

THE EASTERN MESS



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Greek Troops Marching Through a Burning Village to Meet the Forces of Kemal Pasha in Asia Minor



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Turkish Infantry Wearing the New Steel Helmet, Shaped Like a Fcz and Bearing the Crescent on the Front

WHEN an American ventures to set forth facts he feels his countrymen ought to know, but which do not reflect credit on the governments involved, the cry is invariably raised that he is hostile to the peoples of which he is writing. In order to obviate that possibility in the present instance, I propose to deal with the Turkish-Greek mess through the statements of British and French newspapers and public men. To arrive at the true inwardness of a tragedy that nearly precipitated another great war from which it would have been difficult for us to hold aloof, we have only to examine what the British and French themselves say of the business. Their own words tell the story. Such explanations as may be required for an understanding of the matters to which they refer will consist of facts whose proof is easily obtainable.

Lord Islington's Comment

LORD ISLINGTON, G. C. M. G., D. S. O., P. C., formerly governor of New Zealand, Under Secretary for the Colonies, and Parliamentary Under Secretary for India, came out with a statement from which I cull the following: "Practically all the difficulties confronting the Allied Powers, and the prospects of vast expenditure confronting the British Empire, could, in a large measure, have been avoided, had some far-seeing policy in the East been carried out immediately after the Armistice. Our policy in the East since the end of the war may be said to have been continuously wrong. We were wrong in Mesopotamia. We were wrong in Palestine. We were wrong in our dealings with the fallen Ottoman Empire. We were wrong with regard to Greece."

"We fought arduous and costly campaigns in Mesopotamia to protect our interests along the Persian littoral and to secure trade security around Basra, and, so far as I know, for no other reason. We fought in Palestine an offensive-defensive campaign in order to defend the Suez canal—the jugular vein of an Asiatic Empire. We succeeded, and at the time of the Armistice our prestige in the Near East, and among the Allies, was rightly immense."

"Then was the time to come to grips with the situation. Our position as the greatest eastern power demanded that we should pacify the Moslem world by means of a bold and enduring settlement. And we should have been able to force better terms out of the Turk in 1919 than we are ever likely to get now."

"Greece would never have gone to Smyrna except for the Prime Minister"—Lloyd George. "Instead of peace in the Near East, we had another war with all its resultant revulsion of feelings among the Moslems. It was clear to everyone that the Greek advance in Asia Minor was a Pyrrhic victory, which ultimately must lead to disaster. Why should Great Britain be made to advertize to the Moslem world that this unnatural and uncalled for act had been committed through the instrumentality of the British Government?"

"What has the Government's Greek policy resulted in? It has revived the broken and dissipated forces of the

By George Pattullo

Ottoman Empire. It has brought a great calamity on Greece—which calls for sympathy and pity, since we were responsible for it.

"It has changed the Turks from a defeated people into a victorious and doubtless unduly pretentious people. It has put Great Britain in a wrong and invidious position in the eyes of her Moslem subjects."

"It has been suggested that the problem be given to the League of Nations to settle. This would be fatal for two reasons: it would involve delay, and most of the Powers sitting on the League have no Asiatic interests, and their decision, based on sentiment and humanitarianism, might well be fatal to the British Empire in India and the Moslem colonies of France."

There is no need to quote more. Let us leave the noble lord there. It seems a good place.

There is one sentence of his statement which deserves emphasis, however: "It has brought a great calamity on Greece—which calls for sympathy and pity, since we were responsible for it."

To do Lord Islington justice, this expression from him goes much further in a humanitarian way than any comment I have seen in the London press, either editorial or from public men and business leaders. To be sure, Lord Islington dismissed the tragedy with that sentence, and immediately passed to consideration of the practical points that must be stressed in the settlement—keeping the Dardanelles open, protecting the rights of foreign nationals in Constantinople, and evolving a scheme for the safety of the Christian minorities in Asia Minor. But at least he was sorry for the Greeks. Those London newspapers which flayed Downing Street and laid the whole responsibility for the calamity on the Lloyd George cabinet's support of Greek invasion of Turkish territory made comparatively casual reference to the victims' pitiable plight. They abused the Greeks for failure—damned them as futile trouble makers. Their real concern seemed to be for the one point affecting the material and political interests of Great Britain—the necessity of keeping the Dardanelles and the Black Sea from Turkish control.

Thousands of Greek and Turkish soldiers had been killed in the fighting; cities and towns and leagues of countryside had been laid waste; Smyrna lay in smoking ruins; hundreds of thousands of civilians—men, women and children—were outcasts from their homes and thrown upon the world's charity. Yet the note the newspapers sounded was anxiety for the prestige and interests of the Empire.

"Freedom of the Straits" completely overshadowed all other considerations.

Mr. Lovat Fraser, who has enjoyed the reputation in London of being well informed on Eastern affairs, and who has paid tribute in the past to Mr. Lloyd George's achievements, had an article in the Sunday Pictorial, from which I give excerpts:

"It was in 1919 that Mr. Lloyd George began to go sadly astray. . . . In May of that year he invited Greece to land troops at Smyrna, the chief seaport of Asia Minor. Greek contingents reached Smyrna on May 15, 1919, and signalized their arrival by a bloody massacre of Turks, the true facts about which have been studiously suppressed by the British Government."

"The Greek Army then marched inland upon a wild enterprise of conquest, and the instant consequence was the birth of the Turkish Nationalist movement under Mustapha Kemal Pasha, which has now smashed the Greek Army and ruined Greece. The Allied Powers held Constantinople and created a puppet Turkish Government, but every Turk was henceforth a Nationalist and his sympathies lay with Mustapha Kemal at Angora."

Smyrna Promised to Italy

"WHY did Mr. Lloyd George send the Greeks to Smyrna? Little more than a month ago, in the House of Commons, he sought to defend his eastern policy in a speech delivered on August fourth. He said he acted on the advice of a commission on which Great Britain was represented by Sir Robert Borden. No one who was in Paris at the time supposes for a moment that Mr. Lloyd George was really influenced by Sir Robert Borden. The truth is that in 1917, at Saint-Jean de Maurienne, Mr. Lloyd George had promised Smyrna to Italy."

"Two months earlier"—Mr. Fraser means earlier than the Greek seizure of Smyrna—"Italian troops had landed farther south in Asia Minor. He heard they were stealthily moving on Smyrna, and he flung in the Greeks to forestall them, in violation of his own unwarrantable promise of 1917. The way European statesmen handled great communities as though they were pawns will astonish future generations, if the truth is ever told."

"That speech delivered by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on August fourth was the most incendiary utterance uttered by a responsible statesman since the Armistice. It was made at a time when the Greek Army in Europe was actually preparing to march on Constantinople. . . . It was made when Ferid Bey was on his way to London from Angora to endeavor to arrange terms of peace; and when he got here later in the month, no Minister would receive him. . . . Some of his statements were grossly inaccurate. . . . He said, for example, that the Greeks had 'established a military superiority in every pitched battle,' whereas their offensive last year miserably failed and they were driven back with heavy loss. He praised the conquests and valor of the Greeks, and extracts from his speech, which was regarded as a direct incitement to further fighting, were actually published in an Order of the Day to the Greek Army. Five weeks later, the Greeks were swept out of Asia Minor. . . ."

"He backed M. Venizelos; and when the Greek Prime Minister fled from Athens in November, 1920, he actually backed King Constantine, who regained his throne but had to continue the war."

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In closing, Mr. Lovat Fraser sounded the high note to which I have already referred: "Mr. Lloyd George's support of the Greeks has alienated from us the whole Mahomedan world, including sixty millions of Indian Mahomedans, and something not far short of another twenty millions in Egypt, Palestine and Mesopotamia. Think what the loss to British trade, the boycott of British goods by these eighty millions, means."

Earlier in his article, however, Mr. Fraser throws out a thought which will make instant appeal to all lovers of peace: "Smyrna and Bagdad make it necessary to ask whether the autocratic and unfettered powers now wielded by successive Prime Ministers can be maintained any longer in a great democracy."

Here are some extracts from editorial comment in the Northcliffe press from time to time:

"The Greeks were notoriously sent at the instance of Mr. Lloyd George, who backed the mad plans of M. Veniselos. The Government have still to answer to the British public for all the later disasters which have followed. Had not the Greeks been sent to Smyrna with the assent of the British Government, there would have been no war in Asia Minor and no danger of its spreading to Europe."

"Because the Prime Minister was deluded into sending the Greeks on an unwarrantable filibustering expedition, the near and middle East have been rent asunder for three years, India has been gravely disturbed, the Dominions have been unnecessarily asked for help, and huge sums have been expended on the despatch of 'reinforcements' which need never have left the shores of Britain. The suggestion that as 'between the Greeks and the Turks the British Government have been neutral' will not bear a moment's examination. In his inflammatory speech in the House of Commons on August fourth, Mr. Lloyd George praised the Greek Army to the skies, said he knew no other army which could have done so much, and alleged that they had 'established a military superiority in every pitched battle.' When the Turkish envoy afterwards reached England to submit peace proposals, no Minister would see him. . . . There are nearly 150,000,000 Moslems in Asia who have been accustomed in the past to buy Lancashire cotton goods. The war mongering of the British Government and their pronounced hostility to Islam have gravely affected these Asiatic markets and have closed some of them for years."

Criticism of Mr. Lloyd George

Again, we find in the same newspaper: "We believe, however, that it is quite possible to make the Turks clearly understand that, whatever happens, the Straits must be kept open and the way to Constantinople and the Black Sea must remain free."

"Apart from that one essential, on which there can be no compromise, Great Britain is really not concerned to save the Greeks from the consequences of their militaristic adventures. We are certainly not going to undertake costly liabilities to establish the Greeks in Thrace or Constantinople, and, of course, there can be no question of our supporting them in the recovery of any part of Asia Minor."

"The British Government must realize that it has already done enough mischief in that portion of the world. Mr. Lloyd George encouraged the Greeks to go to Smyrna, and to believe that they could count upon British support there. He thus put us into a false position with the whole of the Mahomedan world, to which we have peculiar responsibilities. He made the Greeks believe that they could hold Smyrna and Asia Minor by force, and he thus perpetrated a gross blunder, which is likely to cause us immense trouble."

The disastrous failure of the Greek adventure threatened to lose to Great Britain all the advantages she had gained by victory over the Turks in the Great War—advantages she had sought to enlarge and consolidate. Mustapha Kemal's triumph endangered everything. So in the desperate emergency the Lloyd George government looked about for help. Italy and France were working against her—both had surreptitiously supported Kemal, inasmuch as

the blow against Asia Minor had also been aimed at their own spoils of war.

On September sixteenth, the British Government issued through Reuter's a statement of policy in which they said, in part:

"It is clear, however, that the other Allied powers of the Balkan peninsula are also deeply and vitally affected. Rumania was brought to her ruin in the Great War by the strangulation of the Straits. The union of Turkey and Bulgaria would be productive of deadly consequences to Serbia in particular and Yugo-Slavia as a whole. The whole trade of the Danube flowing into the Black Sea is likewise subject to strangulation if the Straits are closed. The engagement of Greek interests in these issues is also self-evident. His Majesty's Government are therefore addressing themselves to all these three Balkan powers with a view to their taking a part in the effective defence of the neutral zones."

"His Majesty's Government have also communicated with the Dominions, placing them in possession of the facts and inviting them to be represented by contingents in the defence of interests for which they have already made enormous sacrifices and of soil which is hallowed by immortal memories of the Anzacs."

Mr. Asquith's Censure

This appeal raised a tornado of protest. In the first place it was charged that the government was trying to summon dangers which did not exist, as Bulgaria had already announced her neutrality and was in no shape to join Turkey in military operations. And the request to the Dominions for troops was regarded by many Englishmen as humiliating.

Mr. Asquith: "I confess I had thought British diplomacy had reached its climax of clumsiness and ineptitude in the publication a few weeks ago of the Balfour Note"—he referred to the famous note on Allied indebtedness—"but I was mistaken. It was easily surpassed by the official communication which was given out to the world on September 16, and which sounded a note alien to the best traditions of British statesmanship—a note of provocation and a note of panic. It appeared to the Dominions like a kind of S O S signal to make ready to come to the armed assistance of the mother country. I cannot remember in all my long experience of public life a more ill-timed and discreditable incident."

Englishmen as far apart in politics and viewpoint as Mr. Arthur Henderson, M. P., a representative of Labor, and the Earl of Harewood, father-in-law of Princess Mary, were united against the war which the government then appeared bent on forcing.

"We shall oppose by all the means in our power the war that now threatens," declared Mr. Henderson, and the National General Council representing the General Council of the Trade Union Congress and the Parliamentary Labor Party and the Executive Committee of the Labor Party announced in a resolution: "The Council is convinced that there is not a shadow of justification for war."

The Earl of Harewood: "We are menaced with as great a danger as ever confronted Great Britain in recent years. If this danger is to come upon us, let us stick together as we did eight years ago—and then settle with the politicians who got us into this mess."

The Daily Mail of Paris, one of the Northcliffe newspapers, said editorially on September eighteenth:

"The most astonishing disclosure in this amazing declaration of British policy is that apparently Mr. Lloyd George has already sent the fiery cross around the overseas Dominions. He is calling upon the Dominions to send contingents to Turkey to join in his mad war, and he has even tried to play upon the emotions of Australians by invoking the immortal name of the Anzacs."

"In Canada and South Africa this invitation to plunge into fresh strife has caused great surprise. We trust the Dominions will flatly refuse to be entangled in another disastrous military enterprise, which is being contrived for no other purpose than to cover up Mr. Lloyd George's irreparable blunders."

Next day the Daily Mail fired another broadside: "The British people will appreciate the prompt though mistaken devotion which has led New Zealand and other Dominions to respond to the call, but it is our duty to tell the Dominions that they are being fooled by Mr. Lloyd George. He is playing upon their patriotic emotions. . . . Happily there are signs that the Dominions are beginning to grasp the true situation and the suggestion of Mr. Hughes, the Prime Minister of the Australian Commonwealth, that the issue should be referred to the League of Nations, shows which way the wind is now blowing at the Antipodes."

In a speech at Melbourne, Prime Minister Hughes declared that the British Government spoke for the Empire in foreign matters, and Australia stood by Britain "because we must have one mouth-piece for the Empire. But we have the right to demand that a policy, once having been declared, should be adhered to, and we are not to be made the shuttlecock of faction, whether faction be in Britain or elsewhere. We demand to be consulted before any foreign policy is laid down."

The Daily Mail said editorially in the middle of October:

"The indictment upon which the British Government are now arraigned does not begin with the deplorable mistakes of the past few weeks. So far as Near Eastern policy is concerned, the opening counts relate to May, 1919, when the Prime Minister and his colleagues embarked upon the adventure which has kept the Near and Middle East in turmoil ever since."

"The British Premier, led astray by the seductive pleading of M. Veniselos, was chiefly responsible for sending the Greek Army to Smyrna six months after the armistice. He took the lead at Boulogne in June, 1920, in inciting or permitting the Greeks to march against the Turks in the far interior of Asia Minor. Had there been no Greek invasion of Turkish territory in Asia, there would have been no Greek defeat, and the Turks would not have returned to Europe, except to their capital, which they had been told they would receive back."

"The British Government persisted in the mistaken policy of backing the Greeks after M. Veniselos had fallen, after India was disturbed by outbursts of Moslem protest. . . . We do not recognize Mr. Lloyd George's picture of what would have happened if the Turks had crossed into Europe. They are about to cross into Europe now with the assent of the Powers. It is Mr. Lloyd George's policy which has brought them back."

Near Eastern Policy Analyzed

"One of the most surprising passages in the Manchester speech is the audacious claim that the British Government have 'established freedom of that great and gifted people, the Arab race.' In Palestine the Arab majority is being repressed by Sir Herbert Samuel's armored cars and aeroplanes, and in Mesopotamia the Arabs are being subjected to an alien control which they deeply resent."

In discussing the Lloyd George defense of his policy the same paper said:

"The Premier concentrated his defence yesterday on the events of the last three or four weeks. He carefully ignored the fact that these events are the results of the Government's policy of the last three years. . . . If the Turks are now to return to Constantinople and Thrace (as they are) it is directly due to the British Government's own blunders."

"(1) Why did he encourage the Greek invasion of Asia Minor three years ago by sending the Greeks to Smyrna when the late Sir Henry Wilson warned him and them that they could not hold it unless they were masters of the interior?" (Note—The late Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson declared that Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, in supporting the Greeks against the Turks, were "backing the wrong horse.")

"(2) Why, even so late as August 4, after his lofty call on July 28 to the Free Churches to 'make war impossible,' did he deliver this incitement to the Greeks, in Parliament? 'I do not know of any army that would have gone as far as the Greeks have. It was a very daring and dangerous

military enterprise. They established military superiority in every pitched battle. They had to maintain lines of communication that no other army in Europe would ever have dreamed of risking."

"Unfortunately, almost before the echo of these words had died away, the Prime Minister's foresight was completely belied by the overwhelming rout of the Greeks."

The London Spectator of September sixteenth, in an article on Lloyd George's premiership:

"By far the most visible mess in these recent days is in the Near East. It was Mr. Lloyd George who encouraged the Greeks to undertake and continue a fantastic adventure in Asia Minor. The whole history of modern Greece might have warned him."

Professor Arnold Toynbee, after an extensive visit to the seat of the war last year, concluded that the Greeks behaved just about as badly as the Turks. "There are three false antitheses of Christianity and Islam, Europe and Asia, civilization and barbarism," he wrote. "In judging Greek and Turkish atrocities, Westerners have no right to be self-righteous. They can only commit one greater error of judgment, and that is to suppose that the Turks are more unrighteous than the Greeks." Professor Toynbee described many Greek atrocities which he witnessed, and which he charged were "organized from above."

Mr. Lloyd George's Statement

The Northcliffe press, inveighing against an attempt of M. Veniselos in a letter to the London Times to paint Greece's cause as a sort of "holy war," grew very salty.

"M. Veniselos now speaks unctuously of the Greeks as Christians—as though they had suddenly become Christians—and apparently wants to raise the Cross against the Crescent. This is a mere politician's device. . . . If we are to talk of Christians, let us think first of our own Christians. Great Britain is full of Christians, 1,500,000 of whom are out of work and receiving doles which our Christian taxpayers would certainly not be able to provide if the British Government proceeded to spend their money on M. Veniselos's Christians."

The London Daily Express, owned by Lord Beaverbrook, who was for long one of Mr. Lloyd George's staunchest backers, came out with an editorial from which I quote:

"Why should we not agree to allow the Turks to enter Thrace now—with only such delay as may be necessary to evacuate Greek troops? If the Greek troops refuse to go, we ought to give the Turks the same opportunity to impose their will upon the Greek Army in Europe as we gave the Greek Army to impose its will upon the Turkish Army in Asia Minor. The Greeks were permitted during their campaign against the Turks to have a base in Constantinople. Their flagship lay in the harbor. In the city they had their military mission. They enjoyed the freedom of the Straits."

So much for neutrality. Now for the other side of the picture. Mr. Lloyd George's secretary sent the following letter to a correspondent on September twenty-fifth:

"The Prime Minister directs me to thank you for your letter and to say that there is no foundation for the suggestion that this country has assisted either the Kemal forces or the Greek forces by the provision of arms, equipment, or advice. The British Government has maintained an attitude of strict impartiality between the two combatants since the declaration of neutrality issued by the Allied Powers in March, 1921, and has not helped either in any way to continue hostilities."

His newspaper organ in London, the Daily Chronicle, did better than this. It said:

"That the prospects of peace are so good is due in some degree to the skill of Lord Curzon, in some degree to the readiness of the French to repair, as far as they could, the effect of their withdrawal in front of the Turks, which might otherwise have gone down to history as a betrayal, but most of all to the strength of the British case and the purity of British motives, and to the firmness of the government in holding on to Chanak."

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The London Morning Post, that bulwark of conservatism, did not agree with this view. Mr. Bonar Law wrote a letter to the Times from which I quote:

"I see rumors in different newspapers, which I do not credit, that the French representative with the Kemalists forces has encouraged them to make impossible demands. The course of action for our Government seems to me clear. We cannot alone act the policemen of the world. The financial and social condition of Great Britain makes that impossible. It seems to me therefore that our duty is to say plainly to our French Allies that the position in Constantinople and the Straits is as essential a part of the peace settlement as the arrangement with Germany, and that, if they are not prepared to support us there we shall not be able to bear the burden alone, but shall have no alternative except to imitate the Government of the United States and to restrict our attention to the safeguarding of the immediate interests of the Empire."

Boiled down, this was a warning to France that if she did not support Britain against the Turks Britain would not support her in enforcing the peace terms against Germany. So the Morning Post came out with:

"Mr. Bonar Law's letter contains all the worst features of Mr. Churchill's memorandum. It is offensive to the Turks, it is also offensive to the French. Let the British public beware. An effort is being made to force them into war against their will, and it is not Kemal, or M. Franklin-Bouillon, or the bolshevik Araloff, who is the prime mover in that criminal enterprise."

There was a come-back to Bonar Law's warning which he probably did not foresee. The French welcomed it. The Echo de Paris:

"Rightly or wrongly, France and Italy have repudiated any intention of opposing the Turks, either at Chanak or in the Straits, but neither the Paris cabinet nor the Rome cabinet has questioned England's right to defend her interests by the means she deemed the best, even at the cost of an isolated action. It is a precedent which may be invoked in the future."

In other words, a precedent has now been established for independent action in protecting national interests. France would like nothing better than a free hand to deal with Germany as she wants.

The Victoire:

"If the Turks, after their victory over the Greeks, have not thrown into the sea the small British detachments at Chanak, if they have not crossed the Dardanelles in spite of the British fleet, it is because for the last year France has prepared the peace in the Near East by winning the Turks' confidence by the Angora agreement, and by making concessions in Cilicia."

The French View

A semiofficial note issued in Paris at the same time declared:

"The uncompromising attitude maintained at Downing street, notably in the appeal for military help from the Dominions, was not such as would calm the Turkish Nationalist leaders. The head of the Angora government, relying upon the assurance brought to him by the French delegate—Franklin-Bouillon—agreed to cease all military enterprises. The intervention of the French government had a decisive influence in the preservation of peace."

The Temps, the semiofficial government organ in France, declared:

"Mr. Lloyd George pushes the English people to approve the conquest of the Straits—that is to say, an operation which is incompatible with the independence of Turkey and with the vital interests of Russia. He wishes that at the future peace conference, where each one will have losses to repair, England should present herself as mistress of the Dardanelles, as she is already mistress of Gibraltar and of Suez. This is an eventuality which ought to inspire us with certain reflections and even certain regrets. But nobody can cultivate imperialism with impunity. Mr. Lloyd George will find it out some day."

And M. Henri Gallien, in the Avenir of Paris, sums up the situation thus:

"M. Veniselos, like any other Greek minister, would be obliged to follow England's policy in the Orient. Now it happens that at present the policy of the British government on the settlement of

the Turkish question is directly opposed to our own. Whether Greece be governed by Constantine or Veniselos, or by both at once, the situation will remain unchanged so far as we are concerned. Greece will remain England's soldier in the Orient."

The Germans found plenty of food for thought in these tortuous moves and plots and counterplots.

"Activity, utmost political activity, is the policy of the Turks today," said the Tag. "Weak stepping aside is the essential trait of the German today. He is afraid of his own courage, he is trying to get along with everybody. We are not siding with France, nor with England, nor with Russia. What has become of the famous treaty of Rapallo?"

"New wars, new political constellations are forming in the world and there certainly are points through which we could obtain advantages, but there is a cemeterylike quiet all over Germany. When the Near East imbroglio is over, England will probably turn its attention to Germany, trying the same policy it tried with Greece, but recent events should have taught Germany one thing: whoever relies on England is lost."

Some French comment blamed the United States for all that had happened.

Even America Blamed

"We might make the point that the Americans are to blame primarily for the evils which cause them concern," wrote Auguste Gauvain in the Journal des Débats. "The fact is that after the Peace Conference they opposed an American mandate for Armenia, as well as any intervention by their government in Turkey. Their hesitancy caused the disorders in the Near East to continue, and their final refusal completed the ruin of the Treaty of Sévres."

Having sounded this note, the Journal des Débats had the satisfaction of seeing it swell to quite a chorus. It was never taken seriously in France, of course, where the purpose of this line of argument was perfectly gauged, but a certain type of American was swayed by it. These pale lilies bowed their heads in shame for their country—it wouldn't cancel Europe's debts and give them all the money they wanted; it wouldn't come to Europe's aid and make everybody happy; it had lost its soul! This species of American, who so grieves over his country's sordid selfishness and is always clamoring for the United States to jump in and give to Europe till it hurts, is sometimes a ribbon hunter—sometimes has been entertained hospitably abroad, or has breakfasted in Downing Street—sometimes is ambitious for a social career in London or Paris—generally he is sincere, but simply ignorant, abysmally ignorant.

Large numbers of the latter shouted for us to line up with Great Britain and fight for the Cross against the Crescent. The protection of Christian minorities in Asia Minor made a stirring slogan—some excellent people were moved by it to demand that America go to war.

"Two hundred thousand Christian refugees in Smyrna are in grave peril of massacre, despite the fact that peace negotiations are actually under way between the Powers and Mustapha Kemal. This is the alarming news which the British Government received from its agents in Asia Minor on Saturday night and communicated to Lord Balfour in Geneva today," said a dispatch from Geneva about the time Mr. Lloyd George was making his appeal to the Dominions. But Lord Balfour, that charming façade behind which British Imperialism has accomplished so much since 1916, "spoke guardedly of the British information" to the League of Nations. Being a man of unblemished personal honor, Balfour also qualified what he had to communicate. "I can only say that if it is correct, it [the British information] shows the situation at Smyrna to be more grave than it has ever been." This statement was made after the destruction of Smyrna, and had reference to a possible massacre of the refugees. In fact, the claim was made in some quarters that all Christians in the destroyed city were to be murdered the following Saturday.

"Great Britain today offered a sum of \$250,000 towards keeping alive these thousands, if the other nations contribute an equal amount," continued the same dispatch from the seat of the League of Nations. At this time the United States was making millions available, to salvage

as best it might the human misery a political filibuster had caused.

The plight of the refugees very naturally wrung our hearts. All those hundreds of thousands of helpless, wretched victims, suddenly driven from their homes in flight! Somehow most of us pictured them as people a good deal like ourselves. But we read in a dispatch from Mr. John Clayton to the Chicago Tribune: "The acts of the Greek Army in Western Anatolia are one of the blackest spots in the whole history of western civilization. It had not even the excuse of anger to mitigate the bloody horrors. I have taken information from no Turkish sources, but from returning Greeks, Englishmen and Americans, and I have seen with my own eyes." When we read that from a foreign correspondent it is time to reflect.

"A tithe has not been told of the terrors suffered by Moslems living inside the Greek occupied territories as the Greek army retreated," declared Fethi Bey to Mr. Clayton.

"No estimate has been made of the deaths in this series of massacres, one of the worst and most vicious that ever happened in the Near East. No Greek can live in Western Anatolia among the Turkish population after this retreat."

And Mr. Henry Wales adds a bit of information, under date of October second, from Constantinople:

"The Greek and Armenian boatmen refuse to transport their fellow-countrymen or baggage across the Straits at less than ten (10) Turkish pounds a head, even to save them from massacre."

Now, personally—despite my rock-ribbed Presbyterianism, which makes me ready to argue predestination at the drop of the hat—my sorrow is just as keen for a slain Moslem as a slain Christian. And my purpose in quoting the foregoing dispatches is simply to show that this whole wretched, tragic business is largely a case of dog eat dog.

And so is the struggle for advantage between France and Great Britain, which led to this. It has been going on ever since the Armistice, with political and economic domination of Europe and the Near East as the stakes.

There have been periods during the past two years when the French press denounced "perfidious Albion" and charged the British Government with all the bad faith and double-dealing that Napoleon was wont to attribute to them. And the British replied by charges of militarism and greed and treachery.

Perhaps a short statement of the national interests involved will help to an understanding of British and French and Italian policies in this tangle.

General Townshend's Protest

For centuries Great Britain has had her eye on Constantinople and the Dardanelles. So has Russia. These clashing ambitions led to war against Russia by Great Britain and France and Turkey during the reign of Napoleon III. Within the memory of living men the British were the allies of the terrible Turk against whom Downing Street has recently been trying to raise the Anglo-Saxon world. And it would not be such an extraordinary event historically if they should become the allies of Turkey again. With Gibraltar already in her possession, British control of the Dardanelles and Constantinople would practically turn the Mediterranean into a British lake.

France and Italy shared in this control after the Allied victory broke the Turkish power and gave them Constantinople. Yet Britain's naval preponderance made her arbiter of the Straits and dominant. The British landed troops in Constantinople in the spring of 1920.

"When I heard that," said the British General Townshend, "I wrote a letter of protest to Lord Curzon, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, deploring such an act of madness, and I went to see Lord Long, then First Lord of the Admiralty, to try to get him to act, and he was in full sympathy with me. That piece of folly was a gross strategic blunder, a tactical mistake, and a political error of the first magnitude. It lit up the Turkish National Party, who ran to arms at once. It lit up India and Egypt; and a powerful fleet—British—anchored 500 or 600 yards off the Sultan's palace. We cannot turn Constantinople into a Gibraltar or a Suez, and the sooner we evacuate it the better for us and our dignity."

The French and Italians viewed with alarm these efforts to consolidate the British hold on the Turkish capital and the Mediterranean. True, under the arrangement arrived at in the peace settlement they shared in the control, but actually it was slipping more and more into British hands. The Sultan was a mere puppet.

Italy had seized the Dodecanese islands after her victory over the Turks in 1911, as a guaranty for the execution of the peace treaty. The treaty was executed, but she still held on to them. Then the Balkan war of 1913 broke out and in the various parcelings-out which attended it these islands were awarded by the powers to Greece.

That was tantamount to giving them to Great Britain, to whom they would be valuable for a naval base. There are twelve islands in the Dodecanese group, of which the most important is Rhodes; Stampalia is the potential naval base.

Although awarded to Greece, Italy clung to them and it was not until the Treaty of Sévres, in 1920, and after she had received other good and sufficient considerations, that Italy agreed to confirm Greek sovereignty over the islands, except Rhodes. Reluctantly Italy prepared to surrender her hold on the Dodecanese, to which she had been sending many emigrants. Then Greece was humbled by Mustapha Kemal, and "The Minister for Foreign Affairs," announced an official Italian communiqué, "has informed the Greek Minister here that in view of the early meeting of a conference to settle eastern questions on the basis of a new situation substantially different from that created by the Sévres treaty, the Italian government wishes to notify the Greek government that Italy regards as lapsed the special accords with Greece concerning the Dodecanese." In other words, Greece may whistle for those islands, and Great Britain has lost out there.

The Influence of Zaharoff

The British Government did not want the Italians in Asia Minor, and an agreement said to have been entered into in the dark days of 1917 by which Italy was to receive Smyrna must have been distasteful to them. The Italians landed troops in Asia Minor two months before the Greeks seized Smyrna and report had it that their objective was Smyrna.

A short time after the visit of M. Gounaris, the then Greek Minister of War, to London, the Greeks started their first offensive against the Turkish Nationalists. At the outset they were cursed with success. This proved calamitous. Large arsenals were established in Greece and the islands, and prospects looked so bright that Mr. Lloyd George began to talk about giving Constantinople to the Greeks. He declared it would be easy for the Greek Army to take it.

That stirred France to fresh endeavor. Greek seizure of Constantinople was to them merely British seizure in disguise. British interests in these operations were enormous.

By victory of the Greeks over the Turks she might strengthen her hold on Mesopotamia, occupy the Dardanelles, and possibly gain Constantinople. If the venture went well the position of her eastern empire would be enormously improved, she would hurt French prestige in the East and demolish French attempts to dispute her domination there.

*The prizes of victory would be colossal. But Lloyd George "backed the wrong horse." It may be that he was influenced thereto by the support of Sir Basil Zaharoff, the Greek Croesus who bears an English title, who controls enormous munitions work in Great Britain and on the Continent, who is reputed to own Monte Carlo, who financed M. Veniselos, and is reported in London to have been one of the most generous financial backers of the Lloyd George régime.

Somebody must have found the money for all these operations. The Greek filibuster, from first to last, cost in excess of two hundred million dollars without counting losses through damage and destruction. It is unlikely that Kemal Pasha's campaigns totaled as much. They ran into a lot of money, however. His treasure chest had its taproot in Paris. Surely these operations have some bearing on Interallied debts.

France and Italy supplied the Turks with artillery and munitions and rifles, also. It had been decided at an Interallied

Watch This Column

Universal Joy Week

Keep your eyes open for the week beginning Dec. 24th and ending Dec. 30th. It is always the merriest week of the year. But this year it will be ten times merrier than ever. *It will be Universal Joy Week.*

* * *

Universal has prepared a special Christmas bill for Joy Week which will fill you with mirth and make your eyes pop with delight. Watch your theatre. If it announces Universal Joy Week, go! Don't let anything stand in the way.

* * *

Just think! The bill will include Century Comedies with Baby Peggy, Lee Moran, Queenie, the comedy horse, and Brownie, the wonder dog. It will include Lewis Sargent [hero of Huckleberry Finn] in Universal Messenger Boy Comedies, and Neely Edwards, "Nervy Ned," in Universal tramp comedies.

* * *

And lo! and behold! We have Mary Pickford in a comedy she made for us *eleven years ago*, entitled "Going Straight." It is a scream. See it and you will have a chance to compare the Little Mary of eleven years ago with the millionairess of today.

* * *

No, that isn't all. The bill will include "The Leather Pushers" and the new series, with Reginald Denny as "Kid Roberts" and Hayden Stevenson as the foxy manager. It is going to be the funniest week of the year. Watch for the posters. See where it is going to be shown. Don't let it escape you. Take the tip from me.

CARL LAEMMLE, President.

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

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meeting in 1921 that the three governments of Great Britain, France and Italy would maintain a strict neutrality between the Greeks and Turks. To those in the inside this must have sounded like a grim jest, but it at least prevented any open break. At that same meeting they agreed that private individuals and firms should be free to sell the combatants arms and munitions, a right of neutrals sanctioned by precedent in every war of modern times.

Therefore France supplied Kemal with seventy-fives and rifles. Italy supplied rifles and aircraft. In addition, French capitalists furnished certain financial support. The Turks enjoyed the benefits, also, of French military tutelage.

Had they seen the Allies in close union the Kemalists would never have dared the offensive they later undertook. The reorganization of the Turkish Army and the financing of their military operations were also far beyond the Turks' own resources.

By the Treaty of Angora, which France concluded separately with the Turkish Nationalists, she gave the Kemalists assurance that they were no longer threatened from the south and that they could concentrate all their forces against the Greeks without menace from the direction of Cilicia and Syria. His hands free, and confident of the moral if not open support of France, Kemal Pasha proceeded to drive the Greeks into the sea. Since the establishment of Greece as a Byzantine empire would have shut off Italy from an excellent outlet for her surplus population, she likewise backed Kemal. American immigration laws have closed the door to Italian emigration to a considerable extent, and she must find territories for many thousands of her excess population yearly. Asia Minor, with the same climate and a productive soil, offers a tempting field for colonization.

Moreover, France had historic and sound financial reasons for supporting the Turks. She had always been friendly with Turkey until the Great War, when German influence turned the scales. Her first alliance with the Turks dates back to 1538, when King Francis I appealed for help against his enemies the Solyman the Magnificent, and the French Ambassador, John de la Forest, arranged a treaty between the two countries. French influence is wider in Turkey today than that of any other nation, particularly among the upper classes, and in all African possessions the French enjoy, through the traditional friendship with the Turks, better facilities than do the British in their colonies. And as I have said before, the French under Napoleon III were allies of the Turks against the Russians in the Crimean War.

The Question of Oil

France had, too, a dominant role in the organization of Turkish finances. The Ottoman Debt was created in 1875, and the French took 60 per cent of the total capital, the remainder being divided about equally between Britain and Germany. Her capitalists controlled the Imperial Ottoman Bank. French participation in the industrial enterprises of the Ottoman Empire is 53 per cent, whereas British capital controls only 13 per cent.

There was, too, the question of oil. The oil supply has become a pressing problem for France, ever since the great Verdun battle revealed its importance, when her transport almost came to a standstill at one stage for lack of petrol. M. Briand foresaw his country's future needs and in 1916 signed accords with Great Britain by which, in case of victory, France was to receive the zones of Adana, Mosul and Palestine. M. Briand got the British to concede Syria, all Northern Mesopotamia, and the Mosul Province, bordering the Persian frontier.

It was a fine trade—the way the powers used to swap and trade territories and peoples that did not belong to them, whenever reverses made new adjustments obligatory was a caution. But the agreement never came into force. M. Clemenceau, who succeeded Briand, signed another agreement, in April, 1919, which divided Turkey into zones under the control of the Allies.

According to this deal Italy received Cilicia, Palestine was to form a national home for the Jews—as though anybody could persuade a Jew to go there—and Great Britain received a protectorate over Mesopotamia and Mosul.

The exploitation of the oil fields of Mosul was left to the Turkish Petroleum Company, affiliated with the Royal Dutch. The French obtained only 25 per cent of the shares which formerly belonged to the Germans, and the wells remained in the hands of the British, who exercised absolute control over production. Clemenceau was outtraded in this instance. After a victorious war of four years France became entirely dependent for oil—the lifeblood of modern commerce and military operations—on Great Britain. She regarded this situation as intolerable.

The Treaty of Sèvres, which Italy and France had been obliged to sign, owing to previous agreements with London, was almost as disgraceful to the French as it was to the Turks and Russians. A strong campaign was launched against Clemenceau in 1920 for having sacrificed French interests in the treaties with Britain. He himself appears to have understood the mistake he had committed in regard to the oil supply, for he said to Mr. Lloyd George not long after he had signed the agreement, "If I had known that Mosul was so important I would not have let you have it."

British Prestige Hurt

San Remo and the Treaty of Sèvres having given them the worst of it, according to their view, the French cast about for a way of escape from the territorial and political arrangements arrived at. It was decided to return to the old policy of friendship with the Turk. Accordingly M. Franklin-Bouillon was sent to Anatolia in the summer of 1921 to establish close relations with the Kemalists, the only strong representatives of Turkey—Great Britain controlled the puppet Sultan in Constantinople. Franklin-Bouillon was not a member of the government; he was a business man. He not only concluded the agreement of Angora with the Turkish Nationalists but laid the foundation for French participation in commercial and industrial development in the future in all territories under Turkish control.

Up to now, the French have triumphed in this struggle for advantage. Their champion has given the British representative a terrific beating. For a while after the Armistice it looked as though British astuteness in business and statesmanship, British resources and naval power, and the fact that she has so long been in the ascendancy in Europe would bring French rivalry to nought. But it cannot be denied that the Greek reverse has dealt her prestige a fearful blow, and that in Europe and the Near East France towers today greater than she has ever been in history, with the exception of the brief Napoleonic period.

At this writing comes news that the Angora National Assembly has dethroned

the puppet Sultan at Constantinople and declared an end of the Ottoman Empire. Another French triumph. The new Turkey will be France's stout ally. And just recently she sent the mayor of Lyons to Moscow on a diplomatic mission, and usually well-informed circles in Paris had it that a rapprochement with the Bolsheviks was in prospect.

The full extent of this disaster to British interests cannot yet be measured, but the repercussion in her Eastern possessions is bound to be serious. Her support of the Greeks against the Turks puts her in the position of championing the enemies of the Moslem world, and India and other portions of her Eastern Empire will not soon forget. Despite the bold front put up at Chanak, both Europe and Asia recognize the tremendous concessions she has had to make. Downing Street averted a debacle by a stubborn stand at Chanak and by taking the risk of involving the empire in a new war, but Great Britain ought never to have been trapped in such a desperate situation.

"It seemed a nightmare that might well move any rational man to begin to despair of human folly and precipitate action," wrote Mr. J. L. Garvin in the London Observer—and Mr. Garvin has been a stout champion for Mr. Lloyd George at times.

"The declarations of every other country in Europe were quieting and pacific by comparison. The sobriety of the Turkish communiqués was a rebuke to the rampant challenges of our own."

"The peace of the world was placed at the mercy of a chance shot. I had thought that the Mr. Lloyd George of Genoa would have sacrificed office and cut off his right hand rather than suffer it that such a tone, at such a moment, should have been used in the name of his Government."

"The avowed objects of British policy in the East were hopelessly lost before the Chanak crisis and scare arose. All the convulsive action then was utterly belated. It was an attempt to bang the stable door and hang it with padlocks after the loss of the steed."

"If war had come as the result of a chance shot—when we had created just the sort of situation where the guns were most tempted to go off themselves—it would have been war for the empty stable."

Time for Caution

The British may repair at the conference table what they have lost by backing this disastrous military enterprise. As traders across the board they are incomparable. And the breed does not give up an objective because of initial defeats. There will be more trouble about Constantinople and the Straits—lots of it. Germany and Russia will one day have something to say about any arrangements entered into now.

"The liberty of the Straits, in the name of which Europe is again preparing to spill blood," declared a note from the Soviet Government when the situation was most tense, "only signifies for the Entente powers liberty to blockade the Straits at any moment and under any pretext, and thus cut off the entire Black Sea from the rest of the world. The Russian Government is for the liberty of the Straits, but for a liberty appertaining to merchant vessels alone, which would completely free both the Straits and the Black Sea from the presence of foreign naval forces. The Russian government insists upon the removal of all the restrictions ordered and enforced by Great Britain and her Allies regarding the passage of the Dardanelles and of the Bosphorus by merchant vessels."

Russia and Germany can do little but protest just now; but it would be folly to expect sudden amity and sweet cooperation between the French and the British. Their struggle for domination has simply entered another stage; it will continue.

We may see serious trouble over this question, but it does not necessarily follow that the American people should permit themselves to be stamped by one side or the other. The near Eastern question had best be examined from all sides, and then turned over to expose what is underneath. The United States cannot hold aloof from Europe, but it can at least treat with her on a common-sense business basis.

And whenever the spokesmen of Europe begin to get mealy-mouthed and exhort about the American soul it is high time for an American to button his coat over his watch and clap a hand on his wallet.



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It Took Three Hours of Cautious Crawling to Photograph These Seals at the Mouth of the Columbia River, Oregon