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1. Introduction

The year 2019 marks the centenary from the official initiation of the Paris Peace Conference. A summit, which would end the bloodiest war human history had until then witnessed. Such was the scale of that armed conflict, which would later be called precisely the Great War, that the globe witnessed battles on almost every continent and every ocean and the participation of numerous states from all around the world. Of course one should not overlook that its initiation, the major battle-fields, and its conclusion would be written upon the Old Continent itself. The devastations brought upon from this war would accompany Europe at least for twenty-seven more years, when an even more monstrous and disastrous war would end nearly three decades of hostilities worldwide.

Though the Great War would be concluded with the aforementioned Peace Conference, which would last from 1919 to 1920, few seemed to have realized that this conflict had spread its roots deep between the old established world and the new one, which was to arise from the peace treaties. While WWI ended in 1918, at the same time some of its war theaters remained still active. This case was indisputably the Russian Civil War.

All the Allies participating in WWI on the winner's side organized the Allied Intervention in Russia, which would last officially from 1918 to 1922¹. Although at first this campaign would be seen as defensive and supportive to Russia and its people, to re-establish the eastern front of the war, soon it would be turned into an offensive one. The once friend and ally during WWI, became quickly a foe and an outsider in the international relations, as the hatred and the resentment of the old-established Tsarist elite class towards the Bolshevik regime was abundantly clear, since the very beginning.

As we shall examine further on, the official end of the hostilities, with the consequent armistice-treaties with the Central Powers, during the autumn of 1918, brought an abrupt end to the official logic behind the intervention of the Allies in Russia's internal affairs. What at first had been considered an attempt to aid the

¹ Most of the Allies had already departed the Russian soil, within 1920. The last invading force to leave the newborn Soviet State, was Japan when its troops departed completely in 1922. A more elaborate analysis of the Allied Intervention in Russia, will be examined in the chapters ahead.

suffering Russian people, became an anti-Bolshevik effort. Every country though would abide by its own rules and guidelines. Naturally, not all of them were determined by animosity to Bolshevism and its principles. As the military intervention acquired an overall image of a crusade and the Soviet historiography treated exclusively this attempt as a pure anti-Communist effort, this notion has primarily been presented until nowadays, regarding all of the participant states.²

Among the countries that participated in this campaign, there was also Greece. The once peripheral kingdom at the edge of the Balkan Peninsula had managed within almost a decade to double its borders and its population mainly through the Balkan Wars³ and WWI. Through subsequent wars, the Greek Army had restored much of its fame which had been tampered and disgraced especially after the Greek-Ottoman War of 1897 and the subsequent defeat of the Greek troops.⁴

The Macedonian Front in WWI was considered one of the turning points of the long-term, ferocious conflict, which would finally tip the scale for the victory of the Entente Powers in Southern Europe. And this victory was to be more or less attributed to the late, though the decisive contribution of the Greek troops.⁵

While Greece's participation in the war occurred almost at the last moment, Greece managed to find itself among the victors after the final armistice treaty of the 11th November 1918 with Germany, which would put the first "full stop" to the worldwide four-year bloodshed.

But how did Greece come actually to partake in an armed struggle fighting the Bolsheviks, namely a campaign far away not only from its borders but even quite distant from the lands that constituted the Greek irredenta's traditional aims of the Great Idea?⁶

² See Peter Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End*, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 35-36.

³ Douglas Dakin, *Η Ενοποίηση της Ελλάδας 1770-1923*, (Αθήνα, Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης, 1982), p. 303.

⁴ For an accurate though political-inclined analysis of the Greek defeat in the war of 1897 see Γιάννης Ν. Γιαννουλόπουλος, «*Η Ευγενής μας Τύφλωσις...*», *Εξωτερική Πολιτική και «Εθνικά Θέματα» από την ήττα του 1897 έως τη Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή*, (Αθήνα, Βιβλιόραμα, 2003), pp. 83-89, 171-183.

⁵ Κωνσταντίνος Σβολόπουλος, *Ελληνική Εξωτερική Πολιτική 1830-1981*, (Αθήνα, Βιβλιοπωλείον της Εστίας, 2014), p. 151.

⁶ Under the term Great Idea, Megali Idea or Μεγάλη Ιδέα came to be known the description of Greek Nationalism especially towards the end of the 19th century, mainly up until the end of the Asia Minor Campaign and the subsequent Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. The notion of the Great Idea could be summarized as the cradle of the Greek irredentist agenda, aiming the restoration of a Greater Greece,

1.1 Aim & Structure of this Thesis

The question which was placed above gave me a series of thoughts and other inquiries almost a year ago. WWI and its aftermath shaped a new era for the majority of the states in Europe and among them Greece as well. Constant regimes' changes, wars, revolutions, and peace-treaties, have written new pages in history, which would be and are being studied meticulously up until nowadays, either for their military or their social and political background, as well as for the repercussions these actions have subsequently induced. Yet among cataclysmic historical events, one seems to have been nearly forgotten, regarding not only its record within the Greek historiography but also its interconnection with the international scene as well. The participation of the Greek Army in the Allied Intervention within the context of the Russian Civil War in 1919 against the Bolsheviks.

This participation would be later characterized as “The Ukrainian Campaign” among the few scholars and press, who would show interest in it. The term *Ukrainian* would be attributed, as the Greek troops were dispatched mainly –but not exclusively– in the lands of Ukraine, that was also considered at that time as Southern Russia.⁷

This campaign⁸ was interposed between two major events within Greek history. On one hand the primarily successful decade of wars for Greece, which would shape largely the Greek social background for the years to come and would forge the territorial landscape of the country almost as it is nowadays. On the other hand, there is the Greco-Turkish War 1919-1922 that led to the “Asia Minor Catastrophe” of the Greek troops. It should be noted that altogether the decade of the 1910s' for Greece, could undoubtedly be called -the longest- decade, the small Balkan country had up until that time ever experienced. And it was hence long, not only because numerous events occurred during that time, but because this specific sequence of events started in 1909

which would replace the Ottoman Empire and take its rightful place at history as an heir-state of the once almighty Byzantine Empire. For a definition on the birth of this term see Έλλη Σκοπετέα, *Το «Πρότυπο Βασίλειο” και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα, Όψεις του Εθνικού Προβλήματος στην Ελλάδα (1830-1880)*, (Αθήνα, Πολύτυπο, 1988), pp. 257-251.

⁷ The majority of the Ukrainian territory was under Tsarist rule up until the October Revolution in 1917, therefore the terms “Southern Russia” and “Ukrainian soil” have an ambiguous meaning. The political situation as a whole in Ukraine after the Revolution will be further analyzed later in the text. See Matthew Stachiw, Jaroslaw Sztendera, Joan L. Stachiw (ed.), *Western Ukraine, At the Turning Point of Europe's History 1918-1923*, vol. 1 (New York, The Shevchenko Scientific Society, 1969), pp. 7-8.

⁸ In this thesis, the stand-alone use of the word campaign is primarily linked with the Greek Expedition or Campaign in Ukraine in 1919.

when the Goudi coup took place and ended in 1923 with the Treaty of Lausanne and the subsequent conclusion of a long-term war period. This long decade changed the political landscape of Greece and shaped its borders almost as they are up until nowadays. The common denominator throughout all those years was unequivocally the political personality of Eleftherios Venizelos.⁹

These two major events have dominated the interest of historians, leaving the Ukrainian Campaign nearly forgotten. Another reason might have been that it was short-lived and unsuccessful. But that doesn't denote obviously, that this conflict played a minor or a nonexistent role at all for Greece at the time.

Greece's participation in the Allied Intervention in Russia came as a consequence of Eleftherios Venizelos' policy, one of the most important statesmen the country had ever seen, who also had decided to join the war on the side of the Entente Powers in WWI, after he had shortly proved victorious on his long-term dispute with King Constantine in 1917. Venizelos expressed the Greek notion of the Megali Idea, a leading figure, which Greece had been lacking for quite some years. Yet of course, as it usually happens in those cases, strong and prominent personalities, which have loyal and zealous supporters, have equally renowned antagonists, with powerful opposition feelings and followers as well.¹⁰ In Venizelos' case, the great adversary was King Constantine I, who desired a rather moderate and introvert stance on the field of foreign policy. Thus the Venizelists and the Royalists or anti-Venizelists, as they were respectively called by their adherents, were the two camps, which shaped Greece's political landscape at the time.

Furthermore, even though Greece's contribution to the Macedonian front was significant, it had only been but for the last months of the war. That being said, it is easily comprehensible that the demands, the Greek Prime Minister desired to direct in the Paris Peace Conference, could not be matched with the sacrifices the Greek Army had suffered in comparison to the other victorious countries. Additionally, the conference in Paris would define once again the world order, but this time almost from

⁹ One of the most significant textbooks regarding the turbulent 1910s' decade in Greece, is the two-volume work by Georgios Ventiris. Although it is written, under a rather Venizelist scope, it comprises an excellent examination of the incidents of those years. See Γεώργιος Βεντρήρης, *Η Ελλάδα του 1910-1920*, 2 vol., (Αθήνα, Πυρσού ΑΕ, 1931).

¹⁰ Doros Alastos, *Venizelos: Patriot, Statesman, Revolutionary*, (London, Lund Humphries, 1942), pp. 1-7.

scratch, as new countries had appeared and requested their share. Venizelos had realized that without firstly the consent and secondly the actual material and financial assistance of the Great Powers, Greece's national ambitions towards the expansion of the Greek borders and the annexation of Ottoman territories, inhabited though largely by Greek population, could not be accomplished.

While the Allies had already commenced their intervention in Russia, they knew that their forces were inadequate to successfully confront the growing Soviet Red Army. France asked Greece to provide fresh troops, which could be used primarily as a defensive and occupying force in Southern Russia, and alongside the French troops would assist the counterrevolutionaries White Russians in their attempt to defeat Bolshevism and restore the pre-war order within the vast Russian state. France in return promised its active support regarding the presentation of the Greek claims before the commission in the Paris Conference. As we shall examine later, these promises were up to a point vague, as Greece's demands were colliding with France's ambitions and expansionistic policy, and those of other countries as well. Yet Venizelos knew, that he had to risk and "play by the rules" imposed by the Great Powers.

As a result of the aforementioned policy, within 6 months more than 23.000 Greek soldiers were sent to the first transmarine campaign, the Greek Army had encountered since its initiation and the Greek State's independency in 1830. However, this expedition would be branded by consequent fiascos and absolute catastrophe. The Greek troops faced difficult conditions, which proved unable to overcome and were finally defeated.

But who was actually responsible for this debacle? Was it the inability of the Greek troops to successfully conduct the war-operations? Did they perhaps lack the necessary operational-preparedness to confront the Bolshevik troops? Or did they demonstrate despondency in the battlefield, thus they were condemned to be vanquished? Should the Greeks be held responsible for this unprecedented setback?

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first and the last compile the Introduction and the Conclusion of this work, respectively. Chapters 2 & 3 are a rather introductory section of the main part, in which the overall political climate in Europe, Russia, and Ukraine, as well as the Allied Intervention within the Russian Civil War, are being discussed. The main rationale and cause behind the intervention will be analyzed, while also a synopsis of the whole expedition will be presented. Chapters 4

& 5 constitute the main corpus of this work. The fourth chapter deals with the political situation in Greece before its participation in the intervention, the consideration of Venizelos behind his decision to dispatch Greek troops into foreign soil; at the same time, a brief overview of the military operations is also being presented. The fifth chapter attempts to answer the main question, namely the reasons why this campaign proved actually to be a failure for the Greek troops. The role of the French in the whole expedition, their interactions with the Ukrainians and the White Russians, as well as the conduct of the Bolsheviks and the population of the occupied territories, which was friendly-disposed to their cause, are being intensively examined and discussed.

This essay aims to highlight the reasons behind the failure of the Greek expedition in Southern Russia. Firstly it will be demonstrated, that almost the sole burden of responsibility lies in the French policy before and during the whole expedition. Thus it will be presented that the French inability to draft a clear strategy at first from the governmental circles in Paris, had condemned the campaign, even before its initiation. As an imminent result of this negligent behavior, the subsequent French policy, drove further apart the French decision-makers, not only in France but in Southern Russia as well, by misleading information, affected by personal ambitions and incomprehension with the locals. The lack of an overall unified policy from the French relied on the fact that both the French diplomats and the military officials regarded their involvement in the Allied Intervention as a part of an “old-fashioned” colonial policy. Thus they failed to perceive, that the solution to the Russian problem couldn’t be only the materialization of the Whites’ slogan “Russia, one and indivisible”; instead it was a combination of factors, which sometimes were unintentionally and sometimes willingly disregarded.

Furthermore, it will be demonstrated, that upon the instigation of the operation and the landing of the first French troops in Ukraine, the latter exhibited intransigence and non-cooperative behavior. This was primarily an aftereffect of the long-term war efforts of the French soldiers, who wished their immediate demobilization after the end of WWI. Instead, they found themselves entangled in the Russian civil war. Demoralized and exhausted, they often led to insubordination and desertion. This endangered even more the military operations and alienated Ukrainian Nationalists and White Russians alike, bringing the Greek troops before faits accomplis. Greeks were directly involved in conflicts, with the Bolshevik troops, albeit they were meant to be

used as auxiliary forces. The dissensions were intensified through the derogatory French attitude towards their Greek allies. The lack of cooperation between the French and the Greek led unequivocally to a general disaster, which jeopardized the safety and integrity of the Allied forces in general and brought them near their total annihilation.

In conclusion, it will also be argued, that the final outcome of the failed Ukrainian expedition, should be further contributed to the constantly aggravating living conditions of the occupied territories, be these social, political and financial. The ever-growing social discomfort, due to the massive pauperization of not only the lower classes but also the disintegration of the former Russian aristocracy, had created an extraordinary situation, upon which surviving seemed the only option available. Furthermore, the continuous empowerment of the Bolsheviks, in manpower and through popular propaganda, increased, even more, the danger within the areas of action of the Greek troops, as constant threats were appearing sometimes, even out of the sudden.

1.2 Sources & Bibliography

This study is based both on primary and secondary sources. Regarding the primary sources, of great help has been the archive of Eleftherios Venizelos¹¹, which is also digitized and easily accessible. These documents helped me achieve a clear understanding of an abundance of diplomatic papers, containing therefore critical information about the era under examination. Furthermore, the study of all those documents provided me the opportunity, to fully grasp the sentiment of an epoch, in which Hellenism and its ambitions had reached their peak. The correspondence between Venizelos, his diplomatic attachés, foreign officials, as well as with the most prominent Venizelist officers and protagonists of the Ukrainian Campaign is of unique importance, as someone can easily perceive the agony, anger, joy, and relief, which those men had to cope with, towards the end of probably the tensest decade the Greek State had experienced.

¹¹ The digital archive of Eleftherios Venizelos is a unified digital archive about Eleftherios Venizelos and modern Greek history and is compiled by documents from i) Benaki Museum, ii) Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive, iii) Museum - "Eleftherios K. Venizelos" House, iv) National Research Foundation " Eleftherios K. Venizelos ". For my research, useful information was found only in documents from the first two institutions. See <http://www.venizelosarchives.gr/tree.asp>.

Equally significant was the evidence obtained at the Archive of the Greek Army History Directorate (Διεύθυνση Ιστορίας Στρατού-ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ), where I conducted research, for a month. These documents compiled the greatest source of evidence regarding the military operations of the Greek troops during their stay in Ukrainian soil. A lot of these documents were daily reports or commands and military journals of the protagonists of this expedition. I attempted to reconstruct this era, in order to identify the state of the Greek Army, its needs, rights, and wrongs. Many official reports contain also assessments of the campaign from the Greek officers that provide an even more close understanding. Naturally, as it happens they are not always objective. Among these documents, there are copies of correspondence between Venizelos, officers of the expeditionary corps, as well as statesmen and diplomats, who -one way or another- were involved in this campaign and managed to leave their mark on it.

Another major aid in this thesis was an unpublished document, which I have discovered in the Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive (Ε.Λ.Ι.Α.). That is the military journal, of the Infantry Commander-Colonel (in the Ukrainian Campaign) Panagiotis Gargalidis. This document contains not only an accurate description of the everyday life of the Greek Army in Ukraine but also a vivid narration of some of the fiercest battles, the troops fought against the Bolsheviks. Quite noteworthy is the narrative of Gargalidis, regarding the lack of cooperation between the French military authorities and their consequent disrespect and recalcitrant behavior towards the Greek Army.

Finally, my research was further assisted with the finding of numerous reports and telegrams, regarding the turbulent era under examination, in the digitized archive of the U.S. State Department (The Office of the Historian). In this sector, the piece of information drafted mainly by American onlookers in Southern Russia at the time contains valuable details on the social and financial situation of the Ukrainian territory. Although the information regarding the Greek troops or their conduct in general, is scarce, these documents remain still a precious source, of a third-party observer within a hostile land, amidst the chaos of the civil war.

It should also be noted, that the libraries of the Army History Directorate and the Greek National Library proved equally important and extremely helpful to my research. They both contain some rare books and memoirs, which were not easily obtainable from elsewhere. These books significantly helped me understand the general

climate of the epoch under examination and provided me valuable information on – primarily- matters of socio-economic nature.

There is also an abundance of briefings, telegrams, and correspondence compiled not only in French but also in Ukrainian or Russian. A large-scale study of primary sources from the French and Bolshevik side would be beyond the scope of this study, as my primary goal is the investigation –mainly- of the Greek side. Whenever needed a more thorough examination of the other side’s demeanor, I have relied primarily on critically acclaimed academic studies, which provide an as much as possible accurate and objective description, of the participants within the Ukrainian debacle.

Regarding the necessary bibliography, in the second chapter, I have drawn the studies of Lawrence Sondhaus and Michael Howard on the Great War (“World War One: The Global Revolutions & The First World War” respectively, for the titles as a whole see “Bibliography”), as they comprise, the first quite elaborately, while the second more briefly an accurate guide on the events prior to the outbreak of the war, while also profoundly they provide a great insight on the military operations and the consequences this cataclysmic event brought upon the world. In order to perceive the significance of the war’s aftermath and the meticulous, laborious and momentous negotiations that took place in Paris for more than a year in 1919, Margaret MacMillan’s circumstantial study “Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World” was a unique tool. On the issue of the October Revolution and the subsequent Russian Civil War, the literature is more than abundant. Countless works have been compiled, covering practically all aspects of the events, Marxist or pro-Soviet scope, or taking the side of the Whites’ point of view, while also there are those studies that have tried to provide a narrative of the period. For this cause, the books from Laura Engelstein and Evan Mawdsley (“Russia in Flames: War, Revolution, Civil War, 1914-1921” & “The Russian Civil War”, respectively) have helped me greatly to discover the answers behind the occurrence and evolution of these events. The studies of John Reshetar and Matthew Stachiw & Jaroslaw Sztendera (“The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism” & “Western Ukraine, At the Turning Point of Europe’s History, 1918-1923” two vol., respectively) provide an overview of Ukraine’s course through history during the second decade of the 20th century, the nationalist dreams and aspirations, relations with neighboring states, and the USSR.

Another well-studied period of global history is the Allied Intervention in Russia, from 1918 to 1922. For this subject, which is discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, I have found many answers with the assistance of a recently published work from Ian Moffat “The Allied Intervention in Russia, 1918–1920”. This work provides a detailed analysis of the events that led to the intervention as well as the military operations that took place and were conducted by the Great Powers against the Red Army. Naturally, many more notable works were consulted and used, such as John Bradley’s “Allied Intervention in Russia” and John Swettenham’s “Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1919: And the Part Played by Canada”. On the British participation and aims in the intervention, I have considered especially noteworthy the books from Michael Kettle “Churchill and the Archangel Fiasco: November 1918-July 1919” & Clifford Kinvig’s “Churchill's Crusade: The British Invasion of Russia, 1918-1920”, while on the American conduct the works from Carl J. Richard “When the United States Invaded Russia, Woodrow Wilson’s Siberian Disaster” and George F. Kennan “Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1920” facilitated majorly my point of view.

For the fourth chapter, I have employed mainly Greek and English literature. A great part of this chapter has been based on the archival evidence at Venizelos Archives and the Archive of the Greek Army History Directorate. For the delicate issue of Greece’s political background in the 1910s’, which deals with the Greek internal and foreign affairs at the time, Greece’s participation in WWI, while also some thorny subjects, such as the National Schism and the rift between Venizelos and King Constantine numerous works have been compiled. In Greek among the most prominent and elaborate publications that I have consulted, are the two vol. work from Georgios Ventiris “Η Ελλάδα του 1910-1920: Ιστορική Μελέτη” (“1910s’-1920s’ Greece: A Historical Study”), which though should be viewed with caution, due to the writer’s Venizelist scope; furthermore on the National Schism, the work of Georgios Mavrogordatos “1915: Ο Εθνικός Διχασμός” (“1915: The National Schism”) covers perfectly this obstreperous era of the Greek history. Respectively, fairly essential for this thesis have been the works of George B. Leontaritis (or Leon) “Greece and the Great Powers 1914-1917” and “Greece and the First World War: From Neutrality to Intervention, 1917-1918”, which also provide a thorough examination of Greece’s foreign relations at that time, as well cover the Greek involvement in the war and its political background. On Greece’s participation in the Paris Peace Conference, a

groundbreaking work has been written by N. Petsalis-Diomidis “Greece at the Paris Peace Conference (1919)”, which provides a detailed analysis of the Greek diplomatic efforts, in the aftermath of the war. Finally the two textbooks, if they could be called so, regarding primarily the military aspect of the Ukrainian Campaign are the official work of the Greek Army’s historical department, “Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα εις Μεσημβρινή Ρωσίαν (1919)” (“The Greek Expeditionary Corps in Meridian Russia”); and the published memoirs of the General in charge of the Greek troops in Ukraine, Konstantinos Nider “Ἡ Εκστρατεία της Ουκρανίας (Ἰανουάριος-Μάϊος 1919)” (“The Ukrainian Campaign: January-May 1919). These works, which are an extremely useful tool for the fifth chapter as well, present uniquely the events, prior, during and shortly after the official demise of the military operations, with a profoundly detailed analysis of the incidents that took place in the six-month expedition of the Greek Army.

Finally, the fifth chapter was based almost mainly on archival documents, from all the aforementioned primary sources. Apart from these original documents, I relied heavily on the reference from George Brinkley “The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917-1921: A Study in the Politics and Diplomacy of the Russian Civil War“. Although it has already been mentioned shortly in a previous chapter, this book provided me a clear understanding of the perplexing situation the French found in Ukraine, and their subsequent failure to facilitate the communication between the anti-Bolshevik groups in the area, which led to a greater rift among all the sides involved. Towards this direction Christopher Lazarski’s work “The Lost Opportunity: Attempts at Unification of the Anti-Bolsheviks:1917-1919”, helped me further identify the tense relations of the opponents of the Bolsheviks, mainly in and around the city of Odessa, as well as their complete inability to form a unified front against their common enemy, due to unresolved political differences, in an era that first and foremost survival and unification should be considered the principal aims of the anti-Bolsheviks. Furthermore, it should be mentioned here that the published and unpublished memoirs of soldiers, lieutenants, and generals at the time (see Karakassonis, Grigoriadis, Plastiras, etc.) constituted an assistance of utmost significance. Through the eyes of the Ukrainian Campaign’s protagonists, I have managed not only to get a glimpse of the constantly aggravating situation, which the Greek troops came against, but these men underline and comprehend the rationale behind the failure of the expedition. While a lot of them express a rather excessively

heroic attitude towards the deeds of the Greek troops, even if they were defeated, they present quite elaborately, with accurate paradigms the difficulties of the operation, throughout the whole period of their stay in foreign soil.

2. The Political Climate before the Intervention

2.1 Europe after the Great War

WWI ended officially on the 11th of November 1918 when the last armistice-pact between Germany and the Entente Powers was signed in a train in the forest of Compiègne.¹² Thus ended a war whose scale was unprecedented primarily for the European continent where the majority of large-scale conflicts had taken place, but also its impact affected many countries around the globe as well.

Roughly sixty-five million men had been recruited, of whom almost ten million were killed and almost another twenty million were wounded, as a result of the four-year hostilities.¹³ As it usually happens in every war, the cost was great for the non-combatants as well. Though the consequences of this dreadful warfare were not only measured in human casualties. The moral effects, left behind after every war, are often neglected, as the statistics tend to dominate the charts. It was the first time in human history that policies on war conduction had psychologically scarred and amputated so many millions of people.

These consequences though came as a result of long-term military operations, more modern and deadlier types of war equipment and the new type of trench-warfare. The war-weariness, which tormented the soldiers and the common people alike, brought a series of political re-evaluations and a need for social change; and in many cases, revolution.

Through the ashes of the war, age-old, multinational empires collapsed and perennial regimes were dismantled, while new states were born. Among those new states that emerged from the Great War, was also the Soviet Union. As we shall see, the consequent revolutions terminated an imperial era, which was to be followed for seven decades by a communist one. A new social order arose in Russia, which would attempt in the years to come to spread the revolution around the world as well.

Although in Russia the change of regime came before the end of the war -but as an imminent consequence of it as well- that was not the case in Imperial Germany and

¹² Lawrence Sondhaus, *World War One: The Global Revolution, 1914-1919*, (New York et.al., University Press, 2011), pp. 435-437.

¹³ On a meticulous analysis of the WWI's statistics see Stephen Broadberry & Mark Harrison, "The economics of World War I: an overview", in *The Economics of World War I*, Stephen Broadberry & Mark Harrison (ed.), (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 3-37.

Austria-Hungary, where things took an alternate course right after the conclusion of the conflicts. Both empires ceased to exist and multiple separate states were created, while the royal institution in those states met also its demise.

The first bellicose era of the 20th century would end, yet only for a few years, and a new world order would emerge, where the victors of the war would feel that their sacrifices had finally borne fruits. However, among the defeated in the Paris Peace Conference, a sentiment of bitterness and vengeance would be born. States such as Germany and Bulgaria, which would be later characterized “revisionist states”, met the almost utter wrath of the Allied Powers in the Treaties signed thereupon. The Conference signaled just the initiation of an era, whose main feature was a fragile peace.

2.2 The Paris Peace Conference

The participants in Paris came across the arduous task of having to adjust all the issues that had arisen during and after the end of the war. For someone to grasp the importance and the amount of the talks that took place, but also the atmosphere of disagreement and brain-storming that occurred, it should just be noted that the summit lasted for a whole year. Yet the decision of the peace-negotiations would be revised four years later when the Greco-Turkish War would end and the new Turkish secular, republican state would be formally established under the Treaty of Lausanne.¹⁴

The Paris Peace Conference constituted globally the center of attention, as the multitude of some of the most important statesmen of the 20th century, had all gathered in the French capital to define the order of the new world. Strong and decisive personalities such as Woodrow Wilson, Georges Clemenceau, David Lloyd George, Vittorio Orlando and many more representatives from all the victorious countries tried to project their national claims, which more or less, finally acquired a vengeful attitude against the defeated. The long term peace-talks were not only of geopolitical nature but economic and military as well, while they dealt furthermore with the delicate issue of self-determination.¹⁵

¹⁴ Michael Howard, *The First World War*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 142-143.

¹⁵ On the issue of self-determination during the Paris Peace Conference, which was largely formed by President Wilson’s attitude, willpower and role see Derek Heater, *National Self-Determination: Woodrow Wilson and his Legacy*, (Hampshire & London, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1994), pp. 53-70.

Among the greatest achievements of the summit was undoubtedly the foundation of the League of Nations. A product of President Wilson's determination, aiming to establish a global post-war stability and an international order, which would be publicly acclaimed and accepted. Thus, future bloodshed, catastrophe and the destabilization of world peace could –at least theoretically- be prevented.¹⁶

Another sign of President Wilson's eagerness to bring long and lasting peace was the declaration of his Fourteen Points released on the 8th of January 1918.¹⁷ Yet despite the will and the proclamations regarding the sovereign equality of all states, it turned out that the gap between the four great powers¹⁸ and the smaller victorious countries was practically chaotic.¹⁹

The greater testimony of this megalomaniac attitude was unquestionably the exclusion of the Soviet Union and the defeated states from the negotiations.²⁰ And what did that practically mean for the Conference in general? The "Big Four" constituted an established directive authority, upon which all decisions for all participants should first and foremost have their approval. That is to say, that an old authoritarian order had been shattered in order to be replaced by those democratic values that would help the world stand back to its feet; but principally only in theory. As it usually happens in those cases, the right of the strongest should prevail.

Additionally, even though the intervention of the Allies within the vast Russian country had commenced much earlier than the negotiations in Paris, to be exact in mid-1918 and by the end of that year almost 180.000 Allied troops were within the Russian

¹⁶ Zara Steiner, „The Treaty of Versailles Revisited”, in *The Paris Peace Conference, 1919: Peace without Victory*, Michael Dockrill & John Fisher (ed.), (New York, Palgrave, 2001), pp. 29-30.

¹⁷ For the Fourteen Points of Woodrow Wilson see Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World*, (New York, Random House, 2002), pp. 495-496.

¹⁸ Great Britain, France, USA and Italy.

¹⁹ The Rt Hon. Lord Hurd of Westwell, “The Rise and Fall of Morality in Peace Making”, *The Paris Peace Conference*, pp. 8-12.

²⁰ Regarding the issue of the exclusion of the Soviet Union from the peace talks, it's not entirely accurate to assume that it was altogether undesired. Some delegates of the USA including President Wilson himself wanted to include the Soviet Union in the negotiations, not as a victorious country *per se*, but rather along with all the belligerent sides within the Russian Civil War, namely the Whites and the Bolsheviks, in order a common ground and a possible resolution towards a cessation of the hostilities to be found. It was decided that these talks were to take place on the island of Prinkipo, in the Sea of Marmara, across Istanbul, instead of Paris. Yet such a proposal met the absolute negation of the French Prime Minister Clemenceau, the British and the Italians as well, while it sparked the rage of the White Russians too.

For that matter see Keith Neilson, “‘That elusive entity British policy in Russia’: the Impact of Russia on British Policy at the Paris Peace Conference”, *Ibid.*, pp. 82-84.

borders, the delegates of the Conference failed to come to a substantial conclusion of this dubious enterprise. All the countries involved –but France- had admitted that their entanglement in the internal affairs of another country, let alone a former ally of theirs, was a mistake. However, they seemed all unable to put an end to a hideous bloodshed such as the Russian Civil War, which on the contrary, was further encouraged by them.²¹

The summit concluded with the signing of five treaties, each one regarding each defeated state: The Treaty of Versailles with Germany, the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye with Austria, the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine with Bulgaria, the Treaty of Trianon with Hungary and the Treaty of Sèvres with the Ottoman Empire.²²

Roughly the content and the basic terms of the treaties were similar. Major territorial losses, infliction of war-compensations and assumption of sole responsibility for the initiation of the war. Those harsh conditions imposed upon the defeated, were more conspicuous by the size of territorial realignments, in which those countries did not only cede their soil but in some cases, occupation armies were sent under the pretext of the “preservation of the security order”.²³

The main problem of the signed peace-treaties was that instead of creating a stable geopolitical atmosphere, which would prevent future turmoil and long-term hostilities, it was the exact opposite that was actually accomplished. Peace and prosperity didn’t emerge victorious after Paris. On the contrary revisionism and a general sense of injustice seemed to prevail.

In most cases, the inflicted terms on the defeated were not only obnoxious but unrealistic at their core. The large demands of the victors in social, material and economic level induced feelings of humiliation and enormous outcries. Probably

²¹ MacMillan, *op.cit.*, pp. 63-82.

²² Steiner, „The Treaty of Versailles Revisited”, *The Paris Peace Conference, op.cit.*, pp. 13-32.; see also for each Treaty respectively MacMillan, *op.cit.*, pp. 155-206, 243-256, 136-142, 257-271, 429-451.

²³ Some typical examples of this attitude were the occupation of the Rhine territory by the French army and its subsequent declaration as a demilitarized zone, in order future unilateral German offensive intentions to be avoided; or the Greek and Italian occupation forces, which were sent to Southeastern Turkey. The outcome of these operations is widely known. On one hand, Hitler a few years later would characterize the French occupation as part of a “Diktat”, imposed upon Germany from the Allies as a part of a hideous peace treaty. On the other hand, soon after their landing the Greeks and the Italians would come against the Turkish wrath, which in the end would find the Turks victorious in their War of Independence, having entirely defeated the foreign occupiers and regained the lost territories. See Howard, *op.cit.*, pp. 136-143.

without even realizing it, the Allies, while trying to restore justice, they enhanced the revisionist attitude of their former rivals, who had criticized the Treaties since their groundwork.²⁴

The conclusion of the summit in 1920 would be the inception of a new era for the world, where the balance of power would waver for the next twenty years until a Second World War came again; larger, deadlier and more absolute than ever before.

2.3 Russia after the October Revolution

The political situation in Russia at the same time was extremely fluid and fragile. The country had thrice come against a change of regime within less than a year. From the Tsarist rule to a more liberal yet unstable democracy under Alexander Kerensky, and finally to the instigators and victors of the October Revolution, Lenin, and his Bolshevik cadres.

However, every revolution comes with a cost. Lenin had realized that in order for his Party to be able to organize the post-revolutionary, socialist order in his country, it was imminent that the war had to end immediately, at least for the Russian troops. One of his first moves accordingly was the immediate peace-agreement with the Central Powers and the conclusion of the hostilities in the Eastern Front. Here it should also be noted that the Communists towards this move had proclaimed by official declarations to all directions, already since the end of 1917, that the war had to be terminated in all fronts.²⁵

The pursuit of a common solution towards this logic though was utterly rejected by the Allies. Not only were they trying to re-establish the Eastern Front against Germany, but they were now essentially terrified of possible revolutionary movements and the spread of communism in their own countries. The Central Powers, on the contrary, considered the peace-negotiations with the newborn Soviet State as an opportunity. Firstly, they could dispatch a large number of troops from the Eastern to the Western Front, thus gaining a strong numerical superiority in an attempt to tip the

²⁴ MacMillan, *op.cit.*, pp. 459-484.

²⁵ Richard K. Debo, *Survival and Consolidation: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1918-1921*, (Montreal & Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), pp. 22-23; Arno J. Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions*, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 245-246.

balance of power in their favor. Secondly, equally enormous would be the economic and territorial benefits for the Central Powers from a potential agreement between the belligerents of the Eastern Front, as the Soviets were in a dire and nearly desperate position.²⁶

That peace-treaty was actually signed on the 3rd of March 1918 in Brest-Litovsk. The negotiations had lasted almost three months. The demands of the Germans were immense and respectively tragic were the clauses Russia had to acquiesce. Briefly, the Russian borders were shrunk to their previous two-thirds, as it happened with the Russian population as well, while a lot of new, autonomous states emerged from the partition of the Old Tsarist Empire.²⁷

While the Bolsheviks were trying to establish firmly their authority and gain power all over the country, the general dissatisfaction on the acceptance of the Treaty and the new regime would grow hazardously against the newborn Soviet State. A new polemical climate would arise and soon it would be transformed into a bloody and long-term civil war.

First among many to declare their counterrevolutionary sentiments were the Cossacks. A big segment of the Russian population, nearly 4.5 million, who were dispatched all across the vast steppes. Although the Cossacks had never had secession thoughts from the old Greater Russian State, the October Revolution provided the perfect opportunity for the birth of anti-communist, opposition feelings, as well as the idea of independence or at least autonomy.²⁸

Yet the major opposition to the Bolsheviks would be formed by the former middle and upper classes, royalist supporters and fervent anticommunists, in order to

²⁶ Dan Diner, *Cataclysms: A History of the Twentieth Century from Europe's Edge*, (Wisconsin, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), pp. 61-62; Mayer, *op.cit.*, p. 261-262.

²⁷ On a more detailed analysis of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and the political maneuvers before and during its completion see also Laura Engelstein, *Russia in Flames: War, Revolution, Civil War, 1914-1921*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 237-259 ; Peter Kenez, "A History of...", *op.cit.*, pp. 31-32.

²⁸ The Cossacks had enjoyed a great number of self-determination rights, throughout the years of Tsarist Russia. They constituted a significant military force, as 300.000 of them had fought in the World War. As they had realized that the new communist regime would try to control them totally, they resisted firmly and were thus turned against the Bolsheviks. From Siberia to Central and South Russia they formed military divisions for this cause. The most famous of all were the Cossacks of the Don area, in the Donets River Basin and the Eastern Ukraine, under the leadership of Hetman Kaledin, a former Tsarist official. See Evan Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War*, (New York, Pegasus Books, 2005), pp. 17-19.

overthrow the Red regime and bring back Russia to its pre-revolution state of being. The White Russians, or simply the Whites, were led and organized firstly by General Kornilov and they were later under the commands of Admiral Kolchak and Generals Yudenich, Alekseyev, Denikin, and Wrangel.²⁹

The complexity of the situation was of such magnitude that countless works have been written upon it. Numerous nationalities fought on this war, which lasted for nearly five years (1917-1922). Although the Bolsheviks managed to win the war, the balance hadn't since the beginning tipped in their favor.

The Whites had better-trained officers and up to a point, significant, external assistance from the Allied Powers, which would also break the monopoly of the Whites' counterrevolution, as they would decisively intervene in the war as well. That helped the Whites secure some decisive battles and even at some point, they came close to recapturing the two most significant cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Yet, what they actually lacked was a strong and well-founded ideology and a concrete strategical plan, upon which they would adequately form and command their troops. They were led by military men; generals whose experience accordingly was restrained solely in military affairs. They didn't possess diplomacy and political flexibility as their opponent did. Their eagerness to restore swiftly a decaying state led them unequivocally to blatant and conspicuous mistakes.³⁰

²⁹ The majority of the White Armies were led by former Imperial generals and officers. General Kornilov had been involved extensively in the Provisional Government era, as Commander in Chief of the Russian troops and afterward with his infamous coup d'état, which led to his arrest. Thereupon his release he commanded the White forces in Southern Russia along with General Mikhail Alekseyev, who was mainly responsible for the political affairs of the Whites. After Kornilov's death in early 1919 General Anton I. Denikin succeeded him. Soon after the military demise of Denikin, General Pyotr Wrangel followed, as a successor of the southern forces. Wrangel would be the last Commander in Chief of the Whites.

In the Baltic region, General Nikolai Yudenich controlled the counterrevolutionary forces. For a year he posed a great threat to the Bolsheviks and came close to Moscow's recapture, but he ultimately failed.

In Siberia, Admiral Kolchak established its rule, under considerable British support, which led to a dictatorial regime, under his direction. Unquestionably Kolchak's military authority was the most significant of all.

For an accurate analysis of the establishment of the White regimes see Peter Kenez, *Civil War in South Russia, 1918: The First Year of the Volunteer Army*, (Berkeley et.al, University of California Press, 1971); George Stewart, *The White Armies of Russia, A Chronicle of Counter-Revolution and Allied Intervention*, (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1933); see also Jonathan D. Smele, *Civil War in Siberia: The Anti-Bolshevik Government of Admiral Kolchak, 1918-1920*, (Cambridge et.al., Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 108-182; see also J.F.N. Bradley, *Civil War in Russia 1917-1920*, (London, B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1975), pp. 37-54.

³⁰ Kenez, "A History of...", *op.cit.*, pp. 37-40.

This lack of specific policy and the unwillingness towards the restoration of a former, repressive status-quo, not only seemed unattractive to the lower-classes but profoundly repelled them. They were simply poor and hungry peasants or laborers, wishing to survive with a small but proprietary piece of land or better conditions in the factories. After the revolution had helped them overthrow the bourgeoisie, it seemed only natural, that they would not aid the Whites to restore the former despotic order. Quite the opposite, they considered the Bolsheviks, more attractive and friendly disposed to their inquiries.³¹

On the contrary, the Bolsheviks managed to show several qualities, which would prove valuable to their struggle for the final win. Their successful and targeted propaganda, their firm control of vast regions of Russia, which gave them the advantage of affording to lose territory to the enemy, the mass mobilization and conscription of the Red Army troops, as well as the swift interpretation of the people's needs proved to be the decisive tools for the outcome of the civil war.³²

2.4 The situation in Ukraine: A revolution within the Revolution

Russia's withdrawal from the war had multifarious consequences. Not only a perilous situation had been created in the core of the Old Tsarist Empire, but things had taken a rapid turn on the peripheries of the vast country as well. One of Lenin's most significant declarations was that, regarding the nations' self-determination right.³³ This exact statement seemed plausible to all those various states of the old Russian State, who rushed to declare their independence after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the internal turmoil caused by consequent revolutions. Among them stood also Ukraine.

The complexity of the situation in Ukraine was even graver than it has been in Bolshevik Russia. Soon after the February Revolution the first Central Ukrainian

³¹ *Ibid.*; see also Marc Ferro, *The Bolshevik Revolution: A Social History of the Russian Revolution*, (London, Boston & Henley, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 112-178.

³² *Ibid.*; Mawdsley, *op.cit.*, pp. 272-285; see also David Footman, *Civil War in Russia*, (New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1961), pp. 303-305.

³³ "...Consequently, if we want to grasp the meaning of selfdetermination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or "inventing" abstract definitions, but by examining the historico-economic conditions of the national movements, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state..." On Lenin's Self-Determination Question see Bernard Isaacs & Joe Fineberg (trsl.), Julius Katzer (ed.), *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works*, vol. 20, (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1964), pp. 395-400.

Government –the Rada- proclaimed the establishment of the Ukrainian People’s Republic. This government had been primarily a product of the Ukrainian intelligentsia led by Volodymyr Vynnychenko and Simon Petliura, who wished to see primarily a totally independent, or at least an autonomous Ukraine, disengaged from the “Soviet grip”.³⁴

The social-democratic regime of the Rada though, could not stand by itself against the Russian opposition and specifically after the October Revolution, against the ever-growing Red Army. The Bolsheviks intended to include Ukraine in their newly-born state, despite the general attitude towards sovereignty from the Ukrainian people. At that time the Bolsheviks had already moved against Ukraine and defeated the unorganized governmental troops. Thus the Rada, with its delegates appealed, as an independent entity, to the Central Powers in the Brest-Litovsk negotiations for help.³⁵

This support though was a catalyst for the role the Germans intended to have in the new Ukrainian State. The Germans marched through the greater part of Ukraine and their role as arbitrators soon turned to an occupational force. Although the expulsion of the Bolsheviks from Ukraine was successful due to the German troops, the democratic regime could not remain intact. A new authoritarian state under General Pavlo Skoropadskyy was established, which was to function as a satellite-state for the Central Powers.³⁶ The new leader was proclaimed Hetman³⁷ and the Ukrainian State was turned into the Hetmanate. The new regime and its leader, was merely a byproduct of opportunism, supporting sometimes Ukrainian nationalistic ideas and their will towards independency, while also sometimes a unification with Soviet Russia, but above all obeying the mandates of the Central Powers. Thus this regime’s power and motivation were dependent on the circumstances that arose at each given moment.³⁸

³⁴ Engelstein, *op.cit.*, pp. 315-316.

³⁵ John S. Reshetar Jr., *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism*, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1952), pp. 3-4; Bradley, “Civil War...”, *op.cit.*, p. 47.

³⁶ Quite revealing is the stance on General’s Erich Ludendorff memoirs, where he states himself that the cooperation with the old regime in Ukraine was not functional, up until the ascension of Skoropadskyy in power. Furthermore, he acknowledges the importance of Ukraine’s occupation from the German army and the problems this caused to the Soviets. See Erich Ludendorff, *My War Memories, 1914-1918*, vol. 2, (London, Hutchinson & Co., 1919), pp. 622-626.

³⁷ The title “Hetman”, was an archaic word meaning chieftain. See Mawdsley, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

³⁸For a short introduction in the Hetmanate’s history, course and demise see Reshetar, *op.cit.*, pp. 143-207; Christopher Lazarski, *The Lost Opportunity: Attempts at Unification of the Anti-Bolsheviks, 1917-1919*, Moscow, Kiev, Jassy, Odessa, (Lanham, University Press of America, 2008), pp. 59-63.

The presence of German Troops in Ukraine constituted a major role in the sociopolitical and military developments of the country and the Eastern Front in general. However, it is not the task of this essay to examine systematically the German conduct in Southern Russia. The presence of those soldiers may have brought a harsher and stricter rule of government within the occupied lands, they managed though in most cases to re-establish security and order, which had long been forgotten amidst the chaos of the civil war. These safety measures were considered quite helpful from the Allies, when later after the end of WWI would also occupy the Ukrainian lands.³⁹

At the same time, multiple reactionary organizations had been developed to fight the occupants. The most noteworthy among those was led by Nestor Makhno, an anarchist, who fought with the Bolsheviks for several years until their final split in 1920. Makhno was mainly active towards the southern part of Ukraine, both eastern and western. That part was primarily the main scene of hostilities throughout the whole span of the Russian Civil War, regarding the battles in Ukrainian soil.⁴⁰

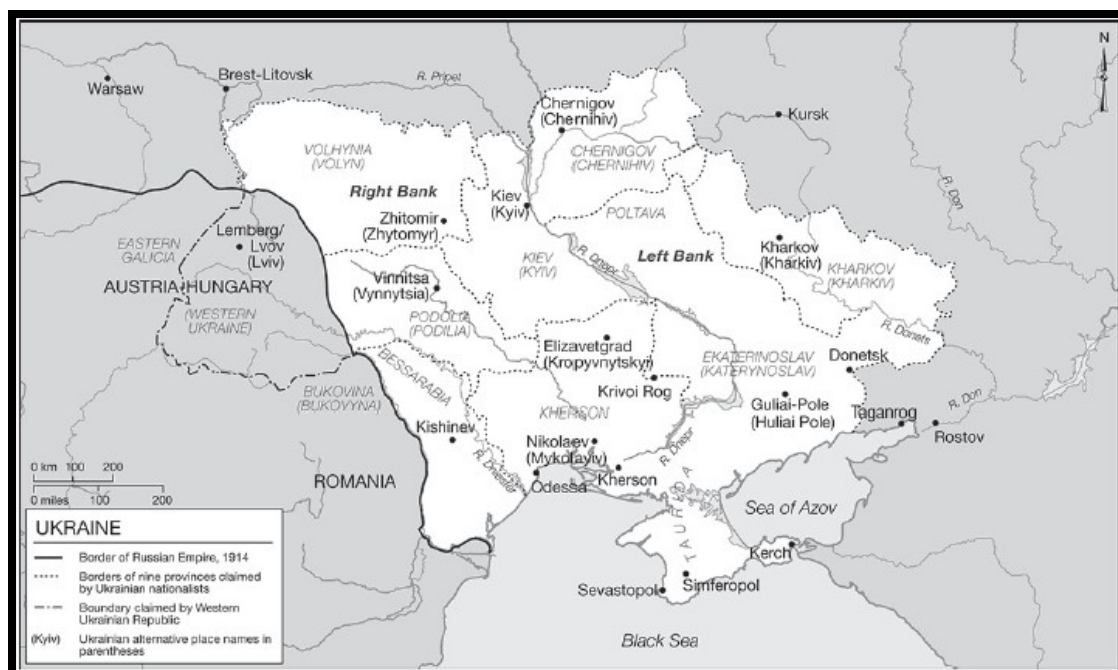
Yet the Hetmanate whose existence was owed to the Central Powers wasn't meant to survive long. Soon after the withdrawal of the German and Austrian troops, the regime fell and gave its position to the Directory of Ukrainian National Republic under Petliura. The unity and the unification of the country were not complete. Before the signing of Germany's armistice with the Entente States, at a moment when the influence of the Central Powers was practically nullified, the Ukrainian nationalists of the highly disputed area of Eastern Galicia⁴¹ formed the Ukrainian National Council, led by Yevhen Petrushevych and Kost Levytsky, who in their turn announced the creation of the Western Ukrainian National Republic.⁴²

³⁹ On the role of the German troops in Ukraine, as much as occupying force, as well as covering force for the Entente troops see respectively Kurt Fischer, *Deutsche Truppen und Entente Intervention in Sudrößland 1918-19*, (Boppard am Rhein, Harald Boldt Verlag, 1973), pp. 49-75, 92-144.

⁴⁰ For a complete analysis of Makhno's involvement in the Russian Civil War see: Michael Malet, *Nestor Makhno in the Russian Civil War*, (London & Basingstoke, The MacMillan Press, 1982); see also Mayer, *op.cit.*, p. 380; Footman, *op.cit.*, pp. 245-302.

⁴¹ At that time Eastern Galicia was an area of conflict between Ukrainians, Polish, and Austro-Hungarians.

⁴² Engelstein, *op.cit.*, pp. 325-327; Stachiw, *op.cit.*, pp. 99-115.



Map 1: The borders of Ukraine in 1918-1919

Among these unstable political conditions and with the unification of the country still at stake, the military conflicts were escalating rapidly. On the West, a new war front had opened, this time against the new Polish State.⁴³ In the North, the Red Army was already marching southwards and Kyiv's occupation seemed imminent. Here, one should take into consideration why Ukraine was of such importance for Russia, both Tsarist and Soviet alike. There were not only the same Slavic- and Orthodox traditions that had united these two countries for centuries, but first and foremost Ukraine had been the “granary” of Russia, as well as one of its leading iron-production centers for an equally long time.⁴⁴

The union of the two Ukrainian parts took place in January 1919, having but one simple cause, the final and permanent independence of the Ukrainian State.⁴⁵ Yet as mentioned above the union never actually happened. Not only was the war still

⁴³ Stachiw, *ibid.*, pp. 118-125; Reshetar, *op.cit.*, pp. 211-216.

⁴⁴ The acquisition of Ukraine for the new Soviet State was of high priority for Lenin and his party. Even if he had declared every nation's right to self-determination, Lenin knew that it would be almost impossible for the newborn country to survive without its most significant primary-production center. For this cause, he even dispatched a new commissar, authorized to oversee the obtainment of grain from the Ukrainian lands. See James E. Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918-1933*, (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 26; Engelstein, *op.cit.*, pp. 445-448.

⁴⁵ Stachiw, *op.cit.*, p. 129.

raging in the west against the Poles, as on to who would rule over Eastern Galicia, while at the same time the Soviet Red Army occupied large Ukrainian territories, striving for the annexation of the former Russian periphery. Two more players had appeared and they were equally unwilling to left things to mere chance.

Firstly, there were the White Russians and the Volunteer Army of the South under the commandment of Generals Alexeev and Denikin.⁴⁶ Their cause was similar to that of the Bolsheviks, namely Ukraine's union with Russia, but with one major differentiation. Russia would be established again as it was before the revolutions, under a new monarchical regime, with the old aristocracy and middle-class restored. The Whites in Ukraine were fighting not only against the Bolsheviks but as well against the nationalist, governmental groups under the leadership of Petliura.⁴⁷

Secondly, the final participants in the hostilities of the "Ukrainian drama" would be the combined forces of French and Greek troops, within the context of the Allied Intervention in Russia. The French tried at first to re-establish the Eastern Front of the war in this respective area. But when the war was over, they came before the fact that Bolshevism had prevailed in Russia. Subsequently, they tried to create a "cordon sanitaire", to stop the further spread of communism and to protect the major financial interests of the French capital in Russia, which were crushed after the October Revolution. Those troops were stationed mainly in the southern part of Ukraine and in Crimea. Although their alliance was with the White Army, they didn't confront the Petliura nationalists, but ultimately tried to create an unstable coalition among these two, which would utterly fail. The conduct of the Allies in Ukraine as well as the fighting that they engaged with, will be analytically examined in the chapters ahead.

⁴⁶ The Whites as already mentioned in the previous sub-chapter were the main antagonists of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War. Their leaders in the Don Area, in Ukraine, were Generals Alexeev at first and then General Denikin, who commanded the Volunteer Army, which was comprised mainly by volunteer-soldiers, who in their turn wished to overrule the Communist usurpers of power and restore Ukraine's union with Russia. The commencement of the Volunteers should be attributed mainly to General Alexeev, who choosing as his base firstly Novochoerkassk and then expanding his authority to southwestern Russia, managed to assemble an army, practically from scratch. The involvement of the Volunteer Army in the battles in Ukraine will be further analyzed in the next chapters. For the first movements on the creation of the Volunteer Army see A. Denikine, *The White Army*, (Connecticut, Hyperion Press, 1973), pp. 26-35.

⁴⁷ Lazarski, *op.cit.*, pp. 62-63; Footman, *op.cit.*, pp. 33-84.

3. Foreign Intervention in Russia

3.1 The rationale behind the Intervention

The inception of the idea for the Allied intervention in Russia cannot be traced with utmost certainty. Though the majority of historians agree that the early thoughts had been shaped by the end of 1917. This entanglement in the Russian internal scene was not a planned operation since the commencement of the war. Yet it became one, which not only would utterly fail but would last far longer than the Allies would have expected.

One and a half years before the end of WWI and the subsequent demise of many multinational empires as a byproduct of the new world order, the Romanovs in Russia would be the first to resign their throne. The constantly growing mutinies within the Imperial Russian Army, the chaotic inequalities between the aristocracy and the lower classes, the dire financial situation of the Tsarist state and the so-desired need for peace, would bring a new liberal-socialist government on the wheel of Russia, under the leadership of Alexander Kerensky. The Allies felt dazed and confused after the rapid turn of events in Russia, as they could not foreshadow if the new regime would keep its promise and continue the fighting. Yet the Kerensky government pledged that Russia would not break the alliance and the Eastern Front of the war remained still active.⁴⁸

However, the fear of the Allies was once again corroborated, when a new revolution broke out and a new government under V.I. Lenin and his Bolshevik Party emerged. The new regime made it abundantly clear that the war for the Russian troops was over, and the desired peace with the Central Powers was ratified with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The shock for the Entente Powers was tremendous. Numerous divisions of the Central Powers had been kept occupied in the Eastern Front, while in the west the outcome seemed to have started taking a rather positive turn for the Allies. Furthermore, the Americans had joined the war, thus the Allies had already begun to think, that if the situation in the East remained as it was, the ever-growing Allied forces would soon put a conclusive end on the bloodshed.⁴⁹ But that couldn't happen if the country, which has provided the largest manpower of all the Allies in the war,

⁴⁸ J.M. Roberts, *Europe 1880-1945*, (New York, Routledge, 2001), p. 240; Engelstein, *op.cit.*, pp. 131-133.

⁴⁹ John Swettenham, *Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1919, and the Part Played by Canada*, (London & New York, Routledge, 2017), pp. 28-29.

abandoned the fighting.⁵⁰ The end of the war with Russia and the subsequent Peace Treaty at Brest-Litovsk had multiple consequences for the Allies. Firstly the Central Powers were now free to focus on the war exclusively fought in the Western Front. Further manpower could also be found, as prisoners of war had been released and would soon return to their military task. Thus the re-establishment of the Eastern Front was an imminent necessity.⁵¹

Furthermore, the signed Peace Treaty had provided to the Central Powers new and fertile lands. The acquisition for instance of Ukraine, Rumania and the Baltic States provided large amounts of grain, iron, and oil, whose significance was tremendous, in order large armies to be well fed and to be able to function properly.⁵²

At this stage, practically no one believed that the Bolsheviks could hold onto power for much longer though. After all, it was a coup d'état, which had overthrown an elected government. The Allies believed that sooner or later, logic would prevail and Russia would return to the war and its pre-war promises alike.⁵³ Yet despite these beliefs, they could not remain apathetic. Even before the outbreak of the Bolshevik uprising, the Allies had already started drafting an intervention plan. This though, would not be turned against the Kerensky government, but it would attempt to raise the ruined morale of the Russian troops. Additionally, a few Allied troops could be employed, firstly in order to restrain the Eastern Front until its formation anew; secondly to control Russia's natural resources and the Trans-Siberian Railway.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Roberts, *op.cit.*, p. 241-242; Engelstein, *op.cit.*, p. 217; Sondhaus, *op.cit.*, pp. 244-247, 264-267.

⁵¹ Clifford Kinvig, *Churchill's Crusade: The British Invasion of Russia, 1918-1920*, (London, Hambledon Continuum, 2006), pp. 4-5; Diner, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

⁵² The fear of the Allies wasn't without justification. They were aware of the fact that Germany was planning to exploit to the maximum the new areas, as it has been known even before the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. On the significance of Ukraine see Charles Dubreuil, *Deux Années en Ukraine: 1917-1919; avec une Carte de l'Ukraine*, (Paris, Paulin, 1919), pp. 68-83.

On the importance of the Baltic regions to the German cause and its intention to use it further as a foothold against Russia, see Holger H. Herwig, "German Policy in the Eastern Baltic Sea in 1918: Expansion or Anti-Bolshevik Crusade?", in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Jun., 1973), pp. 339-357; see also Roberts, *op.cit.*, p. 245.

⁵³ The logic behind this, was mainly that the Bolsheviks lacked the popular will. In the last Russian elections, the majority of the votes went to the Social Revolutionaries (nearly 40%), while Lenin's Party acquired some 25%. Furthermore, the Allies knew that even in power, it could be almost impossible to organize a regular army in such short notice, to back their ascension to power, as they had realized that a civil war was looming. See Mawdsley, *op.cit.*, pp. 3-4; John Bradley, *Allied Intervention in Russia*, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), pp. 4-5; Engelstein, *op.cit.*, pp. 199-200.

⁵⁴ Ian C.D. Moffat, *The Allied Intervention in Russia, 1918-1920: The Diplomacy of Chaos*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 16.

Yet, this course of action could not be handled so easily solely by British and French soldiers. Not only because there was a lack of manpower and evidently the troops could be better utilized elsewhere in the war, but there have been also mutinies, incidents of insubordination and lack of discipline. Thus fresh personnel was needed and both Britain and France knew that it could be found primarily with the help of the USA and Japan.⁵⁵

Apart though from the re-establishment of the front as a barrier to the Central Powers, it was of great significance the safeguard of the tons of military equipment and materials that had been sent to Russia.⁵⁶ Specifically, major harbors, such as Vladivostok, Archangel, and Murmansk, had been used as gathering points of this equipment and they needed to remain in Allied hands.⁵⁷ Yet the Allies didn't trust completely either the Bolsheviks for the safeguarding of these supplies. In Murmansk for instance, in early 1918 the government had passed to Bolshevik hands and the new policy started turning against the previous English interests in the area. However, the Bolsheviks in Northern Russia, in their attempt to protect their region from a possible German attack as the Brest-Litovsk Treaty hadn't been signed yet, accepted –under the utmost consent of Trotsky-, the Allied assistance. The Bolsheviks in their agony of establishing their authority and amidst the war and peace confusion had permitted an early intervention with the setup of a military base, organized and directed by the Allies within the Russian soil.⁵⁸

Russia's further involvement at war wasn't the only defining factor for the Allies in their dubious decision to intervene on such a scale.⁵⁹ Soon after their ascension to power, the Bolsheviks declared that all previous debts of the Russian State to other

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 17-18, 21-25; Swettenham, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-112; see also W.P. Coates & Zelda K. Coates, *Armed Intervention in Russia 1918-1922*, (London, The Camelot Press, 1935), pp. 66-72.

⁵⁶ According to W. Churchill, 600.000 tons of military material had been sent to Russia equal amounts of coal. See Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis: The Aftermath*, (London, Thornton Butterworth Ltd, 1929), pp. 88; see also Perry Moore, *Stamping Out the Virus: Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918-1920*, (Atglen, PA, Schiffer Military History, 2002), pp. 9-10.

⁵⁷ Roberts, *op.cit.*, p. 263.

⁵⁸ In early March 1918, a handful of British Marines landed on Murmansk, in northwest Russia in order to provide much-needed aid to the Bolsheviks, mainly through transporting and safeguarding military equipment. Soon after the French and the Americans sent also one cruiser each to reinforce the British. At that time the Allies were aiding the Bolsheviks, but they were also in touch with the White Russians. See Moffat, *op.cit.*, pp. 28-29; Kinvig, *op.cit.*, p. 17; Coates, *op.cit.*, pp. 81-82.

⁵⁹ A brief but accurate analysis of the Allied Intervention in Russia and the rationale behind each states' interventionist conduct, can also be found in William Henry Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution*, vol. II, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1987-1935), pp. 150-172.

countries were to be annulled. Besides, within the context of the new communization process, all properties of foreign owners would be nationalized.⁶⁰

Among the main offended by these deeds were the British, the Americans and especially the French. Since the revolution of 1905 in Russia, up until the outbreak of the war and until the October Revolution, the financial interdependence between France and Russia was more than significant. France had undertaken major construction-works within the Old Tsarist Empire, as well as a plethora of French officers, had been sent in Russia to re-organize the imperial troops. It should be noted here though, that not only Russia needed France for its military restructuring, but also France needed the Russian alliance and manpower if a war against Germany would commence. However, the French capital that was imported in the Russian market, in the form of either loans, or French acquisitions and properties was of even greater extent. Thus for the French, cooperation with the new regime was almost impossible, although scarce attempts were made in order for a common ground to be found. The new situation ought to be resolved and Russia should return to its pre-war status quo.⁶¹

Regarding Britain, its financial interests were not limited only in monetary loans and the dispatch of war-supplies. The colonial British Empire had under its direct or indirect control large areas that spanned from Mesopotamia all the way to India and the Pacific Ocean. Specifically the threat of a possible Turco-German offensive against multiple targets in Central Asia, upon the withdrawal of the Russian troops from regions such as Georgia or Afghanistan, which could jeopardize India's existing state of affairs among others, was unacceptable for the British. They knew that in order for such a threat to be prevented, British soldiers had to replace the Russians.⁶²

For the Americans, the intervention was not an issue primarily of financial assistance, though Washington had already agreed with the Provisional Government of Kerensky that consequent credits on the amount of \$325 million to be dispatched, of

⁶⁰ Swettenham, *op.cit.*, p. 27; Bradley, "Allied Intervention...", *op.cit.*, p. 8.

⁶¹ Three perfect examinations of the pre-war dependence and interdependence relations between France and Russia, as well as regarding the amount of French capital that was circulating within the Russian market, can be found here: Thierry Claeys, "Les investissements français en Russie de 1857 à 1914: conseils, expertises et stratégies", in *Quaestio Rossica*, vol. 4, 2015, pp. 163-179; Olga Crisp, "Some Problems of French Investment in Russian Joint-Stock Companies, 1894-1914", in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 35, No. 84 (Dec., 1956), pp. 223-240; D.W. Spring, "Russia and the Franco-Russian Alliance, 1905-14: Dependence or Interdependence?", in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 66, No. 4, 1988, pp. 564-592.

⁶² Kinvig, *op.cit.*, p. 13; Swettenham, *op.cit.*, pp. 41-43.

which nearly \$188 million were until the time of intervention actually used.⁶³ President's Wilson opinion was at first against the intervention. He was an advocate of the self-determination's right of the Russian people and strongly in favor of their liberation from the yoke of the autocratic tsarist rule.⁶⁴

At first, even if Wilson was suspicious against the Bolsheviks, he didn't condemn their revolution, as he believed that if the opportunity would be given to the Russian people, democracy would sooner or later emerge. He was also hoping that a common solution could be found and the Eastern Front would be re-established. Furthermore, Wilson had realized that an intervention of such a scale would be practically infeasible. Upon the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty though, he realized that this arrangement wouldn't last. What intrigued him further though was the uprising of the Czech Corps in Siberia.⁶⁵ Not only was the rescue of the Czechs a matter of

⁶³ George F. Kennan, *Soviet-American Relations: 1917 – 1920, Russia Leaves the War*, vol. 1, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 19; David S. Foglesong, "Policies Toward Russia and Intervention in the Russian Revolution", in *A Companion to Woodrow Wilson*, Ross A. Kennedy (ed.), (Chichester West Sussex, WileyBlackwell, 2013), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.uaccess.univie.ac.at/doi/book/10.1002/9781118445693>, p. 388, accessed on 20.5.2019.

⁶⁴ Foglesong, *ibid.*

⁶⁵ The Czech Corps or Czechoslovakian Legion consisted of about seventy thousand Czechoslovakian men, the majority of whom, were war prisoners and defectors from the Austro-Hungarian army. Soon after their capture they were released and joined the Russian Army in order to fight in the Eastern Front, while they had been promised that their struggle would help their cause for an independent state of Czechoslovakia. The Peace Treaty with the Central Powers signed by the Bolsheviks though turned down their participation in battle. With Russia out of the war, the Allies under the consent of the Bolsheviks agreed on sending the Czechs to the Western Front, through Vladivostok and the Pacific.

On their way back, a Czech Legionnaire was shot from a group of newly freed Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war. When the Czechs demanded the severe punishment of those responsible for the death of their compatriot, the Soviet authorities arrested the Czech soldiers involved instead. Through consequent erroneous decisions, as well from the Allied Powers, as from the Bolsheviks too, the Czechs revolted against the Soviets and occupied the Siberian city of Chelyabinsk.

Among the climate of the general antipathy towards the Bolshevik regime, the Allies considered the Czechs as an adequate bulwark against Bolshevism in Siberia and a means to bolster the initial stage of the intervention. Wilson favored equally the participation of the Czechs in the fight against both the German and Austro-Hungarians prisoners of war and the Soviets, as well as their subsequent overthrow, which would lead to a new government friendly-disposed to the Allied cause. Thus the Eastern Front would be reconstructed and the Czechoslovakian Legion would return to its initial task. Furthermore, Wilson was hoping that the Legion could be used as a shield against Japan and its imperialistic expectations.

On President Wilson's notion about this thorny issue of the intervention see: Carl J. Richard, *When the United States Invaded Russia: Woodrow Wilson's Siberian Disaster*, (Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), pp. 38-49; see also Moffat, *op.cit.*, pp. 56-58.

On the escalation of events that led Wilson to overcome his initial negation towards American participation in the intervention of the Allies in Russia see Eugene P. Trani, "Woodrow Wilson and the Decision to Intervene in Russia: A Reconsideration", in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Sep., 1976), pp. 440-461.

importance for Wilson, but what he loathed the most, was Japan's claims and expansionistic targets in the Far East, which had appeared soon after the revolutionary chaos emerged in Russia. The American President and his statesmen knew that if Japan was left to act alone in Eastern Asia, not only would she further consolidate her power, but also American trade agreements and further economic profits were to be –if not lost-, reduced to the minimum.⁶⁶ Finally, American diplomats had realized that any one-sided Japanese act, could be a major alarming signal for the Russians, which could drive them directly to Germany's arms. After all, the mutual antipathy between Russia and Japan was widely known, as the last Russo-Japanese war dated only fourteen years back.⁶⁷

Japan's interests should be undoubtedly not underestimated. After a successful campaign against Russia in 1905, Japan was extending her expansionistic policies mainly towards China and southeastern Asia. The declaration of war against Germany permitted also the annexation of numerous German colonies in China and the Pacific as well. Although Japan and Russia had been allies throughout WWI, the consequent Russian revolutions and the chaos in Siberia opened the way for the Japanese to prepare for an armed intervention against their former war associate.⁶⁸ Japan stated though, that it wasn't the annexation of new territories that she desired, but the safeguard of her national security.⁶⁹ If that could have been true, it was also true that, as the USA was concerned about the financial predominance in the Pacific area, so were the Japanese. Last but not least, the French and the British seemed the most desperate of all about the Japanese help.⁷⁰ They knew that without this aid, no one else could provide the manpower in order the valuable war supplies, stocked in Siberian ports, to be saved from German hands. Furthermore, they were equally anxious about the fate of the Czech Legion. Besides no one else could provide swifter and more adequate assistance at this region and in that specific moment, than Japan.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Moffat, *ibid.*, p. 47; Swettenham, *op.cit.*, pp. 114-116.

⁶⁷ Richard, *op.cit.*, pp. 27-28.

⁶⁸ Swettenham, *ibid.*

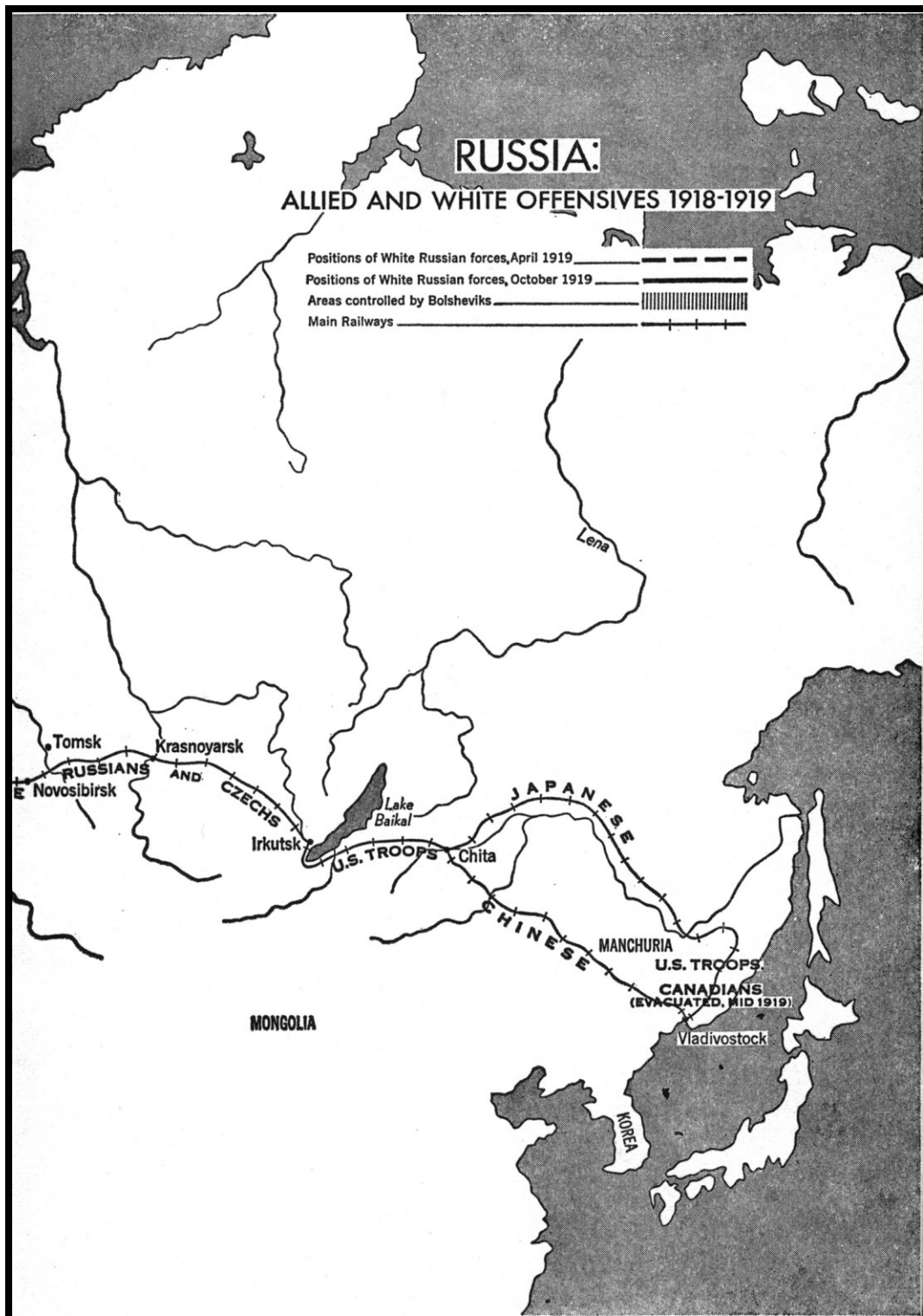
⁶⁹ Moffat, *op.cit.*, p. 37,

⁷⁰ Kinvig, *op.cit.*, p. 52

⁷¹ Bradley, "Allied Intervention...", *op.cit.*, pp. 24-47.



Map 2: Allied & White Offensives in Central-Western Russia, 1918-1919



Map 3: Allied & White Offensives in Central-Eastern Russia, 1918-1919

Finally, the Allies had been developing a growing fear of communist ideology's spread, first among their kinsmen and then globally as well. For some diplomats not only democracy was in danger, but also moral values or even Christian ethics could be annihilated from the "red hurricane". Fears had also been expressed about the fate of

Germany and a possible connection with Russia even after the armistice of 11th November. Thus Germany could exploit the havoc within the Soviet State and regain control of its after-Brest-Litovsk arrangements.⁷²

The anxiety regarding the expansion of Communism became a matter of greater importance among the discussions in the Paris Peace Conference. New revolutionary movements were appearing more often than ever before and the Allies were in search of a common strategy. Yet that could not easily be found.⁷³

What had actually started as a need to re-establish the Eastern Front against the Central Powers, had been transformed into a full-scale military campaign against the Soviet State and its communist ideology. The ultimate goal of the Allies was now to create a cordon sanitaire to the periphery of the Soviet State by supporting the newly independent countries and the White movement. Thus they would try either to crush Bolshevism, which though seemed from the beginning extremely unlikely or at least restrain it within Russia.⁷⁴

3.2 The Allied Operations of the Intervention

Soon after the end of the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks controlled the major cities of the Russian State, such as St. Petersburg and Moscow. The struggle of power though had just begun. Numerous opponents of the new regime were drawn together to the peripheral areas of the vast Russian State, in order to resist the communist usurpers of power. Those fractions hadn't formed a union and their political beliefs spanned from monarchists to cadets-liberals and Left Social Revolutionaries. Subsequently, several smaller or larger, weaker or more stable governments were constantly appearing within

⁷² Michael Kettle, *Churchill and the Archangel Fiasco: November 1918-July 1919*, (London & New York, Routledge, 2005), pp. 1-2.

While those suspicions weren't exactly unprecedented, as before the October Revolution Lenin had arrived in Russia on a German train. However, there is no doubt that he and the Bolshevik Party acted completely on their own and for their interests solely, but for quite some time after that, he was considered by many Westerners as a German agent; and his party subsequently as a tool, which in the end would serve the German ambitions in the Eastern European region.

These notions were further corroborated upon the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the major concessions the Soviet State made. These accusations were though inaccurate, as among other reasons the Bolsheviks after the end of the Civil War had retaken most of the territories lost during WWI and the Peace Treaty with the Central Powers. See Engelstein, *op.cit.*, pp. 143-145; Roberts, *op.cit.*, p. 245.

⁷³ Macmillan, *op.cit.*, pp. 63-71.

⁷⁴ Moffat, *op.cit.*, p. 146.

the overall condition of havoc and disarray. They were further subdivided into nationalities or ethnicities, such as the Cossacks, the Georgians, the Armenians, etc. The core of the anti-Bolshevik military movement constituted the White Russians and their Volunteer armies, but even these were never a unified military corps.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the Allied support to the Whites, through military equipment and munition would be the first step towards the military intervention that was to follow.

The two remaining European Entente Powers, Britain, and France had already since the late December of 1917 made a secret pact, which defined the spheres of influence within the Russian state between them. The British had taken over the Cossack areas, Armenia, the Caucasus, Georgia, and Kurdistan, while shortly after North Russia and Siberia were added too, whereas the French were responsible for the western territories, namely Ukraine, Crimea and Bessarabia. This seemed from the beginning as a clear and definitive intention to interfere within the internal affairs of the Russian state and even if that wasn't the purpose all along, in the end, it surely had become one.⁷⁶

As already mentioned before, the first troops to have landed in Russia were the British Marines in Murmansk in early March, in order to safeguard the war material, under the consent of the Bolsheviks too. Yet that didn't constitute a full-scale military intervention altogether. Where the first act actually occurred, was in the south-eastern part of Russia, the Transcaspian area in the Caucasus. There the British sent first their troops to deal with an imminent Turco-German attack which could jeopardize the fate of India and the Mesopotamian oil-fields as well. Alongside the British had been sent a handful of Canadian troops as reinforcements.⁷⁷ At the same time, the overall region had been turned into a battlefield, as the Bolsheviks were also fighting the Cossacks.⁷⁸ The primary task of the Allied forces was to cut off the marching of the Turks, but also

⁷⁵ As already shortly mentioned in a previous chapter the Whites were not torn so much from political juxtaposition, rather than personal rivalries between their leaders. Even more due to the large size of the Russian State those armies were further separated and could not easily form one division that could receive common orders from its leaders. See Peter Kenez, "The Ideology of the White Movement", in *Soviet Studies*, vol. 32, No. 1, (Jan. 1980), pp. 58-59.

⁷⁶ David Watson, "Britain, France and the Russian Civil War, 1918-1920", in *Anglo-French Relations in the Twentieth Century Rivalry and cooperation*, Alan Sharp & Glyn Stone (ed), (London & New York, Routledge, 2002), <http://libguides.uleth.ca/chicagostyle/books/ebook>, pp. 92-93, accessed on 23.5.2019; Swettenham, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

⁷⁷ Swettenham, *op.cit.*, pp. 47-48.

⁷⁸ Moffat, *op.cit.*, p. 83.

to train local Persian tribes, Georgians, and Armenians and create a resistance-zone, as it would be unattainable for them to deploy a large force on their own. The main fighting took place in and around Baku, which then was still a Bolshevik dominated city. Though the British force was far too small to halt the Turkish offensive, which proved successful and Baku was captured by the Central Powers in autumn of 1918.⁷⁹ This situation though would rapidly change, as after a few days subsequent armistices would be signed and the hostilities between Entente and the Central Powers would end in every corner of the war fronts. Now Baku was again under British dominance.⁸⁰

The Bolsheviks at that time were also seeking to consolidate their power in that area and their interests were in conflict with those of the British and the Whites. The British had found themselves fighting in two war fronts. As WWI had not been concluded yet the Turks and the Germans were still fighting, but the Bolsheviks were also trying to expand their borders, attract more people to their cause and regain the territories of the old Tsarist Empire.⁸¹

Yet the British with the aid of General Denikin's Whites managed to strike a few successes, but that wouldn't last long. More and more voices within Britain had started to raise, as the troops were getting even more entangled in a perplexing situation in Russia's internal affairs.⁸² The British intervention in the Russian Civil War had caused serious friction among the political scene of the country, with most notorious that between Lloyd George and Churchill.⁸³ But the fear of Bolshevism according to Lloyd George, loomed large, within England as well and the British disengagement from the Russian imbroglio was nothing but difficult.⁸⁴

The South though wasn't only the Transcaucasian and Transcaspian territories, but Ukraine and Crimea as well, with their main centers being Odessa and Sevastopol

⁷⁹ George A. Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917-1921: A Study in the Politics and Diplomacy of the Russian Civil War*, (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), pp. 60-70.

⁸⁰ For a detailed analysis of the military operations see Moore, *op.cit.*, pp. 132-134, 147-150.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 151-155.

⁸² Even the British PM Lloyd George acknowledged himself that the act of intervention in Russia with the participation of English troops was "...the greatest act of stupidity that any Government could possibly commit...". See Brinkley, *op.cit.*, p. 174.

⁸³ Moffat, *op.cit.*, pp. 195-197

⁸⁴ Kettle, *op.cit.*, pp. 105-106.

respectively.⁸⁵ There the command had been taken over by the French, who would fight alongside with a sizeable force of Greek troops, but as well a small Polish division and of course Denikin's Whites, under the broad command, regarding the operations, of the French General Franchet d'Espèrey, while –weirdly as we shall examine later- the preparation of the intervention had been taken over by General Henry Berthelot.⁸⁶ But this situation fared no better too. The French landed there in late 1918 after the armistice with the Central Powers had been signed. The political situation in Ukraine was even more complicated than in other former tsarist Russian territories. Clusters of Ukrainian nationalists, White Russians, Ukrainian and Russian Bolsheviks, German occupying troops were compiling an unpredictable and precarious situation.

As we shall see, the fighting that took place in the Ukrainian provinces was far from successful for the French expeditionary force. Not only the major bulk of operations were carried out by the Greeks, who were more numerous than the French troops, but also the whole expedition, which lasted for about six months proved to be a total fiasco. The main battles took place in the cities of Kherson and Mykolaiv and their suburban areas, where the Allied troops were utterly defeated by the Red Army, under the leadership of Hetman Nikifor Grigoriev.⁸⁷ The final act of the Allied occupation would be played on Odessa in March 1919, when the French and the Greeks found themselves encircled by much larger Red forces. When sanity seemed to prevail for the first time, the French decided definitively in early April to abandon Ukraine. The expeditionary force moved shortly to Romania and then the French solely turned their attention towards Poland and Czechoslovakia.⁸⁸ As they had realized that their interference in the Russian Civil War, was a hideous mistake, which had cost them further manpower, money and fame, they tried indirectly to create a buffer zone against the spread of Bolshevism alongside the Polish borders.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Moffat, *op.cit.*, p. 148.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 156; Brinkley, *op.cit.*, p. 77.

⁸⁷ Swettenham, *op.cit.*, pp. 247-250.

⁸⁸ For a brief analysis of the French intervention in the Polish-Soviet clashes, which occurred mainly after the failed French expedition in Southern Russia, see: Piotr S. Wandycz, "France and the Polish Soviet War, 1919-1920", in *The Polish Review*, vol. 62, No. 3, 2017, pp. 3-15.

⁸⁹ France's decision to intervene seemed almost from its inception to be a failure. Disarrays among the French general staff had appeared even before the landing of the first troops. Not only were there disagreements between Generals D'Espèrey and Berthelot, the heads of the campaign but even before that, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs -the Quai d'Orsay- and the Ministry of War seemed to have divergent opinions, regarding the conduct of the operations. The French indecision and incompetence on leadership and the preparation of adequate strategy, constituted a major role in the

The vast northern regions of Russia didn't involve many different ethnicities and nationalities as that of the South. What it did include though, was a weird mosaic of different political elements and governments that sprung out of every corner, with the most renowned among them being the Socialist-Revolutionary Government in Samara and a right-inclined White Government in Omsk.⁹⁰ While those political changes were happening the Allies didn't fall short to send their troops in the North as well. Thus, amidst the summer of 1918 Allied troops under the British aegis landed in Archangel and the intervention in Northern Russia had just commenced.⁹¹

Simultaneously mainly American and Japanese troops landed in Vladivostok, having as their primary objective the assistance to the Czechoslovakian Legion, which at the same time was gaining even greater momentum in its clashes with the Bolsheviks.⁹² The Americans and the Japanese, contrary to their other Allies, tried to refrain as much as possible from fighting the Soviets. Although there were actual battles, they used primarily their forces to safeguard the war materiel in the Russian warehouses and ports and also they were employed to guard the Trans-Siberian railroad. As already stated above, the Japanese were keen to exploit the intricate situation in Far Eastern Russia for their benefit; thus they had sent a large force, totaling more than 70.000 soldiers⁹³. The constantly growing Japanese power though, was an alarming factor for the Americans as well, who on their behalf intended to forestall any unilateral Japanese act. That meant, that they both were almost merely interested in the economic matters of the Civil War, keeping an eye on each other.⁹⁴

Shortly after the end of WWI, a new Provisional All-Russian Government had been established by the merge of the Samara and Omsk Governments. Soon though, a coup d'état took place, upon which Admiral Kolchak ascended to power -under British blessings-, as Supreme Ruler of Russia, namely a position with dictatorial duties. From late 1918 up until mid-1919, the operations undertaken by Kolchak's Whites had been

setback of the Ukrainian Campaign, as we shall examine later, as one of the main reasons that the Greek participation in the Allied intervention in Russia ended in failure.

⁹⁰ Swettenham, *op.cit.*, pp. 96-97; Coates, *op.cit.*, p. 122.

⁹¹ Kinvig, *op.cit.*, pp. 33-34; For someone to perceive the range of the intervention, we should note that only in Archangel the Allied Mission was consisting of British, French, Americans Italians, Serbs, White Russians, and Finns as well. See Moore, *op.cit.*, pp. 22-23.

⁹² Richard, *op.cit.*, pp. 57-62; Swettenham, *op.cit.*, p. 124.

⁹³ Swettenham, *ibid.*, p. 126.

⁹⁴ Bradley, "Allied Intervention...", *op.cit.*, pp. 106-107.

mainly successful. But war-weariness, corruption within the Whites' lines and incompetence, started taking its toll on the war front. Concomitantly, the Czechs had started to withdraw from the battles, because of their heavy fatigue and war-deprivations, as well as their deep aversion towards the Kolchak regime.⁹⁵

Almost since the Allied troops' landing, the hostilities between them and the Soviets had begun and continued unceasingly until the summer of 1919⁹⁶; while the Allies were also conducting offensive operations almost until April of the same year. In the meanwhile though, some serious events had taken place.

Firstly, Leon Trotsky, the Soviet War Commissar had initiated the total reorganization, retraining, and transformation of the Red Army. Within a short period Trotsky managed to instill discipline and order among the troops, to inculcate the will and the moral values of a Russian communist, loyal not only to his fatherland but also to his ideology. Last but not least Trotsky managed to massively increase the conscription rates within the Bolshevik Army. For someone to grasp Trotsky's effectiveness, it should be underlined that the Red Army numbered 331.000 soldiers in August 1918, while by the end of the year these numbers were raised to 800.000, and during 1920 they had reached the outstanding amount of more than 5 million men.⁹⁷

The initial aim of the intervention was long gone. The ever-growing Soviet military forces, the lack of adequate manpower to reinforce the operations and thus the subsequent shift towards a defensive mission, led the Allies to reexamine their strategy.⁹⁸ Although there had been thoughts on maintaining the existing forces and supporting them mainly with military equipment⁹⁹, consequent poor results on the

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-121.

⁹⁶ For a thorough analysis of the operations in Northern Russia from the summer of 1918 up to the summer of 1919, see Moore, *op.cit.*, pp. 14-107.

⁹⁷ Quite revealing is the way of mass-conscription in the Red-Army, which saw its numbers rise in skyrocketing levels within a short notice. This proved to be a key element in the final victory of the Bolsheviks at the end of the civil war. See, Orlando Figes, "The Red Army and Mass Mobilization during the Russian Civil War 1918-1920", in *Past & Present*, No. 129 (Nov., 1990), pp. 168-211; see also Swettenham, *op.cit.*, pp. 101-102.

⁹⁸ Moffat, *op.cit.*, pp. 205-206.

⁹⁹ That was mainly the notion of Winston Churchill, who as a fervent anti-communist was an untiring advocate of the continuation of the intervention, even if new troops couldn't be sent.

military front and the demoralization of the Allied troops seemed to leave only one choice; total withdrawal.¹⁰⁰

Already the British War Office had communicated since March 1919 to its officers in Russia that the evacuation of the troops would be imminent.¹⁰¹ While the operations were still ongoing within the summer of the same year, the official orders were drafted, stating that the British soldiers were to be withdrawn before the winter of 1919. The French accordingly, had already evacuated Southern Russia and by June they had also departed from the North.¹⁰² The situation was even clearer for the United States. President Wilson seemed to be –even before the commencement of the operations- the least enthusiastic supporter of the intervention, if not an adversary at all. He had well-acknowledged the voices of concern, which had been raised by the American public and the Opposition as well.¹⁰³ From January 1920 until April of the same year all American troops had departed from Russia when the last Czechoslovakian troops had also left.¹⁰⁴ Finally, the Japanese remained the longest within the Russian soil, in comparison with the other Allied countries. As they didn't want to abandon that easily their foothold in Eastern Russia, but with no other alternative insight, as the Whites had already been defeated, the Japanese departed in autumn of 1922.¹⁰⁵

Thus ended the Allied intervention in Russia, which had started in early 1918, ended in 1920 but the last troops were officially withdrawn in 1922.

3.3 The reasons of failure

Most historians admit that the Allies didn't anticipate that since the initiation of their involvement in Russian affairs they would commit themselves against the communist ideology and would become an open opposition to the new Soviet government. Yet an already fragile situation shaped a new order in Russia. The Allies tried desperately to

¹⁰⁰ Regarding the low ebb of morale and discipline among the Allied troops, see Swettenham, *op.cit.*, pp. 202-206.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 212.;

¹⁰³ Richard, *op.cit.*, pp. 110-111.

¹⁰⁴ Moffat, *op.cit.*, pp. 250-260.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 261; Mawdsley, *op.cit.*, p. 235

have a saying in the new circumstances that arose. But their choices were far from being successful.

The intervention never acquired a large operational level. For the gigantic size of the Russian land and the number of Red troops, the Allies never deployed an equally large and adequate force. Almost since the beginning, the Allied and White armies were overruled by their rivals. What they managed to accomplish through that, was a dreadful prolongation of an even more appalling civil war.

Probably the most significant cause of the Allied collapse was the lack of a unified strategy. As it usually happens in those situations every country has its own goals to pursuit, but for such large scale operations to be successful, self-interests shall first and foremost be put aside and a common policy ought to be drafted. This though remained a distant dream, if anyone ever had dreamt it at all. The Allied leaders and their entourage were consisting of strong personalities, with –quite often- subjective judgment of the situation, naturally in favor of their homeland’s interests. But that wasn’t only a fault of the protagonists in the diplomatic scene, but rather one of the frontrunners on-the-spot. Quite typical and obvious are the successive mistakes the British officers made. Many of them, were keen on proving themselves not only in the military field but as ardent decision-makers on the policy of their nation. Underestimating the new Russian status and self-seeking themselves were driven to erroneous decisions, which through misinformation and miscalculations misled their superiors.¹⁰⁶

The French were probably the fiercest anti-communists of all, but they were equally blinded from their hatred.¹⁰⁷ As we shall examine later, they failed to

¹⁰⁶ The incidents of disobedience, false decision-making, and initiatives that should have never been taken in the Russian campaign from the British officers on-spot were numerous. To list but a few see Kinvig, *op.cit.*, pp. 168-169, 180-181; Kettle, *op.cit.*, pp. 29-30, 95, 515.

Another striking description of the aberrant situation and the mistakes made by British generals can be found here: Brock Millman, “The Problem with Generals: Military Observers and the Origins of the Intervention in Russia and Persia, 1917-18”, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Apr., 1998), pp. 291-320.

¹⁰⁷ Quite remarkable are the early thoughts before the intervention regarding the Bolsheviks, their leadership, their ideology, and cause, where it was widely believed, as already mentioned before, that they acted as German agents. The feelings of animosity towards the new regime, are more than apparent. See for example the first classified report from the head of the French military mission in Russia shortly after the October Revolution, addressed to Clemenceau: J. F. N. Bradley, “France, Lenin and the Bolsheviks in 1917-1918”, in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 86, No. 341 (Oct., 1971), pp. 783-789.

understand that their troops had had enough of the long term hostilities. The Great War had ended, but the French soldiers were still fighting; and for a purpose that they wouldn't enjoy any benefit, or gain any fame, by fighting people who were longing for their freedom. Numerous mutinies and phenomena of insubordination took place among the French troops during the Russian expedition.¹⁰⁸ Hence it came to a much quicker closure than Paris had expected.

As for the Americans, Wilson most likely would have never participated, if it wasn't for the Czech Legion, which gave him a reasonable justification, and of course Japan and its expansionistic ambitions, which was its main driving force after all. Therefore though, the number of American troops was seriously limited in comparison with those of the other Allies. That didn't clearly express Wilson's distrust towards the whole operation, but reveals that the intervention was doomed to fail. If a major ally is since the launch of the operation practically adverse towards its fulfillment, then it will most likely prove to be disastrous.

Finally, the Allies failed initially to make an attempt to grasp the motives of the Civil War main belligerent sides, and then to seek a possible agreement among them. Although there had been some slight efforts of reconciliation and rapprochement between the Bolsheviks and the Whites, such as the Prinkipo Proposal, they were all viewed with mistrust, dismissed and further sabotaged, not only from the Russians but from the Allies' own actions as well.¹⁰⁹

Undoubtedly though, what it should actually be acknowledged to the Allies, is the fact that albeit they conducted an altogether failed operation, they succeeded to withhold –at least temporarily- the spread of communism, as they had wished. With only but a few and mainly short-lived exceptions, the revolutionary spark was confined within Russia. Mainly after WWII would new communist states start to emerge again around the globe, but the world would be totally different by then.

¹⁰⁸ See for instance Patrick Façon, “Les mutineries dans le corps expéditionnaire français en Russie septentrionale (décembre 1918-avril 1919)”, in *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, vol. 24, No. 3, Jul. Sept. 1977, pp. 455-474, DOI : <https://doi.org/10.3406/rhmc.1977.990>, https://www.pers-ee.fr/doc/rhmc_0048-8003_1977_num_24_3_990, accessed on 27.5.2019.

¹⁰⁹ Regarding the Prinkipo Proposal or Prinkipo Conference, as already mentioned earlier, apart from the fact that the Whites were biased to reject it since the beginning, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs himself, was encouraging the Whites' leaders to turn down any possible offer for a common solution. That means that even if a common Allied strategy was to be drafted at that time, it was already sabotaged from the inside. See Brinkley, *op.cit.*, p. 109.

4. The Greek Participation in the Allied Intervention

4.1 The Political Situation in Greece and the decision for Intervention

Greece's political landscape through the course of the wars' decade would be largely defined and shaped by the feud between Venizelos and King Constantine I, as it had split the country into two rival camps. The main cause of dispute, concerned Greece's participation in WWI. Venizelos' notion was that the country ought to join Entente's alliance, as those states he believed, would emerge victorious from the Great War.¹¹⁰ On the contrary, the King was a fervent votary of the neutrality-tactic, under the pretext of promised territorial gains from the Central Powers, and more specifically Germany. For two years (1915-1917) Greece was torn in half, as the royal, official government had its seat in Athens and under its influence Central and Southern Greece¹¹¹; while Venizelos had established his authority in Thessaloniki and Northern Greece in general¹¹², under the Provisional Government of National Defense, which was eventually de facto recognized by the Entente Allies.¹¹³ Thus had been created a peculiar situation within the country, in which a dual political order was prevailing.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Venizelos at that point had successfully assumed that Greece's vital interests, regarding the fulfillment of its nationalist policy and the unresolved issues of the unredeemed Greeks outside the Greek borders, would be better addressed and even -some of them- resolved, through the coalition with the Entente. This aspect would be further corroborated and practically ratified, when Greece's main antagonists, Turkey and Bulgaria, would join the war, on the side of the Central Powers. See Κωνσταντίνος Σβολόπουλος, *Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος 12 Μελετήματα*, (Αθήνα, Ελληνικά Γράμματα, 1999), pp. 16-17.

¹¹¹ The so-called "Old Greece".

¹¹² Northern Greece, namely Macedonian territory was called the "New Lands", as it had been annexed to Greece only a few years ago, after the successful campaigns of the Balkan Wars.

¹¹³ This thesis aims not to give a detailed analysis of those happenings, because it would be impossible these to be mentioned thoroughly, as numerous works had been written upon them. Although it is important to state and underline the major sequence of events, which defined the Greek policy of the time, in order to perceive its culmination, which finally led to the Ukrainian Campaign.

On a meticulous examination of the National Schism, its roots, course, and consequences see Γιώργος Θ. Μαυρογορδάτος, *1915: Ο Εθνικός Διχασμός*, (Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Πατάκη, 2015).

If someone would like to grasp the sentiment of that era and how each political bloc was perceiving the situation, a series of newspaper articles had been published at that time, spanning from 1915 to 1935, written by Venizelos and Ioannis Metaxas, a royalist officer and later dictator, to justify each group's motives and disposition. It is extremely intriguing and useful to read them and look behind the lines for their definition, as we can also notice the different aspects of these men in the same incidents, which shaped the Greek society and political scene at that time. See Collective Work, *Η Ιστορία του Εθνικού Διχασμού κατά την Αρθρογραφία του Ελευθερίου Βενιζέλου και του Ιωάννου Μεταξά*, (Θεσσαλονίκη, Κυρομάνος, 2003).

¹¹⁴ It should be noted that the Allies at that time, were torn as to how exactly they should deal with the political situation, which had split Greece into two camps and had brought it on the verge of open civil war. For instance Russia, refused to provide a de jure recognition of the new Provisional Government, under Venizelos and was strongly urging Britain and France to do so. All of the Allies

Under the intense pressure of the Entente Powers, which since 1915 had had a strong presence in Thessaloniki with their troops, the king was ousted in mid-1917, after the “Noemvriana” or “November-Events”, some months earlier had already diminished his popularity among the European political circles.¹¹⁵ This epoch was characterized by strong and mutual hatred sentiments from supporters of both camps. The National Schism had provoked a series of vengeance and retaliation practices, depending on the side that was prevailing at each given moment. It was not only the royal government, which would permit autocratic processes to take place, but the Venizelists would demonstrate equally despotic attitude toward their political adversaries. The political landscape of the country would be shaped from phenomena of bipolarism and revanchism, which would mark the Greek society and continue to occur, even after the end of WWII.

Thus came to closure this stage of the National Schism, which was succeeded by a new *de jure* recognized government under Venizelos, and Greece in late 1917 was finally participating in WWI. Practically, this meant that the country had no other alternative than to follow the road, which the Entente had destined for it. Nonetheless, it should be noted here, that not only Greece needed the Allied backing to accomplish its expansionistic goals, but also the Great Powers needed the Greek troops to assist them in the battles of the Macedonian Front, and naturally due to Greece’s massive economic dependence from the Allies.¹¹⁶

needed a clear or at least great popular support for Venizelos’ authority, if they were to legally recognize his government, thus they wouldn’t directly harm their official relations with the royalist Greek Government. While both the French and the British followed Russia’s proposal, they provided though moral and material support to Venizelos’ National Defense movement, as they had realized that under his aid, could their interests be secured. See George B. Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers 1914-1917*, (Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1974), pp. 416-420.

¹¹⁵ In November 1916, the British and the French, who openly supported Venizelos and his government in the North, demanded the surrender of war equipment by the Royal Government, a request which would be rejected soon after by the King. Thereafter, the Allied troops disembarked in Piraeus and the hostilities between them and the Greek Army commenced. Only after the King’s reconciliatory attitude would peace talks start and shortly after the atrocities would come to an end. Though the King’s intransigent stance would definitively worsen his relations with the Allies, who on their side imposed a naval blockade on the major Greek ports, controlled by the Royalists. Furthermore, incidents of anarchy and disorder in Athens would rapidly increase. See *ibid.*, pp. 438-459.

¹¹⁶ The ceaseless war-efforts of the Greek troops since 1912 had brought as a consequence major financial discrepancies in the state’s economics. Venizelos needed to strengthen the monetary liquidity, in order to be able to finance the new military campaigns (Ukrainian and later in Asia Minor). Up until that time, the National Bank of Greece had been responsible for the loans towards the Greek State, but due to constant political changes the internal financial landscape, was rapidly deteriorating. Thus in 1918, the governments of the USA, Great Britain, and France agreed on providing a loan of 850.000.000

Soon after, Greece managed within a short notice to dispatch more than 200.000 troops, which were ready to contribute to the great Allied offensive in the Macedonian Front against the Germans and the Bulgarians. Although the state of the Greek Army was dubious before its war-entry, as it had lost its credibility since the majority of them hadn't participated in the war up until that time, the Greek troops managed to secure decisive victories¹¹⁷, renew the trust of the Allies and boost the overall morale of the Allied troops. Venizelos had accomplished, since the beginning of 1918, to revive the fighting spirit of the Greek Army and instill to the troops the long-forgotten winning attitude, which had an imminent impact on the battlefields. The Greek Army constituted one-third of the total Allied military forces in Macedonia, of which their crucial military victories led to the signing of the armistice with Bulgaria in September 1918.¹¹⁸

Greece's short but memorable participation in WWI allowed Venizelos to accomplish what he had wished from the beginning of his first incumbency as Greek Prime Minister; to be able to sit on the table of the victors after the war had ended. Venizelos' vision and foreign policy had proved finally fruitful and gave him and the country the opportunity to attend theoretically –inter pares- the Paris Peace Conference.¹¹⁹

The claims' memorandum that Venizelos had himself drafted, was bold and sometimes excessive, but not unjustified. It was based primarily on the principle of nationhood, namely the annexation of those territories inhabited mostly by Greek-speaking populations outside the Greek borders. The main demands were that Greece takes the regions of Northern Epirus, Eastern Thrace, Western Asia Minor namely Smyrna Vilayet and a part of Bursa Vilayet, as well the Dodecanese islands and the islands of eastern Mediterranean. Even though in Istanbul there was a large Greek community and thus such a claim could be partly valid, Venizelos knew that such a

drachmas to Greece. See Κώστας Κωστής, *"Τα Κακομαθημένα Παιδιά της Ιστορίας": Η Διαμόρφωση του Νεοελληνικού Κράτους, 18ος-21ος αιώνας*, (Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Πατάκη, 2015), pp. 566-569.

¹¹⁷ Such as the battles of Ravine and Skra-di-Legen.

¹¹⁸ See George B. Leontaritis, *Greece and the First World War: From Neutrality to Intervention, 1917-1918*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 149-194; Γιαννουλόπουλος, *op.cit.*, pp. 246-247.

¹¹⁹ Venizelos was always interested and primarily involved in the draftsmanship of the Greek Foreign Policy, even if he had never served as an acting Minister of Foreign Affairs. For a brief but accurate examination of his foreign policy at the long decade see Michael Llewellyn Smith, "Venizelos' Diplomacy, 1910-23: From Balkan Alliance to Greek-Turkish Settlement", in *Eleftherios Venizelos: The Trials of Statesmanship*, Paschalis M. Kitromilides (ed.), (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 134-192.

demand would be almost impossible to be accepted by the Allies. However, he was in favor of a neutral Istanbul and the Dardanelles Straits region, which would be placed under the immediate protection of the League of Nations.¹²⁰

Yet Greece had two major obstacles to overcome. Firstly Greece's demands were often in direct conflict with those of other victorious countries. For instance, regarding the cases of Northern Epirus, the Dodecanese, and Western Asia Minor, Venizelos had met the strong reaction of the Italians. The latter were trying to create a robust foothold in the Eastern Mediterranean region, and the Greek demands were an obstacle to their expansionistic policy as well. Furthermore, regarding Thrace and the Greek communities there and in Istanbul, not only the Italians were opposed to this claim, but even President Wilson and his advisors seemed to have adopted a rather negative stance towards the Greek demands, although they slightly preferred the Greek demands to the Italians. Yet those obstacles seemed to have been overmastered at the end. Under successive diplomatic consultations and meetings, Venizelos managed in most cases to charm his audience and if not always get what he originally requested, at least he would be surely heard cautiously from the summit participants.¹²¹

Undoubtedly the strongest supporter of Venizelos was the British PM David Lloyd George. The two statesmen had already met before the war and mutual friendship feelings had been developed among them. Besides, even though England had originally favored the preservation of the former Ottoman status quo, the subsequent war-entry of the Empire alongside the Central Powers and its distinctive signs of decay and partitionment, enhanced Greece's promotion to a greater regional power in the Aegean territory, which could openly support British claims in that area as well.¹²² For instance,

¹²⁰ On the Greek claims in Paris Peace Conference see the original draft, the Greek PM had prepared and presented before the plenipotentiaries of the summit: Eleutherios Venizelos, *Greece Before the Peace Congress of 1919: A Memorandum dealing with the Rights of Greece*, (New York, Oxford University Press American Branch, 1919).

A modern and meticulous analysis of Greece's presence at the Paris Conference, the negotiations in the background and the subsequent Greek demand's presentation can be found here: N. Petsalis-Diomidis, *Greece at the Paris Peace Conference (1919)*, (Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1978), pp. 135-139.

¹²¹ Venizelos' influence in Paris regarding the Greek demands had been immense. As it usually happens in these cases, not everyone supported him, but he had accomplished to be considered a respected ally among the victors, through his rhetoric and persuasion abilities. See MacMillan, *op.cit.*, pp. 347-365.

¹²² The British had perceived that, if a significant new force was to replace the Ottoman Empire, then that could easily be Greece. Thus not only would Britain have a loyal ally, on whom its influence would be even more strengthened, but the road to India and Mesopotamia would be once again safe and

while the Americans and the Italians had opposed the Greek claims in Western Asian Minor, the British were fervent supporters of the notion that the coastal cities of the Anatolian peninsula, which had had strong Greek presence, should without a question be annexed to Greece.¹²³

Yet although Greece's war participation had been successful, both for the country and the Allied cause in general, Venizelos knew that the Greek troops had fought but for a few months, in fact less than a whole year. He had realized that Greece's contribution to the Great War, although significant, was too short; and that was certainly another obstacle he had to overcome. Furthermore, even though the French were not exactly negatively predisposed towards the Greek recompenses in Paris, they acknowledged the fact that Greece hadn't suffered the same amount of casualties in the war in comparison with the other Allies. France had promised to back the Greek demands regarding Thrace, and would partly support Greece's claims on Asia Minor and the Smyrna vilayet if Greece was willing to contribute to the Allied military expedition in Ukraine, against the Bolsheviks.¹²⁴ France despised also the possibility of Greece becoming an English protectorate in the Mediterranean area, even if this could be just in theory. Not only England wanted to expand its influence and control the Middle East, but so did France as well. Thereafter, Venizelos seemed willing to place the Greek troops under the Allied cause, amidst the Russian Civil war, as he had realized that the Greek national fulfillments could be almost exclusively accomplished "through Russia". The Greek PM was keen to dedicate himself and the country to the Allied causes, to prove the high military level of the Greek troops, which had remained inactive during the greater part of the war. Furthermore, he was trying to enhance Greece's image, as one of Europe's leading peripheral powers, which could, at last, fulfill the national dreams and hopes of the previous generations. Without a question,

secure. See Briton Cooper Busch, *Mudros To Lausanne: Britain's Frontier In West Asia, 1918-1923*, (New York, State University of New York Press, 1976), pp. 70-73, 82-83.

¹²³ Erik Goldstein, "Great Britain and Greater Greece 1917-1920", in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Jun., 1989), p. 350.

¹²⁴ The French PM Clemenceau had openly declared his intention on supporting entirely the Greek demands on Thrace, but on the issue of Smyrna and its Greek occupation, he had expressed uncertainty. He told Venizelos that he would encourage Greece's claims, only under the precondition that this proposal would have the total backing and assent from Lloyd George and Wilson. See Petsalis-Diomidis, "Greece at the...", *op.cit.*, p. 75.

this expedition was a political maneuver from Venizelos, in order to strengthen his diplomatic and negotiations' arguments.¹²⁵

Although Venizelos agreed on dispatching the Greek troops in Southern Russia, he had been suspicious all along. First of all, he shared the main fear of the other Allies, regarding the spread of Bolshevism, specifically upon the return of the troops in Greece, after the end of the campaign. He was anxious about a possible instillation of the communist ideology to the soldiers from the Bolsheviks in Ukraine. Furthermore, he had realized that the Greek participation would raise the voices of concern and dissatisfaction of the Socialist opposition in Greece, thus eradicating or diminishing the positive outcome that could occur after Venizelos' claims in Paris had been satisfied.¹²⁶ After all, it's fair to assume that Venizelos' intentions were not opposed to the Soviets and their ideology per se, but rather he was following the directions set from the French leadership. These of course and the whole French attitude were purely anticommunist as already mentioned above, but that doesn't mean that Venizelos was sharing these views.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Venizelos stated in late 1918 that "...the Greek Army lies at the disposal of the Allies and is to be used for a common cause, wherever its aid shall be considered necessary...". See Σβολόπουλος, "Ελληνική Εξωτερική...", *op.cit.*, pp. 155-156; Γιαννουλόπουλος, *op.cit.*, pp. 253-254.

¹²⁶ Regarding the aspect of the Socialist opposition, it seems that Venizelos was right to be concerned as the decision for Greece's participation had seriously concerned the ΣΕΚΕ (Greek Socialist Labor Party, the precursor to the Greek Communist Party) Members of Parliament. See for instance the interpellation of Aristotelis Sideris and Alvertos Curiel, both ΣΕΚΕ members, to the President of the Parliament, regarding the participation of the Greek troops in the Allied Intervention in Ukraine on the 29th November 1918. See Digitized Library of the Hellenic Parliament: Proceedings of the Hellenic Parliament, 20th Term, 3rd Session, 29th of November Sitting, p. 5, https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/%CE%A0%CE%A1%CE%92_%CE%A0%CE%95%CE%A1.%CE%9A_%CE%A3%CE%A5%CE%9D.%CE%93_1918-1919_2.pdf, accessed on 2.6.2019.

Naturally, the left opposition was issuing its concerns through its Press as well. Mainly the newspapers ΠΙΣΟΣΠΑΣΤΗΣ & ΑΣΤΡΑΠΗ were the tools of the contrariety of opinions, with a multitude of "catapult" articles. They were raising the questions on the usefulness of the Greek troops against the Russian people who wanted to free themselves from the autocratic tyranny, as well the reasons, why Greece was obeying the prescripts of the imperialist Powers. The excerpts of those newspapers regarding the subsequent articles can also be found in the Digitized Library of the Hellenic Parliament, spanning from mid-November 1918, up until the end of the campaign in June 1919: <https://library.parliament.gr/Portals/6/pdf/digitalmicrofilms.pdf?ver=2018-05-09-104050-780>, accessed on 2.6.2019.

¹²⁷ It's important to underline that Venizelos' scope was not anti-Soviet by definition, nor had he set, from the beginning of his cooperation with the Allies, as his political goal to crush Bolshevism. That should be mentioned because there have been also proponents of these aspects among the Greek Marxist historiography. See, for instance, Κώστας Αυγητίδης, *Η Επέμβαση των Καπιταλιστικών Χωρών Ενάντια στη Σοβιετική Ρωσία και η Ελλάδα (1918-1920)*, (Αθήνα, Σύγχρονη Εποχή, 1999) & Τάσος Βουρνάς, *Ιστορία της Νεώτερης και Σύγχρονης Ελλάδας*, vol. 2, (Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Πατάκη, 1997), pp. 208-209.

Last but not least, he was unsatisfied as the whole campaign would be under the complete supervision and direction of the French, which could jeopardize the relations between Greek and French troops, as the Greeks could feel undervalued and inferior to their French fellow soldiers. A rational fear, which would be later solemnly corroborated.¹²⁸ Finally, Venizelos had also expressed his concerns to the French government, regarding the role, which the Greek troops would have in Russia, as part of the Allied expedition.¹²⁹

Thus, the political decision for Greece's participation in the Ukrainian Campaign had been determined and the foundation for its initiation had been firmly established. This expedition was undoubtedly the definition of a *quid pro quo* situation, on which Greece would contribute with its military manpower, while in exchange it could –theoretically- enjoy the diplomatic support of the Allies, in particular mainly of France, for the realization of its national aspirations. Shortly after, in early January 1919, the first Greek troops would arrive in Odessa, while the last Greek troops would remain in foreign soil until early June, the majority of which would be later transferred to Smyrna.

4.2 The Military Scale of the Campaign: Greek and Allied forces and their Soviet counterpart in Southern Russia

Already since late October 1918 the French PM had informed General Franchet d'Espèrey, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Army of the East, on the Allies' intentions to intervene in Southern Russia. Although the French General was directly opposed to such a move, the first French troops of the 156th Division under General

¹²⁸ On Venizelos' frustration and suspicions about the Ukrainian Campaign see: N. Petsalis-Diomidis, "Hellenism in Southern Russia and the Ukrainian Campaign: Their Effect on the Pontus Question (1919)", in *Balkan Studies*, vol. 13, 2 (1972), pp. 235-236.

¹²⁹ Venizelos had asked from the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Pichon, to provide an adequate and detailed explanation, on the way that the Greek troops would be utilized in their common fight with their French comrades. Here, quite enlightening is the correspondence between Venizelos and Pichon in early January 1919, which can be found in the Archive of El. Venizelos, which is also accessible online: Μουσείο Μπενάκη/Αρχείο Ελευθέριου Βενιζέλου/Φάκελος 017-08, Athens, January 1919, "Επιστολή του Ε. Βενιζέλου προς τον Υπουργό Εξωτερικών της Γαλλίας S. Pichon σχετικά με την αποστολή Ελληνικού Στρατού στη Ρωσία", <http://www.venizelosarchives.gr/rec.asp?id=3646>; Μουσείο Μπενάκη/Αρχείο Ελευθέριου Βενιζέλου/Φάκελος 017-01, Paris, 3rd January 1919, "Εκθεση του Υπουργείου Εξωτερικών της Γαλλίας προς το Υπουργείο Εξωτερικών της Ελλάδας σχετικά με προτάσεις της Γαλλικής Κυβέρνησης για τη χρήση των Ελληνικών στρατιωτικών δυνάμεων", <http://www.venizelosarchives.gr/rec.asp?id=3622>.

Borius, who besides became in charge of the local Volunteer Army, landed in Odessa on the 18th of December 1918. In early January 1919, French General D'Anselme with his staff also landed in Odessa, to undertake the command of the Allied troops in Southern Russia, under the overall supervision of General Henri Berthelot, Commander of the Army of the Danube.¹³⁰ The original plan for the occupation of the Ukrainian territory would be comprised of twelve divisions –a promise which was also made to the Volunteers-, principally of French and Greek composition.¹³¹ There the Allied troops would establish their base originally in Odessa, from where later they could be able to expand their operational activities towards Sevastopol and Crimea in the South, Kyiv in the North and the Don areas in the East. Their primary task would be the assistance of Denikin's Volunteer Army, both financially and materially. Thus, the Whites would be able to swiftly reorganize their army and prepare for a general major offensive in the Don region.¹³²

The Allied and White military forces of the area, apart from the Greek troops, were constituted by three French Divisions¹³³, the 4th African Regiment, some minor auxiliary platoons, the Volunteer Brigade and the 4th Polish Division. The aggregate numbers of these troops were ca 15.000 men, of whom the French constituted nearly

¹³⁰ After the consequent armistices signed after the end of WWI, the Army of the East was subdivided into smaller groups, depending on the field of operations. Their task henceforth, was the preservation of order, the supervision of the occupied territories and the reassurance, that the armistice conditions would be accomplished. See Γενικό Επιτελείο Στρατού, Διεύθυνση Ιστορίας Στρατού, Αθήνα (from now on ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ), Φ.264/Δ/1, “Σημείωμα Ιστορικού Τμήματος, Γαλλικού Επιτελείου Στρατού”, p. 1-2;

D'Espèrey believed that even after the Allied victory in the Macedonian Front, the troops should not be transferred elsewhere, as the war was still raging. Even after the armistice though, he was adamant that the preparation of the expedition was incomplete, as the available troops were insufficient for a victorious outcome. On the other hand, General Berthelot was keen to undertake the command of the operation. Berthelot was formerly the on-spot reorganizer of the Rumanian Army, thus he had already developed several contacts in the overall region of Southern Russia and Romania. See J. Kim Munholland, “The French army and intervention in Southern Russia, 1918-1919”, in *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, vol. 22, No.1, Jan.-Mar. 1981, p. 45.

It is also widely believed among the Greek military circles, that the dispatch of Greek troops and the overall Allied force in Ukraine and Crimea was also serving those interests regarding the liberation of Romania from foreign occupation and this country's protection, firstly from the Germans and then from the Soviet Army. See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, Φ.263Α/Α/2, “Επιχειρήσεις του Ελληνικού Στρατού εις Ουκρανίαν”, p. 45.

¹³¹ Lazarski, *op.cit.*, pp. 119-120.

¹³² Brinkley, *op.cit.*, pp. 79-80.

¹³³ 156th Division under the command of General Borius (3 Regiments), 30th Division under General Nerel (3 Regiments), 16th Colonial Division.

the two-thirds.¹³⁴ Furthermore, there were some navy auxiliary units in the region, one French and one British squadron, but as well a Greek flotilla, which although small in numbers, their presence proved crucial.¹³⁵

The Greek forces, which were to be sent to Ukraine and Crimea, were undertaken by the 1st Army Corps, which was comprised of I, II and XIII Divisions, under the command of Major General Konstantinos Nider. Its total manpower was 40.840 privates and 1.402 officers. The majority of those troops had previously fought in the battles of the Macedonian Front.¹³⁶ Due to transport predicaments and obstructiveness on behalf of the Allies, mainly the French who had undertaken the command of the operation,¹³⁷ only the II and XIII¹³⁸ Divisions managed to get to Ukraine, while the I Division remained in Greece, up until its dispatch later to Smyrna for the concomitant Asia Minor Campaign. Here it should also be mentioned, that these troops were never a unified force because they were landing successively in Southern Russia. However, this wasn't the original plan, but the deteriorating circumstances, both militarily and organizationally, never allowed the entire array of the troops. The

¹³⁴ It's important to underline here, that even though France had officially sent three Divisions, these were -just in theory- fully and adequately staffed. All of those units were severely reduced in manpower, so they could hardly constitute a division as a whole. See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, *Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν Σώμα εις Μεσημβρινή Ρωσίαν* (1919), (Αθήνα, Έκδοσις Διευθύνσεως Ιστορίας Στρατού, 1955), pp. 32-33; see also Πέτρος Γ. Καρακασώνης, *Ιστορία της εις Ουκρανίαν και Κριμαίαν Υπερποντίου Εκστρατείας τω 1919*, (Αθήνα, Α.Θ. Λαμπροπούλου, 1933), p. 56.

¹³⁵ The first Greek destroyer "Panthir", under the command of Vice-Admiral Giannikostas docked at Sevastopol in late November 1918, as part of the Allied fleet. Furthermore, during the whole span of the Ukrainian Campaign, participated the battleships "Averof", "Kilkis" and "Limnos", the destroyers "Keravnos", "Aetos" and "Ierax" and the replenishment ship "Kanaris". This fleet was under the overall command of Admiral Kakoulidis. These ships were used to sail the Black Sea littoral, to provide immediate aid, whenever and wherever needed during the operations, such as the embarkation and debarkation of the troops, the preservation of the public order and security, etc. Their naval bases were either in Odessa and Sevastopol or in Istanbul. They were later used to the Asia Minor Campaign as well. See Δημήτριος Βάκας, *Ο Ελ. Βενιζέλος Πολεμικός Ηγέτης, Ιστορικά Σελίδες από την Δημιουργίαν της Μεγάλης Ελλάδος, 1910-1920*, (Αθήνα, Οίκος Μ. Σαλιβέρου, 1950), p. 393.

ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, «Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...», *op.cit.*, p. 33.

¹³⁶ The main bulk of information, regarding the composition of the Greek Army, has been achieved through the Military Journal of the 1st Greek AC and the official synopsis-work of the Greek Military History Directorate. See respectively: ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, Φ.263/Γ/1, "Α Σώμα Στρατού, Ιστορικών Ημερολόγιον της εν Ρωσσία Εκστρατείας, Βιβλίον Ι, από 1-1-1919 μέχρι 31-5-1919", pp. 2-11 & ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...", *op.cit.*, pp. 46-47.

¹³⁷ Λεωνίδας Ι. Παρασκευόπουλος, *Αναμνήσεις 1896-1920*, vol. 2, (Αθήνα, Τύποις Πυρσού Α.Ε., 1934), p. 37.

¹³⁸ Under the command of Major Generals Nikolaos Vlachopoulos and Iakovos Negrepontis respectively. ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...", *op.cit.*, pp. 404 & 406.

total amount of the Greek troops that landed in Southern Russia were conclusively 23.351.¹³⁹

The first Greek troops, the 34th Infantry Regiment of the II Division, under Colonel Tsolakopoulos-Rebelos, landed in Odessa on the 20th of January.¹⁴⁰ Even though the general situation in Ukraine was chaotic, the Greek soldiers were greeted with enthusiasm by the people of the city. That was due to the fact that, a part of the population consisted of Greek locals or immigrants. This was also the case for the greater part of the Black Sea region and the Crimean peninsula.¹⁴¹

As already mentioned above, the Greek troops participated in operations, not only in Odessa and its suburban area but also in the Crimean Peninsula. There though, the arrival of the Greek troops was accomplished much later than in Ukraine. Although some Greek battleships and destroyers had docked in late 1918 in Sevastopol's port, the first Greek forces landed on the 23rd March 1919. These troops were the 2nd Infantry Regiment of the XIII Division, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Neokosmos Grigoriadis.¹⁴²

The second arrival of Greek troops took place on the 27th of February, when the 7th Infantry Regiment of the II Division, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Dimitris Kammenos, landed in Odessa. The 7th Infantry Regiment was followed by the 1st Infantry Regiment of the same Division, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Nikolaos Rokas, which landed in Odesa on the 7th of March. The first unit of the XIII Division to have landed in Odessa was the 3rd Infantry Regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel Georgios Kondylis, which arrived in Odessa on the 11th March. The last Greek

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60; Καρακασώνης, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

¹⁴¹ The Greek presence in Russia, the Black Sea region and the Crimean Peninsula was extremely remarkable. This was owed to the commercial activities that had been developed in those areas, among which the Greek communities were also thriving. Cities such as Odessa, Kherson, Sevastopol, and Simferopol were major mercantile centers, on which the Greek element was intense. The Greek community of Crimea numbered up until that time ca. 70.000 people, while the area of Odessa and its suburbs totaled ca. 39.000 Greeks. For a detailed analysis of the Greek population in Russia and the USSR see Κώστας Φ. Τσαλαχούρης, *Ο Ελληνισμός της Σοβιετικής Ένωσης, 1750-1939*, (Αθήνα, Νέα Σύνορα, 1961), p. 91; see also Andrew L. Zapantis, *Greek-Soviet Relations, 1917-1941*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 9-13.

For the Greek community in Odessa see the very interesting article by Patricia Herlihy, "The Greek Community in Odessa, 1861-1917", in *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Volume 7, Number 2, October 1989, pp. 235-252.

¹⁴² ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...", *op.cit.*, pp. 219-222.

troops to have reached the Ukrainian soil were the 5/42 Evzones Regiment of the XIII Division, under Lieutenant Colonel Nikolaos Plastiras, arriving on the 17th of March.¹⁴³

Along with the Greek troops, were also sent auxiliary and sanitary units. However, it is noteworthy to mention that although the military detachments had already been sent, in most cases their military administration arrived much later, mainly because of the French indecision on drafting an accurate plan about the Ukrainian expedition.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, regarding the military omissions, the Greek troops were lacking the majority of their military transports, because of the hastiness of the campaign and the lack of suitable carrier ships.

The Soviet counterpart, whose resistance the Allied troops met in Southern Russia, consisted initially of 4 Infantry Regiments, which were sent to Kyiv from the Russian Bolsheviks to organize the Ukrainian Red Army. The Bolsheviks, through massive conscription policies, but also through successful propaganda managed to assemble three main armies, based on the peripheral districts of Kharkov, Ekaterinoslav, and Vinnytsia. The total amount of these forces was 217.000 men and some minor assistant troops and armored corps. The main opponent of the Greek and Allied troops in Ukraine and Crimea, was the Dniester Division under the command of Hetman Grigorev.¹⁴⁵ This division had an aggregate manpower of 31.000, of which mainly 18.000 were mobilized to repulse the Allied troops.¹⁴⁶ Finally, the Red troops that had been assembled to invade Crimea totaled the number of 20.000.¹⁴⁷

At first glance, it seems that the overall forces of the Bolsheviks in the area under consideration were less superior to the Allied troops there. Though we should

¹⁴³ ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, *ibid.*, pp. 58-70.

¹⁴⁴ Κωνσταντίνος Ξ. Νίδερ, *Η Εκστρατεία της Ουκρανίας (Ιανουάριος-Μάιος 1919)*, Φύλιππος Δρακονταειδής (ed.), (Αθήνα, Κέδρος, 2015), pp. 137-138.

¹⁴⁵ Hetman Grigorev was a former tsarist officer who had previously fought in WWI, while soon after the revolutions he had started organizing military forces in this area under his command. At first, he had pledged his support to Petliura and the Ukrainian Nationalists against the German-imposed regime of Hetman Skoropadsky. Shortly after though, he switched his allegiance to the Soviets. He enjoyed popular support in his area of action and proved victorious in most cases. Though his opportunistic spirit and later his disobedience, towards a more centralized Red Army authority, led him once again to withdraw his support to the Bolsheviks. As he openly turned against his former comrades, he sought refuge in the anarchist group of Hetman Makhno. While that proved only partially successful, he tried to join the White Army of Denikin, but soon before that happening, he was killed by Makhno himself on July 1919. See Reshetar, *op.cit.*, p. 249.

¹⁴⁶ ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, “Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...”, *op.cit.*, pp. 34-36; see also ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, Φ. 263Α/Β, “Η Εκστρατεία της Ουκρανίας, συγγραφέισα υπό Συν/χου Τρεπεκλή”, p. 5.

¹⁴⁷ ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, “Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...”, *op.cit.*, pp. 221.

take into account that not only the overall Soviet manpower was four times larger than those of the Allies, but also the Bolsheviks had the opportunity of recruiting local men for their military purposes. This, of course, was the case, as we shall also examine later, in many towns and villages in the suburbs of Odessa, where the indigenous population was in his majority friendly predisposed to the Communists and willing to aid to their cause.

4.3 The Involvement of the Greek Army in Ukraine

Throughout the whole duration of the campaign, the Greek troops enabled in battle with their Soviet opponents less than ten times. This number may seem small, but one should bear into consideration, that we are dealing with a military expedition which lasted officially six months. Thus, the battles were not necessarily short-term, although they were never longer than 15-20 days and inflicted casualties on both sides.

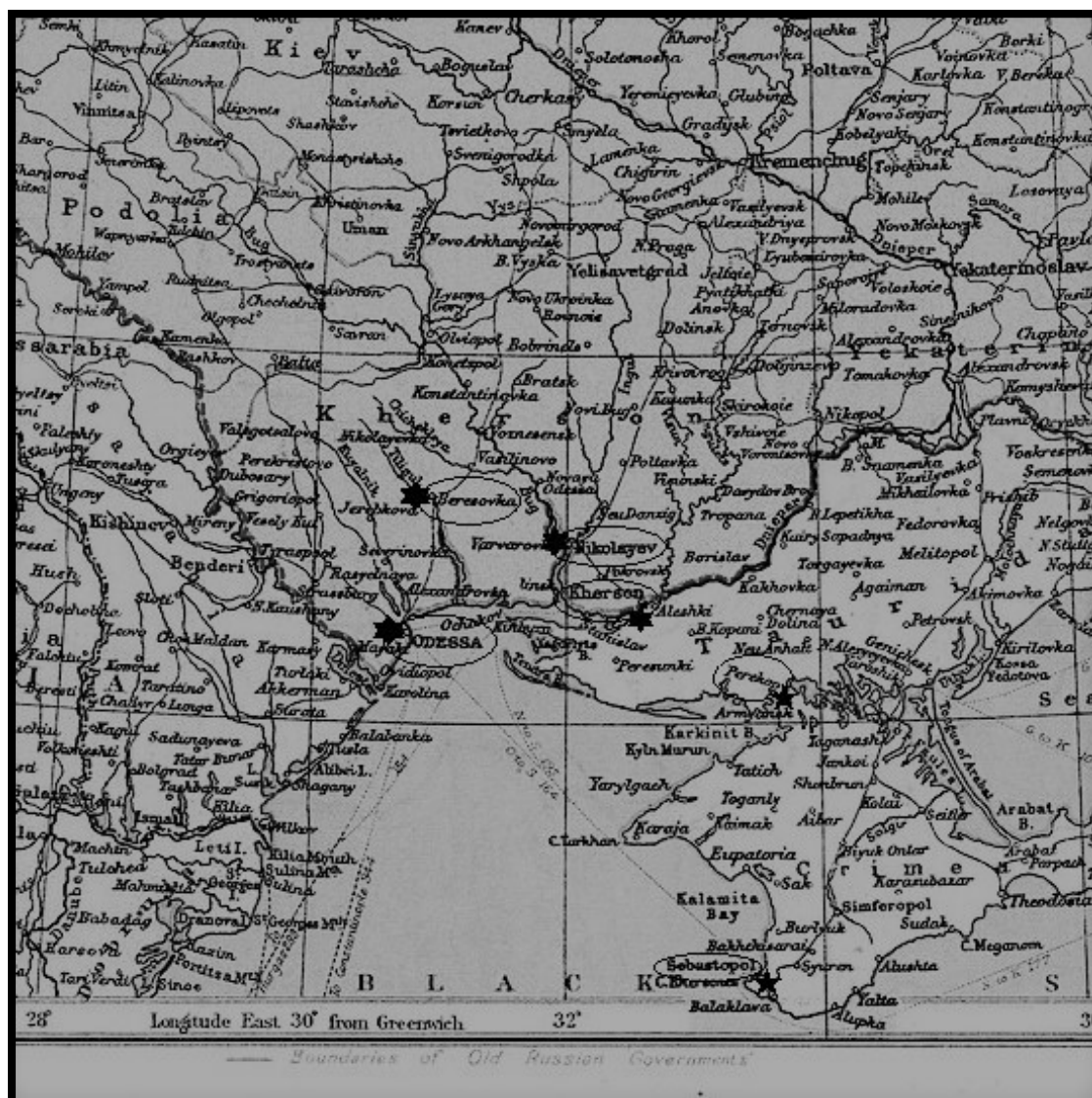
The Greek headquarters had been established in Odessa since early 1919. Even before the arrival of the Greek troops, the Greek Army General Staff had initiated the organization and installation of the Greek base in Ukrainian soil, in order for the Greek troops to be able to adapt easier and faster to the conditions of a new campaign in a foreign and unfamiliar land. Yet that was merely theoretical, as a lot of complications had arisen and the actual establishment of the base would be actually undertaken in late February and early March 1919. The command of the Odessa HQ had been retained by Lieutenant Colonel Stylianos Gonatas.¹⁴⁸

The first military operations started on the 30th of January, when a Greek battalion of the II-34th Regiment was sent to the city of Kherson, alongside a small French squadron.¹⁴⁹ The Allied troops of Kherson totaled nearly 1000 men, while on the other hand, the Bolsheviks under Hetman Grigorev had a manpower of ca 7.500-8.000. Furthermore it should be noted, that the Red troops had also had the material and

¹⁴⁸ ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, *ibid*, pp. 262-263; see also Στυλιανός Γονατάς, *Απομνημονεύματα Στυλιανού Γονατά 1897-1957*, (Αθήνα, Private Publication, 1958), p. 90.

¹⁴⁹ The city of Kherson is located 200 km east of Odessa.

military assistance from Kherson's rural population, in total 15.000 peasants, while also the majority of the city itself was armed¹⁵⁰ and inclined to the Communist ideology.¹⁵¹



Map 4: The main areas of operations of the Greek Army in Ukraine and Crimea

The entire operations in Kherson lasted from the 30th of January until the 10th of March, while the main battle of Kherson started on the 2nd of March and ended 8 days later when the city was completely evacuated by the Allied troops and Grigorev's troops entered victorious in Kherson.¹⁵² Naturally, as stated above the ratio of the Greek

¹⁵⁰ A large part of the population in Ukrainian cities had been effectively disarmed, after the arrival of the German troops as a consequence of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and the consequent occupation of Ukraine. Though after the armistice of the 11th Nov. 1918, as the German troops were waiting to be repatriated, they started selling their military equipment to the Ukrainian population.

¹⁵¹ Νίδερ, *op.cit.*, p. 158; Καρκασσώνης, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

¹⁵² Among the Greek military historiography, the battle of Kherson is considered an "epic", even though the Greek troops were utterly defeated. Some historians though have rejected that notion,

and French troops to their Bolshevik counterpart was 1:8.¹⁵³ Furthermore, the Greek troops had to deal with the open hostilities of Kherson's population, as the citizens were attacking and shooting the Greeks from their houses.¹⁵⁴ Apart from their superiority in manpower, the Bolshevik troops made use of armored trains, which undoubtedly gave them also invincible superiority in military equipment. Thus, the reasons for the short-term battle and the defeat of the Allied troops are easily conceivable.

Soon after the occupation of Kherson, it was decided by the French leadership the occupation of the city of Nikolayev¹⁵⁵, which would constitute the HQ of the II Greek Division.¹⁵⁶ Thus the II-7th Regiment arrived in Nikolayev, along with some French officers under the overall command of the French Colonel Lejay, on the 2nd March. The city of Nikolayev had also been one of the main assembling points of German troops after the end of WWI and their waiting period for their repatriation.¹⁵⁷ Soon after the arrival there, the Greek troops started to offload their munitions, organize the new HQ, while also many more auxiliary units such as sections of the military hospital had been sent there as well.

due to the failure of the operation. In order to clarify the situation, it is important to explain why this battle came to be considered rather positively. First and foremost this happened undoubtedly to bolster the morale of the Greek troops. Secondly, it should be noted that due to the great superiority of the Bolshevik troops, the Greeks and the French had been surrounded, and every contact with Odessa had been lost for more than fifteen days. As the situation was quickly deteriorating and the losses had begun to be heavily multiplied, the isolated Greek troops in Kherson had foreseen that their defeat and practically their annihilation would be imminent. Also, there was no alternative way out available. Thus, the Greek high command in Kherson decided that the only solution was an open onset against their rivals and a battle to the death, namely a consequent sacrifice for their country. However, literally at the last moment, Greek and French reinforcements arrived, which ultimately aided the successful evacuation of the remaining troops through the seaway. ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...", *op.cit.*, pp. 83-91.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁵⁴ An accurate, though sometimes subjective part of the events in the battle of Kherson, can be found in the correspondence of the Greek major in Kherson Konstantinos Vlachos with the famous Greek author Penelope Delta, several years after the Ukrainian campaign. Π.Α. Ζάννας (ed.), *Εκστρατεία στη Μεσημβρινή Ρωσία 1919*, (Αθήνα, Ερμής, 1982), pp. 103-131.

¹⁵⁵ Nowadays the city is called Mykolaiv; I have decided though to use the name as it is primarily used by the majority of scholars. This city is located ca 120 km east of Odessa.

¹⁵⁶ The exact reason for this decision from the French high command is not known.

¹⁵⁷ The German Army in Nikolayev was consisting of ca 10.000 men. The French command had undertaken the task of its repatriation to Germany. Though, the Germans had created a relatively safe environment and a guarded security zone, within the cities they had occupied. Thus, the French were trying to stall as much as possible the German departure, as they intended to keep using them as patrolmen. The Germans knew that they could benefit, both from the Allies and the Bolsheviks, hence they retained a rather neutral attitude until they could gain some benefits from either side. ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Η Εκστρατεία της Ουκρανίας...", *op.cit.*, p. 19; Νίδερ, *op.cit.*, p. 187.

At the same time with the establishment of the Nikolayev-base, the battle of Kherson was raging and had taken the aforementioned negative turn for the Greek troops. As the news soon reached that Grigorev's troops had been victorious, the Greeks and the French realized that the next move for the Bolsheviks would be the occupation of Nikolayev. Amidst fear and panic of the imminent Bolshevik onslaught, the French Colonel Lejay ordered the evacuation of the city, while the Greek troops had just finished offloading their equipment. Due to the hastiness of this new operation, the French command ordered also the abandoning of a great part of the war supplies that had just been unloaded. The Allied troops embarked quickly on the ships, and left Nikolayev on the 14th of March, namely only 12 days after their arrival, without a single-shot to be fired.¹⁵⁸ The Nikolayev-Operation was a typical example, of how the French military leadership planned and organized the overall operations in Southern Russia. There was a lack of a clear strategical plan, on how the operations should be undertaken and by whom after all.

In mid-February a Greek Battalion of the II-34th Regiment, along with a French Zouaves Battalion, two White Volunteer Platoons and some auxiliary units, under the command of the French Lieutenant Colonel Geay had been sent to Berezivka and Veselynov, ca 120 km from Odessa and 70 km from Nikolayev.¹⁵⁹ The occupations of Kherson and Nikolayev by the Bolsheviks led to the partial retreat of the Allied troops to Berezivka, which would constitute the main defensive zone, in their attempt to cut off the Bolshevik expansion. At the same time, it had become known, that Hetman Grigorev, upon his arrival in Nikolayev after the evacuation of the Greek troops, had declared his intention to move against Odessa and occupy this city as well. Thus the area of Berezivka, was of strategic significance for the French, as they understood that the danger was looming.¹⁶⁰

The Bolsheviks were marching towards Berezivka with a total manpower of circa 3-4.000, which upon the end of the operation had been multiplied and reached 8-10.000 men, while the Allied troops numbered ca 2.500 men, even after reinforcements under a Greek Battalion from the II-1st Regiment had arrived in mid-March. The

¹⁵⁸ ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, “Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...”, *op.cit.*, pp. 95-100.

¹⁵⁹ The exact reasons for these operations are evenly unclear. Probably they would have been part of a greater defensive-zone and the attempt of safeguarding the main HQ in Odessa, but in any case, the justification was not provided to the Greek military command there.

¹⁶⁰ Καρακασώνης, *op.cit.*, pp. 103-104; see also Munholland, *op.cit.*, p. 47.

Bolshevik offensive started on the 17th March, while the main battle took place on the next day and was completed the next morning when the retreat of the Allied troops was decided.¹⁶¹ As explained above, the superiority of the Bolshevik troops was more than obvious and constituted the decisive factor for their victorious outcome. But apart from the lack in numbers, the Greek troops came against unexpected difficulties. Not only Lieutenant Colonel Geay hadn't drafted a clear plan on the operational management¹⁶², but also incidents of disobedience and refusal to fight occurred by the French Zouaves Battalion.¹⁶³

The Red victory in the battle of Berezivka not only was bringing the Bolsheviks closer to Odessa but also led once again to the abandoning of a big part of war material. Furthermore, the Bolshevik forces were constantly growing and totaled nearly 20.000 men. The French High Command having realized the graveness of the situation ordered the dispatch of the Greek XIII-3rd Regiment and the French 4th African Regiment, under the overall command of Lieutenant Colonel de Clavière¹⁶⁴, to move towards the aid to Berezivka troops. Thus the fresh forces could support the retreat of the older troops and try to retrieve the equipment left behind. Additionally, a new defensive zone would be organized around the villages of Serbka and Boyalik.¹⁶⁵

The battles of Serbka and Boyalik which lasted from the 19th of March until the 3rd of April were the most successful for the Greek troops in their overall expedition in Ukraine. For the first time, the Greek troops managed to prove victorious, mainly in the Serbka battle, against their Bolshevik rivals. Yet, this situation lasted only for a few days, as the Red Army was once again superior in comparison with the Allied troops,

¹⁶¹ ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, “Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...”, *op.cit.*, pp. 106-118.

¹⁶² There had been more than two occasions when the Greek troops needed assistance from the French, as they had been outflanked by the rival forces, but Lieutenant Colonel Geay rejected these requests, as he thought that these troops could better remain in their current positions. See Νίδερ, *op.cit.*, pp. 202-203.

Furthermore, on the consequent retreat of the Allied troops, the French command prioritized the withdrawal of the French troops, instead of acting as a unit with their Greek comrades, while also no order was given to the Greek commanders for the withdrawal of their troops as well. See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, “Η Εκστρατεία της Ουκρανίας...”, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

¹⁶³ Ζάννας, “Εκστρατεία στη Μεσημβρινή...” *op.cit.*, pp. 92-93.

¹⁶⁴ Soon after de Clavière was removed and the overall command was given to the Infantry Commander of the Greek XIII Division, Colonel Konstantinos Manetas, who in turn was under the command of the French General Nerel, as part of his area of command –the Eastern Sector of Odessa–.

¹⁶⁵ Serbka is located ca 80 km north of Odessa. Nowadays the village of Boyalik is called Blagoeve or Petrivka. See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, “Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...”, *op.cit.*, pp. 119-129.

even though reinforcements with the 5/42 Evzones Regiment arrived to assist their comrades, and finally, General Nerel ordered the retreat of the troops.¹⁶⁶ As it happened in the most battles in Ukrainian soil, the Greek troops undertook the major offensive efforts, almost exclusively on their own. Not only were the Greek troops constantly fighting on two fronts, without being able to be replaced or properly reinforced,¹⁶⁷ but they had to deal with the timorousness of the French troops and their refusal to fight, fearing the superior numbers of the enemy.¹⁶⁸

As the situation was deteriorating, the Greek troops were retreating to Odessa, trying not to allow the definitive collapse of Odessa's defensive zone, which was thereafter constantly shrinking and drawing closer to the city. At the same time, that the aforementioned March operations were taking place, the Greek commander of the 1st Army Corps, General Nider, arrived in Odessa on the 26th of March, to supervise the general condition of the Greek forces and the progress of the expedition. Having a complete image of the operations, both within the city of Odessa¹⁶⁹ and the military acts in the peripheral areas, he reported to PM Venizelos and the C-in-C of the Greek Army Leonidas Paraskevopoulos, that the evacuation of the city should be considered imminent, as the situation was critical.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, the Greek General stressed the need for drafting an imminent withdrawal plan towards the Dniester direction.¹⁷¹

An indirect confirmation to General Nider's speculations was given, when some days before his arrival in Odessa, the French C-in-C d'Espèrey had also sailed to the

¹⁶⁶ For a detailed analysis of the battles in Serbka and Boyalik see ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, Φ.250/Η/5, "Εκθεσις Πεπραγμένων του Συντ/τος από 23 Φεβρ. Με 5 Μαΐου 1919, Εκστρατεία Ρωσσίας, Α ΣΣ XIII Μεραρχία, 3^{ον} Συν/μα Πεζ.", pp. 11-54.

¹⁶⁷ The French troops in Ukraine were constantly reducing, as they were partially sent back to France, thus the Greek troops were practically left without proper backups, apart from their own forces.

¹⁶⁸ ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...", *op.cit.*, p. 136, 145. See also Ευστάθιος Δ. Λιώσης, "Πολεμική Ιστορία του 3^{ου} Συντάγματος Πεζικού (1912-1922)", (Αθήνα, Δ.Δελή, 1923), p. 308.

¹⁶⁹ In Odessa the turmoil among the citizens was growing larger and larger, as they had perceived that its occupation by Grigorev's troops was imminent. Probably a revolt was looming and would have happened if the French hadn't come in terms with the local Soviet, for them to be allowed to evacuate the city peacefully.

¹⁷⁰ On these reports see the copy of the appendices compiled by the Greek Military History Directorate: ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, Φ.263/Β/1, "Εκστρατεία του Α Σώματος Στρατού εις Ουκρανίαν, Παραρτήματα", Παραρτήματα 39 & 40, pp. 37-39.

Here it should also be mentioned that the French General D'Anselme had already drafted an evacuation plan from Odessa, in case of emergency, on the 27th of March. See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Α Σώμα Στρατού, Ιστορικών Ημερολόγιον...", *op.cit.*, p. 56.

¹⁷¹ General Nider was concerned not only on the evacuation plan of the Greek troops but also of the Greek population of the city, which as he had realized, it was much likely to suffer retaliation acts from the Bolshevik victors. See Νίδερ, *op.cit.*, pp. 287-288.

city,¹⁷² to replace General Berthelot, and assume the de facto command of the operations in Southern Russia. While he tried to undertake some measures, in order to facilitate the Allied actions in the area, in the end, he issued a plan on the defensive fortification of the city. But that would not materialize, as the Allied forces were facing multiple defeats in the front, therefore they were retreating even quicker to Odessa.¹⁷³

4.4 Final Operations in Crimea and Total Withdrawal

The concomitant evacuation of Odessa was announced by the Allied HQ on the 1st of April 1919 and simultaneously it was decided that the Allied troops would move towards the Romanian-occupied territory of Bessarabia.¹⁷⁴ From the end of March until the 5th-6th April the Greek troops fought their last battles with the Bolshevik forces within Ukraine.¹⁷⁵ These were mainly in Odessa's suburban area and aiming to delay the Bolshevik onslaught to Odessa and the subsequent safe evacuation of the Allies from the city.

At the same time, when the Allied evacuation of Odessa was taking place, and the troops were heading to the Romanian borders, the Crimean military operations were taking a similar turn of events and were led to an inglorious closure. The Greek military presence in Crimea had proceeded the arrival of the 1st Army Corps, when a small detachment of the Greek fleet had sailed in Sevastopol, under Vice-Admiral Giannikostas, as part of the Allied flotilla, which would facilitate the operations of the Volunteer Army, as well they would preserve the maintenance of the public order.¹⁷⁶

The operations of the Greek Army in Crimea lasted from the 24th of March until the 28th of April. The French Army stationed in the area along with the French sailors, totaled ca 2000 men, of whom though the majority were soon to be dismissed and

¹⁷² On the 20th March 1919.

¹⁷³ ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, “Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...”, *op.cit.*, pp. 173-176.

¹⁷⁴ The official reason for the evacuation, under the statement of the French High Command, was that they were no longer able to provide adequate food quantities for the citizens of Odessa. Although this may have been true, it was equally accurate that the Bolsheviks had occupied the cities of Kherson and Nikolayev, and they were approaching Odessa. According to this plan, which was announced by General d'Anselme, the French and the Greek troops should abandon the city within four days. See Καρακασώνης, *op.cit.*, pp. 188-189.

¹⁷⁵ The last battles, in which the Greek troops were involved took place in Kubanka and around the Tylihul lagoon, nearly 25 km northeast and 50 km east of Odessa, respectively. See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, “Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...”, *op.cit.*, pp. 189-192, 206-207.

¹⁷⁶ Νίδερ, *op.cit.*, pp. 341-342.

ordered to return to France. Thus the actual French combatants were nearly 500 men.¹⁷⁷ The Greek XIII-2nd Infantry Regiment numbered 2000 men, while the total of the Soviet forces was nearly 20.000 men. The clashes of the Greek troops, which were aiding small detachments of the Crimean Volunteer Army¹⁷⁸ took place mainly in the northwestern borders of the Crimea with Ukraine, near the strait of Perekop and in Sevastopol. After the initial defeats of the Allied troops in the northwestern Crimean borders, the Red Army moved towards the capital city of Sevastopol, in which the last defensive zone had been barricaded. The battles didn't last long. The superiority of the Red troops was conspicuous. Not only were they prevailing in numbers, but they had been aided by the local population, which desired the expulsion of the Allied troops from their homeland.¹⁷⁹ The Allied failure was further corroborated with the infamous French mutiny of the Black Sea fleet, which led to temporary clashes of the French sailors with the Greek troops.¹⁸⁰ The hostilities ended with the signing of an eight days cease-fire, which would be followed by the withdrawal of the Greeks and the French and their consequent course to Bessarabia.¹⁸¹

The overall withdrawal of the major part of the Allied troops from Odessa was designated to be carried out primarily through the railway system, which was stretching from Ukraine westwards to the Bessarabian territory. Some military detachments would stay back, to oversee the safe evacuation of the city and then subsequently they would depart as well through the assistance of the Allied fleet in Odessa's port. The looming Bolshevik victory though led to a strike of the railway workers of the city and their

¹⁷⁷ The French high command had sent the 175th Infantry Regiment under the command of Colonel Ruiller, who was later replaced by Col Trousson, along with the navy forces, who were stationed in Crimea, which though were not battle-efficient. See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...", *op.cit.*, p. 220; see also Νεόκοσμος Γρηγοριάδης, *Στα Όπλα η Ελλάδα (Συμβολή της Ελλάδος στον Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο)*, (Κων/πολη, 1920), pp. 168-169.

¹⁷⁸ Ca 600-700 men.

¹⁷⁹ Clemenceau had given a great priority in the defense of Sevastopol. After all, it was the last foothold of the French in Southern Russia, as the Allied troops had already departed from Odessa. Though the French officers on-spot like Trousson knew that this was unattainable, due to the hazardous situation in the city. Not only were they running short of supplies, both food, and war materiel, but they came against the open hostile attitude of the locals, which were keen to support the Bolshevik cause. See Debo, *op.cit.*, pp. 106-107.

¹⁸⁰ This issue will be addressed more thoroughly in the next chapter.

¹⁸¹ Καρακασσώνης, *op.cit.*, pp. 251-263.

refusal to facilitate the Allies, thus the evacuation was accomplished on foot and partly through the seaway.¹⁸²

The Allied presence in Bessarabia, which had since late 1918 declared its independence from Russia and some months later its union with Romania, soon after the withdrawal from Ukraine and Crimea was not a mere coincidence. The French leadership was in favor of a strong Romanian State, which like a strong and independent neighboring Poland could restrain the outspread of the “Bolshevik virus” stemming from the North. At that time though, the Romanian army was undergoing its reorganization, as its forces had been severely reduced after the German occupation during WWI. Furthermore, Romanian troops had been sent to Hungary, to fight against the newly-born communist regime of Bela Kun, to be able to project major territorial claims among the discussions in Paris Peace Conference. Thus, the sizeable Greek troops in Bessarabia, along with the French, would be able to oversee and safeguard this territory from a possible Soviet threat¹⁸³, until sufficient Romanian forces could replace them.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, “Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...”, *op.cit.*, pp.183-188.

Such unexpected events, either due to the hostility of the locals towards the Allies or due to the French incompetency, occurred on multiple occasions. For instance, while the evacuation was taking place and due to the lack of transport means, the Greek troops were obliged to leave behind a great amount of their military equipment and munitions.

¹⁸³ The Bolshevik forces in the Dniester area were naturally not negligible. It has been calculated that their troops totaled ca 20-25.000 men. They had gathered along the Dniester shores as well, on the opposite side from the Greek troops, constructing bulwarks and parapets. For an accurate examination of the Bolshevik forces, see ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, Φ.263/Ε/1, “Συμπληρωματική Έκθεσις της εν Ουκρανία και Βεσσαραβία Εκστρατείας”, pp. 14-16.

¹⁸⁴ Romania had for the initial stages of the war remained neutral, until 1916 when upon the signing of a Treaty with the Entente Powers, Romania entered the alliance. Romania’s offensive against Austria-Hungary on the Romanian-Hungarian borders would secure territorial gains for the country, as promised by the Great Powers. Yet this attack was soon easily repelled, and Romania was under the occupation of the Central Powers. Romania managed to regain its independence and declared the war against the Central Powers on the 10th of November 1918, a day before the German armistice. Romania’s short-term war entry had left its nationalistic demands unsatisfied, thus the self-proclaimed union of Transylvania, with its mainly Romanian population in December 1918 satisfied a great share of these expansionistic policies, long-desired by Romania.

Yet in April 1919 the Bolsheviks of Hungary established a new communist regime, in the heart of Central Europe. The new Hungarian army tried to retake Transylvania, which led to a direct conflict with the Romanian troops, which had been guided and reorganized mainly by French generals and officers. The conflict lasted but a few months. The Hungarian troops were utterly defeated and the Romanians were soon marching in Budapest. These would remain in Hungarian soil until March of 1920.

In Bessarabia though there had been a strong presence of Bolshevik element, which in its turn wished the reunification of this territory with Russia and was in direct conflict with the Romanian nationalists.

The withdrawal of the Greek troops from Ukraine and their march to Romania followed the route along the shores of the Dniester River, upon which were defined the defensive zones, which the Greek troops would form. General d'Espèrey having replaced General Berthelot, as commander of Army of the Danube had decided the fortification of the Bessarabian territory.¹⁸⁵ Three sectors were created, namely in Akkerman, in Palanca and in Bender.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, the Greek HQ along with the French were established in Galati. It should be underlined here, that for the first time, the Greek troops were under the direct command of General Nider, namely their principle commander, instead of the French military authorities.¹⁸⁷

The overall stay of the Greek troops within the Rumanian borders lasted three months, from the 11th April until the 17th of July 1919. It should be noted, that in comparison with the stay in Ukraine, the second one in Bessarabia was totally different. The Greek troops never came in direct conflict with the Bolsheviks, while the action was merely reduced in distant shot-firing across the Dniester River. Moreover, the living conditions of the Greek Army were principally meliorated. Not only were they largely independent from their French comrades, but the overall attitude of the population and the Romanian troops was generally friendly disposed towards the Greek troops, contrary to the former situation in Ukraine.¹⁸⁸ Indeed the appreciation of the

Finally, the Treaty of Trianon in June 1920 would conclusively put a final closure on the territorial controversies between these two countries. See Diner, *op.cit.*, pp. 67-76; MacMillan, *op.cit.*, pp. 125-135; Γονατάς, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

¹⁸⁵ Here it should be noted that according to the military plan, the major task of the defensive zones had been undertaken by the Greek Army, which would be placed near the primary points of possible clashes, along with some minor Rumanian platoons, while the French troops would act solely as reserves.

¹⁸⁶ Nowadays these territories belong to the states of Moldavia and Ukraine.

¹⁸⁷ See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...", *op.cit.*, pp. 247-253.

¹⁸⁸ Unlike the attitude of the Ukrainian population, the Greek Army encountered a very different behavior from the locals. This part of Bessarabia was inhabited not only by Romanian and Moldavians but also many German settlers, which had migrated there during the past centuries. Furthermore, there had been also numerous Greek communities in Galati, Constanta, and Braila etc. Both the population and the Romanian authorities understood the significance of the Greek military presence in these territories for the fulfillment of their national interests. Thus they tried to befriend their new allies and facilitate their stay. Here extremely enlightening are the personal memoirs from the officers, who participated in the campaign, such as N. Grigoriadis and N. Plastiras. See Ζάννας, "Εκστρατεία στη Μεσημβρινή...", *op.cit.*, pp. 69-70 & Π.Α. Ζάννας (ed.), *Νικόλαος Πλαστήρας, Εκστρατεία Ουκρανίας 1919, Κίνημα 6^{ης} Μαρτίου 1933, Αλληλογραφία*, (Αθήνα, Ερμής, 1979), pp. 45-46.

The Romanian troops showed also their gratitude towards the Greek Army, for their military service and their impeccable attitude. A typical example is the report sent to the Greek High Command in Bessarabia from the Romanian C-in-C General Prezan, who among others states: "...Today I am deeply touched by the Greek Army's withdrawal, I declare to you, in the name of the entire Romanian

Romanians was of such magnitude, that shortly before the departure of the Greek troops, the citizens asked through an official declaration to the Paris Conference the extension of the Greek Army's stay in their land, in order the administration of Bessarabia province to be assigned to Greece.¹⁸⁹

The unofficial end of the Ukrainian campaign was given on the 6th of May 1919, when in the Paris Peace Conference was decided, that Greece would be permitted to occupy Smyrna and Venizelos informed immediately the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greek embassy in Istanbul.¹⁹⁰ A few days later, on the 15th May General Nider announced to the Greek troops in Romania that through their sacrifices, Greece's national interests had been fulfilled and Smyrna would be occupied by the Greek Army. Soon after, they would start the demobilization of the Greek Divisions in Bessarabia and their transfer to Asia Minor.¹⁹¹

The overall manpower of the Greek Expeditionary Force totaled 22.509 privates and 842 officers throughout the whole span of the Ukrainian Campaign. From these numbers, the Greek losses amounted to 1.055 men, of whom 398 vanished and deceased, while 657 wounded.¹⁹² Although these numbers may seem small and insignificant, one should take into consideration that we are dealing with a campaign,

Army, our great sorrow for our separation, and our admiration, which we feel, for this dignified and manful attitude, that your troops continuously demonstrated..." See Νίδερ, *op.cit.*, pp. 425-426.

¹⁸⁹ Στέφανος Γ. Σαράφης, *Ιστορικές Αναμνήσεις (Από τα παιδικά χρόνια ως την Κατοχή)*, (Αθήνα, Επικαιρότητα, 1980), p. 165.

¹⁹⁰ On the 6th of May 1919, Venizelos telegraphed to the Greek High Commissioner in Istanbul E. Kanellopoulos that the PMs of Great Britain and France, as well the President of the United States, had decided that Smyrna was to be directly occupied by the Greek troops. For this purpose, the I Div., which was never sent in Ukraine would depart for Smyrna. Venizelos also added that the Greek C-in-C Paraskevopoulos should announce General d'Espèrey, that the remaining Greek division stationed in Bessarabia should be swiftly released, -as a strong Greek presence in the area was no longer needed-, in order to be sent also in Smyrna. For this telegram see Μουσείο Μπενάκη/Αρχείο Ελευθέριου Βενιζέλου/Φάκελος 017-39, Paris, 23/6th May 1919, "Επιστολή του Ε. Βενιζέλου προς τον Ε. Καννελόπουλο σχετικά με την αποστολή Ελληνικών μεραρχιών στη Σμύρνη", <http://www.venizelosarchives.gr/rec.asp?id=3870>.

¹⁹¹ The news of Smyrna's occupation brought great joy to the Greek Army in Romania and raised their morale which had been utterly deteriorated from the continuation of the expedition in Bessarabia. General Nider had already since the end of April informed Venizelos that the morale of the Greek troops was extremely low, due to their successive sufferings, the war-weariness, and their homesickness. He furthermore stated, that the Greek soldiers didn't feel obliged to guard the Romanian borders, even though General Nider himself, had explained to them the benefits that Greece would be enjoying from their irreproachable attitude. For this report see Ελληνικό Λογοτεχνικό και Ιστορικό Αρχείο (Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive from now on Ε.Λ.Ι.Α.)/Αρχείο Ελευθέριου Βενιζέλου/Φάκελος 05/067, <http://www.venizelosarchives.gr/rec.asp?id=37713>; See also ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...", *op.cit.*, pp. 255-256; Νίδερ, *op.cit.*, 416-417.

¹⁹² ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...", *op.cit.*, pp. 260-261.

which in purely military terms lasted merely three months. Therefore those casualties in such short notice, should not be neglected or be considered trivial.

The Ukrainian Campaign can be characterized in its total as a failed expedition. Although the Greek troops may have demonstrated chiefly impeccable moral and military attitude, they were utterly defeated in the battlefields. But who was truly responsible for this unsuccessful operation? Was it the French leadership, which lacked administration and discipline skills to manage a military expedition of such a scale? Did the Greek government lack the right and adequate judgment, as to the entire goal of the expedition? Was it perhaps the operation itself, which since the beginning had been characterized as a defensive campaign? Finally was this expedition even intended to succeed in the first place? Undoubtedly the reasons of failure in this part of the Greek history were numerous. Some minor and some more considerable contributed to the final unsuccessful outcome of this adventure. These exact reasons will be examined meticulously in the chapter ahead.

5. The Retrospect of Failure: The causes of the Ukrainian Debacle

The Ukrainian Campaign is probably one of these occasions, when everything that could go wrong, did and went so. Military incompetence, erroneous judgement of the opposite side, war weariness and disinterested troops, operations in a foreign and largely unfamiliar soil amidst a raging civil war, failure of cooperation between the allies and many more causes created a farrago, in which the Greek Army found itself bound and deep entangled. Logically, as already mentioned before, the Greek troops did not appear out of the sudden in Southern Russia, rather they were used as per the political instructions, which were drafted during this time, had commandeered them to. The failure of the Ukrainian Campaign couldn't be attributed to a single factor but is rather a summation of reasons, which doomed almost since the beginning of this expedition to be a catastrophe.

5.1 France in Southern Russia: Lack of a unified policy

The French policy towards the new Soviet state lacked since the beginning a clear strategy. Even if sometimes it seemed to demonstrate a rational approach, it could or would rapidly be altered. Not only the unstable conditions within the Russian geopolitical scene were thus responsible, but the disagreements among the French policy-makers and the general staff had also been frequent. Although Clemenceau was a fervent anti-communist, some of his associates at the early stages of the Russian Civil War were exploring the solution of cooperation with the Bolsheviks. While at some point during the first quarter of 1918 some French statesmen were declaring their intention on supporting the Bolsheviks against the Germans, the French ambassador in Russia Joseph Noulens believed that the Bolsheviks were actually an impediment, both to the re-establishment of Russia's pre-war status quo, namely the re-institution of the ancient regime, and to France's financial interests. This notion was further corroborated by Clemenceau himself when he finally intervened to end all discussions for possible

cooperation with the Bolsheviks and proposed, that solely an intervention could restore France's former financial interests in Russia.¹⁹³

In the summer of 1918, when the Allies were seeking a suitable solution for the "Russian problem", three suggestions were presented on the table. First, they would support the various anti-Bolshevik Governments, and reinforce them mainly through financial and war-materiel means, though without direct intervention. The second suggestion was immediate military action against the new communist regime. The third was the creation of a "cordon sanitaire", around the borders of the newly born Soviet State in order to attempt to stop the outspread of Bolshevism.¹⁹⁴ As more or less all solutions were tested all across the vast Russian territory, thus it happened also in the western-most Southern part of Russia, in Ukraine; although that was not the plan all along. Clemenceau's point of view was that France would undertake the mission of supervising the German evacuation from Ukraine after the armistice of WWI had been signed.¹⁹⁵ Thus, he had envisaged that France could set a strong foothold in Russia, in order to assist the anti-Bolshevik forces to organize and monitor their forces and supervise the launch of the offensives that would be undertaken by Denikin's Whites. The Allied troops in the area, would help to restore order and security, but no offensive

¹⁹³ The French had proposed at first to assist the Bolsheviks through military equipment and some French officers in their attempt to re-organize a Russian army, in order to create a barrier to the Germans in the East. Trotsky had at that time also welcomed this proposition and the Soviets seemed willing to accept the French aid. The proponent of the rapprochement-idea was the French Ministry of War, which was stating that at that time the Bolsheviks seemed to be the only capable force that could provide sufficient opposition to the Central Powers, as the Whites were practically inexistent.

However, the Quai d'Orsay (namely the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs), was examining the things not exclusively from a military point of view. It was supporting the notion that the cooperation with the Bolsheviks would alienate their White political opponents and drive them directly to the Germans. Knowing already the decision of the Bolsheviks to repudiate all the foreign debts in Russia, the French knew that even if they supported the Reds, it would be almost impossible to regain their former economic status under the new communist regime. Most likely they could enjoy once again financial superiority if the anti-Bolshevik element would prevail. This exact reason was the determining factor of the definite shift on France's policy towards the intervention.

See Michael Jabara Carley, "The Origins of the French Intervention in the Russian Civil War, January-May 1918: A Reappraisal", in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Sep., 1976), pp. 413-439.

¹⁹⁴ Harry J. Carman, "Russia and the Reversal of Allied Policy", in *The Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Apr., 1920), p. 472.

¹⁹⁵ The advancement of the White Army at the time the German armistice was signed was very limited. This was undoubtedly known to Clemenceau, who along with the other Allied leaders, who had decided for the intervention in the South, feared that although the Bolsheviks hadn't yet assembled a great army, even at their current position they could overpower the Whites. See Coates, *op.cit.*, p. 132.

would be assumed from those forces. Thus the major French financial interests could be at least partly restored, as France occupied one of Europe's most fertile lands.¹⁹⁶

The decision of the French PM was also based on the major successes of the French and Allied troops in Macedonia during WWI. Upon the entry of the Greek Army in the war, the German-Bulgarian forces had been defeated and Bulgaria was forced to sign an armistice. Clemenceau had probably contemplated, that as the French troops had proved victorious in the Macedonian battlefields, and thus would it happen in Ukraine, where a major military involvement wouldn't even be necessary, as the operations would be mostly carried out by the Whites.¹⁹⁷

As Munholland precisely comments in his article, the French leadership considered their involvement in Ukraine as a form of pre-war colonial mission, upon which they simultaneously sought to overthrow the Soviet regime and exploit economically their area of command.¹⁹⁸

Yet, the French government prior to the intervention was neither acting entirely on its own nor making light-hearted decisions. While the French ambassador Noulens was trying to expedite the intervention based on his experience in Petrograd and Moscow, some further deployed French agents and diplomats in Southern Russia were complicating, even more, an already complicated situation.¹⁹⁹

A month before the landing of the first troops in Odessa, a conference was held in the Romanian city of Jassy, in which Russian political representatives participated in order to find a mutually agreeable solution on the issue of foreign aid and intervention and also to define the future political status of Russia. This summit was an initiative of

¹⁹⁶ Swettenham, *op.cit.*, p. 248.

¹⁹⁷ Clemenceau announced to General Berthelot during their initial contacts regarding the military intervention in Southern Russia in early October 1918 that the General's task would be to strengthen the French contacts with Denikin's Whites. See Brinkley, *op.cit.*, p. 75.

¹⁹⁸ Munholland, *op.cit.*, pp. 43-44.

¹⁹⁹ According to General Nider, the French Government had based its decision mainly on the information stemming from the French Embassies in Jassy and Bucharest. The consular offices hadn't taken under consideration the newly formed social situation in Russia, which also reflected primarily the peoples' dissatisfaction towards the former, autocratic status quo. Accordingly, these offices were acquiring their information, from former Russian noblemen and aristocratic elites, who in their turn had underestimated the strength of the Bolsheviks and their will to establish their authority. Thus they were spreading the news that the defeat of the Red Army would be swift and easy to be achieved. See Нідеп, *op.cit.*, pp. 433-434.

the French vice-Consul in Kyiv, Emile Henno²⁰⁰, who was an ardent supporter of Russia's unification and thus accordingly he despised nationalistic and separatist Ukrainian claims, as well as the Bolsheviks' ascension to power.²⁰¹

In this conference, apart from the Russian political representatives, participated spokesmen of the White Army, while also four delegates from the Allied Powers. The Allied presence in these negotiations attributed to the Russian participants a major sign of potential future help from the foreign governments, but no tangible promises were given. The participants agreed that the Allied intervention should not only be welcomed but also should occur as soon as possible. A strong proponent of the intervention and its rash materialization was also Henno himself, who keenly persisted on the initiation of an Allied operation. Besides, he knew that only the French government would be willing to dispatch troops at short notice.²⁰²

In general, the Jassy conference proved to be an overall farce and fiasco. The Russian delegates based on personal ambitions, combined with their nationalist aspirations, tried to appear a unified and coherent political body to the Allies, in order to draw their full attention and persuade them that they were eager and competent on being relied upon the task of Russia's glorious unification. However that was simply inaccurate. They proved incapable of finding a common solution, on how the future Russian government should be organized. Some were in favor of a dictatorship, while some others were proponents of a political triumvirate²⁰³. But even among those two suggestions, the first group was again split, as to who could undertake the dictatorship's

²⁰⁰ For a brief analysis of Henno's history, as well as his role and his mingling within the Ukrainian and French affairs of that time see Pascal Fieschi, "L'intervention française à Odessa (décembre 1918 - mars 1919) vue à travers l'action du « Consul de France », Emile Henno", in *Cahiers slaves*, n°14, 2016. Les chemins d'Odessa. pp. 161-172, DOI: 10.3406/casla.2016.1142, http://www.persee.fr/doc/casla_1283-3878_2016_num_14_1_1142.

²⁰¹ Henno had already initiated liaisons among leading Russian political figures in Kiev, which were ultimately culminated with the Jassy conference between 16 and 23 November and it was later briefly continued in Odessa until the 6th of December 1918. See Brinkley, *op.cit.*, pp. 80-81.

²⁰² Henno's persistence was further corroborated by a message sent to Paris by the French minister in Jassy, de Beaupoil de Saint-Aulaire, who stated the direct need of the occupation of the major Ukrainian cities, which could be jeopardized by the marching of Ukrainian Nationalists or the Bolsheviks. See Reshetar, *op.cit.*, pp. 235-236.

²⁰³ This political triumvirate would be assembled by Russian politicians and diplomats, who would form a national coalition directorate in Ufa and would attempt to reconstruct a democratic regime, loathing naturally a possible dictatorial regime, which could easily be turned into an old-style autocratic authority, similar to the one that had been abolished. See Robert H. McNeal, "The Conference in Jassy: An Early Fiasco of the Anti-Bolshevik Movement", in *Essays in Russian and Soviet History: In Honor of Geroid Tanquary Robinson*, John Shelton Curtiss (ed.), (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1963), pp. 231-235.

leadership. The main candidates were the former Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, an immediate descendant of the Romanovs, while the other candidate was the White General Denikin. Under constant discussions and disagreements, finally, the delegates agreed on the dictatorship regime, having as its head General Denikin of the Volunteer Army. Yet despite the final agreement, this summit had actually no legal authority, except probably in the South, as an all-Russian Government had already been established in Omsk.²⁰⁴

Soon thereafter the delegates of the conference elected Henno as their plenipotentiary and mediator with the Allies. The latter departed immediately for Odessa, in order to try and secure the order of the city and the population in the name of the Allies and their imminent intervention. Henno, now being promoted to proconsul, was also in favor of the current regime under Hetman Skoropadskyy, which he believed could be a better asset for the French, as it could most likely secure the stay of the German occupying troops in the area until new French and Allied troops would arrive to replace them. This attitude was further demonstrated through a joint declaration of the Allied ministers in Jassy, which though was drafted almost solely by Henno himself, and was also sent to Paris. The declaration was a clear recognition and support of Skoropadskyy's regime and an ensuing threat, both to the Bolsheviks and the Ukrainian Nationalists of Petliura, that disobedience to the Allied policy would be ruthlessly castigated.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ For a more meticulous analysis of the Jassy conference, its disagreements and its decisions see Lazarski, *op.cit.*, pp. 101-116.

²⁰⁵ This declaration can be found in the telegrams sent to the U.S. Secretary of State, from the American ambassador in France at that time William Graves Sharp, after he had received it from the Allied ministers in Jassy on the 7th of December 1918: "...The powers of the Entente state through their special delegate, the French Consul at Kiev, that they will not permit that the work of the reestablishment of order and the reorganization of Russia begun by patriotic Russians and powerfully supported by the Allies shall be disturbed in any manner whatsoever. The regeneration of Russia as a power, forming part of the victorious group of democratic countries of the Entente, shall be carried out in conformity with the desire of all patriots and of all elements which stand for the maintenance of order in Russia, particularly as it effects the parts of southern Russia occupied as well as unoccupied by the Germans and threatened by Bolsheviks. The powers of the Entente declare their firm purpose to maintain order there. This decision will be carried out within the shortest possible period by an armed force as large as circumstances may require. Furthermore, they declare that from the present they will render personally responsible all political leaders for every attempt to create trouble and anarchy. The French Consul at Kiev declares the Entente powers intend to support, with all their force, the existing authority at Kiev represented by the hetman and his government, in the hope that he will be able to maintain order in the cities and provinces until the arrival of the Allied troops in the country. The soldiers of the Entente powers do not desire to enter your territory as enemies or police. They come as friends of people who for two years have fought in the same ranks. Every attack upon the existing authorities, every revolt which will render [harder] the task of the Allies, will be severely punished. The Entente powers urge you to preserve calm, to return to your work, and to aid in the maintenance of order.", See Papers relating to

But Henno and the rest of the conference's participants, including the Allied ministers, through their declaration,²⁰⁶ were not the sole responsible for the deception of the Russians and the Western informants in the South, who proclaimed that definite decisions have been taken and unity had prevailed among them, in favor of Russia's fate. General Berthelot having received no accurate information or directions on how he should proceed or what kind of operations should be undertaken, had in late 1918 already exceeded his position. In a meeting with a representative of Denikin²⁰⁷, he confided to him, that not only twelve divisions, mainly French and Greek, were to be dispatched but they would be used to occupy Kyiv, Kharkov, the Don and Kuban areas, so the White Armies could then be free to move easily towards Moscow. According to these plans General Denikin had consequently started to draft his policy and his next moves.²⁰⁸

Both Denikin and the Russian delegates at Jassy had assumed, that the Allied support would come directly and abundantly. Denikin and his staff had been deceived by the French man-in-charge, General Berthelot, while the Russian politicians had falsely assumed that the Allied force, which would soon arrive, would be more than adequate.²⁰⁹ A rationale, which was ratified by the aforementioned declaration of the Allied ministers, which though had never had a formal recognition from the respective centers of policy-making, on the amount of manpower or war-material and economic assistance that were to be carried out. The Russian spokesmen had also assumed, that by accepting the Allied intervention in their own country that would inevitably mean huge Allied support. But that was mere an assumption, or even more a self-delusion.

the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, Russia, vol. II, File No. 861.00/3395, "The Ambassador in France (Sharp) to the Secretary of State", Paris, December 10, 1918. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1918Russiav02/d820>, accessed on 20.6.2019; see also Brinkley, *op.cit.*, pp. 84-85.

²⁰⁶ See the previous footnote.

²⁰⁷ That representative was General Shcherbatchev.

²⁰⁸ This promise from General Berthelot to General Shcherbatchev included furthermore, a large dispatch of military supplies and financial assistance to the Volunteer Army. This was directly telegraphed to General Denikin. See Denikine, *op.cit.*, pp. 228-229; Brinkley, *op.cit.*, pp. 79-80; Bradley, "Allied Intervention...", *op.cit.*, pp. 137-138.

²⁰⁹ Berthelot seemed to have been ignorant and misinformed himself. During his communication with the Greek Charge d'Affaires in Bucharest V. Dendramis, Berthelot stated that in total the expedition should be considered a four-month operation, and order would have been restored by then. See Petsalis-Diomidis, "Hellenism in Southern Russia...", *op.cit.*, p. 232.

Henno in the meantime, while being sent to Odessa he committed himself and consequently the French forces that were to follow, both to Skoropadsky's regime, which though was soon to be over and to Denikin's cause. Berthelot had openly devoted France's cause to Denikin, while also Clemenceau was an advocate of a Russian unification, under French supervision, which would at first create a zone of isolation against Bolshevism, until the Old Russian state could be reestablished.²¹⁰ But all of them had forgotten the most prominent local player at that time, Petliura and his Directory-established authority. Petliura undertook the governing of Ukraine soon after the Hetmanate collapsed, having as his utmost aim and desire the independence of Ukraine. Not only Petliura was enjoying the support of Ukrainian nationalists, but swiftly enough his troops were reconquering large parts of Ukraine and were also heading to Odessa.²¹¹

Before the landing of the first French troops in Odessa, the frictions among the local political and military forces were becoming even more obvious. Henno was despising the idea of an independent Ukraine, but as the French hadn't landed any force, he knew that Odessa's occupation from the Petliurists, was imminent. Thus a temporary form of peace-negotiations took place and soon after, Petliura's troops entered the city. Petliura hoping to receive assistance from the Allies waited patiently the Allied arrival. On the 18th of December, the French troops landed in Odessa and the debacle became even bigger. Henno had, before the landing of the French troops, appointed General Grishin-Almazov, as the new head of the Volunteer Army in Odessa, under the overall command of Denikin. That general, thinking that the troops of Petliura would attack the French, attacked them instead and forced them out of the city. But Petliura had never expressed a desire to attack the French, on the contrary, he was seeking their aid.²¹²

²¹⁰ Here it should be underlined that the French governmental circles, apart from the Whites, were regarding as their strongest ally against the Bolsheviks, a future independent Polish state and not a Ukrainian one. As they thought Ukraine should and would once again constitute a part of Russia, as it was before the Revolutions. Thus the support to Denikin was unquestionable, as he was the definitive example of that military authority, which supported the "one and indivisible Russia". Equally the recognition of the Polish state from France could be materialized in an actual anti-Soviet war from the Polish, without the direct need of help from the French, who themselves could be solely present in Ukraine and would aid Denikin's Volunteer Army. See Stachiw, *op.cit.*, pp. 141-142.

²¹¹ Reshetar, *op.cit.*, pp. 237-238.

²¹² Furthermore, Petliura had realized, that a possible conflict with the French could have brought upon him and his future political endeavors severe repercussions, not only by the French but also by the rest of the Allies as well. After all, France was among the great victors of WWI, hence the Directory could or even should under no circumstances come into war-status with the French. See *Ibid.*, p. 240.

Under this polemical climate, the French committed themselves solely to the support of the Volunteer Army, within a Ukrainian city, which had already been occupied by Ukrainian nationalists. In addition to that, General Borius, under the consent and abetment from Henno, named Grishin-Almazov as the Military Governor of Odessa, which was soon ratified by Denikin too.²¹³ Another interesting point here is, that Borius wasn't the only responsible for the turmoil. His instructions, directed by the French Government had been to support all-Russian, patriotic elements. Yet in this statement, once again, these elements were neither specified, nor provided him with a solid strategy plan.²¹⁴

Yet that policy would not last for long. In January, along with a new arrival of French troops, the new French commander General D'Anselme of the Odessa HQ landed as well and undertook the supervising role from Borius. D'Anselme, together with his chief of staff Colonel Freydenberg, decided to establish relations with the Ukrainians. As they firmly believed, both the Petliurists and the Volunteers were fighting against Bolshevism, thus they could be equally used as a more than an adequate bulwark to the outspread of communism. The cooperation of the Ukrainians though meant the breach of the French promise to the Whites for the "one, indivisible Russia", which had been issued at the initiation of the intervention.²¹⁵

The ignorance of the French officers had falsely led them to suppose that the Whites could be willing to seek a common solution. But Denikin wasn't simply rejecting the idea of cooperation with Petliura's troops but considered them associates of the Bolsheviks also.²¹⁶ Denikin's resentment was further augmented when Freydenberg suggested the creation of a mixed military force, accepted by all participants, under the overall command of the French. Although, such a move needed a firm political backing if it was to be sustained. To this direction, the French seemed keen to recognize the authority of the Ukrainian Directory and assist it materially and

²¹³ See Kettle, *op.cit.*, pp. 44-45; Brinkley, *op.cit.*, pp. 87-88.

²¹⁴ Bradley, "Allied Intervention...", *op.cit.*, p. 145.

²¹⁵ Undoubtedly, the ignorance both of the French political leadership and the French military High command in Southern Russia, created constant frictions among all participants sides in the area. The Ukrainians seemed naturally eager to accept a proposed French aid and the subsequent negotiations terms, as they knew that the Whites already enjoyed the Allied support. Consequently, if they ever wanted to see an independent Ukraine, then on one side major Allied assistance would be necessary, while on the other side, huge concessions on their behalf should take place. See Lazarski, *op.cit.*, pp. 122-123.

²¹⁶ Denikine, *op.cit.*, p. 243.

economically, but under the precondition that in the future, Ukraine would accept its federal union with the –once again reconstituted Old Russia-, while major financial interests would be secured on behalf of the French. This lack of coordination among the French and their initial allies, the Whites, the attitude towards a seemingly open recognition of a new Ukrainian regime, the breach of former promises and the confused French policy gave the final blow to the relations between Denikin and the French High Command. Both sides were equally negative on becoming more lenient, and when and if they did so, that would have been under major doubts and suspicions.²¹⁷

This breach of promises and further involvement in the Russian matters had become obvious, since Berthelot's arrival in Odessa on the 13th of February. The French general had been disappointed by the recruitment and mobilization efforts undertaken by the Whites, during the past months, thus he decided to act alone. Apart from the negotiations with the Directory, Berthelot had instructed the French forces to begin a recruitment-task in the area, to bolster the French zone of occupation, as he thought the Whites incapable of doing this on their own. These forces would be under the overall supervision and command of French officers, who would also be responsible for the training of the new combat units. This act seemed not only to attribute Denikin's authority a titular character but defied directly his command, as the ruler in the Russian Southwest areas.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ As already mentioned above, General Denikin seemed to utterly reject since the beginning of the French negotiations with the Ukrainians, any all-party cooperation. His main fear was the question of authority that could be raised upon him and the Volunteer status-quo as established by the Jassy Conference. The French attempts for a unification of the anti-Bolshevik fronts stationed in Southern Russia were for Denikin, a façade in order for the French to accomplish their overall dominance of the area in geostrategic terms. Besides, he believed that possible French assistance toward the Directory could lead to the total subordination of the Ukrainians to France, thus creating a protectorate, whose loyalty wouldn't be committed to the dictum of Russia's indivisibility.

Even the short arrival of Berthelot, whom Denikin seemed to respect highly, in Odessa in February couldn't bring a positive turn, but rather the opposite. While Berthelot seemed to have confirmed to some of Denikin's generals that France intended to cooperate with the Volunteer Army and pledge their full support to their cause, he added though that it should also be accomplished, what was more favorable under the current circumstances. Furthermore, Berthelot underlined that not everyone among the French High Command rejected the cooperation with the Directory, thus he could not do more than initially accept these terms. But the meeting between Berthelot and Denikin never happened. During the whole previous time, Denikin sent multiple telegrams to Berthelot asking him to reconsider his plans and his strategy regarding the political situation in Southern Russia, explaining that sole decisions without the consultations of the White Russian on Russia's internal affairs would never achieve the goal of this country's unification. Finally, Denikin had already forbidden his generals to assume orders from anyone else, be that a foreigner or a Ukrainian. See *Ibid.*, p. 244; Brinkley, *op.cit.*, pp. 113-126; Munholland, *op.cit.*, p. 47.

²¹⁸ See previous footnote, and Bradley, "Allied Intervention...", *op.cit.*, pp. 148-149.

The tension between the French and the Volunteers had become even more obvious, when in mid-February, rumors had started to spread, that an upcoming meeting of all Russian belligerents in the civil war, would be called, in order a common solution to be found; as had been proposed in the Paris Conference. The Prinkipo Proposal was rejected strongly by the Whites, and the local White-inclined newspapers in Odessa were firmly criticizing this suggestion and were blaming even the French High Command in Ukraine, for not supporting and safeguarding the interests of the Russian nation, as they already had a clear image of the perplexity of the situation in this territory. This criticism brought a harsh, dictatorial-style decision from D'Anselme to suspend the local Press for several days, as retribution. While the French General recalled his command later, this was another clear intrusion in the Russian affairs, which alienated, even more the Volunteers, who saw this move as an immediate and unprecedented abuse of power.²¹⁹

The last blow to the French-White relations was given when in mid-March consequent military operations failed utterly one after another and D'Anselme announced that he would declare Odessa in a state of siege, and a new political authority would be established. This shift of policy provoked the replacement of Grishin-Almazov, Denikin's plenipotentiary, by Andro de Langeron²²⁰ as Chairman of the Administrative Council in the city of Odessa, while a General Schwarz, was appointed Head of the Military section (also in control of all Russian troops in the French zone) and in charge of the city's defense. This decision was additionally accompanied by the ousting from the city, of the two closest Denikin's associates in Odessa.²²¹ The new change of established authority met the fury of Denikin, who considered it to be an obvious coup d'état²²². D'Anselme's actions provoked further reactions from the local elites as well²²³, who had realized that the role of the French authorities had become

²¹⁹ Kettle, *op.cit.*, p. 103.

²²⁰ Andro de Langeron was another curious figure in the area, much like Henno. He had participated in the political affairs of Russia before the revolutions and he was active in the area near Kyiv as a grain-concessionaire. Furthermore, he had served in the Imperial Army, while later he found himself to be associated with Skoropadskyy's regime. After the end of WWI, he had established good relations with Berthelot and Freydenberg. According to Kettle, his significance was owed to the power he had gathered through the grain commercial activities. See *Ibid.*, p. 99; Lazarski, *op.cit.*, p. 140.

²²¹ Generals Grishin-Almazov and Sannikov, who were ordered to return to Denikin's HQ at Ekaterinodar,

²²² Denikine, *op.cit.*, p. 246.

²²³ For example the choice of de Langeron had seemed like a vital and significant solution by the French High Command, which falsely believed that de Langeron would enjoy the support of all sides

something considerably more than auxiliary, and had turned into a quasi-colonial instrument.²²⁴

While the arrival of Franchet d'Espèrey towards the end of March should have betokened a rather positive shift and a more pragmatic policy to the Ukrainian dramatic situation, that proved to be merely another delusion. New decisions had been made in Paris, which dictated the necessity of concentrating the French forces to Rumania, in order for the buffer zone between the Romanian and Ukrainian borders to be created there. That meant subsequently that the Ukrainian expedition would be abandoned and Odessa was to be imminently evacuated. In a continuation of the disunity-policy of the French and the arrogant attitude, which they had demonstrated towards the Whites, the decision of Odessa's evacuation was announced to Denikin, a day after this had already started.²²⁵

The situation in Crimea fared no better fate as well. The Crimean Government which had been formed after the war had an even worse relationship with the Volunteer Army, as the Crimean politicians hadn't gained the trust from Denikin's generals in the area. On the contrary, they were rather considered troublemakers. These politicians though disliked equally the Volunteers, who as they thought should only concern themselves with their clash against the Bolsheviks and not interfere with Crimea's internal issues. Thus, the Crimean Government sought since the beginning to establish

involved in Odessa, as he claimed to be descendant of one of the old French founding families of the city. De Langeron had demonstrated a strong will to support the Ukrainian cause and he had been acquainted with the majority of the statesmen in the area. Yet his choice enraged even more both the Volunteers and the local politicians. The first considered him a convenient tool, which would be used to support and put forward the Ukrainian separatist demands, while the latter saw in him, due to his history with wheat-trade activities, an emissary of the rich landholders. See Bradley, "Allied Intervention...", *op.cit.*, p. 149.

²²⁴ The turmoil was even more intensified, as at first General Schwarz was reluctant to undertake the overall military command of the city. He knew that another rift would be created between him and the French on one side and Denikin on the other. To overcome these hesitations General d'Espèrey made new promises to Schwarz, some of which included the terms of a new all-inclusive Southwest Russian government, new recruitment missions would start immediately, fresh Allied troops and materiel aid would arrive soon and Denikin's cooperation would be secured. Under these preconditions, Schwarz finally agreed, without actually knowing though, that they were hollow.

The French had also underestimated the reaction of the locals, who they had thought, that they would support the new authority. Not only that didn't happen, but some local politicians who were in favor of Denikin went so far as to threaten the French, that they would call to mass uprising and demonstration against the new establishment. See Brinkley, *op.cit.*, pp. 127-131.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

close relations with the French leadership in the area, but the French were actually disinterested in cooperating with both sides.²²⁶

Additionally to the egoistic and arrogant approach demonstrated already in Odessa, the French asserted once again the sole authority of power in Crimea, defying, the Crimean Government and the local representatives of the Whites. Firstly, Colonel Trousson –the French commander of the Allied forces in Crimea–, assumed arbitrarily the command of Sevastopol's defense from the White General in charge Subbotin. This arrogant behavior brought naturally the wrath of the General, who refused to obey orders from a French inferior officer. Even if this was not enough, Trousson accused the Volunteers of looting the city's vaults and taking money that didn't belong to them. When he demanded the Crimean government to hand him over those funds, they announced to him that these had been used for the maintenance and supply of the Volunteers, in order to be able to protect the territory. As the Colonel could not accept this, he gave further commands that all the Government Members are prohibited to depart and are to be detained, until the sums are being presented to him. After some days of conspicuous extortion and blackmail, while some funds had been scarcely found, and the Government had signed a document, which delivered all capital and property control of the Government to the French, then and only then managed the Crimean politicians to depart.²²⁷

From the initiation of the operations, the French failed to achieve a unified policy and consolidate their position alongside the existing forces in the Southern Russian territory. Without a clear strategy drafted by the French government, the French generals were sent ignorant or misinformed to draft their own plans based on what they could assume on their own. Either by failing to understand the intentions of the Ukrainian nationalists and those of the Whites or by developing short-term

²²⁶ Peter Kenez, *Civil War in South Russia, 1919-1920, The Defeat of the Whites*, (Berkeley et al, University of California Press, 1977), pp. 198-200.

²²⁷ In order for someone to have a clear image of the humiliation brought upon the Crimean statesmen and the ignominious French attitude, it should be noted that, while they had already embarked on a ship and they were ready to depart the city of Sevastopol, they were ordered by Trousson to disembark and stand before him to provide explanations on how the money had disappeared, in such a manner as if they were court-martialed. Showing no spirit of reconciliation Trousson ordered the confiscation of all Government assets that could be found until they would provide him either the funds or they would surrender the control of all governmental property. See *Ibid.*, pp. 200-202; Brinkley, *op.cit.*, pp. 135-138.

ambiguous tactics, they demonstrated a lack of competency on decision-making on their own and proved “worthy successors” of their sloppy superiors in Paris.

Finally, the French policy can be summarized through the words of the diplomatic attaché of the Greek Government in Ukraine, Ioannis Stavridakis:

“...It’s a fact that today France is altogether hated in Southern Russia. And it earned the public outcry, not only due its insubstantial methods...which it used but also due to the behavior of its officers...In one phrase, France became, due to the inexpedient policy of its on-spot policy-makers, detestable to all Russians...”²²⁸

5.2 Unfolding a Military Debacle

The causes of failure of the Ukrainian expedition were manifold but plain enough. Apart from the obvious omission of drafting a clear policy by the French, the military scale of the operations proved to be similarly feeble, erroneous and quite often illogically sketched. The Greek troops fought often valiantly and did their best, but the incompetence and lack of strategy of their French superiors doomed the operations, time and again since their commencement, to constant failures. Furthermore, the French didn’t consider the Greek troops and their officers as their comrades, having equal rights –with whom also, they had successfully fought together in the Macedonian Front-, but as it happened with the Russians and the Ukrainians as well, they exhibited constantly arrogance and recalcitrant attitude.

The first indication, that the operations would prove disastrous, was the message of General d’Espèrey in response to Clemenceau’s telegram, regarding the situation in Southern Russia and the future of anti-Bolshevik, interventionist endeavors. The French General not only explained clearly that his troops are not adequate to fulfill the obligations of such a titanic operation but also they are not willing to continue fighting in a foreign soil after WWI had ended.²²⁹ Despite the accurate judgment of the situation

²²⁸ See the report of Ioannis Stavridakis, explaining the situation in Russia to the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs N. Politis, dated on 7.3.1919. Ε.Λ.Ι.Α/Αρχείο Ελευθέριου Βενιζέλου/Φάκελος 09-82, Sevastopol 7. March-Athens 15. May 1919, “Έκθεση του Ι. Σταυριδάκη προς τον Υπουργό των Εξωτερικών, Ν. Πολίτη σχετικά με την κατάσταση στη Ρωσία”, pp. 19-22. <http://www.venizelosarchiv.es.gr/rec.asp?id=39082>.

²²⁹ D’Espèrey’s response was precisely this: “...My troops do not suffice, to enter this freezing land, especially during the winter. At most, we could be able to hold Odessa and the nearby docks... (The troops) would consider unpleasant the operations or the occupation of Ukraine and Russia, in which

from the French General, Paris approved nevertheless the further deployment of the expedition.

Even after the operational authorization, the composition of the French troops was significantly limited, while the majority of the troops proved to be untrustworthy. According to the diplomatic attaché of the Greek Government in Ukraine, Ioannis Stavridakis:

“...The military force, which since the beginning the French provided in Odessa and Crimea, was literally comically disproportionate to the severity of the situation. Little by little and while the demobilization (of the soldiers) still went on in France, they were pulling out their men. But even the smallest military force would be a worth-mentioning factor for the fate of these provinces, if the (military) leaders had instructions of what to do if these instructions came from a clear understanding of the situation...”²³⁰

All of the three French divisions sent in Southern Russia had been incomplete in numbers. This was a result of demobilization orders, issued by the French General Staff, after the end of WWI. If though that was not enough, the French had ordered the dismissal of older classes and their replacement with volunteers, who not only were insufficient but also demonstrated largely desertion attitude. The untrustworthiness of the French soldiers was demonstrated quite often, as they exhibited also acts of thievery. For instance, during the stay of the troops in Romania, the citizens of Constanta were constantly complaining about the loot-actions of the French soldiers. Quite vividly Lieutenant Colonel Grigoriadis describes the French volunteers as following:

“...these were not ordinary volunteers; (rather) social scums, mere adventurers, something equal to the vended meat of the Middle Age-mercenaries; they are here to loot...”²³¹

The French despondency and misery were further augmented by the intense Bolshevik propaganda, which was taking place in the occupied areas. A Soviet mission

it seems hazardous, that they could cause baneful incidents...”. See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, Φ.263/Β/1, “Εκστρατεία του Α Σώματος...”, Παραρτήματα 1 & 2, *op.cit.*, pp. 1-3.

²³⁰ See Ε.Α.Ι.Α/Αρχείο Ελευθέριου Βενιζέλου/Φάκελος 09-82, Sevastopol 7. March-Athens 15. May 1919, “Εκθεση του Ι. Σταυριδάκη...”, *op.cit.*, pp. 13-14.

²³¹ See Ζάννας, “Εκστρατεία στη Μεσημβρινή...” *op.cit.*, p. 143, 145-147.

was quickly dispatched from Moscow to Southern Russia headed by Jacques Sadoul²³², a former French military attaché who had endorsed the communist ideology and spread the propaganda mechanisms towards the Allied troops. The Bolsheviks had employed numerous ways of propaganda means to successfully achieve their cause, in order to appeal both to the French and Greek soldiers. General Nider mentions in his memoirs that:

“...the Bolsheviks employed all means of propaganda, using Greek-speaking Armenians and Tatars and above all Israelite women...”²³³

The Bolsheviks tried mainly to create a sentiment of home-sickness, while also they were culminating friendly-disposed attitude towards their communist ideals. Even the French High Command seemed desperate, as it had also perceived, how prone the French troops had been to Bolshevik propaganda.²³⁴

One of the most infamous incidents of desertions, committed by the French, was the mutiny of the French sailors in Sevastopol at the end of April 1919. After the end of WWI, the French troops were eager to cease fighting, as that had been affirmed by the armistice of Compiegne.²³⁵ The continuation of the armed struggle though, made the soldiers and sailors impatient and indifferent to the cause that their government had once again assigned to them. On the 19th of April 1919, the crews of the ships “France” and “Jean-Bart”, “Vergniaud”, “Mirabeau” and “Justice” rebelled against their superior officers. The events started taking an abrupt turn, when the next morning the mutineers

²³² On a brief review of Sadoul’s aspect regarding the Allied Intervention in Russia see Thomas R. Peake, “Jacques Sadoul and the Russian Intervention Question, 1919”, in *The Russian Review*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Jan., 1973), pp. 54-63.

²³³ Though, according to the general, these methods had the exact opposite effect with the Greeks, as they were getting more fanaticized about the expedition and they were even demonstrating harsh punishment methods against the Bolsheviks. See Νίδερ, *op.cit.*, p. 358; Καρακασώνης, *op.cit.*, p. 233.

²³⁴ The accounts of the Bolshevik propaganda were even known to the other Allies, through reports from Allied agents in Southern Russia. For example, the report from Sidney Reilly, a prominent British agent at that time stated that “...among the French troops the (Bolshevik) propaganda effort...is beginning to have some effect...”. See John Ainsworth, “Sidney Reilly's Reports from South Russia, December 1918-March 1919”, in *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 8 (Dec., 1998), p. 1462.

The Bolshevik propaganda in Odessa and the nearby territory was extensive. The Bolshevik agitators were constantly trying to meet with French troops, wherever they could find these in order to try to instill their ideology and provoke hatred feelings for the intervention in general. See Munholland, *op.cit.*, pp. 49-50; Lazarski, *op.cit.*, p. 122; Kettle, *op.cit.*, pp. 102, 148, 185, 273.

²³⁵ Even Winston Churchill, a fervent anti-communist and strong proponent of the intervention in Russia, acknowledged the vanity of this expedition, in which the French sailors had to confront. In a quasi-rhetoric style, he writes “...Why should they fight now that the war was over? Why should they interfere in Russian affairs? Why should they not go home?...”. See Churchill, *op.cit.*, p. 168.

joined the Bolsheviks in joint demonstrations, singing the Internationale Anthem, waving communist flags and shouting slogans against Greece and Romania, while praising the Bolsheviks. They marched throughout the city and reached the Greek camp, where they continued to hiss and shout against the Greek soldiers. According to Stavridakis:

“...three hundred (French) sailors alongside four hundred workers were marching down the central street of Sevastopol shouting «A Toulon, nous voulons partir», hoisting red flags...”²³⁶

As the demonstration was growing even more dangerous the Greek troops, under the French consent fired against the mutineers, of whom five civilians were killed and three French sailors were wounded. While the crowd was dispersed, the sailors upon returning to their ships, were enraged with the Greek troops and they were threatening with bombardment the adjacent Greek flotilla. According to the English report from Rear-Admiral Seymour to C-in-C of the Mediterranean Fleet S.G. Calthorpe on the 1st of May 1919:

“...The demands of the mutineers were as follows:

- (i) The French squadron to return to France as soon as possible and in company, the men declining to do any more work until the date of sailing was fixed.
- (ii) The right for delegates on the various ships to signal and communicate with each other freely.
- (iii) Refusal to fire on the Bolsheviks...”²³⁷

Only under the timely intervention of the British fleet was further bloodshed avoided.²³⁸

²³⁶ See E.A.I.A/Αρχείο Ελευθέριου Βενιζέλου/Φάκελος 09-82, Sevastopol 7. March-Athens 15. May 1919, “Εκθεση του Ι. Σταυριδάκη...”, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

²³⁷ See Paul Halpern (ed.), “The Mediterranean Fleet, 1919–1929”, in *Publications of the Navy Records Society*, vol. 158, (Farnham, Ashgate, 2011), p. 43.

²³⁸ The historiography on the so-called “Black Sea revolt” is extensive and was used by communist historians as a proof of the interventionist policy of the French and the unwillingness of the French soldiers to fight against the Bolsheviks. The most prominent work is that of Andre Marty, who was one of the mutineers and later he became a leading figure among the French Communist Party. See Andre Marty, *The Epic of the Black Sea*, (New York, Workers Library Publishers, 1941); a more objective examination can be found in Philippe Masson, “The French Naval Mutinies, 1919”, in *Naval Mutinies of the Twentieth Century: An International Perspective*, Christopher M. Bell & Bruce A.

During this five-month operation, the Greek troops undertook almost solely the responsibility of fighting against the Bolsheviks. Furthermore, on more than one occasions, the French privates deserted the battlefield, leaving thus the Greeks alone to fight.²³⁹ One of the most renowned incidents happened during the battle of Berezivka. The French Colonial troops refused to fight, abandoned their initial positions and sought cover behind the stationed trains in the railway station of this town, even though they had received orders from their superiors to move towards the battlefield. Furthermore, upon their refusal, they were propagating the idea of desertion to the Greek troops as well, urging them to abandon their positions too. According to the military journal of Infantry Commander Colonel Panagiotis Gargalidis, who provides a vivid description of the French unwillingness to help, Major Konstantinou of the II-2nd Infantry Regiment was declaring:

“...It’s imperative that the French are brought into action, to secure the railway and our back...”²⁴⁰

This attitude of the French was a combination of war-weariness and despondency, which led repeatedly to their objection on following the rules of their superior officers, who even sometimes had to beg them to take the positions they ought to.²⁴¹ In his final military report regarding the Ukrainian Campaign, the Greek Colonel Kondylis evaluated the French troops as:

Elleman (ed.), (Portland & London, Frank Cass, 2003), pp. 106-122; see also Γρηγοριάδης, *op.cit.*, p. 176; ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, Φ.263/Γ/1, “Α Σώμα Στρατού...”, p. 94.

²³⁹ This act of disobedience led to the abandonment of the Greek troops, which were left to fight alone against much superior forces. As if that was not enough, when the French Lieutenant Colonel Geay ordered the withdrawal of the Allied troops from Berezivka, due to their defeat, the French rushed to evacuate first, ignoring the fate of their Greek comrades, to whom the French were also refusing their embarkation on the evacuation trains. The irregular withdrawal of the French in this battle caused the defection of many Greeks as well. See Ε.Α.Ι.Α/Παναγιώτης Γαργαλίδης/3ος Αριθμός-Τεύχος/5th of March, pp. 13-23; see also Καρακασσώνης, *op.cit.*, pp. 109-110; Χρήστος Καραγιάννης, *Η Ιστορία Ενός Στρατιώτη (1918-1922), Μια Συγκλονιστική Μαρτυρία για τις Ελληνικές Εκστρατείες*, Φύλιππος Δρακονταειδής (ed.), (Αθήνα, Κέδρος, 2013), pp. 72-74.

²⁴⁰ See Ε.Α.Ι.Α/Παναγιώτης Γαργαλίδης/3^{ος} Αριθμός-Τεύχος/5th of March, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

²⁴¹ Apart from the fatigue of the French and their unwillingness to fight, they were also demonstrating pessimistic views towards future polemical endeavors, which could dishearten the morale of the Greek troops as well. Such an incident occurred, when after the defeat in the Berezivka battle, fresh reinforcements, under the command of Col Kondylis (3rd Infantry Regt), were sent to the front by train. When Kondylis encountered on the way the French Lt Col Geay and his retreating troops, asked him about the situation of the operation; then Geay replied in despair “It’s all over”. See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, Φ.250/Η/5, “Εκθεσις Πεπραγμένων...”, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

“...The French soldiers were publicly denouncing the campaign, while they reluctantly, participated in the battles, leisurely and when they were no longer needed, if they didn't at all refuse to obey the given commands at each time...Their officers dispatched always undue information, and they seized every opportunity to abstain from the fight. (French) Senior officers were...expressing themselves without hesitation against the ongoing expedition...”²⁴²

This naturally raises the question, why such an expedition was ratified if there were not enough troops available, to successfully occupy a small territory? The answer lies in the fact of the misdirection and the incorrect information which Paris had had, that there were adequate White Russian forces to carry on the attack, while also further Polish and Ukrainian divisions would aid the Volunteers and the Allies.

In order to have a clear understanding of the manpower needed for such a vast operation, it should be underlined that the German troops, which had been sent during WWI to occupy the Ukrainian soil totaled nearly half a million men.²⁴³ Therefore it is needless to further question that the overall Allied forces of ca. 40.000 men, were not even enough to restore the order within a land adrift into anarchy and chaos. According to a report submitted by Colonel Gargalidis to the Ministry of Military Affairs and the Greek General Staff on the 7th March 1919 (according to the modern Gregorian calendar the date is 20.3.1919) for a possible successful outcome on this expedition, it was needed:

“...500.000 Allied troops, prudent, long-term actions, thorough supply and many sacrifices...”²⁴⁴

Regarding the Greek participation, the quandaries had appeared even before the commencement of the expedition. The Greek PM Venizelos had repeatedly declared to

²⁴² See *ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁴³ According to the official Greek military report, during the time of operations in Southern Russia, apart from the Allied troops, the Ukrainians and the Volunteers, there were also nearly 500.000 Germans waiting for their withdrawal back to Germany. Especially in the areas of interest namely Odessa, Nikolayev, Kherson, etc. the German Army had in total 19 Divisions stationed in those areas. See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, “Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...”, *op.cit.*, p. 31; See also Frank Grelka, *Die ukrainische Nationalbewegung unter deutscher Besatzungsherrschaft 1918 und 1941/42*, (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), p. 106.

²⁴⁴ Undoubtedly, the Allies in Southern Russia provided almost nothing of these. See Ε.Λ.Ι.Α/Παναγιώτης Γαργαλίδης/1ος Αριθμός-Τεύχος/13th of March, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

his French and British colleagues that in order the Greek participation to be accomplished, the Greek troops should be considered and treated as equals with their Allied comrades, be that regarding food, transportation, military equipment and of course the chain of command. While Venizelos had been granted General d'Espèrey's consent on the equal terms of the participation, he would soon be refuted.²⁴⁵

The first obstacles, concerning the transportation of the Greek troops from Macedonian harbors to Southern Russia, arose early on the expedition. For the embarkation of the Army, three ports in Macedonia had been selected, which theoretically would facilitate the swift transfer of the troops in Ukraine. Albeit, not only the period of the transportation lasted for five months, but even the way of transportation was anomalous.²⁴⁶ As already mentioned earlier, three Greek divisions had been selected to be dispatched to Southern Russia, of which though only two managed to get there.

The separation of the troops was further augmented when none of the two divisions were sent as a whole. Since the beginning, the lack of adequate transport ships, or their incapacity to carry more troops and munitions simultaneously, deprived the Greek forces of their conveyance means, their artillery and their animals, which would be used for transportation, military assistance, and adequate feeding. The hastening of the expedition, its bad planning and coordination from the French High Command resulted further in the confused and unordered dispatch of the Greek troops. While the troops were preparing for two months before their departure, the exact time and date of their leaving were communicated to them literally in the last moment. That was due to the constantly changing conditions in Ukraine and the inability of the French leadership to draft a clear strategy, on which the Greek forces could rely and would follow in their expedition. The shortage and deprivation of the munitions hindered massively the smooth implementation of the operation. The Greek troops needed on multiple

²⁴⁵ Actually, the first disagreements had started when the British and the French remained apathetic and unwilling to fulfill their promises when they refused, in the beginning, to provide –as promised– the greater part of hospital beds, which were to be transported to Russia. Instead, the Allied delegates in the Istanbul HQ were indifferent to accommodate the Greek needs, as the majority of them were opposed to the military campaign all along. Under consequent and tenacious correspondence a solution would actually be found. See Νίδεπ, *op.cit.*, pp. 129-130.

²⁴⁶ The Greek General Staff had already planned an appropriate and punctilious transport plan of the Greek troops in Ukraine. Though, the last-minute decisions taken by the French High Command altered entirely the scheduled departure of the Greek Army, in a way, which not only was dysfunctional but also “paralyzed” the proper launch of the expedition. See *Ibid.*, pp. 153-156.

occasions their means of transportation, these being cars or horses, in order to move to the war front or to accommodate their military services in the area, but instead these had never departed Greece.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, even when some of the cars finally arrived in Ukraine, after nearly two months of loitering, constant problems kept arising, with the most imminent being the scarcity of gasoline. Since the beginning of the expedition agreements had been made, that the French Commissary would be responsible for the supply of the Greek HQ in Odessa with the majority of commodities, including fuel oils. Yet that became another broken promise, as the French High Command was constantly denying the Greek demands for fuel supply, and when that actually happened, it was entirely inadequate.²⁴⁸

The irregularities were continued, when the Greek troops had to confront the French intransigence, regarding their collaboration. Since the first days, the noncooperation signs of the French were conspicuous.²⁴⁹ As the French had undertaken the overall command of the whole expedition they never regarded the Greek troops as their equals, but rather as their subordinates.²⁵⁰ This had caused undoubtedly great

²⁴⁷ During those five months of the Greek Army's mobilization, there were numerous incidents, in which the Brigades or the Regiments departed Greece without their cars, horses, and artillery for feeding, transportation and war purposes. See indicatively ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...", *op.cit.*, pp. 47-48, 52, 67, 272.

²⁴⁸ The refusal of the French to fulfill their promises, regarding the fuel-supplying, as well as the impediments the Greek Military Transport Department, can be accurately observed in the reports drafted by the commanding officers in ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, Φ.264/Γ/1^α, "Αντίγραφον Εκθέσεως Διευθ. Υπηρ. Αυτοκινήτων Εκστρατευτικού Σώματος Ρωσσίας, 13-29 Μαρτίου 1919".

²⁴⁹ Oftentimes the Greek officers had underlined the imperative need of cars, to facilitate their transfer to distant areas such as the cities of Kherson or Nikolayev. Even though, the French High Command knew the complications and the perilous development that a shortage of such means could cause, ordered anyway the implementation of the commands. Furthermore, the French had occupied all the material warehouses near the harbor of Odessa, which in combination with the lack of cars incommoded the storage of the Greek war material. In some cases, due to those difficulties, the transport ships had to depart with their cargo still laden, even though the troops needed their equipment. See Γονατάς, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

²⁵⁰ Another serious incident between the French and the Greek occurred during the retreat of the Allied troops to Bessarabia, after the evacuation of Odessa. According to the memoirs of Captain Georgios Christopoulos of the 5/42-II Battalion, during the march towards the Romanian soil, he urged a French officer to allow him to cross a bridge across the Dniester River, to seek food for his squadron. Yet, the French officer refused to him, without explanation. When Christopoulos tried again to traverse the viaduct he met the utter wrath of a French Captain, who continued to refuse persistently. The situation escalated quickly and the two platoons were ready to pull the trigger of their guns if sangfroid from others hadn't prevailed, thus the bloodshed was avoided. See Γεώργιος Χριστόπουλος, *Κάποιες Άλλες Εποχές: Αναμνήσεις από τον Στρατό, Βαλκανικοί Πόλεμοι-Ουκρανία-Μ. Ασία*, (Αθήνα, Private Publ., 1984), pp. 94-95.

In Sevastopol, upon the departure of the Greek troops, the aid of a French ship was needed. At that time though the French captain refused with no reason the embarkation of the Greeks upon his ship. Only after a bitter quarrel with Lt Col N. Grigoriadis and his threat, that he will assign the

resentment among the Greeks, not only because they were mistreated, but on most occasions, the Greek officers received orders from inferior French officers.²⁵¹

The combination of all the above-mentioned factors rendered the Greek troops almost solely as the only -capable of fighting- forces, during the era under examination. They carried the burden of a fight, which initially was designated neither for them nor for the French troops though. Within a military imbroglio, the Greek troops fought bravely, as General Denikin also admitted in his memoirs, in contrast with their French comrades.²⁵² Despite the constant setbacks and the final fiasco, the Greeks seemed to have constituted a small pillar of steadfastness, among the overall maelstrom in the Southern Russian territory.

5.3 Odessa Province and Crimea: War within and without

The success or failure of a military operation, rely undoubtedly on many factors. Among them an important reason is the type of the area, those operations are taking place. For the Greek troops, their dispatch in Ukraine didn't only mean the first military expedition outside of their country, but also it would test their ability and reflexes in a peripheral country of the old vast Russian Empire, who was plunging in revolution, chaos, and anarchy.

Odessa was one of the largest cities of the old Tsarist Russia, and in regard with Ukraine, it was even larger than Kyiv, which was considered the capital.²⁵³ Odessa wasn't just a big city, but also a multinational one. Almost solely one-fifth of the

commandeering of the ship to Greek sailors and captain, was the attitude of the French altered. See Σαράφης, *op.cit.*, p. 162.

²⁵¹ The inability of the French officers to command properly the Greek troops and their megalomaniac attitude was another reason for the deterioration of the relations between the French and the Greeks. This was actually communicated to General Nider and the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Venizelos, when he received a report from Col Tsolakopoulos of the II-34th Regt, complaining about the inability of the French High Command. Henceforth, Venizelos asked that from now on (28.2.1919 based on the Julian calendar, 12.3.1919 based on the new Gregorian calendar) the separation of the Command and its equal allocation between the French and the Greeks be implemented. Furthermore, he concludes that if the Greek troops were to act together with the French, then the French directives could be accepted; if though the Greek forces would act on their own, then it should be imperative that the directions come straight from the Greek High Command. See Μουσείο Μπενάκη/Αρχείο Ελευθέριου Βενιζέλου/Φάκελος 017-15, London, 28.2.1919-“Τηλεγράφημα προς το Υπουργείο Εξωτερικών για το Νίδερ σχετικά με την κατάσταση του Ελληνικού Στρατού στη Ρωσία”, <http://www.venizelosarchives.gr/rec.asp?id=3686>; See also Καρακασσώνης, *op.cit.*, p. 156.

²⁵² Denikine, *op.cit.*, p. 247.

²⁵³ Before the Great War, Odessa had an estimated population of 670.000 residents, while Kiev ca 600.000. See Engelstein, *op.cit.*, pp. 312-313.

population was of Ukrainian origin, while one-third was Jewish, another one-third Russian, and of course, there were significant but smaller in number minorities such as Greeks, Armenians, and Poles.²⁵⁴ At the time of the arrival of the Greek contingents in Ukraine, Odessa was totaling nearly 800.000-1.000.000 inhabitants.²⁵⁵ The rapid increase of the population was a consequence of the snafu conditions created from the raging civil war and had turned Odessa to a shelter for many of the old Tsarist aristocracy, as well as many more refugees.²⁵⁶ Yet among the whole population, a great share endorsed Bolshevism and thus was considering the Allied landing an action of enmity and raw intervention in Russia's internal affairs.²⁵⁷

The ongoing civil war, the political turmoil, the Allied Intervention, and the refugee crisis had created an atrocious and inhumane situation in Odessa. The commercial activities had almost completely been eliminated, as the presence of the Allied troops rendered the city an isolated fortress. The economy was shattered, leading to enormous unemployment rates.²⁵⁸ Furthermore, shortages of all sorts, such as milk, bread or fuel, and the spread of various diseases were deteriorating the already grim conditions.²⁵⁹ The inflation was reaching unprecedented heights and the currency was steadily declining, reaching even the one-tenth of its initial value.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁴ Kenez, “, Civil War in South Russia, 1919-1920...”, *op.cit.*, p. 180.

²⁵⁵ Some sources even raise these numbers to 1.5 million, but it seems doubtful that could be true. See Dubreuil, *op.cit.*, p. 66.

²⁵⁶ Ζάννας, “Νικόλαος Πλαστήρας...”, *op.cit.*, p.47; Lazarski, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

²⁵⁷ Most Greek sources state that the Bolsheviks in Odessa numbered 300.000 people. See for example Ε.Λ.Ι.Α/Παναγιώτης Γαργαλιδής/1ος Αριθμός-Τεύχος/ 27th of February 1919, *op.cit.*, p. 30; or the correspondence of XIII-Infantry Commander Konstantinos Manetas with Penelope Delta, in Ζάννας, “Εκστρατεία στη Μεσημβρινή...”, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

²⁵⁸ 80 percent of the workers in Odessa, was affected by unemployment. In such terrible conditions, even if at first, they weren't in favor of Bolshevism, this unbearable situation, alongside the political program and propaganda of the Bolsheviks seemed not only attractive to them but also a cause worth fighting for. See Engelstein, *op.cit.*, pp. 455-456.

²⁵⁹ The most common diseases raging at that time in Odessa were typhus, malaria, and STDs. The large presence of soldiers and the declining living conditions enhanced, even more, the outspread of those maladies. A thorough analysis of the medical conditions that prevailed, mainly among the Allied troops, during the Ukrainian Campaign, is the journal of one of the military doctors of the Greek Army Corps and director of the II-Military Transfer Hospital stationed in Odessa, Nikolaos Sbarounis-Trikorfos. See Νικόλαος Σμπαρούνης-Τρίκορφος, *Ημερολόγιον της εις Ρωσσίαν Εκστρατείας*, Ιωάννα Παπαθανασίου (ed.), (Αθήνα, Βιβλιόραμα, 2013).

²⁶⁰ Quite striking is also the description of American observers, who had been dispatched in Southern Russia at the time of the Allied Intervention. In two telegrams, directed to the State Department from 15th and 26th of March they provide an eloquent narration on the dramatic events, which would finally lead to the total withdrawal of the Allied troops. The first telegram on the 15th March writes “Food situation here exceedingly serious in the town of Odessa, now that the Kherson-Nikolaieff grain stores are cut off. Prices very high, money practically worthless, and every sort of speculation being carried on

to an extraordinary extent. Only hope for treating bad situation and best possible anti-Bolsheviki propaganda appears to be the speedy assistance Allied food supplies and merchandise together with adequate personnel with authority to prevent speculation..."

The second one, provides an even clearer image of the ongoing circumstances:

"1. Economic situation. The Odessa region suffers from a lack of manufactured articles of all kinds owing to the shortage of raw materials formerly obtained from districts now held by Bolsheviks. Industries are practically at a standstill. Of the 50,000 workmen formerly employed in the town, 40,000 are idle. No tramways are running, electric lights burn intermittently and heating is a luxury. Prime necessities sell at enormously enhanced prices, although a survey of the markets shows an apparent abundance. I have informed the authorities that until the stocks of foodstuffs said to be hoarded by Russia are made available, or at least until a serious attempt to do so has been made, I could not give support requests for foodstuffs from America. An Inter-Allied Commission is being formed by the French to control imports and exports, regulate distribution and combat speculation, which is in practically all organizations. The masses suffer while a few make enormous profits, a combination which inevitably breeds Bolshevism. Refugees from Bolshevik Russia have increased the population to nearly 800,000, or 30 per cent above normal. Single unheated rooms without board rent for 1,000 to 2,000 and small apartments from 5,000 to 15,000 roubles monthly. Congestion, underfeeding, and lack of sanitary supplies are the underlying causes of prevailing typhus epidemic.

2. Financial situation. Notes issued by the defunct Hetman government and the city of Odessa are in circulation, Romanoff and Kerensky roubles being held for speculation. The currency situation is rendered more complex by the presence of unauthorized Ukrainian notes and counterfeit money, the latter estimate[d] to exceed 50,000 roubles. Each note must therefore be carefully examined and often endorsed by the last holder. Unlimited speculations in gold bullion with consequent violent fluctuations renders it impossible to know real value of cash on hand. Imperial Bank notes sell at a premium of 100 per cent for large and 50 per cent for small amounts, Kerensky's at a premium of 25 to 40 and 15 to 25 per cent respectively. Money changers charge as much as 19 per cent for small change. Banking has largely degenerated to speculation. In German territory the franc varied in two days from 2½ to 5 roubles, pound notes from 75 to 100 roubles. Francs are in greatest demand, being necessary for the essentials and rental. It is evident that steps must be taken to stabilize the currency, possibly along the lines adopted at Athens. The scarcity of exportable goods in this importing district renders exchange of goods impossible except for large organizations having branches in the North Caucasus, where there are surplus supplies.

3. Political and military situation. The military situation is far from satisfactory, although the French have apparently resolved to try to hold Odessa. A large percentage of the workmen of the laboring classes sympathize with the Bolsheviks and should the city be seriously threatened another debacle such as that at Kherson, where French and Greek garrisons well bred [were] fired upon from the rear, would probably result. The French and Russian commands do not have sufficient forces to undertake the imperative task of disarming the local population. The relations of the French with the Russians have been frequently unfortunate and number of democratic organizations have become estranged. The French commander-in-chief admitted to me that all classes are dissatisfied. None of his staff has had experience in Russia and unfortunately Chief of Staff Freidenberg is a Jew and particularly successful in antagonizing Russian and even Allied elements. This is the inevitable result military intervention unaccompanied and undirected by experienced political agency. Here and elsewhere in Russia the great lack of coordination and efficiency among the Russians themselves emphasizes the need of tact and understanding on the part of outsiders. The French are also handicapped by having troops who are tired of fighting and whose morale is therefore far from good. The Greeks are poorly officered and are a doubtful element away from their native soil. A betterment of the situation depends on the arrival of sufficiently strong reinforcements to assure safety in the rear and to make possible an extension of the zone of operations so as to include and securely hold the supply districts a short distance [to the?] North and East. Please acknowledge by telegraph. Repeat to Department. Jenkins."

See respectively, Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919, Russia, Paris Peace Conference 184.01602/3: Telegram, "The Chief of the Mission to Southern Russia (Riggs) to the Commission to Negotiate Peace", Odessa, March 15, 1919, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1919Russia/d872>, accessed on 12.7.2019 & Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919, Russia, 861.00/4157: Telegram, "The Commission to Negotiate Peace to the Acting Secretary of State", Paris, March 26, 1919, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1919Russia/d874>, accessed on 12.7.2019; see also Reshetar, *op.cit.*, p. 247.

Like most of the French troops, the Greeks likewise had inadequately been informed, about the conditions that prevailed in Southern Russia. The Greeks had imagined their arrival in Ukraine, as a leisure trip, in which they would be surrounded by a friendly disposed population, as the Greek communities were primarily still thriving there. Yet except from their compatriots there, a general suspiciousness overran the majority of the Russian and Ukrainian inhabitants, as to the presence of the Greek and French forces in their city.²⁶¹

The initial suspiciousness and the appalling living conditions turned oftentimes into open hostilities against the Greek troops, who were held also responsible for this escalation.²⁶² Undoubtedly, a major advantage of the Bolshevik residents of Odessa and its provinces, was that they had been adequately armed, thus they could instill fear and cause anxiety to the Allied troops, that an imminent armed rebellion could outbreak at any moment. Here it should be noted that during the German occupation of the city, the inhabitants had been completely disarmed by the occupying troops, which had imposed a strict discipline during their time there. Yet after their withdrawal, the Germans left deliberately or sold a lot of weaponry, which the Bolsheviks rushed to seize or buy. The Greek High Command had repeatedly stressed the need for the people's disarmament to the French military authorities, which requests though, were declined. Furthermore, the internal security of Odessa was deteriorating every day. The state police were unable to do much because they were also afraid of the retaliation by the much larger Bolsheviks. This had as a consequence numerous robberies in broad daylight, while also kidnappings or disappearances were an every-day procedure²⁶³ The armed residents proved helpful to the Bolshevik cause more than one time, with the most infamous incident being the battle of Kherson, when the citizens were shooting from their houses and their roofs against the Greek troops, who simultaneously were fighting Grigorev's Bolsheviks.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Λιώσης, *op.cit.*, pp. 266, 310.

²⁶² There had been incidents, where Greek soldiers were shot or murdered in plain sight, within the Ukrainian towns by the local population, as retaliation for being part of the occupation forces. See for instance Χριστόπουλος, *op.cit.*, p. 86.

²⁶³. See Νίδερ, *op.cit.*, pp. 146-149; Καρακασσώνης, *op.cit.*, pp. 38-40.

²⁶⁴ In the battle of Kherson, in which the Greek contingents counted their most losses in the whole Ukrainian expedition, they had to confront the open hostilities from the residents. Colonel Gargalidis, in charge of the operations in Kherson, ordered the ignition of the houses with gasoline, as an act of retaliation against the residents. This brought miraculous results, as their morale was shattered

The same perilous situation occurred also in Crimea. The news of the upcoming Bolshevik offense in Sevastopol, alongside the political and living circumstances, had caused hysteria and perturbation to the whole population. On one side the bourgeoisie of the city was panicking, as they sensed their imminent collapse. On the contrary, the popular voices were constantly complaining about the intervention.²⁶⁵ Apart from demonstrations, which had been an almost every day procedure, the workers of the city's harbor and shipyard, who totaled ca. 15.000 men, went on a strike and refused to assist in any way the French and Greek troops, stationed there.²⁶⁶ The dire state, in which the city had resulted, was further aggravated as the majority of the workers had once again been armed, by retreating German troops, but also through depredations.²⁶⁷

In general, the Greek troops confronted more than one time the stubborn attitude of the friendly-disposed to the Bolshevik cause population. Not only were they actively assisting the marching Red troops in terms of mass conscription and participation in armed struggles against the fighting Greeks. They were also openly boycotting or blocking omnifarious operations, such as the communication roads or railways between the constantly newly created war-fronts.²⁶⁸

It's unequivocal that the Bolsheviks, in their fights against the Allied troops, lacked in military consistency and hadn't drafted a clear strategical plan, or organized

and they ceased immediately their hostile actions. An accurate narration can be found in Ε.Λ.Ι.Α/Παναγιώτης Γαργαλίδης/1ος Αριθμός-Τεύχος/24th February 1919, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

²⁶⁵ Munholland, *op.cit.*, pp. 60-61.

²⁶⁶ The news of Simferopol's occupation and Odessa's evacuation by the Bolsheviks created a wave of enthusiasm to Sevastopol's workers, who sensed that the occupation of their city would occur soon enough. These sanguine sentiments made the -friendly disposed to the Bolshevik cause- workers more minatory against the Allied occupation of the city. Apart from the mass demonstrations, they were calling through proclamations the citizens to an armed insurrection for the expulsion of the foreign authorities. The situation was relatively normalized, when the French High Command issued an order, stating that whoever was to be arrested carrying a firearm would be executed immediately. This threatening French attitude stalled the rebellious appetite of Sevastopol's Bolsheviks and seemed to have bought some time for the rescue of the Allied troops. See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, "Το Ελληνικόν Εκστρατευτικόν...", *op.cit.*, p. 234.

²⁶⁷ The German troops were demonstrating a rather passive attitude. As mentioned above they would sell their weapons for profit, or as the chaos reigned in the Ukrainian lands, they would quite often get robbed by bandits, who either would keep the munitions for themselves or would in their turn sell them. See Fischer, *op.cit.*, p. 100; Νίδερ, *op.cit.*, pp. 342, 356, 370.

²⁶⁸ A typical example of this attitude is the refusal of the rail workers or the locomotive drivers to transport the troops to the front, due to the pro-Bolshevik sentiments. Thus in more than one occasions the Greek or French officers had to forcefully impose their will, under the threat of a gun. See Καργιάννης, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

a regular and well-structured army, even though superior in numbers. Lieutenant Colonel Kondylis in his military report from the Ukrainian Expedition underlines:

“...The organization and composition of the Bolshevik army had been rather inchoate. It indeed had at its disposal cavalry, artillery, armored vehicles, and trains, but it’s also true that (this army) never managed to utilize either the cavalry or the technical means in such a way, as to have the same effects, as in an organized army...”²⁶⁹

Yet they managed to outbalance these disadvantages, through the overall assistance from the residents of the Ukrainian provinces, who in their turn, regarded them as their liberators from the foreign yoke.²⁷⁰ Even when in some battles the numerical superiority, could tip slightly in favor of the Allied forces, this would be again counterbalanced due to the voluntary or forced mass conscription tactics literally at the last moment, from the vast pool of workers and peasants in places such as Nikolayev or Kherson. That couldn’t naturally be matched from the Allies, whose numbers not only weren’t increasing but rather declining through the continuous demobilization of the French troops and the slow and segmental arrival of fresh Greek troops.

Last but not least the overall climatic conditions, in which the Greek troops were obliged to fight could be characterized as notably harsh and cruel. They arrived in the heart of the winter, in a land where the temperature was constantly below zero degree Celsius.²⁷¹ However, under these extremely cold conditions, the Bolshevik troops were generally used to fight, either as being part of the Communist Red Army or even before that, under the Tsarist rule. The Greek troops, on the contrary, confronted their enemies

²⁶⁹ Their main advantage though was their persistence and dedication to their cause. This persistence furthermore, managed to lead to the psychological distress of the Greek troops, as Grigorev had realized that constant small-scale offensives would eventually break the morale of his foes and exhaust them, both physically and spiritually. See ΓΕΣ/ΔΙΣ, Φ.250/Η/5, “Εκθεσις Πεπραγμένων...”, *op.cit.*, pp. 79-83.

²⁷⁰ Παναγιώτης Ι. Παναγιωτόπουλος, *Αναμνήσεις εκ του Μακεδονικού, Ουκρανικού και Μικρασιατικού Μετώπου*, (Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Ιωλκός, 2003), pp. 60, 67-68.

²⁷¹ As a consequence of the gelid conditions, the Greek troops suffered from extensive frostbites. Especially when they were fighting for more than ten consequent days, such as the battle of Berezhivka, and their attention was constantly turned on the front, thus being unable to organize rear auxiliary units, which could occasionally relieve them from the fight and keep themselves warm. Another morbid incident, indicative of the appalling conditions amidst the freezing Ukrainian land occurred when the Greek troops fought over who would carry a recently deceased French soldier on his shoulders, in order to warm himself from the dead body’s warmth. See Καραγιάννης, *op.cit.*, p. 84 & 79.

in foreign soil, with no knowledge at all of the battlefield and under the aforementioned circumstances, having almost none as an ally, as we already examined earlier the French aid was at best reduced to the minimum, if not harmful at all.

Unsurprisingly there were also some minor desertion incidents on behalf of the Greeks as well, as a combination of the fear of the enemy's superiority and its ceaseless propaganda.²⁷² However, under those conditions, it can be certainly assumed that the Greek troops fought courageously, throughout the whole Ukrainian expedition. Among a plethora of erroneous and hasty decisions, allies only by name and numerous foes amidst a foreign land, this short expedition proved to be a successful -in terms of military attitude, bravery and patriotism- lesson for the Greek Army. Yet many of those mistakes that the French had committed, dragging along the Greeks through the mud of the Russian imbroglio, would be repeated by the same Greek troops in their next adventure in Asia Minor, leading to the final demise of the long-desired vision of a "Greater Greece of two continents and five seas".

²⁷² Ζάννας, "Εκστρατεία στη Μεσημβρινή..." *op.cit.*, pp. 151-152.

6. Conclusion & Hypothesis for Further Research

On the 6th May 1919, the British Prime Minister Lloyd George informed Venizelos that he would be summoned immediately to attend to a meeting at Quai d'Orsay, where a sitting of the Allies would take place in order the peace-terms with Germany to be announced and their final approval to be ratified. Upon Venizelos' arrival, Lloyd George confided him that Britain, France, and the USA had unanimously decided Smyrna's occupation by the Greek Army.²⁷³ This occupation though was not purely a gift in return for the Greek participation in the Southern Russian expedition. The Italians had previously landed troops in Western Asia Minor, close to the city of Smyrna, thus they forcefully occupied by military means Smyrna's nearby territory such as Fethiye, Marmaris, and Bodrum.²⁷⁴ This peremptory Italian action induced not only the confusion but also the disappointment and the wrath of the Allies. The expansion of Italian influence in areas of vital interests especially of Great Britain, but also France, allowed Greece amidst fortunate circumstances, to fulfill its own nationalist hopes and dreams.

Here it should not be assumed that Smyrna's occupation by the Greek Army was accomplished merely by Greece's participation in the Ukrainian Campaign against the Bolsheviks. It was though a critical factor, which was combined by Venizelos'

²⁷³ The dialogue between Lloyd George and Venizelos was the following:

-LG: "Do you have an army at your disposal?"

-EV: "We do. What is this about?"

-LG: "We have decided today alongside with President Wilson and Mr. Clemenceau, that it would be proper for you to occupy Smyrna.

-EV: "We are ready."

-LG: "How many troops can you send immediately?"

-EV: "One division of about 15.000 men, who were ready to be transferred in Russia, where after the turn of events they will be no longer transferred, while Franchet d'Espèrey declared to the Greek C-in-C that he can freely use this division (as he thinks proper). If it's necessary we are able to dispatch a second division right after..."

See Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος, *Ιδιόγραφον Ημερολόγιον*, (Χανιά, Ιστορική Λαογραφική και Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία Κρήτης, 1979), p. 49.

²⁷⁴ Venizelos with two telegrams on the same day (6th of May 1919), announced both to the Greek High Commissioner in Istanbul Kanellopoulos and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that the Allies had decided Smyrna's occupation by the Greek troops. Though in his telegram to the MFA, he stated that the occupation was to be expedited, as the Allies had been informed that the Italians had already landed and occupied the aforementioned areas. See Μουσείο Μπενάκη/Αρχείο Ελευθέριου Βενιζέλου/Φάκελος 017-37, Paris, 23/6th May 1919, "Τηλεγράφημα του Ε. Βενιζέλου προς το Υπουργείο Εξωτερικών σχετικά με τη στρατιωτική κατοχή της Σμύρνης και την αποστολή του Στεργιάδη στην περιοχή.", <http://www.venizelosarchives.gr/rec.asp?id=3864>.

ceaseless diplomatic efforts, having succeeded to thrive under constant allied and oppositional pressure, while also dealing with limited diplomatic possibilities, within an extremely fragile global scene. Venizelos' participation in the Paris Peace Conference was undoubtedly if not the greatest, among the highlights of his political career. Within a few years, Venizelos had managed to succeed greatly, in a field where most of the former Greek PMs had failed. Greece had, if not gained the overall admiration of the Allies, at least managed to dismiss their doubts, which had marked the Greek foreign relations since 1897.²⁷⁵

Greece's participation in the Southern Russian expedition should also be viewed as a part of overall military era, thus not only limited in the battlefields of the Great War, even if it constituted its natural aftermath. For Greece WWI was in its turn, a direct continuation of the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, which would be further resumed up until 1922, namely for a total decade. During this period, through constant clashes, not only outside its borders but also on the inside as well, Greece would double its size and its population, and it would "play the game" of the Great Powers until it wouldn't and couldn't.

In general, the Ukrainian Campaign constituted for the Greek historians of the early 20th century a major contribution to Greece's "grandiose history". Naturally among them, there have been numerous memoirs, journals, leaflets or books composed either by the direct protagonists of this expedition, or by some minor participants, or even later by admirers of those men. It is common in those records a rather apologetic attitude toward the efforts of the troops and a glorification of their deeds. Unquestionably the whole expedition was an operational and military fiasco. The battles won by the Allied troops, or better said, by the Allied troops of –primarily- Greek composition, can be "counted on the fingers of one hand". Yet the responsibility doesn't cumber the Greek Army, almost not in the slightest.

The actual conditions, upon which the Greek troops were asked to fight, were totally different from these principally presented by the Allies. The impression was that the main military operations would be undertaken by the Volunteers, while the Allied

²⁷⁵ The failed war of 1897 against Turkey, the consequent unsuccessful Cretan rebellions towards the end of the 19th century and the Macedonian Struggle, had seriously scarred Greece's relations with almost all the Great Powers of that time. Untrustworthy troops, incompetent politicians and overall mismanagement of the state, had discredited almost irrevocably Greece's image. See Γιαννουλόπουλος, *op.cit.*, pp. 195-196.

troops would limit themselves in safeguarding major cities and strategic points, such as Odessa, Kherson, etc. Furthermore, the Allies had falsely assumed that the Bolshevik Army were hordes of irregulars, or even insubordinate and criminal elements, who totally lacked discipline, equipment and proper military training. That may have been true during the first months of Russia's withdrawal from the war, when the soldiers, exhausted from the long-term clashes, returned to their homes still carrying their firearms; they forcefully seized land from the once rich landowners for themselves, in order to survive. This typical example of the post-revolutionary chaotic conditions was further amplified by the misleading narrations of the Old Russian aristocracy, which had been subsequently hit hard by the new change of regime, thus practically begged the Allies to intervene and restore the old order. For them, either the ignorance factor or their deliberate "White-inclined" propaganda, presented a country, which had despite its will been turned into a godless, unruly Red state. Thus the local population would unquestionably aid the Allied cause and under no circumstances impede the military efforts.

However, the political and military landscape of the Old Tsarist Empire had been rapidly and radically transformed. The end of the war had brought the abrupt termination of the need for the reconstruction of the Eastern Front. Therefore the Allied Intervention, which had already begun, was consequently turned into a pure counterrevolutionary operation, a part of which would also be carried by Greece and its troops. The hastiness and the recklessness upon which the whole intervention was drafted were somehow unique, considering some factors, such as the vast size of the Russian land, the Bolsheviks' influence on civilians, peasants, and workers, while also later their overall numerical superiority. The leading European political figures refused or failed to perceive altogether the eagerness of their troops to put a definite closure in the hostilities, which had already lasted more than four years. On the contrary, they seemed "blinded" and narrow-minded by short-term, possible but uncertain profits, in their support of the counter-revolutionaries.

In Ukraine in particular, the French were under the impression that the situation was limited to one cause only, the restoration of the Old "one and indivisible Russia". They couldn't have been more deceived, after all. They failed to realize since the commencement of the operations, that Ukraine had been the "apple of discord", for almost every claimant within the perplexing Russian political and military debacle. At

a time when the nation-making in high politics reached a new and unprecedented level, Ukraine was also struggling to be recognized as an undisputedly independent state. Even if the population of that country was mixed, no one could ignore the strong, nationalist feeling of men such as Petliura and Vynnychenko, who in their turn fought intensely for their homeland's sovereignty, both diplomatically and in terms of military means. For the Bolsheviks, Ukraine ought to be undeniably a vital part of their newborn socialist state, despite Lenin's initial support to the right of nations' self-determination and their subsequent will to create an independent state. For the Whites, since the beginning of the counter-revolutionary efforts, any thought of Ukraine's secession was out of the question. After all, this country constituted the most fertile land, not only in Russia but probably in the whole European continent. Its grain production and its soil's richness in metals would be a huge asset for any future ruler, Ukrainian, Bolshevik or White alike.

The disunity attitude, which the French demonstrated throughout their whole stay in Southern Russia was in general a small-scale version of a larger sphere of disagreements and confusion, stemming first and foremost from the Russians themselves. The Leftists blamed and vilified the Rightists as bourgeois-elements, whose only concern was the restoration of an obsolete, autocratic regime. The Rightists inveighed the Leftists for their ideological revolutionary monomania, who was a major impediment in Russia's glorious reconstitution. In Odessa only, there were at least four different major multiparty organizations, which would have long abandoned any reconciliatory attempt, if the French would not put pressure upon them, to seek a viable solution.²⁷⁶ Yet this pressure never proved to be adequate to resolve resolutely a plethora of complications, which harried the political landscape of Ukraine.

The French were simply too little and too late in their efforts. Having not attempted, along with the rest of the Allies who fought the Bolsheviks, to crush Bolshevism at its hatch, as they had desired all along, they proved unable to match

²⁷⁶ The disunity of the political circles in Odessa constitutes a major part of the political turmoil that had been created. Yet although noteworthy, its significance was minimized, as, after a few months of Communist occupation, the city was retaken by the Whites in August 1919. In the end though, when the demise of the White troops was drawing near, the Bolsheviks reconquered Odessa in February 1920. However, what was actually important, is the fact that the overall political discords, proved to be a constraint in the sketching of a solid Allied policy, which had been undertaken by the French. As already mentioned earlier, the Russian farrago created the French fiasco, which was particularly responsible for the total Greek failure as well. On the political discrepancies of the anti-Bolsheviks Parties in Odessa, see Lazarski, *op.cit.*, pp. 130-138.

neither the military strength nor the decisiveness of the Bolsheviks, which grew even stronger day by day. And amongst them, the Greek troops would become a target and a scapegoat, for the Bolsheviks and the French alike.

Undoubtedly this campaign was the final –and unofficial rehearsal- for the Greek troops, before their entirely own fiasco in Asia Minor. But in Ukraine, the Greeks confronted nothing but intransigence, paralyzation and calamities, from their allies and their foes alike. The Southern Russian expedition constitutes probably the most striking example of sloppiness and catastrophe, heroic deeds and devotion to the cause at the same time. Furthermore, this campaign constitutes the last interlude of an intensively hectic and tense period, which had begun ten years earlier with the “Goudi coup” and would meet its final demise in the Asia Minor coasts three years later when the last shred of Greece’s offensive expansionistic policy would be ultimately buried away.

Finally, the military reports drafted during and after this expedition constitute a rather unique piece of evidence, which could pave the way into an even deeper analysis of the state of the Greek Army at that time. As already mentioned above, these same troops were transferred to Smyrna right after Ukraine and Bessarabia, to participate in the Asia Minor Campaign. A further examination of the involvement of the same commanding officers in both of these expeditions, as well as the comparison of their orders and their strategical movements in each campaign, could bear fruitful results and shed new light upon the reasons of failure of these two consequent polemical endeavors. Furthermore, the investigation of the Greek soldiers’ conduct in these two campaigns, would provide another asset on the understanding of this turbulent era. Namely, how and why did the same soldiers have an impeccable behavior during the Ukrainian Campaign, while after a few months they were accused of massacres and war crimes in Asia Minor? The overall interaction between these two historical polemical junctures, through the words of their protagonists, could provide unequivocally not only new questions but new answers as well.

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8. Abstracts

8.1 Abstract (English)

This thesis aims to highlight the reasons behind the failure of the Greek expedition in Southern Russia as a part of the Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War in 1919 against the Bolsheviks. It will be demonstrated, that the main causes behind this unparalleled fiasco was an imminent consequence of the French policy before and during the whole expedition. The French, who were in charge of this operation, proved unable to draft a clear strategy. As an imminent result of this negligent behavior, the subsequent French policy, drove further apart the French decision-makers, not only in France, but in Southern Russia as well, by misleading information, affected by personal ambitions and incomprehension with the locals. The lack of an overall unified policy from the French relied on the fact that both the French diplomats and the military officials regarded their involvement in the Allied Intervention as a part of an “old-fashioned” colonial dogma.

Furthermore it will be demonstrated, that upon the instigation of the operation and the landing of the first French troops in Ukraine, the latter exhibited intransigence and non-cooperative behavior. This was primarily an aftereffect of the long-term war efforts of the French soldiers, who wished their immediate demobilization after the end of WWI. This endangered even more the military operations and alienated Ukrainian Nationalists and White Russians alike, bringing the Greek troops before faits accomplis. The Greeks were directly involved in conflicts, with the Bolshevik troops, albeit they were meant to be used as auxiliary forces.

In conclusion, it will also be argued, that the final outcome of the failed Ukrainian expedition, should be further attributed to the constantly aggravating living conditions of the occupied territories, be these social, political and financial. The ever-growing social discomfort, due to the massive pauperization of not only the lower classes, but also the disintegration of the former Russian aristocracy, had created an extraordinary situation, upon which surviving seemed the only option available. Furthermore the continuous empowerment of the Bolsheviks, in manpower and through popular propaganda, increased even more the danger within the areas of action of the Greek troops, as constant threats were appearing sometimes, even out of the sudden.

8.2 Abstract (Deutsch)

Diese These versucht die Gründe des Scheiterns des griechischen Feldzugs in Südrussland zu unterstreichen, der als Teil der Alliierten Intervention im Russischen Bürgerkrieg im Jahr 1919 gegen die Bolschewiken betrachtet wird. Es wird dargestellt, dass die Hauptursachen dieses unvergleichlichen Fiaskos eine unmittelbare Konsequenz der französischen Planung waren, nicht nur vor der Expedition, sogar auch während ihres Verlaufs. Die Franzosen, die die Leiter dieser Operation waren, stellten sich als inkompetent heraus, eine klare Strategie zu entwerfen. Als direkte Folge dieses nachlässigen Verhaltens, trieb ihre subsequeute Strategie, durch Fehlinformationen, und auch beeinflusst von persönlichen Ambitionen und Unverständnis mit den Ortsansässigen, die Entscheidungsträger nicht nur in Frankreich, sondern auch in Südrussland auseinander. Der Mangel an einer allgemein einheitlichen Politik auf französischer Seite stützte sich darauf, dass die französischen Diplomaten und Militäroffiziere ihre Beteiligung an der Alliierten Intervention als ein Teil des traditionellen kolonialen Dogmas betrachteten.

Darüber hinaus wird es offensichtlich, dass seit dem Beginn der Operation in Ukraine, wiesen die französischen Truppen Unnachgiebigkeit und nicht-kooperatives Verhalten auf. Hauptsächlich war es eine Nachwirkung der langjährigen Kriegsanstrengungen der französischen Soldaten, die sich ihre direkte Demobilisierung nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg ersehnten. Dies gefährdete noch mehr die militärischen Operationen und entfremdete ebenso die ukrainischen Nationalisten und die Weißen Russen, und brachte die griechischen Truppen vor *Fait-accomplis*. Die Griechen beteiligten sich direkt an Konflikten gegen die Bolschewiken, obschon sie als Hilfstruppen eingeplant waren.

Abschließend soll es debattiert werden, dass das Endergebnis des gescheiterten ukrainischen Feldzugs auch an die immer weiter verschlechternden Lebensbedingungen der besetzten Regionen zugeschrieben werden soll, seien sie sozial, politisch oder wirtschaftlich. Das zunehmende Unbehagen, aufgrund der massiven Verelendung, erschuf eine außerordentliche Situation, in der das Überleben die einzige Option war. Letztendlich wurde die Gefahr noch mehr vergrößert, durch die stetig wachsende Kraft der Bolschewiken, sowohl in Manpower, als auch durch mithilfe von Propagandamittel.