

CRETE TO BE NEXT IN THE LIMELIGHT

DISPOSITION OF COUNTRY PUZZLES EUROPE

People Seek Annexation to Greece, but Turkey Claims Title to the Island—Protectorate to Be Dissolved

VIENNA, July 29.—The most important question of diplomacy is now grappling with is the question of Crete. What is to become of the island when the four protecting powers—Great Britain, Russia, France and Italy—withdraw their troops at the end of this month? Is it still to remain under the nominal suzerainty of Turkey, or is it to achieve the ambition, passionately cherished by nine Cretans, to be united with Greece? Or is there some other alternative which, while fulfilling the ineradicable aspirations of the Cretans, will reconcile the young Turks to the loss of yet another portion of the Ottoman empire?

The problem is not an easy one to solve, yet its solution, either in whole or in part within the next few weeks, may easily prove a matter of crucial urgency. A good deal of diplomatic agility among the powers and a good deal of level headedness and restraint among the Turks, the Cretans and the Greeks, will be needed if it is to be settled without provoking a serious crisis. Crete has been under Turkish rule for 240 years. Its inhabitants are all Greeks—probably the purest Greek stock to be found in the Levant. Even the native converts to the Moslem faith, roughly speaking one-tenth of the population, some 30,000 of 300,000, though they side with Turkey and regard themselves as Turks—Crete being one of the many spots on this inexplicable earth where nationality is determined by religion—are really Greeks, and indistinguishable in race and language from their fellow islanders.

Christians Restless The Christian majority have never acquiesced in the Ottoman dominion. They have risen in desperate rebellion against it time and again. Their only political desire is union with Greece. They are simple, mendacious, inflammable folk, with a sense of racial nationality that has become at once an instinct, an ideal and a disease. Hellenism means more to them than anything else under the sun. It is one of those deep-seated, primitive, unreasoning passions that in the long run break through all the barriers and artifices of diplomacy. They know that Greece is a chaos of faction and corruption; that her finances are wholly disorganized, her army worthless and her future precarious. They know that union with her entails conscription and heavy taxation. Nevertheless, to be part of the Greek kingdom and under the Greek flag is the sum of all their hopes.

And Greece reciprocates their longing. To obtain Crete the Greeks have fought Europe and fought Turkey, and would probably do so again. They have won all but the final victory. Crete today is free in nearly everything but the name. After the Greco-Turkish war of twelve years ago the powers expelled the Turkish troops from the island and took over the administration themselves, imprisoning its ports and controlling its external affairs.

Turkish Influence Gone Nothing today remains of Turkish authority except a single crescent ensign floating side by side with the flag of Great Britain on the island of Suda bay. There are no Turkish officials in the island. The Cretans pay no tribute to their pseudo-suzerain. For the past eleven years they have been governed, with the sanction and under the supervision of the four powers, first by a prince of the royal house of Greece, and secondly by a former prime minister of the kingdom. Greek is the official language; the legal code has been remodeled in conformity with that of the Hellenic kingdom; the Cretan flag is composed of the white and blue of Greece; the Cretan militia and gendarmerie are under Greek officers; the very postage stamps used by the islanders are those of Greece.

Except that Crete, like Cyprus, still suffers financially from having been once a part of the Ottoman system, and cannot, for instance, alter its import duties without the assent of European bondholders, and except that one-tenth of its population is still Mussulman, there is little or nothing to show that it had ever come under Turkish rule. Since its occupation by the powers the island has prospered, and peace between Moslem and Christian has been all but unbroken. The powers fourteen months ago were satisfied with its progress as to promise the withdrawal of the international troops by July, 1909. Nobody at that time doubted that the withdrawal of the troops would be the signal for union with Greece with the tacit consent of the powers.

Old Regime Disappears But in the last fourteen months much has happened. The old regime in Turkey has disappeared. The first result of its downfall and of the Austrian and Hungarian coups that followed it was that the Cretan chamber voted immediate union with Greece. Under the advice of the powers, Greece neither accepted the offer nor rejected it. She held her hand, and with equal magnanimity and discretion did nothing to add to the difficulties of the Young Turks. But the question, shelved last October, is now pressing for settlement. Unless the four protecting powers leave Crete in a week or two, and what will happen when they go, nobody knows. The Young Turks, however, are insistent that, whatever happens, Crete must remain a recognized part of the Ottoman dominions. They declare that they have no wish or intention whatever to interfere with its present autonomous condition, or to restore their vanished authority. They are content with the status quo. But they are decidedly not willing that the status quo should be altered to their own disadvantage and to the advantage of Greece. They have lost their last titular hold over Bulgaria; they cannot afford to lose Crete also. If a union with Greece were declared, they would resist the blow to their prestige, if necessary, with force of arms. On that point all Turkey is unanimous.

Cretans Determined The Cretans, on their part, claim that their national aspirations are perfectly well known to the powers, have more than once in the past ten years been recognized and encouraged by them—as, for instance, when the nomination of the governor of the island was entrusted to the king of Greece—and that the promise of evacuation, a promise not withdrawn even after the Cretan chamber had voted union with Greece, is practically a European indorsement of their "manifest destiny." Left to themselves they will unquestionably declare for incorporation into the Hellenic kingdom, and the Greeks as unquestionably will give them a ready welcome.

The risks, therefore, are considerable—risks of trouble between Christian and Moslem in Crete, risks of develop-

ments that may precipitate a conflict between Turkey and Greece. Neither Greece nor Turkey, one may fairly assume, desires war. Greece remembers 1857 and Turkey, in the present condition of her finances, with her political prospects still highly precarious, with Albania and Arabia in quasi-revolt and with Macedonia once again seething with unrest, can have no wish for any further distraction. Her best interests undoubtedly lie in getting rid once and for all of the complications of the Cretan problem. But this she does not, and can hardly be expected to, recognize at present. She will not treat with Greece; she apparently rejects altogether the idea of financial compensation. The powers cannot permit an armed occupation of the island by either Turkey or Greece, nor can they evacuate it without a declaration of their future policy.

RUSSIAN POLICE CHIEF MAY BE BOMB PLOTTER

Slav Sherlock Holmes Declares Trusted Official Is Under Sentence for Organizing Conspiracy Against Czar

PARIS, July 29.—One of the most extraordinary police scandals of modern times has been revealed in Paris. Vladimir Bourtzoff, the Russian Sherlock Holmes, who unveiled the mystery of Azeff (who was both police spy and terrorist), declares that one of the chiefs of the Russian secret police in Paris was sentenced by the French courts in 1890 to five years' imprisonment as organizer of the plot against the late Czar Alexander III.

This amazing accusation, which Bourtzoff declares he can fully substantiate, was first made to M. Jean Jaures, director of the Journal Humanite, and a member of the chamber of deputies, and afterward repeated in a written denunciation to the minister of justice. "I have absolute proof," Bourtzoff said, "that this Russian police official, who holds a high military rank, as well as one of the most coveted decorations in Europe, is in reality a convict, open to arrest any moment and to imprisonment for the crime he committed nineteen years ago."

When Bourtzoff went to M. Paures with his almost incredible story M. Paures advised him to write to the minister of justice. In his letter to that minister Bourtzoff said: "I have the honor to lay the following facts before you: "In July, 1890, a man named —, whose real name is —, was sentenced in his absence by the criminal court of the Seine department to five years' imprisonment as the chief organizer of a dynamite outrage—escaped and could not be found.

"I made the acquaintance of this man in 1890, and was in close personal touch with him for fully a year. "I have the honor to draw your attention to the fact that the so-called — (giving the name by which the Russian police official is known), alias —, alias —, who lives in Paris and is personally known to M. Hamard, the chief of the Paris detective force, and to other officials, who occupied an official position in Paris is no other than the man —.

"I hold the proofs of his identity at your disposal, and the object of this letter is to ask you to arrest the said —, otherwise —, I am entirely at your disposal for all information on the subject which you may require."

Twelve Arrested The plot against Czar Alexander III was organized in Paris, and bombs were manufactured here. There was a large colony of terrorists in Paris at the time, twelve of whom were arrested and brought to trial. When the czar heard of their arrest he is reported to have said: "At last the French have a government."

During the trial of the twelve terrorists M. Hamard, their lawyer, declared that the principal criminal had mysteriously escaped, and that he would in the course of time prove to be a police agent. The court, without taking any notice of this statement, sentenced the twelve men to three years' imprisonment, and their leader, who had escaped, to five years by default.

It was this man whom Vladimir Bourtzoff now declares to be identical with the prominent Russian police agent in Paris whom he denounces. When efforts were made to find this police official it was said that he had left France. No information regarding his whereabouts could be obtained at the Russian embassy.

When Bourtzoff was asked how he came to make this extraordinary discovery, and if he was certain that his letter to the minister of justice was justifiable, he said: "I have been looking for — (the leader of the terrorists who plotted against Alexander III), since 1890, and now I am absolutely certain that he and — of the Russian secret service police are the same person.

"I have a well organized service of counter-espionage under my control. While I was unraveling the Azeff mystery my aide-de-camp, Bakul, the former chief of the Warsaw secret police, told me that —, the Russian police agent I now accuse, had been an agent-provocateur of importance.

"Two years ago a very high official in the police told me that —, the leader of the terrorists of 1890, was living in Germany, where he was drawing a large pension. I did not believe that he had told me everything, and so I began to make every effort to find out the whole truth.

Links Identity "Some months ago I learned that the missing terrorist had become a member of the police charged with the personal protection of the czar. At the same time I was told that he was in South Africa. Then I was told that he was dead.

"It is too long a story to explain in detail how I finally linked the identity of the present police official with that of the terrorist who was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in 1890, but I finally succeeded in doing so. "Little by little I acquired the necessary proof, and finally I realized that the secret service official and the criminal whom I had known in 1890 were one and the same man. In February of this year, when the Azeff affair was at its height, I learned from an unimpeachable source that the man was in a state of nervous terror, and that he feared discovery. The time had not yet come to unmask him, but I had letters and signatures which proved my case, and evidence of which I will tell later.

"In Azeff's affair I proved that Raskine and Azeff were the same man. I am equally sure that the present official and the convict are the same, and my proof is equally conclusive in his case.

The affair is likely to cause a tremendous sensation. Bourtzoff's accusation comes on the eve of the czar's visit to Cherbourg.

Away Go the Doors Yeast—I see in parts of China if a man does not pay his debts his creditors carry away one of his doors to allow evil spirits to enter. Crimsonspeak—If that plan was adopted here we might often get the impression that a lot of people couldn't afford to have any doors.—Yonkers Statesman. Difficult for Her Foote Lighte—Has your sister got a hard part in the play? Miss Sue Brettle—Why, yes; it's hard for her. She's got a thinking part.—Yonkers Statesman.

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