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GREEK ISSUE IN BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY (1914–1917)

The article sheds light on British policy of bringing Greece into the First World War on Entente's side. Interests of mutual cooperation between Greek political circles and Foreign Office, the course of negotiations about terms of Greek participation in the war, and requirements of the sides are analyzed. Factors that made an influence on Great Britain's diplomacy are researched, namely: a danger of joining Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria to Central Powers after entering into the war by Greece in the first months of the conflict, an influence of Dardanelles operation on the positions of Greece and British diplomacy, an activity of French foreign service. Methods of British diplomacy, notably territorial compensations, financial assistance and bribery, were discovered.

Keywords: Great Britain, Greece, Foreign Office, First World War, Balkans, Macedonia, diplomacy, foreign policy.

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ГРЕЦЬКА ПРОБЛЕМА У БРИТАНСЬКІЙ ЗОВНІШНІЙ ПОЛІТИЦІ (1914—1917)

У статті розкрито британську політику щодо залучення Греції у Першу світову війну на боці Антанти. Проаналізовано інтереси грецьких політичних кіл та Foreign Office у взаємній співпраці, перебіг переговорів про умови участі Греції у війні, вимоги, які висували сторони. Досліджено чинники, які впливали на дипломатію Великої Британії, а саме: загрозу приєднання до Центральних держав Османської імперії та Болгарії зі вступом Греції у війну в перші місяці конфлікту, вплив Дарданелльської операції на позицію грецької та британської дипломатії, діяльність французького зовнішньополітичного відомства. Розкрито методи, якими оперувала британська дипломатія, зокрема, територіальні компенсації, фінансова допомога та підкуп.

Ключові слова: Велика Британія, Греція, Foreign Office, Перша світова війна, Балкани, Македонія, дипломатія, зовнішня політика.

From the beginning of the First World War the diplomacy of the belligerents was actively working on bringing neutral state on it's side. Greece also among to these states. On the eve of the conflict it was closely connected with Great Britain as her main trade partner¹. For the Britain a cooperation with Athens was an opportunity to create a barrier for German expansion on East². Because of it the aim of London's policy on Balkans was creating an alliance of states of the peninsula³. Becouse of geopolitical placement of Greece, cooperation with Athens had great value for this direction of the British strategy.

The problem of struggle between great powers for the ordinary players never lost the urge. Under challenges of the recent years It is particularly severe for Ukraine, hence is the relevance of the topic substantiated.

The source base of the research includes documents of The National Archives of United Kingdom (TNA), particularly fonds CAB and FO, collections of the documents «International relations in the era of imperialism»⁴, «European states and Greence in the era of World War»⁵, sources published in

the journal «The American Journal of International Law»⁶, memoirs of R. Poincare⁷ and D. Lloyd George⁸.

Separate issues of the research problem are discovered in summarizing works of Greek history (R.A. Klogg⁹, J. S. Koliopoulos and T.M. Veremis¹⁰, A.A. Ulynyan¹¹, D. Michalopoulos¹², D. Keridis¹³); works about socio-political development of Greece in the period of the First World War (O. Sokolovskaya¹⁴, G.F. Abbott¹⁵ and L. Hassiotis¹⁶) and relations between Greece and other states (O. Aganson¹⁷, D. Batakovich¹⁸ Ta J. Maiolo and T. Insall¹⁹); military history researches (H.B. Liddel-Hart²⁰ and A. Zayonchkovskiy²¹) and diplomatic history (F. Notovich²²). However, in the modern foreign historiography we did not find any specialized explorations that discovers specificities of British foreign policy regarding Greece. Such works also are not exist in Ukrainian historical science, which make it possible to be asserted about a novelty of the research.

The aim of the research is to explore the problem of bringing Greece into the war in British foreign policy in years of the First World War.

The objectives of the research are: to explain the value of Greece for British foreign policy; to analyze the development of Foreign Office's diplomacy regarding Greece; to shed light on methods used by London in the bringing Greece into war.

On the beginning of the war there was two political factions in Greece: venizelists (Liberal party) headed by the Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos; royalists under the patronate of the King of Greece Constantine I. The struggle between them is also known in historiography as «the national schism»²³.

Venizelists and the Prime Minister itself were advocated of the «megali idea» (a conception of «Great Greece» in borders of Byzantine Empire) and because of geopolitical situation they were the opinion that realization of these plans is possible only in the alliance with Entente. The King Constantine had other geopolitical plans²⁴. He was closely related to Germany for a long time. He had been studied and performed military service there, and his wife was a sister of caiser Wilhelm. As a result, Constantine is frequently characterised as a germanophile in the historiography²⁵.

It is important to say that documents of Foreign Office does not absolutize pro-Germanic views of the King. On the one hand, they do not deny the fact of German influence on Constantine. For example, in the telegram of British ambassador in Greece Francis Elliot to the Foreign Minister of the Great Britain Edward Grey from the 23 September 1916 an interesting details that the King suffering from alcoholism is present, and Germans in Athens attempt to get him drunk to manipulate²⁶. But generally, British diplomats give him a tendency to moderate policy and neutrality. On the other hand, it should not be ruled out that Constantine was trying to deliberatelly make such impression on

London diplomats²⁷. Anyway, pro-German circles were really concentrating around Constantine²⁸.

In the 1913 the Treaty of Alliance and military conventions of mutual assistance between Greece and Serbia were signed²⁹. When Austro-Hungarian forces had begun an offensive against Serbia, her diplomates informed Athens about casus foederis. But they were denied on absolutely baseless accordingly to the content of the treaty motive that Greek assistance does not bring a significant benefits for Serbia, but it will weak Greece for the future military conflicts³⁰.

However, there is no reasons to blame Greek side only. It is known that on the 6 August Venizelos urged the Government to join Entente, and on the 12 August he asked British council will Britain consider Greece as ally if the latter will act in defence of Serbia. Notably, British side did not give any answer. Premier Minister continued diplomatic approaches. On the 18 August he informed British ambassador Francis Ellion that Greece will be an Entente's ally and join her on the first appeal, but on the condition of guarantees against Bulgarian offensive³¹. On the same day Venizelos without any agreements with the King informed about readiness to provide 250.000 Greek troops for Entente. 50.000 of them he proposed to sent to defend Suez Canal³³, looks like, with aim to play on potential danger on Ottoman empire's entering into the war on the side on Central powers and Turkish army offensive on British positions in Egypt.

But the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Great Britain Edward Grey considered to give up this cooperation. On his opinion, Greek entering to the war on Entente's side could provoke Bulgaria and Ottoman Empire to join the Central Powers. Also, London was afraid of confrontation with Turks because of large number of Muslim subjects. Therefore on the 19 August 1914 Entente's ambassadors informed Greek government that it should adhere to neutrality³⁴. Later David Lloyd George in his memoirs had criticized Grey for «tiresome hesitancies», particularly about Greence³⁵. Grey's caution was also signed in the telegram of Russian ambassador in the Great Britain Alexandr Benkendorf³⁶.

In parallel with Venizelos, the King Constantine also checked an ability of cooperation with Entente. Through admiral Kerr, head of British Navy mission in Greence, he proposed a plan of an attack on Dardanelles made by Greek military staff. From British side the Secretary of the State of War Herbert Kitchener and First Sea Lord Winston Churchill had started to develop this idea earlier. Finally, however, it's realisation was disrupted. Firstly, Kerr proposed to Greek command to create a fleet of light battleships that would have to fight together with heavy British ships. Combined fleet would be a serious power, but light Greek fleet only would be helpless against British

ships — so, Greek command understood this as desire to leave Greece without a possibility to do any resistance in case of pressure from Entente's side or conflict with latter³⁷. Secondly, Constantine soon convinced that Bulgaria will adhere to pro-German course, so he abadoned the plan of attacking the Straits³⁸. The King had not informed Venizelos about changing his position, and latter in protest on the 7 September 1914 submitted his resignation³⁹.

These developments disturbed the King (because of potential demarches of venizelists) and Entente (because of danger of coming to power pro-German circes in Greece). The King did not accepted the resignation and Entente's ambassadors expressed their wish that Venizelos should stay as head of government. By such external support, Venizelos not only saved his position as a Premier Minister, but forced to resignation of pro-German foreign minister Strait and took his portfolio⁴⁰. Hence, next two propositions (in October and November) about joining to Entente and military supporting Serbia on condition of guarantee against Bulgaria's offensive became. They were ignored by British diplomacy again⁴¹.

At the beginning of 1915, when Britain had started to prepare Dardanelles operation, Greek-British cooperation intensified. Approximately of the 23–25 January Gray proposed to Greece to enter to the war on Serbia's side in exchange for territorial compensations is Albania (Northern Epirus) and Asia Minor⁴². March message of British ambassador in Petrograd Buchanan refers to give Smirna to Greece as a compensation⁴³. Notably that Greek ambassador in London Gennadius was negative about it: he emphasized that in case of receipting of territories in Asia Minor Greece will immediately became a geopolitical competitor for Entente⁴⁴.

To neutralise Bulgarian danger, it was proposed to Greece to give up territories in Macedonia (Drama, Kavala and Seres) in favour of Bulgaria. First Venizelos called this idea absurdly, but then he expressed willingness for a compromise about Kavala. In turn, Constantie had begun to clarify details of territorial compensations that put British diplomats in tough place because they had to maneuver in their propositions between plans of Greece and Italy about Balkans and Asia Minor⁴⁵.

On the 26 January Venizelos mad a request to Allied diplomats about military expedition of Entente to Macedonia⁴⁶. Grey promised that troops will be send to safe Greece from Bulgarian assault⁴⁷. British discussed this idea with French and Russian diplomats⁴⁸, but then abandoned it in favour of Dardanelles operation because of new difficulties in joining Greece to Entente⁴⁹. According to Elliot's telegram of the 5 February 1915, Venizelos changed his mind and did not want to enter the war without Romanian assistance. On the 6 February he informed British ambassador that Bulgaria had took a loan from the Germany and demonstrated her pro-German course by

this, so, he rejected any assignments about Kavala⁵⁰. Therefore, a base for agreement made on the twentieth of month had been annulled.

However when in late February 1915 Entente had begun Dardanelles operation, Venizelos started to seek entering Greece into the war again. He forced addressing of German ambassador and head of Greek staff Dousmanis. On the 1 March Venizelos told Elliot that Greece is ready to give three divisons for Dardanelles operation. In response British side required to use Greek fleet in the operation and Velizelos agreed⁵¹.

But new head of General Staff Ioannis Metaxas, which reckons that Greece could not keep Asia Minor and wage long war, had begun to resist the Venizelos' plans⁵². Also, Russian Empire because of danger of capture Constantinople by Greeks was argued against Greek participating in the war⁵³, and Freence, which was concerned that Britain and Greence will take over the Straits, too⁵⁴.

On the 5 March 1915 Venizelos raised a question with the King about Greece entering to the war again. Contantine asked about 24 hours for thinking. Premier Minister did not wait for monarch's decision and informed Entente's ambassadors about his agreement to give 15.000 Greek troops and all the fleet to assistance for Allies. But on 6th March Constantine answered in the negative to Venizelos' question, and latest hand in his resignation⁵⁵.

Greek government had been haded by royalist and convervative Dimitros Gounaris⁵⁶. Because of this political transition, British government did not pursue negotiations with Greece in favour of bringing Italy into the war. However, new Foreign Minister Georgios Zografos informed Entente's diplomats that Greece would not shun cooperation and still is opened for propositions⁵⁷. In the same time British find out that Serbian and Greek militaries discussed joint operations agains Bulgaria. Because Britain had counted also on cooperation with Sofia, Grey ordered to military agent in Greece to be a quite careful in Bulgarian question, and to Elliot – to inform Zografos that Greek provocations against Bulgaria will be recieved by London negatively⁵⁸.

On the 14 April 1915 Greece imposed new conditions for Entente: for a some time (researched materials does not report exact terms) after the war territorial integrity of Greece must be guaranted; Greek army must wage war only on European territories of the Ottoman Empire; Entente must provide necessary military assistance for Greek army to make her strength equal to Turkish. There was no official response from Allied diplomacy⁵⁹. Obviously in the London had hoped that successes of Dardanelles operation will promote Athens to agree on more modest terms⁶⁰.

On the 13 June 1915 liberals had won on the regular election and 23 August Venizelos returned to Premiser Minister's position⁶¹. However,

there was no significant changes during the summer on the Greek direction of British foreign policy. At this time Foreign Office concentrated his efforts on diplomatic struggle for Bulgaria. That was demonstrated by incident on the 3 August 1915 when British ambassador promised Kavala to Bulgaria. It had enraged Greek side and British diplomats had to explain Greeks that in case of joining Bulgaria and successful war Greece will receive large compensations in Asia Minor⁶².

On the 21 September 1915 Venizelos informed Britains that Greek army cannot march without Entente's military assistance of 150.000 troops, the same number that Serbia had obliged to provide according the Agreement of 1913. Notably that this act of Greek Premier could be called a demarch or even an ultimatum because he asked Elliot and French ambassador to answer during 24 hours⁶³. After 48 hours Entente agreed because of Bulgarian army mobilisation⁶⁴. Venizelos required from the King to mobilise the army. Constantine rejected again due to the fact that Serbia cannot provide 150.000 troops according to the agreement of 1913, so he considers that Greece is free from these obligations⁶⁵. Venizelos had to sign a decree of mobilization without official King's agreement⁶⁶.

Bulgaria's entering to the war made Londons position in Greek policy more explicit. On the 1 October 1915 Bank of England give a 5.000.000 franks loan to Greece⁶⁷. But Entente's landing in Salonika that had begun on the 5 October 1915⁶⁸ triggered a rapid negative reaction of society because of impression that country will be dragged into the war without regard for her government's and citizens' desire. Venizelos which was criticized by the King had been forced to resign⁶⁹. On the 11 October 1915 a new Greek Premier Minister Alexandros Zaimis, which had been staying away both from venizelists and royalists⁷⁰, informed French and Russian ambassadors that Greece will stay neutral⁷¹.

Approximately 7–16 October Gray proposed Cyprus and Thrakia for military assistance for Serbia. But on the 20 October Zaimis rejected⁷².

We draw the attention that for that time Greece was not able to rescue Serbia, but she had risked to be head-tohead with armies of Austro-Hungaria, Bulgaria and Ottoman empire and therefore to meet the same fate as Serbia⁷³. It can be stated that official Athens' position was reasonable because the tragic example of Serbs demonstrated how actively states of Entente hurries to help their weaker allies. Instead, British diplomacy demonstrated late reaction on events development when proposed large territorial reward.

On the 4 November in Foreign Office the memorandum had published where, as British diplomacy believed, profs of preparing Greece to the war on side of Central powers were listed: withdrawing Greek money from London City, signing a contract for procurement of quinine (a substance with anti-

inflammatory and antipyretic properties) from Germany, preparing large reserves of food, negotiations with USA about procurement of horses to Greece⁷⁴. However it should be noted that these preparings are not a direct evidence of intention to join the war. They probably demonstrates foresight of Greek authorities which was quite reasonable for the situation where the country found itself. The same day, according to Entente's diplomats advice, venizelists raised a question of confidence to Zaimis' government because of violating the traty of alliance with Serbia⁷⁵. The King answered by another political maneuver. He dissolved the parliament, called a new election and appointed Stefanos Skouludis to a Premier Minister's chair⁷⁶.

At that time Britains and French's made a new approaches of Greek position about the war⁷⁷. Unofficial visit of Greek consul in London John Stavridis to Athens had been organized⁷⁸. On the 11 November he met with Greek ministers and heared from them that Athens will adhere to friendly neutrality about Entente. On the 17 November the King more categorically informed Stavridis that Greece would no join Entente and Allies' pressure will only bring her to Central Powers⁷⁹.

Obviously, because of failure of diplomacy, London to use bribery. It should be noted that Venizelos were rejecting financing from abroad except from Greek diaspora⁸⁰. Foreign Office brought an arms trader Basileos Zaharoff, who had a Greek origin, for new propositions of such «crude diplomacy». Zaharoff proposed to bribe pro-German press and influential Greek officials and to arrange a provocation on Greek-Bulgarian border. In December Zaharoff had meet some Greek politicians and journalists in Neapolis and at that time from British bank 1.500.000 pounds were transferred to the accound of Vincent Calliard (financial director of «Vickers» company for which Zaharoff had been worked) in «Barclays Bank», who was a mediator between Zaharoff and British government. In turn, Calliard transferred the money on the Zaharoff's account in the Bank of France. In December Zaharoff had visited Greece, met Venizelos and transferred 1.000.000 pounds to the account of venizelist Georgios Averof. Unfortunatelly, the sources does not report how these funds were been used later. But it is known about Zaharoff's proposition from the 24 January 1916 (after his returning from Greece) to use remains (210.000 pounds) of mentioned sum for political propaganda. British diplomacy did not agreed with it because venizelists had boycotted elections of December 1915 in order to disrupt them and to provoke a political crisis and removal of the King, so, in London did not see any reason to finance them⁸¹. In the archive sources there is a mention that on April 1916 Zaharoff transferred to venizelists more than 80.000 pounds⁸².

On the 25 February the Prime Minister Skouludis asked Britain officially to give Greece a loan of 150.000.000 francs. Elliot advice British government

to require an entrance to the war in return for loan, but French ambassador, who believed that neutrality of Greece and changing the current government by friendly for Entente cabinet of Zaimis would be enough, was opposed it⁸³. On the 23 March Skouludis asked about load again, used extortion that in case of negative answer Greece will discharge her army. At that time part of Greek army personnel had been really put on leave. To prevent dischargement, Britain and France agreed to give a loan⁸⁴.

On the 28 May 1916 Greece made another one foreign policy twist. She gave fort Roupel, placed on north-east from Salonica near Seres, and Kavala to Bulgaria, therefore demonstrated her shaky position for hostice blocs and disability to resist both Quadruple Alliance and Entente. Allies find out that Bulgarian diplomacy convinces Romania that there is Greek-Bulgarian agreement and new head of staff Dousmanis told Sweden newspaper in the interview about possibility of Greek-Romanian-Bulgarian alliance. In such circumstances French side had proposed to create in Salonica a Venizelos' government alternative to the government in Athens, but this idea was refused in London because at that time Britain held all her attention to the Near East and Salonika expeditionary forces were enough for defence only. However French troops established a state of siege in Salonika⁸⁷, an on the 6-7 June 1916 Entente begun a maritime blockade of Greece⁸⁸.

On the 21 June Entente's ambassadors required from Greece to hold election, to discharge army and to create a cabinet which will guarantee Greek neutrality⁸⁹. Despite categorical tone, Britain still had stayed on internal Greek split prevention course. Thus, on the 28 June Elliot wrote to Gray that he strive (without going into details about methods) in order to make venizelist's press to agitate for cooperation between the King and Venizelos⁹⁰. British continued to refuse French proposition to create a separate government in Salonika hoping that venizelist would won on the August elections⁹¹.

Greece had fulfilled claims of the 21 June. Skouludis' government had resigned, Zaimis became a new the Prime Minister⁹². After it mentioned mediator Zaharoff send to Britain a request for money for financing Venizelos' electoral campaign. The Prime Minister Herbert Asquith agreed. Required 5.000.000 drachmae were provided by Britain and France equally⁹³.

On the 17 August 1916 Central Powers' troops' offensive on the Salonika front had begun, in which they managed to move expeditionary forces' front for a some time (later returned their position in October)⁹⁴. In the view of O. Sokolovskaya, Greek government at that time took measurements to support Central Powers. To prove her hypothesis, the author cited the fact that Greek ammunition depots and trains were moved closer to region where Bulgarian troops where located. In her interpretation in case of offensive latest could quickly took them⁹⁵. However, as for ours point of view, these actions could be

planned by Greek General Staff as a base for active defence deployment against an enemy (that was Bulgarian troops), which in case of favourable circumstances could develop into counteroffensive. Therefore, again, these facts could not be understood as direct evidence of Greek intention to join the Quadruple Alliance.

Finally, Romania's join into the war on Entente's side had led to fully pro-Entente's rhetoric not only of Greek government, but also of the King. Constantine begun to deny his liaisons with Germany and to hint at cooperation between Athens and Entente⁹⁶. But, obviously, Great Britain and France did not believe those assurances and had prepared a radical scenario.

On the 30 August — 1 September 1916 a part of Greek garrison in Salonika proclaimed independence from Athens⁹⁷. With support of French and British units venizelists also organized uprising on a number of Greek islands. A British-French fleet had arrived to the Phalerum. On the 9 September French admiral find out that encrypted telegrams had been sent from Athens to capitals of Central Powers and required to cease communications with later, threatening to use «appropriate actions» in case of deny. On the 12 September it was required to Greek government to place under Entente's control post and telegraph, and Athens were forced to agree⁹⁸.

Zaimis, before his resignation that occured on the 16 September (new government had been led by Nicolaos Kalogeropulos) proposed an alliance to Entente again. In London saw this as an attempt to play for time, but they were going to agree. But French leadership did not expressed interest which British diplomats had threatened as unwilling to develop the partnership, they did not mind about further worsening of the situation in the country⁹⁹. From this moment a line of being "second fiddle" in Great Britain's foreign policy course about Greek issue. Primacy and initiative had been transferred to French.

On the 26 September Venizelos arrived to Crete where with the support of Greek national hero admiral Kunduriotis he had formed a temporary government which moved to Salonika on the 30 September¹⁰⁰. Venizelos appealed to the King with a proposition to lead the national protest movement and join to Entente, but latter had refused. Crisis was amplified, Kalogeropulos government, most of which supported Venizelos' call, resigned, 80 years old historian Spyridon Lambros became the new Prime Minister¹⁰¹.

On the 20 October 1916 a conference in Bologna had begun, where British and French sides decided to Greek proposition of cooperation from 23 October to declare war on Bulgaria¹⁰².

New events in Greece added a new one delicate political problem in Ententes' diplomacy, including British. An open support of Salonika government would mean recognizing royalists' troops as enemies¹⁰³. Also, French side opposed to official recognition of Venizelos' government. Petrograd was

of the same opinion¹⁰⁴. Despite those diplomatic doubts, the split of Greece became a fact. Salonika government had expelled diplomats of Central Powers, on the 23 Novmber declared a war to Bulgaria and Germany. At that time a neutral zone between venizelists' and royalists' troops had been created¹⁰⁵.

Back in October French had sequestered Greek fleet⁰⁶, notably, that this decision had been made without British knowledge. The latter strongly protested¹⁰⁷. Those actions disturbed Greek officials, including militaries. Under their pressure Constantine refused to obey Ententes diktat. Therefore in December 1916 3.000 British and French troops landed in Phalerum and Piraeus. Clashes with Greek troops, subordinate to Athens government, occurred. Ententes' units were defeated and withdraw¹⁰⁸. Athens government banned printing venizelists' newspapers¹⁰⁹, venizelist politicians were persecuted¹¹⁰.

Fuelled by takeover rumours about royalists' offensive to Salonica, enhanced with real Greek army maneuvers¹¹¹, on the 8 December Britain give Athens an ultimatum to withdraw all the troops from Thessaly to Peloponnese, failure of which would be recognized as declaration of war. The same day Entente declared a complete blockade of Greece: «Recent events in Athens were proved conclusively that neither the King nor the Greek government have sufficient control over the Greek army [...] Under these circumstances the Governments of the Allied Powers [begin a blockade]»¹¹². On 12 December Entente required from Greece to release from prison all the venizelists¹¹³. Constantine agreed to fulfill both¹¹⁴. On the 16 December the Greek King sent to Foreign Office a telegram with his own view on the situation. In particular, he complained that Greece four times proposed a cooperation to Entente, but the latter continue to blame Athens for conspiring with Quadruple Alliance and disarms Greek army in the same time when self-proclaimed illegetimate government in Salonica had arised¹¹⁵.

Another one worsening had been provoked by French side, unbeknowst to Britain again. Commander of Salonika front general Sarrail recieved a telegram from France, which content he interpreted that royalists are going to attack Eastern Army's flank. On the 30 December Sarrail's troops began a march to city Kozani to the west of Salonica. To the request of British side French answered that there had been a misunderstanding and actually the telegram was about an assumption not real threat 116.

On the 5–7 January 1917 an allied conference was held in Rome, where new requirements to Athens were made. Withing 48 hours Greek government had to implement previous requirements of withdrawing the troops and ammunition to Thessaly. On the proposal of French side, requirements were complemented by paragraph, according to which, in case of non-compliance of requirements, expeditional forces in Salonika would be entitled to take any actions to secure themselves. Athens agreed, but withdrawed the troops very slowly¹¹⁷.

Long blockade had significantly hit Greek economy. Standard of living had seriously declined, there were cases of starvation 118 . However, French government continued to advocate the strenghten the blockade which was unanimously objected by Britain, Russia and Italy 119 . There is written in the memorandum of Foreign Office of the 27 January 1917 about Greek events estimation: «this intervention into which we [Britain — A.H.] were rushed by the Freanch government definitely compromised the position of M. Zaimis and інтервенція [ruined any hopes for peaceful solving of the problem]» 120 . British leadership also considered an issue of providing food to venizelists 121 . Finally, at the conference of February 1917 in Petrograd Allies decided to reduce the blockade 122 .

On the other hand, in January 1917 French and British diplomats arrived to Salonica, which de-facto was a recognition of Venizelos' government¹²³. Further assignments to French in Greek policy became a new tactic of British diplomacy¹²⁴. On the 11 April 1917 Lloyd George informed the French Prime Minister Alexandre Ribot that he is ready to support an idea of the Greek King's resignation¹²⁵. Also London decided to withdraw his two divisions from Salonica, and in as a compensation Britains agreed with taking by French any initialives about Constantine¹²⁶. It has sense to agree with O. Sokolovskaya's point of view, who believes that this way London was going to pin the thrust of Greek policy on Paris¹²⁷.

In the sources there are two variants which were considered by Britains on that time to solve the Greek issue. According to first one, the throne had to turn to the Constantine's oldest son, and Premier Minister's post had to be taken by Venizelos or anyone from his associates. According to second one, that was more compromise, Constantine had to remain on the throne and the government had to be headed by Zaimis, but provided that germanophiles Gounaris, Dousmanic, perhaps Strait and other would be expelled from Greece. Also Britains did not excluded resolving the problem by force, but in general they had a negative attitude to it, because in that case it would became a chaos in Greece 128. In turn, venizelists, according to information of British intelligence, were not even considered an idea of reconciliation with the King 129.

On the 28–29 May 1917 in London had been held a conference where an algorithm of addressing Constantine was adopted. There had to be a requirement to him to abdicate throne, and in case of refusal Greece had to be completely blocked from sea. In case if any activity of Greek army Entente troops would land at the Isthmus of Corinth.

A need to the King's abdication was argued by violation of the treary of 1863 about accession of Prince William of Denmark to the Throne of Greece (under the name of George I). According to the article 3 Greece, under guarantees of Great Britain, France and Russia, became an independent

constitutional monarchy. Instead, Constantine's actions, according to allied diplomacy interpretation, showed desire to turn i to absolute monarchy, which led to split of the country. As a result, guarantor powers did not wish to see Constantine on the throne ¹³⁰. Thus, the treatment of 1863 was hypocritically used to blame Constantine, although the initiative of splitting Greece was took by Venizelos who now was openly supported by Entente.

On the 11 June 1917 states of Entente officially required from Constantine to abdicate, which was fulfilled. On the 12 June older Constantine's son, prince Alexander, took the oath of the King of Greece. Constantine went to Switzerland¹³¹. Cabinet was headed by Venizelos again, on the 28–29 June Greece broke diplomatic relations with Quadruple Alliance¹³². The Prime Minister declared that Greece was in state of war¹³³.

This, Greek course of British foreign policy had changed a few times throughout the war. It makes sense to asume that if Foreign Office's policy would had more consistent character, Greece could join Entente much earlier, which will safe the state from blockade and split. Struggle for Greece also demostrated competition between Britain and Frence for influence on the country. However, shortcomings of Allied diplomacy were compensated by strong economic and military influence of Allies on Greece, which kept Athens from joining Central Powers. Greek experience of British foreign policy demonstrated that event neutral state could face economic losses and political split if it is an object of struggle between more powerful parties to a conflict.

The experience of Great Britain's struggle for Greece is also illustrative for modernity. As practise of XX - first decades of XXI centuries shown, the states which are regional or world leaders continue to use weaker neighbouring states as a pawn in political and military games. The fate of Greece must became a lesson also for Ukraine, which turned out to be in extremely complex geopolitical situation.

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