

The Ionian University of Smyrna, 1919-1922: "Light from the East"

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To those unfamiliar with the period of Greek history from 1919 to 1922, the title of this paper may give the impression that the Ionian University existed and demonstrated the practical application of peaceful coexistence in the field of higher education, as indeed it was intended to do. On the contrary, the story is not of a fine project brought to fruition, but of a great idea brought to heroic failure by the forces of *realpolitik*.

Indeed, the fate of the proposed Ionian University was bound up with the fate of the Greek venture in Asia Minor which, in turn, was inextricably bound to developments in the international post-First World War scene. In retrospect, given the circumstances and conditions which shaped Greece's role at that stage, it is evident that this venture was doomed to be short-lived. Of the episode Churchill wrote:

The story carries us back to classic times. It is a true Greek tragedy, with Chance as the ever ready hand-maid of Fate. The interplay between the Greek love of party politics and the influence exercised over them by Venizelos, constitute the action of the piece. The scene and the lighting are the Great War and the theme "How Greece gained the Empire of her dreams in spite of herself and threw it away when she awoke".¹

In October 1918, with the collapse of the Central Powers imminent, Turkey hastened to sign an armistice with the Allies. As soon as the lenient terms of this armistice became known, persecution of the Christians in Asia Minor intensified and law and order was on the verge of collapse. The Ottoman Greeks retaliated, demanding the restitution of property confiscated

¹ W. Churchill, *The World in Crisis: The Aftermath* (London 1929), p. 309.

during the Great War and the return of those exiled, deported or recruited to the labour battalions. The presence of Allied warships in Constantinople and Smyrna emboldened them and encouraged them to believe that their moment of redemption was at hand. As this perception of the situation was far from the truth, Eleftherios Venizelos advised the Greek primates to restrain their communities from any undue nationalist manifestations, fearing that any such activities could impede his negotiating efforts at the Paris Peace Conference.² However, the local Greeks, embittered by endless years of persecution, could not understand the reasoning behind the Venizelist policy of appeasement and leniency towards the Turks, a policy essentially dictated by the need to convince the Allies that Greece was capable of ruling over ex-enemies, forgiving and forgetting.

Meanwhile, a number of factors militated against Asia Minor ever becoming part of Greece. For one thing, the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the Great War, in conjunction with the Turcification policy pursued by the Young Turks, had stirred a rise in Turkish nationalism, with ample prompting from those Allied circles which opposed Greek expansion in Asia Minor. By the end of March 1919, the hostile attitude of the Allied representatives in Smyrna towards Greek aspirations emboldened the Turks to set up committees for the defence of Turkish rights. The Muslim population was armed and, in the words of a Greek representative, "what remains of Hellenism in Asia Minor is today sitting on an active volcano, largely due to the attitude displayed by our Allies, and especially Italy".³ It was against this background of violence prevailing in Anatolia that the

² Αρχείο Ε. Βενιζέλου, Benaki Museum, Athens [VA]. File 314, Report no. 637/18.1.19, Politis to Diomidis.

³ Ιστορικό Αρχείο Υπουργείου Εξωτερικών, Athens [MOFA], Υπάτη Αρμοστέια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, [CHC], Ειδικός Φάκελος Β/1/1919, Report no. 494/11.3.19. Captain Mavroudis to MOFA. On Turkish evidence of Italian co-operation, see i.a. Nail Morali, *Miitarkede Izmir Olaylari* [The events of Smyrna during the Armistice Period] (Ankara 1973), pp. 51-2. Count Sforza, Italian High Commissioner to Constantinople at the time, refers to these events extensively in his book *Costruttori e Distruttori* (Rome 1945).

landing of Greek troops at Smyrna was decided by the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference which, in the meantime, had started its deliberations in Paris.

This is not the place to recount the manoeuvrings of the Paris Peace Conference and, more particularly, those of the Supreme Council, about which an ample bibliography exists.⁴ Sufficient to note that in May 1919, Lloyd George advised the Supreme Council that, if the Allied mandates over Turkey were not rapidly regulated, half of Asia Minor would finish up occupied by Italy, which, having withdrawn from the Supreme Council over a row with President Wilson, was landing troops in several locations along the Asia Minor coast. Lloyd George concluded: "We must let the Greeks occupy Smyrna. A massacre is taking place over there and there is nobody to protect the Greek population."⁵ At that point, a somewhat vague Greek mandate over an undefined portion of Western Asia Minor received the unanimous sanction of the Supreme Council, composed of the President of the United States and the Prime Ministers of Britain, France and Italy.

Far from representing any indication of Allied support for Greek irredentist aspirations, and in order to clarify any misunderstandings in that direction, this unanimous decision was soon followed by Supreme Council declarations to the effect that the Greek occupation was temporary and would not determine the final settlement of the issue. Clearly, by deciding the Greek landing in Smyrna, the Allies had found a convenient though temporary solution to the question of the mandates over Asia Minor, since, in the words of the American Consul General to Smyrna, "there was such strong jealousy among them that they could not go ashore either together or separately".⁶ For Greece, on the other hand, the Allied decision represented the starting

⁴ For a comprehensive treatment of the Greek presence at the Paris Peace Conference see N. Petsalis Diomidis, *Greece at the Paris Peace Conference* (Thessaloniki 1978).

⁵ P. Mantoux, *Les Délibérations du Conseil des Quatre* (Paris 1955), I, LXII, pp. 485-6.

⁶ G. Horton, *The Blight of Asia* (Indianapolis 1926), p. 23.

point for the realization of the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα*.⁷ However, the temporary and vague nature of the Greek mandate, together with Italian hostility towards Greek expansion and the long standing differences between Greeks and Turks were bound to lead to events that would seriously question the Greek government's wisdom in accepting the Allied offer.

The Greek contingent landed in Smyrna on 15 May 1919. The Greek High Commissioner Aristidis Stergiadis followed a week later, accompanied by a team of high-ranking members of the Greek civil service who had worked under him during his term as Governor General of Epirus. Their task was threefold: to exercise discreet control over the Turkish authorities until Greece assumed the administration of the area after the conclusion of the Peace Treaty; to represent Greek interests and liaise with the representatives of the Great Powers in Smyrna, as well as with the Allied High Commissioners in Constantinople; and to lay the foundations for the establishment of an effective state machinery in Asia Minor.

Although Stergiadis assumed the post of High Commissioner reluctantly, he was to follow Venizelos's directives with enthusiasm. With Asia Minor under martial law throughout the period of Greek administration, his strict and uncompromising character, together with his past performance as Governor General of Epirus, guaranteed that he would live up to the Greek Prime Minister's expectations for an impartial rule over a society of so many inherent contradictions.⁸

⁷ A substantial bibliography exists on the subject of the development of the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα*. Most of the relevant works are listed in D. Zakythinis, "Η ιδεολογία του Μεγαλοϊδεατισμού", *Πολιτική Ιστορία της Νεωτέρας Ελλάδος*, (Athens 1965), pp. 47-65. See also K.N. Vavoukos, *Η Μεγάλη Ιδέα ως ιδέα και πραγματικότητας* (Thessaloniki 1970) and S.G. Xydis, "Modern Greek Nationalism", in: *Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Washington 1974), pp. 207-58.

⁸ Venizelos himself rarely missed an opportunity to express his confidence in the High Commissioner: "The situation prevailing in Asia Minor is extremely serious and, if I still hope to overcome the dangers, I rely mainly in your presence there as it assures me that everything humanly possible is being done." MOFA, Φάκελος AAK 1919-1920, telegram no. 6627/5.7.19, Venizelos to Stergiadis.

As things turned out, the Greek Administration of Smyrna survived, to be precise, three years, three months, three weeks and three days. Certainly, it did not last long enough to see the establishment of an administration which, as Venizelos planned, could change the face of Asia Minor and bring the public and financial activity of the area into the twentieth century. Nonetheless, the Greek government's adherence to the principle of peaceful coexistence among the peoples of Asia Minor favoured the assumption of measures which, even in that short time, showed how successful they would have proved, had the international situation allowed them to flourish.

For despite the horrific destructive culmination of 1922, the Smyrna High Commission administration was notably positive and constructive. Its programmes were wide ranging, starting with the repatriation and rehabilitation of some 250,000 refugees who had been obliged to flee Asia Minor during the First World War, the organization of a health service free to all peoples in the zone, the planning and implementation of important public works, the supervision of the Muslim institutions which permitted their proceeds to double within three years, and the establishment of the most progressive University in the Balkans.⁹

The most important feature of these programmes was the objective of minimising friction between the different nationalities who were obliged to coexist. The liberal Greek regime set out deliberately to avoid partiality towards the local Greeks. An early expression of this policy came in Prime Minister Venizelos's message to the Hellenes of Asia Minor on the occasion of the landing of the Greek troops in May 1919:

Let the expression of joy filling your hearts be accompanied by an expression of brotherly feelings towards the cohabiting populations. Let them realize that we are not celebrating the casting-off of a yoke in order to replace it with our own so that we can hurt others, but that the Hellenic freedom brings liberty, equality and justice to everyone irrespective of race and creed.

⁹ The work of the Smyrna High Commission in these fields is examined in V. Solomonidis, *The Greek Administration of the Vilayet of Aidin, 1919-1922* (PhD thesis, University of London, 1985).

Winning the trust of the other populations in the area, not only do we remain true to our national traits but we also serve our ultimate national interests.¹⁰

The first practical demonstration of this policy had come with the selection of Aristidis Stergiadis as High Commissioner by Venizelos himself, despite the displeasure this choice incurred among Liberal party members who had hoped to secure this major post. Stergiadis, who had participated in the Cretan liberation movement, and had lost two brothers in that struggle, was a fervent supporter of the views held by Dragoumis and Souliotis Nicolaidis on peaceful coexistence between Greeks and Turks. Equally, he was a firm supporter of the move to create a new eastern civilisation in response to the efforts of the West to penetrate the Near East.¹¹ As he often declared, the only reason for his agreeing to take up the post was his wish to participate in the creation of such a civilisation, whose advent would constitute the ultimate justification for Greek expansion in Asia Minor.¹²

At the same time, the Greek political leadership under Venizelos was adamant that the contradictions inherent in the Asia Minor campaign demanded the pursuit of peaceful coexistence as the only realistic means of safeguarding the Greek presence in the area. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexandros Diomidis wrote to the Greek Commander in Chief Leonidas Paraskevopoulos:

Greece is going to be under continuous scrutiny and the size of the role awarded to her by the Allies in Asia Minor is going to be decided by the impartiality of the Greek administration and its active protection of the rights of the minorities. If Greece behaves towards the minorities as a representative of a superior

¹⁰ MOFA, A 5/VI, 1919, Φάκελος Σμύρνης 4000 - 6000, telegram no. 4443/13.5.19, Venizelos to Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹¹ These principles were expressed by Stergiadis in one of his rare interviews, published by Costas Ouranis in the Athenian newspaper *Ελεύθερος Τύπος* (7 April 1929).

¹² V. Solomonidis, "Βενιζέλος - Στεργιάδης: Μύθος και πραγματικότητα", in: Th. Veremis (ed.), *Μελετήματα γύρω από τον Βενιζέλο και την εποχή του*, Vol. 2 (Athens 1986).

civilisation, only then can she hope for a positive reaction from the Allies towards her territorial claims.¹³

Despite the strong reservations of those who were sceptical as to the feasibility of this policy against a background of continuous warfare, specific measures taken from the first days of the Greek occupation – such as the institution of Turkish as an official language of administration equal to, and in parallel with Greek – underlined the determination of Athens to implement policies conducive to the desired peaceful coexistence among the peoples of the area.¹⁴ At the same time, the preservation of the existing Turkish administrative machinery which would operate in conjunction with the Greek authorities, was considered by Venizelos as the first step towards the creation of an international administration which would reflect the population mix in the zone under Greek rule. From the first days of the official Greek presence in Smyrna, it was underlined that the youth of Asia Minor, Greek, Turkish, Jewish and Armenian, would be called upon to assume an important role in the administrative machinery of the new regime. At Stergiadis's invitation, the primates of the Jewish and Armenian communities were informed of his intention to employ qualified Jews and Armenians, who, in conjunction with the Turkish civil servants already serving, would form the new Asia Minor administration.¹⁵

This inclination of the Greek leadership was soon to be applied to educational matters with the aim of cultivating and educating the inhabitants of the new lands and, thereby, preparing the next generation of senior administrative and state officials. It was also hoped to counter the hellenocentric nature of Greek higher education, which largely ignored the eastern

¹³ N. Petsalis Diomidis, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

¹⁴ MOFA, A 5/VI I, 1919, Φάκελος Σμύρνης 4000 - 6000, telegram no. 48881/22.5.19, Venizelos to Stergiadis. According to instructions contained in this telegram, all the announcements of the civil and military authorities would be issued in Greek and Turkish and a special department of the High Commission would undertake the required translations.

¹⁵ MOFA, Φάκελος Έντυπα 1919-1920, telegram no. 2884/17.6.19, Stergiadis to Venizelos.

world now living within the borders of the Greek kingdom and which should participate on an equal basis in public life and the general development of the country. Furthermore, it was obviously vital to ensure the education of a large number of people who would thus obtain detailed knowledge of the whole spectrum of issues specific to the new domains. The foreign minorities had to be given the opportunity to embrace the spirit of Greek civilisation which would in turn contribute greatly to the improvement of mutual understanding. This effort to promote mutual understanding was not planned as a vague utopian exercise but as a substantial and necessary prerequisite for the pacification of Anatolia.

One of the means central to the realization of these goals was the establishment of a new university. In the aftermath of the victorious Balkan wars, the establishment of a second Greek university to meet the needs created by the addition of new lands to the Hellenic Kingdom was already being planned before the Greek landing at Smyrna. Now, however, with the impending extension of Greek territory to the other side of the Aegean, the immediate implementation of the plan became a pressing necessity. The importance which Venizelos attached to this project became evident in September 1919 when, despite his work load during the Paris Peace Conference, he called Professor Constantine Karatheodoris to Paris to consult him on the matter.¹⁶ A Professor of Mathematics and a member of the Prussian Science Academy and the Vatican Academy, Karatheodoris was probably the most appropriate person to brief and advise the Prime Minister because he had for many years been an advocate of the creation of a second university in Greece. As Toynbee wrote:

He was interested in everything – archaeology, hygiene, economics, languages – and constantly reminded me of what I had

¹⁶ On the personality and the work of Constantine S. Karatheodoris, see the entry in S. Vovolinis, *Μέγα Ελληνικόν Βιογραφικόν Λεξικόν*, Τόμ. Ε' (Athens 1962). See also an article by his assistant in Smyrna Professor N. Kritikos, in the periodical *Παιδεία και Ζωή* (1950). For his contribution to the establishment of the Ionian University, see Ch. Solomonidis, *Η Παιδεία στη Σμύρνη* (Athens 1961).

read about Ludwig Ross and the other German savants who came out to Greece in the thirties of [the] last century in the train of King Otto. In fact, Professor Karatheodoris was a Westerner abroad – constructive, broad-minded, humane, and out of water.¹⁷

As a result of Venizelos's discussions with Karatheodoris, a detailed feasibility study was compiled and submitted to the Greek Prime Minister. The study covered all possible aspects and was based on the maxim that "the Greek state should re-examine the very basis of the education of its children".¹⁸ As immediate goals, the study suggested "the spiritual preparation of those young people who will be called upon to co-operate in the economic development of the country, such as farmers, engineers and traders", as well as the propagation "among the Greeks of the scientific knowledge of Slavonic and Eastern European languages... [as well as] the history, customs, religion and legal system of these peoples". In addition, the foreign minorities living within the Greek borders would be provided with the opportunity to study Greek language, history and culture. According to the feasibility study, the university departments to be established immediately were those of engineering, agriculture, commercial studies and oriental ethnology, the latter incorporating a section of eastern languages open to the students of all other departments. The long-term goal of this initiative was the creation of a major centre of scholarship which would serve as the core of a broad spectrum of scientific study and research. To these initial departments,

¹⁷ A. Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey* (London 1922), p. 166. Professor D. Chondros also notes: "It was an honour for us to have him as a colleague... Karatheodoris was the exact opposite of the pure mathematician. He was human and nothing human was foreign to him. Few men had his understanding of the arts. He knew Greek, modern and classical, as well as Latin, French, German and English. His knowledge of the bibliography was unequalled". See D. Chondros "Από τη ζωή του Καραθεοδωρή", *Αιών του Ατόμου* (Feb.-March 1950).

¹⁸ MOFA, Φάκελος Α: Πολιτικά Σχέδια περί Διοικητικής Οργανώσεως Μικράς Ασίας, 1921, Report: "Projet d'une nouvelle Université en Grèce présenté au Gouvernement Hellénique par C. Karatheodori", Paris 20.10.19.

others would be added in order to meet future needs of the state, with the institution, for example, of a medical school or a school of Islamic Law.

Karatheodoris's project visualised a completely new kind of university which would not imitate either the German or the British institutions of higher education, but would express and serve local needs and would constitute the antipode of the National Capodistrian University of Athens, which, by its nature, was geared towards classical antiquity. "The syllabus of each course," the feasibility study underlined, "should not be compiled as a replica of the one applied by this or that foreign university but should take into account the particular goals of each department." Theoretical knowledge would be transmitted to all students, to be followed by specialised practical courses according to each student's inclinations rather than "a little of everything to all and sundry", Karatheodoris concluded.

The years of study for every course would vary according to the qualification sought, while short vocational courses spanning a few weeks were also envisaged to cover practical aspects of engineering and farming. Specific entrance examinations for each course would guarantee the level of the students. For checking progress during the course the system proposed a combination of the British model with a large number of examinations with that of German universities, which featured very few, if any. The syllabus would provide compulsory subjects for each course with the possibility to choose one or two electives. The feasibility study also advocated that the new university should on no account duplicate courses taught in Athens, but, on the contrary, complement them with new ones.

A detailed list of subjects for each course was incorporated in Karatheodoris's study. Provisions made for the Department of Oriental Ethnology included the teaching of Turkish, Farsi, Arabic, Jewish and Aramaic languages, history, history of art and archaeology, as well as comparative linguistics and Islamic Law. The aim of the Department was to provide the student with a real understanding of the Middle and Near East, not only from the historical but also from the contemporary perspective. To quote from the feasibility study: "In addition to his university duties and as a real master of his subject, the holder of this chair should be in a position to exercise positive influence

over a wide audience, and over the foreign minorities in particular, through tutorials and public lectures."

As a plan of action, Karatheodoris proposed the implementation of the scheme in stages so that the organizers would have ample time to identify high-calibre teaching staff. Thus, during the first year of its operation, the University would offer only core subjects with laboratories for physics, chemistry, engineering, electrical engineering and agriculture, together with model farms and nurseries. Among the high-priority tasks of the organizers would be the creation of a large library.

The seat of the proposed university was not specified in Karatheodoris's report but Smyrna, Thessaloniki or Chios were suggested as the most appropriate host cities. When, however, the feasibility study had been approved by Venizelos and Athens had given the go-ahead for the implementation of the proposal, the idea for the institution of a real *universitas litterarum* in Smyrna was adopted without further discussion.

In July 1920, a Royal Decree on the Establishment of the Smyrna University was published in the Government Gazette.¹⁹ The decree was based on Karatheodoris's report and provided for the institution of four Departments: Physical and Technical Sciences, Agriculture, Eastern Languages and Ethnology, and Public Administration. At the end of the academic year 1919-1920 Karatheodoris left Berlin to work exclusively on the organization of the new University. In August 1920, he escorted Venizelos on his only visit to the port of Smyrna, where the Professor met Stergiadis for the first time. The High Commissioner was to become his most ardent supporter as well as an eager sponsor for the finances required.²⁰ Two months later, Karatheodoris and his team had taken up residence in Smyrna. In a letter to his friend Professor Vouyioukas in Austria, Karatheodoris wrote:

At last I see realized the plan I conceived before the war for the establishment of a second university in Greece. It is to be based in Smyrna. It would be of great help if you could come and offer your expertise in this task, whose aim is to shine the light of

¹⁹ *Εφημερίς της Κυβερνήσεως*, Series A, ii, Law 2251/14.7.20.

²⁰ S. Vovolinis, *op. cit.*, p. 492.

civilisation in Asiatic Greece, as well as in Thrace and Macedonia. I do not know if you are aware that Smyrna and its hinterland constitute today and for the next five years a separate state which, for the time being, is ruled almost dictatorially by the High Commissioner Aristidis Stergiadis, who shows great eagerness to assist our plans with all his power. So, if you decide to come, you will be in a position to realize in a short space of time an organization that would take many years to achieve in Greece.²¹

On 28 October 1920, High Commissioner Stergiadis officially appointed Karatheodoris to the positions of organizer of the Ionian University of Smyrna and Professor of Mathematics, with a view to his assuming the rectorship of the University when circumstances permitted.²² An Office for the Organisation of Smyrna University was established as part of the Directorate of Education in the High Commission. The post of the secretary was entrusted to Karatheodoris's student and future professor at the National Technical University of Athens N. Kritikos, who, at the time, was carrying out his military service at Aivali.²³ The Office's brief included legal matters related to the establishment of the University, the compilation of regulations and the completion and refurbishment of buildings made available by the High Commission.²⁴

²¹ The text of this letter is published in Vovolinis, *op. cit.*, p. 492.

²² Local newspaper *Αμάλθεια* (29 October 1920). Decree no. 119/12711/12720. Karatheodoris's monthly salary was fixed at 4,000 drs. During the same period, the monthly salary of the High Commission Secretary General was 2,000 drs.

²³ From October 1920, Karatheodoris was also assisted by I. Kalitsounakis, G. Ioakeimoglou and F. Theodoridis, who were all later to become Professors at the University of Athens. I. Philippidis, who had served in the position of the Secretary General of the Rizareios School of Theology for over thirty-five years and held a doctorate at Law, was selected to serve as Secretary General of the new University.

²⁴ For the issue created between the Jewish community and the High Commission regarding the ownership of these buildings, see Ch. Solomonidis, *op. cit.* The Ottoman administration was constructing these buildings with a view to housing a public library and a technical school. With the advent of the Greek administration and following the High Commissioner's decision to hand them over to the Ionian University, the

Against the background of the continuing war in Asia Minor, the difficulties encountered in the realization of the project were innumerable. Buildings had to be restructured or constructed, laboratories set up, books and equipment purchased and brought in from Europe and, finally, professors selected from among the best available in Greece and abroad. Undaunted, the organizers forged ahead and the fruits of their labours were soon evident.

The initial staffing plan provided for a small number of professorial chairs and readerships, supported by lecturers and assistant lecturers, with a free hand to decide on content and methodology. According to the Royal Decree on its foundation, the language used at the University would be Greek and "of equal status, wherever possible, Turkish. If required, the use of other languages is not excluded."²⁵ All those who had the qualifications provided for by the regulations would be accepted as students regardless of sex or creed. The qualifications awarded would be certificates, degrees or doctorates, according to the length of the course.

In the summer of 1921, Karatheodoris made a four-month trip to Germany, Austria and Switzerland in order to meet with scientists wishing to be engaged by the University. He also visited firms which specialised in equipping scientific laboratories and arranged procurement at reduced prices. One of the foremost tasks of this trip was the furnishing of the University Library, which he considered as the backbone of the institution. "I am convinced," he wrote to Stergiadis from Leipzig, "that within the next few years we will have in Smyrna a library which, though smaller than the one in Athens, will be much more useful for our purposes."²⁶ Two days later he added: "The sum required for the library collection is relatively large ... if we can secure 20 to 25 thousand pounds, we will be able

project for their restructuring was entrusted to the Athenian architect Aristotelis Zachos (1879-1939). Up until September 1922, the work for the restructuring of the site and the addition of new buildings had cost 110,000 Turkish liras, while the total of the monthly salaries of the personnel working for the University amounted to 15,647 drachmas.

²⁵ *Εφημερίς της Κυβερνήσεως*, Series A, ii, Law 2251/14.7.20.

²⁶ The text of this letter, dated 12.7.21, is published in Vovolinis, op. cit., p. 497.

to create a library the like of which does not exist in the East."²⁷ The first collection to be incorporated into the library was that of the Austrian Archaeological Institute of Smyrna, to which, after Karatheodoris's trip to Europe, 36 crates of rare books were added. Those had mainly been bought in Germany by Ioannis Kalitsounakis, Professor of Oriental Ethnology, to whom Karatheodoris wrote on his return to Smyrna in November 1921: "The High Commissioner is willing to provide a generous sum for the library and I am hopeful that our task will meet with success."²⁸ With the help of G. Ioakeimoglou, Professor of Pharmacology at Berlin and himself originating from Asia Minor, all the instruments and material for the microbiology laboratory were purchased and arrived in Smyrna.

By spring 1922, the laboratories and the nucleus of the library were ready, the professors' contracts had been signed and the first schools were ready to open their doors in September 1922. An important achievement was the rapid organization of the microbiology laboratory which was already in operation in August 1922 as part of the Institute of Hygiene. Its aims were to carry out tests free of charge, prepare vaccines, drips, antitoxins and antidotes, and help combat infectious diseases, such as malaria and TB, in co-operation with the Directorate of Public Health of the High Commission. At the end of August 1922, the central power-generating plant, an important part of the Ionian University's Engineering Laboratory, which had been built in co-operation with the Directorate of Public Works of the High Commission, was also ready to operate.

But whilst all these preparations were being made, the very future of the Greek presence in Asia Minor was being progressively eroded. Greece had received no clear mandate over the area so that its authority clashed with increasing frequency with the interests of the Allies in matters as crucial as customs and passport control, censorship and the application of the right of extraterritoriality to foreign nationals. No Greek civil courts were allowed to be established in the Greek zone and the law

²⁷ Letter published in Vovolinis, *op. cit.*, p. 498.

²⁸ A detailed report by Karatheodoris on the creation of the collection, the personnel and the operational rules of the University Library is published in Vovolinis, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

was flouted on a massive scale. The Allied High Commissioners in Constantinople acted as if Greece had not been asked by their governments to land in Asia Minor and most foreign consuls issued certificates of protection to Turkish nationalist leaders, who used every opportunity to wage war against the Greek occupation.

In the meantime, relations between Stergiadis's civil administration, on one hand, and the Greek military and religious leaders, on the other, went from bad to worse, exacerbated by persistent interference from Athens in favour of one faction or the other.²⁹

In November 1920, the Greek electorate ousted Venizelos and returned King Constantine to the throne. The Allies chose to repudiate agreements with the previous regime and adopted a stance of neutrality between Greece and the Turkish nationalist forces, which increasingly challenged Greek authority.³⁰ This neutrality went as far as vetoing the sale of war material to Greece, while the French and Italians supplied arms and even uniforms to the nationalists through Chios, an undisputed part of Greek sovereign territory.³¹

²⁹ Within the first eight months of his presence in Asia Minor alone, Stergiadis submitted his resignation three times in protest against interference from Athens in the performance of his duties. MOFA, Φάκελος Σμύρνης 1919, Ελληνική Διοίκησης Σμύρνης, Διάφορα, telegram no. 12225/6.12.19, Stergiadis to the Minister of Justice.

³⁰ On the Allied reaction to the return of King Constantine and the collective measures taken against Greece see Documents of British Foreign Policy [DBFP], Vol. xii, no. 457/2.12.20, no. 451/4.12.20, no. 436/5.12.20.

³¹ MOFA, Αρχείο Δ. Γούναρη, 1921, "Report on the Procurement of War Material to the Nationalists". Greek Military Intelligence, II Bureau, September 1921. MOFA, Αρχείο Δ. Γούναρη, 1920, telegram nos. 1825/26.5.21 and 2281/18.6.21, Rangavis to Minister of Foreign Affairs. Also: A.A. Pallis, *Greece's Anatolian Venture – and after* (London 1937), pp. 97-113, the section entitled "The Responsibility of France"; Ambassador H. Morgenthau, *I was sent to Athens* (New York 1929), p.30: "While the Greek campaign was going on, it soon became notorious to military observers of all nations that the Turks were being continually supplied with ammunition 'bootlegged' to them from the Italian base at Adalia."

In the face of Kemal's intransigence and the continuing warfare in Asia Minor, far from supporting Greece, whose entanglement they had themselves instigated, the Allies refused to provide any assistance in helping her extricate her forces from an impossible situation. The nationalists drove the Greek army all the way from the interior of Anatolia to the shores of the Aegean and all Greek civil and military authorities were obliged to evacuate Smyrna on 8 September 1922.

Immediately after their departure, looting and killing of Christians began and gathered momentum as the hours went by. The Allied representatives did nothing to prevent this massacre. On 13 September the Metropolitan of Smyrna and three church wardens were lynched by the Turkish mob. Later on the same day, a fire broke out in the Armenian quarter and spread to the Greek and European neighbourhoods, which were almost completely gutted, leaving the Turkish and Jewish areas unscathed.³²

The twenty-one Allied warships in the Smyrna harbour did nothing to prevent the massacre and rapine which ensued on shore. The Greek venture in Asia Minor was at an end.

In the wake of disaster on such a catastrophic scale, the splendid vision nourished by Venizelos, Karatheodoris, Stergiadis and so many others to create the most modern higher education institution in the Balkans, an institution which would have brought together the cultural traditions of all the peoples in the area in peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding, was reduced to ashes at a stroke. The fledgling university, upon

³² London's *Daily Telegraph* reported on 16 September 1922: "Except for the squalid Turkish quarter, Smyrna has ceased to exist... the problem of the minorities is here solved for all time. The refugees are being removed to other lands as far as possible. No doubt remains as to the origins of the fire. On the sworn testimony of the American Staff of the Collegiate Institute, the torch was applied by Turkish regular soldiers." For a detailed description of the events as recounted by the staff of the American Collegiate Institute, see G. Horton, op. cit. M. Housepian's *Smyrna 1922: The Destruction of a City* (London 1972) examines invaluable archival material on the subject and presents witnesses' accounts of the events.

which so many hopes had been pinned, was swept away with the mass exodus of the two million refugees from Asia Minor.

Karatheodoris, who had invested so much energy and devotion to the planning of the Ionian University, was faced with the sad task of packing up its instruments, books and archives. On 8 September 1922 the Professor and his colleagues departed for Athens with their model institution packed in a few crates. Seventy-five years after the Disaster this material remains dispersed in various schools of the University of Athens, a phantom of the Asia Minor utopia, with only the proud logo of the Ionian University "Εξ Ανατολών το Φως" to recall the great but still-born dream for the creation of contemporary Greece's second institution of higher education.