

Character Sketch of Venizelos

Great Personal Influence Welded Among People by Late Premier Led Reform Movement and Averted Revolution in 1910 by Carrying Out Radical Program

In the Summer of 1910, says a correspondent of the London Times, chance afforded me an opportunity of discussing the situation in Greece with one of the most intelligent members of the Greek Royal family. A year had passed since the acute dynastic crisis of 1909, when King Edward had spent the greater part of his last "cure" at Marienbad in urging the late King of the Hellenes not to seek in abdication relief from the troubles and anxieties of the position. Thanks mainly to the King of Britain, King George of Greece retained his throne, and stood his ground against the mutinous officers who, emulating the Young Turks, had carried out a pronouncement at Athens and had assumed practical control of public affairs.

By the beginning of 1910 these officers had learned that it is easier to promote than to direct a revolution. In their embarrassment they appealed to Eleutherios Venizelos, a Cretan leader who had shown remarkable qualities during the prolonged Cretan crisis. Training and instinct alike fitted him to deal with a revolutionary situation. Time and again he had shouldered his rifle and "done his bit" in the Cretan mountains against the Turks and even against the arbitrary rule of the High Commissioner, Prince George of Greece, whom the powers had placed in control of the island. He, indeed, had been chiefly instrumental in securing the recall of Prince George—whence many tears! His political views were believed to be tinged with republicanism. His methods, though never violent unless force appeared to be the

only remedy, had gained him as firm a reputation for strength of deed as for savvy of manner.

Of middle stature and slender build, possessed of a physical energy that enabled him to undergo severe exertion without fatigue, of irresistible charm in conversation, with persuasion—as was said of the greatest Greek orators—"sitting on his heels," Venizelos wielded a personal influence that went far to secure recognition for his high moral character and steadfastness of purpose. His manner, his language, and the thoughtful expression of his features conveyed a convincing expression of sincerity which, as those who know him well can testify, was, and is, not deceptive. To him the leaders of the "Military League" appealed to redeem a position that had got beyond their control. He redeemed it without delay. Reaching Athens on January 10, 1910, he succeeded within three weeks in persuading not only the officers, but also the various political leaders, and through them the late King George, to accept the idea of a Revisionary Assembly, which, by reforming the Constitution, would complete the programme of the Military League, and facilitate the painless extinction of that moribund coterie. At the same time, with a courage unique in Greek political life, he, the Cretan leader, declared from the new Hellenic Parliament, and thus obviated danger from the side of Turkey.

"Facing the Music."

Then, having transformed the situation, he withdrew to Crete to face the indignation of the ultra-Hellenic party in the island. He met it, and overcame it. In the following September, after the convocation of the Revisionary Chamber, he returned to Athens, and was received as a popular idol. The populace, however, had been won over to the idea of a Constituent Assembly, and insisted that it be substituted for the Revisionary Chamber which Venizelos, in agreement with the Crown, had advocated. Despite public clamor, he insisted on keeping his agreement, and bent the people to his will. A few days later he was called to office by

King George.

It was at this moment that I was enabled to gain an insight into the views of the Greek Royal family. Recognition that Venizelos had saved the country and the dynasty hardly availed to neutralize their apprehension lest a politician of alleged republican leanings should betray the dynasty, or, at least, lest the Crown should suffer an irreparable diminution of its power. I cited the example of Crispien and of many another Italian ex-Ruler, who had done notable service to the House of Savoy; but the conversation left upon my mind an abiding impression of the difficulties that may be encountered even by upright and patriotic statesmen in the service of the Crown, when their political theories cannot be compressed beforehand into orthodox monarchical formulae.

The work of Venizelos in the reorganization of Greece, the introduction of greater honesty and efficiency in administration, the employment of French, British and Italian officers for the reconstruction of the army, the navy and the police, the inauguration of a sober and moderate foreign policy, and, above all, the foundation of the Balkan Alliance, are too recent to need more than passing mention. No man worked harder than he to prevent the breakdown of the alliance. None regretted more deeply the second Balkan War.

AS PER USUAL.

BERNE, Switzerland, Nov. 1. via Paris Nov. 2.—The federal government announces that the German minister has expressed his government's deepest regret for the act of a German aviator in dropping bombs recently on Chaux de Fonds and has promised to pay indemnity for death or injury of Swiss citizens and damage to property. The minister explained that the aviator who dropped the bombs had lost his way and believed himself to be over French territory. He and his observer have been punished and transferred.

AT THE NICKEL TO-DAY.

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(Editor Mail and Advocate)

Dear Sir:—"Whosoever neither desires to please men nor fears to displease them shall enjoy much peace," and when I write an honest article to the Mail and Advocate dealing with the condition of the railroad, I have no fear of whom I might please or displease.

My charges in the press concerning the railroad and the very unsystematic way it is operated are written on good ground—and written on a subject which I understand—and am ready to debate or contravert in the press with any of the railroad officials in this country. There is nothing so inconvenient in this world as an absolutely truthful persons who can both speak and write and has the courage of his convictions.

One can always arrange matters with liars because they being hampered by their own deceptions are compelled to study ways, means and chances to appear honest. But to a person who holds truth dearer than gold, and honour more valuable than advancement there is nothing to be done now that governments cannot insist on the helmet cure as in the case of "Socrates."

Everytime an article written by me appear in the Mail and Advocate, especially when it is in relation to the condition of the railroad a certain gentleman residing at Clarendville set up howling and try to convey an impression upon the minds of people that I am the most dishonest scoundrel in the world for writing such scandalous epistles in the Mail and Advocate. This gentleman has been howling intermiten, for at least two years, at my so-called dishonest and insensate articles.

He also howled when I wrote to the Mail and Advocate some months ago concerning the P. T. O. here and its employees. Yet I heard the very same gent ridicule the same employees behind their backs, unmerciful, and express his opinion of them in words which are difficult to find in the English Vocabulary. He has now pronounced my article in the press wholly senseless, and since I enjoy much peace under the lashings of his scorn, I have only to say in reply that fools laugh at what they cannot learn, thinking that by their laughter, they show a superiority instead of latent idiocy.

As to the operation of the railroad I may state that many people of Clarendville have been now waiting for freight by rail that was shipped from St. John's three weeks ago. This doesn't suggest that the road is handled in a very systematic style. Quite recently I saw a freight train of twelve cars arrive at Clarendville with one solitary man to conduct and handle freight. Many times on our road, one trainman has to handle a full freight train, when not less than three should be employed.

In what country could you go where trains are running, and find one man having to handle a full freight train. And what government would allow it outside of Newfoundland. The trainmen slaves under the "iron rule" of the present Superintendent, who is responsible for the present mismanagement of the road.

Mr. Rioux is by far a better railroad man than the present superintendent, and when he held the position of superintendent the road traffic was far more satisfactory. I have much more to say in reference to the road later, but will conclude for the present.

W. L. BETLER,
Clarendville, Nov. 8, 1915.
FERDINAND'S NEPHEW
BADLY WOUNDED.

A despatch from Rome, under date of Nov. 3, states that Prince Leopold, a nephew of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, was burned with acid and wounded with a revolver by a woman friend, the daughter of a Viennese police captain, according to a despatch from Vienna. It is stated that the woman committed suicide by shooting. The condition of the Prince is most grave, and he is likely to lose his sight.

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