

The British Enforcement of Ionian Neutrality Against Greek and Turkish Refugees, 1821—1828.

A Study in Selectivity.

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During the era of the Greek Revolution, the British authorities in Corfu enforced Ionian neutrality against Greek and Turkish refugees on a selective basis. Even though they constituted an independent republic, the Ionian Islands had been transformed into a model colony through a series of political reforms instituted in 1817 by Sir *Thomas Maitland* — the first Lord High Commissioner, or British governor-general, of these islands. *Maitland* used these political reforms to reduce the traditional powers of the Ionian aristocracy, an indigenous class of privileged individuals who had ruled their insular homeland as an independent state during the Napoleonic era. As a result, the Ionian aristocracy expressed their Anglophobia by joining the *Philiki Etairia* (Society of Friends), a secret society which was determined to liberate such traditionally-Greek regions of the Ottoman Empire as the Peloponnese and Thessaly from Turkish domination. The Ionian members of the *Philiki Etairia* believed that a free Hellenic state could be created, even if it possessed only nominal independence like their own homeland, and they precipitated this creation during April 1821, when they actively participated in the initial hostilities of the Greek Revolution. Because he was concerned with the diplomatic repercussions which might result from the revolutionary activities of his colonial subjects, Sir *Frederick Adam* — the acting Lord High Commissioner — proclaimed the official neutrality of the Ionian government on 7 June 1821. *Adam* hoped that a policy of strict neutrality would isolate the Ionian Is-

Abbreviations

Admiralty Office

Adm. 1 (Mediterranean)

Colonial Office

C. O. 136 (Ionian Islands)

Foreign Office

F. O. 32 (Greece)

F. O. 78 (Turkey)

F. O. 352 (Stratford Canning Papers)

lands from the hostilities of the Greek Revolution, as well as preserve the traditional cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations, and he implemented several restrictive measures as a result of his official proclamation. Unfortunately for the British authorities in Corfu, this neutrality could not always be enforced strictly, especially since Ionian volunteers serving in Greece could physically avoid any punishment prescribed by the Lord High Commissioner. By contrast, strict neutrality could readily be enforced against the increasing number of Greek and Turkish refugees who fled from the mainland to seek asylum in the Ionian Islands. Although asylum was extended to nearly all these individuals, the British authorities in Corfu were not at all pleased with the presence of Greek refugees in the Ionian Islands, whereas they were eager to assist Turkish refugees, especially in the light of Anglo-Ottoman relations. Accordingly, Ionian neutrality was enforced by these British authorities along rather selective lines.

1. The Greek refugees and their subsequent internment, 1821—1826

In the light of strict neutrality, the presence of Greek refugees in the Ionian Islands created serious problems for the British authorities in Corfu. The massive influx of destitute refugees from the Peloponnese which accompanied the outbreak of the Greek Revolution was regarded by these authorities as both a threat to public health and a financial burden for the local councils of the seven islands in the Ionian chain¹). Furthermore, the British authorities in Corfu generally felt that a prolonged asylum for all these refugees would incite the revolutionary sentiments of the Ionian populace. During the spring months of 1821, the departure of Ionian volunteers for Greece had already disrupted domestic tranquillity on all these islands, with the exception of Corfu, and the violence which occurred on the island of Zante in October 1821 was attributed partly to the disruptive influence which the Greek refugees supposedly exerted upon the local inhabitants²). Of course, many agents of the *Philiki Etairia* had entered the Ionian Islands in the disguise of refugees, and they soon established a base for their revolutionary activities on the nearly-deserted isle of Calamos, where its relative isolation from Corfu enabled many Greek insurgents to

¹) C. O. 136/1091: *Adam* to Residents, 6 Aug. 1822; and C. O. 136/1308: *Traversers* to *Adam*, 28 May 1821.

²) C. O. 136/435: *Knox* to *Adam*, 29 May 1821; C. O. 136/1103: *Adam* to *Moore*, Private and Confidential, 2 June 1821; C. O. 136/442: *Adam* to *Hankey*, Private, 11 July 1821; and F. O. 78/103: *Meyer* to *Castlereagh*, 9 May 1821. Cf. Panagiōtis Chiōtis, *Historia tou Ioniou Kratous apo Systaseōs autou mechris Enōseōs* (etē 1815—1864). 2 vols; Zante: By the Author, 1874—1877, I. pp. 460—465.

place their dependants in a secure, neutral haven located near the mainland. For instance, *Georgios Varnachiottis* — an Albanian chieftain of Hellenic descent from Akarnania in Western Roumeli — had placed all his dependants and five Turkish hostages as well on Calamos³). Such instances substantiated the claims of the Turkish authorities in Greece that both revolutionary agents and insurgents had infiltrated the growing ranks of Greek refugees in the Ionian Islands⁴). Indeed, this situation was leading to serious diplomatic consequences in Constantinople, where the Ottoman government — known traditionally as the Porte — viewed all Greek refugees as rebellious subjects, and decisive action was now required on the part of the Lord High Commissioner and his subordinates in order to preserve the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations⁵).

To reduce diplomatic tensions between London and Constantinople, the British authorities in Corfu decided to expell all Greek refugees from the Ionian Islands. The recent victories of the Greek forces left the Hellenic government in virtual control of the Peloponnese, and Sir *Frederick Adam* reasoned that this situation assured the safe return of all Greek refugees to the mainland. *Adam* accordingly terminated all official relief for destitute refugees, and he provided inexpensive transportation for all refugees possessing sufficient means to leave⁶). In addition, he ordered the compulsory evacuation of all Greek revolutionaries and their dependants from Calamos, and he later placed a small detachment of British troops on this remote island to protect its neutrality against further violations by these insurgents⁷). Although they could not discipline those Ionian volunteers serving in the Greek forces on the mainland, the British authorities in Corfu could punish the Greek refugees in the Ionian Islands for their violations of strict neutrality. Since he intended to prevent further such violations, *Adam* now discouraged the future emigration of all refugees from Greece by instructing the British consuls on the mainland to refuse all requests for visas of transit, because neither Greek males, nor the dependants of any known insurgent, would be admitted to the Ionian Islands for any reason⁸). Because only widows and orphans could now remain in these islands, the acting Lord High Commissioner felt that the Greek refugees no longer presented any problems for either Ionian neutrality, or Anglo-Ottoman relations, especially since the implementation of his strict measures had significantly reduced the population of Greek refugees in the Ionian Islands with-

³) C. O. 136/435: *Knox* to *Adam*, 29 June & 7 July 1821.

⁴) F. O. 78/98: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 25 May 1821; and C. O. 136/20: *Bathurst* to *Adam*, Confidential, 26 May 1821.

⁵) C. O. 136/435: *Temple* to *Adam*, 15 June 1821.

⁶) C. O. 136/1085: *Maitland* to *Adam*, 27 June 1821.

⁷) C. O. 136/436: *Adam* to *Knox*, 29 July 1821.

⁸) C. O. 136/1084: *Adam* to *Residents*, 12 June 1821; and C. O. 136/441: *Meyer* to *Adam*, 10 Sept. 1821.

in the period of one month⁹); however, he had not faced the actual facts surrounding their presence in these islands.

From the standpoint of both public order and finance, the Greek refugees had hardly presented any real problems for Ionian neutrality. These refugees had not incited the Ionian populace towards any violence, and they had played a relatively minor role in a riot which occurred on Zante during October 1821 — a disturbance which actually originated from the initial violence which the sudden appearance of the Turkish fleet in local waters two weeks earlier had prompted¹⁰). Consequently, the British authorities in Corfu would later admit with much reluctance that they could not connect the Greek refugees with any violence in the Ionian Islands, since most local unrest had arisen from the ineffective enforcement of strict neutrality, and they also admitted reluctantly that these refugees had not created the domestic inconvenience which had originally been envisaged. The Ionian populace had responded to the challenging remarks of the British authorities about Hellenic solidarity by collectively reimbursing their government for all the expenses incurred by the Greek refugees during 1821, and the official funds designated for the relief of destitute refugees remained largely unspent during the initial months of the Greek Revolution¹¹). In the light of this situation, the Colonial Office ordered the reinstatement of relief assistance for those destitute refugees remaining in these islands, and this situation forced the British authorities in Corfu to be more responsible towards the needs of all Greek refugees, even though such action would again prompt complaints from the Porte about their Ionian asylum¹²). Nevertheless, such action was later proven necessary, especially since the return of such individuals seemed inevitable for the duration of the Greek Revolution.

With the initiation of a counter-offensive in the Peloponnese by the Ottoman army during February 1822, Greek refugees would again flee *en masse* to the Ionian Islands¹³). After he granted a temporary asylum to those refugees travelling to foreign ports beyond Corfu, Sir *Thomas Maitland* — who had been in London during the initial months of the Greek Revolution — was confronted with a massive influx of destitute refugees, and he was now obliged to assist these particular individuals in conformity with the guidelines set by the Colonial Office¹⁴). As a result, he abandoned all inten-

⁹) C. O. 136/1084: *Adam to Theotoky*, 2 July 1821.

¹⁰) C. O. 136/433: *Colhurst to Travers*, 8 Dec. 1821.

¹¹) C. O. 136/1085: *Maitland to Adam*, 27 June 1821; and C. O. 136/1270: *Travers to Adam*, 22 Aug. 1821.

¹²) C. O. 136/305: *Bathurst to Adam*, 30 June 1821.

¹³) C. O. 136/1085: *Maitland to Wilmot Horton*, 8 Feb. 1822.

¹⁴) C. O. 136/1091: *Adam to Ponsonby*, 7 Aug. 1822.

tions to deport these destitute refugees, and he interned them on the island of Calamos, where a British garrison was now permanently stationed to ensure that Ionian neutrality would not be violated¹⁵). By November 1822, over 400 women and children were interned on Calamos as the strict enforcement of Ionian neutrality became tempered with some humanitarian considerations¹⁶); however, such consideration would lead to further violations.

Although the internment camp was theoretically secure, Ionian neutrality was frequently violated on Calamos. The Greek chieftains from Albania had used this island as an occasional refuge since 1820, and they now were able to place their dependants in this camp without any interference from the local authorities. This immunity from judicial prosecution enabled such renegade leaders as Captains *Georgios Varnachiottis* and *Andreas Iskos* to switch their allegiance between the Ottoman and Hellenic governments on an occasional basis¹⁷). For instance, *Varnachiottis* had entered the Greek Revolution on the side of the Greek forces until events convinced him to join the Turkish forces in 1822. This decision was not so extraordinary as many such chieftains switched their allegiance whenever defeat by a stronger force seemed imminent. As a result, *Varnachiottis* secured a long-term asylum for his dependants by joining the Turkish forces led by *Omer Vrioni Pasha* in September 1822, and his status as a pro-Ottoman chieftain assured this asylum for nearly all the entire duration of the Greek Revolution¹⁸). The frequent movement of Greek renegades between Calamos and the mainland also threatened the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations, especially since such activities attracted the attention of the Porte¹⁹); however, British attempts to rectify this overall situation were frustrated by Ionian magistrates, since their pro-Hellenic sentiments precluded them from ordering the deportation of most Greek refugees and insurgents²⁰).

Contrary to their actual wishes, the British authorities in Corfu could not arbitrarily deport any Greek refugees from Calamos. The Foreign Office recognised the belligerent rights of the Hellenic government in March 1823,

¹⁵) F. O. 352/11: *Adam to Jervaise*, 15 Oct. 1822.

¹⁶) C. O. 136/446: *Crummer to Adam*, 4 & 7 Nov. 1822.

¹⁷) C. O. 136/1090: *Adam to Bathurst*, 22 July 1823.

¹⁸) C. O. 136/1106: *Adam to Crummer*, Private, 31 Mar. 1823; and C. O. 136/476: *Omer Pasha to Adam*, 28 Jan. 1824. Cf. John A. Petropoulos, "Forms of Collaboration with the Enemy during the First Greek War of Liberation", in: *Hellenism and the first Greek War of Liberation, 1821—1830*, edited by Nikiforos P. Diamandouros, et. al. Salonica: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1976, pp. 132—138.

¹⁹) F. O. 78/114: *Strangford to G. Canning*, 10 & 25 April 1823.

²⁰) C. O. 136/447: *Knox to Hankey*, Private, 28 July 1822; and C. O. 136/457: *Adam to Bathurst*, 22 July 1823.

and the Greek refugees could no longer be regarded as just rebellious aliens, since they were supposedly represented by a legitimate government in Greece. In addition, the collective deportation of over 2,000 women and children was not feasible from either a diplomatic, or an humanitarian, standpoint²¹). Although the Porte was thoroughly displeased with this sudden change of policy, the internment of Greek refugees on Calamos suited the British government, since Ionian waters still were not patrolled regularly by the Royal Navy, and Ottoman abductions of deported refugees from Ionian vessels in recent months had caused some embarrassing criticism in the House of Commons²²). To avoid further such criticism, the Colonial Office recommended that the current deportation of Greek refugees be curtailed, and *Maitland* subsequently announced that the internment camp on Calamos was now open to all refugees — both Greek and Turkish alike²³). While this change would have unpleasant consequences for the future enforcement of Ionian neutrality, this announcement was designed to placate both the Ottoman and Hellenic governments about their respective refugees, and the Porte utilized this open offer of asylum to its own advantage by placing all sorts of ethnic refugees in the relative security of the Ionian Islands²⁴). Indeed, the Porte briefly ceased all its complaints about Calamos; especially after *Adam* — who had become the Lord High Commissioner after the death of *Maitland* in January 1824 — re-proclaimed the neutrality of the Ionian Islands in April 1824; however, the presence of Greek refugees in these islands was still an embarrassing point in Anglo-Ottoman relations.

In response to this situation, the Lord High Commissioner appointed Major-General *Frederick Ponsonby* to inspect the overall security of the internment camp on Calamos²⁵). Due to the failure of the Turkish forces to suppress the Greek Revolution, the Egyptian government was invited by the Porte to end this rebellion, and the subsequent invasion of the Peloponnese by its own army in 1825 had forced many Greek refugees to seek asylum on Calamos. In conformity with official policy, all destitute refugees were accepted upon humanitarian grounds, and this particular group included redeemed slaves from Egypt — as well as Ionian citizens who normally resided in Greece²⁶). Angry with British policy in the Greek Revolution, the Porte subsequently complained that the insurgents who were hid-

²¹) C. O. 136/307: *Bathurst* to *Maitland*, Private 2 June 1823.

²²) C. O. 136/457: *Adam* to *Maitland*, Private, 4 & 23 July 1823; and Adm. 1/439: *Moore* to *Crocker*, 19 Sept. 1822.

²³) C. O. 136/1090: *Maitland* to *Bathurst*, 4 June 1823; and C. O. 136/188: *Bathurst* to *Maitland*, 13 June 1823.

²⁴) F. O. 78/115: *Strangford* to *G. Canning*, 10 July 1823.

²⁵) F. O. 78/131: *Turner* to *G. Canning*, 10 May 1825; and C. O. 136/34: *Adam* to *Ponsonby*, 27 Jan. 1826.

²⁶) C. O. 136/523: *Gilpin* to *Crummer*, 25 Sept. 1826.

ing among these refugees had transformed the island into a base for their revolutionary activities²⁷). After a thorough inspection, *Ponsonby* concluded that these complaints were groundless, especially since Calamos had been quarantined from all surrounding islands by a British garrison, while all refugees in the internment camp had been disarmed by the local authorities in accordance with strict neutrality²⁸). Furthermore, all refugees were pledged to reside peacefully on the island, since they were liable to deportation, and several such offenders had recently been expelled for their violations of Ionian neutrality²⁹). In spite of these findings, the British authorities in Corfu decided that all further refugees would be turned away, since their acceptance would again antagonize the Porte, and *Ponsonby* announced that only those refugees whose political status was unlikely to create Anglo-Ottoman tensions would be given asylum³⁰). Naturally, few refugees fitted this category, and all refugees from the town of Missolonghi, a community in Roumeli under current siege by both the Egyptian and Turkish forces, were denied asylum in the Ionian Islands, especially since the infiltration of their ranks by insurgents would threaten security on Calamos. Nevertheless, *Adam* did intercede briefly on behalf of the civilian populace of this Epirote town³¹), even though it was the Turkish refugees from the mainland who actually received favorable treatment.

2. The Turkish and Souliote Refugees, 1821—1823

To preserve the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations, the British authorities in Corfu readily accepted all Turkish refugees seeking asylum in the Ionian Islands. The Porte regarded all such refugees as loyal subjects who were involuntarily displaced by the hostilities of the Greek Revolution, and they were rarely the subject of discussion when the Ottoman government complained about the enforcement of Ionian neutrality³²). As a result, the Lord High Commissioner interned nearly all these refugees on the island of Cerigo, where — unlike their Greek counterparts — they were not subjected to any systematic hardships which were designed to encourage

²⁷) C. O. 136/311: *Bathurst* to *Adam*, 12 June 1825.

²⁸) C. O. 136/28: *Adam* to *Bathurst*, 20 June 1825; and C. O. 136/312: *Bathurst* to *Adam*, 14 Dec. 1825.

²⁹) C. O. 136/497: *Crummer* to *Rudsdell*, 23 Mar. 1825; and C. O. 136/34: *Adam* to *Reshid Mehmet Pasha*, 31 Dec. 1825, and *Spencer* to *Adam*, 12 Feb. 1826.

³⁰) C. O. 136/34: *Ponsonby* to *V. Capodistria*, 13 Sept. 1826.

³¹) F. O. 78/132: *Turner* to *G. Canning*, 11 July 1825; and C. O. 136/35: *Ponsonby* to *Bathurst*, 17 May 1826.

³²) F. O. 32/11: *Adam* to *Travers*, 16 Apr. 1821; and C. O. 136/1148: *Lane* to *Heathcote*, 10 & 19 Sept. 1821.

their speedy departure from the Ionian Islands. This situation was facilitated by the Porte, which paid all the expenses incurred by these Turkish refugees³³), and private charity — which was denied to Greek refugees — was acceptable for these particular individuals whenever payments from Constantinople were delayed. Strangely enough, the British authorities in Corfu never regarded the presence of Turkish refugees on Cerigo as a threat to public order, even though forty such individuals had been murdered by the local inhabitants in a spontaneous massacre which had occurred during October 1821³⁴), and their continued presence on the island — which in itself initially constituted a violation of strict neutrality — was encouraged by the fact that their departure aboard Ionian vessels usually encouraged attacks upon this neutral shipping by the Greek corsairs³⁵). Indeed, despite the need to maintain the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations, the overall situation regarding Turkish refugees and Ionian neutrality was quite extraordinary, and some rather bizarre events occurred.

Among other occurrences, the Lord High Commissioner redeemed a Turkish harem from the captivity of the Greek insurgents. Comprised of Greek-speaking women, this harem was the property of *Chourshid Pasha*, the Ottoman commander-in-chief of all Turkish forces in Albania, and it had been captured at the Morean town of Tripolitza, where the Greek forces had murdered several thousand Turkish inhabitants during October 1821³⁶). The Foreign Office advised the Lord High Commissioner that the release of this harem would further improve the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations, and though he was less opportunistic than his diplomatic colleagues in both London and Constantinople, *Maitland* did concede that this proposed redemption would not constitute a violation of Ionian neutrality, provided that all negotiations with the Hellenic government on this matter were conducted indirectly. Accordingly, he appointed *Dr. Marinos Stefanos*, a member of the *Philiki Etairia* on Zante, to handle these informal negotiations under the supervision of Sir *Frederick Adam*³⁷). Since he thought that the British government would be obliged to finance all costs, *Adam* insisted on a reduction in the stated amount of ransom, and despite the preliminary talks which were held with the Greek representatives, the Hellenic government reacted by increasing its original demand, while the

³³) C. O. 136/1332: *Hankey* to *Heathcote*, 14 Aug. 1821 & 3 Feb. 1822; C. O. 136/1353: *MacPhail* to *Adam*, 1 Aug. 1823, and *Heathcote* to *Strangford*, 10 Feb. 1822; and C. O. 136/1149: *Rudsdell* to *MacPhail*, 29 July 1823.

³⁴) C. O. 136/1085: *Heathcote* to *Maitland*, 12 Oct. 1821.

³⁵) C. O. 136/1353: *Heathcote* to *Adam*, 12 May & 12 and 14 July 1821; and C. O. 136/1332: *Adam* to *Heathcote*, Confidential, 9 Sept. 1821.

³⁶) C. O. 136/438: *P. J. Green* to *Adam*, 26 Oct. 1821.

³⁷) C. O. 136/1085: *Maitland* to *Bathurst*, 12 Feb. 1822; and C. O. 136/1106: *Maitland* to *Chourshid Pasha*, 15 Mar. 1822; and F. O. 78/108: *Strangford* to *Castlereagh*, 25 May 1822.

Turkish harem remained captive in Argos³⁸). This impassé continued until several months later when *Courshid Pasha* — who had secretly embezzled the treasury of *Ali Tepeleni*, the Pasha of Albania, during a recent rebellion — provided the funds to meet this increased demand, and his harem was redeemed shortly afterwards for a ransom of 120,000 Spanish dollars (£25,000)³⁹). This harem was transported to Albania aboard a British vessel by way of Corfu, and the island subsequently became an intermediary point for the occasional exchange of captives during the era of the Greek Revolution. Paradoxically, this humanitarian act eventually led to charges by Radical members in Parliament that Ionian neutrality secretly favoured the Ottoman government, while the Porte complained that the British authorities in Corfu had themselves embezzled the treasury of *Ali Tepeleni*⁴⁰). *Maitland* managed to refute all the parliamentary charges; however, he concluded that the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations had not been improved substantially by the recovery of this harem, even if it had forged a bond of friendship between *Adam* and *Chourshid Pasha*, and he now acted to improve such relations further by accepting a different sort of refugee.

Along with other refugees from the mainland, the Souliote community sought asylum in the Ionian Islands. These individuals had supported *Ali Tepeleni* in the Albanian rebellion of 1819—1822, and they next joined the Greek forces in order to continue their anti-Ottoman crusade. Their incorporation into an ethnic unit, led by *Markos Botsaris*, contributed a sizeable force to the Greek army until July 1822, when this unit — along with several corps of Ionian volunteers and European philhellenes — was annihilated at the Battle of Peta in Greece. The survivors of the Souliote corps were persuaded by *Omer Vrionis Pasha*, the high commander of all Turkish forces in the Balkans, to both accept an amnesty from the Porte by seeking a temporary asylum in the Ionian Islands, while his forces finished their suppression of the local insurrections in both Greece and Albania. Although they had previously been denied such asylum, the Souliote insurgents and their dependants were admitted by the Lord High Commissioner when he received the news of this amnesty, and he declared that the strict precepts of Ionian neutrality could be relaxed slightly, since these individuals were now entitled to the same humanitarian considerations which the Greek refugees had received in recent months⁴¹). In this manner, *Maitland* intended to avoid further criticism from his parliamentary enemies about

³⁸) C. O. 136/436: *Adam* to *Stefanos*, 29 Dec. 1821; and C. O. 136/444: *Adam* to *Maitland*, 1 Jan. 1822.

³⁹) C. O. 136/1149: *Lane* to *Hulme*, 11 Jan. 1822.

⁴⁰) C. O. 136/1105: *Adam* to *Chourshid Pasha*, 4 May 1822; C. O. 136/20: *Adam* to *Wilmot Horton*, 13 May 1822; and C. O. 136/1086: *Maitland* to *Wilmot Horton*, 18 Apr. 1822.

⁴¹) F. O. 78/103: *Hankey* to *Meyer*, 28 Jan. 1821; C. O. 136/1087: *Adam* to *Omer Pasha*, 25 Aug. 1822; and C. O. 136/1105: *Adam* to *Napier*, 24 Sept. 1822.

the different ways in which he handled the various refugees who sought asylum, while he also cooperated quietly with the Ottoman authorities in Albania, and he accordingly instructed *Adam* to admit all Souliote refugees for asylum which would last for twelve months⁴²).

As they could not coexist peacefully with the various other refugees in the Ionian Islands, the Souliote refugees were interned in an ancient fortress which was located near the village of Assos on the island of Cephalonia⁴³). Although the local inhabitants openly supported the Hellenic cause, this village was situated some distance from the urban centres of revolutionary fervour in the townships of Cephalonia, and the local fortress served as an ideal site for the internment of these troublesome refugees⁴⁴). The 12,000 individuals of the Souliote community, which had on occasion fought nearly all the ethnic tribes of both Albania and Greece, were disarmed in conformity with Ionian neutrality, and subsequently placed in quarantine at their own expense during September 1822. These particular refugees resided peacefully at Assos, where the reluctance of the British authorities in Corfu to provide anything for their welfare resulted in the death of many such individuals from either small-pox, or exposure, during their period of internment⁴⁵). They were treated as outcasts even upon their departure from Cephalonia, since they were expected by the British authorities in Corfu to join the Greek forces. As a result, their firearms — which had been confiscated after their arrival in Assos — were returned secretly as they embarked aboard vessels which had specially been chartered by the Ottoman government⁴⁶). Because they subsequently rejoined the Greek forces as expected, *Maitland* incurred the displeasure of both the Porte and his parliamentary enemies, while *Adam* paradoxically received the official approbation of the Colonial Office for his role in handling the brief internment of the Souliote refugees on Cephalonia⁴⁷). Unfortunately for the British authorities in Corfu, not all refugees could be expelled so easily, and it was feared that even more refugees might seek asylum in the Ionian Islands.

⁴²) C. O. 136/1087: *Adam* to *Bathurst*, 7 Sept. 1822, and *Maitland* to *Bathurst*, 29 Sept. 1822; and C. O. 136/306: *Bathurst* to *Maitland*, 28 Sept. 1822. Cf. Eleutherios Prevelakes, *Hē Philikē Hetaireia*. “Ho Alē Pasas kai hoi Souliotes”, in: *Melemēmata stē Mnēmē Basileiou Laourda*, edited by Lousia B. Laourda. Salonica: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1975, pp. 453—456.

⁴³) C. O. 136/1271: *Adam* to *Napier*, 6 Sept. 1822. Cf. Petropulos, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

⁴⁴) C. O. 136/1087: *Adam* to *Maitland*, 7 Sept. 1822.

⁴⁵) C. O. 136/1309: *Napier* to *Hankey*, 22 Dec. 1822.

⁴⁶) C. O. 136/460: *Napier* to *Lane*, 12 May 1823; and C. O. 136/1271: *Adam* to *Napier*, 19 Aug. 1823.

⁴⁷) C. O. 136/306: *Bathurst* to *Maitland*, 20 Sept. 1822; and F. O. 352/19b: *Meyer* to *S. Canning*, 3 Aug. 1824.

3. Greek refugees and British mediation at Missolonghi, 1826

Although he had no intention of offering asylum to the Greek civilians of Missolonghi, Sir *Frederick Adam* interceded on their behalf during the spring months of 1826. The siege of this town in Roumeli by the combined forces of the Egyptian and Ottoman armies had been initiated in 1825, and the rumoured enslavement of Greek civilians by the Islamic commanders in Greece had become a rather heated issue in European diplomacy, especially among those nations — such as Russia — which supported the Hellenic cause for independence. Indeed, a Russo-Ottoman crisis over the Greek Revolution could occur if such rumours were ever substantiated⁴⁸). *Adam* knew that the Greek commander of this besieged town did not intend to surrender, and he feared that its inhabitants would be subsequently enslaved by the Egyptian forces in conformity with Islamic tradition⁴⁹). To avoid either this enslavement, or even a worse fate, the Lord High Commissioner met with the Ottoman and Egyptian commanders on the night of 17—18 March, and he questioned their intentions regarding the ultimate fate of the Greek civilians of Missolonghi. This same question had five days earlier been asked by Captain R. G. Spencer of HMS *Naiad*, and the Egyptian commander-in-chief, *Ibrahim Pasha*, replied only that all his campaigns were conducted in a humane manner, while the new *Serasker* — or commander-in-chief — of all Turkish forces in the Balkans, *Reshid Mehmet Pasha*, referred all questions on this matter to both *Hussein Effendi* and *Neghib Effendi*, the respective Ottoman and Egyptian political commissioners — both whom were closely scrutinizing the actions of the Islamic military commanders. Though they were indeed worried about the possibility of British intervention in this siege, both these commissioners would not negotiate with such a low-ranking officer as Captain *Spencer*, and they merely informed the Lord High Commissioner that they would not allow any foreign representative to arrange the capitulation of Missolonghi⁵⁰). *Adam* finally realized that these civilian inhabitants could not be rescued by humanitarian means, and he returned to Corfu, where he instructed his subordinates to turn away all refugees, since armed insurgents would most

⁴⁸) Adm. 1/444: *Pechell* to *Neale*, 2 June 1825; and C. O. 136/35: *Miaoulis* to *Johnstone*, 19 Apr. 1826. Cf. Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence, 1821—1833*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973, pp. 184—188; and C. W. Crawley, *The Question of Greek Independence*. Cambridge: University Press, 1930, pp. 42—63.

⁴⁹) C. O. 136/29: *Adam* to *Bathurst*, 5 Aug. 1825; C. O. 136/37: *Ponsonby* to *Bathurst*, 27 Aug. 1826; and Adm. 1/467: *Spencer* to *Neale*, 19 Mar. 1826.

⁵⁰) C. O. 136/34: *Adam* to *Bathurst*, 21 Mar. 1826; and Adm. 1/445: *Spencer* to *Neale*, Secret, 18 and 19 Mar. 1826.

likely be included within their ranks. Since few inhabitants escaped from Missolonghi when it was captured during the following months, these instructions were easily implemented⁵¹).

In the aftermath of this famous siege, the capture of Missolonghi was seen from a Western viewpoint as the end of the Greek Revolution. Most observers could not envisage any further progress for the Hellenic cause without major assistance from the governments of Europe, and one Italian critic went as far as stating that these governments could have best expressed their gratitude for the cultural legacies of the ancient Greeks by assisting their modern-day descendants⁵²). Similarly, Captain *G. W. Hamilton* of *HMS Cambrian* expressed his amazement that his own government had expended so much effort upon the conversion of heathen races to Christianity, while it simultaneously ignored the systematic annihilation of such Christian people as the Hellenic race, even if the Greek insurgents did lack the essential courage needed for victory over their Turkish enemies⁵³). Although he privately shared such feelings, *Adam* was relieved that both the official neutrality and domestic tranquillity of the Ionian Islands were further assured by the Egyptian victories in Greece, and these islands remained so tranquil after the capture of Missolonghi that he was granted an extended furlough of six months in western Europe by the Colonial Office⁵⁴). Unfortunately for strict neutrality, those refugees who had already received asylum presented further problems for the Ionian interests of the British government.

4. The Albanian Renegades, 1826—1828

Displeased by the continuous exodus of Greek refugees from the Peloponnese in the aftermath of Missolonghi, the Ottoman government attempted to annex the Ionian island of Petala. Located near Ithaca, this small island served as a temporary haven for those refugees who escaped from Missolonghi during the Egyptian siege, and these individuals had forcefully been evicted from Petala by *Adam* on several occasions during 1825—1826⁵⁵). Their vacant places were soon filled with new refugees, and

⁵¹) F. O. 352/13a: *Ponsonby* to *S. Canning*, 10 June 1826; and Adm. 1/445: *Johnstone* to *Spencer*, 23 Apr. 1826.

⁵²) C. O. 136/516: *Spencer* to *Ponsonby*, 27 Apr. 1826; and C. O. 136/521: *Gamba* to *Hamilton*, 30 Apr. 1826.

⁵³) C. O. 136/521: *Hamilton* to *Ponsonby*, 1 May 1826.

⁵⁴) C. O. 136/34: *Adam* to *Bathurst*, Private, 23 Jan. 1826, and *Adam* to *Hay*, 17 Apr. 1826.

⁵⁵) C. O. 136/29: *Adam* to *Bathurst*, 4 Aug. 1825; and C. O. 136/1114: *Ponsonby* to *Johnstone*, 15 Apr. 1826.

this situation was encouraged by those British philhellenes working with the chapter of the *Philiki Etairia* which was located on Corfu⁵⁶). Although he was aware of this situation, the Lord High Commissioner preferred to order the periodic eviction of these refugees, rather than station a British garrison on this small island, since this latter action could lead to an international incident with either belligerent participant in the Greek Revolution⁵⁷). Such an incident occurred unexpectedly in September 1826, when the Albanian renegade, *Georgios Varnachiottis*, and fifty armed followers captured this island in order to discourage the further emigration of Greek refugees from the mainland, and Ionian neutrality was again violated by this troublesome renegade⁵⁸).

Outraged by this blatant violation of Ionian neutrality, the Lord High Commissioner declared his readiness to defend the island of Petala against its occupation by a belligerent force⁵⁹). Although he had prohibited all refugees from using this island, *Adam* would not permit any foreign force to interfere with the Ionian asylum of any refugee, especially since *Varnachiottis* had himself enjoyed such a privilege such 1821⁶⁰). While he agreed that the contested sovereignty of Petala could be arbitrated in Constantinople by the British ambassador, the Lord High Commissioner would not permit its occupation by any armed force, and the Royal Navy subsequently evicted *Varnachiottis* and his armed band from this island⁶¹). In the light of their numerous violations of Ionian neutrality, these Albanian renegades were prohibited permanently from Calamos by *Adam*, and they soon rejoined the Ottoman forces on the mainland⁶²); however, they could not be kept away for long.

Since the defeat of the Ottoman forces in Greece seemed imminent, Captain *Varnachiottis* and his associates again sought asylum in the Ionian Islands. The Ottoman and Egyptian navies had been sunk by the combined fleets of the British, French, and Russian governments at the Morean port of Navarino in October 1827, and in the light of this victory by the naval

⁵⁶) C. O. 136/35: *Ponsonby to Bathurst*, Private, 27 Apr. 1826; and C. O. 136/516: *Spencer to Ponsonby*, 6 May 1826.

⁵⁷) C. O. 136/1151: *Rudsdell to Temple*, 6 Aug. 1825; and C. O. 136/518: *Ponsonby to Cotton*, Secret, 18 May 1826.

⁵⁸) C. O. 136/34: *Crummer to Gilpin*, 12 Sept. 1826; and C. O. 136/517: *Meyer to Ponsonby*, 29 Sept. 1826.

⁵⁹) C. O. 136/34: *Ponsonby to Meyer*, 17 Sept. 1826.

⁶⁰) C. O. 136/512: *Temple to Gilpin*, 13 Sept. 1826; and C. O. 136/313: *Bathurst to Ponsonby*, 27 Sept. 1826.

⁶¹) C. O. 136/34: *Adam to Bathurst*, 9 Dec. 1826; and C. O. 136/41: *S. Canning to Ponsonby*, 16 Jan. 1827.

⁶²) C. O. 136/1191: *Ponsonby to Meyer*, 25 Nov. 1826.

forces of these three European governments, which were determined to impose a truce upon both belligerent participants in the Greek Revolution, diplomatic relations between London and Constantinople were subsequently suspended. Because the Turkish authorities in Albania desired an Anglo-Ottoman rapprochement at the European level, *William Meyer* — who was the British consul-general in Prevesa — approved the readmission of these renegades to the internment camp on Calamos in February 1828, even though the new commandant of this camp, Captain *Robert Mawdesley*, had been instructed that these particular renegades should never again receive asylum⁶³). The readmittance of these individuals to Calamos was regarded by both *Meyer* and *Stratford Canning de Redcliffe*, the former British ambassador to the Porte, as a conciliatory gesture to encourage the resumption of Anglo-Ottoman relations in the aftermath of the naval battle at Navarino. Accordingly, *Adam* did not order their second deportation, and he transferred these Albanian renegades to Corfu, where they could be placed under constant surveillance⁶⁴). Typically, they did not remain long in Corfu, and they soon returned to the mainland in order to join the Greek forces, commanded by General *Richard Church*, which had gained the upper hand in the hostilities⁶⁵). At long last, the British authorities in Corfu were rid of these troublesome renegades who had frequently abused their asylum on Calamos, and the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman increased considerably after their resumption in 1829, especially because these individuals could no longer violate the strict precepts of Ionian neutrality. Nevertheless, there were still refugees whose presence in the Ionian Islands was considered to be a continuing violation of strict neutrality.

5. The Greek Refugees, 1827—1828

By 1827, the Lord High Commissioner was seriously concerned about the financial burdens created by the prolonged presence of Greek refugees in the Ionian Islands. The Egyptian forces still controlled a sizeable portion of Greece in the years 1827—1828, even though the political autonomy of the Hellenic government was recognized by the European states, and British

⁶³) C. O. 136/314: *Bathurst* to *Adam*, 14 Feb. 1827; and C. O. 136/530: *Temple* to *Mawdesley*, Private, 20 Oct. 1827.

⁶⁴) C. O. 136/551: *Meyer* to *Mawdesley*, Private, 1 Feb. 1828; C. O. 136/1153: *Rudsdell* to *Mawdesley*, 18 Feb. 1828; and C. O. 136/45: *Meyer* to *Rudsdell*, 5 Apr. 1828. Cf. C. M. Woodhouse, *The Battle of Navarino*, London: Dufour, 1965, pp. 110—141.

⁶⁵) C. O. 136/521: *Church* to *Napier*, 17 Mar. 1828; and C. O. 136/1122: *Adam* to *Church*, 14 Oct. 1828.

suggestions for the evacuation of these forces were not found acceptable in Cairo. On the advice of the British ambassador in Constantinople, *Adam* had recently renewed asylum for all refugees on humanitarian grounds following the capture of Missolonghi, and the renewed influx of destitute refugees from the Peloponnese was quickly exhausting the meagre resources of the Ionian government⁶⁶). The Ionian government was now obliged to provide a minimal level of assistance for nearly 9,000 refugees, and it was spending more revenue on these individuals in 1827 than it had during the past six years combined. Further expenses were incurred as it was forced to re-open a small infirmary on Calamos, while all refugees were being provided with victuals from the British garrisons in the other islands of the Ionian chain⁶⁷). Unlike the Porte, the Hellenic government did not defray the expenses incurred by its national citizens in the refugee camp, and the massive influx of destitute refugees in recent months had now placed an unwanted strain on the financial budget of the Ionian government, especially in the light of its annual expenditure for defence by the British forces⁶⁸). After they created constant problems for Anglo-Ottoman relations, the Greek refugees now presented a real economic crisis for the Ionian government, and *Adam* implemented a plan which he had presented to the Colonial Office during his recent furlough.

To save the Ionian treasury from insolvency, the British government secretly agreed to assume all the current expenses incurred by the destitute refugees on Calamos⁶⁹). Until 1827, the Ionian government had provided nearly all the Greek refugees with unlimited amounts of relief assistance in conformity with the basic principles of humanitarianism. All such assistance was now financed from London, and the British authorities in Corfu could now be less generous about distributing such official charity to those destitute refugees, currently estimated at 15,000 individuals, remaining on Calamos⁷⁰). Furthermore, the British treasury could subsidize all these expenses with obsolete coinage, since *Adam* had delayed the introduction of silver coins to avoid inflating the Ionian economy, and this delay allowed the British government to reap a long-term profit by both exporting copper coinage from Great Britain and subsequently re-importing it after this coinage had been smelted into ignots at an Ionian foundry. Until silver coinage could be gradually introduced, this obsolete coinage would finance

⁶⁶) F. O. 352/17a: *S. Canning* to *Adam*, Secret, 1 June 1827, and *Adam* to *S. Canning*, Secret, 16 July 1827; and C. O. 136/38: *Adam* to *Goderich*, Private, 29 June 1827.

⁶⁷) C. O. 136/525: *Hooker* to *Rudsdell*, 16 Aug. 1827.

⁶⁸) C. O. 136/315: *Adam* to *Huskisson*, 31 Oct. 1827.

⁶⁹) C. O. 136/39: *Adam* to *Goderich*, 20 Aug. 1827.

⁷⁰) C. O. 136/39: *Adam* to *Huskisson*, Private and Confidential, 25 Sept. 1827.

all expenses connected with the internment camp, since the Ionian government still honored all forms of British specie, and its circulation on Calamos would also deflect the current use of Turkish *paras* which had been produced by Ionian counterfeiters⁷¹). Though the Ionian government was expected to benefit also from this new scheme, *Adam* was determined that the Greek refugees on Calamos would incur a minimum of expense, especially since the neutrality of Ionian shipping was still violated by the Greek navy, and the major defeat suffered by the Ottoman and Egyptian navies at Navarino in October 1827 also meant that the Greek refugees no longer required asylum, since little resistance was expected from the Islamic forces remaining in the Peloponnese.

With the evacuation of all Egyptian forces from Greece in September 1828, it was finally decided to close the internment camp on Calamos. The prolonged residence of 15,000 Greek refugees had directly affected the living conditions within the internment camp so much that even the British garrison stationed there was now suffering from infectuous diseases⁷²). Although his government was now subsidizing all expenses incurred by these refugees, the Lord High Commissioner would not improve conditions in this camp, and he refused all private charity that would have ameliorated the plight of these destitute refugees⁷³). With the full approval of the Colonial Office, he had refused private donations from Count *John Capodistria*, a Corfiote expatriate who was the newly-elected president of Greece, and from the aristocratic members of the chapter of the *Philiki Etairia* on Corfu, which included several brothers of the new Greek president, in conformity with strict neutrality. *Adam* also terminated all relief assistance for these destitute refugees by informing the Hellenic government that it was now totally responsible for the welfare of its own national citizens⁷⁴). Since they had always been neglected by their own government, the Greek refugees were now also ignored by the Ionian government, and nearly all these individuals returned immediately to Greece, thus lowering the weekly cost of their collective maintenance from £185 to £33⁷⁵). The operations of the internment camp had cost the British government a total sum of £12,594 during the previous eight years, and it expected to be reimbursed fully by the Ionian government⁷⁶). The Lord High Commissioner would no longer tolerate the presence of any Greek refugees on Calamos, and his

⁷¹) C. O. 136/314: *Hay* to *Adam*, 5 Mar. 1827; C. O. 136/41: *Gilbert* to *Williams*, 8 Aug. 1827; and C. O. 136/1153: *Rudsdell* to *Mawdesley*, 4 Mar. 1828.

⁷²) F. O. 32/2: *Adam* to *Capodistria*, 7 Oct. 1828.

⁷³) C. O. 136/541: *Rudsdell* to *Mawdesley*, 23 July 1827.

⁷⁴) C. O. 136/1153: *Rudsdell* to *Mawdesley*, 8 Sept. and 22 Dec. 1828.

⁷⁵) C. O. 136/38: *Adam* to *Bathurst*, 15 Apr. 1827; and C. O. 136/52: *Adam* to *Murray*, 6 Aug. 1829.

⁷⁶) C. O. 136/1091: *Adam* to *Williams*, 6 Aug. 1829.

methods to encourage their departure were so successful that only 397 Turkish refugees remained on the island by December 1828⁷⁷). Although not all the hostilities of the Greek Revolution were concluded, the humanitarian policy of extending asylum to all refugees, both Greek and Turkish, had been withdrawn even before Ionian neutrality was officially rescinded in June 1830.

Conclusion

Contrary to their intentions, the British authorities in Corfu could not exclude all refugees from the Ionian Islands. Although some individuals were deported, neither *Maitland* nor *Adam* could halt the continuous influx of refugees from Greece, and they were forced to provide asylum for all such individuals, despite their determination to enforce Ionian neutrality on a strict basis⁷⁸). In reference to both Turkish and Souliote refugees, exceptions were made in order to reinforce the general cordiality which existed between the British and Ottoman authorities at the Ionian level, and it was this cordiality which would facilitate partly the resumption of Anglo-Ottoman relations in 1829.

By contrast, Anglo-Hellenic relations at the Ionian level were never cordial. The British authorities in Corfu considered the Greek Revolution to be a direct threat to the Ionian interests of the British government, and therefore every Greek refugee was a potential violator of Ionian neutrality. In strict conformity with Ionian neutrality, both *Maitland* and *Adam* expended much effort to discourage the steady emigration of Greek refugees; effort which was tempered only by the humanitarian recommendations of their superiors in London. Even when he interceded on behalf of the civilian inhabitants of Missolonghi, *Adam* did not intend to offer them asylum because he feared that their ranks would be infiltrated by Greek insurgents.

Paradoxically, the presence of Greek refugees in the Ionian Islands cannot be associated with any major violations of strict neutrality during the Greek Revolution. It was the arrival of Turkish refugees which incited their subsequent massacre on Cerigo in October 1821, while it was the appearance of the Ottoman fleet which incited violence on Zante during the same month. Moreover, such insurgents as Captain *Varnachiottis* were generally considered by the British authorities in Corfu to be Turkish citizens, a decision which facilitated the extraordinary length of their stay on Calamos. Al-

⁷⁷) C. O. 136/560: *Rudsdell* to *Mawdesley*, 22 Nov. 1828; and C. O. 136/46: *Adam* to *Murray*, 28 Sept. 1828.

⁷⁸) C. O. 136/310: *Wilmot Horton* to *Hankey*, Private and Confidential, 5 Feb. 1824; and C. O. 136/313: *Bathurst* to *Ponsonby*, 9 June 1826.

though their capture of Petala caused tension for Anglo-Ottoman relations, these Greek renegades still received asylum in the Ionian Islands, especially as such selectivity was designed by the British authorities in Corfu to assure the cordiality of Anglo-Ottoman relations. Nevertheless, diplomatic relations between London and Constantinople were affected by the presence of Greek refugees in the Ionian Islands, and unless otherwise ordered by the Colonial Office, the British authorities in Corfu would have not tempered their strict enforcement of Ionian neutrality with any humanitarian considerations⁷⁹).

⁷⁹) C. O. 136/22: *Stovin to Adam*, 18 May 1824; C. O. 136/312: *Temple to Meyer*, 12 June 1825; C. O. 136/34: *Adam to G. Canning*, 24 Dec. 1825; and F. O. 78/130: *G. Canning to Turner*, 12 Aug. 1825.