

Durrell: “Lawrence Of Corfu”

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Abstract

Corfu, due to its geographical position, was the cornerstone of the control of the entrance and exit of the Adriatic, the continental coasts opposite it and a significant part of the Eastern Mediterranean basin. As Lawrence Durrell himself expressed about the island, it could be an ideal base of operations in the event of upcoming military conflicts. In the 20th century, and in particular in the 1920s and 1930s, the Great Powers competed with each other in a game of domination, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean. In the face of diplomatic incidents, such as Italy's attack on Abyssinia, England and France played an influential role in the final negotiations to settle the issue, for fear of an Italian expansionist policy in the wider Mediterranean region. Therefore, Great Britain considered it imperative to seek allies to defend its interests in areas of direct vital interest, such as Greece. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the preceding practices through the activity of Lawrence Durrell, where he was, among others, a loyal servant of the British Empire. In the year 1935, the latter took a keen interest in Corfu, as it was the first place he chose to settle in Greece after England, where he had resided. England's "propaganda plans" were fleshed out through Durrell, as his letters foreshadowed his desire to "protect" Corfu against the interests of the competing Great Powers of the time, especially Italy. The ambitions of the Great Powers, in the field of foreign policy, were, among other things, their dominant influence in the Balkans. Durrell's letters demonstrate his "vaguely" active and "discreet" participation in the Balkan scene in the period 1935-1940 on behalf of Great Britain.

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I. Corfu as Lawrence Durrell's first choice of settlement

Through the letters of an important 20th century writer Lawrence Durrell, in his book *Spirit of Place*, the reason why he arrived on the island of Corfu in 1935 will emerge. Durrell, in his capacity as a "Sanitary Engineer", arrived in Naples in 1935, through which he was to head to Corfu¹. The choice of Corfu as his place of residence was no coincidence, as the first reason why he wanted to stay on the island was his friend George Wilkinson, who was already there and invited Durrell and his family to enjoy the idyllic life on this evocative island in the Ionian Sea².

The letter sent by Durrell before he arrived in Corfu, in 1934, from Bournemouth to George Wilkinson, shows that the former sought to settle there not only for reasons of rest and relaxation, but because his plans at that time were inextricably linked to the foreign policy issues of his country, England. The latter wanted to secure a "bulwark" in Greece against the expansionist practices of the other Great Powers of the time³. During this period,

¹ The Durrell couple, with fifteen-year-old Margo, sailed on the SS Oronsay from Tilbury to Naples, bound for Corfu on 2 March 1935. At the P&O Steamship Company Larry declared his occupation as "Sanitary Engineer". He may also have had a playful disposition that caused him to give Italy as his future country of residence. (Mr. Durrell, the sanitary engineer, ready to make his mark on the "backbone" of Europe) (see G. Bowker, *Through the dark labyrinth: A biography of Lawrence Durrell*. USA 1997, p.59.)

² A. Thomas, *Spirit of Place, Mediterranean writings, LAWRENCE DURRELL*, London 1969, p.17.

³ Russia was in the phase of an imperial expansion and was keenly interested in access to the Turkish Straits, through which it would secure its commercial interests. Britain, concerned about Russia's imperial claims, wanted to maintain its naval supremacy in the Mediterranean and finally France was determined to secure its

after Hitler's rise to power, a new Balkan Entente was created in 1934, which included Greece, Turkey, Romania and Yugoslavia in an agreement to guarantee the existing borders, with the support of the Soviet Union and with French co-support⁴. It is also worth mentioning a diplomatic episode of the interwar period, in 1934, when the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini made demands for the expansion of his country into African territory, the Abyssinian Empire, today's Ethiopia. The episode of "Walwal", as it was called, provoked the reactions of the European powers of the time (Great Britain, France, Germany) as Italy's expansion into East African regions was opposed especially by Great Britain⁵, which did not want its vital interests in the southeastern Mediterranean basin as well as in the Middle East and the Indies to be threatened⁶.

Starting to clarify the relevant passages of this letter, what is important to mention is on the one hand Durrell's willingness to settle in Corfu, but on the other hand he was concerned about the proximity of the island to Albania⁷. This fear is best explained by the fact that Italy had already used the incident on the Greek-Albanian border in the past for the benefit of its imperialist plans, culminating in the occupation of Corfu⁸. In the 1920s and 1930s Corfu was at the centre of Italian ambitions, where fascist expansionism was moving rapidly towards the Balkans in order to achieve the vision of the "New Italy". The latter's interest was to weaken Great Britain, with the main aim of rebuilding the ancient Roman Empire at the expense of the existing states⁹.

Durrell then wonders whether the marriage of Prince George, who was the fourth son of King George V of the United Kingdom, to Princess Marina of Greece was a good omen for British interests, as he thinks that since England was unable to safeguard the trade routes through Suez, Greece could be an ideal base of operations against any southern country¹⁰.

place on the European stage, as the instability of the Balkans created opportunities for this purpose (see R. Craig Nation, *The Balkan region in world politics, In War in the Balkans, 1991-2002*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College 2003, p.18).

⁴ R. Craig Nation, *op. cit.*, p.44.

⁵ Publications of the newspaper ETHNOS in 1935, which originate from English newspapers, describe the particular circumstances of the war in question, where the Emperor of Ethiopia wishes his country to obtain arms from other countries, but resents the fact that, as he points out, the export of these arms has been prohibited and he also says that "we are denied the right of defence". It is also stressed in an article in the newspaper "Economist" that: "disaster is predicted in Europe and Africa if the pro-war policy of Mr. Mussolini prevails". (see the newspaper ETHNOS of June 30, 1935, report from London: "ΕΠΙ ΤΟΥ ΠΙΕΣΤΗΡΙΟΥ, Αβησσυνιακά Παράπονα, Δυσχαιρένεται η άμυνα εναντίον των Ιταλών p.508).

⁶ M. Botsis, *Γεωπολιτική Αδριατικής Ιονίου: Η περίπτωση της Κέρκυρας*, Athens, 2005, p.269.

⁷ A. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p.19.

⁸ During 1923, after the occupation of Corfu by the Italians, Greece was forced to pay an exorbitant sum to Italy because of the diplomatic incident at the Greek-Albanian border, under the pretext of the assassination of the Italian general Telini. As Harold Nicholson, as First Secretary of the League of Nations at the time, expressed it. "*In response to B. Mussolini's successive threats, we silenced the League, imposed the fine on Greece without evidence of guilt and without a report to The Hague, and disbanded the Commission of Inquiry. Thus, a settlement was reached*". P. J. Yearwood, Consistently with Honour: Great Britain, the League of Nations and the Corfu Crisis of 1923, *Journal of Contemporary History*, p. 559.

⁹ Adelaide, S. Aust.: Register Newspapers Ltd., 1901-1929, «ITALIAN IMPERIALISM AND EUROPEAN PEACE», South Australia, *The Register ADELAIDE*, South Australia, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1923, p.6.

¹⁰ A. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p.19. Britain's pursuits involved the transit of its products through India, the supply of oil from northern Iraq as well as the export of manufactured goods from England to the East. British policy was thus focused on the control of the Turkish region, the Aegean, the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. (See M. Botsis, *op. cit.*, p. 269)

As for the sanctions against Italy after the invasion of Abyssinia, they remained at a mild level, since the sale of oil was not banned and the Suez Canal, which was under British control, was not closed, as had been planned. The main reason for this decision was on the one hand to safeguard the commercial and economic interests of the latter and on the other hand a war with Italy would require the concentration of the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean and this fact was not in the interest of Great Britain¹¹. In this direction and the course of international geopolitical practices, Durrell himself observes that Corfu, because of its geographical position, is going to emerge as an ideal and important base of operations for Britain, if any Balkan problems occur¹². He also expresses his concern to Wilkinson about whether the latter is going to give his life for "little Greece, our brave little ally" as Durrell calls it¹³.

In 1935, the main objective of the League of Nations was to stand firm against Hitler's revisionism, Great Britain for her part was anxious about a possible military conflict in the Mediterranean and this because Italian expansionism was gaining ground at the gates of the Balkans¹⁴. At the same time, England, on the occasion of the League of Nations sanctions (1935) against Italy because of the diplomatic incident in Africa, asked for the support of the Balkan countries in case of an imminent British-Italian conflict. Among the countries that sided with Britain was Greece¹⁵.

¹¹ Apart from this, Great Britain was also concerned about France's reaction to the situation, as it was doubtful whether France would support Great Britain in the end. A typical quote from the Foreign Office on this matter: "Although we can blackmail M. Poincare with the threat of the Convention, M. Mussolini can blackmail him even more effectively by threatening to put the Fiume question in sharp relief. I do not think, therefore, that we can rely on any firm support from M. Poincare [sic] as regards the evacuation of Corfu" (See P.J. Yearwood, Consistently with Honour: Great Britain, the League of Nations and the Corfu Crisis of 1923, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 21/4,1986, p.564).

¹² A. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p.19. The boundaries of the Balkan peninsula are delineated by the Adriatic and Ionian Seas to the west, the Aegean Sea to the south and the Black Sea to the east. The sea lines of communication between the Turkish Straits and the Strait of Otranto (opposite the island of Corfu, which lies south of the Adriatic Sea) parallel to Anatolia and along the Greek and Albanian coasts, were the bone of contention of strategic rivalries and an important point of major naval encounters. In the two World Wars the Balkans were an important stage of operations. The Balkans without the tradition of an independent state has been a key point of confrontation between neighbouring power complexes and beyond. The strategic importance of the Balkans as a land bridge between Europe, Asia and the African continent makes the Balkan Peninsula of great importance for the balance of the expanded European power system (See R. Craig Nation, *The Balkan Region in World Politics, In War in the Balkans, 1991-2002*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College 2003, p.1-3).

¹³ A. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p.19. The secret pact of London in 1915, negotiated by the Entente powers (Great Britain, France, Russia) provided, among other things, that the Albanian territories were to be divided between Greece and Italy if the latter two countries joined the Entente, leaving only a central zone as an autonomous Albanian province. In favour of the Entente was the faction of the liberal politician Eleftherios Venizelos, which eventually prevailed over the pro-German faction headed by King Constantine in 1917.

¹⁴ G. Baer, *Sanctions and Security: The League of Nations and the Italian-Ethiopian War, 1935-1936*, *International Organization*, 27/2, 1973, 166.

¹⁵ Greece and Turkey were two countries that constituted important pillars for the new Italian expansionist policy, as the eastern Mediterranean was in the context of Italy's intense interest in order to increase its influence not only in the Dodecanese but also to expand into the Black Sea. Still, England felt that Italy's role was useful in controlling Germany in Europe in general. After Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, the League of Nations wanted to impose sanctions on Italy and Great Britain, fearing the Italian threat in the Mediterranean, sought the help of Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia and provided guarantees to these countries in case of an

Returning to Durrell's letter, at the end of the letter it is noted in an obvious way that the latter's purpose, (concerning his impending settlement in Corfu) was to seek a good base of operations with a cheap exchange rate, in order to eliminate his existence for a year or two until his stock as an artist would rise¹⁶. He, characteristically, states:

"Personally the intentions of us are (strictly dishonourable as ever) to have a glance round for a good base of operations with a cheap exchange and pit out our existence for a year or two until our stock as artists goes up.."

These kinds of activities in which Durrell himself was involved had to be kept in the "secret background" as he says, as international developments and the aforementioned historical events show that Great Britain, due to the rivalries of the Great Powers, had to secure its supremacy and strengthen its defence in areas where it had direct vital interests, including Greece.

II. Durrell as an employee of the British Council and his "fight" for Corfu

From this point onwards, it becomes apparent through other letters of Durrell, which will be presented below, that he aimed to follow the orders he received from the British Council in order to be in Athens whenever he was asked, but in Corfu he still has many reasons that keep him on "alert". As he says in his letter to John Gawsorth, in 1936 he feared the impending war as Mussolini, after Ethiopia, what he wanted most was Corfu, as he had done before in 1925. Durrell therefore sees the island as Italy's next target¹⁷.

Three years later, Durrell is in Athens and in a letter to Anne Ridler in 1939, he says that he and his brother Leslie wanted to "protect" Corfu against the Italians, but since he had not received any confirmation of his work in naval intelligence, he had to rush to Athens¹⁸. However, in his book *Blue Thirst*, in the chapter *Propaganda and Impropropaganda*, commenting on his life as a diplomat, he mentions among other things an incident with him personally where the Foreign Secretary of England called Durrell and told him that he must go to Athens. He characteristically states: *"You know it is customary before you are sent to your first post to have ten minutes with the Foreign Secretary... You don't know what to say and so he is inclined to say: "Well, oh... Durrell, you're going to... um... you're going to Athens, I think." "Yes, sir." "Well, the ambassador is like this"¹⁹ ..."*. This fact foreshadows that he himself before he went to Athens, in the years he was already in Corfu, he had contacts with various persons in each Ministry and apparently received certain orders in order to follow a certain program, meaning missions of an open or closed nature²⁰.

imminent war (see D. Barlas, *Friends or Foes? Diplomatic Relations between Italy and Turkey, 1923-36, International Journal of Middle East Studies*,36/2,2004, p.233,243,247).

¹⁶ A.Thomas, *op. cit.*, p.20.

¹⁷ A.Thomas, *op. cit.*, p.42.

¹⁸ Among other things, the information that Durrell gives in this letter relates to the time of the flight from Corfu to Athens in 1939. He states that the whole island was in turmoil, as the war with Albania had already been started by the Italians. The military corps had taken up defensive positions in the northeast of the island of Corfu (see Al. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p.42). It is worth noting that, at that time, in order to increase Italian prestige abroad, fascist imperialism proceeded to occupy Albania in April 1939. As Mussolini expressed about this event *"he granted Albania a status of association with Italy"* (see G. Bernardini, *The Origins and Development of Racial Anti-Semitism in Fascist Italy, The Journal of Modern History*,49/3,1977, p.452).

¹⁹ L. Durrell, *Propaganda and Impropropaganda, In Blue Thirst, Santa Barbara,1975, p.39.*

²⁰ In the same chapter of that book, he goes into more detail about his position when he was in Athens and mentions: *"...Of course, in my particular department it was one of the things we couldn't do, because I was always stationed at crisis points where sitting quietly was not right, because there were always Russians or Germans or something like that invading... When the enemy arrives, you burn everything marked "Top Secret". I think I've been in more bunkers than you can probably imagine ..."*

Returning to the letters in the book *Spirit of Place*, Durrell lists his status as a kind of "private Godfrey Winn (war correspondent²¹), controlling public opinion". He states that he works for the "Diplomatic Delegation", (Legation) in Athens and gives a tip about a colleague of his who came to that department, and that: "He was very Compton Mackenzie(spy) who ran around Athens in a taxi, was followed and escaped²²". From the above information, therefore, it can be concluded that Durrell without any attempt to cover up any activity, was working for the British Empire²³.

In the following period he worked for the British Council as an English teacher at the British Institute. Again, here, there is talk of his desire to return to Corfu and fight at some naval base there against the Italians²⁴. At the same time, he writes "wonderful articles in the Greek press and conceives cunning schemes for the promotion of our arms²⁵". In another letter to Wilkinson, from Athens in 1940 he says that he is working for the "Diplomatic Delegation" there and this has given him a "false" social position (caste) and a decent salary²⁶. It is also significant that he mentions that as a teacher he "teaches English with care", thus demonstrating that this position involves a sacrifice of personal ambition for a higher cause that he himself stands for, which is none other than the promotion of British interests in Greece.

The letter to Anne Ridler, from Durrell in Athens in 1940, among other things, provides additional testimony the latter's purpose regarding his imminent settlement in Cyprus, as an official of the British Council there. He states, however, that if he does not succeed in reaching Cyprus what he must or wants to be is Lawrence of Albania or Corfu and this fact will turn the pessimism he feels about Britain's fate in the Balkans into "the wine of victory" as he puts it, into an unquestioning optimism²⁷. Wanting to assume a leading role in these

²¹ He was an English journalist, known as a columnist, writer. In 1939, Winn was the first British war correspondent to cross the Maginot Line. He served as an able seaman in the Royal Navy during World War II.

²² Compton Mackenzie served in the British intelligence service in the Eastern Mediterranean during World War I. In 1916 he set up an important intelligence network in Athens, then in 1917 he founded the Aegean Intelligence Service and enjoyed considerable autonomy for a few months as its director. Lawrence Durrell, in his book *Blue Thirst*, in the chapter *Propaganda and Impropropaganda*, discussing some characteristic points of his involvement with diplomacy, said of Mackenzie: "Bad faith and secrecy have been done very well by Compton Mackenzie in his five books analysing the situation in Athens during the First World War, because in every country you have a divided view of every issue and it's fun, exciting and sometimes a little dangerous to try to find out exactly what's eating them and then carry it back. But our methods of espionage these days are so ridiculous." (See L. Durrell, *op. cit.*, p.53.)

²³ In a letter to Henry Miller in 1940, he states: "...I recall some passages containing violence against the dear old British Empire of which I am now a paid servant... ". (See L. Durrell, *Letters to Henry Miller, Twentieth Century Literature*, 33/3, 1987, p.361). (See L. Durrell, *Letters to Henry Miller, Twentieth Century Literature*, 33/3, 1987, p.361).

²⁴ The British Council was founded in 1934 and its purpose was to organise a framework in which the teaching of English could be extended to the Near East, the Balkans, the Baltic, Portugal and South America. The main concern of this, was to increase British influence in areas of utmost vitality to the interests of the Empire, in order to oppose in this way the fascist cultural penetration, which involved the same areas. (See R. Smith, *ELT and The British Council, 1934-2014: Research notes. In 'Building anarchy and a record of the history of British Council involvement with ELT, 1934--2009' (2010-2011) and 'Documenting British Council involvement with ELT (1934-2014)', United Kingdom: University of Warwick. Retrieved from https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/research/collections/elt_archive/research_projects/britishcouncil/*

²⁵ A.Thomas, *op. cit.*, p.43.

²⁶ A.Thomas, *op. cit.*, p.43.

²⁷ A.Thomas, *op. cit.*, p.47.

developments, ensuring essentially by his participation in the possible missions, indirectly the dominant aspirations of Britain in areas of paramount strategic and geopolitical importance²⁸. He, characteristically, states:

«If all goes well we shall leave for Cyprus on the 13th: ...Otherwise if we get stuck I shall willy nilly have to be Lawrence of Albania or Corfu. And so, my dears, all the best for the turning of the water of our tears into the wine of victory; and safety and an après la guerre when such things will be written as make the philistines to gape and the little fishes to dance...»

III. Lawrence of Arabia and Lawrence of Corfu

The above analyses of Durrell's letters refer, to the greatest extent possible, beyond his status as a loyal servant of the British Empire, to a purpose that he himself pursued throughout the years 1934-1940: to fight for the sake of Corfu. His emphasis on being called "*Lawrence of Albania or Corfu*" draws a strong parallel with the story of Lawrence of Arabia, the latter having a prominent place in the Arabs' war against the Ottomans in the First World War²⁹. After the outbreak of the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire, Lawrence was appointed an officer and advisor to the son of the Emir of Mecca, named Faisal, and his forces in Hijaz. His military activity was intense and prominent between 1917 and 1918, involving himself in many operations against the Turkish forces, the most significant of which was the capture of Damascus by the Arabs and Faisal's establishment in the area. However, at the Versailles Conference in 1919, it became clear that Faisal's Syrian kingdom was not supported by Britain and that even if he succeeded in establishing himself in the region, the Arab forces would necessarily succumb to the impending French order³⁰.

Lawrence exerted considerable political influence in the Middle East in much the same way as he carried out his military objectives. So, as he fought for the Arabs, Lawrence of Arabia wanted Lawrence of Corfu to do the same, to fight for the Greeks, for the benefit of Great Britain. The stories are perfectly consistent with each other, and the reference to Lawrence of Arabia may not be clear, but the emphasis on that name and the victorious acceptance of the latter by the world at large, like Durrell, if he plays the part of Lawrence of Corfu or Albania, will make the "*Philistines gape and the little fishes dance*"³¹. However, any qualification concerning Durrell's use

²⁸ In the crucial decade of 1930-1940, Lord Chatfield, Britain's first Sea Lord in 1935, expressed the view that "Britain could beat the Italians in an imminent battle", but nevertheless believed that Italy was "a real threat to Britain's imperial communications and defence system". A strong Italy posed a serious threat to British dominance in the Mediterranean (see James J. Sadkovich, *Understanding Defeat: Reappraising Italy's Role in World War II*, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 24/1, 1989, pp 29).

²⁹ Specifically, in 1914, Lawrence, then a student at Oxford, took part in an archaeological survey under the supervision of Hogarth at the Hittite excavation near Aleppo. When war broke out in the same period, Lawrence was granted a post for the cartographic section of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, as his knowledge of the geography of the Sinai was particularly useful to Britain. He was subsequently transferred to the MI7 military intelligence service, with a total survey scope covering most of the Middle East. Still, in June 1916, Hogarth, deputy director of the military intelligence unit in the Middle East, introduced Lawrence into the Bureau's work, with a view to producing the Arab Bulletin, a secret magazine with feature articles on Middle Eastern politics (see Linda J. Traver, *In Wisdom's House: T. E. Lawrence in the Near East*, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 13/3, 1978, p. 586).

³⁰ Lawrence's participation in the Battle of Tafila earned him a major award in the Order of Distinguished Service and special recognition for outstanding command. From 1916-1919, the latter acted as a mediator for the British government and Faisal, with a guiding role in the imminent prosperity and conduct of Anglo-Hashemite relations. A characteristic report by Colonel Bremond (head of the French Military Mission in Hijaz, while in Aqaba in 1917 "...of the British officers there, only Lawrence exercised political authority over the Bedouins...". (See Linda J. Traver, *op. cit.*, pp.597,600,604). After the Arab victory over the Ottomans, the Arab cause was under the sceptre of British and French foreign policy and as Lawrence noted at the beginning of the Arab revolt: "*It was obvious from the first moment that if we won the war, these promises (those made to the Arab leaders), would be fake.*" (See A. W. Lawrence, *Oriental Assembly*, London, 1939, p.145).

³¹ The significance of the name Philistines is found in an ancient people who inhabited Palestine and their place of origin is believed to have been the Aegean, Southern Europe and the Mediterranean at the beginning of the Iron Age and is generally characterized as one of the "Sea Peoples". Metaphorically, the term philistine is used to describe a person of narrow views, with petty, selfish and hypocritical behaviour.

of the word can tell you that what he wanted was either to make his name known in the wider Eastern Mediterranean region, or to distinguish himself through his activity against "selfish" competitors who were none other than the other Powers who in turn wanted to annex more and more of the Balkans. It can be reasonably predicted that Durrell wanted to be at the centre of events with the "salutary" version of his multidimensional status as a hegemonic personality and pioneer of Great Britain's imperial plans in the wider Greek area.

IV. Conclusions

The 1930s-1940s is a transitional and weak period for the British Empire, both in the military and diplomatic field. In order to stop the plans of the fascist foreign policy, England imposed sanctions on Italy for the latter's invasion of Ethiopia, but not the expected and most onerous ones, as the association of Italy and Germany would mark a beginning with a negative bias towards the interests of Great Britain. Italian security and freedom of action depended on maintaining closer relations with Germany. Great Britain wanted to maintain the status quo within the Mediterranean and African regions. A strong Italy posed a threat to British dominance in the Mediterranean, and along with Italy's imperial ambitions, Anglo-Italian relations were further shaken³². Italy, fearing a victorious Germany and the possibility of becoming a "satellite country" of the latter, decided to get involved in the war scene in order to improve its position in the world hierarchy of the Great Powers.

All these events are emphatically mentioned in Durrell's letters and it is important to note the reason why he came to Corfu. It should be noted here that in the archive of Alan Thomas, a close friend of Durrell, he points out that: "*Larry left me some papers...These, along with the rest of his papers, were left behind in Corfu when he fled to Alexandria and were used by the German occupation troops to light fires*"³³...". Among other things, with regard to Durrell's intentions, what emerges is that in his capacity as an official of the British Council in the following years, he became directly involved in the propaganda practices of Great Britain as he wrote many articles in the press to promote the aims of British foreign policy. Still, regarding Durrell's predisposition "*to raise his stock as an artist*", it can be said that he wanted to increase his financial earnings, as in light of his literary career, this statement may have been a start towards achieving this goal. On the other hand, however, his desire to spread his fame and to be recognized as the Lawrence of Corfu, demonstrates his need to enter the naval intelligence service, himself standing for a higher purpose, to fight in one way or another on behalf of Corfu. Here, then, is the point where the will is perfectly connected with duty, to offer his services to Greece, to defend Greek affairs, under the "cloak" of a loyal servant of the British Empire.

With regard to Lawrence of Arabia, it should be noted that he himself wanted to support the Arab question as a morally worthy idea, and his tactical acumen contributed decisively to the outcome of victorious results in favour of the Arabs, in the war against the Ottomans. However, later on the occasion of the anti-colonial revolts that broke out against British rule throughout the empire, Lawrence was introduced with his fellow agents into the new part of the Middle East, in order to carry out the new project of establishing air control in the region under the British sphere of influence³⁴. As for Lawrence of Corfu, the letters of the period 1935-1940 from the book *Spirit of Place* do not indicate any active military activity of the latter, but only his desire to fight and distinguish himself with unprecedented heroism on the war scene. Lawrence of Arabia's comment in his book *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is noted here to illustrate the common thread between these two personalities, which concerns an ambition in which "*There was a longing to be famous-and a horror of being known to like being known. Contempt for my passion for distinction made me refuse any honor offered. I retained my independence almost as a Bedouin, but the impotence of my vision best showed me my form in painted pictures, and the oblique cryptic comments of others best taught me my created impression*"³⁵. Lawrence of Corfu had the same "longing"

³² James J. Sadkovich, *op. cit.*, p.29-30.

³³ Alan Thomas, *Preserving the Archive, Twentieth Century Literature*,33/3,1987, p.345.

³⁴ Winston Churchill, post-war Secretary of War and Air, had direct contact with Arab agents. Lawrence assisted in British foreign policy efforts to devise such a plan from 1920 with the Iraqi political commissioner, Arnold Wilson. Sinai Major C.S. Jarvis pointed out: "*an intuitive expert like Lawrence could perceive a situation with a clarity...not a characteristic of the average Whitehall official*" (See Priya Satia, *The Defense of Inhumanity: Air Control and the British Idea of Arabia, The American Historical Review*,111/1,2006, p.28).

³⁵ T.E.Lawrence,(2001,para.9).Balancing for the last effort. InT.E.Lawrence(Ed.) *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

to become a famous "commander-in-chief" of Greece, and of Corfu in particular, in a possible war conflict against the other Great Powers.

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