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Greek-Canadians Write to Prime Minister Venizelos: Two Letters from the Interwar Era

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RÉSUMÉ

Deux lettres envoyées par des Grecs de Montréal au Premier Ministre Grec de l'époque Eleftherios Venizelos au début du vingtième siècle expriment leurs inquiétudes sur le maintien de leur identité, leur culture et leur religion et la crainte de l'assimilation.

ABSTRACT

Two letters from Montreal to the then Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos in the beginning of the twentieth century express the worries of the early Greek immigrants in Montreal on issues of identity, culture, religion and assimilation.

The years 1900–1939 were a period when the Greek immigrant community started laying foundations in Canada. It was also a period of great upheaval in the history of Greece, with national and political sentiments running very high.

As Greek immigrants were trying to establish themselves in organised communities in North America, the issues of identity, culture, religion, assimilation, etc. were central to their everyday discussions. Two letters which we found in the recently released on-line archives¹ of the then Prime Minister of Greece Eleftherios Venizelos (1864–1936), clearly express such worries.

A church Scandal to be Dealt with

In the first letter written in Montreal on Jan. 29, 1929, George Kalfas,² a prominent Greek-Canadian businessman, writes to Venizelos so as to complain about a deposed Greek Orthodox bishop named Vasileios Komvopoulos.³ Kalfas

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accuses Komvopoulos of pretending to have been reinstated and, in this way, to have ordained another 40 priests choosing from “men illiterate, gamblers and committers of unspeakable acts.” Kalfas also dares to accuse the official representatives of Greece in Canada and the USA for being too close to some Greek Orthodox clergy, and for that reason they were not giving to the Government of Greece a clear picture of the situation.

Apparently this was not the first scandal in the Greek community of Montreal involving a priest. Hercules Papamanolis, in his *Greek-Canadian Guide* published in Montreal in 1922,⁴ mentions that another priest divided by his actions the Greek community in 1906–1907, embezzled money from several Greek-Canadians, and then ran away taking with him all precious church objects, including the Gospel and the chalice. The priest was eventually captured in Liverpool, UK. He was sent to Canada, and from there he was extradited to Greece.

The answer to Kalfas from the private secretary of Venizelos dated February 28, 1929, says that the Greek Prime Minister read Kalfas’ letter “with interest” and that “he took notes.” We do not know if there were any follow-up actions from the Greek Government, but Komvopoulos was reinstated as Bishop of Drama in 1930, while Venizelos was still Prime Minister of Greece.⁵ Another thing is also certain: Such problems inside the Greek-Canadian communities and the Greek Orthodox clergy did not end in 1929. They rather continue to our days.⁶

A Self-Appointed Organiser of Greek-Canadian Communities

The second letter is from Hercules N. Papamanolis,⁷ an intellectual, teacher of Greek and journalist, who writes to Venizelos as the “Grand Governor of Canada” (sic) of the Delphic Order of GAPA.⁸

Papamanolis’ lengthy letter is dated April 11, 1931 and it is handwritten in the simple purist Greek (*ἀπλή καθαρεύουσα*) of that time. Papamanolis first introduces himself by stating that he had already met “His Excellency” (Venizelos) in Paris and he had spoken to him about matters of concern to the Greek-Canadians. He then goes on to say that he is the owner of the only Greek newspaper in Canada, *Hestia*.

After that introduction, Papamanolis explains that the major issue of that time is that a significant number of Greek immigrants across the vast Canadian

territory remained unorganised in communities, i.e., they were without any Greek school or Greek Orthodox parish, with a serious risk of assimilation. To correct the situation, Papamanolis proposes himself to go on a 45-day mission across Canada to set up Greek schools in communities with unorganised Greek immigrants. His only request is that the Greek Government pays him \$700 for his trip expenses. This proposal, he says, was welcome by the Acting Consul of Greece in Montreal,¹⁰ who passed it to the Embassy of Greece in London (which was overseeing the Greek-Canadian diplomatic relations). However, Papamanolis states that, several months after his meeting Consul General of Greece in Montreal, there was no answer from the Embassy of Greece in London. For that reason, he concludes in his letter, he decided to write directly to the Prime Minister of Greece.

The answer to Papamanolis' proposal comes indirectly in another letter from Dimitrios Kaklamanos,¹¹ the Greek Ambassador in London, dated June 1st, 1931. In his letter, the Ambassador states he never received any request from Papamanolis. And Ambassador Kaklamanos goes on saying that Papamanolis did not have the necessary clout for such a mission, because he had already gone on a similar mission across the United States with almost zero results. In place of Papamanolis, the Ambassador proposes Apostolos Machairas, who had already served as General Consul of Greece in Montreal between 1919 and 1923.¹²

Looking at these letters almost a century later, one may understand that Greek-Canadians were really worried about losing their ethnic and cultural identity, a worry that remains always alive even today. This concern had made some members of the Greek-Canadian community to look at themselves as potential national organisers, leaders and saviors. One such self-appointed national savior was apparently Hercules N. Papamanolis. Judging from his deep involvement in the Greek-Canadian community affairs, probably his intentions were genuine. This does not exclude a possibility that he was also trying to make a meagre living out of patriotic undertakings.

NOTES

1. For more details about the Venizelos Foundation, see: www.venizelos-foundation.gr (last accessed on Jan. 30, 2016).
2. The “adventurous and daring” George Kalfas (Γεώργιος Α. Κάλφας or Καλφάκης: born in Creta, died in Montreal in 1960) was also involved in the internal politics of the Greeks in Canada. Leading a group of supporters of Venizelos, he founded the “Greek Orthodox Community of Holy Trinity” in Montreal in 1925, because of political differences with the royalist-controlled “Greek Orthodox Community of Montreal.” The two Greek communities of Montreal (the one run by Venizelos’ partisans and the one run by Royalists) reunited in Dec. 1931. For a few more details about him and the two Greek pre-WWII communities in Montreal, see: S. Florakas-Petsalis, *To Build a Dream: The Story of the Early Greek Immigrants in Montreal*, 2nd ed., Montreal 2010, pp. 170–172; T. Ioannou, *La Communauté grecque du Québec*, Institut québécois de la recherche sur la culture, Québec 1983, pp. 24–25; and G.D. Vlassis, *The Greeks of Canada*, 2nd ed., Ottawa 1953, p. 140.
3. Bishop Vasileios Komnopoulos (Βασίλειος Κομβόπουλος: born in Sinope, Ottoman Empire, 1877; died in Drama, Greece, 1941) was a controversial Greek Orthodox cleric. Being a royalist, he clashed with the pro-Venizelos Patriarch of Constantinople Meletios Metaxakis, and in 1922, he left for the United States where a year later he created the splinter “Autocephalous Greek Orthodox Church of America and Canada” («Αὐτοκέφαλος Ἑλληνικὴ Ἐκκλησία Ἦνωμένων Πολιτειῶν καὶ Καναδά»). He was officially deposed in 1924, but he was reinstated by Bishop Damaskinos (later Archbishop and Regent of Greece) in 1930, in a gesture of reconciliation within the Greek Orthodox Church. After his reinstatement, he returned to Greece to become Bishop of Drama. For more details about Bishop Komnopoulos, see: <http://www.imdramas.gr/news/?c=26> (last accessed on Feb. 21, 2016).
4. Η. Ν. Παπαμανώλης, *Περὶληπτικὴ Ἱστορία τοῦ Καναδά καὶ Ἑλληνο-Καναδικὸς Ὅδηγός*, Canadian Greek Publishing Co., Μοντρεάλη 1921–1922, σσ. 140–142.
5. See Note 2.
6. The dispute between the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal and the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada), which has a history of more than 30 years now, is probably the most protracted discord in the Greek minority of Canada.
7. Hercules Papamanolis (Ἡρακλῆς Ν. Παπαμανώλης: born in Piraeus, Greece, circa 1875; died in Montreal in 1946). He apparently held a degree in Law from the University of Athens. In 1902–1903, he edited and published in Piraeus two literary collections (φιλολογικὰ λευκώματα) of short stories, essays and poems written by various Greek authors of that time. By 1910, he had immigrated in Montreal, where he briefly held the position of teacher and director of the newly-established Greek School. In 1921–1922, he published a Greek-Canadian *Guide* (see Note 2) and in

1923, he launched the Greek weekly newspaper *Hestia* (*Ἑστία*), which was published until 1958. He probably travelled a few times across the Atlantic. Beyond his trip to Paris to meet Venizelos sometime before 1931, which is mentioned in his letter, his name is found twice in the Ellis Island (NY, USA) registry of immigrants: once in 1933 with “age 54”, and a second time in 1939 with “age 60.” A grave in the Mount Royal Cemetery of Montreal bears the name “Hercules Papamanolis” with a date of death November 15, 1946.

8. GAPA stands for Greek American Progressive Association. It was established in 1923 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as a more nationalist counterpart of AHEPA (American Hellenic Progressive Association). Contrary to the assimilation-oriented AHEPA, GAPA was placing more emphasis on the preservation of the Greek language, and only Orthodox applicants were accepted as members. Several GAPA chapters are still active today in the US, but the organisation is virtually non-existent in Canada.
9. The amount of \$700 was substantial in 1931. To put things into perspective, in 1930, the average annual wage for men was \$931 and for women \$564 (see: A. Rashid, “Seven decades of wage changes.” *StatCan Perspectives*, summer 1993, vol. 5, no. 2, article 1; URL: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/1993002/57-eng.pdf>, last accessed on Feb. 17, 2016).
10. A.V. Seferovitch was the Consul General of Yugoslavia and the Acting Consul of Greece in Montreal in the late 1920s and early 1930s (see: G.D. Vlassis, *The Greeks of Canada*, Ottawa 1942, p. 26).
11. Dimitrios Kaklamanos (Δημήτριος Γ. Κακλαμᾶνος; born in Nafplion, Greece, 1867; died in London, UK, 1949) was a Greek intellectual journalist and career diplomat (see: Π.Γ. Καλλίνικος, *Δημήτριος Κακλαμᾶνος: Ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ τὸ συγγραφικὸ του ἔργο*, Δόμος, Αθήνα 1994).
12. Apostolos Machairas (Ἀπόστολος Μαχαιρᾶς; born in Lefkada, Greece in 1883; unknown where and when he died) was a Greek career diplomat, and the first salaried General Consul of Greece in Montreal. His presence in Canada was cut short due to budget cuts (see: Γιάννης Κόκκωνας, «Ἡ ἐλληνικὴ διπλωματία στὸν Καναδά», 31 Αυγούστου 2013; URL: <https://coconasblog.wordpress.com/2013/08/31/>, last accessed on Feb. 21, 2016).

The Transcribed Letters

Letter 1

From George Kalfas to Eleftherios Venizelos, Prime Minister of Greece

Mr George Kalfas

Montreal, 28 Ιαν. 1929

Πρὸς τὴν Αὐτοῦ Ἐξοχώτητα
κ. Ἐλευθέριον Βενιζέλον
Πρωθυπουργὸν
Εἰς Ἀθήνας

Κύριε Πρόεδρε,

Ἔχω τὴν τιμὴν νὰ ἀποστείλω Ὑμῖν συνημμένως ᾧδε ἀντίγραφον ἐκθέσεως γεγονότων τῶν ὁποίων ἦρωσ τυγχάνει ὁ καθηρημένος Βασίλειος Κομβόπουλος.¹

Αἰτία τῆς ἀποστολῆς πρὸς Ὑμᾶς τοῦ ἐν λόγῳ ἐγγράφου εἶναι ἡ διάδοσις ὅτι ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἀπεφάσισε νὰ ἄρῃ τὴν καθαίρεσιν καὶ νὰ ἐπαναφέρῃ τὸν Κομβόπουλον εἰς τὸ ἀξίωμα τὸ ὁποῖον κατεῖχεν ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ πρὶν καθαιρεθῆ. Τούτου γενομένου, θὰ δημιουργηθῆ μία κατάστασις πραγμάτων μεταξὺ τῆς ἐν Ἀμερικῆς ὁμογενείας καθ' ὅλοκληρίαν ἀθεράπευτος. Καὶ ἐξηγοῦμαι:

Ὁ Βασίλειος Κομβόπουλος μετὰ τὴν καθαίρεσίν του ἐχειροτόνησε 40 ἱερεῖς, ἀνθρώπους ἀγράμματους, χαρτοπαίκτης καὶ ἥρωας ἀκατανομάστων πράξεων, οἱ ὅποιοι ἐπανερχομένου τοῦ Βασιλείου εἰς τὴν τάξιν τῶν κληρικῶν θὰ παραμείνωσι πέτρα σκανδάλων καὶ διαιρέσεων τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ τῆς Ἀμερικῆς καὶ τοῦ Καναδά. Διότι, γνωστοῦ ὄντος τοῦ χαρακτηῖρος τῶν ἀνθρώπων τούτων, οὐδεὶς φρόνιμος καὶ σεβόμενος ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὴν ἁμωμον θρησκείαν μας θὰ ἀναγνωρίσῃ ὡς ἀντιπροσώπους αὐτῆς. Οἱ λεγόμενοι ἱερεῖς τοῦ Κομβόπουλου ἔχουν τελέσῃ διάφορα μυστήρια ἀνερχόμενα εἰς χιλιάδας ἅτινα βεβαίως εἶναι ἄκυρα, καθότι (2)² ἐτελέσθησαν παρὰ λαϊκῶν.

Κύριε Πρόεδρε, αἱ πράξεις καὶ αἱ ἐνέργειαι τοῦ Κομβόπουλου καὶ τῶν παρ' αὐτοῦ χειροτονηθέντων προκαλοῦσι τὴν φρίκην καὶ τὸν ἀποτροπιασμόν. Ἐξηγυτέλισαν τὸ ἑλληνικὸν ὄνομα εἰς τὰ ὄμματα τῶν ἰθαγενῶν καὶ κατερρείψωσαν τὴν Ὁρθοδοξίαν.

Ἴσως δὲν ἔπρεπε ἐγὼ νὰ προβῶ εἰς τὴν ἀποστολὴν τῆς παρούσης διότι ἀρμόδιοι εἶναι οἱ ἐπίσημοι ἀντιπρόσωποι τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Κυβερνήσεως, ἀλλὰ γνωρίζω ὅτι, οὗτοι ὄχι μόνον δὲν ἐξέθεσαν τὴν ἀληθῆ κατάστασιν τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν μας πραγμάτων ἐν Ἀμερικῇ καὶ Καναδᾷ, ἀλλὰ, θέσαντες τὰς προσωπικὰς τῶν συμπαθείας ὑπεράνω τῶν κοινῶν συμφερόντων, παρέστησαν εἰς τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν Κυβέρνησιν ὅλως διαφορετικὴν τὴν κατάστασιν.

Βεβαίως γεννῶνται τὰ ἐρωτήματα:

- Πρέπει νὰ διαιωνισθῇ ἡ κατάστασις καὶ ποῖα μέτρα πρέπει νὰ ληφθῶσι διὰ τὴν θεραπείαν της;³

Ο Κομβόπουλος καταρρέει, οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες αὐτὸν εἶναι ἐλάχιστοι, καὶ ἐὰν διὰ μιᾶς ἐνεργείας τῶν ἐπισήμων ἀντιπροσώπων τῆς Ἑλλάδος καὶ ἰδίως τοῦ ἐν Οὐασιγκτῶν Πρεσβευτοῦ, διὰ τῆς ὁποίας νὰ ὑπεδεικνύετο ἐντόνως καὶ αὐστηρῶς εἰς τοὺς ἀκολουθούντας τὸν Κομβόπουλον ὅτι τὰ μυστήρια τὰ τελούμενα παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν παρ' αὐτοῦ χειροτονηθέντων εἶναι ἄκυρα, καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικῶς καὶ πολιτικῶς, τὸ εὐχάριστον ἀποτέλεσμα θὰ ἐπήρχετο ταχύτερον παρ' ὅσον ἐλπίζεται. Διότι οὐδεμία παρομοία ἐνέργεια ἐγένετο παρὰ τῶν ἀντιπροσώπων τῆς Πατρίδος μας μέχρι σήμερον.⁴

(3) Ἐπίσης θὰ ἦτο συντελεστικὸν εἰς τὴν παγίωσιν τῆς εἰρήνης ἐὰν ἀπεστέλετο διακεκριμένος κληρικὸς καὶ εἰ δυνατόν ἐκ τῶν νέων χωρῶν τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὁ ὁποῖος νὰ περιέλθῃ ὅλας τὰς Ἑλληνικὰς Κοινότητες Ἀμερικῆς καὶ Καναδᾶ καὶ μὲ δύναμιν καὶ σθένος ὑποδείξῃ εἰς τοὺς ὁμογενεῖς τὰς συνεπειὰς καὶ εἰς ποῖον κρημνὸν ὀδηγοῦνται. Εἶμαι βέβαιος ὅτι θὰ ἐπειθε τοὺς καλῆ τῇ πίστει ἀκολουθούντας τὸν Κομβόπουλον.

Καὶ τέλος ἐὰν δοθῇ –συγχωροχάρτι –⁵ εἰς τὸν Κομβόπουλον θὰ προκαλέσῃ κάκιστον προηγούμενον καὶ δὲν θὰ εἶναι δύσκολον, λαμβανομένης ὑπ' ὄψιν τῆς ἐλαστικότητος τῶν νόμων Ἀμερικῆς καὶ Καναδᾶ, νὰ ἀναφανῶσι καὶ ἄλλοι Κομβόπουλοι, εἰς τὸ λίαν προσεχῆς μέλλον.

Πάντως οἰαδήποτε ἐνέργεια ἣτις ἤθελε τεθῆ εἰς ἐφαρμογὴν οἱ χειροτονηθέντες παρὰ τοῦ Κομβόπουλου πρέπει νὰ παύσωσιν ἐπαγγελόμενοι τὸν ἱερέα.

Πεποιθὸς ὅτι ἡ Ὑμετέρα Ἐξοχώτης θὰ κατανοήσῃ ὅτι τὰ ἀνωτέρω εἶναι ἐξωτερίκευσις τοῦ πόνου διὰ τὴν ἐν λόγῳ κατάστασιν, Ἑλληνοῦ οἰκογενειάρχου καὶ Χριστιανοῦ Ὁρθοδόξου.

Διατελῶ μετ' ἀπέιρου σεβασμοῦ,

Γ. Α. Κάλφας

Letter 2

From the Private Secretary of Eleftherios Venizelos, Prime Minister of Greece, to George Kalfas

Ἀθήναι τῆ 20/2/1929.–

Κύριε Κάλφα,

Ὁ κ. Πρόεδρος τῆς Κυβερνήσεως μοῦ ἀνέθεσε νὰ σᾶς γνωρίσω ὅτι ἀνέγνωσε μετ' ἐνδιαφέροντος τὴν ἀπὸ 28 λήξαντος ἐπιστολὴν σας κρατήσας σημείωσιν τοῦ περιεχομένου της.–

Μετὰ τιμῆς

Ὁ Ἰδιαιτέρος Γραμματεὺς⁶

Κον Γ. Κάλφαν

Montreal, Kanada⁷

Letter 3

From Hercules Papamanolis to Eleftherios Venizelos, Prime Minister of Greece

Hercules N. Papamanolis

Grand Governor of Canada

Delphic Order of G.A.P.A.

Grand Governor's Office

4395 St. Denis Street

Montreal, Canada 11 Ἀπριλίου 1931

Κύριε Πρόεδρε!

Ἐν γνώσει τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐπιθυμίας ὅπως ἐλευθέρως ἀπευθύνεται πᾶς Ἑλλην πρὸς Ὑμᾶς εἴτε διὰ τὴν ἀπονομὴν δικαίου εἰς αὐτόν, εἴτε ὅπως ἀναπτύξῃ τι

συντελεστικὸν διὰ τὴν γενικὴν πρόοδον, λαμβάνω τὴν τιμὴν νὰ σᾶς ἀπευθύνω τὴν παροῦσαν, ἐν πεποιθήσει ὅτι θέλει τύχη τῆς δεούσης προσοχῆς.

Πρὸ τῆς εἰσόδου μου εἰς τὸ θέμα, ἐπιτραπήτω μοι νὰ ὑπομνήσω τῇ Ὑμετέρα Ἐξοχότητι ὅτι ἔσχον τὴν τιμὴν νὰ σᾶς γνωρίσω ἐν Παρισίοις καὶ νὰ σᾶς ὑποβάλλω – καθ' ἣν ἐντολὴν εἶχον παρὰ τῶ Κοινοτήτων τοῦ Καναδᾶ – τὴν εὐγνωμοσύνην τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ τοῦ Καναδᾶ διὰ τὰς ὑπερόχους πρὸς τὸ Ἔθνος ὑπηρεσίας σας, (2) ἔτι δὲ νὰ προσθέσω ὅτι εἶμαι ἰδιοκτῆτης καὶ διακινήτης τῆς μόνης ἐν Καναδᾶ Ἑλληνικῆς Ἐφημερίδος «Ἐστίας», περὶ τῆς δράσεως τῆς ὁποίας θὰ ἠδύνατο νὰ ζητηθοῦν πληροφορίαι παρὰ τῆς Α.Ε. τοῦ ἐν Οὐασινγκτῶνι Ἀντιπροσώπου τῆς Ἑλλάδος, καὶ παρὰ τοῦ Σεβ. Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κορινθίας.

Εἰσάγω τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ μου τὸ πράττειν ἀπλῶς καὶ μόνον ἵνα ἡ Ὑμετέρα Ἐξοχότης ἔχει ὑπ' ὄψει τῆς ὅτι λόγῳ τῆς ιδιότητός μου ὡς δημοσιογράφου ἔχω μελετήσῃ τὸ θέμα τὸ ὁποῖο λαμβάνω τὴν τιμὴν ν' ἀναπτύξω.

Ἐν ὁλοκλήρῳ τῇ Ἐπικρατεῖᾳ τοῦ Καναδᾶ, εἶνε ἐγκατεστημένοι περὶ τοὺς 8.000 Ἕλληνες. Τὸ ἥμισυ αὐτῶν ἔχουσιν ἐγκατασταθῆ ἐν τῇ μητροπόλει τοῦ Καναδᾶ, Μοντρεάλῃ,⁸ καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐπαρχίαν Ontario. Τὸ δ' ἕτερον ἥμισυ (3) εἰς τὰς λοιπὰς Ἐπαρχίας. Κοινότητες λειτουργοῦν τρεῖς: δύο ἐν Μοντρεάλῃ μετὰ δύο ἰδιόκτητων σχολείων, καὶ μία ἐν Τορόντῳ Ont. μετὰ σχολείου.⁹ Τὸ Δελφικὸν Τάγμα τῆς Gara διατηρεῖ ἐν τῇ πόλει Quebec σχολεῖον Ἑλληνικόν.¹⁰

Ἡ Μοντρεάλῃ εἶνε ἔδρα τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Προξενείου, ὑπάρχει δὲ καὶ Ὑποπροξενεῖον ἐν Τορόντῳ. Τὸ ἐν Βανκοῦβερ κατεργήθη.

Ἡ ἀπόστασις ἀπὸ Μοντρεάλῃς μέχρι Βανκοῦβερ εἶνε σιδηροδρομικῶς περὶ τὰ πέντε ἡμερονύχτια, οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐπαρχίας Ontario ὁμογενεῖς μέχρι Βανκοῦβερ οὐδέποτε εἶδον Ἕλληνα Πρόξενον, οὐδέποτε ἤκουσαν μίαν πατριωτικὴν ὁμιλίαν, καὶ ὅπου συνέβη νὰ μὴν εὐρίσκονται πλησίον τῶν πόλεων εἰς τὰς ὁποίας διαμένουσι Ἑλληνικαὶ παροικίαι τῆς Ἀμερικῆς ἠναγκάσθησαν οἱ ὁμογενεῖς (4) νὰ τελοῦν τὰ μυστήριά των εἰς τὰς Ἀγγλικανικὰς Ἐκκλησίας. Τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα εἶνε τὰ Ἑλληνόπουλα τὰ πέραν τοῦ κύκλου τῶν Ἐπαρχιῶν Quebec καὶ Ontario ἀγνωοῦσι τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν γλῶσσαν, καὶ εἶνε ἐλάχισται οἱ οἰκογένειαι ἐκεῖναι αἱ ὁποῖαι ἐμερίμνησαν νὰ δώσουν Ἑλληνικὴν τινα μόρφωσιν εἰς τὰ τέκνα των.

Ὅπως καὶ ὁ ἐν Ἀμερικῇ Ἑλληνισμός, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἐν Καναδᾷ τοιοῦτος διακρίνεται διὰ τὴν φιλοπατρίαν του, πλὴν οἱ εἰς τὸ ἐσωτερικὸν τοῦ Καναδᾶ ὁμογενεῖς παραμεληθέντες παρημέλησαν νὰ ὀργανωθοῦν εἰς Κοινότητας.

Τελευταίως καὶ αἱ δύο ὀργανώσεις Gara καὶ Ahera ἴδρυσαν τμήματα εἰς τὸ ἐσωτερικὸν τοῦ Καναδά, ὅπου ἀπεδείχθη ὅτι χρειάζεται κάποια ἐπίσημος ἐνέργεια πρὸς διοργάνωσιν τῶν ἄνευ Κοινοτήτων Ἑλληνικῶν παροικιῶν τοῦ (5) ἄχανοῦς Καναδά.

Κατανοῶν τελείως ὅτι μόνον μία ἐπίσκεψις ἀνθρώπου περιβεβλημένου κάποιαν ιδιότητα εἰς ἐιδικὴν ἀποστολὴν θὰ ἐδύνατο νὰ ρυθμίση τὴν κατάστασιν, νὰ ἐμψυχώση, νὰ ἐνθαρρύνῃ καὶ νὰ ὀργανώσῃ τὸν Ἑλληνισμὸν ἐπισκέφθη πρὸ μηνὸς τὸν ἐν Μοντρεάλῃ ἀναπληρωτὴν Γενικοῦ Προξένου κ. Ζεφέροβιτς καὶ τοῦ εἶπα ὅτι θὰ ἦτο καλὸν νὰ ταξιδεύσῃ, ὑπὸ τὴν ιδιότητά του ὡς Προξένου, ἀπὸ μιᾶς Ἑλληνικῆς παροικίας εἰς ἄλλην καὶ νὰ προβῇ τουλάχιστον εἰς τὴν δημιουργίαν σχολείων, δεδομένου ὅτι ὑπάρχουν πέντε κέντρα ὅπου κάλλιστα δύνανται νὰ διαβρεθῶσι τοιαῦτα. Ὁ κ. Πρόξενος εὗρεν ὀρθὴν τὴν ιδέαν μου, δηλώσας μοι δ' ὅτι δὲν ἔχη τὸν καιρὸν διὰ νὰ ἐπιχειρήσῃ τὸ ταξείδιον αὐτό, με ἐρώτησεν ἐὰν ἐδυνάμην ἐγὼ (6) νὰ τ' ἀναλάβω ὑπὸ τίτλου ἐιδικῆς Προξενικῆς ἀποστολῆς, ἐπὶ τῇ ἐρωτήσει του δὲ τίνας ἀξιώσεις εἶχα διὰ ταξείδιον τὸ ὅποιον θ' ἀπῆτει ἐν ὄλῳ 45 ἡμερῶν ἀπουσίαν ἐκ Μοντρεάλῃς, τῷ εἶπον ὅτι προκειμένου διὰ τοιοῦτον ἔργον δὲν θέλω ἢ μόνον τὰ ἐξοδά μου, ἦτοι ὑπολογίσαμεν ὅτι τὰ σιδηροδρομικὰ καὶ λοιπὰ ἐξοδα θ' ἀνέρχοντο εἰς \$700. Ὁ κ. Πρόξενος με εὐχαρίστησεν καὶ μοι ἐδήλωσεν ὅτι θὰ γράψῃ περὶ τούτου ἔκτενῶς εἰς τὴν Πρεσβείαν Λονδίνου. Παρῆλθον ἄρκετοὶ μῆνες, καὶ ὡς μοι ἀνακοίνωσε δὲν ἔτυχε ἀπαντήσεως ἐπὶ τοῦ ζητήματος τούτου.

Αἰσθανόμενος ὅτι δύναμαι νὰ φανῶ χρήσιμος τῇ Πατρίδι ἐπὶ τοῦ ζητήματος αὐτοῦ, καὶ πιστεύων ὅτι ἀποτελεῖ ἀδίκημα νὰ μείνῃ ἀναδιοργάνωτον μέγα τμῆμα τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ τοῦ Καναδά, ἀπεφάσισα (7) ν' ἀποτανθῶ πρὸς Ὑμᾶς, καὶ νὰ θέσω ὑπὸ τὴν κρίσιν σας τὴν ιδέαν μου. Δὲν ὠθοῦμαι ἀπὸ φιλοδοξίαν, ἀλλὰ νοιώθω μέσα μου ὅτι δύναμαι νὰ φέρω εἰς πέρας μίαν τοιαύτην ἐντολήν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτον ἔλαβον τὸ θάρρος νὰ γράψω πρὸς τὴν Ὑμετέραν Ἐξοχότητα.

Διατελῶ μετὰ βαθυτάτου σεβασμοῦ

Ἦρ. Παπαμανώλης

Letter 4

From Dimitrios Kaklamanos, Ambassador of Greece in London, UK, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece

No. 1531/Π/31

ΛΟΝΔΙΝΟΝ ΤΗ 1ην¹¹ Ιουνίου 1931

Πρὸς τὸ ἐπὶ τῶν Ἐξωτερικῶν Ὑπουργεῖον
Τμῆμα Β'. Πολιτικόν.

Ἀπαντῶν εἰς τὸ ὑμέτερον ὑπ' ἀριθμ. 6514 ἔγγραφον τῆς 13ης Μαΐου, λαμβάνω τὴν τιμὴν νὰ ἀνακοινώσω ὑμῖν, ὅτι, κατὰ τὴν γνώμην μου, ἡ πρότασις τοῦ δημοσιογράφου κ. Παπαμανώλη, ὅπως περιηγηθῆ τὸν Καναδᾶν, πρὸς ὀργάνωσιν Ἑλληνικῶν Κοινοτήτων κτλ. δὲν μοῦ φαίνεται πρακτικὴ, οὔτε δύναται νὰ καταλήξῃ εἰς οἰονδήποτε ἀποτέλεσμα, διότι οὗτος δὲν ἔχει τὸ διὰ τοιαύτην ἐργασίαν ἀπαιτούμενον κῦρος. Ὁ κ. Παπαμανώλης, ἄλλως τε, καὶ πρὸ τριετίας ἐπεχείρησε τοιαύτην περιοδείαν, κατ' ἐντολὴν καὶ διὰ δαπάνης τῆς ἐν Οὐσιγκτῶν Ἑλληνικῆς Πρεσβείας, χωρὶς ἡ περιοδεία του ἐκείνη νὰ καταλήξῃ εἰς τίποτε τὸ χρήσιμον ἢ πρακτικόν.

Τὸ ἔργο διοργανώσεως τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν Κοινοτήτων εἰς τὸν Καναδᾶν ἐφ' ὅσον ἐννοεῖται θὰ ὑπῆρχον καὶ τὰ πρὸς ὀργάνωσιν τοιοῦτων κοινοτήτων στοιχεῖα, θὰ ἠδύνατο ν' ἀναληφθῆ ὑπὸ ἐμμίσθου ὑπαλλήλου τῆς Προξενικῆς ἡμῶν ὑπηρεσίας, ὡς τοιοῦτον δὲ συνίστων τὸν Γενικὸν Πρόξενον κ. Μαχαιρᾶν, ὅστις καὶ ἄλλοτε ἐπεσκέφθη, μὲ εἰδικὴν ἀποστολὴν, τὸν Καναδᾶν, καὶ ἐὰν ἡ Κυβέρνησις ἐνόμιζεν ὅτι ἐνδε[ι]κνύεται ὀργανωτικ[ή] τις ἐνέργεια ἐκεῖ, εἶμαι βέβαιος ὅτι ὁ κ. Μαχαιρᾶς θὰ ἐξεπλήρου τὴν ἀποστολὴν του ἐπιτυχῶς.

Ἐ[ξ] ἄλλου, ὁ κ. Σεφέροβιτς¹² οὐδέποτε μοῦ διαβίβασε τὴν ἀναφερομένην ὑπὸ τοῦ κ. Παπαμανώλη αἴτησιν περὶ τοιαύτης περιοδείας· αὐτὸς δὲ εἶνε ὁ λόγος δι' ὃν καὶ δὲν ἔλαβεν ἀπάντησιν ἐπὶ τῆς προτάσεώς του ὁ κ. Παπαμανώλης.

Ὁ Πρεσβευτῆς
Δ. Κακλαμᾶνος

NOTES ON THE TRANSCRIBED LETTERS

1. A handwritten note on the letter states: “<Also newspaper clips>.”
2. Numbers in bold parentheses indicate the page number of the original manuscript.
3. The author says that there are several questions, but he puts forth only one.
4. This is a direct accusation that the Greek diplomats in Canada and the USA were too close to some clergy circles.
5. The long dashes are present in the typewritten letter. It is likely that the author wanted to use quotes for the word *συγχωροχάρτι*, which sounds as not part of the Greek purist (*καθαρεύουσα*) vocabulary. (Yet, this word is perfectly Greek.)
6. There is no signature in this note by the Private Secretary of Venizelos.
7. In the original, the word Canada is misspelled with a K instead of C.
8. According to the 1915 Census data included in Papamanolis’ Greek-Canadian *Guide* of 1921–1922, Montreal was then the biggest Canadian city with a population of 617,000 (not including the suburbs). Toronto was second with a population of 534,000. By 1931, the two cities were almost equal in population, and later Toronto overpassed Montreal.
9. Montreal and Toronto are today the only two Canadian cities where daily Greek schools are operating. Particularly in Montreal, there is a network of six kindergarten and elementary Greek schools with over 1,200 pupils.
10. The Greek school in Quebec City was opened in 1930, but closed in 1938, because it did not have enough students (see: S. Constantinides, *Les Grecs du Québec*, Éditions O Metoikos – Le Métèque, Montréal 1983, pp. 74–76).
11. Mistakenly written in the original letter. It should have been written as 1η.
12. Mistakenly written in the original letter. It should have been written as Ζεφερόβιτς (Zeferovitch).