TIME ON THE MOUNTAIN: THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES IN AXIS-OCCUPIED GREECE, 1943-1944

A dissertation submitted to Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Kyriakos Nalmpantis
May 2010
Dissertation written by
Kyriakos Nalmpantis
B.A., Allegheny College, 1990
M.A., Kent State University, 1995
Ph.D., Kent State University, 2010

Approved by
S. Victor Papacosma, Ph.D.
Chair, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Mary Ann Heiss, Ph.D.
Members, Doctoral Dissertation Committee
Richard Steigmann-Gall, Ph.D.
Andrew Barnes, Ph.D.
Mark Colvin, Ph.D.

Accepted by
Kenneth Bindas, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of History
Timothy Moerland, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments..................................................................................iv  
Note on Translation and Transliteration............................................xii  
Glossary of Frequently Used Terms..................................................xiii  
Introduction.........................................................................................1  

I. Chapter One: The Historical Background.....................................29  
II. Chapter Two: Occupation and Resistance.................................53  
III. Chapter Three: The British and the Greek Resistance, 1942-3......78  
IV. Chapter Four: Axis-Occupied Greece and US Foreign Policy, 1942-3...109  
V. Chapter Five: The OSS in Greece, September 1943-December 1943..139  
VI. Chapter Six: Gerald K. Wines, Deputy Commander of the AMM....169  
VII. Chapter Seven: Civil War..........................................................204  
VII. Chapter Eight: The OSS in the German-Occupied Evros, 1943-4: Part I...228  
IX. Chapter Nine: The OSS in the German-Occupied Evros, 1943-4: Part II...264  
Conclusion..........................................................................................311  
Bibliography.......................................................................................325
Acknowledgments

At one point over the last decade or so, I remember reading or hearing somewhere that “a good book is never late.” Clearly, the source was eminently forgettable but I clung to that quote like a drowning man clings to a piece of floating debris. Surely it had to be so. How else could I explain to loved ones, friends, and well-wishers, but most of all to myself, what exactly was taking so long? Dissertations take a long time you understand, you can’t rush a good thing…but as one year melded in to the next, and the goal of completion receded far into the horizon, all those rationalizations seemed like so much sophistry and I was left only with a yawning, empty doubt and an impending sense of failure. When I began this project a lifetime ago, I thought I was writing a history. Little did I know then (though many who have completed similar projects nod ruefully when I tell them so) how much of a person’s self-respect gets caught up in something like this, the bitter humility one learns as one contemplates the possibility that there will be no happy ending. I would like to say that it was faith that got me through it but that would be a lie. No, not true – it would be a partial lie. I lost my faith (and reacquired it) too many times to mention. In the end, it was the faith of those closest to me, my family and friends, that kept me afloat, kept my head above water. I’ve been waiting such a long time to acknowledge each of them and thank them from the deepest recesses of my heart.

First, I would like to thank the dear and wonderful friends and loved ones who are no longer with us, though their generosity and magnanimity of spirit will – of this I have
no doubt – live forever. Dr. John Logue, of the Kent State Department of Political Science, who graciously agreed to sit on my doctoral committee when it appeared that Mark Rubin would be too ill to continue on as my outside reader, though he did not know me at all. His untimely passing in December 2009 was a blow to the entire Kent community. Sadly, Dr. Rubin did not long outlive him and passed away just a few days later. Friend and confidant, scholar and teacher, advisor and surrogate parent, Mark was one of the most decent and intelligent people I have ever met, truly a man for all seasons. Anyone who ever worked with him or got to know him would say no different. We all miss him keenly. I am eternally thankful as well to the late Yiannis Koufidakis, brilliant conversationalist, sensitive teacher, and dearest friend, who arranged my visit to the archives of the Greek Army General Staff and provided me with a wealth of knowledge on 1940s Greece. Yianni *mas leipis file mou*. My late mother-in-law, Ellen Forster, gifted storyteller and courageous wife and mother, was an inspiration to her entire family. She is sorely missed, though never far from our thoughts. Finally, I remember my late uncle, Constantine Triantis, who fought with the Greek Army in North Africa and then against his own brother in the streets of Athens in December 1944. His reminiscences, as retold by my cousin Manouel after his passing, brought the era to life for me in a very real way. *As einai elafri to choma pou tous skepazei.*

So many scholars and archivists provided succor to one extremely confused doctoral candidate. My sincerest gratitude must first go to Dr. John Iatrides, the preeminent scholar of Greek Civil War studies, whose expertise and guidance were absolutely invaluable. He generously gave of his vast store of wisdom, provided me with
crucial primary documents from his private archives, and even proofread one of my chapters. What I owe him cannot be repaid. At the National Archives in College Park, an intimidating place for a young scholar, Dr. Larry McDonald calmly steered me through the vast welter of material and pointed out fruitful paths of research. I don’t think I could have negotiated the OSS archives without him. I am grateful as well to the kind and professional staff at the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives at King’s College London who, with good-humored grace, copied a vast amount of material for me on embarrassingly short notice.

Largely because most of the essential documents had been published before this topic chose me, I found little at the Army History Directorate of the Greek Army General Staff. But the professionalism and generosity of its personnel impressed me profoundly. Lieutenant General Ioannis Kakoudakis (ret.), who was at the time the director, personally showed me around the facilities and, without any prompting on my part, granted me a warm and informative interview. I was as well completely humbled by the infectious enthusiasm and honest support of Greece’s former Defense Attaché in Washington D.C., Colonel Ilias Leontaris, who graciously provided me with copies of hard to find Greek books dealing with the OSS that proved to be treasure troves of information. Truly, from my vantage point at least, the Greek military is in the best of hands. I would also like to thank the American Hellenic Institute in Washington D.C., and its able director, Nick Larigakis, for providing me with a forum to share my developing research. Of course, the symposia of the Modern Greek Studies Association have provided me with the best opportunities to refine my topic and also allowed me to
come into rewarding contact with outstanding scholars from all over the world. I am so deeply thankful to the various editorial staffs of that organization that over the years accepted my paper proposals and allowed me to present at these stimulating conferences.

To this day, the only organization to provide me with a grant for this project is the Hellenic University Club of Cleveland. I thank them profusely and hope that this work meets up with their expectations. My heartfelt appreciation also goes out to Dr. Dimitris Retikas of Akron, who opened up his house and his scintillating memories to a complete stranger. For that and more I owe him a debt of gratitude. The Department of History at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania also deserves special thanks for allowing me to teach at that wonderful institution for many years. Though just a graduate student, I was hired as a full-time instructor, and the salary from that time was much needed and appreciated. I am grateful as well to the Kent State College of Arts and Sciences for furnishing the necessary extensions that allowed me to complete this project and graduate and Ms. Sean Howard, the administrative secretary, who answered harried questions with infinite patience and efficiency.

Finally, no one organization deserves more thanks than the Department of History at Kent State University which provided me with immense financial support and an education that is, I am sincerely convinced, second to none. Despite many stumbles along the way, my numerous friends at the department never lost faith in me or in my abilities. Though all my professors at Kent State were exceptional educators, I would like to single out Jerome Friedman, friend, mentor, and brilliant scholar. It was a privilege to be his student for a time. Special thanks also go to Ann Heiss, whose
unstinting support and advice literally saved my graduate career. Ann, I owe you much. Finally, I would also like to thank my dissertation committee members, Richard Steigmann-Gall, Andrew Barnes, and Mark Colvin, who provided me with the helpful criticism that made this study the best that it could be.

There are so many friends and loved ones to thank. The Kollias family, Lakis, Mika, Jimmy, and Olga, thank you for giving me shelter from the storm in dark times – my debt to you is absolute. Dr. Jonathan Helmreich, my advisor at Allegheny College who first put me in contact with Dr. Papacosma and remains a close family friend, thank you for being there always. Dr. Ihor Bemko, my closest friend at Edinboro, freely provided companionship and aid while asking little in return. Doxis Doxiadis, brilliant scholar and closest friend, offered human warmth, sage advice and uncommon wisdom: *kale mou file s’ efharisto apo ta vathi tis kardias mou*. At Kent, Terry Netos, Chris Wentling, Tom Roka, Steve Levine, and the rest of the old gang in Bowman 205 – I will always cherish the memory of those days in the bullpen. I am deeply grateful for the friendship of Doug and Alana Webb, Dan and Sue Thompson, Bruce Cline and Connie Wolfe, Bob and Alice Cahen (who provided Jen and me with a home away from home on the holidays), and Kelly McFarland. I feel honored to know you all. My wonderful new friends at Kent, Kim Carey, John Henris, Lennette Taylor, Brenda Faverty, Steve Haynes, Tim Scarnecchia, and especially Nathan Fry and Monika Flaschka, thank you so much for your support and encouragement. Most of all, I’d like to thank a dear friend and cherished confidant, Kay Dennis, the department’s administrative secretary, without whom none of this would have been possible.
In Greece, my childhood friends Likourgos and Ilias Hristakos and Nick Liaropoulos (and his wife Natasha), showered this undeserving friend with their love and respect. Know that I love you all and Vardis Tsontos as well should know that I miss him. My sister-in-law Adela Rotarescu also supported me in hard times even before she was married to my brother. I am proud to be related to her and proud that she is the mother of my beautiful nephew, Alex Nalmpantis, who I hope will one day read this dissertation and remember fondly his *barba*. Alexi, I love you more than you can know.

My stepmother Evangelia Mastropasqua-Nalmpantis, a kind and generous soul if there ever was one, knows only how to give and give without ever taking. My stepfather, Evangelos Pastrikakis, has always been closest to my heart, as friend, counselor, father, confessor, and intellectual lodestone. I want him to know I remember always all our conversations and cherish each and every one of them.

Looking back on my life, I can state without reservation that the person who first inspired me to be a historian was my father, Alexandros Nalmpantis. His vibrant and evocative stories, delivered always with his characteristic sense of humor, titillated my imagination and freed my mind from the terrestrial confines of the mundane present. The bitter experiences of the Axis occupation he wove into a magical narrative, so that it seemed like you were there, with him, as he watched his grandmother get beaten by soldiers while begging for scraps of food. That those experiences scarred him is beyond doubt (I don’t ever recall an empty refrigerator growing up), yet he had that unique ability to weave them into a narrative that was resonant but never sentimental. He would have made a great professor. My mother, Amalia Gyftopoulou, knows well the love I
hold for her. Her magnificent fighting spirit, her stubborn tenacity in the face of adversity, her immense love for her children, her fierce protective instincts: my brother and I benefited immeasurably from all these qualities and more. Educator and entrepreneur, clerical worker and waitress, real estate agent and trader, mother and friend, she is an astounding individual. In my mind, her stature is that of a Homeric hero. A simple truth: without her I would not be here writing this today. Finally, to my best friend in all the world, intellectual sparring partner, emotional support, my brother of blood but also of spirit, Anastasios Nalmpantis: you know, I believe, the love I have for you, more than for my own self. Thank you for always being my shield-man in the phalanx and guarding my unprotected right. You inspire me to always reach for more. I love you Tasouli.

I have saved for the end the two people who stood behind me most resolutely and stubbornly in this long endeavor, the twin foundations of support that dragged me across the finish line kicking and screaming. Though I was responsible for inflicting upon them numerous disappointments, large and small, they stuck by me through the storm, supportive but not judgmental, encouraging but not obsequious. My advisor, S. Victor Papacosma, who displayed Olympian patience in dealing with my often erratic and irresponsible ways, was my guide and friend. If I ever seemed ungrateful I would like to state now that I am deeply sorry and let him know that what I owe him cannot be encompassed by mere words. It is my singular privilege to have been mentored by a scholar of his academic ability and intellectual insight. If this dissertation is lacking in any way, it will not be because of his failure to teach, but because of my inability to
learn. Thank you as well Victor for being like a father to me, and I want you to know that I have nothing but love and admiration in my heart for you. May God bless and keep you and your family always.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to the love of my life, my wife, Jennifer Nalmpantis. We have shed so many bitter tears together, gone through so much darkness and pain, yet all I can think of at this moment is how much I look forward to my mornings with her, when I can see her infectious smile and bask in her generous spirit. Sixteen years have gone by but I am as fascinated by her now as I was on that first day I met her. She is a source of constant inspiration. Her unfailing fidelity, her intellectual rigor, her incredible sense of humor, her courage in the face of adversity, I love all these things about her, but also something more. I think it was Plato who first formulated the concept of a soul-mate, one’s other half, and though I have my problems with him I have to admit he got this one right. But my life with Jen has led me to a further insight, a funny sort of alchemy that comes from finishing each other’s sentences and anticipating each other’s thoughts over a period of many years that I think he failed to explore. After all this time, I’m not really sure where her half ends and mine begins. And that, I am guessing, is the closest I’ll ever come to a true definition of happiness.
Note on Translation and Transliteration

Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Greek into English in this study are my own. There exists no standard or universal system of transliterating Greek characters into English. In all cases, I have tried to maintain consistency by choosing the simplest English phonetic equivalent. Exceptions to this rule occur when established convention dictates a different spelling: for example, “Georgiades” instead of the more phonetically accurate “Georgiadis.”
### Glossary of Frequently Used Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMM</td>
<td>Allied Military Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andartes</td>
<td>Guerillas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMM</td>
<td>British Military Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAM</td>
<td><em>Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo</em> – National Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDES</td>
<td><em>Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Syndesmos</em> – National Republican Greek League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EKKA</td>
<td><em>Ethniki kai Koinoniki Apeleftherosi</em> – National and Social Liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELAS</td>
<td><em>Ethnikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos</em> – National Popular Liberation Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force 133</td>
<td>Codename for Special Operations Executive in the Middle East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISLD</td>
<td>Inter-Services Liaison Department – Codename for British Secret Intelligence Service in the Middle East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KKE</td>
<td><em>Kommounistiko Komma Ellados</em> – Communist Party of Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI-6</td>
<td>Military Intelligence 6 – Alternate name for Secret Intelligence Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSS/SO</td>
<td>Office of Strategic Services – Special Operations Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSS/SI</td>
<td>Office of Strategic Services – Secret Intelligence Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td>Secret Intelligence Service (British)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOE</td>
<td>Special Operations Executive (British)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

I. Purpose and Scope of the Study.

On 1 June 1941, the island of Crete, the only remaining bit of Greek territory not under Axis control, fell to German paratroopers after nearly two weeks of hard fighting. For Greece, the Axis occupation, “the long night of barbarism” in the words of Winston Churchill, was to persist until the second week of October 1944, when the last German troops finally evacuated the country. Measured against even the loathsome nature of Axis rule in other parts of Europe, the occupation of Greece was noteworthy for its exceptional brutality. It unsurprisingly spawned a vigorous resistance that enjoyed some measure of military success against the hated occupier, though the cost in blood was appallingly steep. Yet within weeks of the German evacuation, on 3 December 1944, fighting broke out between the main wartime resistance group, the communist-led National Liberation Front (EAM), and its principal Greek opponents – with the latter aided by British troops stationed in Greece as members of the Allied liberation force. Caught in the midst of this conflict, Costa Couvaras, an operative of the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS), disgustedly encapsulated in a caustic letter to his superiors in Cairo what many in Greece must have at the time been thinking. “Bullets fly all around, and all the time. To some of us this situation is a repulsive site to witness…the Greek people expected peace and freedom, [but] they [got] different treatment.”¹

¹ National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group (RG) 226/Entry 190, Box 73/Folder 27, “Pericles Correspondence: Costa to Richard – 15 December 1944.”
The civil war that broke out in Greece in December 1944 was the only time in World War II when the forces of a wartime resistance movement clashed with those of a liberating Allied power. In the words of one scholar, the British decision to intervene in the struggle between EAM and its enemies also “marked an early stage in the Cold War” since it thereafter provided Joseph Stalin with an apparent excuse to behave similarly in those areas of Eastern Europe under Soviet control. Finally, the conflict was the “only occasion during the Cold War in Europe when the forces of a Western democracy fought against those of a Communist party.” But the immense historical ramifications of that brief confrontation, which ended with the military defeat of EAM in January 1945, extend further than even the foregoing would imply. Hounded mercilessly by the vengeful forces of the Greek Right, the former guerilla leaders of the leftist resistance decided once more to take up arms, in mid-1946, to halt the widening cycle of persecution and make one last try for power. That decision prompted another long and bloody civil war which ended only in 1949 with the total defeat of the communist Democratic Army. This final phase of the Greek Civil War was in part responsible for forcing the United States to dramatically underline its commitment to resist global communism with the issuance of the Truman Doctrine in 1947. Domestically, the communist defeat resulted in the decades-long political suppression of the Greek Left.

So how did it all happen? What were the series of events that led Greece to bloodshed so soon after the end of a savage foreign occupation? This dissertation attempts to answer these questions by examining the nature of the Greek resistance

---

during the Second World War. It is distinguished by the fact that the bulk of the primary source material comes from the records left behind by OSS field agents stationed in the country to collect intelligence and aid in resistance activities. In this case, the sources have helped to determine the shape of the narrative. This study is then partially about the OSS as a functioning organization, but also indirectly concerns itself with American wartime policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. As far as it is possible, it strives to view the Greek resistance holistically, but focuses more on dissecting the nature, goals, and methods of the communist-led EAM. It most of all explores the intricacy of Greek domestic politics in a historical moment when Greece and its troubles, presaging as they did the shape of the world to come after the great conflagration was finally over, commanded the attention of the mighty.

As the principal wartime American intelligence organization, the OSS was tasked with a variety of critical functions in occupied Greece, of which the gathering of substantive military intelligence and guerilla action against the German and Italian occupation forces comprised the largest, though by no means exclusive, areas of concentration. Another equally important function of the OSS in Greece, perhaps harder to pinpoint or discern, was to promote cooperation and understanding between the various Allied – in essence British and American – missions and local resistance organizations. In either capacity, OSS operatives were in a unique position to observe and comment on internal political developments at this critical juncture in Greek history. Although a number of researchers have utilized OSS records in the intervening decades since the war, due to issues of priority, declassification, and availability, no study of
Axis-occupied Greece, or of the Greek Civil War, has made such a specialized use of select OSS records to further supplement and clarify the historical record of the period in question as this one. The study further distinguishes itself by exclusively relying on reports generated by OSS field agents. Reports produced by OSS analysts in Cairo or Washington, no matter how astute or discerning are, in all but a few instances, ignored. The reason is simple. OSS field operatives were direct firsthand participants in the events they were describing. From the historian’s perspective, their unedited reports are obviously invaluable.  

For many decades, the specter of vicious internecine conflict bedeviled a sober assessment of this critical period in Greek history. The end of the Cold War and new geopolitical concerns have muted the era’s political immediacy in contemporary Greece, allowing the historical conversation to move from the realm of heated public discourse to a point, “where the passage of time avails the historian and the remaining participants the luxury of examining this period with a degree of detachment and dispassionate retrospection.” Still, controversy persists. Though this study in no way claims to be the

---


5 Even pinpointing the exact date when the Greek civil war began is a difficult enterprise for the historian. According to the traditionalist method of historical division, for example, most conservative scholars divide the Greek Civil War into three stages – or “rounds” – with the First Round coming as early as October of 1943, when EAM launched a preemptive attack against its major rivals in the mistaken belief that an Allied landing in the Balkans was imminent. Others reject this chronology, arguing, often convincingly, that the three Rounds are only indirectly related and thus should not be viewed as a seamless series of events leading to a predetermined conclusion. That such a seemingly simple task as setting a starting date is fraught with controversy, testifies to the complex problems posed by the study of this pivotal conflict. For representative examples of the “Rounds” thesis, see C.M. Woodhouse, *Apple of Discord: A Survey of Recent Greek Politics in their International Setting*, (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1948) and C.M. Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* with an introduction by Richard Clogg (London: Hurst and Co., 1976). Another convincing articulation of the idea can be found in, John O. Iatrides, *Revolt in Athens: The Greek Communist “Second Round,” 1944-1945* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press,
final word on the subject, it nevertheless strives to explain why in the end, when by all
goods Greece should have expected “peace and freedom,” it got bullets instead.

II. Preliminary Historical Background.

Greece entered into the Second World War on 28 October 1940 after refusing to
accept an ultimatum delivered by the Italian Fascist dictator, Benito Mussolini. Italy
invaded Greece from its proxy state of Albania the same day. Despite superiority in
manpower and materiel, the Italians failed to make any headway against Greek forces and
by mid-November, the Greeks had even gathered enough strength to mount a successful
counterattack. Although Greece tried to avoid relying on Great Britain for much-needed
military aid, fearing to provoke Mussolini’s ally, Hitler, the situation was certainly an
untenable one for Germany. The Italian action complicated Hitler’s grand strategy in
southeastern Europe, just as he was preparing for a massive invasion of the Soviet Union.
The need to secure his southern flank and to prevent the British from gaining an
important morale-boosting victory, forced Hitler to invade both Greece and Yugoslavia in
April 1941. Greek forces quickly collapsed on all fronts and the British could do little to
prevent their one fighting ally from surrendering to the Axis on 23 April 1941. The
island of Crete, protected by British Dominion and some Greek troops, held out for a few
more weeks but surrendered finally on 1 June 1941. The official Greek government

1972). For a more recent, if scathing, critique of the “Rounds” hypothesis see, Thanasis D. Sfikas, *The
eventually found its way to London. Another branch of the government, along with the
bulk of the surviving Greek armed forces, settled in the Egyptian capital of Cairo.\(^6\)

An organized resistance to the occupier took a few months to develop. Although
hatred of the Axis seemed universal from the beginning, the rapid conquest shocked
political elites and prevented them from rapidly responding to the new order. On the
non-traditional extreme left of Greek politics, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) also
delayed in responding to the hated Fascist/Nazi occupier in the first few weeks of the
occupation, its position complicated by the reality of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of
1939 which resulted in Soviet neutrality. The invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany
on 22 June 1941 removed that obstacle to action, and other non-related factors cleared the
path for the non-communist resistance as well. By September 1941, organized resistance
activity was gathering momentum, and many young Greek males were contemplating
going to “the Mountain” to join one or another of the nascent guerilla (in Greek, \textit{andarte})
bands that were, by the end of that year, forming at a rapid pace.\(^7\)

It is therefore a truism to state that, as in other areas of Axis-occupied Europe,
groups representing diverse points of the political spectrum conducted resistance activity
within Greece.\(^8\) However, as the war progressed, it became glaringly evident to the
Allies that the bulk of native resistance to the Axis occupiers originated from within one
major organization, the communist-led EAM and its attendant military arm, the National

---

\(^6\) An interesting discussion on the military dimensions of the Balkan campaign can be found in John Keegan, \textit{The Second World War} (New York: Viking Penguin, 1989), 142-159.
\(^8\) Although the variety of political viewpoints represented by the numerous resistance organizations was somewhat more circumscribed in Greece – see the second chapter for details on why this was so.
Popular Liberation Army (ELAS). In short order, and perhaps unavoidably, the political friction arising from the necessity of close cooperation between the ideologically liberal and capitalist Allies and the communist-populist leadership of EAM/ELAS hampered severely the conduct of resistance operations.

American involvement in Greek resistance activities was limited throughout the war, both because of America’s late entry into the European theater of operations (the major OSS missions to Greece began to infiltrate the country in the latter half of 1943) and because the British would make it clear to the Americans from the beginning that the Eastern Mediterranean theater generally, and Greece more specifically, was their special strategic preserve, a geographic area that they considered vital to their national interest. The Americans acceded readily to these British stipulations. The historian Robert Frazier is probably the only scholar ever to point out an ironic contradiction in this regard. Although official American policy frowned upon the colonialist-imperialist notion of “spheres of influence” (this despite the Monroe Doctrine of course), a point reiterated incessantly in countless American diplomatic dispatches, the United States government was more than happy to concede the Eastern Mediterranean to the British.9

---

9 Robert Frazier, *Anglo-American Relations with Greece: The Coming of the Cold War, 1942-1947* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 3-4. The American stance on “spheres of influence” is well-documented. Suffice here to quote a characteristic statement made by the US State Department (drafted by acting Secretary of State Edward Stettinius Jr.) in a dispatch to the British Embassy to the Greek government-in-exile commenting on a British idea to propose to the Soviets a divvying up of power in the Balkans – which no doubt eventually led to the infamous “Percentages Agreement” between Churchill and Stalin on 9 October 1944 – and dated 12 June, 1944: “[Such a plan] would inevitably result in the persistence rather than the elimination of any divergence in the views of the British and Soviet governments with regard to the Balkan region and would lead to the division of that region into spheres of influence… the practical and military advantages sought in resorting to plans of this general nature do not counterbalance the evils inherent in such a system.” United States, Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), Diplomatic Papers, 1944, Vol. V: The Near East, South Asia, Africa and the Far East* (Washington, D.C., 1965), 120.
For the United States, therefore, the Eastern Mediterranean was of secondary importance to the overall war effort, while most American policy-makers and key military personnel were, at best, only vaguely familiar with the history and culture of the region. Though cultural and economic ties between the United States and Greece existed before the war’s beginning, Washington had few political connections to the country and possessed no clear ideas about its political future, aside from a fuzzy commitment to the principle that Greeks should determine for themselves the shape of their postwar government. The attitude of studied neutrality toward Greece that American diplomats, soldiers, and operatives adopted thus contrasted sharply with the partisan anxiety manifested by representatives of the British Empire when the topic of Greece’s political future came up. Control of the Eastern Mediterranean had always been critical to maintaining the imperial lifeline to India, even before construction of the Suez Canal, and the region was also the gateway to the Black Sea and the Soviet Russian hinterland, an area of immense strategic significance because of its vast agricultural wealth and abundant mineral resources.

Consequently, it was the British military, specifically the Special Operations Executive (SOE), which had the primary responsibility for the conduct of Allied resistance operations in Greece. The problems that arose between the Allies and EAM/ELAS during the course of the war were therefore caused almost exclusively by an evident, and throughout the conduct of operations growing, political difference of opinion between the British and the indigenous communist-led resistance forces. Both sides
understood that the political future of postwar Greece was at stake, and each had an alternate vision of what that future would look like.

Amidst the growing tension, the OSS assumed the role of passive observer, and tried throughout the war to demonstrate to both the British and EAM/ELAS its genuine impartiality. In this project, the OSS was extremely successful: while maintaining a close, if not always warm, relationship with the British, it nurtured a strong and mutually satisfying partnership with EAM/ELAS. It would of course be a mistake to imply that the political role or stance of the OSS was uniformly monolithic. Individual OSS operatives held varying opinions on the true nature and aims of the EAM/ELAS movement. Likewise, individual guerrilla leaders had varying opinions on the objectives and mission of the OSS. Nevertheless, as an organization, the OSS enjoyed a great deal of prestige among Greek guerillas of all political stripes. Certainly, the lack of a clear American policy on Greece throughout the war allowed the OSS to cultivate a more freewheeling attitude than its British counterpart. Governmental non-interference afforded OSS chiefs in Cairo and Washington the opportunity to recruit agents representing all points of the political spectrum and to give those same agents a certain degree of flexibility in their dealings with local resistance leaders.\(^{10}\)

British foreign policy toward the communist Greek Resistance was also confused throughout the course of the war. Although the SOE was the organization burdened with the primary responsibility of looking after British wartime interests in Greece, it often

---

encountered great difficulties in doing so, largely because of a long-standing rivalry with the Foreign Office. The SOE fell under the nominal jurisdiction of the rival Ministry of Economic Warfare but that was not the only cause of friction. An outfit created strictly because of wartime requirements, the SOE encountered a great deal of resentment from older agencies and organizations in the British foreign policy and military establishments. As one historian put it, “diplomats and professional soldiers were never able to rid themselves of the feeling that SOE was largely composed of bungling amateurs, and it has to be conceded that SOE did enlist some unlikely operatives, and did think up some harebrained schemes.”

Jealousy was another reason for intra-service friction. The SOE enjoyed a groundbreaking role in the conduct of wartime operations. For the first time in the history of armed conflict, the use of clandestine intelligence gathering services and special operations units devoted to such “unorthodox” practices as sabotage behind enemy lines or in enemy-occupied territory, psychological warfare, and the promotion of indigenous resistance forces against the occupier became critical. Britain of course already possessed an intelligence service, the famed Secret Intelligence Service (otherwise known as Military Intelligence-6), but deleterious wartime circumstances forced the British government to think in broader strategic terms. It was the utter collapse of the Franco-British military effort, resulting in the defeat and occupation of France by the Axis in June 1940, which provided the initial impetus behind the creation

\[1\]

of the SOE and related “commando” units more than a year before U.S. entrance into the war. The British government, therefore, first conceived of clandestine warfare as, in the best case, a necessary expedient and, in the worst, a desperate gamble since “it was considered highly unlikely that Britain, on the basis of her own resources, would ever be able to mount a full-scale invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe.” In the event, such a unique and controversial role put the SOE in an unenviable position vis-à-vis the rest of the British political-military establishment, which viewed such cloak-and-dagger games with ill-disguised contempt.  

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the SOE and the British Foreign Office disagreed vehemently about the political future of Greece. The content of this disagreement concerned the postwar status of the Greek monarchy and created a host of difficulties and misunderstandings that plagued Anglo-Greek relations both during the war and after liberation. Within wartime Greece, the disagreement over the return of the king also influenced negatively relations between the SOE and the OSS, a fact reflected quite clearly in the available documentary evidence. Indeed, the historiographical record of the period is replete with references to this one contentious issue.

III. Historiographical Issues and Concerns.

Not surprisingly, the era of the 1940s has received a great deal of scholarly and non-scholarly (mostly journalistic) attention in the postwar period. The voluminous academic output is largely the product of historical research, although the twin themes of

---

12 Richard Clogg. “The Special Operations Executive in Greece,” 64. British Lieutenant-Colonel Dudley Clarke first coined the term “commando” to describe those clandestine raiding units formed in response to Winston Churchill’s famous dictum to his armed forces to create a “butcher and bolt” military outfit that would “set Europe ablaze.”
occupation and civil war have attracted, and continue to attract, input from scholars employing diverse methodological approaches. Many of these scholars belong to a variety of disciplines in the social sciences, including anthropology, sociology, and political science. In recent years, contributions from the social sciences have equaled, if not surpassed, the contributions of historians, a fact that has had an effect on the way historians approach the topic as well. Current research seeks, using interdisciplinary approaches, to clarify the historical picture by using previously ignored source material such as records from local archives and oral testimony. The typical reliance on international archives and on the multitude of readily available personal memoirs has been lessened, though not entirely eliminated, by these new approaches.\textsuperscript{13} The following summary of the extant historiographical record is thus not exhaustive but represents simply an introduction to a rapidly burgeoning field.

Political loyalties trumped historical good sense from the very beginning. The ideological virulence with which both the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would pursue their postwar agendas, a virulence that contributed to setting the intransigent tone of the early Cold War years, forced many scholars of the immediate postwar era to look back to the war years for signs of the impending conflict. Researchers placed emphasis on exposing who was at fault for the horrific civil war that followed the hard years of occupation. It followed that if historians could apportion the majority of blame to the offending side – depending on one’s viewpoint this could be

\textsuperscript{13} Mark Mazower, “Historians at War: Greece, 1940-1950,” \textit{The Historical Journal} 38 (Spring 1995): 499. The obsessive reliance on memoirs has certainly led to discussions about source value. Refer to the historiographical discussion in chapter six for more details on this particular concern.
either the Right or the Left – this would then feed into the broader debate on who was truly to blame for the start of the Cold War. Was it the United States, the inheritor of Britain’s imperialist/neo-colonialist scheming during the war, or was it EAM/ELAS, a pathetic Stalinist dupe that failed to seize power at the right moment, thus dooming itself to ignominious defeat? The seemingly inexorable course of events that led to civil conflict also raised the issue of historical inevitability. “Until the 1980s, this debate had focused almost exclusively on two major questions: ‘counterfactual’ questions (could the war have been avoided?) and the ‘which side is to blame for the launch of the civil war?’ type of question.”

Traditionally, in the Greek domestic arena, the answers to these questions shifted according to who was in power and hence had the capability to control the public discourse. In the immediate wake of the occupation, many leftist participants in the resistance published their wartime journals. The defeat of the communist insurgency in the civil war inaugurated a decades-long period of conservative dominance and resulted in an avalanche of anti-communist memoirs and monographs. After almost forty years of frustration, the socialist victory in the parliamentary elections of 1981 swung the pendulum of historical interpretation the other way. Since that time, the paradigm of a

---

14 Nikos Marantzidis and Giorgos Antoniou, “The Axis Occupation and Civil War: Changing Trends in Greek Historiography, 1941-2002,” Journal of Peace Research 41 (March 2004): 226. This is probably the most current and complete historiographic analysis of the occupation and the civil war. In writing this brief summary, I have relied extensively on this article and on Mark Mazower’s, “Historians at War,” 499-506. The researcher wishing to learn something more about that fateful decade in the history of modern Greece should also consult Hagen Fleischer’s and Steven Bowman’s Greece in the 1940s: A Bibliographic Companion, ed. John O. Iatrides (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1981). This very thorough, although by now somewhat dated bibliography, is a useful supplement to the identically titled series of essays also collected and edited by John Iatrides.
heroic leftist resistance, waylaid and ultimately denied a political voice by the neo-
colonialist scheming of the British and American governments, has largely prevailed.

On the international level, scholarly approaches to the topic have been more
varied although, here too, the political realities of the modern Greek state have tended to
intrude on the writing of history. By extension, the pendulum shifts between the rightist
and leftist interpretations of the civil war are reflected in the international
historiographical record as well, although in a muted fashion. Conversely, a less
stringent ideological and political environment has had the predictable effect of
encouraging methodological innovation, and it remains a fact to this day that the most
influential and well-respected historical analyses of the period are still being written
abroad.

The qualitative gap between domestic and international research is also evident
when one considers the topic of available primary sources. Although within Greece itself
a voluminous literature about the 1940s exists, rarely does that domestic output equal, in
the quality of research and in methodological rigor, the extensive historical literature
produced by scholars outside the country. Many historians attribute this qualitative gap,
at least in part, to the woeful state of the official Greek archives, an issue mentioned
frequently in numerous academic works and monographs. The disinclination of the
Greek state to reopen old wounds is, of course, the primary, but not the only, culprit.
Many vital records and documents were destroyed during the civil war or during the
reaction that followed in its wake. Other records were left moldering for years, since the
topic of resistance and collaboration had potentially explosive implications for the
succession of rightist governments that followed the final defeat of communist forces in 1949. In a baffling move retrospectively, the Greek government decided in 1989 to destroy numerous files that it kept on noted communists to symbolize the political reconciliation of the Greek Right and Left after the formation of a coalition cabinet between the conservative New Democracy Party and the KKE. An additional causal factor impeding a clearer understanding of the war years is the KKE’s continuing refusal to open its archives to anyone.

Recently, the situation has changed for the better, and the official archives of the Greek state have finally found adequate housing. But the dismal situation of the past few decades has affected negatively the progress of domestic scholarship. Meanwhile, international researchers, unencumbered by some of the excessive financial and bureaucratic constraints that hamper scholars living in Greece, have produced many works of high academic quality. In the decades since the war, few Greek-based scholars have produced comparable material although there are, of course, certain notable exceptions.

---


16 Historian Mark Mazower once described the state of the Greek archives as a “national disgrace.” See *Inside Hitler’s Greece*, 425. Until the year 2003, the General State Archives of Greece (GAK) were housed in a dilapidated building located next to a malodorous alley near the main city market. Construction of a new building to house the documents was completed the year before the 2004 Athens Olympics. The KKE archives remain closed to outside researchers as of the writing of this study (2010).

In contrast, international researchers must overcome a wholly different set of obstacles when dealing with the question of available sources. Cold War realities meant that most relied traditionally on the archives of the British Foreign Office. The relatively slow system of intelligence declassification employed by the British government has had the obvious effect of retarding scholarly evolution and creating interpretive gaps in the literature that will require decades to fill. Overt reliance on British archives also tends to distort the influence the British had on political and social developments inside occupied Greece. For many current historians this assumption of British omnipotence is warped.

As this whole debate draws to a close, its underlying assumptions have come to the surface. Among the most important of them, though rarely defended explicitly, is the view that Axis policies were of only secondary importance, compared with relations between the British and the Greeks…But was the nature of Axis rule really so benign as to exert no significant influence over developments in wartime Greece? To ask the question is to answer it…

In the case of the American archives, the problem facing researchers is the opposite. The documents are many and categorized in a confusing fashion, making the task of retrieval a challenging one. They also proliferate at a prodigious rate every year but are conversely subject to periodic culling by the government of the United States, which often decides retroactively to classify passages and/or documents it previously considered suitable to be declassified. Nevertheless, there is an enormous amount of information gathered at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington D.C. and the true challenge for any researcher is separating the chaff from the wheat. One noted scholar described the OSS as an organization with a “voracious appetite for information” which, by extension, made the National Archives a scholarly

---

18 Mazower, Inside Hitler's Greece, xvii.
“treasure trove,” but concluded that although the collection of documents was “very rich in terms of content, [it] was not well ordered.”

The end of the Cold War has naturally raised the possibility of clarifying the final piece of the Allied puzzle, namely what the Soviet role was in occupied Greece, in either preventing or, alternately, fomenting civil war. It is certainly an undeniable fact that the Soviets did have a good degree of indirect influence over the Greek Communist Party a fact repeated numerously in many postwar memoirs written by prominent members of the KKE. Significantly, although a few historical monographs focusing on the Soviet role in occupied Greece have been published and numerous other authors have dealt with secondary aspects of the subject in a number of articles, these analyses all share the common failing of relying on British or American archives to supplement the little information available from purely Greek sources. Research in the Russian state archives is still at a primitive stage for a variety of reasons, not least of which is the recent scholarly loss of interest in the political dimensions underpinning the Greek Civil War in favor of methodological approaches focusing more on the social impact of the Axis occupation and its relationship to the unprecedented levels of violence that followed the German evacuation in 1944. Still, enough evidence is in to prove that Stalin had little

---

interest in supporting the aspirations of the Greek communists, especially after he came to a formal agreement with Churchill on partitioning the Balkans into spheres of influence on 9 October 1944.\(^{21}\)

Despite the access to a larger primary source base, international scholarship has still revolved, until recently, around the question of blame and has also been affected by the political turbulence of the postwar Greek state. The traditionalist school initially supported the notion that EAM’s communist leaders were Soviet puppets intent on imposing a Stalinist regime on a prostrate Greece.\(^{22}\) Even before expanding research revealed Stalin’s wartime disinterest in Greece, the school began to shift to emphasizing EAM’s revolutionary desire to overthrow the old order, with or without Soviet help.\(^{23}\) At present, few scholars persist in highlighting EAM/ELAS’ wartime misdeeds or focusing attention on its role in fomenting violence against its Greek political opponents – even before the final Axis evacuation – but exceptions exist.\(^{24}\)


Revisionists preferred (and prefer) to assign the majority of the blame for the start of the civil war on the British and their Greek anticommunist clients. The conventional revisionist approach emphasizes the vast popular support that the EAM movement received from Greeks during the Axis occupation as well as its implementation of a progressive social agenda in the remote mountain villages under its wartime control. Thus, the military defeat of EAM/ELAS between December 1944 and January 1945 at the hands of the British and their Greek allies represents the frustration of an authentic and popular mass movement by the forces of reaction backed by the neocolonialist machinations of a traditional Great Power. Usually, a point of disagreement among revisionists revolves around the counterfactual question of whether the communist leaders of EAM/ELAS could have done anything to avert the December catastrophe but the viewpoint that the communist-led organization was generally the victim in the resistance drama seems universal. It is hard to refute the generalization that the revisionist school is currently hegemonic, both inside and outside of Greece.25

Of course, despite the ubiquity of postwar political controversy, a few scholars have managed to contribute works noteworthy for their absence of overt bias. Some of

these even prefigured the hesitant turn toward a post-revisionist synthesis which began in the 1990s. One factor hastening the advent of the post-revisionist school has been the steady exhaustion of the traditional source base; few completely unexplored areas remain available to the aspiring researcher and this has prompted many scholars to experiment with employing different methodological approaches, such as concentrating on micro-regional studies and increasing reliance on oral interviews. Since the mid-1990s, historiographical examinations have hailed the end of the old paradigm, with its emphasis on traditional diplomacy and politics, in favor of a new paradigm focusing on social and cultural issues, one historian even going so far as to claim that “diplomatic history has taken us as far as it can.”

Though new interdisciplinary approaches have added much to the scholarly corpus, such pronouncements seem hasty. Certainly, the tendency to see both the communist leadership of EAM/ELAS and its opponents in monolithic political terms while ignoring issues of class, ethnicity, kinship, or even gender, was both limiting and antihistorical. That research gap is in the process of being filled. However, the presumption that the political controversies undergirding the civil war have been put to rest is flawed. Indeed, few studies of the era of resistance and civil war fail to apportion

---

27 Mazower, “Historians at War,” 504.
some measure of the historical blame for the conflict on either one side or the other. In short, changing the methodological focus and expanding the primary source base has not obviated the need to explain why fratricidal violence broke out in the first place.

Over the past few decades, a few scholars have managed to skirt the potential minefields to deliver works of superlative historical value. Deserving of special mention in this regard is Mark Mazower’s influential Inside Hitler’s Greece, a pioneering exemplar of the new post-revisionist synthesis that assigns blame to all sides. Distinguished by an enormous amount of research in numerous international archives, the study was also one of the first to forsake the traditional emphasis on high politics and ideology in order to focus as well on the social cleavages that led to the outbreak of civil conflict after the war was over. Still, even this generally even-handed work is not without its flaws, as Mazower tends to sometimes downplay EAM’s wartime propensity for extreme and premeditated revolutionary violence, a weakness of his research that others have commented upon.29

New political histories are still being written.30 As with Inside Hitler’s Greece, these works make at least some use of OSS records, a fact which sets them apart from traditional narratives that were overly dependent on British primary sources. By far the most comprehensive among these is David Close’s Origins of the Greek Civil War.

30 Clogg, Anglo-Greek Attitudes; Frazier, Anglo-American Relations; André Gerolymatos, Guerilla Warfare and Espionage in Greece, 1940-44 (New York: Pella, 1992).
Originally written as part of a series on the origins of modern wars, this book became an instant classic of the field. To this day, it remains unmatched in terms of analytical scope, depth of coverage, and historical objectivity. More than any other scholar, Close makes extensive use of OSS field reports and analyses to arrive at new insights about the changes that the Axis occupation wrought on the political map of Greece, the nature of EAM/ELAS rule in the countryside, and the reasons that led the organization to conflict with its enemies after the German withdrawal.

Close challenges the hegemonic revisionist interpretation on a number of levels. First, he refuses to countenance the notion that EAM/ELAS had no plans, implicit or explicit, to take over the country after liberation. Certainly, it was not seeking a military reckoning with the British, but it was not resolutely committed to following a non-confrontational course either. In essence, it was hoping to peacefully dominate postwar Greece without the need for an armed conflict. But contingency plans were in place in case events took a different course. Second, he portrays the EAM/ELAS leadership as both rational and ruthless, not the indecisive victims of British imperial manipulation that currently fashionable scholarly interpretations imagine them to have been.

This study will confirm these important insights with documentary evidence provided by OSS firsthand accounts and validate Close’s apparent contention that the leaders of EAM/ELAS were independent historical actors. But it will take the assumption of historical agency one step further by implicitly broaching the broader question of the origins of revolutionary violence. Despite the stated commitment of EAM/ELAS’s leaders to the concept of the Popular Front, the organization as a whole
was responsible for conducting numerous ideological witch-hunts against its perceived domestic enemies during the war. In contrast, opposing the Axis appeared in many instances to be a secondary concern for a majority within the organization. Ultimately, this study will demonstrate that the beguiling utopian vision of a communist future for Greece created a kind of revolutionary imperative that dragged many members of EAM/ELAS, whether leaders or rank-and-file, along in its inexorable wake.

As comprehensive and well-researched as Close’s survey is, not even it manages to bridge an important gap in the historical discussion. Since the end of the war, a few international studies, some of high quality, have been written with an eye toward examining the purely military aspects of the guerilla campaigns, both during the occupation and the subsequent civil war. Despite their narrower focus, these studies highlight aspects of the insurgency that are otherwise ignored, most especially how the Greek resistance fit into the greater strategic backdrop of World War II. Though such analyses are useful in further clarifying the Allied decision-making process, they seem to have been in most cases ignored by traditional scholars. Another partial goal of this study is to attempt to redress that historiographical imbalance.31

IV. Brief Chapter-by-Chapter Summary.

The first chapter sets the historical context. Greece has faced many developmental challenges since acquiring its independence from the Ottoman Empire in

the first half of the nineteenth-century. Foreign dependency, chronic underdevelopment, and a malformed state apparatus remained important themes in the decade of the 1940s and the historical roots of these problems will be examined. Special attention will be paid to the “National Schism,” which revolved around questions of authority and pitted the monarchy against the notable politician Eleftherios Venizelos. The formation of the Greek Communist Party and the ramifications of the failed Anatolian expedition of 1919-1922 will be explored and analyzed.

The first months of Axis occupation form the subject matter of the second chapter. Initially successful against Mussolini, Greece finally succumbed to the Germans in April/May 1941. The subsequent division of the country among three Axis powers, Germany, Italy, and Bulgaria, and the hard winter of 1941-42, which resulted in widespread famine, led to the first stirrings of armed resistance. Among the first to organize were the Greek communists who, in conjunction with a few minor political partners, created EAM in September 1941. Armed ELAS bands took to the mountains in early 1942. However, EAM/ELAS was not just a resistance organization but a force for change in the remote mountainous areas under its wartime control. The chapter will end by describing EAM’s comprehensive social agenda and its political vision for the postwar future.

As outlined above, throughout the course of the occupation, Great Britain was the senior covert representative of the Allies in Greece and, until the first OSS teams entered the country in September 1943, it was the only representative. The third chapter will cover the British presence in Greece, outlining and explaining the complexities and
contradictions of British foreign policy that engendered considerable infighting between the Foreign Office and the SOE. After a spectacularly successful beginning with the demolition of the Gorgopotamos viaduct by a team of British commandos and Greek guerillas belonging to both EAM/ELAS and its principal non-communist rival EDES (National Republican Greek League), misunderstandings and lost opportunities characterized the British experience in occupied Greece until the arrival of the Americans.

The fourth chapter discusses the inchoate nature of American foreign policy in wartime Greece. This lack of central direction resulted throughout the war in a bewildering mishmash of policies articulated by a variety of actors, including the president, the US State Department, the ambassador to the Greek government-in-exile, top OSS brass in Washington, mid-level functionaries of the OSS in Cairo and even, confusingly, OSS field operatives. President Roosevelt was, of course, the chief conductor, and he set the tone by studiously avoiding the topic of Greece when he could. Unfortunately, his one attempt at direct intervention in wartime Greek politics, which came in December 1943, was disastrous and may have led to the protraction of the civil conflict that was raging in the country at the time and in the midst of the occupation.

Though the US had no political objectives to meet in wartime Greece, it was still interested in winning the war, and the first OSS teams entered the country in September 1943 to do just that. The fifth chapter describes the early American missions to Greece and outlines some of the institutional and logistical challenges confronting the OSS, including in its uneasy relationship with the SOE – rendered more problematic by the
American organization’s prolific use of Greek-American agents. Despite the clear American commitment to concentrate only on military matters, it was inevitable that OSS field agents would get involved in the politics of the resistance. The first American chief of mission, Captain Winston Ehrgott, frequently clashed with his British SOE counterpart, Colonel C.M. Woodhouse, over the question of EAM/ELAS. Ehrgott’s frequent bungling forced his superiors to replace him with the more senior Major Gerald K. Wines in December 1943.

Major Wines was not just an excellent soldier but an astute observer of Greek politics, who happily recorded the essential details about the events he experienced and the personalities he encountered on his tour of duty in wartime Greece in a fascinating, but as yet unpublished, postwar memoir. Although he was the longest-serving American OSS officer in Axis-occupied Greece, his memoir and wartime reports have merited little attention from specialists, for unknown reasons. The sixth and seventh chapters deal with his experiences in wartime Greece, from his seven-month tenure as Deputy Commander of the Allied Military Mission (AMM), which lasted from December 1943 to June 1944, to his brief brush with the momentous events of December 1944.

The final two chapters of this study deal with the Chicago mission, arguably the most important OSS mission to occupied Greece. The principal aim of the mission was to sabotage two critical rail lines connecting Turkey to Bulgaria that ran through the German-occupied Evros region, at the far northeastern corner of mainland Greece. Although most major OSS branches contributed personnel to the mission, the principal primary source material comes from the numerous wartime reports and postwar
correspondence of its chief intelligence officer, Aleko Georgiades. Geographic remoteness and the peculiarities of Axis occupation policy isolated the Evros chapter of the EAM/ELAS organization from its affiliates in the rest of Greece. Furthermore, in contrast to other parts of the country, the British secret services had an insignificant role to play in the resistance politics of Evros, as they never managed to infiltrate operatives into the region. In Evros, a sympathetic OSS came into contact with a homegrown resistance movement and cooperated with it to complete a mission of vital strategic importance. The political ramifications of this cooperation were immense. It is therefore remarkable that only one article, written by the Byzantinist Angeliki Laiou, examines the politics of the Evros resistance in any great detail. Gradual declassification of files has resulted in the expansion of the primary source base, so this study revisits the mission armed with more information.

Study of the OSS experience in occupied Greece presents the researcher with a host of new insights on both the general nature of guerilla insurgency and the complexities of conducting special operations and intelligence-gathering in a time of war. It also allows the scholar a privileged glimpse into the inner workings of American foreign policy at a time when the burdens and responsibilities of becoming a world superpower had not yet forced a sea change on the American political psyche. Most importantly, the amity that existed between the OSS and EAM/ELAS allowed the former a unique opportunity to observe and comment upon the latter, in the mountain retreats where it reigned supreme. In these areas of “Free Greece,” the nature of EAM rule theoretically previewed the kind of regime that its communist leadership expected to
establish throughout the rest of the country after the withdrawal of the Axis occupier.

Analyzing that regime also indirectly provides an opportunity to examine and compare the contrasting American and British wartime attitudes toward the leftist resistance and ultimately reveals whether the unique American approach of overt friendliness to EAM/ELAS might have, in the end, yielded a different result than the fratricidal tragedy that followed on the heels of the German pullout.
Chapter One

The Historical Background

I. Themes of Underdevelopment and Dependency.

The Greek state emerged in 1829 when, after a fierce eight-year conflict marked by large-scale atrocities and significant Great Power intervention, the Ottoman Empire granted autonomy to a tiny Greece of severely circumscribed frontiers. Since that struggle for independence, foreign intervention in the domestic affairs of the nation arguably became a central feature of Greek political life. According to the fashion of the times, the guaranteeing Great Powers – Great Britain, France and Russia – determined that the new state should be a monarchy. In 1832, the Ottoman government recognized Greece’s sovereignty. Miniscule in area and bereft of resources, possessing only a fraction of the Greeks inhabiting the Eastern Mediterranean littoral, and devastated by nearly a decade of warfare, the Kingdom of Greece faced numerous developmental challenges at its creation.32

Nevertheless, in the years following independence, one outstanding issue easily overrode all of these vexing problems. To most Greeks, this eventually became known as the “National Issue,” essentially a Greek version of Manifest Destiny. The peace settlement created a state that, according to some estimates, contained no more than a third of the Greeks that had inhabited the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, many of the

unincorporated Ottoman lands where Greeks constituted a majority were far wealthier than those lands that fell under the purview of the independent Greek state. The idea of a tiny and impoverished Greece was unacceptable to all Greeks, regardless of social class, and dreams of reuniting the “unredeemed” populations outside the borders of the rump state would haunt a succession of policymakers for more than a century. In more fanciful moments, simple reunification of the irredenta would combine, in the minds of many politicians, with visions of a reconstituted Byzantine Empire under Hellenic tutelage. This heady combination of legitimate demands with dangerous nationalist dreams was dubbed the Megali Idea, or the Great Idea. Unfortunately, “the preoccupation with irredentist ventures also came at the expense of [necessary] social and economic reforms.”

The government and country still had to accommodate the vision of a large united Greece with the reality of an impoverished treasury, a non-existent infrastructure, and the implacability of the guaranteeing Great Powers, who wished for no further boundary adjustments in the Balkans. Sadly, unscrupulous politicians and the foreign-imposed king found the promulgation of the Great Idea an effective method of distracting the citizenry from the real problems facing the nation. But irredentism was a two-edged weapon. Persistent problems of underdevelopment and the failure to achieve any substantial territorial gains were two of the principal reasons that led to the downfall of

---

Greece’s first monarchial family. Formerly of Bavaria, the first king of Greece Otto was replaced by King George I of the Danish Glücksburg dynasty in 1864.\(^\text{34}\)

Greece’s geographic position made foreign intervention inevitable and compounded the standard problems of dependency facing a developing nation. Situated along the entryway to the Black Sea, the country’s political fate became a matter of vital interest to Great Britain, especially after the construction of the Suez Canal in 1869. As outlined in the introduction, British diplomacy in the nineteenth-century was intent on ensuring that the Eastern Mediterranean remain open to friendly shipping, a task made more difficult by the inexorable decline of the Ottoman Empire. The resulting political vacuum contributed to a great deal of instability in the region and generations of British diplomats became obsessed with propping up the Ottoman “sick man of Europe” as a bulwark against Russian expansionism. France, with historic connections to Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt that stretched back to the era of the Crusades, was also inclined to interfere frequently in Ottoman affairs. Finally, Tsarist Russia, which sent a sizeable portion of its grain shipments through the Bosporus Straits, was naturally interested in exerting control over the region, but its ambitions were practically curtailed by its lack of maritime strength. Still, Russia benefited from the fact that its lands bordered directly on the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, most of the inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula, which formed the European section of the Ottoman Empire, were, like Russia, Orthodox Christian. The conflict between the Great Powers, dubbed the “Eastern Question,” was

arguably the central problem of European diplomacy in the years leading up to World War I.\(^{35}\)

Surrounded on three sides by water, Greece was also uniquely vulnerable to the kind of pressure a naval power such as Britain could bring to bear. Four of its five largest cities were port cities and the country was historically dependent on imported food shipments to meet its subsistence needs. Throughout the nineteenth century, and most famously from 1854-1857 during the Crimean War (when the largest port city, Piraeus, was occupied by British and French troops)\(^{36}\) Greece was blockaded into submission when it dared show an inclination to adopt a foreign policy position antithetical to Great Power or, more specifically, British interests.\(^{37}\)

Oddly, in contrast to what might be expected in such an underdeveloped state, Greece’s parliamentary politics were robust, dynamic, and of long duration. A military coup in 1843 forced the monarchy to allow for a constitution granting universal male suffrage.\(^{38}\) Greeks thereafter participated enthusiastically in the electoral process, but the lack of education, civic awareness, and widespread clientelism and corruption weakened the party system and undermined the democratic process. In practice, the political parties evolved into vehicles for dispensing patronage and were not therefore characterized by

---


\(^{36}\) Clogg, *A Concise History*, 57.


ideological commitment to principle. A bloated state apparatus was created to deal with the problems posed by distribution of patronage and the government extended its influence into every realm of public life. Massive bureaucracies staffed by indifferent and unqualified officials loyal not to the citizens but to the state dominated Greek political life. Taxation increased exponentially to fund the project of national expansion and military conscription was frequently employed to swell the ranks of the army but citizens received few services in return. “Thus the state not only failed to inspire a sense of obligation, but also weakened such sense of community spirit as existed, or prevented it from developing. This void left the extended family…as the main focus of collective obligation.”

Another significant long-term problem was the absence of constitutional controls over the monarchy. Though in theory the monarch was supposed to stand above parliamentary politics, the vaguely defined relationship between the monarch and parliament invited royal abuse of power. This failure to constitutionally circumscribe monarchical authority would inexorably lead to severe crisis and breakdown during World War I.

Despite these endemic weaknesses, Greece remained an imperfect constitutional monarchy in the nineteenth century. From a cynical perspective, it is possible to conjecture that the reason for this commitment to parliamentary politics emerged from the nature of the parties as vehicles for distributing social and economic benefits.

---

Entrenched patronage networks made it difficult for any one group to exclusively control the mechanism of distribution for too long, for fear of sowing the seeds of revolt among the disenfranchised.\(^\text{42}\) Nevertheless, in such a system, the masses, uneducated and often repressed by an impersonal but intrusive government, were still viable sociopolitical actors that had to every so often be courted for their vote. Mass politics remained always relevant in the kingdom of Greece.\(^\text{43}\)

The general consensus on the need for territorial expansion and irredentism netted Greece few tangible results throughout the course of the nineteenth century. On the international front, the general thrust of Great Power politics was toward keeping the borders of the Ottoman Empire intact, and even when it was not, Greece found it difficult to acquire advocates. Britain was resistant to territorial readjustments and Russia, though Orthodox Christian, was more inclined to support the competing national projects of Slavic Balkan ethnicities over those of Greece.\(^\text{44}\) On the domestic front, a perennially depleted treasury, corruption, and negligence, resulted in a poorly trained and equipped military, thus removing from Greece the means by which it could pursue its ambitious agenda. The country managed to make some few territorial gains but those came from Great Power diplomatic initiatives and not from military conquest. When Greece did

\(^\text{42}\) Close, Origins, 12.


\(^\text{44}\) Bulgarian national concerns were principally the focus of Russian foreign policy in the region at the turn of the century. See Douglas Dakin, The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913 (Thessaloniki, Greece: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1966), 11-16, 26-34.
attempt to militarily effect the separation of Crete from the Ottoman Empire in 1897, total defeat came quickly and decisively at the hands of superior Ottoman forces.\textsuperscript{45}

II. Eleftherios Venizelos, the Constitutional Question, and Catastrophe.

The humiliation of the 1897 defeat prompted Greek elites to consider reforming the dilapidated military and government. In 1909, a group of generally lower-ranked officers led by Colonel Nikolaos Zorbas mounted a successful military coup.\textsuperscript{46} Zorbas and his cohorts, styling themselves the “Military League,” put forward a surprisingly moderate series of reform proposals. Eschewing the path toward outright revolution and deciding not to challenge the institution of the monarchy, the officers instead pushed for national elections and threw their backing behind a charismatic and relatively young Cretan politician named Eleftherios Venizelos, who became prime minister in the late autumn of 1910.\textsuperscript{47}

Described by one historian as the Bismarck of modern Greece, Venizelos is unquestionably one of the key Greek political figures of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{48} However, his dynamic personality and weighty political legacy have tended to obscure his initially moderate stance on a variety of issues. Zorbas and his co-conspirators had been anti-dynastic in conviction, prohibited from deposing the king only by the opposition of the Great Powers. Their hostility to the monarch was nevertheless made manifest when they chose to remove Crown Prince Constantine from his position as head of the Greek army. Though the coup had made it possible for Venizelos to acquire

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.; Miller, \textit{Making of Modern Greece}, 4.
\textsuperscript{46} Papacosma, \textit{Military in Greek Politics}, 176.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 150-155.
power, one of his first and most important acts as prime minister, after presiding over the dissolution of the League, was to restore Constantine’s command. Nor did his rise to political prominence represent the triumph of a reform-minded entrepreneurial middle class as had been the case in other European countries. Venizelos had a modest social agenda which was focused primarily on separating the military and civilian spheres, improving the efficiency of state bureaucracies, and breaking up large estates to redistribute land to landless peasants. But his program was in no way radical. The land redistribution was in fact envisioned as a means by which to forestall agrarian and social radicalism.

Venizelos’ own political extremism manifested itself only in his fervent commitment to the cause of the Great Idea. He was “at heart…a national, not a social, revolutionary.” Dynamic and shrewd, Venizelos also benefited from major shifts on the international diplomatic front. As a byproduct of the Young Turk Revolt in 1908, Turkish nationalism was in the ascendant, a fact which prompted the heretofore squabbling Christian Balkan states of Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia to reconsider closer cooperation with each other. Moreover, by the second decade of the twentieth century, British commitment to the territorial integrity of the Ottoman state had withered as a result of the growing economic, political, and cultural ties between the Ottoman Empire and Germany.

In 1912, a series of bilateral agreements tied the Christian Balkan states into an alliance. For his part, Venizelos committed Greece to an alliance with Bulgaria on 29

---

May 1912. War between the allies and the Ottoman Empire broke out in October that same year. Though the Great Powers were united in their opposition to a general conflict in the Balkans because of the unforeseeable consequences on the delicate European balance of power, their divergent goals prevented them from taking effective action to stop the war.\textsuperscript{50}

Greece emerged from the war with significant territorial gains. Bulgaria did most of the fighting but ended up with relatively little. In an ill-considered attempt to rectify the situation, Bulgaria attacked its former allies in June 1913. This action precipitated the Second Balkan War, which pitted Bulgaria not only against its former allies Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro, but also against Romania and a resurgent Ottoman Empire, eager to win back lost territory. There could be only one outcome, and Bulgaria was forced to quickly sue for peace. In August 1913, the Treaty of Bucharest gave the largest portion of Macedonia (over fifty percent of the total territory) to Greece; Serbia received nearly forty percent. Although Bulgaria did receive some Macedonian territory and Western Thrace, most of the lands it had coveted before the wars went to Greece. Bulgaria never came to terms with these losses and became a revisionist state in the years leading up to World War II.\textsuperscript{51}

As a result of the two Balkan Wars, Greece “added some 70 percent to her land area, while her population increased from approximately 2,800,000 to 4,800,000.”\textsuperscript{52}

Spectacular as these gains were, they burdened Greece with a variety of problems.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 113-114.
\textsuperscript{52} Clogg, \textit{A Concise History}, 83.
Foremost among these was the mixed ethnic profile of the newly acquired areas. Integration into the national body politic would be difficult and traumatic, not least because a significant number of the inhabitants of Greek Macedonia could not identify as ethnically Greek. The largest city, Thessaloniki, contained a sizeable Jewish population and many in the rural countryside were Bulgarian-speaking and thus of dubious ethnic affiliation from the perspective of the Greek government.

Therefore, on the eve of World War I, and thanks to Venizelos’ adept leadership, Greece was well on the way toward achieving, or perhaps even exceeding, its maximal territorial objectives. It was at this point that the situation began to unravel. The outbreak of war between the major European powers in August of 1914 split the political consensus that Venizelos and his conquests had so laboriously achieved. The prime minister felt that Greece should throw in its lot with the Triple Entente, judging, in the event correctly, that Britain, France, and Russia had more to offer Greece in the way of territorial gains and that they would most likely win. Constantine I, now the Greek king, was on the other hand a relative of Kaiser Wilhelm II’s through marriage. A known Germanophile, he advocated neutrality, fearing British naval power in the Eastern Mediterranean. As the conflict progressed, the rift between the two men widened and both the Entente and the Central Powers tried to exploit the domestic political situation to their advantage. The disagreement over foreign policy eventually became intertwined with the question of the king’s actual constitutional authority and the country was split down the middle between Venizelists and Constantinists.
Although Venizelos enjoyed a parliamentary majority and theoretically had the constitutional right to choose the direction Greece would take, Constantine undermined his authority at every turn, thus placing “his own judgment above the rules of parliamentary democracy.”

In August 1916, a group of disgruntled Venizelist officers staged a coup against the royalist government in Thessaloniki. The split then became permanent in September when the frustrated Venizelos took control of the coup and established, with the help of Entente troops, his own rival government in northern Greece, making Thessaloniki his provisional capital. Mounting pressure from the Entente, which threatened to bombard Athens, forced the king to finally leave the country, without abdicating formally, in June 1917 in favor of his second son Alexander. A triumphant Venizelos immediately set about the task of cashiering those officers and civil servants who had been loyal to Constantine and replacing them with his own followers.

Ultimately, this conflict, dubbed the National Schism, was at its core not about substantive policy differences, but about the intense competition between two entrenched political blocs that equated nepotism, the dispensation of patronage to political allies, and the concomitant cashiering of political opponents, with the assumption of power at the national level. It was also a duel between two stubborn personalities, King Constantine I and Venizelos, which featured vendettas, purges and counter-purges, and inaugurated an era of bad feeling and distrust that lasted well into the contemporary era. One unforeseen consequence of the unbridgeable divide was that it smothered all other forms of Greek

---

political expression, eventually stunt ing even the growth of the nascent Greek communist movement in an era of budding, albeit slow, industrialization.55

Banking on the support of the British and the French at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Venizelos requested and won the right for Greece to administer a large portion of the western Anatolian peninsula around the port city of Smyrna and to occupy all of Eastern Thrace. Greek troops moved into Smyrna on 15 May 1919 and swiftly imposed order. In November, the allies forced Bulgaria to surrender Western Thrace in the Treaty of Neuilly.56 They subsequently awarded the territory to Greece in April 1920.57 After months of delicate negotiations, Venizelos succeeded in convincing the Powers to allow Greece to continue to occupy Smyrna and its province of Aydin for a period of five years until a plebiscite could determine its final status. The Treaty of Sevres in August 1920, signed but never ratified by the Ottoman government, also allotted the entire Thracian littoral to the Greek government.

However, the Greek forces on the ground were in a precarious position. A port city, Smyrna was vulnerable to having its overland supply routes cut off. In an attempt to secure a defensible frontier for their mandate, Greek troops began to move slowly into the Anatolian heartland, thus pushing into territory that was overwhelmingly Muslim and Turkish. This move was not viewed favorably by the local population or by Greece’s Western allies who, after the trauma of world war, were loath to challenge a resurgent

55 Mavrogordatos, Stillborn Republic, 335-349.
56 Jelavich, Balkans, vol. 2, 125.
57 The territory was under French military administration in those few months. See Geneviève Desiré-Vuillemin, “L’Occupation de la Thrace Occidentale par l’Armée Française d’Orient (Octobre 1919-Mai 1920) [The Occupation of Western Thrace by the French Army of the East, October 1919-May 1920,” Revue Historique des Armées 3 (Spring 1976): 124-157.
Turkey. The Ottoman government, already discredited by the defeat in World War I and humiliated by the signing of the Treaty of Sevres, was now accused by Turkish nationalists, led by veteran general Mustafa Kemal, of acceding meekly to the dismemberment of its remaining territory. The Turkish counteroffensive gathered irresistible momentum.\textsuperscript{58}

As one observer has pointed out, Venizelos was perhaps fortunate to lose the legislative elections held on 1 November 1920.\textsuperscript{59} War-weariness and the heavy-handed nature of his domestic policies contributed to his stunning defeat. The premature death of Alexander in October 1920 also led to the triumphant return of Constantine in December. Already by early November, a disappointed Venizelos had voluntarily left for France declaring that he was officially exiting the Greek political scene. In a vengeful mood after his years of exile, King Constantine presided over a thoroughgoing purge of Venizelists from the government and armed forces.\textsuperscript{60}

Left to pursue an irresponsible expansionist policy that they had never believed in, Venizelos’ successors tried helplessly to forestall inevitable defeat. The political departure of Venizelos provided the Western allies with a convenient excuse to withdraw their support from Greece. Short on supplies, weary from more than a decade of fighting, and surrounded by a hostile population, the Greek army went down in defeat. In


\textsuperscript{59} Miller, \textit{Making of Modern Greece}, 9.

September 1922, Kemalist forces entered Smyrna. Demoralized Greek troops also abandoned their positions in Eastern Thrace.61

In the aftermath of what the Greeks would henceforth refer to as the “Asia Minor Catastrophe,” Greece received more than a million Orthodox Christian refugees from Anatolia. Most had fled voluntarily fearing Turkish vengeance but about 200,000 were expelled officially by the Kemalist government. Some of the new arrivals did not even speak Greek but had Turkish as their primary language. In return, Greece expelled nearly 400,000 Muslims. The Treaty of Lausanne, signed in July 1923, confirmed this historically unprecedented mandatory exchange of populations and made Greece one of the most ethnically homogeneous nations in Europe. However, the social cost of the refugee problem was acute. More than twenty percent of the interwar Greek population was from Asia Minor, most of them desperately poor, unemployed, and culturally distinct in speech, diet, dress, music, and customs.62

Initially, the search for scapegoats took precedence over all other matters. The humiliated army revolted against the royalist regime and forced Constantine to abdicate in September 1922. He died in exile the following year. Though his eldest son George II succeeded him to the throne, the monarchy’s days were numbered. The new military regime, led by two Venizelist colonels, Nikolaos Plastiras and Stylianos Gonatas, authorized the departed Venizelos to represent Greece in the Lausanne negotiations. Meanwhile, still looking for someone to blame, the government arrested, tried, and

summarily executed six of the most prominent members of the previous regime, including the former prime minister, Dimitrios Gounaris, and the last royalist commander-in-chief of the Anatolian expedition, Georgios Hatzianestis in November 1922.63

Though this was a horrific and unjustified abuse of governmental authority on the part of the returning Venizelists against their royalist opponents – but probably necessary given the outraged popular mood – it obscured the underlying implications of the Asia Minor debacle. The Great Idea was dead and the National Schism seemed irrelevant to the pressing needs of the moment. The coup leaders believed that the electorate now wanted to abolish the monarchy and establish a republic. But Venizelos was opposed to the idea, fearing that the establishment of a republic would lead to anarchy and radicalism. In the event, the anti-Venizelists sealed their own fate when they unsuccessfully attempted a countercoup in October 1923. Despite the fact that Venizelos briefly returned to Greece in January 1924 partly to forestall the establishment of a republic, he was unable to reconcile the disparate voices within his own camp. The constituent assembly declared Greece a republic on 25 March 1924. George II, who had already left the country, was formally deposed. A plebiscite ratified the decision on 13 April.64

The settlement of the regime issue exposed rifts within the Venizelist bloc itself. Interim governments succeeded one another until the feuding prompted yet another

---

63 Llewellyn-Smith, Ionian Vision, 312-336.
64 Mavrogordatos, Stillborn Republic, 29-32. The triumph of Bolshevism in Russia in 1917 provided adequate testimony to the dangers of radicalism for bourgeois leaders such as Venizelos.
military coup, spearheaded by the Venizelist General Theodore Pangalos, in June 1925, on the pretext of restoring order. Pangalos’ disastrous mismanagement of diplomatic and financial affairs soon led to his downfall but had the unexpected result of getting both the Venizelist and anti-Venizelist camps to set aside their differences in order to ensure his ouster. A new round of elections was held in November 1926. The Greek people, tired of acrimony, demanded bipartisan cooperation and got it in the form of a Venizelist-directed ecumenical government that restored a few royalist officers to their former rank. Further financial problems and a lack of decisive leadership led to yet another election in August 1928 with Venizelos finally reentering Greek political life and participating as a candidate. He won a resounding victory.65

It is important to remember that these political dramas were occurring against the backdrop of severe social dislocation. The most pressing problem facing the country was what to do with the large and landless refugee population. In fact, this issue was so critical that the revolutionary government established in September 1922 after the removal of Constantine decided to deal with it forcefully even before the question of the regime was resolved. By February 1923, the government had cleared the way for a massive project of land expropriation and redistribution that would break up large estates in the territories acquired during the Balkan Wars and to divide that land up among the refugees. The entire process lasted about three years. This redistribution not only headed

65 Ibid., 33-37.
off agrarian radicalism by solving the problem of land hunger, it also permitted the
government to Hellenize these ethnically heterogeneous territories.\textsuperscript{66}

Nevertheless, the solution of populating the new areas with refugees was not a
perfect one. First, the original inhabitants of those lands, some of whom had never
considered themselves anything but Greek, felt justifiably slighted and neglected by a
state that was showing so much favoritism to what, in their view, were foreign
interlopers. These would form the core of anti-Venizelist support in the interwar period
and beyond. Second, neighboring Balkan countries, especially Bulgaria, did not easily
forget their territorial losses in the Balkan wars. Both problems reemerged, with tragic
consequences, during the Axis occupation.\textsuperscript{67}

Though the project of land redistribution was successful, it could not cover the
entire refugee population. Many remained landless. Moreover, the small labor market
could only absorb a fraction of the multitudes. Poor economic prospects forced the rest
of the refugee population (nearly half a million people) to live in makeshift shantytown
neighborhoods that grew up around the large cities of Athens and Thessaloniki. Among
the dispossessed were many former professionals and prosperous merchants, now forced
to labor long hours in menial occupations, when they could find employment at all. The
cultural distinctiveness of this compact refugee underclass exacerbated the problem of
incorporation. Not surprisingly, therefore, some of the refugees were attracted to radical
political ideologies like communism. Many of the original leaders of the Greek

\textsuperscript{67} For an excellent analysis on Bulgarian territorial ambitions in the interwar period see, Elisabeth Barker, \textit{Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics} (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1950), 29-36.
Communist Party (KKE) were of Anatolian origin. Nevertheless, the Third International’s controversial stance on the future autonomy of Macedonia combined with the limited progress of Greek industrialization meant that the KKE grew slowly in the first years of the interwar period.\(^6\)

III. Prelude to War: Depression and the Metaxas Regime.

In what would turn out to be his final administration, 1928-1932, Venizelos was interested primarily in improving Greece’s relations with neighboring countries. The Greek prime minister signed friendship pacts with both Yugoslavia and Italy, ceding to the former the right to use Thessaloniki as a free port. Ironically, the mandated population exchange and the resulting termination of Greek irredentist hopes now made Kemal’s Turkey an ideal security partner in the postwar Balkans. Both Greece and Turkey were anti-revisionist states interested in maintaining the territorial status quo against the revisionist aspirations of countries like Italy and Bulgaria. In October 1930, Greece and Turkey signed the Treaty of Ankara, recognizing the legitimacy of each other’s borders and agreeing to naval parity in the eastern Mediterranean. Toward the end of his term in office, Venizelos also worked for the creation of a Balkan alliance that would further cement the existing geopolitical situation. Venizelos was not in office in 1934 when the treaty creating the Balkan Entente, comprised of Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia, was signed. He had, however, contributed to the initial

negotiations. More impressive in theory than it turned out to be in reality, the Entente was, nevertheless, a diplomatic coup for the time, representing as it did a mutual guarantee of borders on the part of the four signatories.69

Whatever its successes in the international arena, the Venizelos administration, like many governments around the world, faced a dire challenge with the outbreak of the Great Depression in 1929. The poor agricultural economy could not hope to meet the enormous financial burdens the country had incurred after a decade of warfare followed by a refugee resettlement problem of historic proportions. Furthermore, Venizelos himself was never particularly adept in managing the economy and, in any case, had preferred to concentrate on foreign policy. Surprisingly, the chronic unemployment and general economic dislocation did not initially profit the KKE. Mismanagement and factional infighting stunted its growth in the early 1930s, and the party’s insistence on the autonomy of Macedonia, which offended the national sensibilities of all Greeks and threatened directly the property rights of the refugee settlers who had benefited from land redistribution, made it especially unpopular among many struggling smallholders, who might otherwise have been natural recruits.70

The administration’s popularity plummeted, and after finishing its four-year term (a miracle in its own right given the tumultuous nature of Greek politics) it barely succeeded in getting a majority in parliament. When that tenuous majority proved

---

unworkable, the country held another election on 5 March 1933, which Venizelos lost.\footnote{Mavrogordatos, \textit{Stillborn Republic}, 43-44.} Fearing the loss of their positions due to patronage, Venizelist officers revolted against the new pro-royalist government the next day. The coup, led by Plastiras, attempted to nullify the results of the election and reinstall Venizelos as prime minister. It failed miserably and Plastiras fled to exile in France. In addition, although there was never any proof that Venizelos himself was involved in the conspiracy to overthrow the government, the opposition nevertheless thought so. An attempt on Venizelos’ life aggravated even further the situation.\footnote{Clogg, \textit{Concise History}, 122-113. During the war, in a rather strange episode, the OSS suddenly became enamored of the idea to present Plastiras as a possible candidate for prime minister of the Greek government-in-exile. The Morale Operations branch conceived a plan to pluck him from France and bring him to Cairo, but in the end, it amounted to nothing: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), RG 226/144 87/9, “Cherry Plan – Undated.”} Over the next two years the situation grew progressively worse. In March 1935, Venizelos joined Plastiras in exile in Paris, when another attempted coup by Venizelist officers, this time with his complicity, also failed. In short order, the pro-royalist government oversaw a clearly fraudulent plebiscite that produced an overwhelming majority in favor of King George II’s return from exile in Britain.\footnote{Jelavich, \textit{Balkans}, vol. 2, 210.}

Once safely on his throne, the monarch attempted to be conciliatory. Repudiating the government that had engineered his return, the king appointed a caretaker government to oversee yet another round of elections in late January 1936. The result was electoral deadlock. The true significance of this election, however, lay in the rapid rise in political influence of the KKE. Although netting a mere six percent of the popular vote, the KKE was now in a position to use its fifteen parliamentary seats to win for itself a place in the
next government. Both the Populist (royalist) and Liberal (Venizelist) parties conducted secret negotiations to gain the communists’ allegiance. When word of these negotiations reached the press, the army once again grew restive, raising the distinct possibility of yet another putsch. The king’s response was immediate. In March 1936, he named General John Metaxas, the leader of an ultra right wing party, as the caretaker minister of war. After the death of the interim government’s prime minister on 13 April, the king appointed Metaxas to be his successor. Thereafter, Metaxas used his political influence to convince the king to give him greater emergency powers, especially after a series of KKE-orchestrated labor uprisings demonstrated the inability of the traditional parties to deal with the dislocations brought forth by the Depression. On 4 August 1936, the king allowed Metaxas to suspend “key articles” of the constitution, to apparently thwart a communist-inspired general strike planned for the next day.74

Unpopular and patently illegitimate, Metaxas was nevertheless able to establish effective control over the government through a combination of his considerable political intelligence, the ruthless efficiency of his minister of public order, Constantine Maniadakis, in exterminating nascent challenges to his regime, and, most importantly, the active backing of King George II. The king accepted the notion that the so-called “Regime of the Fourth of August” was the only bulwark against the factionalism threatening the very integrity of the Greek political system, thus making it vulnerable to the machinations of the otherwise impotent KKE. Since the army remained loyal to the person of King George II and not Metaxas directly, it is possible to see the Metaxas

74 Clogg, Concise History, 117.
dictatorship as royalist in principle, if not in fact. The king, however, eschewed direct involvement in the day-to-day running of the country, leaving the task of administration to the able Metaxas, who swiftly imposed his political vision. Taking aesthetic cues from Mussolini’s Italy and Hitler’s Germany, Metaxas fashioned a government awash in fascist symbols, including the infamous salute, a nationalist youth organization, and an ideology that included historical justifications of the regime as a “Third Hellenic” civilization after Classical and Byzantine Greece, vaguely similar in tone to the millenarian allusions of Mussolini’s “Second Roman Empire” and Hitler’s Nazi Third Reich.75

Despite the existence of an effective and oppressive security apparatus, and whatever its external trappings, the “Fourth of August” regime was not, ultimately, a fascist government. One of the most important hallmarks of fascism, an ideologically radicalized mass base, was conspicuously missing. Although certainly anti-communist, Metaxas also discreetly kept to the traditional pro-British line of Greek foreign policy that was, in any case, the only course open to him given the realities of the international situation and the obvious Anglophilism of the Greek monarch. One influential historian describes the regime as a “hollow” and “reactionary” dictatorship. “In truth, the ‘ideology of the Fourth of August’ does not contain anything beyond ‘stability, tranquility, and order,’ a cry that answers itself.” In its ideological content, the Metaxas regime reflected the age-old Greek conflict between a Westernized ruling elite at odds

---

with, and desperately seeking to impose order and discipline on an anarchic “Eastern” populace.\textsuperscript{76}

Metaxas was a great admirer of German values and culture. He had completed his military training in Germany and had come to appreciate the preciseness of the Teutonic mind with its emphasis on martial virtues like discipline, courage, and efficiency. This thinking not only put him at odds with the majority of his fellow Greeks, but also with his monarch, who had developed a distinct love of all things English during his long exile in Great Britain. Despite this bias, Metaxas never committed Greece to a partnership with the Axis, and in fact opposed resolutely an increasingly, during the late 1930s, expansionist Italian foreign policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. As revisionist states in their own right, Germany and Italy had nothing to offer Greece but the threat of cooperation with like-minded revisionist states in the Balkan region.\textsuperscript{77} It was clear, for example, that Bulgaria had much to gain from an alliance with the Axis: an excellent opportunity to rectify the injustices of the past when, as a twice-defeated power, first in the Balkan Wars and then in World War I, it had been forced to sign away much of what its nationalists considered authentically Bulgarian lands.\textsuperscript{78}

On the morning of 1 September 1939, the German army invaded Poland, thereby inaugurating World War II. The intention of the Metaxas regime was to keep Greece well out of the conflict, but its strategic interests clearly lay with Britain. Whether

Greece would remain neutral or become a combatant was not, however, a decision the Greek government could make alone. Germany’s victories in the first full year of the war, including the spectacular invasion and conquest of France, attracted the envy of Mussolini, who had already managed to expand into the Balkans by successfully invading Albania in late April 1939. Although the Greek government was fully aware that Mussolini harbored hostile intentions, it realized it would have little success deflecting his aggressive designs by anything other than armed resistance. British promises of support in the eventuality of an Italian invasion were of limited value, especially after the fall of France in June 1940. The government therefore prepared for war by bolstering the defenses on the Albanian frontier, Italy’s most likely point of egress, and strengthening the diplomatic ties with Turkey, in the hopes of dissuading Bulgaria from taking advantage of Greece’s vulnerability. After a series of deliberate provocations, the Italian government delivered its final ultimatum on 28 October 1940. The summary rejection of the humiliating terms, amounting in essence to accepting Italian military occupation, led to immediate war. On that same morning of 28 October, Italian mechanized forces streamed across the Greek border with Albania.

Chapter Two

Occupation and Resistance

I. The Greco-Italian War and German Invasion.

The failure of the Italian army to make any progress did not astound outside observers as much as the Greek counterattack in mid-November. That counterattack pushed Italian forces back into Albania at such a rapid pace that Mussolini, by the end of that month, was forced to call for all available reserves lest the Axis position in Albania be totally lost. The collapse of the Italian invasion and the looming catastrophe of a total Axis defeat forced Hitler to reassess his Balkan strategy. Mussolini’s humiliation had come at precisely the wrong time for his German ally. By November 1940, the Battle of Britain had been decided in favor of the Royal Air Force, and Hitler was stuck fast on the horns of a major dilemma: the advisability of attacking the Soviet Union despite the existing Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact between the two countries. He had been hoping to intimidate most of the Balkan countries into remaining neutral while he pursued his aggressive designs on the Soviet Union. Mussolini’s botched invasion of Greece forced Hitler to intervene at precisely the time he wanted to allay Stalin’s suspicions as to his ultimate intentions and designs.

Two outstanding reasons now made a German invasion of Greece practically inevitable. The first of these was the important economic value that the Balkans represented for the German war effort:
Southeastern Europe provided half of Germany’s cereal and livestock requirements. Greece, with Yugoslavia, was the source of 45 percent of the bauxite (aluminum ore) used by the German industry, while Yugoslavia supplied 90 percent of its tin, 40 percent of its lead and 10 percent of its copper. Romania, and to a marginal extent, Hungary provided the only supply of oil which lay within the radius of German strategic control; the rest came from Russia under the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.81

Intimately tied to this primary reason was the danger of direct British involvement in the Balkans due to Mussolini’s blunder. Although the Greek government, justifiably fearful of incurring Hitler’s wrath, had been careful to minimize its requests for outright military assistance, it did view Great Britain as an ally in its war with Italy. The possibility that the Greeks would cede bases to the British, thus making Germany’s entire southeastern flank vulnerable at precisely the time it was contemplating war with the Soviet Union, was intolerable to Hitler. Metaxas’ sudden death of natural causes in January 1941 brought that possibility into sharp focus. Less concerned than Metaxas about placating Germany, his successor Alexander Koryzis, invited four British divisions into Greece to aid in the war against the common enemy, Italy. The actions of the Greek prime minister, buoyed by a series of extravagant British promises, sealed the fate of his country. Without much debate, Hitler issued a series of directives for the proposed invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece, which the German General Staff dubbed “Operation Marita.”

Complicating German war plans was the political stance of Yugoslavia. Early on, Hitler’s generals had determined that the easiest invasion route into Greece lay through that country and not through Bulgaria where, with the full connivance of the Bulgarian

government, which had joined the Axis on 1 March 1941, the Germans had placed seven divisions. For many months, German diplomats had been exerting considerable pressure on the Yugoslav government to join the Axis, a pressure that the Yugoslavs had resisted valiantly. Nevertheless, by mid-March 1941 it was obvious that the Axis star was in the ascendant all over the Balkan Peninsula. Romania and Bulgaria were German allies and Albania was an Italian protectorate. Greece was resisting successfully but its prospects seemed grim. Surrounded on all sides by danger, the Yugoslav government finally joined the Axis on 25 March 1941. However, German satisfaction at this auspicious turn of events was to be short-lived. On the next day, a group of Serb military officers overthrew the official Yugoslav government in a hastily organized coup and replaced the regent, Prince Paul, with his eighteen-year old nephew, who was crowned King Peter II.

Although the new government attempted to assure the Germans that it would accede to the demands of the Tripartite Pact, Hitler was in no mood for compromise. He immediately ordered his generals to include Yugoslavia in the preparations for Marita. Ironically, this bold act of Yugoslav defiance, partly encouraged by the American envoy Colonel “Wild Bill” Donovan, in his capacity as President Roosevelt’s personal emissary, complicated greatly the defense of Greece. Greek generals had deployed the army on two fronts, the active one in Albania and the other (including the handful of British troops) on a double line of fortifications facing Bulgaria, the obvious entry point of a German invasion. This unique deployment left a huge gap between the two fronts where
the Yugoslav border was located. If the Yugoslav army should fail to stop the Germans, both Greek fronts would thus be exposed and vulnerable to attack from the rear.\footnote{At least one historian has made the point that from a Greek strategic perspective, Yugoslavia was better off as an unwilling enemy than as a militarily incompetent friend. Given that the terms of Yugoslavia’s accession to the Tripartite Pact included the stipulation that the Yugoslav government could refuse the passage of Axis troops through its sovereign territory, an Axis-controlled Yugoslavia was preferable to one opposed to Hitler. In the former case, the Greek government could at least be secure in the knowledge that its section of the border adjacent to Yugoslavia was safe from enemy attack. In the event, it is probable that both a pro-Axis government and Hitler would have ignored this clause but at the very least the delay of a build-up (as opposed to the rapid collapse of Yugoslavia in the invasion) may have given Greece a bit more time. See Barbara Jelavich, \textit{History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century}, vol. 2, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 237.}

In the event, that is exactly what occurred. On 6 April 1941, Operation Marita commenced with a simultaneous German attack on both Balkan countries. On the Bulgarian frontier, Greeks troops held fast, despite a withering German offensive. Unfortunately, the Yugoslav army, irrationally deployed to defend the entire Yugoslav frontier, was overwhelmed in less than two days. German troops streamed through the Greek border with Yugoslavia and, in a matter of days, both active Greek fronts were turned and in full retreat. Lacking in mechanized transport, unlike their British allies, many elements of the Greek army were captured by the rapidly advancing Germans. The majority of British troops barely managed to escape through the Athenian port of Piraeus, accompanied however, by the cheers of thousands of Athenians who defiantly lined the streets of the city, in the teeth of frequent German air strikes, to wish them farewell.

Faced with defeat and conquest, Prime Minister Koryzis committed suicide on 18 April. Although his successor, Emmanuel Tsouderos wished to continue the fight, General George Tsolakoglou, commanding the remnants of the Greek army in the north, signed an unauthorized armistice with the German General Wilhelm List on 21 April.
1941, apparently to avoid having to surrender to the advancing Italians. The rest of the Greek government, including the king and his family, fled first to Crete, then to Cairo. For Greece, the war was over, but the nightmare of occupation had just begun.

II. Occupation, Resistance, Collaboration, and the Creation of EAM/ELAS.

The success of Operation Marita did not mean that the Germans could now rest on their laurels. Especially worrisome was the problem of Crete, which remained in Greek hands and by April 1941 contained a small number of well-entrenched British Dominion troops from Australia and New Zealand. Britain’s dominance of the Mediterranean was centered on its operational headquarters in Egypt. From there, British naval power radiated outward to Cyprus (somewhat removed from the main focus of naval operations in the Mediterranean) and Malta, an absolute thorn in the side of German war planners, as it sat astride the main supply routes between Italy and its dependencies in North Africa. Crete now represented the potential for a third major British base in that theater of operations. Although German strategists agreed that Malta seemed too heavily fortified to be taken by direct invasion, the British garrison on Crete seemed vulnerable to airborne assault, an unprecedented method of taking enemy territory and one pushed by

---

84 Mazower, Inside Hitler’s Greece, 17. The King would later end up in London but would also visit Cairo periodically throughout the war. Excepting the King, the Greek government-in-exile was officially headquartered in Cairo throughout the war.
Field Marshal Goering who was anxious to restore the Luftwaffe’s credibility following its recent failure in the Battle of Britain.  

Audacious as it was, the invasion of Crete, which commenced on 20 May 1940 and ended on 1 June, met with mixed success, despite the fact that what remained of the Greek army and most of the frontline British troops had already evacuated to Egypt. The elite German paratroopers suffered enormous casualties taking Crete, souring Hitler to airborne operations for the remainder of the war. The conquest of Crete was, however, a signal to the German occupying authority to start organizing the zones of occupation, a problem it had left on the backburner for the duration of the Cretan invasion. The Germans decided on giving the Italians the primary administrative responsibility in occupied Greece, although this decision was bound to humiliate any German-backed government in the eyes of the Greek people, who justifiably considered Italy a defeated enemy. The Italians, on the other hand, were disappointed that the Germans would not allow them to annex Greece directly as the Germans had annexed a major section of Poland.

Over desultory Italian objections, Hitler and his generals decided that a puppet government composed of quisling notables would administer Greece. General Tsolakoglou, the Greek general who signed the surrender, was to head the government, the first in a series of German-appointed Greek premiers throughout the course of the war, whose collective – though as events would show, vacuous - excuse for collaboration

---

with the occupier was to avoid further hardships to the Greek people. Ignoring the weak
remonstrations of the Tsolakoglou administration, the Germans divvied up the territory of
the country among their allies. The vast majority of the country was placed under the
rule of the Italians, who received Epirus, Thessaly, Central Greece, the Peloponnese, the
islands of the Ionian Sea and most of the islands of the Aegean. The Germans handed the
eastern portion of Greek Macedonia and most of Western Thrace to the Bulgarians, who
treated the award as an outright annexation (an Axis victory in the war would have
certainly confirmed this assumption) and immediately inaugurated a savage policy of
ethnic cleansing. Bulgaria, a strange sort of Axis ally that would subsequently – after the
commencement of Operation Barbarossa – refuse to engage in offensive operations
against the Soviet Union, had achieved its maximal territorial ambitions in the Balkans
without firing a shot and the Germans had one less administrative headache to worry
about. The Germans kept to themselves critical areas of great strategic importance:
Athens, Thessaloniki and its Macedonian hinterland, Crete, a strip of the Greco-Turkish
frontier in Thrace and a few of the large Aegean islands abutting the Turkish mainland. 87

A period of relative calm characterized the first months of occupation, as the
occupying powers sorted out their respective roles and responsibilities, and the Greek
population sought surcease from months of unremitting warfare. Those traditional

87 The neutrality of Turkey was not something the German High Command – or the Western allies for that
matter – could rely on with any great certitude. See Frank G. Weber, The Evasive Neutral: Germany,
Britain, and the Quest for a Turkish Alliance in the Second World War (Columbia, MO: University of
Missouri Press, 1979). Most of the important OSS missions to Greece would later be launched out of
Turkey and were often coordinated, somewhat ironically, from the regional OSS desk in Smyrna (Izmir).
The excesses of the Bulgarian occupation, one of the most brutal of the war, are well documented in Kofos,
Nationalism and Communism, 104-108. The Germans also gave the Bulgarians all of Yugoslav
Macedonia. Both Yugoslav and Greek Macedonia suffered as a result of depredations although the
situation in Greece was much worse.
political elites that had not fled, shaken by the destruction of the familiar prewar certainties, and hesitant to pursue a cohesive policy of resistance to the Axis that might entail a descent into a shadowy underworld of violence, crime, and physical danger, decided instead to lick their wounds and play a passive waiting game. That left the Greek Communists, who were well-versed in the methods of underground political organization, in a very strong position. Years of evading Metaxas’ secret police had given the KKE the invaluable advantage of practical experience, and the apocalyptic nature of Marxist doctrine, with its emphasis on class struggle and the inevitability of the proletarian revolution, added ideological reinforcement to the KKE’s oppositional attitude.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of Non-Aggression complicated the position of the KKE, but the difficulties it generated were not insurmountable. David Close has pointed out that “even during the two months before the invasion of the Soviet Union, there was little scope for doubt because the implication of the Nazi-Soviet Pact was that Communist parties would prevent domination of the Balkans by either Britain or

89 Gerasimos Maltezos, *EAM-ELAS: Anamniseis kai Zitimata Stratigikis kai Taktikis* [EAM-ELAS: Remembrances and Matters of Strategy and Tactics] (Volos, Greece: Korakis, 1987), 51-57. In his article, “EAM, 1941-1947: A Reassessment,” Hagen Fleischer argues convincingly that many opponents of the KKE tended to overemphasize Communist experience with clandestine activities in order to use that as a convenient excuse to explain away their own failure to organize an effective resistance against the occupier. It is true that the Metaxas government had, prior to the occupation, effectively penetrated the KKE and obliterated its top leadership. The quick recovery of the Greek Communist Party after the German invasion must imply that other factors, like patriotism or ideological fervor, and not necessarily previous experience in underground organization, were far more important in galvanizing the communists to action. Hagen Fleischer, “EAM, 1941-1947: A Reassessment.” *Greece at the Crossroads: The Civil War and Its Legacy*, eds., John Iatrides and Linda Wrigley (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 51.
Germany. In general terms such a statement is accurate, though there is documentary evidence to prove that the Comintern, in January 1941, pressured the KKE to retract an October 1940 directive put forward by its leader at the time, Nikos Zachariades, declaring the Greco-Italian War “a struggle for national liberation of the Metaxas government against Mussolini’s fascism,” highlighting rather the need for the Greek people “…to fall into line with the policy of neutrality and friendship advocated by the Soviet Union.”

The need for short-term prudence was nevertheless complementary to the immediate interests of the Greek population, who were certainly tired of conflict and uncertain as to how life under the new Axis administration would evolve. The KKE could afford to take its time, especially since both the royalists and the Venizelists had been rendered incapable of action by the totality of the Greek defeat.

There is evidence to show that the British, recognizing the obvious futility of the struggle to defend Greece against the German invader, attempted to organize some form of postwar resistance apparatus. Indeed, British preparations for a post-occupation resistance were already afoot even before the war with Italy had begun, largely as a result of action by the British MI-6. In contrast, the Greek government, equally aware of the inevitability of the Axis occupation, did not take any steps to prepare for resistance to the occupier, a fact that, as time passed and the occupation became increasingly onerous, drove yet another nail into the coffin of the old order. Eventually, after the

---

90 Close, Origins, 69.
92 Margaritis, Apo tin Itta, 55.
commencement of the Greco-Italian War, the British SOE also became involved in preparations for resistance. Although British efforts were hurried and generally fruitless, some minimal good was achieved and a primitive infrastructure was in place when the Germans marched into Athens. The ultimate goal, of course, was to organize a pro-British resistance that would be led by the Greek government-in-exile and by the SOE. This, however, the British failed to do.  

On the other hand, a spirited domestic resistance flowered from the very beginning. In the words of Christopher Woodhouse, “resistance began spontaneously; or rather, it never ceased.” Initially, as could perhaps be expected, acts of resistance were unorganized and inchoate, without clear political overtones. The first few months of the occupation saw disparate acts of patriotism in the form of random sabotage or potentially dangerous but inspired stunts, such as the removal of the Nazi flag from the Acropolis, an event that stirred the imagination of many Greeks and signaled to the occupying powers the enormity of their task. As the summer of 1941 progressed, however, and the Axis occupation solidified, many groups, most of them located in Athens, began to make attempts to organize the resistance under one or another political banner. The two most important Greek resistance organizations of the wartime period, EDES (National

Republican Greek League) and the communist-led EAM, were both formed in September 1941.\footnote{C.M. Woodhouse, The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949 (Brooklyn Heights, NY: Beekman-Essanu Publishers, 1976), 2. The removal of the Greek flag from the Acropolis is described in André Gerolymatos, Guerilla Warfare and Espionage in Greece, 1940-1944 (New York: Pella Publishing, 1992), 189. The American minister to Greece, Lincoln MacVeagh, also wrote an account of the incident in one of his last letters before being withdrawn from the occupied country. John Iatrides, ed., Ambassador MacVeagh Reports: Greece, 1933-1947 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 371-372. EDES was founded on 9 September and EAM on 28 September.}

The movement toward an organized resistance acquired inexorable momentum once the true nature of the Axis occupation became evident. Though the Italians quickly attempted to grab a sizeable portion of the country’s wealth, the Germans were determined to reserve the lion’s share for themselves. Short-sighted and brutal, interested only in plundering the country without thought to the welfare of the population, the German authorities methodically began as early as the first week of May 1941 to strip Greece of its liquid financial assets, agricultural produce, and mineral resources. The expropriation of crops predictably led to hoarding in the countryside. Combined with the shortfall in the harvest engendered by wartime disruption, and the logistical difficulties of forcibly requisitioning grain from thousands of peasant smallholders in a nation with a primitive infrastructure, it is no wonder that famine was the inevitable result.\footnote{Mazower, Inside Hitler’s Greece, 26-32.}

From October 1941 to late September 1942, it is estimated that, according to a 1942 study commissioned by the International Red Cross, about a quarter-million people perished from starvation. Naturally, the major urban centers of Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patras, suffered the most deaths. The poor slum dwellers of Athens, many of them...
refugees from Asia Minor, were especially hard hit. In those parts of Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace annexed by Bulgaria, the Bulgarian authorities were completely indifferent to the fate of the starving Greek population, since they were intent on ethnically cleansing the area anyway in order to make room for Bulgarian colonists. Blockade by the British fleet compounded the dire situation and matters improved only after it became obvious that the Axis authorities could do nothing to help alleviate the suffering. The British government relented and, in June 1942, agreed to allow food into Greece as long as it was delivered under neutral auspices. The first shipments finally arrived in September.

The callous disregard of the Axis occupier for the basic survival needs of the Greek population made willing collaboration practically impossible and catalyzed the movement toward armed resistance. It also highlighted the ineffectuality of the quisling government headed, since the beginning of the occupation, by George Tsolakoglou, the man who had signed the surrender. The Greek historian George Margaritis has correctly emphasized the enormous insecurity and dislocation that the absence of a credible state apparatus caused in the minds of the subject population in those first months of foreign occupation. “They found themselves suddenly alone, without a state or social mechanism working for them, without a sounding board, a moderator of despair. The state was lost.

---

96 Exact numbers are hard to come by but the Red Cross estimate is probably on the conservative side. See Neni Panourgia, Dangerous Citizens: The Greek Left and the Terror of the State (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 51-52, 14n.
97 Hans-Joachim Hoppe, “Germany, Bulgaria, Greece: Their Relations and Bulgarian Policy in Occupied Greece,” Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora 11 (Fall 1984): 42-46. For more on the Bulgarian occupation, see chapters eight and nine.
98 Mazower, Inside Hitler’s Greece, 47.
That omnipotent coordinator of modern Greek life simply disappeared."99 The transition from the bloated, top-heavy government of the interwar period to the utterly helpless one of the first year of occupation was one more factor that led to armed resistance.

Something or someone had to step in to fill that social and cultural void.

Historians have long argued about the timing of when and where the first armed guerilla bands began to appear in the mountains of Greece. The issue pivots around who specifically should lay claim to the honor of being the first to resist actively the occupier through the use of armed force. The evidence is somewhat vague, although it seems obvious that Greek communists were among the first to do so. At least one British officer, Lt. Colonel J.M. Stevens, for a time head of the SOE’s Greek Desk in Cairo, confirmed this assumption directly in a report drafted after an inspection tour in the summer of 1943. He wrote, “In the summer of 1942 the first Andartes [guerillas] appeared; they were Communists who formed a band on Mt. Olympus. This was no mere coincidence. The EAM appreciated quite correctly that guerillas could only exist...[with]...the support of the villagers and the first eighteen months of the occupation had been spent in organizing the villages.”100 In subsequent years, the wartime head of the British and then later of the Allied Military Mission, Christopher Woodhouse, in a historical monograph about the occupation and civil war, found no reason to disagree with this assessment, although he did question the extent to which the embryonic guerilla bands that first emerged fell under any form of centralized control.101

99 Margaritis, Apo tin Itta, 54-55.
101 Woodhouse, Struggle, 25.
definitely the case that, along with the overtly leftist bands, there emerged also Venizelist republican and even politically non-aligned bands as well.¹⁰²

Still, most of the guerillas in the mountains were, from an early date, loyal to the communist-led EAM. But the degree of tactical control either EAM or the KKE exerted over the first leftist armed bands was probably minimal. If nothing else, the independent attitude exhibited by some notable guerilla leaders [Kapetanioi] in later years attests to the organizational weakness of the KKE in the first months of the occupation. Phibos Grigoriadis, a former leftist guerilla and a postwar chronicler of the resistance, implies, in his multi-volume account of the war years, *To Antartiko*, [The Guerilla War] that the formation of EAM’s military wing, ELAS (National Popular Liberation Army), was not just a result of KKE planning. It was also the product of personal enterprise shown by charismatic leaders in the countryside, men like Athanasios Klaras, better known by his *nom de guerre*, Aris Velouchiotis, the most important of the founders of ELAS: a former schoolteacher and disavowed member of the KKE, who had, during the Metaxas years, signed a document renouncing his party affiliation to avoid governmental persecution and had been thus thrown out of the party.¹⁰³ After apparently reconciling with the KKE in the first weeks of the occupation, Aris – perhaps to expiate his shame – badgered, cajoled, and pleaded with the party leadership to let him form an armed band in his native Roumeli in Central Greece. This request was granted, though many within KKE leadership circles questioned Aris’ known propensity for extreme violence and referenced

---


his rumored fondness for heavy drink. In truth, throughout the war years, the political leaders of EAM controlled Aris only with great difficulty.\(^{104}\)

In the urban confines of the capital, where capture was an omnipresent concern, several resistance organizations had been formed by the early autumn of 1941. Nominally, the first among these EDES, formed on 9 September 1941 by a minority of the disaffected republicans and enemies of the Metaxas regime – a number of Venizelist officers among them – still extant in occupied Greece. In theory, the titular head of this new organization was General Plastiras, the famous Venizelist opposition leader who had fled the country in March 1933 after leading an abortive coup against the lawfully elected royalist government of Panages Tsaldares.\(^{105}\) In reality, EDES was led by Napoleon Zervas, formerly a colonel in the Greek Army with strong Venizelist sympathies who had been, at one time or another in the interwar period, involved in various conspiracies against the monarchy and who also uncomfortably had a “reputation as a gambler and a womanizer.”\(^{106}\) Nevertheless, Zervas was undeniably charismatic, shrewd, and an able military tactician when the situation called for it. He also was lucky enough to surround himself with some able lieutenants such as Komninos Pyromaglou, described as a “great man, a scholar, and schoolmaster” by the chief of the Allied Military Mission, C.M. Woodhouse and who was probably the leading intellectual light of the organization.\(^{107}\)


\(^{105}\) After Venizelos’ death on 18 March 1936, Plastiras had emerged as one of the more notable personalities of the Venizelist movement.

\(^{106}\) Gerolymatos, *Espionage and Guerilla Warfare*, 211.

\(^{107}\) C.M. Woodhouse, *Something Ventured* (London: Granada Publishing, 1982), 64. The historian Heinz Richter points out that EDES was most certainly the brainchild of Plastiras and Pyromaglou who imagined the organization while in exile in France but, in occupied Greece itself, only Zervas was willing and able to lead such a movement. Heinz Richter, *1936-1946: Dio Epanastaseis kai Antepanastaseis stin Ellada* [Two
Unfortunately for Zervas specifically, and for the centrist cause generally, EDES failed to rouse all the prominent Venizelist leadership from their post-occupation torpor. Many of those inclined to activism had fled with the government to Cairo. Others justifiably distrusted Zervas the man. Still others felt that any sort of resistance was either premature or bound to fail and thus cause undue hardship to the Greek people. In truth, Zervas himself hesitated to take his movement to the mountains, despite receiving repeated appeals by the British SOE to do just that. In the early part of 1942, the SOE even deigned to pay him off with 24,000 gold sovereigns if he would just depart Athens and begin an active resistance. When this proffered carrot failed, the British then blackmailed Zervas, threatening to denounce him to the Gestapo if he failed to leave the city within forty-eight hours. The plan worked. By the late summer of 1942, Zervas had set up a sizeable band of approximately five-hundred men in his native Epirus in northwestern Greece.\textsuperscript{108}

Whatever the reasons for his hesitation, Zervas unquestionably missed an opportunity to take advantage of the popular mood for resistance. Minor acts of sabotage and numerous examples of passive resistance abounded from April 1941 on and “represented a sentiment, a spirit, a will to continue the antifascist struggle.”\textsuperscript{109}

Considerable as the pretensions of Zervas and EDES were, they clearly failed to live up to the heightened expectations of the subject population and once again served to


demonstrate the inadequacy of the old political order, whether Venizelist or royalist. Zervas’ hesitation might also have doomed him to playing a secondary role in the resistance throughout the entirety of the occupation and doubtlessly impelled him to become increasingly reliant on British support, even prompting one British officer to state in September 1944 that, “Zervas is a British creation in the sense that we are responsible for his continued existence today and for all the consequences that may follow there from.”\textsuperscript{110} Perhaps an overstatement, nonetheless it is significant to note that an earlier OSS analysis of EDES and Zervas, published by the Secret Intelligence Branch in 1943 and based, apparently, on a variety of sources both sympathetic and unsympathetic, concluded that “from what is known of Col. Zervas since his return to Greece it cannot be said that his personality and activities inspire full confidence.”\textsuperscript{111}

Many Venizelists agreed with this assessment in the first few months of the occupation. Although Pyromaglou and Zervas made attempts to recruit some notable Venizelist personalities, they were rejected as often as not. Some notable malcontents went on, in due time, to form their own resistance organizations. One such was Colonel Dimitrios Psarros, another former military officer who had, like Zervas, been involved in the abortive March 1935 Venizelist coup against the pro-royalist government of Panages Tsaldares.\textsuperscript{112} A much more upstanding and credible officer than Zervas, Psarros possibly lacked the simple charisma and shrewd intelligence required to lead an informal guerilla band but nevertheless proceeded to form his own organization, which eventually became

\textsuperscript{110} D.J. Wallace, “Conditions in Zervas-held Territory,” in Baerentzen, \textit{British Reports on Greece}, 120.
\textsuperscript{111} NARA, RG 226/165 26/209, “C.F Edson and S. Dow to Lt. Col. Florimond Duke: Greek Underground and Quisling Organizations – August 1943.”
\textsuperscript{112} C.M. Woodhouse, \textit{Apple of Discord: A Survey of Recent Greek Politics in their International Setting} (London: Hutchinson, 1951), 35.
the third largest resistance movement in Greece. Named, somewhat clumsily, National and Social Liberation (EKKA), Psarros’ organization never controlled more than a few hundred guerillas and was very limited in terms of geographic scope, its area of operations in the central Greek highlands of Roumeli surrounded entirely by EAM/ELAS-controlled territory. Despite its relative unimportance, Psarros’ EKKA was destined to play a prominent role in the last few months of the occupation when it entered into a conflict with EAM/ELAS and was, as a result, utterly obliterated by the communists in March 1944. In the ensuing chaos, Psarros was murdered under mysterious circumstances by an ELAS detachment, a fact that weakened the moral credibility of the EAM/ELAS movement and influenced considerably the direction of British foreign policy in the post-liberation era.\footnote{Close, Origins, 113 and John Louis Hondros, Occupation and Resistance: The Greek Agony, 1941-44 (New York: Pella Publishing, 1983), 220-222. The military “wing” of EKKA was named, more grandiloquently, the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones. For details on the dismemberment of the 5/42 and the murder of Psarros by EAM/ELAS elements, see chapter six.}

Other Venizelists who distrusted Zervas made less successful attempts to form their own bands. Notable among these was Colonel Stefanos Sarafis, an officer in the regular army, who, like Psarros, commanded a great deal of respect in Venizelist circles. Sarafis was undoubtedly inclined to do something, but his professional training and personal predilections made him ill-suited to the realities of guerilla warfare. He vacillated between action and inaction for a number of months. Recognizing his high political standing and obvious patriotism, the central committee of the KKE tried to convince him to join EAM in late 1942, an invitation that he rejected. But he also was not inclined to trust the British and refused their financial and moral inducements to start
an organization as well. He finally took to the mountains in January 1943, creating his own short-lived movement called Struggle-Restoration-Independence (AAA). Within two months time, the AAA was disbanded at gunpoint by units of ELAS, and Sarafis became a prisoner of the communist-led resistance. During his incarceration, he apparently underwent a transformation of conscience. A few days later, in early April 1943, he emerged from captivity not just a free man but, unexpectedly and remarkably, as the overall military commander-in-chief of ELAS. According to his memoir, his conversion was completely voluntary; inspired in part by the “remarkable discipline” displayed by the ELAS soldiers and by how well they treated him while he was in their custody. Sarafis’ conversion represented a momentous success for EAM/ELAS and had the effect of further sundering the ties that bound the prewar anti-monarchists together.115

Zervas’ failure to galvanize the old Venizelist opposition, combined with his obvious disinclination to fight, left the door open for the KKE and other heretofore marginalized parties of the left. Whereas it seemed that the founders of EDES were more interested in emphasizing their opposition to the return of the king, the Greek communists emphasized, with a combination of patriotic and ideological fervor, the primacy of armed resistance to fascism and thus did much more to capture the popular imagination. The charter of EAM was ratified on 28 September 1941. In the spirit of the Popular Front, it was signed not only by the KKE but also by the far smaller (and politically inconsequential in the prewar era) Socialist and Agrarian parties. The KKE intended it to be an inclusive organization, open to all Greeks willing to resist the occupier. Signifying

114 Woodhouse, Struggle for Greece, 30-34.
its desire to avoid the spotlight, the KKE chose a sufficiently generic name designed to put the emphasis on the struggle, hoping to simultaneously woo progressive, left-leaning Venizelists and patriots to its cause. This goal was paramount despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that the KKE was clearly the largest signatory. The last article of the founding charter highlights this concern: “Between the parties and organizations cooperating within the EAM, there will be maintained, throughout the entire course of the struggle for National Liberation, the highest level of mutual help and support on any matter concerning the struggle and the more specific struggle of every separate party.”

Conversions of prominent Venizelists and high-ranking military men like Sarafis and Euripides Bakirdzis (the latter had also worked with the British SOE before joining with ELAS) testify to the success of this tactic.

Without a doubt, the creation of EAM reflected more accurately the popular mood towards resistance in the winter of 1941-42. In remarkably short order, EAM managed to create a highly effective resistance movement, with a disciplined military component subordinated, however, to an ideologically cohesive political authority. Moreover, the movement enjoyed a considerable degree of popular support, at least in the first months of the occupation. Eventually, even some former opponents were persuaded to join its ranks, apparently awed by its efficiency and passion. The Venizelist response to occupation was nowhere near as effective and conformed more closely to the traditional Balkan resistance archetype, dating back to the days of Ottoman occupation, of an ill-


disciplined band of irregulars united by a charismatic chief or war leader. Significantly, the old anti-Venizelist establishment failed, for various reasons, to create any sort of effective resistance organization. Many royalists had, in any event, fled with the king to Egypt. Those that remained were sometimes compelled, by dint of occupation or conviction, to collaborate with the Axis authorities, although widespread collaboration was rare. More often, the old anti-Venizelist ruling classes simply remained quiescent. In occupied Greece, there was, assuredly, nothing analogous to the Yugoslav Draža Mihailović’s Chetnik movement. Nevertheless, the monarchial right would have a complicated and ambiguous role to play in the unfolding story of the Greek resistance.118

III. Postscript to the Interwar Period and Reflections on the Rise of the Wartime KKE.

In retrospect, the meteoric rise of the KKE to wartime prominence appears to be the major historical conundrum posed by the politics of the interwar period. Without a doubt, the party’s political significance under Axis occupation would likely have surprised most observers in the 1920s and 30s, if they had the ability to move forward in time to witness the creation of EAM/ELAS. Tiny and prone to factionalism, burdened with a primitive industrial economy which initially stunted its growth, isolated by its own often contradictory policies, and persecuted zealously by Metaxas’ secret police in the period of the dictatorship, the KKE still managed to place itself at the forefront of a

118 The similarities and key differences between the Greek and Yugoslav resistance movements were pointed out by the British Ambassador to the Greek government-in-exile (1943-1946) Reginald Leeper in his postwar memoir. See Reginald Leeper, When Greek Meets Greek, (London: Chatto&Windus, 1950), 16.
broad-based national resistance movement in a relatively short amount of time after the establishment of Axis control.

Given this miraculous communist wartime renaissance, scholars could perhaps be forgiven for assuming that it was the brutal nature of the Axis occupation that created the conditions for spontaneous social and political revolution in wartime Greece. Viewed in this light, the conflict between Venizelists and anti-Venizelists produced an enormous amount of political sound and fury but in the end signified little. In the crucible of Nazi savagery, the politics of the National Schism were incinerated. What remained was the outline for a radically new social order. Mark Mazower has emphasized this meme of revolutionary sociopolitical transformation in his influential *Inside Hitler’s Greece.*

“Like a tidal wave, occupation swept away old structures, and changed the entire landscape…the shock caused established systems of thought and rule to disintegrate. In this way Nazi rule acted as the catalyst for a series of unpredictable political and social reactions.” Similarly, in a later passage describing the EAM/ELAS phenomenon, Mazower writes that “it was something unprecedented in modern Greek history – a mass ideological movement in a country of clientelist factions and charismatic leaders.”

Though on the surface such generalizations seem to make intuitive sense, deeper reflection on the historical legacy of the National Schism shows them to be both false and misleading. For one, the leftward shift that occurred in wartime Greece was not by any stretch “unpredictable.” Many Venizelists had already started to become politically radicalized even before the advent of Metaxas. The dismal economic prospects

---

engendered by the Great Depression, poor working conditions in the few factories, a state apparatus that was unresponsive or sometimes even hostile to labor demands, and the internal reorientation of the KKE away from sectarian ideological positions toward a more conciliatory and patriotic line, were all factors that contributed to a rise in the party’s numbers by 1932.\textsuperscript{120}

Incongruously, Venizelos may have also contributed to the centrifugal forces that were driving his supporters leftward in the early 1930s. George Mavrogordatos convincingly points out that after Venizelos’ final administration many Greeks were ready to consign the National Schism to the dustbin of history. By 1932, large numbers of anti-Venizelists were even willing to set aside the notion of the king’s return and officially recognize the republic. The removal of the regime issue from the political spotlight would thus have overcome the one remaining obstacle prohibiting bourgeois cooperation and would have presented the electorate with a robust alternative to communism. Unfortunately, however, the regime issue was the only factor keeping the ruling Venizelist coalition together in 1932. Therefore, in order to preserve his own power and keep his coalition intact, Venizelos made the fateful decision to revisit the past by raising the possibility that the republic might collapse in the event of a Venizelist electoral defeat. The heated rhetoric galvanized the old anti-Venizelist opposition and ended all hopes of reconciliation. Thereafter, events followed their predictable course

until the abortive Venizelist coup in March 1935 and the establishment of Metaxas’ dictatorship in August 1936. 121

The obvious beneficiary of the revival of conflict between Venizelists and anti-Venizelists was the KKE. The threat of the king’s return forced all the republican and progressive elements of the electorate to cooperate against the threat of an anti-Venizelist reaction. The KKE’s switch to a new “Popular Front” strategy in 1935 dovetailed nicely with these developments. 122 Venizelism’s mass base, which consisted primarily of either refugee factory laborers or indebted rural smallholders, began to drift appreciably leftward by 1935. The phenomenon was dubbed “Venizelocommunism.” Realizing the danger, Venizelos, in his final attempt to save Venizelism, recognized the restored monarchy in late 1935 from his place of exile in Paris. But it was too late. Venizelos’ recognition of the monarchy permanently alienated the left wing of his coalition and thoroughly confused the rest of his supporters. It also cleared the way for the historically unpopular Metaxas, who now could present himself as the savior of the bourgeois order against Venizelocommunism. As Mavrogordatos points out, however, the dictatorship failed to destroy “…the seeds planted in 1935-1936. In the wake of this forced interval and during the Axis Occupation, the diffuse and amorphous radicalized Republicanism born out of the March 1935 coup, and the hegemonic project of the C.P. [KKE] would both combine in a formidable popular movement: the National Liberation Front (EAM)…”123

121 Mavrogordatos, Stillborn Republic, 341-344.
122 Smith, “Marxism,” 54-55.
123 Mavrogordatos, Stillborn Republic, 345-349. The quotation is from 349.
As the foregoing discussion implicitly reveals, Mazower is also incorrect to posit that Greece lacked a “mass ideological movement” prior to the creation of EAM. Venizelism, which in the final analysis represented the purest distillation of the Great Idea, was just such a movement. The fact that Venizelism had a charismatic leader and engaged in clientelistic practices should not obscure the strength and authenticity of its ideological message. Powered by an almost messianic form of nationalism, Venizelism galvanized Greek society, temporarily obscuring deep social cleavages in pursuit of its vision. The Catastrophe destroyed the basis for Venizelist irredentism but it did not eliminate Greek nationalism. In wartime Greece, nationalism had a power that not even the KKE could deny or “sweep” away. Certainly it would be erroneous to argue that socioeconomic considerations had nothing to do with the growth of EAM/ELAS, but it would be even more irresponsible to assume that nationalism was not the prime motivating factor that led Greeks to support that organization in huge numbers during the war. Though its leaders thought otherwise, EAM ultimately was a social movement second, a national movement first and foremost.
Chapter Three

Prolegomena: The British and the Greek Resistance, 1942-43

I. British Support for the Greek King.

The hasty withdrawal of British armed forces from the Greek mainland in April 1941, and then from Crete in May, ruined many carefully constructed plans to organize and nurture a post-occupation resistance organization connected to the British military effort and to the Greek government-in-exile. As it was, the resistance to Axis rule emerged spontaneously and was the product of forces that had been, before the war, uniformly opposed to the Metaxas-Royalist ruling coalition. EAM/ELAS’s strong though not always visible communist connections posed a problem to long-term British interests in the region, especially in the event of an Axis withdrawal. Despite the fact that the British government enjoyed a great deal of prestige among Greek Venizelists and had some long-standing historical associations with many of them, London did not, in the final reckoning, trust them to form a stable postwar government that would safeguard British imperial or geostrategic concerns. These were, of course, of paramount importance in the Eastern Mediterranean area.¹²⁴

The reasons for the British pro-monarchist attitude were many and complex, but bolstered by a few incontrovertible realities, at least according to Prime Minister Churchill and the British Foreign Office. First, it was true that King George II had

¹²⁴ Some of these issues are discussed in Prokopis Papastratis, British Policy towards Greece during the Second World War-1944 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 217-225.
always displayed unstinting loyalty to the Allied cause, even in the midst of invasion and defeat and despite the obvious power of German military might in the first few months of the war. The British guessed, no doubt correctly, that the king’s inherent Anglophilism, nurtured by his long years of exile in London, had served to mitigate Metaxas’ admiration for Germany, although it was highly unlikely that it in any way played a primary role in the overall determination of Greek foreign policy before the war. Still, given that for a time Greece had been Britain’s lone ally against the Axis juggernaut, both Churchill personally, and the policymakers in Whitehall more generally, felt that some debt was owed the Greek monarch who in their eyes had done much to keep his fellow countrymen from deserting the British cause.125

It was moreover the case that George II and Churchill, members of the same Masonic lodge in London, had developed a close personal relationship during the former’s years of exile, although friendship might be too strong a word.126 Ever the keen imperialist, Churchill also believed, paternalistically, that monarchy was the type of government best suited to a chaotic region like the Balkans.127 Prejudiced or not, the historical record superficially supported this viewpoint. Excepting Venizelos’ last term in office, which ended rather stormily, the Metaxas dictatorship had marked the only real period of political stability in Greece after 1922. Finally, it was the case that the British

government had made a great effort to evacuate the king from Greece and to recognize (and hence legitimize) his exiled government. The seamless continuity of that government had to be guaranteed until the withdrawal of Axis forces and the restoration of civil order. It was always unlikely, if not inconceivable, that Britain would choose to withdraw its support from the king before the fight was even over – too much political capital had been expended keeping him in power – no matter what problems might arise as a result of that support.\footnote{Hagen Fleischer, \textit{Stemma kai Svastika: I Ellada tis Katochis kai tis Antistasis, 1941-1944} [Crown and Swastika: The Greece of Occupation and Resistance, 1941-1944], vol. 1, (Athens: Papazeses Publishing, 1988), 187; Robert Frazier, \textit{Anglo-American Relations with Greece: the Coming of the Cold War, 1942-1947} (London: Macmillan, 1991), 2-3. A good summation of British views on this issue can be found in a memorandum, dated 4 August 1943, that the British Embassy to the Greek government-in-exile sent to the United States Department of State. United States, Department of State, \textit{Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), Diplomatic Papers, 1943}, Vol. IV: \textit{The Near East and Africa} (Washington, D.C., 1964), 137-138.}

There were many problems, certainly. In the first instance, the king himself had, in 1935, returned to power in what was commonly perceived by many Greeks as a rigged plebiscite. Furthermore, long association with the despised Metaxas had tainted the image of the king in Greece, and the heroic Greco-Italian campaign was not enough to restore the monarch’s standing in the eyes of the Greek people. This was particularly the case since, in the final two years of the dictatorship, it was obvious to all observers that the king had gone from being an active partner in his collaboration with Metaxas, to being a passive, even powerless, participant in a government increasingly subject to the whims of the aging dictator. The death of Metaxas a few months before the German invasion did little to restore the government’s legitimacy since no elections were ever held and the premiership was passed from one caretaker appointee to another. It ended
up on the shoulders of Emmanuel Tsouderos, a former Liberal MP and director of the National Bank of Greece, who had been, in the interwar period, a known Venizelist and had even been exiled for a time by Metaxas. This notch in his political belt, along with his considerable Anglophilism and overt desire to support the institution of the monarchy in a time of war, recommended him as the successor of the ill-fated (again, former banker) Alexander Koryzis, who had taken his own life just two days before the final surrender to German forces. The British might have been pleased with Tsouderos’ politics, but his association with the king and his lack of legitimacy undermined the credibility of the government-in-exile in Axis-occupied Greece.129

The almost unqualified support that the British Foreign Office was willing to extend to King George II baffled many neutral, contemporary observers. This confusion was engendered by the king’s obdurate personality and abysmal political track record, which often complicated his relations with his friends as much as it did with his enemies. In a diary entry after his recall to Washington because of the German invasion, Lincoln MacVeagh, the United States minister to Greece – a man who was close to and even had some affection for the king it should be noted – had this to say about the king’s prospects of ever returning to Greece as its crowned head:

It is possible, of course, that the King’s future conduct may conquer for him an esteem which he could never win previously. But this seems unlikely. Whatever his good qualities, he is no Albert of Belgium to sum up in his person the heroism of a whole nation. It appears more probable that what Greece has against him and his dynasty, – their avariciousness and self-absorption at the expense of the

country, but above and beyond everything, their ill-success, – will bulk even larger than it does today when the hour of possible return arrives.130

Criticism of the king was not just limited to ostensible neutrals like the Americans. In time, even his backers in the Foreign Office began to despair as to his leadership qualities, especially as the political situation in occupied Greece began to devolve toward civil war. MacVeagh’s comments seemed almost prophetic a few years later, when in April 1944, no less a personage than British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden intoned: “…the King is not wise and he is obstinate. It is in my judgment increasingly unlikely that he will ever return to Greece as King, and stay there.”131

Despite these concerns, the British foreign policy establishment managed to maintain its pro-monarchist stance throughout the period of occupation. One final factor that might possibly explain the British government’s inflexible line on this matter was its lack of understanding about conditions in occupied Greece. The collapse of the British effort to foment loyal resistance cells after the fall of the country to the Axis also meant the loss of crucial intelligence assets. Greek refugees intermittently fleeing Nazi oppression after April 1941 could and did provide some information to British General Headquarters, the Foreign Office, and the SOE. Nevertheless, as Colonel C.M. Woodhouse, future head of the Allied Military Mission (AMM) to occupied Greece, was to later remark in a report sent to Cairo,

[Because of the daily struggle for existence] no one outside Greece can speak for the Greeks in Greece. Five minutes after leaving Greece, anyone is out of touch with the reality in Greece and disqualified from speaking for the Greeks. No one can even legitimately claim to speak for a political party, since political life in Greece had been defunct for eight years. I doubt whether any of the Greeks now discussing their country’s future in the Middle East can even state the problems they are trying to solve.  

A lack of awareness of local realities was therefore a real impediment to the proper formulation of British foreign policy. When better information began to trickle in after a British commando team had been infiltrated into the country in October 1942, the Foreign Office – after a period of shocked outrage and disbelief – began slowly to modify, although never really change, its stance on the return of the king. Churchill, a busy man with many things on his mind, naturally remained less well-informed than Whitehall on real-time events in Axis-occupied Greece and thus was disinclined to change his mind on the matter of the Greek king, even when presented with contrary evidence, choosing instead to downplay or disbelieve reports sent by his own SOE.

Although the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI-6, known in the Middle East as the Inter-Service Liaison Department, or ISLD) attempted to set up some sort of intelligence network before the final British evacuation, its efforts ultimately met with little success.  

In contrast, SOE had more luck making contact with elements of the embryonic Greek resistance in the autumn of 1941, when it tried using notable Venizelists who had fled with the armed forces to Egypt to make contact with their

---

133 One former ISLD officer noted subsequently how better informed SOE seemed to be about Greek politics than his own organization: “The news [out of Greece] in no way surprised the SOE specialists who had a good political understanding of prewar Greece (in contrast to their counterparts in SIS).” Nigel Clive, A Greek Experience, 1943-1948 (Wiltshire, United Kingdom: Michael Russell Publishing, 1985), 33.
erstwhile cohorts in occupied Greece. In January 1942, SOE attempted to form its own Venizelist resistance group that would take its orders from SOE and the Greek government-in-exile, and to this end sent a prominent republican officer, Major Ioannis Tsigantes, to liaison with the republican politicians and officers still extant in Greece.\footnote{Bradley F. Smith, \textit{The Shadow Warriors: OSS and the Origins of the CIA} (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 421.}

Among those approached by Tsigantes was Stefanos Sarafis, later commander-and-chief of ELAS, and Dimitrios Psarros, future leader of EAM/ELAS’ rival, EKKA. It should be pointed out that these were British attempts to create resistance movements that would have both an urban and a rural/guerilla element.\footnote{C.M. Woodhouse, \textit{Apple of Discord: A Survey of Recent Greek Politics in their International Setting} (London: Hutchinson, 1948), 36-37.} In terms of pure intelligence gathering and occasional sabotage operations, the SOE did have an asset in one Ioannis Peltekis, a republican businessman who ran an extremely successful intelligence network out of Athens, codenamed \textit{Apollo}, until jealousy and internecine rivalry rendered his ring of spies obsolete. But even \textit{Apollo} was not a guerilla movement. The British desire to create a militarily capable group of irregulars that would keep important German military units tied down indefinitely in counter-insurgency operations fell through permanently when German secret police ambushed and killed Tsigantes in the early part of 1943.\footnote{Richard Clogg, “The Special Operations Executive in Greece,” \textit{Anglo-Greek Attitudes: Studies in History}, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 61-62. Essentially, the \textit{Apollo} ring was left leaderless when fellow Venizelist politicians, jealous of his position with the British, falsely accused Peltekis of being a double-agent. Though exonerated, his enforced absence to defend himself at the military tribunal convened to decide his guilt, dealt a fatal logistical blow to his organization.}

Despite these various setbacks, it was the case that by late 1942, the SOE had managed to establish some minimum contact with various important personalities and groups in Greece. It also benefited from the intelligence it acquired from those officers
and politicians who had decided to flee Greece after the German takeover. As a result, the SOE gained valuable information on the guerilla groups that had risen spontaneously in the countryside without British assistance. Principal among these was, of course, EAM/ELAS which, by March 1942, was even receiving drops of supplies from British planes. Knowledge of the specifics was vague. Some among the British, both SOE and Foreign Office, theorized that EAM was a “patriotic” organization that possibly included some nationally-minded communists in its ranks. Others felt that the communists were finally willing to suppress their revolutionary agenda for the sake of defeating the common fascist foe. Most British policymakers probably paid no attention to any group within occupied Greece, not considering any of them worthy of serious support. One thing was, however, certain. Before the arrival of British commandos in Greece in October 1942, SOE and the Foreign Office had some knowledge of Greek affairs.  

II. Operation Harling.

All this changed after the members of Operation Harling parachuted into Greece with a top secret mission to destroy the Gorgopotamos viaduct on the lone single-line railway connecting Athens to Thessaloniki and points beyond. Sometime in mid-1942, British war planners in Cairo determined conclusively that this railway between Greece’s two largest cities, the lifeline connecting the Mediterranean to the Balkan hinterland, was absolutely essential to keeping Rommel’s Afrikakorps supplied with almost eighty

---

percent of its war materiel.  These experts estimated that demolition of the bridge would “cut the railway line for many weeks, possibly months.” This might, in turn, allow British forces in North Africa to break out of their defensive posture in western Egypt and drive Rommel back from that area, only a few days march from British GHQ in Cairo. The Royal Air Force, due to German air superiority in the Mediterranean, was having a difficult time interdicting the supplies as they were ferried from Piraeus to Benghazi and then to Rommel’s forward bases in Tobruk, Libya. That left sabotage as the only option.

In the end, Cairo HQ chose twelve parachute-trained soldiers to conduct the operation, nine officers and three enlisted men. The team leader was Colonel (later Brigadier) Edmund C.W. Myers, of the Royal Engineers, a demolitions expert and career soldier with no real knowledge of Greece or Greeks. To offset that disadvantage, as all the planners agreed that local help would be required to complete the task, Myers was accompanied by a few Greek-speaking officers who would serve as his liaisons with the Greek resistance. Principal among these was his second-in-command, Major (later Lt. Colonel and Colonel) Christopher M. Woodhouse, an Oxford-educated classicist in civilian life and, at the time, only twenty-four years old. Later appointed the overall commander of the AMM, Woodhouse was to play a key role in the unfolding story of the Greek resistance. After the successful completion of the mission, Myers and most of the

139 The majority of the information on Harling comes from the memoir of the mission commander, Brigadier E.C.W. Myers and is apparently based on his full, but unpublished, diary: E.C.W. Myers, *Greek Entanglement* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1955), 17, 17-87.
140 Condit, *Case Study*, 29-32.
team were supposed to be evacuated by submarine. Woodhouse, along with an Anglo-Greek lieutenant and two radio operators, was slated to remain behind to build more extensive contacts with the Greek guerillas.  

A great deal of controversy has arisen among historians over the level of briefing on local conditions in occupied Greece received in Cairo by the members of the mission, especially about the political and military nature of the indigenous resistance movements. Myers and Woodhouse both claimed that they obtained no information concerning any sort of communist or populist resistance movement and heard not a word about the existence of EAM/ELAS. The mission commanders subsequently stuck to this assertion despite the fact that, by the fall of 1942, EAM/ELAS was far and away the largest extant resistance movement, with cadres throughout Greece. Moreover, it seems certain that the Foreign Office knew something about the existence of a populist resistance movement at least a few months before the departure of Harling. Richard Clogg, the preeminent historian of the SOE, has uncovered documents to show that the Foreign Office had enough information, gleaned primarily from SIS/MI-6 contacts, to know that a large “Popular Front” existed in Greece and, in the words of a senior political officer of the British Embassy to the Greek government-in-exile, it was not “outwardly

---

141 Woodhouse’s postwar corpus of work dealing with aspects of the Greek resistance is impressive even given that he was a prolific historian. He too wrote on Harling in two monographs dealing with the 1940s, namely Apple of Discord and the Struggle for Greece listed in the bibliography. However, probably his most interesting description of the mission is contained within his personal memoir, Something Ventured (London: Granada, 1982), 24-51.
142 Myers and Woodhouse were adamant, in their respective memoirs, that they received no information about EAM/ELAS. It is indeed curious that Woodhouse, who was being sent to liaison with the guerillas and thus had more of a political role to play, never received any information on such a potentially critical matter. Directly contradicting these accounts, one of the other members of Harling, Captain Denys Hamson, in his own memoir, claimed to have been briefed about “a certain Major Ares [Aris Velouchiotis of ELAS]...his second-in-command was called Karalivanos.” Denys Hamson, We Fell Among Greeks (London: Jonathan Cape, 1947), 20.
communist.” Clogg posits the logical point that if the Foreign Office had such information in its possession, it was unlikely that SOE, with a more extensive network of agents at its disposal, would not have even better information about such a movement. He concludes that it was probably an accident – due to a recent organizational restructuring of SOE Cairo – that the members of Harling were kept ignorant of the facts regarding the various Greek resistance movements.143

Historian Ole Smith, in a relevant article, questioned this conclusion on a number of points, intimating that the lack of adequate briefing was a conscious, even nefarious, act of omission on the part of SOE Cairo (though not of the Foreign Office apparently) to promote Zervas’ EDES over EAM/ELAS. First, Smith points to a meeting that Woodhouse had, on 28 September 1942, with the deputy prime minister of the Greek government-in-exile, Panayiotis Kanellopoulos, a man who had just escaped from Greece with good knowledge of EAM. However, Kanellopoulos did not make mention of the organization during the meeting. Second, one of the British intelligence officers accompanying Woodhouse on his visit, MI-6 station chief Major Ian Pirie, was an acknowledged expert on the domestic political situation existing in Greece at the time.144

Smith’s contention that there was an SOE plot afoot to promote EDES falls apart on a number of key points. Neither Myers nor Woodhouse, nor for that matter Captain

143 Richard Clogg, “Pearls from Swine,” British Policy, 171-172. In a different article published in the same collection of essays, Bickham Sweet-Escott, a senior SOE staffer during the war (he was, for a time, head of SOE operations in Cairo) and another important historian of the SOE in the postwar period, stipulates that the members of Harling were not informed because, since their role was operational, “it was none of their concern.” Bickham Sweet-Escott, “SOE in the Balkans,” British Policy, 18. This exact quote is also referenced in Andre Gerolymatos, “The Development of Guerilla Warfare and British Policy toward Greece, 1943-1944,” Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora 17 (Spring 1991): 98.
Denys Hamson, another member of *Harling*, ever mention the term “EDES” in their respective memoirs when discussing their briefings. If SOE was indeed intent on promoting that organization, they would have at least given the mission members some idea as to its structure and ideological platform. Similarly, Kanellopoulos’ reticence could just as well have been explained by his distance from events on the ground in Greece. Indeed, the first three-hundred or so pages of his diary revolve almost strictly around his busy life in Egypt as an important member of the Greek government – a hermetically sealed world populated by noteworthy personalities and far from the barren slopes of occupied Greece.

Furthermore, given Zervas’ stormy relations with SOE throughout the first half of 1942, when he was threatened with exposure to the Gestapo by the British agency after all other means of convincing him to start a movement in the mountains had failed, it would seem highly unlikely that they would then choose to entrust such a critical mission wholly to a man like him. As it was, the SOE planners probably felt that he was, unfortunately, the only viable option open to them given the restricted timetable they had to work with. It is significant to note that, Myers, Woodhouse, and Hamson all recall that, in addition to the name of Zervas, they also heard mentioned the name “Karalivanos” who, in fact, was an ill-disciplined half-guerilla, half-brigand under the nominal control of (the then still unknown to them) Aris Velouchiotis, one of the founders of ELAS and probably the most famous communist guerilla of the war. \(^{145}\)

\(^{145}\) Prokopis Papastratis, *British Policy*, 127; General Bernard Montgomery, commander of the British Eighth Army facing Rommel, was preparing for a breakout in the late fall of 1942. In the event, the breakout, in other words the action that *Harling* intended to facilitate by blowing the Gorgopotamos viaduct, started in the beginning of November 1942 – a few weeks before the *Harling* team could blow the
The question of the briefing is crucial because of the events that transpired after the Harling team arrived in Greece in late September 1942. After a month-long series of misadventures that almost scuttled the entire effort, Myers was able to assemble his team for the demolition, only to discover that Zervas’ band was not the only group of guerillas active in the mountains of central Greece. Woodhouse, whose pre-arranged job it was to contact Zervas and bring him to the chosen assembly point, also brought with him another band of guerillas, totally unrelated to the Zervas group, and led by a man bearing the nom de guerre “Aris Velouchiotis.” It was not difficult for even those inexperienced with Greek politics among the team members to discern that Aris was a communist and, moreover, the local military representative of a much larger organization than Zervas’, an organization called EAM/ELAS. According to Woodhouse, Aris had initially shown great reluctance to help the British commandos, and the British theorized that he had, in fact, received orders from some important EAM functionaries in the plains to desist from doing so. Nevertheless, he realized that EAM/ELAS would suffer through the inevitable Axis reprisals if the mission failed, regardless of whether Aris’ band actually participated in the operation or not. More importantly, if the mission succeeded, Zervas’ reputation would be boosted immeasurably to the obvious detriment of EAM/ELAS.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Woodhouse, Something Ventured, 43-46, 51; Myers, Greek Entanglement, 62-65; Hamson, We Fell, 98-100. It should be noted that many communist historians, among them an important member of the KKE’s Central Committee in the 1940s, Petros Rousos, deny the claim made by the British officers of Harling that Aris probably had orders from EAM HQ to desist from helping them – Rousos, in fact, calls that accusation a “distortion of the truth.” Petros Rousos, I Megali Pentaetia, 1940-1945: I Ethniki Antistasi kai o Rolos tou KKE [The Great Five Years, 1940-1945: The National Resistance and the Role of the KKE] (Athens: Synchroni Epochi, 1982), 241. However, in the same passage where he makes this assertion, Rousos complains about Aris’ rebellious streak implying that he was undisciplined, “anarchic,” and “irresponsibly cruel.”
So the mission went ahead with both rival guerilla leaders contributing significant forces to the assault on the bridge’s large Italian garrison. On 25 November 1942, and despite some unforeseen difficulty, the British and Greek saboteurs routed the defending garrison and demolished the bridge, managing to escape without a single casualty. It took six weeks for the bridge to be repaired and for the supplies to start flowing again. Undoubtedly, the demolition of the Gorgopotamos viaduct was an incredible tactical success. Its strategic significance is, in contrast, uncertain. By that point in time Montgomery had broken out successfully at El-Alamein and Rommel had retreated into the depths of Libya, well out of range of the supply ships coming in from Greece. Years later, an incredulous Woodhouse was to learn that Montgomery, whose staff had requested the operation in the first place, had never even heard of the mission. Be that as it may, the generals back in Cairo were delighted. The achievement far outweighed the investment in men and materiel, and the SOE’s reputation with the regular army skyrocketed.147

The psychological effect on the subjugated population of Greece was nothing less than astounding. Both EDES and EAM/ELAS acquired great credibility, and it seemed that the assault had also gained both organizations a healthy supply of new recruits, especially in the case of EAM/ELAS, since the Gorgopotamos viaduct was within range of a number of loyalist EAM villages and Zervas was a few hundred miles from his base of operations in Epirus in north-west Greece. Tragically, the Gorgopotamos operation

147 Woodhouse, Something Ventured, 51.
was the only time during the war that EAM/ELAS and EDES ever cooperated. Its legendary status in the annals of the Greek resistance is thus assured.148

III. The Sarafis Conversion and Operation Animals – Spring 1943.

The strategic ramifications of the Harling mission pale greatly in comparison to the decisive political impact it had on the course of the Greek resistance. Its very success meant that British military strategists saw clearly the value of collaboration with local guerilla bands and they pressured the SOE to cancel the evacuation of the team from Greece. Instead, much to the chagrin of a few team members, all of whom had volunteered for the mission and felt double-crossed by the unwarranted extension, SOE Cairo telegraphed Myers and his team to return to the mountains with the purpose of setting up a permanent British Military Mission (BMM) to coordinate future actions of sabotage and irregular warfare with local resistance leaders.

The new orders contradicted Myers’ original instructions to “let the andartes [guerillas] return to quiescence” after the operation, apparently for fear of Axis reprisals (that occurred anyway). Myers, Woodhouse, and the rest were left to discover on their own what the British leadership in Cairo apparently did not know, namely, that EAM/ELAS was far and away the largest, most disciplined, and most effectively organized resistance movement in Greece. According to the EAM political

---

148 Greek communist historians of the resistance believe that the involvement of EAM/ELAS forces was decisive to the successful outcome of the demolition. For a characteristic example, see, Thanasis Chatzis, Ι Νικιφόρα Επαναστασις που Χαθικε, 1941-1945, [The Victorious Revolution That Was Lost, 1941-1945] Vol. 1 (Athens: Papazeses Publishing, 1977), 302-308. Far from disagreeing, Woodhouse insists that if they had decided to help the Harling team sooner (Zervas took a long time getting to the rally point), they could have gotten all the credit for it, thus in his view probably changing the entire course of modern Greek history. Woodhouse, Something Ventured, 51.
representatives accompanying the ELAS officers, the organization was a “democratic union” of many parties, maybe even all of them. However, in private consultations with Zervas, Myers found out that seven of the eight central committee members of EAM were communist and that the organization had attempted to recruit him as their commander-in-chief but that he turned them down for fear of being a communist puppet. Myers was obviously shocked by the news (Woodhouse, who had some knowledge of the Greek political landscape, less so), but like a good soldier, he set about the task of trying to convince the EAM/ELAS leaders to cooperate with the BMM. He also sent Woodhouse to Athens to liaise directly with the EAM leadership, mostly for the purpose of ascertaining if they actually were communists, since it was possible that the shifty Zervas had been lying, and to also make contact with the one active British agent there, a Greek naval officer who headed an intelligence network codenamed Prometheus II. Ultimately, both Myers and Woodhouse hoped that non-communist elements in Athens from more traditional political circles would be willing to raise bands in the mountains once the British, through Woodhouse, had assured them of their support.149

The trip, undertaken in January 1943, was a catastrophe. Due to amateurish security preparations, the German authorities in Athens quickly became aware of Woodhouse’s existence, as the EAM leaders informed him on the night of their first meeting. In short order, the Prometheus network was smashed, Prometheus himself was captured, and Woodhouse was running for his life. He fled to the only people who could protect him, EAM. After some hesitation, they finally agreed to shelter him in one of

149 Myers, *Greek Entanglement*, 100-107. Prometheus II was a Venizelist naval officer, Lt. Commander Koutsoyiannopoulos.
their safe-houses and eventually arranged his escape to the countryside. During his aborted mission, Woodhouse had managed to discover that the EAM leadership was indeed primarily communist and that the more traditional political leaders were unwilling to risk either their lives or their reputations to start guerilla bands in the inhospitable mountains of Free Greece.150

There were exceptions to that general rule. Some former military officers, overwhelmingly republican in their political sympathies, were inspired by the success of Gorgopotamos to take to the mountains. For example, the prestigious Venizelist Colonel Stefanos Sarafis chose the spring of 1943 as the opportune time to start his own resistance movement [AAA – see the previous chapter] despite Myers’ remonstrations – who was motivated by his own growing fear of ELAS aggression against rivals. In a matter of a few weeks, a well-armed ELAS regiment disarmed Sarafis’ budding group, executed a few of its members, captured Sarafis, and accused him of collaboration with the Italians. According to Sarafis’ account of the same events, he was never threatened directly by ELAS and the capture was due to a severe misunderstanding engendered partly by provocateurs loyal to Zervas who had duped him into believing they were fighting for the same patriotic ideals he was and had thus surreptitiously infiltrated his movement. In truth, as Sarafis later claimed in his memoir, they had been men simply interested in fighting their fellow Greeks and not the occupier. Whatever the true

150 Another British agent, Ioannis Peltekis – the aforementioned Apollo – did, in due course, manage to free Prometheus from prison. It is interesting to note that one of the EAM (whose security apparatus was, in Woodhouse’s own words, truly “professional”) leaders, Andreas Tzimas, had from the first declared Prometheus’ security measures inadequate, characteristically stating: “Your agents have no idea of security…they lack conspiratorial experience, whereas we have been outlaws for years.” Woodhouse, Something Ventured, 58.
motives of EAM/ELAS were, one thing was clear: it was slowly but steadily succeeding in its goal of monopolizing the resistance in the mountains of central Greece. Sarafis’ conversion and subsequent promotion to commander-in-chief of all ELAS forces, outlined in the previous chapter, cemented the reputation of EAM/ELAS as the preeminent resistance movement and provided it with a much-needed prestige boost. Sarafis was a well-respected member of the prewar Venizelist establishment and his inclusion within the movement aided greatly the EAM attempt to downplay its communist connections.151

The events in Athens and the Sarafis capture with his subsequent conversion convinced Myers that much greater cooperation with EAM/ELAS was necessary for the success of future sabotage operations. After Woodhouse’s return from Athens, the two of them set about the difficult task of forcing the guerillas to cooperate under the aegis of the British mission. The task was next to impossible and complicated increasingly by the arrival of more former officers in March and April 1943. Colonel Dimitrios Psarros, another reputable military man, completed forming his own band, National and Social Liberation (EKKA), in late March. Although certainly not a communist, Psarros was a more radical Venizelist than Zervas, a fact that seemed auspicious towards furthering republican cooperation with EAM/ELAS. Unfortunately, the geographic area Psarros chose as his main base of operations, a small area in central Greece near Mt. Parnassus, had already been staked out by a number of ELAS bands, including Aris’ own group, the infamous “Black Caps.” These resented the existence of rival guerilla leaders within

their midst, even of those with somewhat comparable political opinions, in territories they considered, in effect, already “liberated.” Nevertheless, some basis of cooperation had to be hammered out if stunning successes like the Gorgopotamos operation were to be repeated. In Woodhouse’s own words, “part of the price for EAM’s cooperation, however, was that a joint GHQ of the guerilla forces be set up.” This desire also dovetailed nicely with the long-term plans of British war planners in Cairo, as well as with the goals and intentions of SOE.\footnote{For an erudite analysis on the weaknesses of Psarros’ EKKA movement written by a contemporary, Zervas’ second-in-command, Komninos Pyromaglou, see Komninos Pyromaglou, \textit{I Ethniki Anistasis: EAM-ELAS-EDES-EKKA} [The National Resistance: EAM-ELAS-EDES-EKKA] (Athens: Dodoni Publishing, 1975), 332-336; Woodhouse, \textit{Something Ventured}, 65; Komninos Pyromaglou, \textit{O Giorgos Kartalis kai I Epochi Tou, 1934-1957}, vol. 1, (Athens: Istoriki Ereuna, 1965), 158. Finally, a good, although somewhat simplistic, analysis of the complex relationship between EKKA and the British is Argyrios Mamarelis, “The Special Operations Executive in Greece: The Case of the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones,” \textit{LSE Hellenic Observatory} June 2003; available from http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/hellenicObservatory/pdf/1st_Symposium/Mamarelis.pdf; Internet; accessed 1 May, 2006.}

It was around this time as well – in February/March 1943 – that the first cabled messages from the British mission began to arrive in Cairo, the delay having been caused by a series of unfortunate mishaps. Myers informed his superiors about the political situation in Greece and advised that the best resolution would be to get the king to agree to a plebiscite before his return to Greece. Their cumulative effect on Foreign Office personnel, both in Cairo and in London, was akin to an exploding bomb. None of them could believe the reports of the king’s massive unpopularity nor were they convinced that the political views of the guerillas cooperating with Myers and Woodhouse were truly representative of the wishes of the general Greek population. Moreover, the Foreign Office was incensed that SOE commandos had taken it upon themselves to determine British foreign policy, something they were clearly not equipped, either by dint of
expertise or training, to do. The unpalatable reports were responsible for widening the rift that had existed between the Foreign Office and SOE prior to the departure of Harling. In its subsequent attempts to censure SOE, the Foreign Office had the unqualified support of Churchill whose commitment to the restoration of monarchy and apparent underestimation of the Greek resistance would color his perceptions until the moment of liberation. Conversely, SOE could rely on the support of the British military, General Henry “Jumbo” Wilson, head of Middle East Command and his staff, who appreciated immensely the strategic value of resistance operations in enemy-occupied territory. Although SOE was reprimanded, Myers was not recalled, and he was even invited to bring a delegation, composed of the main guerilla leaders, to Cairo for consultation with the British, the king, and the government-in-exile.¹⁵³

The basic problem, of course, was irresolvable: the political goals of the British foreign policy establishment, namely the commitment to supporting the restoration of the monarchy at all costs, conflicted with the British military’s goal of fighting the Axis with whatever tools were available. In the first months after the creation of the BMM, however, this fundamental contradiction was not yet obvious. It was much easier for the Foreign Office to believe that Myers was a loose cannon and a political ignoramus who had been duped by wily communists and Venizelists into believing that the king was unpopular. Doubtlessly, there was also evident a discernible tendency among some of the staff, including the British ambassador to the Greek government-in-exile Reginald

¹⁵³ Myers, Greek Entanglement, 215; Clogg, “Pearls from Swine,” 167-178.
Leeper, to disregard the political importance of what was going on in the distant Greek mountains, especially from the vantage point of bustling, cosmopolitan Cairo.

In one of his early cables to Cairo, sent in the late autumn of 1942, Myers set off a firestorm by relaying the wishes of the resistance leaders that King George II agree to a plebiscite before coming back to Greece in the event of an Axis withdrawal. The Foreign Office blamed SOE for irresponsible politicking detrimental to British long-term interests, but still allowed for the possibility, proposed originally by Myers, of a dialogue between the guerilla leaders and the Greek leadership in Cairo. The king, however, was unwilling to consider even the slightest compromise, knowing full well that he had the categorical support of Churchill. Briefly, in March 1943, the storm of recrimination calmed somewhat when Woodhouse convinced Zervas to send the king a salutation on the occasion of Greek Independence Day. According to Woodhouse, Zervas one-upped even his advice by sending the king a “fulsome telegram” stating that he, at least, would be willing to accept the king back without a plebiscite. 154 The Foreign Office was only momentarily mollified and still somewhat suspicious given Zervas’ republican credentials. 155 For Leeper, the message seemed a lukewarm palliative to a steadily worsening situation. 156 Later that month, republican elements of the fugitive Greek army in Syria revolted, ostensibly for fear that they would be used, by the British, to impose monarchial rule once the war was over. Under pressure, the king and the Greek government-in-exile now permanently moved to Cairo from London. Once again, the

154 Woodhouse, Something Ventured, 64-65; Clogg, “Pearls from Swine,” 178-182.
155 Frazier, Anglo-American Relations, 14-17.
156 In his own memoir, Leeper clearly downplays his intransigence in the matter of British support of EAM/ELAS. Sir Reginald Leeper, When Greek Meets Greek, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950), 18-24.
importance of the so-called “Constitutional Question” was reaffirmed to the Foreign Office.  

But military expediency trumped such concerns. In May 1943, Allied war planners ordered Myers and his team to engage in multiple sabotage and demolition operations on the west coast of Greece, in order to convince the Axis that the Anglo-American invasion would occur there and not in Sicily, the actual site. This elaborate deception, codenamed *Animals* in the Balkans, precipitated a series of daring attacks by the British commandos, including the brilliant demolition of the Asopos viaduct (just a few miles from Gorgopotamos on the same railway line), that Myers and five others of his team accomplished single-handedly and without ELAS assistance after their request for aid was turned down by that organization. *Operation Animals* was an unqualified success insofar as it apparently convinced Hitler that Greece would definitely be the chosen invasion site. Furthermore, the minimal but still useful cooperation that did occur between the BMM and EAM/ELAS during *Animals* convinced Myers, Woodhouse, and SOE Cairo that they had to deal with this organization, communist front or no, since EAM/ELAS was obviously the most effective resistance movement in the land. 

It was the promise of greater cooperation that prompted Myers, with the full support of SOE Cairo, to begin negotiations for forming the joint GHQ that EAM/ELAS

---

157 British Middle East Command had withdrawn the Greek Brigade I from the Libyan front in January 1943. After a brief stint in Suez, it was stationed permanently in Syria to help with the training of another Greek brigade (Brigade II). The two mutinied together, but the uprising was brief and was put down with minimal violence. This was the first mutiny of the Greek armed forces in the Middle East. A second, more violent uprising would occur in April 1944 in Egypt. See Evangelos Spyropoulos, *The Greek Military (1909-1941) and the Greek Mutinies in the Middle East (1941-1944)*, East European Monographs, no. CCCLX (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 203-228.


had requested since March. Although both the British and the EAM leadership agreed on the necessity of such a joint command, they disagreed on the form it would take. The real question revolved around who would have the preeminent control of the guerilla movement in Greece, the British or EAM. However, there were tactical disagreements over the nature of guerilla warfare as well. The British desired small, flexible groups of highly trained and disciplined individuals led by British Liaison Officers (BLO’s). Sarafis, on the other hand, preferred to think of the men under his command as a regular resistance army, divided into regiments, brigades, and divisions and capable of mounting regular large-scale operations when the situation called for it. Nominally, such a force would be under the British Commander-in Chief, Middle East in Cairo, General “Jumbo” Wilson. In reality, it would be largely independent of British influence and answerable only to its Greek commanders.\(^\text{160}\)

In the end, a compromise agreement, somewhat favoring EAM/ELAS, was signed on 5 July, 1943. EAM/ELAS agreed to some degree of British control over military operations, mostly to offset charges that, as a group, it was more interested in brigandage than in promoting the Allied cause. In return, the joint GHQ was to be composed of three representatives from EAM/ELAS, one from EDES, and one (after the British insisted stringently) from Psarros’ EKKA. Myers and Woodhouse browbeat Zervas into signing the agreement, despite the latter’s reservations that such a reckless move would put him at the mercy of EAM/ELAS. According to the letter of the agreement, all guerilla bands in Greece were now part of an overarching command structure and had to go by the name

of *Ethnikes Omades Antarton*, or EOA (National Bands of Guerillas). In the coming months, that rubric would be ignored by EAM/ELAS. For that movement, the significance of the agreement lay in the fact that, as an organization, it now enjoyed official Allied recognition. As such, it was eligible to receive British funding, supplies, and, most importantly, arms.¹⁶¹


In June, the Foreign Office finally decided to take matters into its own hands, increasingly uneasy about the growing influence of EAM/ELAS and Myers’ handling of the political situation. Ambassador Reginald Leeper and Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden were having difficulty countenancing the SOE analysis of the situation and decided to send one of their own people, Major David Wallace, to observe first-hand the situation in Greece. Interestingly enough, by the time Wallace was dispatched to Greece, Leeper and the embassy staff had developed the notion that Myers alone was responsible for the anti-monarchical tone of the reports. Although Woodhouse was thoroughly familiar with the Greek political situation, Myers was his superior officer and Leeper theorized that Woodhouse would have great difficulty bucking the chain of command by issuing contrary opinions. To avoid a similar “problem” developing with Wallace, Leeper requested Foreign Secretary Eden’s permission to make him a member of his own staff,

¹⁶¹ Condit, *Case Study*, 57-58; Myers, *Greek Entanglement*, 187-201; C.M. Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949*, with a foreword by Richard Clogg (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 1976), 43. It should be mentioned in passing that EDES, at least in official documents and declarations, kept the “EOA” rubric. Coincidentally, the “National Bands Agreement” followed a declaration by King George, made the day before in Cairo that, although he intended to return to Greece, he was willing to consider the idea of a plebiscite. However, the word “plebiscite” was never actually used and King George’s previous record regarding promises made to the Greek people was not sterling; Frazier, *Anglo-American Relations*, 19.
answerable only to the Embassy. In the field, Wallace would be technically under the command of Myers, to preserve military discipline, but, in reality, he would be completely free to form his own independent opinions. Clearly, the Foreign Office was hoping that Wallace could return with information that was easier to digest.162

Whatever the explicit intent of Wallace’s mission, Myers, for his part, was glad to have another political expert to consult. Major Wallace parachuted into occupied Greece in late June. In an ironic twist, Wallace and Myers liked each other from the first. According to Myers, when Wallace started drafting his reports for the Foreign Office a few days later, he showed them all to Myers before sending them on to Cairo. Obviously, Wallace’s initial experiences in the mountains compelled him to re-evaluate any negative opinions he might have received on Myer’s lack of political acumen. Unfortunately, the messages, sent via SOE radio transmitters, were inexplicably but critically delayed on their way to Cairo. Leeper suspected foul play although it seems more likely that it was just typical wartime bureaucratic overload. In any event, this misunderstanding furnished further proof of the growing rift between SOE and the Foreign Office.163

The lack of communication between British GHQ and occupied Greece prompted Myers to request a return to Cairo for further instructions in mid-July. He cabled ahead that he would be bringing with him some of the most important guerilla leaders for a

162 Clogg, “Pearls from Swine,” 84-85; Papastratis, British Policy, 138-139.
163 Myers, Greek Entanglement, 215-216. Historian Lars Baerentzen, in his introduction to a later Wallace report that he edited, challenges the SOE excuse of a bureaucratic snafu as contrived. See Baerentzen, “Introduction,” British Reports, xxxiii. Nevertheless, the twin facts of Myers’ assertion that Wallace showed him every report before he sent it off to Cairo and Leeper’s own admission that Wallace was of the same mindset as the other British officers of the BMM when he first came back from Greece on the issue of EAM/ELAS, seemed to obviate the need for SOE to engage in any shady behavior.
face-to-face with the Greek government-in-exile, the king, and various Foreign Office personnel. Obviously, this was welcome news in Cairo and his request was granted expeditiously. Apparently, only Woodhouse urged Myers to remain in Greece fearing, in the event prophetically that, once in Egypt, he would be scapegoated by Leeper for the anti-monarchist policies – at least from Whitehall’s perspective – of the BMM. Even though Myers had forewarned the Embassy that he would be bringing the significant personalities of the Greek resistance with him, Leeper characteristically failed to inform either Prime Minister Tsouderos or the king of their imminent arrival. The Greek government was thus surprised when, on 10 August 1943, Brigadier Myers alighted from a transport plane accompanied by six guerilla leaders, four from EAM/ELAS, and one each from EDES and EKKA.164

In retrospect, the visit of the guerilla delegation to Cairo was arguably a significant turning point in the history of the Greek resistance. The disastrous repercussions of the visit echoed through to liberation and beyond. One historian intimately familiar with the politics of the resistance, Prokopis Papastratis, contends that more than any other factor, the abortive trip of the six guerilla leaders to Cairo was the single development that contributed most to the outbreak of civil war just a few weeks after their return to Greece. The goal of Myers and the six delegates was to hammer out an agreement that would achieve a coalition government composed of representatives from both Greece and Cairo. Myers and the guerilla leaders believed that the only way

164 E.C.W. Myers, “The Andarte Delegation to Cairo: August 1943,” in Auty and Clogg, eds., British Policy, 166. The four representatives from EAM/ELAS were three communists, A. Tzimas, P. Rousos, K. Despotopoulos, (all three members of the KKE’s Central Committee) and a socialist, I. Tsirimokos. Zervas sent his second-in-command K. Pyromaglou and EKKA the intellectual and politically moderate republican, G. Kartalis.
this could become a reality was if the king would agree to a plebiscite. The negative outcome was the combined product of some serious miscommunication between Leeper and his superiors in London, a certain degree of short-sightedness on the part of the Tsouderos government, and a great deal of obtuseness on the part of the king.¹⁶⁵

Wallace had accompanied Myers and the delegation to Cairo. Leeper immediately sought him out and, at least according to Myers, attempted to isolate him from his former commander. Presumably, Leeper expected Wallace to foreswear the machinations of Myers and Woodhouse and reconfirm the loyalty of the Greek people to their monarch. Leeper’s subsequent attempts to claim that Wallace’s debriefing confirmed his own suspicions about the political status quo in Greece seem hollow in light of the available documentation, despite the fact that Wallace’s actual report remains classified. Certainly, Leeper was not galvanized to defend the institution of the monarchy after his exhaustive interviews of Wallace. Meanwhile, the six delegates sought out Tsouderos and the progressive centrist Deputy Prime Minister, Panayiotis Kanellopoulos, to relay to them the universal desire, on the part of all the members of the Greek resistance, to see the king foreswear a return to Greece before a plebiscite. All this activity had the effect of softening Leeper’s initially hard stand on the constitutional question. He relayed these opinions to his superiors in London, implying that the king should be pressured to accept the situation and agree to a plebiscite, in order to best serve the interests of the Greek people.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Papastratis, British Policy, 104-106.
¹⁶⁶ Kanellopoulos, Imerologio, 473-475; Papastratis, British Policy, 106; Clogg, “Pearls from Swine,” 191-192.
Whitehall responded with an unequivocal reaffirmation of its support for the king. “It was the Foreign Office’s view that if the king at this point should pledge himself not to return to Greece pending a plebiscite, he would in fact be signing his abdication.” Undoubtedly, the Foreign Office was in an extremely delicate position. Eden and Churchill feared, with some justification, that if a government was allowed to form after liberation without the king, his enemies in that government, whether communist, socialist, or Venizelist, would seize the opportunity to campaign against him, thus predetermining the outcome of a plebiscite. He would not be there to defend himself against the charges of his enemies. Nevertheless, even to the king’s most ardent supporters, it was becoming increasingly apparent that his popularity was declining in occupied Greece. Tsouderos and his government seemed to be in lockstep with the delegates on the question of a plebiscite and Leeper was caught between the orders of his superiors and the desires of most of the Greeks in Cairo. Confused and possibly overburdened, he made the fateful and unauthorized decision to send all six delegates back to Greece before any agreement on a broad-based coalition could be achieved. It is possible that he feared that the pressure the six exerted on the king would impair the latter’s ability to reach a sober decision on this most important of issues.

Although Eden and the Foreign Office disapproved of Leeper’s handling of the entire affair, the ambassador did enjoy the support of Churchill, who backed fully the decision to send the guerilla leaders packing. The turn of events emboldened the king as well, a fact which would only increase his intransigence on the constitutional question in the months to come. Leeper, on the other hand, was embarrassed by the reaction of his
superiors in Whitehall and chose, for his part, to blame the SOE for relaying false and contradictory intelligence that disrupted the smooth functioning of the policymaking process. As Woodhouse had predicted, Myers was forbidden to return to Greece with the guerillas, on the completely unjustified assumption that it was his pro-EAM attitude that encouraged the guerillas to challenge the king in the first place.\textsuperscript{167}

The guerilla leaders departed for Greece on 22 August 1943 empty-handed and frustrated. More than ever, the members of the delegation were convinced that the British government wanted above all else to impose an unpopular monarch on the Greek people.\textsuperscript{168} The constitutional question might not have been foremost in the minds of the communist members of EAM/ELAS – they had a more radical political agenda to realize – but the British refusal to compromise undercut the position of the moderates, both within and without that organization.

It is, however, possible to overemphasize the impact of the negotiations on EAM/ELAS policy in occupied Greece. In his postwar memoir, Woodhouse posited that the Germans were not the only party fooled by the success of Animals. The EAM/ELAS leadership was also persuaded that an Allied landing in Greece in the last few months of 1943 was likely. Woodhouse theorized that this belief, combined with the shoddy treatment of the EAM/ELAS delegates in Cairo, prompted the communist leaders to commence hostilities with rival resistance organizations in the summer of 1943.\textsuperscript{169} If EAM/ELAS proved to be successful in obliterating its competition, it would present the

\textsuperscript{167} Myers, \textit{Greek Entanglement}, 258-259.
\textsuperscript{168} Clogg, “Pearls from Swine,” 193-194.
\textsuperscript{169} Woodhouse, \textit{Something Ventured}, 66.
invading Allied forces with a fait accompli. In support of this contention, David Close notes that EAM/ELAS had begun attacking rival bands in the more peripheral areas of Macedonia and the Peloponnese even before its representatives left for Cairo. He goes on to theorize that even if an agreement had been reached with the Greek government-in-exile and the British, EAM/ELAS would have used it to “absorb or suppress” its rivals in Greece.\footnote{David Close, \textit{The Origins of the Greek Civil War} (New York: Longman), 105. See also the relevant discussion in the next chapter.} Taking into account the single-minded ferocity with which EAM/ELAS pursued its opponents in the latter half of 1943, this seems a reasonable assumption.

In the event, it was in the middle of this internecine conflict that the first OSS officers began to filter into occupied Greece. The misunderstandings and miscalculations of the previous months had demonstrated the necessity for clear lines of communication between field operatives and headquarters, as well as the need for a unifying strategic vision on the part of planners and decision-makers. But the differences between Churchill, Whitehall, and the SOE were significant and hard to reconcile. The OSS would prove no more adept than the British at skirting the minefields of resistance politics, but for different reasons. The American organization not only possessed few experienced agents but was forced by the British to accept a subordinate role in Greek affairs. Still, the greatest OSS handicap was the lack of a comprehensive policy at the top. Here, the problem was not one of competing strategies but of no strategy at all. As the next chapter will show, aside from a vague desire to commit themselves to the principles of the Atlantic Charter, American policymakers in Washington had little idea what to do with Greece or the Greeks. Possibly, some of this confusion was engendered
by ignorance and some by indifference, but the results were predictable all the same. Though Greeks of all political persuasions shared a positive outlook about the United States, the OSS would contribute little to affecting a solution to the complex political problems raised by the occupation.
Chapter Four

Axis-Occupied Greece and United States Foreign Policy, 1942-1943

I. Greece, American Foreign Policy, and the Constitutional Question.

Knowledge of Greek affairs in American policy-making circles before World War II was incomplete and sketchy and too often reliant on British reports and analyses. This ignorance was probably more the result of lack of interest rather than lack of adequate sources. The United States possessed a sizeable Greek-American community that it could rely on for information about the Greek political landscape. In addition, the American minister to Greece on the eve of the Italian invasion, Lincoln MacVeagh, who stayed at his post through the first weeks of the German occupation, was a perceptive and sympathetic student of Greek politics and culture. He was, as well, an expert on the Metaxas regime and a personal friend of many members of the Greek elite, including King George II. Despite this latter connection, after the occupation and the flight of the king’s government to London and then Cairo, prominent Venizelist members of the Greek expatriate community in Egypt worked to get MacVeagh reassigned (he was then in South Africa) as US Ambassador to the Greek government-in-exile because many among them saw him as a fellow-traveler on the great political issue of the day: the requirement that the monarchy accede to a popular plebiscite before the king’s return to Greece. In this matter, MacVeagh was simply reiterating the traditional American preference for republican forms of government, and associated distaste for monarchial
rule, typical of most US personnel – including the crushing majority of those working for the OSS – throughout the war.\textsuperscript{171}

Nevertheless, even after America’s entry into the war in late 1941, Washington showed little interest in commenting on Greek affairs. The paucity of published US State Department dispatches concerning Greece in 1942 is telling, if only to highlight what the Department’s staffers deemed to be of exceptional interest and thus worthy of publication. The few indirect references to Greece in 1942 and early 1943 dealt with such relatively minor matters as the diplomatic difficulties arising from the escape of Greek refugees to Turkey and Cyprus and the existence of a Greek consulate in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. MacVeagh’s own detailed observations before the closure of the American Legation in Greece in 1941, some of which came in the form of letters to President Franklin Roosevelt apprising him of the developing military situation during the Greco-Italian conflict, were transmitted faithfully, but lack of American interest in the region assured that, on a policy level at least, they had no perceptible effect.\textsuperscript{172}

In the autumn of 1942, the Foreign Office forwarded a statement of policy to the US State Department outlining the general British position on the Greek constitutional question. Among other things, it emphasized that the British government had no intention of forcing the monarch on the Greek people, although it concurrently argued


that, in the past, republican governments in Greece had produced nothing but instability, thus implying a British preference for a monarchial form of government in the postwar period. The US State Department took exception with a number of the British premises, questioning the notion that the interwar administrations of Venizelos lacked stability and pointing out that, if the British government attempted to force the king on the Greek people prematurely, civil war would be the most likely result. Nevertheless, the American response did emphasize the correctness of British support for established prewar governments. In general, the disagreements between the two governments were markedly nuanced, but it should be remembered that this diplomatic exchange took place before the revelations of the Harling mission and the subsequent shift in British policy that occurred in the spring and summer of 1943.173

As outlined in the last chapter, the dismal reports coming in from Greece in March 1943 created a serious rift between SOE and the Foreign Office, a rift that had the effect of hardening the British stance on the Greek constitutional question. In April the British government issued a statement that highlighted its support for the unconditional return of the king and pointedly stated that “it is not the policy of His Majesty’s Government to encourage the idea that immediately Greece is liberated [sic] a plebiscite shall be organized under British aegis to determine whether the monarchy shall be maintained or abolished.” Moreover, the position paper undervalued the strength of opposition to the king in occupied Greece and supported the idea of a vigorous “propaganda” campaign to increase the popularity of the monarchy, while at the same

time deferring the raising of the constitutional question to a later date “when the period of military necessity has passed.” The State Department took three months to formulate a careful response to the British policy position. On the whole, Washington agreed with the British for the “most part.” However, the American viewpoint centered on the inadvisability of militarily supporting an unpopular monarch, wishing to avoid the impression, among the Greek people, “that [the Allies] intend to impose the King…under the protection of an Allied invading force.”

Two days after the delivery of this American communiqué, on 4 July 1943, the British convinced the king to issue a conciliatory statement, broadcast on radio, emphasizing the desire of his government to abide by the principles of democracy. In it, the king assured the Greek people that, when the day of liberation came, they would “be invited to decide by popular and free vote the institutions with which Greece must endow herself in sympathy with the forward march of democracy.” Nevertheless, nowhere in the statement did the king mention a plebiscite, rather stating that the decision to restore the monarchy would rest with an elected constitutional assembly. The question of restoration would not, therefore, be put directly to the Greek people and there would be a delay of (at most) six months before any kind of vote was held. Such a delay did of course mean that the king would have the privilege of sweeping into the liberated country as the titular head of its armed forces, thus garnering for himself a portion – undeserved

---

in the eyes of his many communist and non-communist opponents – of the laurels of victory.\textsuperscript{175}

It was at this juncture, after the king’s early July broadcast, that events began to take a confusing turn for the Foreign Office and for the British Embassy to the Tsouderos government. As described in the previous chapter, a guerilla delegation, composed of prominent leaders from all three important resistance organizations in Greece, EAM, EDES, and EKKA, and accompanied by the chief of the British Military Mission, Brigadier Myers, arrived in Cairo on 13 August 1943. They included not one royalist among them. Also on the plane was Major David Wallace, the independent agent for the Foreign Office sent to Greece a few months earlier by Ambassador Leeper to ascertain whether Myers’ depressing accounts of the strength of anti-monarchial feeling in that country were indeed accurate. Wallace confirmed that they were.\textsuperscript{176}

Faced with undeniable proof that the king was not wanted in Greece, Leeper, in a characteristic about-face, decided to try and convince him to agree to the idea of a plebiscite before his return to the country. Demand for a plebiscite was, in any case, the one political idea that all the members of the guerilla delegation could agree on and they immediately put it forward to Tsouderos hours after their disembarkation. The Greek prime minister then had a long talk with Leeper and presented these viewpoints to him yet again. It was this discussion that possibly convinced the British ambassador to talk to the king, in the company of the EAM representatives, to put forth the idea of a plebiscite.

\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 135. It should be kept in mind that 4 July 1943 was also the date, coincidentally, that the National Bands Agreement was signed in occupied Greece (see the previous chapter).

\textsuperscript{176} Prokopis Papastratis, \textit{British Policy towards Greece during the Second World War-1944} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 106. See also the previous chapter.
Leeper apparently undertook to reformulate British policy in this matter completely on his own initiative and without consulting the foreign secretary, Anthony Eden. The meeting was unique, since Leeper decided to hold it at his own flat in Cairo, and the four EAM delegates were allowed an hour with the king “to break the ice.” Significantly, and no doubt correctly, Leeper guessed that this occasion represented the only time when “the King had spoken to a Greek communist or vice versa.” The meeting ended abruptly and without resolution, although the king was apparently disturbed enough by what was said that he decided to telegraph Churchill and Roosevelt, at the time attending an Anglo-American Conference in Quebec, for advice on how to handle the request for a plebiscite. Specifically, the king admitted to the two leaders that he was “adverse [sic] to taking a final decision” on the matter since doing so “might well create precedents” that would have wider political implications, especially in the Balkans.177

The response of the British government was to reassure the Greek monarch of its full support, and instructions were relayed to Leeper to resist the guerilla demands for a plebiscite before the king had a chance to return to the country at the head of his armed forces. Subsequently, after rejecting their request for a binding promise from the king on the matter of a plebiscite, and their secondary demand to acquire three ministerial portfolios in the government-in-exile, Leeper bundled the guerilla leaders off to Greece, a move that had the most disastrous consequences for the future of that country. But the

August crisis was also significant for another reason: the episode marked the first time that President Roosevelt involved himself with the Greek constitutional question.

At the Quebec Conference, on 22 August 1943, the president, accompanied by his Secretary of State Cordell Hull, presented no objections to the British stipulation – motivated primarily by the Greek king’s telegraphed plea for advice – that the “two Governments should continue to support the governments and regimes as now recognized by them generally through the period up to the defeat of the enemy.” Evidently, even the South African prime minister, Jan Smuts, sent a message to the conference participants opining that it was simply a “matter of fair play that the King of Greece not be precluded from entering his own country…subject, perhaps, to a later decision by the people of Greece.” Far from disagreeing, Roosevelt and Hull assured their British counterparts that “the United States Government would not take any different position.”

II. Civil War in Greece and the Italian Surrender – Autumn 1943.

The abortive attempt to affect some sort of reconciliation between the king, his government, and the leftist resistance, ushered in a period of intense conflict that some individuals identify as the “First Round” of the Greek Civil War. EAM cited the British refusal to countenance the power of popular sentiment against the king as evidence of that power’s perfidy and willingness to force a political outcome favorable to its geopolitical interests rather than to the high democratic ideals set forth in the Atlantic Charter. Moreover, there were proximate factors compelling EAM’s leadership to act in

the early autumn of 1943. In the wake of the invasion of Sicily, the Mussolini
government was overthrown in a coup orchestrated by Field Marshal Pietro Badoglio.
Both Hitler and the Allies were aware that Badoglio’s commitment to the Axis cause was
not absolute. Indeed, within a matter of days, the Badoglio government had entered into
secret negotiations with the Allies discussing surrender terms while publicly reassuring
the Germans that Italy remained a loyal ally. On 8 September 1943 came the news that
both sides had been expecting, unwisely broadcast by General Dwight D. Eisenhower
contrary to Badoglio’s wishes: the new Italian government had decided to withdraw
from the war. The announcement allowed Hitler to quickly implement contingency
planning, codenamed Operation Axis, which called for the total disarmament of Italian
troops throughout all major theaters of operation.\footnote{Hagen Fleischer, *Stemma kai Svastika: I Ellada tis Katochis kai tis Antistasis 1941-1944*, [Crown and Swastika: The Greece of Occupation and Resistance, 1941-1944] vol. 2 (Athens: Papazisis Publishing, 1995). 157-163. The Italian desire to withdraw from the conflict was probably the worst-kept secret of the war. The Allied announcement of the Italian surrender was timed to coincide with the first landing of Allied troops on the Italian mainland, which happened on 3 September 1943. Possibly, it was intended to affect negatively the fighting morale of the German soldier. In truth, it simplified Hitler’s strategic plans since he never had much trust in the fighting worth of the Italian armed forces.}

Although Axis worked as intended, some few Italian soldiers did manage either to
surrender or somehow sell their weapons to partisan forces, thereby providing various
guerilla groups in the Balkans with a flood of arms and ammunition. ELAS was a major
beneficiary. No longer was it necessary to rely on the British who had grown
progressively stingier with their weapons drops over the course of the year. In return,
EAM/ELAS took on the responsibility of caring for the captured Italian soldiers, who
now effectively became its prisoners of war. For the Italians, the alternative was to throw
themselves on the mercy of their erstwhile German allies, who early on made it plain that
they would treat the Italians as defeated foes. Either way, the fate of the average Italian soldier in Greece was not a happy one in the early autumn of 1943.

The problem was complex. EAM/ELAS did not have the resources, and for that matter lacked the inclination, to feed or house so many men, who had been, in any case, occupiers. In short order, EAM/ELAS reneged on its agreement with the Italians. To forestall a massive humanitarian problem, the officers of the British Mission offered EAM/ELAS money, although currency in the mountains was more useful for purchasing weapons or non-perishable goods than for procuring food. The problem of the care and disposition of the Italian prisoners cropped up frequently until the moment of liberation, with the British often accusing EAM/ELAS of faithlessness and backtracking. In the early spring of 1944, the commander of the Allied Military Mission, Col. Christopher Woodhouse wrote: “I have always emphasized and told ALO’s [Allied Liaison Officers] to emphasize that we never officially accepted EAM/ELAS repudiation of their written undertaking to support the disarmed Italians on the same standard as their own troops…we only undertook the humanitarian task of the seeing that the Italians did not die as a result of EAM/ELAS’ treachery…”

The Italian surrender thus provided EAM/ELAS with the means to prosecute a civil war just as the woeful treatment of the guerilla delegation at the hands of British embassy personnel and the Greek government-in-exile had furnished the perfect excuse. One further motivating factor was the increased operational activity, codenamed *Animals*

---

180 Ibid.
– which resulted from the Allied attempt to deceive Hitler that the major Mediterranean thrust would come in the Balkans and not, as it did, in Italy – throughout the first half of 1943. There is some speculation among historians that the multiple raids and sabotage operations that accompanied Animals convinced the EAM leadership (it also convinced Hitler for a time) that the liberation of Greece at the hands of an Allied invading force was drawing near. EAM/ELAS presumably wanted to make certain that, in such an eventuality, the Allies would find only one armed resistance organization in Greece, willing and able to take the reins of power once the dust had settled.\footnote{André Gerolymatos, \textit{Guerilla Warfare and Espionage in Greece, 1940-1944} (New York: Pella Publishing, 1992), 313; John O. Iatrides, \textit{Revolt in Athens: The Greek Communist “Second Round,” 1944-1945}, with a foreword by William Hardy McNeill (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Publishing, 1972), 42; C.M. Woodhouse, \textit{The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949}, with an introduction by Richard Clogg (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1976), 59.}

The available evidence from the communist side is mixed, though it does seem certain that EAM/ELAS suspected something important was in the offing, even after the Allied invasion of the Italian mainland. In his memoir (conducted as a long interview with a Party member three decades later), Giannis Ioannidis, throughout the course of the war the second-highest ranking member of the KKE’s Central Committee, behind the “Old Man” General Secretary George Siantos, recalled the discussions that occurred in the early autumn of 1943 among the EAM leadership concerning the rival guerilla groups. “We always had it in mind to one day wipe them [referring to EDES] out. Always. That was never far from our thoughts. That we had to neutralize them. That way we would have no one stabbing us in the back if the time came to fight the battle for Athens…if it came…EDES would not be there to mess with us. Although I do think that
that was an overestimation of their abilities.”

Similarly, another member of the Central Committee, Thanasis Chatzis, in his multivolume monograph about the war years, entitled *The Victorious Revolution That Was Lost*, quotes a letter by Aris Velouchiotis, dated 21 September 1943, to the KKE leadership, detailing the latter’s fears of an imminent British invasion:

> Already the islands of Kos, Leros, and Samos have been conquered by the English. Tomorrow or the next day it will be Corfu, and soon the rest of the islands. The Italians have folded after the surrender of the Badoglio government and now they are among us as fellow fighters. The Germans, now alone – we have information from impeccable sources – admit that they have lost the war and are getting ready to leave by October, making a beeline for Olympus or, better yet, the Danube. Possessing an entire chain of islands, the English, one fine morning, will invade our country unmolested and, just like that, will be among us.  

EAM/ELAS commenced the attack on its principal rival, EDES, in early October. ELAS units, aided by the new Italian armaments, were everywhere successful, driving the EDES forces back to their fortified redoubts in Epirus. Colonel Psarros’ EKKA, already surrounded and isolated in a small, mountainous area of Central Greece since March by thousands of ELAS troops, and riven by ideological conflicts among its top leadership, predictably desisted from acting for either side. Zervas, faced with

---


annihilation, had to rely on infrequent British airdrops of ammunition to survive, which he and his organization barely managed to do. The fighting went on for months but, by February 1944, EAM/ELAS realized that it could not wipe out EDES and decided to settle for a negotiated truce.185

The course of the fighting in Greece had significant repercussions on political developments in Cairo. First, the plight of EDES convinced the British that the reports of their officers in the field had been correct: EAM/ELAS was far and away the strongest resistance movement in the country and the king had very little support among all the armed factions, whether communist or non-communist. Second, the invasion of Italy and Britain’s failed attempt to secure the Aegean persuaded the Allied (and especially the American) war planners that the possibility of opening a Balkan front was remote, if not completely out of the question. Greece represented now, in essence, a secondary strategic concern. In such a situation, it made little sense to continue to support an armed resistance movement whose aims were inimical to British geopolitical interests, given that only slight strategic profit could be drawn at this particular stage of the war. Foreign Secretary Eden, therefore, decided to withdraw the British government’s support for EAM/ELAS. The plan, approved and seconded by Ambassador Leeper, also envisioned the king acceding, finally, to the request for a plebiscite, to mitigate the shock of the British abandonment. After considerable effort, Leeper finally managed to convince the overall military commander in Cairo, General Wilson, of the soundness of the plan.186

186 General Wilson was rightly concerned that an abrupt withdrawal of support would endanger the lives of the many British Liaison Officers who were operating in EAM/ELAS-controlled territory. See Richard Clogg, “Pearls from Swine: The Foreign Office Papers, SOE and the Greek Resistance,” in Phyllis Auty
In making this decision, both Eden and Leeper overestimated the ability of the British government to influence the course of events in occupied Greece. Leeper wholeheartedly supported Eden’s initiative, despite receiving reports from the new head of the British Military Mission, Colonel C.M. Woodhouse, that EAM/ELAS could still create problems for the German occupier, regardless of its reputation for ruthlessness in its dealings with rival resistance organizations like EDES and EKKA. About two weeks after the commencement of the fighting, Woodhouse wrote: “I therefore suggest that we should give way to the wish of ELAS GHQ to be regarded as a responsible operational HQ, and allow them to organize their contribution to the invasion of this country.”

Leeper ignored this advice, however, believing that Woodhouse was simply mouthing platitudes because he feared appearing disloyal to his former commander, Brigadier Myers, given that the latter’s dismissal as head of the Allied Military Mission had not yet been made final. However, that assumption was wrong. In his operational diary, Woodhouse showed that he understood that Myers would not be coming back as early as the first week of October. His was therefore an objective reading of events on the ground during the “First Round” of the Greek Civil War.

III. Roosevelt’s Disastrous Intervention – December 1943.
Bold as the decision to withdraw support from the most effective resistance organization in Greece was, it was almost eclipsed in daring by the parallel decision to force the Greek king to finally allow for a plebiscite before his projected return to Greece. The basic idea was that the king would set up a regency committee, most likely headed by the popular Archbishop of Athens Damaskinos, whose responsibility it would be to conduct and oversee the plebiscite that would decide conclusively the constitutional question. King George’s agreement to allow for such a contingency was thus crucial to the success of Eden’s plan. Furthermore, it was also necessary to convince Churchill, ever the staunch defender of Greek monarchial rights, to accept the wisdom of the proposal and not interfere with its implementation by dissuading the king from accepting it unilaterally. Finally, the new US Ambassador to the Greek and Yugoslav governments-in-exile, Lincoln MacVeagh, who was taking over for Alexander Kirk as Eden’s plan was germinating at the end of November, was also apprised of its details on 2 December 1943 in order to assure American support. In his journal entry for that day, MacVeagh wrote with evident satisfaction: “I told Leeper I was favorably impressed, and would support his ideas as outlined if given the chance.” On the same day, Churchill, who had with Roosevelt just arrived in Cairo from an important conference in Tehran, indicated to his foreign minister that he, too, would reluctantly go along with the plan given the dire political situation.189

This harmonious accord of all parties involved was unfortunately shattered just a few days later by the disastrous intervention of President Roosevelt. On 6 December

1943, King George, after a long talk with Roosevelt, decided to reject Eden’s plan without qualifications, bolstered by the president’s support. The actual conversation that occurred between the two leaders remains a mystery, as there are no official transcripts of the discussion, but reliable eyewitness accounts and the president’s own admissions some time later to MacVeagh and others, confirm that Roosevelt advised the Greek king to hold fast and not sign any declaration calling for a plebiscite. The American president’s untimely and, for all intents and purposes, ignorant, interference at this sensitive juncture had absolutely catastrophic consequences on the course of events in Greece and probably made the conflict that came exactly one year later between the British and EAM/ELAS inevitable. In his memoir about the war, the outraged Eden called the president’s interference “irresponsible” and stated that the whole affair ruined the confidence that existed between the British government and King George II.190

What makes the whole incident truly bizarre is the fact that the president’s stance on the issue of the king’s return contravened directly the position of his own State Department on the matter. Certainly, subsequent sundry biographies dealing with the president’s wartime record tend to ignore the episode – Greece understandably being a perfunctory concern for most – misread it completely, or find it impossible to explain. David Stafford, in his book, *Roosevelt and Churchill: Men of Secrets*, while discussing the disapproval of OSS agents for British power politics in Axis-occupied Greece remarks that “many of Donovan’s [General William Donovan, the head of the OSS] agents, like the president himself, were hostile to the Greek monarchy whose restoration

Churchill demanded.” Similarly, Joseph Persico, in his *Roosevelt’s Secret War*, states in a characteristic passage:

American clandestine operations in Greece, the Prime Minister charged, were designed to keep the Greek king from regaining his throne, while Churchill’s aim was to reinstall him as a reliable ally along Britain’s Mediterranean route of empire. FDR, however, was not about to chastise the OSS for practicing what he preached. The President found it an uninspiring battle cry to tell Americans that when all the sacrifice, hardship, and bloodshed had ended, the world would be much the same as before.  

In contrast, Francis Loewenheim, Harold Langley, and Manfred Jonas, who together edited a volume of wartime letters exchanged between the president and the British prime minister, while acknowledging the episode, display a serious lack of knowledge describing it. Despite pointing out the historical, albeit nuanced, disagreements between the State Department and the Foreign Office on the question of “reimposing” the Greek monarch on the Greek people without heeding the “widespread opposition” that such a move might engender, they then go on to write: “Curiously, at Cairo in November and December 1943 the roles were momentarily reversed, with Churchill seeking to persuade George II to abdicate, [he did no such thing] and Roosevelt personally urging him to stay on.” A comparable degree of confusion, though not an equivalent ignorance of the facts, is displayed by the British historian E.L. Woodward, in his officially sanctioned and influential *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*,

---

wherein he notes that “the President’s action was the more surprising because the State Department fully supported the plan.”

Historians specializing in wartime Greece make various assumptions as to why the president advised the king to resist the British, but they too exhibit a great deal of confusion in determining Roosevelt’s ultimate motivation in doing so. Still others ignore the episode altogether, thereby rendering a type of judgment on the episode’s relative significance, in their eyes at least. Lawrence Wittner, who wrote *American Intervention in Greece*, a work generally critical of American foreign policy both during and immediately after the war, simply states that “Roosevelt faithfully followed Churchill’s lead” during this time period, a contention obviously not borne out by the facts. In her published dissertation, *Britain, the United States, and Greece, 1942-1945*, Anne Karalekas records the outrage that both Churchill and Eden felt after “Roosevelt’s unexpected move” but goes on to posit that the king would have decided against Eden’s proposal regardless. Prokopis Papastratis, author of the acclaimed *British Policy towards Greece during the Second World War*, points out that Roosevelt was contravening directly the wishes of his State Department and ambassador by advising the king as he did but gives no reason as to why the president chose to disregard that expert advice. Likewise, John Iatrides describes the president’s intervention as “unexpected”

---

196 Karalekas, *Britain, the United States*, 56-57.
197 Prokopis Papastratis, *British Policy towards Greece during the Second World War-1944* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 151. Interestingly enough, however, Papastratis, in the above citation, does speculate on the motivations of General Smuts in giving the king the identical advice that Roosevelt gave him.
while John Louis Hondros claims that Roosevelt’s advice to the king was “inexplicable.” Indeed, of the many works dealing with this period of Greek history, few attempt to provide a plausible rationale for the president’s behavior.198

The catholic bemusement over what seems a significant episode in the history of the Greek occupation is telling but not unusual when viewed in the context of Roosevelt’s idiosyncratic approach to foreign policy.199 As it turned out, Roosevelt’s conversation with the Greek king in December 1943 marked the high tide of American diplomatic involvement in Greek internal affairs during the war. Significantly, it even eclipsed the president’s previous, but equally pro-monarchical, involvement in August 1943. Of course, little doubt exists that the general tenor of American foreign policy, emerging from a reading of the State Department dispatches in 1943 and 1944, was to oppose and resist British wartime attempts to secure distinct spheres of influence while simultaneously promoting the rights of peoples to select democratically the governments they wished to represent them. Certainly, the steady American insistence on the above points often annoyed the British, who felt that such principles were fine in the abstract, but difficult to adhere to in practice.

However, at least in the case of Greece, these frequent disagreements contributed to nothing more than the usual, harmless diplomatic bickering that is generated in a time of war between two allied and friendly governments. The president’s advice to the Greek

199 “By his own admission, he was disingenuous, deceptive, and devious; but he had a policy.” See Warren F. Kimball, The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 7.
king in December 1943, on the other hand, signified, at the time, a major American policy deviation from the British line that, moreover, had massive and far-reaching repercussions on political developments in occupied Greece. The fact that Roosevelt’s intervention was diametrically opposed to the default policy position of his own State Department thus added to the ironic poignancy of the whole episode, since it counted for so much more, in the case of Greece, than most American diplomatic initiatives taken throughout the course of the war. In addition, when a second round of violent conflict broke out exactly one year later between EAM/ELAS and its opponents – in this latter case its opponents were British garrison troops sent to safeguard the interests of the king and the government-in-exile – the solution that settled the conflict involved the appointment of a regent, who was none other than the Archbishop of Athens, Damaskinos.

It would be doubtless redundant to indicate that if that solution was good enough for December 1944, when EAM/ELAS was materially stronger and in control of far more territory than it was a year earlier, it would certainly have sufficed to bring about a truce to end the so-called First Round of the Greek Civil War. If nothing else, the king’s declaration to accept a plebiscite before returning to Greece would have removed a major propaganda theme for EAM/ELAS, a theme that the organization used to attract moderate republicans to its cause. In a memorandum sent to Cordell Hull just a few weeks after the fateful conversation between king and president, Ambassador MacVeagh made this precise point. “The principal argument used with Mr. Eden at this time seems indeed to
have been that a declaration by the King would alienate moderate political elements from EAM and ELAS and deprive these last of one of their chief propaganda weapons.”

For the historian, therefore, the obvious question must be what exactly motivated the American president to counsel the Greek king to resist the British demands for the creation of an interim regency council. The question looms large given that, after the episode was over, Anglo-American disagreements over Britain’s Greek policy continued and even, at times, intensified, with the two adversaries returning to their subtly divergent positions for and against overt support for the monarchy. More importantly, the constitutional question would also become the major sticking point between the SOE and OSS once American agents began to filter into occupied Greece after September 1943. A sizeable number of OSS agents accused the British of engaging their old colonial predilection for playing both sides against the middle, accusations that outraged many of the British Liaison Officers but which were sometimes supported, at least surreptitiously, by the head of the OSS, General William Donovan. Consequently, it was all the more incongruous that Roosevelt’s initiative, although predictably anti-British from an American policy standpoint, served to buttress the old monarchical order against its various challengers, old and new – which had, of course, always been the primary British concern in previous (and in subsequent) such instances of conflict.

200 FRUS 1943, Vol. IV, 159.
201 For a typical instance of OSS anti-British sentiment see Costa Couvaras, OSS me tin Kentriki tou EAM [OSS with the EAM Central Committee] (Athens: Exantas, 1976). On page 170, the author, a Greek-American agent assigned as liaison to EAM GHQ, offered up his opinion on who was to blame for the December 1944 “Second Round”: “I hope that the people of the United States will be reliably informed about what is happening here in Greece and will not be swayed by British propaganda. When the American people will learn what happened here things will change…the people are always on the side of justice.”
The diplomatic historian Elisabeth Barker, in her study *Churchill and Eden at War*, speculates that Roosevelt probably had multiple reasons, some shallow and some complex, for counseling the king to oppose the British and there seems little reason to doubt such a contention. Among those she lists are exhaustion (the American and British delegations were returning from their major conference in Tehran with Stalin), frustration (a number of disagreements had ruined the accord between the two allies at that conference), and gullibility (the president had an inordinate respect for the opinions of the South African Prime Minister Smuts who counseled him to support the king that same day). Interestingly enough, however, the primary reason she cites for the president’s behavior is that “it was one of his hobbies to collect foreign kings, just as he collected foreign stamps.”

In his more recent *Anglo-American Relations with Greece*, historian Robert Frazier interprets Barker’s comment to mean that Roosevelt had “an inordinate respect for monarchs,” an argument that he later proceeds to shoot down by claiming that, on the contrary, Roosevelt “more likely saw himself as the equal of kings and queens, if not somewhat superior.” How Frazier equates Barker’s philatelic simile with “inordinate respect” is difficult to fathom, although he is, in all likelihood, correct about Roosevelt’s superiority complex versus crowned heads of state. Frazier goes on to posit some other possible reasons that could have explained the president’s behavior, including a lack of a proper briefing by MacVeagh, Eden’s own failure to sell the plan or highlight its significance to the president, Churchill’s wan support for it – evinced by the fact that the

---

202 Barker, *Churchill and Eden*, 188.
prime minister was not, in the end, all that disturbed by the king’s rejection of Eden’s proposal – and the king’s ability to sway and manipulate Roosevelt through emotional appeal and misrepresentation.203

Ultimately, of course, as Barker herself points out, all this speculation amounts to little more than “guesswork.” Unfortunately, there is no official transcript of the actual conversation and the principal historical actors were generally silent about the affair aside from some expressions of frustration at the impasse that resulted from the president’s interference and the king’s obstinacy. However, the primary documents do contain a few clues, apparently overlooked by historians, which might allow the researcher to make a few educated guesses about the president’s possible motivations, even if definitive conclusions might forever prove elusive.204

In the first place, it should be pointed out that, for his part, MacVeagh did try to brief the president to the best of his ability. In his personal diary, under the date 3 December 1943, MacVeagh records that he had a long and intimate talk with the president about the Greek situation, in fact describing the conversation as “the longest consecutive and most intensive talk I have ever had with him, lasting about one and a quarter hours…in my acquaintance of over 30 years.” It seems that, during the interview, the topic of Greece was first broached by the president who gave the American Ambassador his own personal character assessment of “Georgie” (Roosevelt’s nickname

203 Frazier, Anglo-American, 42, 45-46.
204 Barker, Churchill and Eden, 188; Eden admitted that he was “much upset at this turn of events” although he describes Churchill as calmer and preoccupied principally in talking down a “wrought up” Roosevelt the next day on the way to the airport. See Eden, The Reckoning, 499.
for the Greek king), pronouncing him “nice but stupid.” The conversation then took an interesting turn.

At first, the President told me that the King should be treated squarely and allowed to go back to his country with his troops. Then he outlined the kind of constitution Greece should have, in which the monarch would have nothing to do but lay wreaths, attend functions, etc., and be entirely outside of politics. “What’s the matter with that?” I said, “Nothing, only the nature of the Greeks.” Then he listened very carefully, as he always does, while I tried to explain that “Georgie,” for the Greeks, is a man with a whole history behind him…I said my chief concern was that, though we must support, or rather go along with our British allies, we should not be concerned [involved] in any forcing of any regime whatsoever on the Greeks (to this he nodded his assent), and that therefore I felt immensely relieved when I learned of the present plans…I said I would leave my memoranda with him, and he said he wanted to have them, and promised to see the King personally…

From the foregoing, therefore, it would certainly appear that lack of a thorough briefing, at least by his American experts, was not a real issue for Roosevelt and did not contribute to his decision to advise the king to resist the appointment of a regency council. On the other hand, Frazier’s contention that “MacVeagh was unable to impress upon the President the real significance of the plan” might have some basis in fact. Both Eden and Churchill respectively failed at the same task, probably because they lacked the requisite enthusiasm to push their own plan energetically, so the failure to persuade Roosevelt was not for lack of trying.

In addition, it is possible that Secretary of State Cordell Hull, upon whom the president relied on for counsel, also failed to grasp the significance of the plan or was bewildered by the seemingly sudden shift of British policy on the matter of the Greek

---

205 Iatrides, MacVeagh, 396. Incidentally, the whole “nice but stupid” comment disposes neatly the question of Roosevelt’s “inordinate” respect for crowned heads of state.
206 Frazier, Anglo-American, 44.
constitutional question. This theory is bolstered by a bemused telegram that the secretary sent to MacVeagh December 1943, a little less than two weeks after the king’s conversation with the president. In the telegraph, written at midnight, an obviously confused Hull writes: “A complete reversal of British policy toward the Greek King seems indicated by your [messages]. Please report any obtainable information as to reasons for this change.” MacVeagh responded a few days later on 22 December 1943, in a typically informative and thorough fashion, to the effect that “the developments…should not be taken as indicating any reversal or even alteration of British policy toward the Greek king but rather as representing a change in tactical procedure for the fulfillment of established policy, prompted by changes in the military and political situation.” If nothing else, the preceding exchange demonstrates that Hull was likely a non-entity in the whole affair, given that the president, on 6 December 1943, was no doubt better informed about the Greek situation than his secretary of state.207

So, if it was not a lack of information, what then motivated the president to advise the Greek king as he did? A few hypotheses can be proffered from the available documentation. First, it appears that Roosevelt simply could not understand why it was so significant to the Greek people that the king not return before a plebiscite. This line of reasoning is bolstered by the first letter he sent MacVeagh after the December events, dated 15 January 1944, wherein he wrote,

I fully understand about the Greek matter and I merely want to let you know that the King had a long talk with me and felt (strictly between ourselves) that he was being “railroaded” or “blackmailed” by the British…I told him that if I were in his place I would, at the proper moment (not yet), tell the people of Greece frankly

207 *FRUS 1943*, Vol. IV, 158.
that as a constitutional monarch he had gone a bit too far in the Metaxas case even though his intentions were of the best, i.e., the peace of Greece; that, however, he had learned his lesson and that if he continued as King he would do so in a strictly constitutional manner – and not get caught again at playing with a dictator.\(^\text{208}\)

Clearly, Roosevelt was resisting the notion that his advice to the king originated from a lack of understanding of the specifics of the Greek situation. On the contrary, it seems likely that the president was bored by all the intricacies and had decided, in an extremely paternalistic fashion, to intercede forcefully to end the bickering, not unlike a parent intervening to stop a quarrel between siblings. This thesis is supported by Roosevelt’s contention, in the same letter, that “a tiny spot in the Mediterranean, like Greece, has its reputation enhanced if it has a constitutional monarch, but with certain provisos.” He then goes on to list those provisos – “[the king] should take absolutely no part in government except to open country fairs and give entertainment to visiting firemen” – and enjoins MacVeagh to write him and give him his “own slant as to what is the best form of government Greece could have.”\(^\text{209}\)

Obviously, statements such as these do not arise simply out of ignorance, especially given the fact that MacVeagh had gone to great lengths in previous missives to apprise the president of all relevant political details pertaining to the Greek situation. MacVeagh attempted to respond seriously to the above suggestions by informing Roosevelt, in a long letter, that the extremely politicized nature of the Greeks made it difficult to establish a purely constitutional monarchy because “no Greek will ever believe that a “head man” can’t do things if he wants to, whatever may be the rules.” The

\(^{208}\) Iatrides, *MacVeagh*, 444.
\(^{209}\) Ibid.
president countered with a short tongue-in-cheek effort, ironically dated 1 April 1944, lampooning the Greek political scene and most of the major actors involved. After declaring that he was “rather sentimental about Greece” because his naval family had been involved in aiding the Greeks on two occasions during the struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire, the president then advised MacVeagh as to a likely course of action:

I think you might go up there at the first opportunity, raise an army of brigands, decapitate the Germans, declare yourself Autarch – which translated into modern English means a self-winding dictator – run the show for a couple of years, get thoroughly bored, and finally abdicate in favor of George II. If I were as young as you are I would do just that!210

The refusal to acknowledge the seriousness of the situation – and one can perhaps sympathize given what Roosevelt had on his plate in the spring of 1944 – was plainly evident in the president’s tone, but one can also detect clear traces of a benevolent paternalism that was, perhaps, rooted in a deep impatience with Balkan intrigue. The politically savvy MacVeagh eventually came to the same conclusion. After an extremely brief oral interview with the president in Washington in August 1944, MacVeagh recorded in his diary that Roosevelt seemed “even more impatient and critical as regards the Balkan peoples and their dissensions than he was in Cairo,” and that “if he can’t do it in reality, he is putting a wall around them in his own thinking.”211

210 Ibid., 474, 507.
211 Ibid., 584. The reference to a “wall” comes from the conversation MacVeagh had with Roosevelt on 3 December 1943 just before the president’s fateful meeting with the Greek king. As the discussion was winding down, Roosevelt turned to MacVeagh and conjectured that “the best way to handle Yugoslavia and Greece would be to put walls around them and let those inside fight it out, and report when all was over and who was top dog!” Ibid., 397.
It is therefore highly probable that Roosevelt could have viewed the British change of tactics in the matter of the king’s return in December 1943 as overkill, given the simple state of affairs as he saw them. In this vein, it might appear unsporting of the British to pester the obviously weak-willed George to give up his throne, which was the accusation the president leveled at Eden prior to boarding the plane for Washington in December 1943. The king was, after all, a loyal ally and leader of a country that, in Roosevelt’s eyes, desperately needed the prestige associated with monarchial rule.

Roosevelt probably felt that both the British Foreign Office and the American Embassy staff in Cairo were overestimating the level of hostility toward the monarchy in Greece. In the best American political tradition, it was nothing that a good stump speech, some baby-kissing, and a good round or two of back-slapping could not solve. That is no doubt why the president also rounded on a bewildered MacVeagh right before his departure from Cairo, telling him through a staff member essentially to butt out of the king’s affairs, an action the president later regretted, as his subsequent correspondence to MacVeagh demonstrates.213

The president may have also believed that, in convincing George II to stand firm against a plebiscite, he was foiling British colonial pretensions in the Eastern Mediterranean by defending the decision-making autonomy of an important regional actor. Roosevelt’s patience with British machinations in the region was probably wearing thin by December 1943. Already by that point, Churchill’s obsession with the

---

212 Eden, The Reckoning, 499.
213 Iatrides, MacVeagh, 404. Similarly, in his first letter to MacVeagh following the incident – dated 15 January 1944 and quoted extensively above – the President, in the midst of discussing how a three-party system would be good for Greece added, in an offhand manner, that such a system would in fact also benefit “most Latin or Eastern countries.” Ibid., 445.
Mediterranean had resulted in the strategically dubious Anglo-American invasion of Italy in September, and a November attempt on the part of the British to seize control of the Dodecanese islands that failed mostly because of a categorical lack of US support. In Roosevelt’s mind, such distractions threatened to siphon resources from the impending cross-channel invasion, which was supposed to occur no later than the spring of 1944. Both the president and the prime minister had promised Stalin that the timetable for this invasion would not be altered in any way.²¹⁴ It could be that the president theorized that this latest plan for Greece represented yet another devious way for Churchill to assure the maintenance of British influence in the region, this time not by outright invasion, but by interfering in local politics.

Clearly, whatever his reasoning, Roosevelt failed to grasp the intricacies of the issues involved. His interference at this key juncture assured the continuation of civil strife in Greece well into the future. The king, bolstered by the support of the American president, refused to sign any definitive declaration that would include the word “plebiscite.”²¹⁵ The opportunity to wean moderate republicans from EAM/ELAS had been wasted and mistrust of the Tsouderos government and the king spilled over from occupied Greece to Egypt, where disaffected Venizelists in the Greek armed forces, aided and supported by communist elements, mutinied against the Greek government-in-exile and the British in April 1944. Although the mutiny was put down by the British with minimal bloodshed, it signaled only the beginning of a long cycle of fratricidal violence.

that was fated to continue even after the departure of the Germans in October 1944.\textsuperscript{216} In light of this, the irony of a statement the president later made in a letter to Churchill, written in response to the outbreak of fighting between British troops and EAM/ELAS guerillas in December 1944, is practically overwhelming:

\begin{quote}
I of course lack full details and am at a great distance from the scene, but it seemed to me that a basic reason – or excuse, perhaps – for the EAM attitude has been distrust regarding the intentions of King George. I wonder if Macmillan’s [Harold Macmillan, British Minister Resident, Allied Forces HQ: the British envoy sent to negotiate a ceasefire] efforts might not be greatly facilitated if the King himself would approve the establishment of a regency in Greece and would make a public declaration of his intention not to return unless called for by popular plebiscite.\textsuperscript{217}
\end{quote}

To summarize, American foreign policy toward Greece during the war was conducted in an ad hoc manner, with no clear lines of communication between the embassy in Cairo, the State Department, and the president. It should be pointed out that even after President Roosevelt decided to go against the stated policy of his country in December 1943, the US State Department remained consistently critical of British attempts to fashion “spheres of influence” in the Balkans, preferring to believe that the British excuse of a growing communist threat in the Balkans was overstated. In subsequent months, the president seemed equally oblivious to the diplomatic initiatives and viewpoints of his State Department, often expressing oral support for Churchill and the British in their conflict with EAM/ELAS, although he resisted the temptation to involve himself directly in the Anglo-Greek conflict after 1943. It is not at all surprising,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item For a traditionalist but accurate account of the April 1944 mutiny among the Greek armed forces see Evangelos Spyropoulos, \textit{The Greek Military (1909-1941) and the Greek Mutinies in the Middle East (1941-1944)}, East European Monographs, no. CCCLX (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 350-375.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
therefore, that when the OSS entered the Greek scene, – the first OSS operational teams began to parachute into occupied Greece in September 1943 – its agents were confused as to what political role they were supposed to play once in the field. Naturally, their orders urged them to avoid politics altogether and concentrate on winning the war, but the experience of the British commandos the year before had exposed the impossibility of such a task. Throughout the remaining months of the war, therefore, it would be not at all clear whose policy – the State Department’s, the president’s, or General Donovan’s – if anyone’s, the OSS was supposed to be promoting in Greece, what the stance of OSS personnel should be to EAM/ELAS guerillas or to the British, and what role the OSS was supposed to play once liberation had been achieved. In most cases, these questions would be answered through the personal initiative of the individuals involved, with little input from above.
Chapter Five

The OSS in Greece, September - December 1943

I. Creation and Function of the US Office of Strategic Services.

The rapid collapse of France in the late spring of 1940, accompanied as it was by the near defeat and capture of the – in any case small and ineffective – British Expeditionary Force, thereafter guaranteed that the United Kingdom would not be able to threaten German forces directly in occupied Europe. Thus, desperation motivated the creation of the British Special Operations Executive in July 1940. Lacking the traditional force necessary, in men and materiel, to liberate the European continent, the United Kingdom instead hoped to weaken Hitler’s grasp on it through sabotage and irregular warfare. In contrast, the Office of Strategic Services, formed almost exactly two years later in June 1942 by presidential order and seven months after the official American entry into the European war, did not represent an only option for the American government. At least initially, President Roosevelt seemed to think of it as just one more weapon, in a growing arsenal, that he could use against the Axis. Be that as it may, it was equally the case that both the president and the man he named as the director of the new organization, William “Wild Bill” Donovan, had favorable impressions of the British SOE and tried, in many ways, to model its American counterpart on it.²¹⁸

²¹⁸ There are many histories of the OSS. Most of them tend uncritically to extol the virtues of the organization without engaging in much analysis. They also generally sing the praises of Donovan, some amounting to nothing more than hagiographic paens, like Corey Ford’s, Donovan of OSS (Boston: Little,
Even before American involvement in the war, however, President Roosevelt had seen fit to create a national office of intelligence with the mission of coordinating disparate intelligence reports and data. This move came as a response to the outbreak of the Second World War, which had the predictable effect of flooding Washington and the White House with reams of intelligence that often got lost in the transfer. In the interwar period, American “intelligence” operations fell strictly under the purview of the U.S. military and the Department of State. More specifically, military attachés and ambassadors would send reports, gathered from various secret and non-secret sources, to Washington where an attempt at collating and assessing the importance of each report would fall to a few low-level civil servants. Such an arrangement naturally proved untenable in the tumultuous months following the outbreak of war although departmental squabbling and rivalry, as well as an innate bureaucratic desire to protect one’s own turf, prevented the president from taking any decisive action until the summer of 1941.219

In July, President Roosevelt created the predecessor of the OSS, the office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) with William Donovan as the acting chief. Donovan, a

---

Brown and Co., 1970). A more objective account, though still somewhat biased towards Donovan, is R. Harris Smith’s, *OSS: The Secret History of America’s First Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972). In terms of objectivity, use of primary sources, and critical analysis, the best history of the OSS is Bradley F. Smith’s, *The Shadow Warriors: OSS and the Origins of the CIA* (New York: Basic Books, 1983). However, the latter work is also concerned with exploring the origins of the Central Intelligence Agency and is thus less focused than the previous two when it comes to specifics about certain wartime events. A few years ago, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), in cooperation with the Office for Public Affairs of the Central Intelligence Agency, released a glossy publication to mark the opening of the International Spy Museum in Washington D.C. which provides a nice overview of the logistical organization of the OSS. See Michael Warner, *The Office of Strategic Services: America’s First Intelligence Agency* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Public Affairs, Central Intelligence Agency, 2002).

219 Smith, *Shadow Warriors*, 55-75. If anything, the marginalization of Ambassador MacVeagh’s observations about Greece in the interwar period – demonstrated by President Roosevelt’s indisputable ignorance of Greek affairs in December 1943 – proves the clumsiness of the old system.
decorated hero of the First World War (he had earned the Congressional Medal of Honor) and a former Columbia classmate of the president’s, was a millionaire civilian lawyer of Irish descent known for his energy and perspicacity in civilian life. Roosevelt chose Donovan to head the COI office because he had been impressed with Donovan’s record as his special envoy to Great Britain and the Balkans in 1941. In the years leading up to the war, the president often employed such independent observers to gather intelligence and provide him with the most current information, avoiding the usual bureaucratic red tape of sending official representatives. Sometimes, Roosevelt would use such emissaries as de facto ambassadors, purveying his personal viewpoints to foreign governments and policymakers with rapidity and clarity.²²⁰

Interestingly enough, it was in such a capacity that Donovan was sent to Yugoslavia in the late winter of 1941. While there, Donovan controversially encouraged a few key high-ranking Serb officers in the Yugoslav Army to revolt against the pro-Axis – by virtue of duress rather than sentiment – government of the royal regent Paul. Partly as a result of Donovan’s implied assurances that America would provide support to any country entering the war against the Axis, a plainly facetious claim as the only support Roosevelt could offer at this juncture of the war was psychological, the officers, led by General Bora Mirković, deposed the regent on 27 March 1941, installing the uncrowned Peter as monarch. Though the new government made it explicit that it would not withdraw Yugoslavia from the Tripartite Pact nor renege on any prior agreements with

²²⁰ Most of the information contained in this section is taken from Anthony Cave Brown’s, *The Last Hero: Wild Bill Donovan* (New York: Times Books, 1982), who was Donovan’s official biographer and therefore got unprecedented access to Donovan’s personal files. As can perhaps be expected, the work is biased towards Donovan to a great degree. See also Barry M. Katz, *Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Services, 1942-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 1-3.
Germany, Hitler was not convinced. Ten days later, on 6 April 1941, Germany invaded Yugoslavia and Greece. Yugoslavia signed an armistice and surrendered to the Axis on 17 April. Though Donovan subsequently downplayed the significance of his intervention, there exists little doubt among historians that he did, in fact, try to convince General Mirković and the others to go through with the coup. What influence he had on the decision to revolt is, however, a matter of debate.\footnote{Certainly, it provided more incentive to men already intent on a course of action. Cave Brown asserts that Donovan’s intervention was crucial, even if it was just one reason among many that led the Serb officers to revolt. Brown thus credits Donovan with bringing Yugoslavia into the war, thereby pressuring Hitler to alter his Barbarossa (invasion of the USSR) timetable by the few weeks necessary to secure the Balkan flank. This delay, in turn, meant that the German Army could not force the capitulation of the Red Army before the onset of the infamously brutal winter of 1941-1942 which literally froze the Wehrmacht in its tracks. In Cave Brown’s words, “it would be believed widely, also, that those were the five weeks by which Hitler lost the war.” See Brown, Last Hero, 157. According to his biographer, therefore, Donovan just about single-handedly won the war. The eminent British historian, John Keegan, has argued against this “Balkan delay” thesis, asserting that the timetable to invade the Soviet Union was determined by weather and logistics rather than by the exigencies of the Balkan campaign (Operation Marita, see chapter 2). Keegan acknowledges Donovan’s minor role in the build-up to the coup, positing, however, that it would have occurred even without Western intervention. Furthermore, he believes that the coup itself was an unmitigated disaster for both Yugoslavia and Greece since it simplified greatly Hitler’s strategic position and allowed him to take out two birds with one stone. See John Keegan, The Second World War (New York: Viking Penguin, 1989), 152-157. Bradley Smith makes the identical point in Shadow Warriors, 47-51. If nothing else, the debate demonstrates eloquently the hagiographic nature of much of the historical literature about Donovan.}  

American entry into the war forced the final transformation of American clandestine operations: the responsibilities of the COI were modified and the agency nominally placed under the command of the Joint Chiefs of Staff while being renamed the OSS. Among its duties were research and analysis of traditional intelligence reports, subversion and propaganda, commando operations and espionage. Furthermore, as its name implied, the OSS was designed conceptually to augment military operations and not to gather intelligence for its own sake. Nevertheless, when the president created the OSS on 13 June 1942 some intelligence gathering capacity, inherited from the COI, did
exist and, as the war progressed, this part of the organization grew steadily in importance.

Even so, established civilian agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, resented the new interloper and worked to limit its authority. As a result, during the war, presidential decree prohibited the OSS from engaging in domestic counterintelligence or even from operating in the Western Hemisphere.222

The OSS was divided into various branches. Among these, the most important were the Special Operations Branch (OSS/SO, concerned with engaging in sabotage operations and supporting guerilla resisters in enemy-held territory), the Morale Operations Branch (an outgrowth of the OSS/SO, concerned with psychological warfare and propaganda), X-2 (concerned with counterintelligence, the only OSS Branch that the British allowed to access the top-secret “Ultra” decrypts223) the Secret Intelligence Branch, (OSS/SI, concerned with traditional intelligence gathering), and the Research and Analysis Branch (Donovan’s personal innovation, concerned with collating, organizing, and analyzing the information gathered by the other branches). Other, more minor, branches included the Maritime Unit (which operated a fleet of fishing vessels in the Eastern Mediterranean that could ferry agents to and from occupied territory), the Foreign Nationalities Branch (whose job it was to keep tabs on the activities of foreign

223 Ultra was arguably the most important Allied espionage coup of the Second World War. In the first few months of the conflict, British cryptographers succeeded in deciphering the transmissions of the Enigma machine: the device used by the Germans to encode their military transmissions. As a result, it was eventually possible to decode most German transmissions in “real time,” i.e., as quickly as the German units receiving the message could – the resulting decrypts were codenamed “Ultra.” The intelligence applications were legion. In the Pacific theater, the Americans equaled the British feat by decoding the Japanese naval and diplomatic ciphers, respectively codenamed “Magic” and “Purple.” Unfortunately, the Pearl Harbor attack still achieved total surprise due to the maintenance of strict radio silence on the part of the Japanese Imperial Navy. See Anthony Cave Brown, Bodyguard of Lies (New York: Bantam, 1975), 68-69.
nationalities in the United States, excepted, in this case, from the domestic counterintelligence prohibition affecting the rest of the OSS) and, interestingly, the Labor Branch (that recruited agents from among domestic and foreign leftists – thought to be more palatable to the various resistance organizations operating in Axis-occupied Europe). The branches were largely autonomous of each other and, as in the case of the Labor Branch, engaged in their own distinctive recruiting practices, restricted only by Donovan’s basic dictum that considerations about an agent’s political background could be sacrificed on the altar of military necessity. Most OSS branches made it a point to allow the recruitment of declared communists and leftist sympathizers based solely on their (naturally) impeccable anti-fascist credentials. According to one historian, Donovan was supposed to have once told an assistant, “I’d put Stalin on the OSS payroll if I thought it would help us defeat Hitler.”

The preceding should be taken with a grain of salt. In the _Secret War Report of the OSS_ – the original summary of OSS activities during the war declassified and published in 1976 – the editor, Donovan’s soon-to-be biographer, Anthony Cave Brown, notes that Donovan’s innate political conservatism tempered his liberal attitudes on the recruitment of leftists. In his introduction to the report (which he edited for publication), Cave Brown states that Donovan’s wartime realism had its limits. “While he did recruit Communists to kill Krauts as he put it, he feared and distrusted Communists in places where they counted.”

---


for European (read: British) imperialism, this anti-communist attitude created some interesting political quandaries for the OSS as an organization that were never resolved satisfactorily. For example, in Yugoslavia, OSS agents were generally critical of Britain’s eventual decision to abandon Draža Mihailovic’s royalist Chetniks for Tito’s communist Partisans. In Greece, conversely, many OSS agents denounced the British for doing precisely the opposite by supporting, materially and morally, EDES over EAM/ELAS.²²⁶

II. OSS Operational Planning: Logistical and Other Difficulties.

The majority of OSS missions in wartime Greece belonged either to the Special Operations Branch (OSS/SO) or to Secret Intelligence (OSS/SI), although Morale Operations was active in some areas of the country and the Labor Branch cooperated closely with OSS/SI in mounting Operation Pericles, one of the most notable OSS missions of the entire war. There is little doubt that a considerable amount of rivalry and suspicion existed between the operatives of the various branches, not only because of the differing roles Cairo HQ and Washington expected them to play in occupied Greece, but also due to the conflicting recruiting philosophies of their respective services. For example, although OSS/SO generally tended to avoid recruiting Greek-American officers in large numbers, fearing that ill-disciplined Greek irregulars would hesitate to take orders from fellow Greeks they would otherwise view as equals, OSS/SI did so enthusiastically, on the contrary assumption that Greeks would be more likely to divulge

vital intelligence to presumably trustworthy co-nationals rather than to English-speaking foreigners. Lt. Tom Stix, commander of the SI mission *Operation Stygia* assigned to the island of Evvia in the final few months of the war, put the matter plainly in his final report to OSS HQ in Cairo: “While my lack of knowledge of Greek and Greece was a definite drawback in obtaining and evaluating intelligence, it was a real asset in liaison work as the *Andartes* [guerillas] accepted me as “100% American” with no political or other preconceptions.”

Sometimes, these operational differences were more iconic than anything else. In the last few months of the war, OSS/SO and OSS/SI cooperated to parachute a number of commando teams – the OSS designation for these sabotage/demolition units was “Operational Groups” – into occupied Greece to harass the retreating Germans. Enlisted men in these Operational Groups, along with many of the officers, were Americans of Greek descent. All the same, the prolific use of Greek-American personnel by numerous branches of the OSS created difficulties, not just within the organization itself, but also between the Americans and the British.

OSS officers at all levels of the organization identified some of the problems posed by the employment of Greek-American operatives. Captain R.E. Moyers, the medical head of the Allied Military Mission [AMM] to Greece, and a keen observer of

---

227 National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), RG 226/210, 283/1, “Stygia Mission – Undated.”
events there during his two-year tour, wrote in his final report to OSS HQ that “regardless of how fine it might seem to send Greeks to Greece, Serbs to Yugoslavia, etc., language ability is the only asset justifying this policy.” Moyers felt that Greek-Americans involved themselves too readily in domestic politics and he claimed to have “observed Greek-American officers whose views [had] been distorted by relatives still living in Greece.” He concluded that section of his report by laconically stating that “some of our better men were Greek-Americans but the percentage appeared to me to be low.” The fact that Moyers was a high-ranking and respected field operative during the war made his comments on this matter all the more significant.229

But criticism of the prolific use of Greek-American agents was not just limited to field operatives. Captain Charles F. Edson was a key member of the Research and Analysis Branch in Cairo during the occupation and had been, before the war, a classical historian of some distinction at the University of Wisconsin. After the German evacuation, OSS assigned him to head the Greek Desk in Athens at an extremely sensitive historical juncture when the conflict between the British and EAM/ELAS had already come to a head and further violence between communist and nationalist forces seemed likely. Although OSS was shutting down in Greece and elsewhere, Edson was tasked with collecting what vital intelligence he could with a skeleton staff. However, even with his severe personnel shortage, he was loath to employ Greek-American agents.

229 NARA, RG 226/144 77/751, “Moyers Report – 13 July 1944.” It is important to note that Moyers was popular with many of the EAM/ELAS guerrillas, who tended to trust him implicitly because, as the chief AMM medical officer, he was as well responsible for maintaining the health of the guerrillas during the occupation. As a result, after the German evacuation, when combat had broken out between British forces and EAM/ELAS, and both sides needed someone to oversee the first major prisoner exchange, Moyers was chosen to do so since EAM/ELAS trusted him more than the International Red Cross. See R. Harris Smith, OSS, 128 and Cave Brown, Secret War Report, 269.
In a top-secret letter to the head of OSS Cairo, Colonel Harry Aldrich, dated 1 April 1945, Edson attempted to explain his reasons.

All my experience in Athens has forced me to the conclusion that it is unwise to have any more Greek-American personnel than is absolutely necessary. This of course does not mean that I in any way disapprove of Greek-Americans as such. Greek-Americans are like anyone else – they range from excellent to rotten – from a fine man like Alekko [Georgiades] or like [John] Fatseas to an utter heel like Captain [C.A.] Argyris. The point is that Greek-Americans in Greece are in a very difficult position…to take one example – relatives. It is the most natural thing in the world for Greeks, if they have [American] relations…to conclude that therefore they have an inside track. Most of my Greek-American staff here are [sic] bothered from time to time. Poor [George] Chrysostomas had suffered from a malignant plague of relatives…

Also, and this I know full well, it is a bad thing for OSS for too large a proportion of our staff here to be Greek-Americans. It makes things more difficult with the British, with the Greeks, and, to a degree, with the Embassy. For example, the Ambassador [MacVeagh] is always a bit worried, suspicious and apprehensive about Georgiades and [George] Emmanuel and utterly without reason…The reason is purely and simply that they are Greek-Americans. This attitude is as characteristic as it is completely unfair. (I should add that the Ambassador has no such feeling about [Thomas] Karamessines, whom he regards as “completely Americanized.”) There is no more need for Greek-Americans and it is my belief that it is to the best interest of the organization and of the Greek operation as such that any new personnel sent into Greece be more or less straight American.

---

230 NARA, RG 226/199 150/938, “Edson to Aldrich – 1 April 1945.” A. Georgiades was the SI agent in charge of OSS intelligence operations in the Evros region of Western Thrace. His story is detailed in a subsequent chapter. John Fatseas was a Greek-speaking civilian operative assigned to lead OSS/SI Operation Helot to the Peloponese in the weeks following the German evacuation. The purpose of the mission was to oversee the surrender of the collaborationist Security Battalions to ELAS forces. In the event, the mission bore witness to a number of brutal massacres perpetrated by the communists under the direct supervision of Aris. See NARA, RG 226/190 78/89, “British Operations in the Peloponese: June/September – January 1945.” Capt. C.A. Argyris, a naturalized American of Greek descent, was, for a time, the commander of OSS/SI Operation Ellas, sent to liaison with ELAS forces in Evvia in the final months of the occupation, September 1944 to March 1945. He was replaced in that capacity, somewhat abruptly, by Lt. Christopher Kantianis in November 1944. Capt. George Chrysostomas was, during the occupation, acting chief of the Schools and Training division of the Greek Desk, OSS/SI. See NARA, RG 226/190 73/33, “OSS Personnel: Administrative – Undated” and NARA, RG 226/154 41/10, “Activities of Schools and Training, 1 Jan. to 30 June, 1944 – 26 June 1944.” Capt. Thomas Karamessines was an analyst for the Greek Desk OSS/X2 (Counter-Intelligence) following liberation. After the dissolution of the OSS in October 1945, Karamessines stayed on as the director of intelligence for the US Embassy, possibly at the request of MacVeagh. He became a member of the CIA after that organization was established in September 1947 and eventually CIA Station Chief in Athens. As the chief American intelligence officer during the Greek Civil War, he was instrumental in organizing the Greek Central
Because of the practically limitless supply of Greek-American agents, the OSS was seldom forced to rely, like the SOE often did, on local Greek agents. Nevertheless, the political realities of the occupation provided the OSS with opportunities for recruitment in Greece as well. Outside of Epirus and Crete, the monopolization of the resistance by the radical left allowed those of differing convictions few opportunities to express their patriotism overtly. Short of cooperating with one or another Allied agency, the only other option for a conservative or even centrist sympathizer was to flee to Egypt to join the exiled Greek army, a journey fraught with hazard and one usually undertaken only by those with a military background. Still, the employment of Greek agents was risky, not least because it had the potential of involving OSS in the internecine conflict between EAM/ELAS and its enemies. Greek agents under OSS employ could use their position as operatives to help one or another side, thus jeopardizing their missions and putting the neutrality of OSS into question.

Such was the case, for example, with the prosaically named “Steve-Bill” network of agents (so designated because its two mission leaders, both Greek Army Captains, were named Fotios Stavreas and Anargyros Ballas) operating, during the war, out of Thessaloniki and officially designated as Operation Phalanx, and with the related Intelligence Agency (KYP) along American lines. He was appointed CIA Deputy Director for Plans in 1967. He eventually became the chairman of the Chile Task Force and was one of the authors of the plot to overthrow the Chilean president Salvador Allende in 1973. He resigned from the CIA in protest after allegations that he and his boss, Richard Helms, were involved in the Watergate scandal. He died in 1978. See Lawrence Wittner, American Intervention in Greece, 1943-1949 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 147-151, R. Harris Smith, OSS, 128, and Kristian C. Gustafson, “Reexamining the Record: CIA Machinations in Chile in 1970,” Hosted by www.cia.gov; available from https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/docs/v47i3a03p.htm; Internet; accessed 8 January 2007.
Operation Iron (also based in Thessaloniki) led by the civilian Panos Kalfas. Providing moderately useful intelligence during the occupation, marred every now and then by inaccurate reports and personality conflicts between the leaders and their OSS superiors, both missions quickly became a liability after the German evacuation. At issue was the question of agent compensation for services rendered. Although OSS Cairo had been willing, at least initially, to contemplate some remuneration for the mission chiefs, extravagant claims and the suspicion that the grantees were funneling the funds into promoting anti-communist terror squads, prompted the head of the OSS Security Branch in Greece, Captain Harry Nickles, to forward an internal report on the matter to the OSS leadership in Washington, condemning the opportunism of the Greek agents. Nickles pointed out that “the Missions to which these Greeks belong, Phalanx and Iron, were led by Greeks whose sympathies were definitely toward the Right. It is a pretty good guess that while they were gathering intelligence against the Germans they would also do anything in their power to combat the Leftist movement in Greece.” Responding to the assertion, put forward by Ballas and Stavreas, that the communists were persecuting them as collaborators, Nickles stated that “the persecutions by ELAS that they complain of, probably took place in fact; however, this does not obligate OSS to pull their chestnuts out of the fire.” He concluded the letter by counseling the OSS to resist excessive financial claims, since to him it seemed clear that this was “another case of Greeks bringing pressure on American officials for their own advantage. Apparently the Greek mission chiefs made rash promises to their sub-agents about the nature and quantity of the rewards…even if the promises had not been made, I think many Greeks would
pretend that they had been and claim rewards accordingly.” It is important to note that Nickles was of Greek-American descent.\(^{231}\)

Other obstacles to cooperation between the two allied intelligence communities were certainly profuse after America’s entry into the war. The British resented what they viewed as OSS interference in their own (more or less acknowledged by both sides) sphere of influence. The same month that saw the creation of the OSS, June 1942, also saw the drafting of a complicated, 32-page agreement between the new organization and the British SOE that was intended to delineate the specific areas around the globe where each would have predominance in conducting intelligence operations. As could be expected, the older SOE resisted strenuously all OSS attempts to muscle in on its various operations, especially in strategically vital areas like Greece or Yugoslavia.

Doubtlessly, the British attitude originated in the highest echelons of government. A characteristic exchange of letters between Churchill and Roosevelt in the fall of 1943 testifies to the British prime minister’s desire to deflect American aspirations in the Balkans. On 22 October 1943, Roosevelt sent a brief message to Churchill expressing his anxiety over the outbreak of civil war in Greece and complaining of the disunity of the indigenous guerilla forces there and in Yugoslavia. “In the present confused condition the only hope I see for immediate favorable action is the presence of an aggressive and qualified officer. The only man I can think of now who might have a chance of success is Donovan.” Churchill’s response, drafted and sent the very next day, was terse. “In spite of the vexatious broils…the situation in the Balkan peninsula is grievous for the

\(^{231}\) NARA, RG 226/144 78/97, “Greek Agent Complaints: Nickles for Security Files – 3 April, 1945.”
enemy...our officers there...are very capable...I have great admiration for Donovan, but I do not see any centre in the Balkans from which he could grip the situation.”

Throughout the last months of 1942 and into 1943, OSS representatives in London, along with their SOE counterparts, laboriously hammered out the details of their respective jurisdictions in the Near East. The discussions clarified the wartime responsibilities of the new American service in the Balkans. The British were hesitant to allow the Americans primacy in any region, fearing that their perceived amateurishness, inexperience and overt enthusiasm, would compromise the security of their established networks. The American rejection of postwar “spheres of influence” – hopelessly idealistic from the perspective of the British – was another major cause of contention. Nevertheless, some allowance had to be made for Britain’s American ally and not only for reasons of maintaining Anglo-American amity. As an American service, the OSS possessed almost limitless financial resources that could certainly aid the cash-starved British. Still, British anxiety as to the intentions of the Americans was not misplaced. As late as January 1944, Donovan was confiding to the American ambassador in Cairo, Lincoln MacVeagh, the following observations: “The Russian government, he [Donovan] said, does not want to have a zone of influence around it, or ‘cordon sanitaire,’ with the commitments this would involve. It wants the blessing of friendly governments, not the responsibility of satellites on its frontier.”

The final agreement in the Mediterranean theater – signed on 28 July 1943, a few weeks before the first American operatives were scheduled to parachute into Greece – favored the British, but nevertheless represented a reasonably fair compromise for the Americans. Although the OSS would have to accept the position of junior partner in the two key areas of Yugoslavia and Greece, the agreement stipulated that “OSS should make every effort to penetrate Bulgaria and Roumania [sic] and establish their [sic] own missions there in coordination with such SOE organizations as exist, since it is believed OSS have excellent contacts in these territories and are more likely to succeed than SOE.”

This was not much of a concession on the part of the British. Neither Bulgaria nor Romania had ever been within the traditional British sphere of influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, and it was becoming increasingly evident to Churchill and Eden, even as early as 1943, that the Red Army, and consequently the Soviet Union, would have a preponderant role to play in the future of both those countries once the war was over, regardless of Anglo-American efforts to the contrary. Still, to have a recognized lead in any Balkan country was enough for Donovan and his officers, chafing as they were to get into the fight, one way or another.

The compromise agreement clarified the status of American officers in Greece. It also cleared the way for the arrival of many more OSS teams throughout the course of the next two years. From the beginning, OSS/SO and OSS/SI – the two OSS branches that sent the most missions into occupied Greece – diverged in their operational methods due

---

primarily to their differing relationships with the two main British intelligence services, SOE and SIS/MI-6, (Secret Intelligence Service or Military Intelligence-6) codenamed in the Mediterranean theater of operations as Force 133 and ISLD, respectively. SOE was, by far, the larger of the two and had the same operational profile as OSS/SO, namely sabotage and encouragement of native resistance activity. Similarly, MI-6 and OSS/SI shared many of the same functions, focusing on traditional intelligence gathering and espionage. Since SOE coordinated all airdrops over Greece and since radio communication with Cairo was possible only through established British transmitters on the mainland, all OSS branches had to accept a degree of British control. OSS/SO accepted this state of affairs since its mission objectives paralleled those of SOE. OSS/SI, on the other hand, intent on maintaining its independence in the field of intelligence gathering, chose instead the more hazardous option of transporting its agents by sea using the often ramshackle fishing vessels of the Maritime Unit. In Cairo, contrastingly, the relationship between ISLD and OSS/SI was described, by one in-house OSS report drafted in June 1944, as “splendid” while the relations between OSS/SO and SOE were strained because of broad, intra-service personality conflicts.²³⁶

Separate and apart from these branches concerned with field operations stood Donovan’s brainchild, the Research and Analysis Branch. The head of the OSS was inspired to create this branch after witnessing the endemic logistical chaos of the intelligence-gathering business during his tenure as the Coordinator of Information. His

intention was to form a clearinghouse for all the disparate intelligence collected by the OSS. Once sent, the reports would be collated and then analyzed by a team of experts specializing in the history and culture of the region from where the intelligence originated. According to one historian, “nearly everyone outside OSS agreed that R&A was the most important unit in the OSS.” Personal inclination led Donovan to recruit large numbers of professors, mostly historians, whom he tended to respect above diplomats, scientists, lawyers, or bankers. This tendency was accentuated in regards to Greece, since that country’s unique past and the existence of a prewar American School for Classical Studies provided a ready pool for the recruitment of scholars— and not just for the R&A Branch. 237 In a secret listing of SI personnel available for post-liberation intelligence duty published in August 1944, all of the six senior officers not of Greek-American descent were archaeologists or historians in civilian life, with four having lived in Greece for a time before the war. 238

Consequently, the predominance of academics (R&A headquarters was nicknamed “the Campus”) meant that R&A was suffused with a markedly progressive and anti-imperial bias. Although this political stance was not out of line with the general American feeling against the restoration of a global order characterized by “spheres of influence,” it was, in the case of R&A, untrammeled by the practicalities of cooperation in the field that the other branches had to deal with on an almost daily basis. When inter-allied conflicts erupted over the future of Greece, therefore, Donovan’s R&A experts

tended to be uncompromisingly critical of British policy. This attitude disrupted Anglo-American amity but did not otherwise affect British policymaking and so was, in the end, counterproductive to achieving even the smallest degree of Allied cooperation or agreement on the matter of Greece’s political future. On the contrary, the level of British frustration with American R&A analysts in Cairo was so high that it at times threatened to rupture the alliance. As the British Colonel Robert Wingate later recounted to Donovan’s biographer,

> We had been at war with Germany longer than any other power, we had suffered more, we had sacrificed more, and in the end we would lose more than any other power. Yet here were these God-awful American academics rushing about, talking about the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter, and criticizing us for doing successfully what they would try and fail to do themselves later – restrain the Russians. Donovan was very lucky we didn’t send a Guards company to OSS Cairo.239

III. Captain “Wink” and the Case of the Rogue Airman.

OSS/SO was the first OSS branch to send teams into Greece in September 1943.

Two American officers were sent on the same plane that was returning the six-man guerilla delegation from Cairo, in that abortive attempt by the former head of the British Military Mission, Brigadier Myers, to effect reconciliation between the king and the resistance in August 1943. Due to his supposed pro-EAM policies, Brigadier Myers had been relieved of his command and the new head of the (now renamed in honor of the American OSS officers) Allied Military Mission was his former subordinate, Colonel C.M. Woodhouse, who had remained behind in Greece. Myers had been popular with

---

239 Cave Brown, *Last Hero*, 609. This quote is also reproduced in Winks, *Cloak and Gown*, 214 and Clogg, “Distant Cousins,” 135. Of all the R&A analysts in Cairo that caused the British anxiety, Moses Hadas (see the next chapter) was perhaps the worst offender. Cave Brown implies that Wingate, in the above statement, was referring to some of Hadas’ critical analyses about British activities in Greece.
EAM and especially with the ELAS high command and his removal made the task of his successor – to stop the still-raging civil war between EAM/ELAS and EDES – doubly difficult. Unfortunately, the arrival of the American officers did not help the situation at all, and in fact, it probably made Woodhouse’s mission even more complicated. The senior American officer was Captain Winston “Wink” Ehrgott, who reflexively distrusted Woodhouse and the British and thus ingratiated himself almost automatically with the EAM/ELAS leadership.\textsuperscript{240}

The problems that arose between Woodhouse and Ehrgott originated from the July agreement between SOE and SO stipulating the use of British transmitters by American operatives. Ehrgott possessed his own coded ciphers to communicate with OSS Cairo, but was forced to use the British transmitters to convey these messages and eventually became convinced that Woodhouse was delaying their transmission on purpose. In short order, Ehrgott discovered that Cairo HQ could not even decode his messages when they were relayed, and he became sure that Woodhouse had sabotaged them, due to Ehrgott’s obvious inclination toward EAM/ELAS.\textsuperscript{241} Indeed, as this minor crisis was unfolding, Ehrgott found time to convey his fears of British double-dealing to General Stefanos Sarafis, the commander-in-chief of ELAS. According to Sarafis, Ehrgott requested from him that he “publicize all official documents coming from ELAS GHQ to the AMM because Chris [Woodhouse] was keeping him in the dark on

everything.” Sarafis naturally assumed that the British were railroading Ehrgott because of his pro-EAM/ELAS sympathies. 242

When he was not engaged in bickering with Woodhouse, Ehrgott spent most of his time in Greece organizing an ELAS cavalry regiment with horses captured from the recently defeated Italians. A career soldier of the Seventh US Cavalry Regiment, Ehrgott was obviously enamored with horses – his favorite topic of conversation according to most accounts – and he was notorious for regaling friend and foe alike with stories of his unit’s exploits in this or that war. His dress was as colorful as his personality. “He still wore his cavalry hat, with strap under chin, his pegged cavalry breeches, now slightly out of press, and his high cavalry boots.” 243 In truth, few disliked Ehrgott. Even Woodhouse thought him “likeable and well-meaning,” but also dangerously naïve. 244 The new ELAS cavalry unit was named the Greek Squadron of the Seventh Cavalry Regiment in Ehrgott’s honor, and he did his level best to outfit and supply the unit, despite the standing Allied embargo of EAM/ELAS due to the still-raging civil war. 245

It is interesting to note that Sarafis, in his postwar memoir, suspected that Woodhouse allowed Ehrgott to oversee the training and supply of this cavalry squadron in order to get the American away from ELAS GHQ, where he was a thorn in the side of the British. Certainly, Woodhouse was perfectly content to allow Ehrgott “to gallop happily about the Thessaly plain at the head of his ELAS-US cavalry regiment, and to argue cavalry tactics with Sarafis, who thought him dotty but useful as a lever against

242 Sarafis, O ELAS, 209.
243 NARA RG 226/144 100/1051 “Moyers Diary, entry for 21 December 1943.”
244 Woodhouse, Something Ventured, 68.
me.” But it seems unlikely that Woodhouse had any role to play in the decision to form the unit since it only augmented the strength of EAM/ELAS in direct contravention of Allied policy. Indeed, when Lt. Colonel Paul West, the head of OSS/SO in Cairo, found out about the creation of the Greek Squadron, he was less than pleased. His picture of Ehrgott did not improve when, toward the end of September, the latter volunteered to lead a raid against a German airbase and succeeded in wounding himself in the backside with his own service revolver. Ehrgott, unfazed, applied to OSS for a Purple Heart.

Although Woodhouse seemed unperturbed by the behavior of Ehrgott, the same could not be said of his British superiors in Cairo who were receiving his reports, or for that matter, of the Greek government-in-exile and King George who, in a demonstration of how quickly information could fly across the Mediterranean, had also picked up on some rumors about likely American misconduct in occupied Greece. The king feared that OSS agents were plotting with EAM/ELAS to destroy the credibility of the monarchy. In early January 1944, the prime minister of the Greek government-in-exile, Emmanuel Tsouderos, relayed those fears to MacVeagh, the American ambassador in Cairo. Even though West had, by that point in time, already made the decision to evacuate Ehrgott and replace him with a more capable officer, the Greek government’s fears clearly revealed the delicate position of American agents in the field.

Tsouderos’ remonstrations prompted Ambassador MacVeagh to call in West and Rodney Young, the head of the OSS/SI’s Greek Desk in Cairo, for an accounting. After

---

246 Woodhouse, *Something Ventured*, 73.
assuring the ambassador that American operatives were merely observers and that the British were “taking the lead in secret work in Greece,” West deflected the ambassador’s concerns by pointing the finger at a downed American airman, Lt. Wallie Hughling, as the main source for the reports about American misbehavior. He went on to explain that airmen like Hughling were often rescued by EAM/ELAS guerillas after being shot down over occupied Greece and, as a result, “become partisans of those who rescued them.” In this particular instance, Hughling was, according to West, “stumping the country making speeches for EAM.” But he emphasized that these young pilots were not “OSS agents and the OSS is doing its best to get them out.”

As it happens, West was revealing only a part of the truth to the ambassador. On 21 October 1943, he had secretly (and controversially) flown into Greece to help evacuate eleven downed airmen shot down over Greece exactly one week before. According to West’s mission report, Hughling was not one of the airmen he intended to rescue although, as luck would have it, Hughling belonged to the same bomber squadron that six of the eleven downed airmen belonged to (the 513th) and had been shot down just a few days before them, on 5 October 1943. After his bomber was destroyed, Hughling and another survivor from his plane quickly made contact with members of the AMM in Central Greece and eventually with Ehrcott, who was the ranking American officer. After a few days in country, and around the time when the eleven airmen were shot down, Hughling was ordered north to Macedonia by Ehrcott, to “look over the

---

248 Iatrides, *Ambassador MacVeagh*, 429. The officer replacing Ehrcott was Major Gerald K. Wines.
country for cavalry use, see how the Andartes were armed, trained, etc., and if the
opportunity presented itself, [to] proceed to Yugoslavia to evacuate.” Ehrgott’s decision
to send the young pilot north was probably correct given the inclement weather and
increased Luftwaffe activity in the vicinity of the mission base. However, Hughling later
reported that Ehrgott sent him north without an interpreter, a negligent omission in light
of the tense political situation existing between the AMM and EAM/ELAS. Trouble was
inevitable. After Hughling arrived in a major ELAS staging area in the village of
Pendalofon in southern Macedonia, the local EAM leadership convinced him to give a
speech using one of their own interpreters. “The interpreter couldn’t understand English
very well and I found out later he misinterpreted my remarks to some extent…It seems
that I was presented as representing the US Government on a separate American
Mission.”

West’s subsequent comment to MacVeagh that Hughling was “stumping the
country making speeches” was consequently true, although it seems certain that
Hughling’s rhetorical stylings were not intended to benefit EAM politically.
Nevertheless, they did. The local British commander in Macedonia, Colonel Nicholas
Hammond, was not amused. In his final report, Hughling recalled that “Colonel
Hammond told me to discontinue my tour of the area. He gave me information as to the
condition of the Andartes. I sent Captain Ehrgott this information and also told him I was
going to proceed to Yugoslavia.” Hammond also insisted that Hughling clear things up
with the local EAM/ELAS leadership. Obviously embarrassed, Hughling complied. “I

---

informed the organization leaders that I did not wish to continue my tour and that I had no connection with the mission other than orders that I could proceed to Yugoslavia for evacuation."^251

OSS credibility, fragile at any rate in the eyes of its British rivals, was in danger of being lost completely. The fact that West chose personally to conduct the evacuation of the downed airmen at the time when reports about Ehrgott and Hughling were filtering into Cairo demonstrates this point clearly. However, West was motivated to ascertain the truth about American improprieties in Greece because of another, more pressing reason. By late 1943, two things were obvious: Germany was losing the war and the Allies were, at some point in the next few months, going to attempt a cross-channel invasion of the European continent. Therefore, a tertiary purpose of his trip was to coordinate guerilla resistance activities in anticipation of an imminent German withdrawal. The hope of Allied war planners was that a disciplined and united guerilla force under the leadership of experienced Allied officers could impede the retreat of German Army Group E and prevent Hitler from using it on either the western or eastern fronts with any sort of ease. The entire effort was to be codenamed *Noah’s Ark*. If the American and British members of the AMM could not cooperate, however, there was little hope that any of them could convince the guerillas to do so.

Be that as it may, the proposed West mission to Greece, codenamed *Operation Feather 3* and authorized by Donovan, angered the British, who had serious security concerns about the whole affair. West was a high-ranking officer. If he had been

---

251 Ibid.
captured by the Germans, the consequences would have been catastrophic. For example, his immediate superior, Colonel John Toulmin, the overall head of OSS Cairo, was aware of the launch date for D-Day. Still, Donovan felt that only someone of such high rank could iron out the personality conflicts bedeviling the AMM and convince the guerillas that the Allies were serious. The British nevertheless refused to approve of the transport of West despite Donovan’s personal intervention. In the end, West was forced to rely on trickery and used a false identity to evade detection.252

Once on the ground, West used the opportunity of his visit to publicly reprimand Ehrgott about accepting Sarafis’ offer to lead an EAM/ELAS cavalry unit into battle. “I was anxious to clear this matter up with the General [Sarafis], and proceeded to do so, before Capt. Ehrgott and the Greek Staff…I made it very clear that no American officer…could command any unit at any time.” West left neither Sarafis nor Ehrgott any room for maneuver: “[I] said that the Captain would be honored to serve as honorary commander of the unit only…we cannot and would not be affiliated in any way with any political organization.” In his after action report to Donovan, West revealed his anxiety – an anxiety also shared by the higher echelon of the OSS in Cairo and Washington – that his presence as a high-ranking officer in Greece could be construed by EAM/ELAS as implying American support for its political platform. West thus revealed the magnitude of his dissatisfaction with Ehrgott’s behavior by nevertheless deciding to risk such a

252 NARA, RG 226/154, 39/589, “West to Donovan – 16 November 1943.” The backdrop of the mission is well outlined in Cave Brown, Last Hero, 427-428. The historian Richard Clogg mentions the West mission as well although he seems to ignore its ulterior purpose of preparing the ground for the implementation of Noah’s Ark. He is thus confused as to why the Americans would take the enormous risk of sending their Chief of Special Operations on an otherwise routine rescue mission. See Clogg, “Distant Cousins,” 131-132.
misunderstanding of his motives in order to set Ehrgott straight. “The visit, however, was completely necessary from our angle as Capt. Ehrgott had already accepted this command, and reversal of this action had to take place immediately.”

It is interesting to note that West mentioned Hughling not at all in that same report. Of course, West’s risky foray into occupied Greece to get the airmen out proves that the Hughling episode was foremost in the minds of the OSS brass in the fall of 1943. But the primary target of West’s ire was still Ehrgott. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that, after his one ill-fated stab at political speech-making, Hughling never again made any noise either for or against EAM/ELAS. Significantly, Major Gerald Wines, the officer who took over command of the American side of the AMM after the recall of Ehrgott, never made any mention of Hughling’s political misstep in his detailed postwar memoir. On the contrary, Wines praised Hughling for doing a “jam-up job in building an airfield for small craft” and organizing a mule convoy to transport American and British commandos and their equipment “for field operations.”

It cannot be gainsaid that Hughling did engage in some questionable activity potentially harmful to the image of the AMM, as West later suggested to MacVeagh in January 1944. However, the ultimate responsibility for his innocent transgression still lay with his commanding officer, who failed to foresee what the lack of interpreter could mean in the politically charged atmosphere of occupied Greece. One cannot therefore escape the unavoidable conclusion that the true culprit West was referring to in his

---

254 Wines, “A Lesson in Greek,” 42.
conversation with MacVeagh was Ehrgott and that West was covering up the truth by
scapegoating an unknown pilot in order to shield the OSS from serious embarrassment.255

Ehrgott’s antics had, by that point, convinced West and his colleagues in Cairo
that he had to be replaced by a more senior and hopefully more mature officer.

Nevertheless, Ehrgott still managed to do some damage to Allied credibility while on his
way to the evacuation point. In a village near the coast where he was to be evacuated,
Ehrgott encountered a group of teenagers belonging to the EAM/ELAS youth group,
EPON [United Pan-Hellenic Youth Organization]. Thinking he was engaged in a casual
conversation, Ehrgott proceeded to recount some stories from his college days involving
games of intramural football. Unfortunately, the conversation was not at all casual as one
of the teenagers happened to be the local correspondent for the EPON newspaper.

…before Wink’s [Ehrgott’s] departure on the caique, a highly distorted account of
the interview burst into print. In this article, Wink was consistently referred to as
“the American Brigadier General Wink” – he was then a captain – and he was
made to say some very ridiculous things. Among the statements attributed to him
by direct quotation was one to the effect that there was a definite class struggle in
America: that he had attended a school in America where intramural sports pitted
the plebian against the aristocrat; that he got an intense personal satisfaction
whenever the proletarians bested the capitalists in “the football.” In conclusion,
“Brigadier General Wink” wished EPON and EAM/ELAS godspeed in their
struggle to rid Greece of its own tyrants – or words to that effect.

The intentional misquotation infuriated Ehrgott. He sent an angry letter (co-signed by his
immediate superior, Major Wines) off to Sarafis demanding a retraction and an apology.

Sarafis subsequently apologized and claimed to have reprimanded the author, but OSS

operatives were never able to ascertain whether an official retraction was ever printed. In any case, the damage was done.256

For his part, Ehrgott was unapologetic about his behavior after his recall to Cairo in December 1943. The central theme of his final report, titled “Intelligence on Greece,” was British perfidy. Ehrgott also made it plain that he reserved a special animus for Woodhouse, whom he attacked repeatedly throughout the course of his report. “I sincerely believe that he has courage and I know that he has done good work, even though I consider him one of the main obstacles to complete military unity of the various Greek parties.” Most of all, Ehrgott seemed to dislike Woodhouse because of his privileged background. “He was never forced to work for a penny in his life and has no idea of the ordinary problems of living that confront the Greeks in the best of times.” In reading the report, one also acquires the impression that Ehrgott resented the fact that Woodhouse was a professional academic in civilian life and he revealed that resentment with all the contemptuousness a military careerist could muster. “[Woodhouse] was commissioned in the artillery, but he couldn’t compute the firing data to hit the floor with his hat.” In a similar vein, Ehrgott obviously considered Woodhouse a first-class political operator. In referring to a piece of intelligence that Woodhouse decided at one point to share with him, Ehrgott stated that he “did not know the full details of the story but doubt they are as Chris gave them to me. However, I may be wrong, and if I am, it

would be a pleasant surprise to learn that Chris had at least one Sunday School lesson on the purity of truth that shot home.”

His denunciation of Woodhouse fit in with his general belief that the British were too concerned with playing political games in Greece and not enough focused on winning the war. All the guerillas needed, Ehrcott wrote, was some good old-fashioned military discipline and training that would serve to instill within them the proper fighting spirit. “I believe that only Allied officers can, at this time, breed such a spirit…[the guerillas should be] trained by US Cavalrymen who are thoroughly schooled in modern Cavalry tactics as taught at the Cavalry School at Fort Riley.” As for the British, Ehrcott believed that they should lose their arrogant air of superiority toward the Greeks and “abandon their age-old fight to suppress Russian influence in the Balkans.” In what was perhaps an indication that he was feeling some residual guilt for his role in the Hughling debacle, Ehrcott finished his report by commending highly “2nd Lieut. Wallace Hughling, Air Corps, US Army, for his energy, enthusiasm, resourcefulness, loyalty, courage, and efficiency during the time he was with me.”

The Ehrcott episode serves to highlight the challenges that many American operatives faced in Greece during the war. An able and courageous soldier who was, moreover, well-liked by his comrades, Ehrcott nevertheless lacked the necessary experience and acumen required to deal with the political realities of occupied Greece. His mission objective was deceptively simple: to concentrate on military matters and to win the war by cooperating with local resistance forces to cause problems for the

---

258 Ibid.
occupier. Upon arrival, he quickly determined that EAM/ELAS was the strongest
resistance group opposing the Axis, and so he threw himself into the task of improving its
fighting worth in the only way he knew how. His intense mistrust of the British was
somewhat atypical for an American officer, but seemed to be rooted primarily in the all-
too typical American dislike of British imperialism evident in many of his fellow OSS
comrades. He was confused as to why the seasoned British operatives were not as
enthused about the military potential of EAM/ELAS as he was. Undoubtedly, he was not
in a position to understand the complex geopolitical concerns that were superimposed on
the conflict between EAM/ELAS and the British. His experiences in Greece proved that
OSS officers had to be able diplomats and politicians as well as good soldiers, even
though they still had to abide by the directive to remain aloof from the political conflicts
racking the country and concentrate on winning the war. Fortunately for the OSS and the
American war effort, Ehringott’s successor, Major Gerald K. Wines, managed to
accomplish both of these objectives in his long tenure as the senior American officer to
the Allied Military Mission. Luckily for historians, Wines also managed to record his
experiences in a long and detailed memoir.
Chapter Six

Gerald K. Wines: Deputy Commander of the Allied Military Mission


Although technically under the command of British Colonel C.M. Woodhouse, Major Wines was the highest-ranking and longest-serving American officer in occupied Greece during his term of service. As the Deputy Commander of the Allied Military Mission, Wines was in a unique position to observe closely the events and personalities that shaped this crucial period in the history of Greece. Consequently, his memoir is a natural first stop for the researcher interested in gaining a deeper perspective on the political character of OSS wartime activities. Titled, somewhat self-effacingly, “A Lesson in Greek,” the Wines memoir represents one of the few first-hand American accounts of the occupation.

A very small number of OSS field operatives left written accounts of their experiences in the mountains of Free Greece, in contrast to the proliferation of memoirs authored by former British Liaison Officers (BLO’s) with the Allied Military Mission.259 In addition, Wines was not of Greek descent, did not speak a word of Greek (as the title of his memoir implies) and was certainly no academic. In civilian life an advertising

representative for a major Dallas-area newspaper, he had been a member of the Punitive Expedition to capture the Mexican guerilla chief Pancho Villa in 1916 and a veteran of World War I. One in-house OSS memorandum described him as “an old OSS lad.”

When he parachuted into Greece on 7 December 1943, he was thirteen days from celebrating his fiftieth birthday, the second-oldest OSS operative in active service during the war.

References to Wines in the available communist sources are infrequent but informative. In a report dated 14 April 1944 and issued by the regional headquarters of the ELAS 85th Infantry Regiment – attached to ELAS Ninth Division stationed in southern Macedonia – the local commanders gave their brief but intriguing assessment of both Woodhouse and Wines, who were at the time engaged in a long and grueling tour of various ELAS redoubts throughout central Greece. The purpose of the trip was to promote cooperation between the AMM and EAM/ELAS in support of the general Allied plan, paradoxically named Operation Noah’s Ark, to use native guerilla forces to harass the German Army in its retreat out of Greece. In the event, the expected German evacuation order was long delayed – it finally came six months later. After a lengthy description of the sensitive discussions on force allocation and weapons procurement, the ELAS representatives observed that:


261 For some biographical facts on Wines see also Richard Clogg, “Distant Cousins: SOE and OSS at Odds over Greece,” in Anglo-Greek Attitudes: Studies in History (London: Macmillan, 2000), 129. Also, see Livingston County, Michigan History and Genealogy Project, Hosted by www.USGenNet.org; available from http://www.memoriallibrary.com/MI/Livingston/WWI/Army/gkwines.htm; Internet; accessed 2 August, 2006, for a World War I-era photo of Wines and an abbreviated summary of his service in that war, although the given date of his birth is four years off. He was born on 20 December 1894.
...the British Colonel, with his steady, unchanging and total refusal to provide any sort of aid to ELAS or the local population and...with the characteristic coldness of his expression, made it obvious how much he disliked us...while the American Major, who wordlessly watched the discussion without asking once for any clarification or even once proffering an opinion, showed clearly that either he was in total agreement with his British counterpart or that he was his servile tool – if not a man utterly devoid of reason.\(^{262}\)

It is important to note that this passage stands out as the most detailed assessment of Wines extant in the available resistance documentation originating from the EAM/ELAS rank-and-file or from mid-level officers. In contrast, perusal of the literature emanating out of EAM/ELAS leadership circles reveals a wider variety of diverse attitudes. Sometimes the prevailing attitude could be non-committal, as in the case of KKE Politburo member Petros Roussos’ account of the war, *The Great Five Years,* wherein Wines is mentioned, but not described.\(^{263}\) Conversely, the ELAS commander-in-chief, General Stefanos Sarafis, seemed to trust Wines and even suspected, despite appearances, that Wines was hiding his pro-EAM feelings from Woodhouse in order to preserve inter-allied cooperation and amity. “The American Major Wines always shared Chris’ [Woodhouse’s] opinions. He never raised an objection. My own impression was

\(^{262}\) *Archeia Ethnikis Antistasis, 1941-1944* [Archives of the National Resistance, 1941-1944], Vol. 3, Greek Army General Staff, Department of Military History (Athens: 1998), 408. It is only fair to point out that Wines took an equally dim view of this particular ELAS officer, describing him as that “paunchy little fellow in Nine Div whose politics were all-powerful.” Gerald K. Wines, “A Lesson in Greek,” (Final Draft, 20 January 1948), Woodhouse Papers, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King’s College, London, 162.

\(^{263}\) Petros Roussos, *I Megali Pentaetia, 1940-1945: I Ethniki Antistasi kai o Rolos tou KKE* [The Great Five Years, 1940-1945: The National Resistance and the Role of the KKE] (Athens: Synchroni Epochi, 1982), 29. In this passage, detailing the conference in Plaka in February 1944 that was intended to end the, at that point, five-month long civil war, Roussos describes Woodhouse in scornful terms as “a proper Englishman of the Empire,” trained in intrigue and “long marches.” Although mentioned as present, Wines is exempted from similar treatment – an interesting omission, since, according to Wines, he and Roussos had a long and intimate conversation during the conference about the political situation in Greece. In all probability, the omission is due to the fact that, as Wines ruefully admitted, Roussos completely outmaneuvered him in that same conversation. “I learned the hard and dangerous way that I could not match wits with a mind trained to political argument.” Wines, “A Lesson in Greek,” 77.
that he had begun to discern the real shape of things and was sending the truth back to his headquarters in Cairo while not expressing himself openly here.”

Few would argue with the contention that Wines played an important, even critical, role in the mountains of Greece as an almost de facto American ambassador (by virtue of his rank and position) to the Greek resistance. It is therefore surprising that hardly any historians have made use of his memoir, the only available copy of which is now housed within the Woodhouse collection located in King’s College London. Of course, the fact that the manuscript is a memoir is problematic. In a historiographical article written a decade ago, historian Mark Mazower accurately bemoaned the prolific use of memoirs and personal diaries by historians of the occupation. The paucity or inaccessibility of other types of source material has historically forced researchers to rely on these dubiously reliable first-hand accounts, which have often the effect of distorting the historical picture, sometimes beyond succor. Many of the British memoirs were written some time after the end of the war, and some of the authors of these memoirs clearly referenced early historical works possessing information about the war that could not have been available to the participants involved. This disadvantage could be a contributive factor to the universal neglect shown the Wines memoir by historians, but that seems unlikely given the fact that Wines completed the manuscript in late 1947.

almost a year before the publication of the first major historical analysis of the occupation intended for an international audience: Woodhouse’s *Apple of Discord.*

Furthermore, historians cannot use the slow declassification of the OSS archives as an excuse in this case, mostly because the unedited Wines memoir has been available to researchers (and interested publishing houses) since at least the 1950s. Even those historians who have, in the past, drawn on OSS sources in either a substantive or partial way, like Lars Baerentzen in a detailed and well-researched journal article written in 1986 about the Soviet Military Mission to occupied Greece – based, in large part, on the records of OSS/SI operative Costa Couvaras – have not used the Wines memoir and often seem unfamiliar with its very existence. Indeed, in the bibliography of this study, only five secondary sources cite the Wines manuscript at all.

---

266 C.M. Woodhouse, *Apple of Discord: A Survey of Recent Greek Politics in their International Setting* (London: Hutchinson, 1948). Professor Ole Smith devoted an entire article to a critical reassessment of the numerous postwar memoirs written by British Liaison Officers in light of the fact that the circumstantial evidence (the style and tone of the narratives) seems to indicate that many of the authors were familiar with Woodhouse’s early and undoubtedly seminal treatment of the occupation years. See Ole Smith, “The Memoirs and Reports of the British Liaison Officers in Greece, 1942-1944: Problems of Source Value,” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 11 (Fall 1984): 9-32.


By way of contrast, it is important to note that Major Wines’ contemporaries were not silent, either about his character, or about his ability as an officer or a soldier. Ironically, some OSS assessments of Wines paralleled, to an uncanny degree, the views of the ELAS commanders quoted above. Moses Hadas, the head of the Greek Desk in the Research and Analysis Branch of Cairo Headquarters, wrote a series of memoranda to the overall head of the R&A office in Washington D.C., William Langer, that were highly critical of British foreign policy in the late summer of 1944, or just a few months before the German evacuation. In these memoranda, he also had many negative things to say about the senior American officer, Major Wines, whom he viewed as complicit in fostering a climate of unreasoning Anglophilia at a time when skepticism toward British intentions should have been the order of the day. A professor of classics at Columbia University in civilian life, Hadas, like many of his Cairo colleagues in the R&A branch (most of them fellow academics and classicists) distrusted the British and suspected those who did not share that distrust. He roundly castigated Wines in a series of reports, accusing him of being Woodhouse’s toady, “a political illiterate with no knowledge of Greek or Greeks, who seems to have followed Col Woodhouse about, flattered by the consideration shown him and uncritically echoing and giving wider currency to all Woodhouse’s attitudes.”

There is speculation that this scathing indictment influenced Donovan and he as a result eventually removed Wines from command, but this seems unlikely, especially

---

since most of the Hadas reports were written after the Woodhouse/Wines evacuation in June 1944. Nevertheless, during Wines’ tenure in Greece rumors, apparently generated from within the OSS, did start to circulate in Cairo that he was too close to Woodhouse and the British. The origin of these rumors is hard to pinpoint, although it seems highly probable that it was Hadas. In a situation report written to his superiors after his return to Egypt, Woodhouse stated, “I suspect that OSS fear Wines has become my yes-man. I hope it can be made clear to them that he would not be the slightest use to me if he were. I must have a second opinion and the fresher and more independent the better; and it is well-known that American opinions are often very fresh and very independent indeed.”

Hadas was, of course, a pure analyst and thus had to rely on the reports of field operatives to draw his negative conclusions. It appears improbable, however, as the historian Richard Clogg conjectures, that the originating source for Hadas’ intelligence was Costa Couvaras who, although certainly a friend of EAM/ELAS, was not in a position, before the Wines/Woodhouse evacuation, to comment on the relationship between the two leaders of the Allied Military Mission (AMM). Couvaras landed in Greece in April 1944, and it took him more than a full month to establish contact with the EAM Central Committee in Central Greece, as per his mission profile. Furthermore, Couvaras was an OSS/SI operative interested in keeping his mission secret from the British, so he could not, in any case, establish contact with the AMM under any circumstances.

---

271 Clogg, “Distant Cousins,” 137.
Careful perusal of the dates of the various missions and of the specific language of the Hadas assessments leads to one conclusion: Captain Winston Ehrgott was the source that Hadas used to disparage the character of Wines who was, of course, the replacement for Ehrgott as the head of the American side of the AMM. There is evidence to support this hypothesis. In one typical report, Hadas referenced Woodhouse’s privileged social background, portraying him as a “polished Oxonian,” disparaging his “congenital toryism” and making pointed references to his immaturity (Woodhouse was only twenty-six at the time). Similarly, in his final report to OSS HQ, Ehrgott described Woodhouse as “the twenty-six year old son of a British peer…a student in Greece or England, or about to become a professor of some sort at Oxford…who was never forced to work for a penny in his life” and emphasized that “[the Greeks] regard Chris and certain other officers as old-line British Tories.” Under the circumstances, Hadas’ obvious reliance on a dubious source like Ehrgott devalues his criticisms of Wines considerably.

Hadas was clearly biased against the British, and Ehrgott’s reports provided him with the perfect fodder. Interestingly, there is some evidence to show that some members of the non-communist resistance in Greece were also cognizant of Hadas’ stance toward the British and assumed that his opinions were typical of what they believed to be the pro-EAM OSS. The historian, writer, and industrialist Christos Zalokostas, future biographer of the Greek King Alexander I and a wartime member of the anti-communist

---

273 NARA, RG 226/1, 15/5 “Hadas Memorandum to Langer – 7 September 1944.”
274 NARA, RG 226/154, 39/598, “Capt. Winston Ehrgott: Intelligence on Greece – Undated.” Cogg records that Woodhouse pointed out that it was impossible for him to be a congenital Tory since both his father and grandfather were Liberal Members of Parliament. See Cogg, “Distant Cousins,” 195.
Athenian resistance organization National Action, later elaborated on what he and his comrades thought of Hadas and the OSS during the occupation. “This should be stated: that the OSS…agreed completely with the politics of EAM. The head of the organization was a gullible Hellenist, Hadash [sic], second-in-command was the EAMist Young, and the right-hand man of both was the Greek-American communist Petrou.”

In stark contrast to these negative perceptions of Wines stood the character assessment made by the American ambassador to the exiled Greek government, Lincoln MacVeagh. After Wines was evacuated, he had two lengthy discussions with the ambassador about the political situation in Greece. MacVeagh found Wines to be

…a very sensible fellow. In general, he agrees with Woodhouse’s views on the situation. Sees no hope of EAM’s joining the government and thinks that the proper (and only) way to handle the situation is to assume that EAM has patriotic motives and keep offering it chances to come in, not to attack it, as Papandreou has started to do…He also remarked in passing ‘one meets very few royalists in Greece. They don’t want the king back….’

Obviously, such a damning anti-royalist statement provides sufficient evidence to demonstrate Wines’ independence as a political actor in the complex drama being played out on the Greek mainland and in Cairo. Given the intransigence of Britain’s Greek policy during the summer of 1944, it is difficult to accept that even Woodhouse would

---

275 Christos Zalokostas, *To Chroniko tis Sklavias* [The Chronicle of Slavery] (Athens: Skaziki Publishing, 1949), 207. The name “Young” obviously refers to Rodney Young, the head of the OSS/SI Greek Desk in Cairo (see chapter eight). He was clearly not Hadas’ subordinate. Dimitris Petrou was a Greek civilian who worked with the SI Greek Desk as staff administrator in Cairo and, after the German evacuation of Greece, in Athens. Ironically, his file states that he came to the OSS from the British-sponsored “Free Voice of Greece” because he was disapproving of the communist thrust of its “material broadcast.” See NARA, RG 226/190 73/33, “OSS Personnel: Administrative – Undated,” and NARA RG 226/211 2/1, “Charles F. Edson, Acting Commanding Officer, OSS, Athens, Greece to Commanding Officer, OSS, Cairo, Egypt, re: Mr. Dimitri Petrou – 11 January 1945.”
have been so forthright or candid with his civilian leadership about the future of the Greek monarchy.276

Fellow officers on the ground in Greece, both British and American, were also positive on the ability and character of Wines. It is clear that many commented on and admired his honesty. Chris Jecchinis, a British-Greek commando attached for a time to the AMM, recounted with some pride in his postwar memoir the details of his first encounter with the American major. In that meeting, Wines commended him publicly in front of the mission staff for his successful efforts to rescue a number of downed American airmen. “Anywhere else it might have been melodramatic. But not up there in the mountains. At last I had done a job, a real job in the fight against the Germans.”277

Positive assessments also came from the medical head of the Allied Military Mission, the American Captain Robert E. Moyers, whose wartime diary has only recently been declassified and provides yet another important supplement to the primary source base. Although significant portions of the diary are missing or remain classified, specifically the parts dealing with the training portion of the mission in Palestine where Moyers and Wines first met – and where, consequently Moyers would have recorded his initial impressions of his soon-to-be commander – enough remains to demonstrate that Moyers certainly admired Wines. One characteristic passage described the first Christmas the two spent together in the Greek mountains accompanied by other British and American officers and hospitable Greek villagers, a holiday, incidentally, that Wines

also remembered fondly in his memoir. “Major Wines (yes he has his gold star now) gave some money so that the children of the village might have some sort of a Christmas. We took the few sweets that they [Wines and a few other officers] were able to get in Karpenisi and tied them up in bits of parachute cloth before presenting them to the children.”

If nothing else, the passage highlighted an empathic streak in Wines that steadfastly refused to view the Greek villagers as alien others but rather recognized them as fellow humans caught in the midst of a terrible struggle. Moyers was also positive on Wines’ military professionalism. In late February 1944, both Wines and Woodhouse participated in a historic meeting of all the major resistance factions in the village of Plaka, where an ultimately successful attempt was made to end the outbreak of violence and achieve some sort of reconciliation ahead of the expected German withdrawal. In a report from the field dated approximately two weeks after the conclusion of this meeting, Moyers commented that “Major Wines is doing an excellent piece of work. All of the men speak favorably of him: even the Andartes like him. And that is something.”

Similarly, when Wines was recommended for the Legion of Merit after his term of service in Greece was over – he received the medal in 1945 – Moyers gave him a ringing endorsement. Describing Wines’ pivotal role at Plaka, Moyers stated that the reconciliation “could not have been achieved without the presence of an American officer of the caliber of Major Wines. His sense of fairness and justice soon caused both factions to believe in him and to know that he was not an American figurehead representing

---

278 NARA, RG 226/144, 100/1051, “Moyers Diary – Entry for 21 December, 1943.”
279 NARA, RG 226/154, 39/591, “Moyers to West – 14 March 1944.”
others as they suspected but a man sincerely interested in stopping Greek bloodshed.”

In short, Wines emerges from the sources – whether Greek, British, or American – an enigmatic figure, a fact which, to a large extent, raises the historical value of his own narrative.

The doubts raised about Wines’ exact role in the mountains of occupied Greece, in part because of his close relationship to British mission commander Woodhouse, make it incumbent upon the researcher to examine his postwar memoir with a critical eye. A few years ago, Professor Ole Smith wrote an article laying out a comprehensive methodological criticism of the memoirs written by the British Liaison Officers: his general point at the time was (and it of course remains valid today) that these memoirs represent an obviously biased interpretation of events and any researcher interested in objectivity should treat them with extreme care. Smith went on to present various areas where the memoirs fail, due to both “subjective” and “objective” factors as he called them, to render an accurate picture of the historical reality. In presenting this detailed critique, Smith thus provided a useful methodological tool with which to examine all allied wartime memoirs, not just the British ones.

One of the objective factors Smith elaborated upon was the lack of adequate briefing on local conditions that, when combined with ignorance of the Greek reality and the Greek language, made some of the authors susceptible to propagandistic distortion, especially by fellow officers who did possess some knowledge of Greece and had already

---

formed their own opinions. In this regard, Smith singled out Woodhouse as a possible culprit. For example, Woodhouse, according to Smith, tended to whitewash the negative aspects of the Metaxas regime. Given that Wines was so close to Woodhouse and given his self-professed ignorance of the language and culture, it would seem wise to examine what his own viewpoints on Metaxas were, if only to establish how closely they conformed to Woodhouse’s own.

Fortunately, the Wines memoir is quite clear on this point. After a brief summary of the Greek political situation before the war, Wines had this to say about the connection between the Greek monarchy and Metaxas: “Was the charge of dictatorship against King George sufficient justification for his abandonment, before the Greek people had an opportunity to declare their will in the matter?...had not the Greek people complacently accepted the Metaxas dictatorship in preference to a threatening Communism and disorder?” Although the tone of the passage was apologetic and supportive of the notion that Wines, like Woodhouse, was willing to extend to Metaxas and his regime the benefit of the doubt, it did not reflect a total ignorance of Greek political realities and was certainly not as blithely oblivious to the concerns of the Greek citizenry during the Metaxas dictatorship as Woodhouse apparently was, who as late as 1948 stated, somewhat patronizingly, that the Greek peasant’s only “objection to Metaxas was based on a law restricting goats in the interest of reforestation.” If nothing else, Wines, in the above passage, significantly assigned the Greek people a measure of responsibility in the matter of Metaxas. By pointing out the complacency of the Greek populace at this crucial time in the political life of the country, Wines even went beyond the communist
paradigm – patronizing in its own way – that preferred to paint the regime as solely the imposition of a conspiratorial few and the Greek people as innocent dupes.\textsuperscript{282}

In his assessment of the British memoirs, Smith used the term “subjective” to denote those factors or biases that were inherent to the authors rather than objective realities beyond their ability to influence, like knowledge of the Greek language. Certainly the most important of these subjective characteristics that Smith alluded to, and a characteristic shared by all the British, and incidentally most of the non-Greek American officers, was a visceral aversion to the ideology of communism. It is beyond dispute that Wines was fervently anti-communist. At one point in his memoir, he declared melodramatically that the EAM/ELAS’ brand of socialism was “no mere academic sociology, no parlor-pink political philosophy, no fancied bogey which lurked in the shadows. This was a real and evil ogre which thirsted for blood and whose fangs would draw it from the veins of those Greeks when they had no strength to drive it off.”\textsuperscript{283}

Gothic imagery aside, it is hard to argue with the notion that the vehemence of Wines’ anti-communism was emblematic for an American military man of his generation. Indeed, his viewpoints in this matter differed little from Donovan’s own. What was unusual is that regardless of his obvious political bias, Wines was still rather open-minded when it came to the particulars, especially in regard to specific EAM/ELAS personalities. In his attempt to deal with the communists he encountered in the

\textsuperscript{282} Wines, “A Lesson in Greek,” 93; Woodhouse, \textit{Apple of Discord}, 57.

\textsuperscript{283} Wines, “A Lesson in Greek,” 121.
mountains fairly and on an individual case-by-case basis, Wines diverged from the more narrow-minded approach of the typical British officer.

One notable exception to this generally flexible mind-set was his attitude toward the most accomplished guerilla leader and overall political chief of ELAS forces, Aris Velouchiotis. Almost without exception, the OSS/SO officers stationed in Greece in the last months of the occupation shared the British revulsion for the infamous Aris, whose exploits and depredations were renowned in AMM circles. By his own admission, Wines was influenced, then and later, by the stories told of Aris by his fellow allied officers and by numerous Greek villagers. It should, however, be emphasized that since Wines first met Aris just a few days after the former’s arrival on the mainland, at least some of those stories might have been recounted to Wines while he was still in Cairo. In his memoir, Wines acknowledged that he had some preconceived (and negative) notions of Aris before his first meeting with the guerilla leader in December 1943. Nevertheless, he recalled that up to that point, only one Greek villager had approached him with tales of Aris’ savagery – tales he claims to have doubted at the time. Whatever the truth of the matter, the meeting between the two confirmed all his pessimistic assumptions. “There was evil in his heart, let there be no doubt about it; it showed in his hard, cruel mouth and in his glowering eyes.”

Doubts about the historical objectivity of the Wines assessment of Aris are multiplied when one compares his description of the famous guerilla leader to the description of a fellow OSS officer, Costa Couvaras. A Greek-American agent attached

\[284\] Ibid., 31-32.
to both OSS/SI and the Labor Desk, Couvaras was, according to his own admission, an EAM/ELAS sympathizer. His mission to Axis-occupied Greece, kept secret from the British and codenamed Operation Pericles, had as its objective the placing of an American officer within EAM headquarters for the purpose of establishing independent American contact with the communist leadership. After the war, Couvaras wrote a detailed account of his wartime experiences in Greece, OSS: With the EAM Central Committee (published in both English and Greek) in which he praised Aris as “the greatest hero of the Greek Resistance.” The account has been described by one prominent historian of the Greek Civil War as “vivid” due to Couvaras’ keen powers of observation and sympathetic understanding of Greek cultural norms. Many historians of the Greek Civil War make frequent use of the account and the declassified Pericles files upon which it is based in their scholarly work – certainly, a greater number than those who cite the Wines memoir. In situations such as this, it is almost a practical impossibility for the historian to determine the truth of the matter, and the character of Aris is reconstructed largely according to the scholar’s philosophical or political predilections.

Still, the case of Aris may be an exception. For example, a variety of individuals, not all of them opposed to EAM/ELAS, accused or suspected Aris of numerous war crimes during his time in the mountains. It should also be kept in mind that Aris was,

---

285 Couvaras, OSS, 14.
287 As noted above, Couvaras was a great admirer of Aris. But even he recounts two instances of Aris shooting members of his own band for relatively minor infractions, all in the name of maintaining ideological discipline. Couvaras seemed to believe that the ends justified the means but the comments of
after liberation, hunted down and killed by paramilitary supporters of the nationalist government (after he had been renounced by the KKE) because he had refused, following the EAM/ELAS defeat in the December Uprising, to lay down his arms as stipulated by the Varkiza Agreement of February 1945. The postwar testimony of Giannis Ioannidis is telling in this regard. Commenting on Aris’ defection, Ioannidis noted that “Aris was courageous but we could not trust him…we knew that Aris would one day cause trouble…Aris was always fearless…but he always had the air of the thug about him…he had a tendency toward thuggery.” Ioannidis then provided a startling example of that tendency.

So he would grab a boy like, for example, a shepherd boy. He would tell him: “stand there.” The boy would stand there terrified. Then Aris would pull the trigger and bam! - right next to the boy’s ear. Not to kill him of course. And then he would laugh it up with his crew. How many similar stories Siantos told me I can’t really say there were so many.

It is important to note that these were stories being circulated by Aris’ closest comrades who, despite his defection after the occupation, were still intent on demonstrating that they had not, during the war, allied themselves with a monster. In any event, the preceding passages demonstrate adequately the grudging admiration that Ioannidis had for Aris. However, even Ioannidis could admit that “you could not put such a man in charge of the entire armed struggle, in charge of a mass army like – we

---

288 Ioannidis was the second-highest ranking member of the KKE politburo during the war.
were thinking even in those days – ELAS would become.” It is little wonder then that Wines, in his memoir, recounts even more horrific tales of Aris’ wartime savagery. Nevertheless, a careful perusal of his memoir makes it abundantly clear that the reflexive revulsion Wines felt for Aris was singular and that his opinions on other key EAM personalities were, ultimately, far more nuanced.

For example, Wines’ observations on communists and communism seem moderate when compared to the carefully worded, but still relatively extreme, political opinions of British Colonel Nicholas Hammond. Hammond was Woodhouse’s second-in-command, his eventual successor as head of the AMM and, after the war was over, became an accomplished historian in his own right. A classicist in civilian life who already had a good working knowledge of Greece because of his prewar association with the British School at Athens (devoted to archaeological and classical studies), Hammond was a shrewd observer of Greek political life during the war. In his memoir, Hammond accused Wines of political naïveté and claimed to be relieved when Wines was replaced in Greece by Colonel Paul West the head of OSS/SO in the Mediterranean, shortly before the final German evacuation.

Certainly, the two men differed on a number of issues. One interesting point of disagreement was over the personality of General Stefanos Sarafis, the military commander-in-chief of ELAS. As outlined in previous chapters, Sarafis, a Venizelist

---

289 Giannis Ioannidis, Anamniseis: Provlimata tis Politikis tou KKE stin Ethniki Antistasi, 1940-1945, [Remembrances: Problems of the KKE’s Policy in the National Resistance] ed. A. Papapanagiotou (Athens: Themelio, 1979), 159-160. The “Varkiza Agreement” was the postwar agreement ending the so-called “Second Round” of civil conflict between EAM/ELAS and nationalist forces backed (in force) by the British in December 1944 (see below).

colonel before the war, had been impressed, through the use of force, into service for ELAS after an attempt to start his own armed resistance group in the mountains had failed. Like most observers outside the inner circle of EAM, Wines believed that Sarafis was a puppet of the communists after this episode. In actuality, and unbeknownst to all, Sarafis had become a communist secretly in 1943, a fact only revealed many years later. Hammond, who also saw Sarafis as a communist pawn, seemed contemptuous of the guerilla leader and called him, in his postwar memoir, “pitiful but in no way likeable.”

Wines, on the other hand, refused to see the man as a complete lackey. Reflecting a consensus among many of the OSS officer corps, Wines liked and respected Sarafis and considered him a courageous soldier and an authentic patriot, “a man of honor,” who consciously placed himself “in a position where he could strike a blow for his country.” Wines carefully distinguished between Sarafis and the EAM politicos, pointedly remarking that “his morality was on a plane immeasurably higher than that of the rest of his EAM bedfellows.”

There was also considerable divergence between Hammond and Wines on the personality of George Siantos, the wartime head of the KKE and the effective leader of the entire EAM/ELAS movement. Described by some wartime communists as a genial sort known for his modesty and lack of pretension, Siantos, a former tobacco sorter and a veteran of the Balkan Wars and the Ionian Expedition, was blamed subsequently by many of his comrades for the disastrous defeat suffered by EAM/ELAS in the Battle of Athens.

---

291 Ibid.
292 Sarafis’ surprising Damascene Conversion is described in chapters 2 and 3. Wines, “A Lesson in Greek,” 195-196. For another similar OSS opinion on Sarafis see NARA RG 226/144, 100/1051, “Moyers Diary – Entry for 3 February, 1944.”
in December 1944 at the hands of the British – two months after the German pullout. According to the postwar communist consensus, his alleged vacillation during that encounter doomed the entire EAM effort and more or less guaranteed communist failure in the civil war to follow. At least one historian has questioned the overall validity of these assumptions, but the fact remains that Siantos was certainly not the Machiavellian genius some of his wartime British opponents believed him to be.²⁹³

In his memoir *Venture into Greece*, for example, Hammond described Siantos as “ambitious for personal power and ruthless in his treatment of others; a fanatic but true to his convictions.”²⁹⁴ Additionally, in a series of wartime communiqués, Hammond tried, unsuccessfully, to convince his SOE superiors that Siantos’ ultimate aim was “to eliminate his rivals in the mountains and to seize power in Greece.”²⁹⁵ Although Wines had very little personal contact with Siantos – he only talked to him at length on a couple of occasions – he nevertheless managed to size up the communist leader’s personality and political role keenly. Wines described Siantos as a man with “quite a bit of simple charm in his manner. He looked for all the world like a caricature Norman Rockwell might do of some kindly old American mail carrier… [But] in spite of his disarming appearance we knew that he was not up here in the mountains delivering the rural mail.”²⁹⁶

A final point of comparison concerns another high-ranking member of the EAM Central Committee, the lawyer Kostas Despotopoulos, who was probably the third most

powerful member of the communist political hierarchy and, as such, had been chosen by Siantos to join the six-man guerilla delegation to Cairo in August 1943. In this instance, the opinion of Hammond was only somewhat caustic and essentially non-committal. “He had added to his battery of linguistic cross-fire all the duplicity of Communist dialectic. It was in part because of his skill in debate that we called him among ourselves ‘the slimy Despot.’ In our official dealings we had many friendly moments but were fundamentally antipathetic. His opinion of me was no doubt vitriolic.”

Col. Woodhouse, the overall commander of the AMM, also considered Despotopoulos to be a shrewd operator, albeit not without a certain ruthlessness endemic to his rank and position.

It is significant to point out that, when Wines first met Despotopoulos, the latter tried to persuade him of British duplicity, ostensibly to gauge Wines’ loyalty to Woodhouse. Wines was indignant at the assumption that the Anglo-American alliance was deemed to be that fragile in the eyes of the EAM brain trust. He informed Despotopoulos “that there could be no success in any attempt of his to drive a wedge between the Americans and the British…that we, the Americans, were only a minor part of the Mission in Greece, but we were a loyal part…” According to Wines, the speech had the desired effect. “[His] face turned red. Then he shrugged his shoulders as if the matter had not been of any importance.” This first inauspicious meeting between Wines and Despotopoulos makes his concluding comments on the man all the more surprising, as it seems that Wines harbored some grudging admiration for the EAM commissar. “I

297 Hammond, Venture into Greece, 123.
often said, in the mountains, that although I feared his cunning and distrusted his protestations of friendship, I had to respect him: If I were charged with some particularly nasty, revolting piece of criminality, his sense of morality would not keep him from defending me with all his strength...there was a certain morality in that!”

II. Major Wines in Axis-Occupied Greece: December 1943 – June 1944.

It has been necessary to show the moderation of Wines’ political opinions in order to counteract the negative perception, largely the fabrication of an overzealous R&A Cairo analyst who was demonstrably anti-British, that he was Woodhouse’s puppet in the mountains of Free Greece. Certainly, he did not ever publicly disagree with Woodhouse, although that fact did not preclude some friction with other members of the British mission. Wines was undoubtedly an inveterate Anglophile. However, he seems to have arrived at that attitude more through his wartime experiences and less through any predisposition toward British culture or even because he happened to agree with British foreign policy. In fact, throughout his memoir, Wines made it patently clear that he, like the crushing majority of his fellow OSS officers, was not in favor of restoring the old world order of imperial powers and colonial rule. Winning the war meant making an honest attempt to “bring order out of chaos” and the only way that could be accomplished would be to “permanently compose the differences of the warring factions, with all their incompatible ideologies.” However, the first order of business was to attain victory, and disloyalty to a fighting ally was, for Wines, a grave offense. He had occasion to ruminate on that perceived lack of fidelity to Britain – especially, in his opinion, on the part of the

American press corps – when he and Woodhouse were (temporarily) recalled to Cairo in June 1944.

Why, I asked then, and ask now, is our democratic freedom of the press of such…importance that we must criticize and embarrass our British allies with our continuous harpings on “imperialism,” “colonial policy,” “divide-and-rule,” and all the other familiar catchwords, while these same British allies are fighting, shoulder to shoulder with us…against a clever, murderous enemy? Apart from all considerations of the truth or falsity of the criticism, is there not ample time, when the war is over, to make our accusations and bring our censures?\(^{300}\)

The close relationship shared by Wines and Woodhouse permitted the two to present a united front to the EAM/ELAS leadership throughout the period from December 1943 to June 1944. Allied amity, in turn, was one of the contributive factors in EAM/ELAS’ decision to agree to a truce after the brutal civil war between its forces and the forces of EDES that raged in the late fall of 1943. Wines, in fact, seemed to believe that the cessation of hostilities in the final week of December 1943 was due to his request for a Christmas truce to celebrate the holidays – a mark, perhaps, of his initial political naiveté.\(^{301}\) The failure to dislodge Zervas’ forces from Epirus due to spirited British support in the form of arms and supplies, the negative public image created by EAM/ELAS’ evident desire to temporarily ignore the German occupation in favor of eliminating its principal rival, and the increasingly obvious unlikelihood of a major Allied invasion of the Balkans, were all far more important factors in convincing the communist leadership to agree to end the fighting. Still, Wines’ suggestion did provide EAM/ELAS with a nice face-saving out, allowing its leaders not only to display

\(^{300}\) Ibid., 235; 209.

\(^{301}\) Ibid., 45.
magnanimity in victory, but also respect for Christian tradition, a not unimportant consideration in rural Greece.302

After some requisite political maneuvering, the truce resulted in the pivotal Plaka Conference of February 1944. The talks, held between EAM/ELAS, EDES, and the smaller EKKA [National and Social Liberation], with the AMM in a supervisory role, and with Col. Woodhouse authorized to simultaneously represent the Greek government-in-exile, permanently ended the civil conflict for the duration of the German occupation. It also demarcated, with extreme precision, those territories belonging to each of the three major resistance groups. The terms of the treaty forbade the groups from encroaching on one another’s territory or even recruiting members in the areas controlled by their rivals. As deputy commander of the AMM, Wines principally concerned himself with delineating what role each group was expected to play during the expected German withdrawal, harassment of the retreating Wehrmacht by resistance forces being the overall point of Noah’s Ark. During the discussions, his only recorded contribution was to insist on some form of unified command for the entire resistance, at least until the Axis evacuation, an idea that never really materialized as the three factions could not agree on a mutually acceptable candidate.303

Ironically, the chief EDES delegate to Plaka, Komninos Pyromaglou, ultimately nixed the notion of a unified command. EAM/ELAS’ military superiority immediately prior to the armistice meant that any agreement on an overall leader would effectively put

the two weaker factions even more under the thumb of the communist-led organization. Wines and Woodhouse understood the difficulty but envisioned a loose command structure open to Allied input. In addition, EAM/ELAS argued, cagily, that “territorial demarcation intensified the partisanship already existing, dissipated all hope of unity and set up lines which would interfere with military action against the Germans.” Although this was true in the abstract, both Wines and Woodhouse realized that, in practice, the refusal to demarcate specific areas for each group would mean the eventual annihilation of EDES and EKKA by EAM/ELAS when the time was right. In return for its insistence on separate areas of control, the AMM was prepared to accept a unified command structure, provided an acceptable candidate to all parties could be found.304

Predictably, this never happened. EAM/ELAS made a further request that elections be held throughout free Greece to form a national resistance government, but this was something no one else wanted. Given the enormous swath of territory under the control of EAM/ELAS, elections would have translated into a large number of votes for its proposed representatives. The request was rejected. For the EAM/ELAS delegates, this was not a major loss, since they were already by that point intent on calling elections in the territory they controlled directly in expectation of challenging the Greek government-in-exile’s authority and legitimacy by forming a large, coalition government (PEEA) in “Free Greece.”305

Despite these drawbacks, the Plaka Agreement, signed by the leaders of all the major factions and by Woodhouse and Wines on 29 February 1944, represented a major diplomatic achievement for the AMM. The civil war was indefinitely postponed, the autonomy of EDES (and EKKA) was officially recognized, and joint guerilla operations against the Axis occupier were possible. 306 Their respective offices in Cairo congratulated both Wines and Woodhouse, but the British colonel went out of his way to thank his American subordinate for his unwavering support. The Secret War Report of the OSS highlighted the role of Wines: “The senior American officer on the Allied Military Mission to Greece was credited by the British Mission Chief with major responsibility for the agreement.” 307

Presiding over the Plaka Agreement marked the political zenith of Wines’ tour in occupied Greece, although he continued to pursue energetically the goal of coordinating the Greek guerillas for the purposes of Noah’s Ark. Woodhouse’s praise for Wines’ loyalty was not undeserved. It seems certain that, if Ehrgott had been still in command of the American side of the mission, an agreement between the factions would have been much harder to achieve. The value of Wines’ commitment to a working partnership with the British was also recognized by his immediate superior in Cairo, Lt. Percy Wood (USNR), who, as a result, put his name forward for the prestigious Legion of Merit, the

highest decoration Wines ever received as a member of the American armed forces over the course of two world wars. 308

Real cooperation between the three major resistance organizations remained a chimera, of course, and just one month after the Plaka Conference, in mid-April 1944, ELAS guerillas, under the personal direction of Aris, dismantled EKKA forcefully for the third and final time, murdering its chief, Col. Dimitrios Psarros, along with a number of his closest companions, and scattering the rest of its leaders into exile or vengeful collaboration with the German occupier. However, the tiny size of Psarros’ group, combined with its unfortunate geographic position in Central Greece surrounded on all sides by significant ELAS military units, practically rendered its dissolution a foregone conclusion. Conversely, the EDES forces, of considerably larger size than the EKKA units, well-supplied by the British, and ensconced in the mountains of Epirus, remained largely safe from ELAS attack. The value to the Allied cause of the permanent cessation of hostilities between the two largest guerilla factions until liberation could not be underestimated. What rearguard operations did occur between the signing of the Agreement and the German withdrawal in October 1944 occurred as result of the fact that EAM/ELAS and EDES had foresworn violence against each other in Plaka. The AMM also gained much respect in the mountains of Free Greece for its peacemaking role in Plaka. Similarly, the contravention of the Plaka Agreement by EAM/ELAS just a month

after its signing lost that organization many friends and almost all of the political capital it had so painstakingly accrued over the course of the occupation.\textsuperscript{309}

Immediately following the talks, Woodhouse and Wines began a long and arduous inspection tour of all AMM stations in Central Greece, Thessaly, and Western Macedonia. The tour was completed almost exclusively on foot, its ostensible purpose being to coordinate Allied sabotage teams and local guerilla garrisons to undertake those operations stipulated by \textit{Noah’s Ark}. Unfortunately, the Germans disappointed Allied planners by not evacuating the country as expected. In short order, EAM/ELAS began to suspect that it had been duped into cooperating with the AMM and with EDES for no real reason, as the Germans seemed intent on staying for the foreseeable future. In his memoir, Wines revealed his and Woodhouse’s frustration at this unexpected turn of events. “The Mission had honestly expected the evacuation to be under way by this time, and frankly, in order that the \textit{andartes} would be ready for it, we had told them that it might be started in mid-March.” The two Mission commanders understood that, in all probability, only a cross-channel invasion of the European continent could compel the Germans to evacuate Greece, but they, of course, did not know either when or if such an invasion would ever occur. Nevertheless, the tour continued, if for no other reason than to bolster the fragile peace between EAM/ELAS and EDES.\textsuperscript{310}

Woodhouse conducted the tour, codenamed \textit{Mobility}, at a blistering pace. In the course of the long march, Wines acquired a double hernia. Unfazed, he fashioned his

\textsuperscript{309} According to the historian David Close, the Psarros murder weakened greatly the bargaining position of the EAM delegates at the Lebanon Conference, called by the then Prime Minister of the Greek Government-in-Exile, George Papandreou in May 1944, with the purpose of forming a government of national unity. See Close, \textit{Origins}, 112-114.

\textsuperscript{310} Wines, “A Lesson in Greek,” 161.
own homemade truss and continued to march the “high trails…with fair assurance of staying together.” The fast pace, interrupted only by intense planning sessions in the various villages where Mobility alighted, did not permit either Woodhouse or Wines to ascertain the real truth about Psarros’ apparent murder, since it took them a few weeks to learn about the atrocity. Even when they did find out what happened, their range of actions was limited given the lack of real proof, the fragility of the ceasefire, and the demands of Noah’s Ark. In late April 1944, in Koutsaina, a small village in Thessaly, where another three-way round of talks was scheduled to take place, Wines and Woodhouse waited for days, but the two EKKA delegates slated to attend the discussions never arrived. Although the talks continued with just the representatives of EAM and EDES present, Wines became suspicious as to the whereabouts of the EKKA men and questioned the EAM representative, Despotopoulos, about them. The question was straightforward and fair. To travel anywhere in Greece, EKKA representatives first had to cross through EAM/ELAS territory because Psarros’ base of operations was surrounded completely by ELAS military outposts. It was therefore unlikely that EAM/ELAS would have been unaware of their location. Nevertheless, Despotopoulos, according to Wines, foreshowed any knowledge of their existence.\footnote{Ibid., 175-177. Wines’ determination to soldier on with a double hernia and a homemade truss impressed everyone. However, according to the medical head of the AMM, Capt. Robert Moyers, the problem eventually became so acute that he was forced to recommend Wines’ evacuation in June 1944. NARA, RG 226/154, 39/591, “Capt. Robert E. Moyers to Colonel Paul West – 30 October 1944.”}

A few days later, in the village of Viniani, Wines decided to begin an investigation into the matter. He sent one of his OSS operatives, Lt. Nick Tryforos, to Psarros’ base in Klima to “investigate all angles of the EKKA affair.” In short order, the
EAM leadership got wind of the investigation. A group of EAM political commissars invited Wines to a private (i.e., without Woodhouse) meeting in another village near Viniani, where they showed him the sworn “confessions” of the two EKKA delegates that had never appeared in Koutsaina. Significantly, Wines’ “examination of these papers showed that they had been signed at the very time EAM/ELAS was disclaiming knowledge of their whereabouts.” The content of these confessions is reproduced in Sarafis’ memoir, ELAS. One of the men admitted to supposedly having received orders from Psarros to “complain constantly that ELAS is causing trouble for us.” According to his testimony, the men were then to liaison with Woodhouse who would have put them into secret contact with the EDES representatives in order to create a “common partnership” to attack ELAS. The other accused member of EKKA began his own confession by citing the Plaka talks, admitting that “the EKKA delegation [at Plaka], acting under the express orders of Colonel Chris, torpedoed the suggestions of the EAM/ELAS delegates that represent the general will of the fighting Greek people.” This was a curious admission, since this particular man was not even at the Plaka Conference.\textsuperscript{312} Wines deduced, no doubt correctly, that this was “another of their [EAM/ELAS’] continual attempts to drive a wedge into the unity of the Allied Military Mission” and professed that he “could not shake the feeling that [the confessions] had been obtained by force and torture.” When he queried the EAM representatives about “where the men were now,” their response was non-committal.\textsuperscript{313}

\textsuperscript{312} Sarafis, \textit{O ELAS}, 285-289. Sarafis does not state what happened to the men who signed those confessions, nor do the names appear in any other sources.\textsuperscript{313} Wines, “A Lesson in Greek,” 188.
Thinking pragmatically, Wines was loathe to lay the entire blame for the alleged massacre on Aris, despite reports that he had been spotted in the vicinity of Klima in mid-April when the murders were supposed to have occurred. Wines reasoned that, although Aris often acted on impulse, his natural savagery was an invaluable asset to the EAM/ELAS leadership. It afforded them the opportunity to wash their hands of his more heinous crimes, while at the same time taking full advantage of his ferocity to eliminate their dangerous – or vulnerable – rivals. Aris was the most powerful ELAS chieftain, a fact that also put the members of the AMM in a tough spot. “For the Mission to have demanded Ares’ arrest and punishment would have resulted in the eradication of all of us.”

In due time, Nick Tryforos sent Wines a series of detailed reports outlining, as best as could be reconstructed through eyewitness accounts, what really happened in Klima. As expected, Tryforos’ reports differed from the official EAM/ELAS version in a few key areas. The most important discrepancy concerned the specific circumstances of Psarros’ death. According to the testimony of the ELAS commanding officer, General Mandakas, Psarros had been wounded fatally in a battle that he had instigated with the local ELAS garrison. Sarafis, in his memoir, also records that Psarros was killed in action. However, the eyewitness accounts that Tryforos collected told a different story. First, the reports revealed that it was ELAS that had initiated the battle by raiding EKKA territory. Second, the raid into EKKA territory had been inspired and led by Aris who, countermanding orders from ELAS GHQ to go to the Peloponnese, had decided, on

314 Ibid., 177.
315 Sarafis, O ELAS, 283.
his own personal initiative, to detour to Central Greece to wipe out EKKA. Finally, Psarros had been captured alive and had been carried off by ELAS forces “with his hands tied behind his back.” A little more than a day later, villagers found his body in a ditch “riddled with bullets.” It should be pointed out that Tryforos was no friend of Psarros while in Greece, having described him in his final report to OSS as lacking the ability to “command a band of ten andartes let alone a regiment.”

The known facts were therefore disturbing and not just to the members of the AMM. General Sarafis, the overall military commander of ELAS, was devastated by the news of Psarros’ death. He had been an old friend of Psarros going back to the period before the war when they had been republican officers together. Both were subsequently persecuted for their political beliefs by Metaxas. Sarafis was furious with Aris for having countermanded the orders of ELAS GHQ – essentially Sarafis’ own orders since he was the commander-in-chief. As a committed communist now, Sarafis was willing eventually to give Aris and the others who participated in the action the benefit of the doubt, but he came to that decision with obvious reluctance. It is possible that Sarafis would have pursued the matter further, with serious repercussions for the unity of EAM/ELAS, had not the EAM/ELAS leadership decided at that juncture, in May 1944, to make him part of the EAM delegation heading to Lebanon to engage in unity talks with the prime minister of the Greek government-in-exile, George Papandreou. Cynical or coincidental, this was a wise decision on the part of EAM/ELAS, since Sarafis later admitted in his own memoir that he had demanded a full inquiry into the death of his friend – especially after

he found out that Aris was in large part responsible for the massacre – but was distracted by his impending trip to Lebanon. In the event, upon his return a few days later, the trail had grown cold, and he was forced to accept the official EAM/ELAS version. At least for him, the matter was closed.\(^{317}\)

The matter was closed too for Wines and Woodhouse. As overwhelming as the oral testimony was, it still did not amount to solid proof, and even solid proof would not have been enough at that point in time to shake Aris from his perch at the top of the ELAS power structure. On the contrary, panicked by the course of the investigation, EAM/ELAS in late May sent a shrill letter to Cairo demanding the replacement of Woodhouse and Wines in their capacity as investigators of the EKKA affair. EAM/ELAS requested that new officers be sent from Egypt to conduct the investigation since it did not trust any of the Allied officers currently operating in Greece. The request was rejected. For Wines, however, the request, and the discomfiture of EAM/ELAS it represented, had provided a “fine – if unintended – testimonial to the astuteness of the entire Mission personnel as political observers.”\(^{318}\)

---

\(^{317}\) Sarafis, *ELAS*, 283. It should be noted that the KKE has never published the relevant archives about the murder of Psarros in their entirety even though Aris was expelled from the KKE and officially repudiated in 1945. The incomplete material that has been published seems to confirm the worst. In a 1997 publication of a portion of Aris’ personal archives, the editor, a self-professed communist and admirer of Aris, notes that the guerilla leader admitted that, during the Psarros affair, he extracted information from prisoners through torture and also that “mistakes” were made of “…another kind (mass executions of prisoners in obvious locations away from the site of battle, plundering, arson, etc.).” The editor goes on to question the KKE’s determination to keep these events secret. “Why, really, after fifty years, must these and other comments be censored?” See Grigoris Farakos, *Aris Velouchiotis: To Chameno Archeio – Agnosta Keimena: I Stasi tis Igiasias tou KKE apananti ston Ari Velouchioti, 1941-1945* [Aris Velouchiotis: The Lost Archive – Unknown Documents: The Stance of the KKE toward Aris Velouchiotis, 1941-1945] (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 1997), 295, n. 6.

\(^{318}\) Wines, “A Lesson in Greek,” 189.
In the end, no one was punished for the murder of Psarros. However, EAM/ELAS suffered a serious loss of credibility, both at the unity talks in Lebanon and among Allied war planners in Cairo. Woodhouse and Wines had managed, even after the murder, to spirit away from the country Psarros’ closest political advisor, George Kartalis.\textsuperscript{319} Kartalis subsequently found his way to Lebanon as a recognized emissary of EKKA and used the opportunity to lambaste the EAM delegation, accusing it of faithlessness, brutality, and duplicity. Paradoxically, in order to deflect criticism that it was too leftist in political orientation, EAM’s communist leadership had decided to staff its delegation in Lebanon with noted centrists, among them Sarafis and the newly elected prime minister of its provisional government (PEEA), the socialist professor of constitutional law, Alexander Svolos. These men, old friends and comrades of Psarros, were especially vulnerable to Kartalis’ attacks and might therefore have been more motivated to come to some sort of understanding with the other political parties in Lebanon to disprove the notion that EAM/ELAS was a power-hungry organization bent on the violent takeover of Greece after the war was over.\textsuperscript{320}

In Cairo, the alarming unpredictability of EAM/ELAS, coupled with the June invasion of Normandy – which was, in turn, expected to precipitate a rapid German withdrawal from the Balkans – propelled both the SOE and the OSS to recall Woodhouse and Wines for a series of emergency conferences. Wines was, in any case, suffering

\textsuperscript{319} Ibid., 117.
\textsuperscript{320} Close, \textit{Origins}, 112-114. Hagen Fleischer, the prominent historian of the occupation period, in at least one article, argues that the Psarros murder had a negligible effect on the deliberations of the EAM Central Committee in Greece and on Greek popular opinion on the mainland. This may be so, but he ignores its impact on the EAM delegation in Lebanon. See Hagen Fleischer, “The National Liberation Front (EAM), 1941-1947: A Reassessment,” in John O. Iatrides and Linda Wrigley, eds., \textit{Greece at the Crossroads: The Civil War and Its Legacy} (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 59.
acutely because of his double hernia. On 14 June 1944, Wines climbed aboard the
British Lysander that was to take him to Cairo. Once there, both he and Woodhouse were
invited to participate in a series of meetings, with General Bernard Paget of GHQ Middle
East, with Brigadier Karl Vere Barker-Benfield of Force 133 (SOE), with various OSS
station chiefs, and twice with Lincoln MacVeagh, the American ambassador to the Greek
government-in-exile. Wines believed that the authorities in Cairo seemed intent on
ascertaining whether EAM/ELAS would cooperate indefinitely with the British and with
Papandreou’s government without resorting to violence, but both he and Woodhouse
were pessimistic on that score. His convalescence lasted a month and a half and then he
was allowed to go on leave for two months to visit his wife in the United States. But his
term of service in Greece was not over. In Cairo again by 7 October 1944, Wines
received orders to once more enter Greece, this time to help in the evacuation of OSS/SO
personnel from the country since the German withdrawal had begun in the first week of
that month. Wines landed in Greece on 31 October 1944, just in time to witness the
buildup to the “Second Round” of civil conflict that broke out between EAM/ELAS and
the British in the first week of December.\footnote{Wines, “A Lesson in Greek,” 197-212.}
Chapter Seven

Civil War


Wines’ reassignment to Greece in October 1944 demonstrated clearly the enormous trust that his superiors in Cairo had in his political judgment and in his experience. However, the tense political situation complicated his task of evacuating the remaining OSS/SO personnel from the country. The German withdrawal had left huge swaths of the countryside under EAM/ELAS control. Pockets of anti-EAM forces existed, in Epirus, the Peloponnese, and Macedonia, but these were isolated from each other and surrounded by hostile, well-armed, and confident ELAS units. The anti-communist forces were divided ideologically, lacking cohesion and central direction. Some of these groups, though certainly not all of them as EAM propaganda insisted, had also been tainted by collaborating with the occupier. Additionally, as there had been no Allied landing, the anti-EAM bands were vastly outnumbered by their ELAS rivals, who had captured as well most of the weapons the withdrawing Germans had left behind.322

The political situation in the capital was more ambiguous. Couvaras, who was in Athens at the time, described the capital as a city “divided in two.” Certainly, the half of the population that supported EAM seemed to him to be “stronger and certainly better organized,” in contrast to their opponents who were suffering, in his opinion, from a

crisis in leadership. Still, Couvaras could not but help observe to a leftist friend he had known during the occupation that “Athens is not like the Mountain. There is a great deal of anti-EAM sentiment here.” Both sides recognized that control of the capital would be vital in the coming power struggle. Athens was a city on the brink of revolution.

The Greek government-in-exile, escorted by a small number of British troops, arrived in Athens on 18 October 1944, just six days after the departure of the last German soldier. The conference in Lebanon in May 1944 meant that it was now officially a government of national unity. The delegates in Lebanon had agreed that EAM would hold seven of the twenty-three ministerial portfolios. Because of a separate agreement signed just prior to liberation in Caserta, Italy on 26 September, ELAS forces were placed under the direct command of the British Lt.-General Ronald Scobie, the military head of the liberation expedition. ELAS troops were barred from the Athens metropolitan area and from Zervas-controlled territory in Epirus. The Caserta Agreement further prohibited EAM/ELAS from trying, though not from arresting, suspected collaborators. But it did authorize the organization to keep the peace in the countryside while the government solidified its authority in Athens. In a few key areas like the Peloponnese and Eastern Macedonia, however, EAM/ELAS decided to ignore some of the restrictions

---

323 Couvaras, OSS, 149.
placed upon its overall authority by these agreements and ruthlessly attacked its more vulnerable opponents.\textsuperscript{325}

Papandreou appeared determined to consolidate his authority in the teeth of communist defiance. Despite the fact that most essential municipal services in the capital, including a sizeable number of police, were under EAM’s direct control, he was bolstered by unstinting British support. But his government had no real authority outside of Athens and he, as a relatively unknown prewar politician, would have to work hard to rally the anti-communist forces over to his side.\textsuperscript{326}

In contrast, EAM’s hold on the countryside was absolute. Captain Edward Kimball, an OSS/SO officer stationed in central Greece from July to November 1944, described the situation vividly in his final report: “The majority of the population in the Levadhia area was in a continual state of anxiety as to what EAM proposed to do either through ELAS or the EP [Civil Guard], the party police.” When Kimball and the regional British liaison queried the local EAM political commissar about the mounting violence, his response was illuminating.

A very small percentage of the population, he explained, were war criminals in that they were German collaborators. These people may be distinguished by their violently pro-British attitude. This pro-British attitude must not be confused with the pro-Ally attitude maintained by the majority of the population. There is a


further means by which these people may be detected and that is the fact that they are “uneducated.” Actually the meaning intended there was uneducated in the party doctrine, as the majority of people in this category are the most intelligent and the people with the best education.\footnote{NARA, RG 226/154, 39/576A “Operational Report of Captain Edward Kimball, Jr. – Greece, 24 July to 11 November – Undated.”}

In other parts of Greece, where EAM felt more threatened or insecure, the outlook for the civilian population was even more dismal. Fed up with the unceasing guerilla demands for supplies and the practice of forced requisitions, the population in parts of western Macedonia grew restive in July 1944. An abortive ELAS offensive resulted in brutal German reprisals and the villagers accused EAM/ELAS of failing to protect them. According to the local OSS/SO liaison, EAM responded with a “reign of terror.” Once again, the targets were primarily “teachers and priests” and control was finally reestablished at “the expense…of many beatings and several deaths.” By the time of the German evacuation, large parts of western Macedonia had been largely brought to heel through these methods.\footnote{NARA, RG 226/154, 39/568, “Lt. Henry F, MacLean, USNR: Report of Activities and Military Action, Area No. 1(Western Macedonia), Greece – 1 February 1944 to 1 November 1944 – Undated.”}

Complicating matters for both the communists and their opponents was the dire humanitarian situation. In brief, “the country’s devastation was almost beyond description.”\footnote{Iatrides, \textit{Revolt in Athens}, 133.} The withdrawing Germans had wreaked havoc on the infrastructure of the country and sown terror among its citizens as they desperately tried, with help from a small number of dedicated collaborators, to cow the guerillas into desisting from impeding their retreat. In July 1944, an OSS observer stationed near Volos, Thessaly’s
largest port city, reported that the Germans and their collaborationist allies had, over the month of May, turned the city into a “slaughterhouse.”

The possibility of widespread famine and disease was real and neither side could deny it nor fail to realize that the distribution of relief would be an important way to gain added political influence. Conversely, standing in the way of such aid would earn the censure and hatred of the populace. In the short term, EAM/ELAS had gained much by pursuing and eliminating black marketers and distributing essential commodities acquired through forced requisition and heavy taxation of the propertied and well off. Still, such practices could not be maintained indefinitely without incurring the permanent wrath of the productive classes. And although the Americans were interested in contributing to the post-liberation relief effort, their obvious disinclination to get directly involved in Greek affairs in any meaningful or official way meant that the distribution of food and medicine would politically benefit only the British.

It is possible, as some have contended, that Roosevelt’s insistence before liberation that the US should be concerned strictly with relief in Greece after the German withdrawal was prompted by his fear of enduring postwar commitments. Or he may have thought that American political or military interference in the domestic affairs of a liberated allied country constituted a breach of the spirit of the Atlantic Charter. Whatever his reasoning, in a letter to Secretary Hull, the president made it clear that American troops would not participate as part of the liberation force. Those few

332 Frazier, Anglo-American, 60.
American soldiers slated to distribute aid would be placed under the authority of the office of the Allied Military Liaison, later changed to Military Liaison (ML) to emphasize the lack of American involvement in potential combat operations.\textsuperscript{333} Ambassador MacVeagh, displeased with this course of action, nonetheless went about the task of implementing State Department policy assiduously.\textsuperscript{334} As there were no more Axis troops to fight, the decision was made to withdraw the OSS/SO missions and the Operational Groups. However, plans had been drawn up as early as February 1944 to leave in place some of the OSS/SI missions in order to gather intelligence for the benefit of “agencies like ML and UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration]” and “the American Embassy.”\textsuperscript{335}

The issue of overriding concern in the days following the German withdrawal was the future disposition and status of ELAS forces. Both Papandreou and EAM’s communist leaders were interested in resolving this problem expeditiously. The universal expectation was that ELAS would form the core of the new national army. Papandreou had to accept this reality for two outstanding reasons. First, EAM/ELAS greatly outnumbered its opponents both within and without the capital. Before November, there were no Greek troops in the capital loyal to Papandreou. Second, the British liberation force was purposefully kept small due to the exigencies of the ongoing campaign in Italy.

\textsuperscript{333} United States, Department of State, \textit{Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Quebec, 1944} (Washington, D.C., 1972), 212-17.

\textsuperscript{334} Iatrides, \textit{Ambassador MacVeagh}, 466-7. MacVeagh felt that meaningful American involvement at this stage would make civil war more unlikely.

\textsuperscript{335} “Capt. G.F. Else, Report on Activities – 31 January 1945,” (NA Microfilm Publication M1642RI, roll 83, frame 773); OSS Record Group 226, NARA, College Park, MD. This plan to keep intelligence teams in place was dubbed the “Young Plan” in honor of Rodney Young, the man who did the initial planning on the project.
and because British commanders were well aware that the Americans would balk at the transfer of a large number of troops to a liberated sector while the issue in northern Europe was still in doubt. In December 1944, British troops in the capital did not exceed 2,000.\textsuperscript{336}

Although estimates vary according to source, one noted historian places the ELAS total in September 1944 at somewhere between 45,000 and 50,000 frontline combatants throughout mainland Greece with an unarmed reserve force of about 25,000-30,000.\textsuperscript{337}

At EAM’s disposal was also a 5,000-strong lightly-armed militia force called the Politophylaki (Civil Guard), the elite core of which formed the sinister Organization for the Protection of the Popular Struggle (OPLA), the terrorist organ of the KKE used to enforce ideological conformity on friend or foe.\textsuperscript{338} In Athens itself, EAM/ELAS was able to circumvent partially the restrictions placed upon it by the Caserta Agreement by introducing into the city a large number of unarmed ELAS reservists. Weapons depots and ammo dumps were created on the outskirts of the greater metropolitan area in case of emergency.\textsuperscript{339} Total ELAS forces in or near the capital by December numbered at least 20,000.\textsuperscript{340}

\textsuperscript{338} Iatrides, \textit{Revolt}, 158; Charles R. Shrader, \textit{The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-49} (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 24. In modern Greek the word “opla” means “weapons,” but in classical Greek the word hoplon referred to the standard infantryman’s massive shield. Since this was the most distinctive part of his panoply, the average Greek soldier was referred to as a hoplite or “shield man.” EAM’s communist leadership may have been referencing the ancient designation in choosing the acronym, though its opponents probably would have disagreed with that hypothesis.
\textsuperscript{339} Thanasis Chatzis, \textit{I Nikifora Epanastasi Pou Chathike: Gegononta, Anamineseis, Skepses}, [The Victorious Revolution That Was Lost: Facts, Remembrances, Ruminations], vol. 3 (Athens: Papazisis
Through discussions with a well-placed, mid-level cadre, an OSS/SI source located near ELAS GHQ in northern Thessaly (Trikala) confirmed that the ELAS high command had been at least pondering the seizure of power since December 1943. It seemed that the communist leadership was hoping to affect such a coup with minimal violence. Nevertheless, they were also not averse to contemplating scenarios in which combat with British troops might be required. To that end, ELAS had been carefully choosing its battles with the retreating Germans, attempting to keep casualties to a minimum, conserve valuable ammunition, and capture as many arms as possible before the final Axis withdrawal. “Tanks that were well concealed outside of Larisa [the largest city in Thessaly] were never deployed against the retreating Germans; they were later destroyed in the battle of Athens. The ELAS army was more than on one occasion held back from attacking the retreating Germans by the Commissars.” Interestingly, the source for this intelligence informed the OSS officer that ELAS was counting on American airdrops for resupply in the coming showdown with the British, whether delivered directly to them or indirectly “through Tito.”

Colonel Paul West, who OSS Cairo had sent to Greece in July 1944 to replace Wines, confided to MacVeagh, upon his return to Egypt in October, that he too thought that EAM/ELAS was waiting for the ideal moment to seize total power. In this discussion with the ambassador, West described George Siantos, the head of the KKE, as

---


the “cleverest person in Greece.” West was convinced that Siantos was biding his time because he was afraid of the British but, he assured MacVeagh, that in the event of a British withdrawal, “the picture [would] change sharply.” He held this opinion despite the fact that he was certain that the Russians, who had sent a military liaison team to EAM’s mountain headquarters in late July under the command of Lt. Colonel Gregori Popov, would not want to support EAM/ELAS directly. Conversely, he felt that the monarchy was highly unpopular in Greece and the king would do well to “not now try to return.” He was also pessimistic about Papandreou’s plan to integrate “any loyal elements to be found in the ELAS forces” into the emerging national army. The humanitarian situation was so dire that West believed that Papandreou should just concentrate on “bringing down prices and bringing in food.”

OSS/SO operatives that had been stationed in various parts of Greece throughout 1944 confirmed these assessments repeatedly in their final reports to Cairo. Lt. Joel Hartmeister, who like Wally Hughling was a former airman shot down over Greece and recruited into the OSS by Woodhouse and Wines, eventually ended up working as the American liaison in western Thessaly. In his final report he questioned the Allied wartime commitment to EAM/ELAS. “My feelings are that we have created a more or less Frankenstein monster in Greece which will make demands and be difficult to bargain with in the future. The guns and ammunition that has [sic] been supplied to the andartes [guerillas] will never be given over to any other force.”

Similarly, Lt. Daniel

---

342 MacVeagh to US Department of State – 28. October 1944,” (NA Microfilm Publication M1642RI, roll 83, frames 646-647); OSS Record Group 226, NARA, College Park, MD.
Barnwell, operating out of eastern Thessaly since May 1944, was certain that EAM/ELAS would make a play for power.

It is my belief that no matter what EAM/ELAS says they do not intend to submit to the present Greek government…they do not like nor do they intend to put up with Papandreou. EAM is a powerful and fairly well armed organization. They are not to be taken lightly. They will not hesitate to do anything to gain their ends – even murder and terrorism. However, they are smart and tricky and propaganda is probably their most powerful weapon. It will take a strong firm hand to keep Greece from having another and very bloody civil war.  

Apparently, Papandreou was just as convinced as OSS/SO in the inherent weakness of his position, because in early November he invited a brigade of the exiled Greek army to Athens from Italy. The so-called “Rimini,” or Third Mountain Brigade, was composed solely of officers and enlisted men who had refused to join a communist-inspired mutiny against the British in Egypt in April 1944. Neither EAM nor the KKE were involved in planning the spontaneous mutiny which was instead caused by a local communist agitator. Nevertheless, the mutiny afforded the British and Papandreou an invaluable opportunity to purge the exiled Greek army of all leftist sympathizers thus leaving a rump core of troops whose political loyalty was above reproach.

Numbering almost 4,000 troops, the Mountain Brigade was soon joined by a field artillery regiment composed of strictly royalist officers known as the “Sacred Battalion”

\[345\] George Alexander, *The Prelude to the Truman Doctrine: British Policy in Greece, 1944-47* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 36-7. Rimini is a small town in Italy. When the Allies attempted to liberate the town in late August 1944, they set off the largest battle of the Italian campaign. The Greek troops performed with distinction in this battle, and were the first Allied soldiers to enter it a few weeks later in September, thus earning the brigade its nickname. See Sir Reginald Leeper, *When Greek Meets Greek* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950), 93.
and numbering about 1,000 troops. Together the two units dramatically changed the balance of power in Athens. Though ELAS reservists still outnumbered pro-government forces roughly 2-to-1 in the metropolitan area, the new troops represented a credible threat to EAM/ELAS. They were experienced, heavily armed, and could rely on British air support in the event of an outbreak of hostilities. Their presence also complicated the plans for the general demobilization of ELAS, since it was now obvious to the communist leaders of EAM that Papandreou anticipated that the Mountain Brigade would also form the core of the embryonic national army. In a postwar study, Woodhouse described the presence of the mountain troops as “provocative,” not hiding the fact that he believed the decision to bring them to Greece had been both hasty and irresponsible. It would have dire consequences.

Wines, who personally witnessed the arrival of the Rimini troops, described the reception they received from the massive Athenian crowd on hand to greet them as they marched into the capital as “wildly enthusiastic.” According to his final report, the thunderous welcome surprised him as, prior to the arrival of the brigade on 9 November, EAM/ELAS had, for ten days in a row, organized a series of closely controlled street demonstrations. Nominally, the huge demonstrations were supposed to mark the twenty-sixth anniversary of the founding of the KKE (4 November 1918), but Wines believed that they had the ulterior purpose of intimidating EAM/ELAS’ opponents into quiescence. The communist-controlled press immediately published a series of articles

---

347 Iatrides, Revolt, 152.
348 Close, Origins, 139.
calling for the Mountain Brigade’s demobilization “...giving the unassailable reason that it had been under arms for four years and deserved a return to civilian life.” Papandreou’s government ignored the request.  

Just before the arrival of the Mountain Brigade, on 7 November, Papandreou had named General Alexander Othonaios the commander-in-chief of the national army. Othonaios, a left-of-center Venizelist in politics, was also a close friend of Sarafis, whom he immediately chose as his second-in-command. Significantly, Othonaios had been the candidate that EAM/ELAS had put forward to lead the united guerilla forces at the Plaka talks in February, and neither Zervas nor Psarros had at the time raised any serious objections despite the eventual failure of the conference because of other factors. He was therefore a good choice to lead the new national army, but the arrival of the troops from Italy entirely changed the communist strategy. Though EAM had agreed in principle to dissolve ELAS in October, it had done so on the understanding that all armed groups, of whatever political persuasion, would be disarmed simultaneously. Clearly, the mountain troops had to be included in the general disarmament since they posed the most direct threat to EAM/ELAS’ objective of monopolizing military power after liberation. An American observer questioned the communist insistence on this point given the weakness of Papandreou’s government and the impressive strength of EAM/ELAS in the Greek countryside. Nevertheless, EAM’s leadership was committed to the notion that the

350 NARA, RG 226/154, 39/576, “Major G.K. Wines to Chief of OSS, Cairo, Egypt: Recent Developments and the Present Political Situation in Greece – 9 December 1944.”
351 Iatrides, Ambassador MacVeagh, 642.
rightist troops had to be disbanded and disarmed before any other matter could go forward.\textsuperscript{353}

But British Ambassador Leeper and General Scobie resolutely opposed any such disarmament, and the Mountain Brigade remained a thorn in EAM’s side. Faced with the non-compliance of the EAM ministers in the unity government, Papandreou bowed to communist pressure and on 20 November offered to give the Mountain Brigade “generous leave.”\textsuperscript{354} Matters were by this point proceeding precipitously to a climax. The communist leaders of EAM were worried that even if there eventually was a universal demobilization, some of the officers of the new national army would have to be nominated by the government. Naturally no agreement could allow them to monopolize the selection process. EAM/ELAS had made many enemies during the occupation, and it was therefore not in a position to trust that the government’s selectees would be politically reliable. The British were equally peeved at Papandreou’s apparent vacillation and strongly opposed his proposed concessions. They insisted that the previously accepted date for general disarmament, 10 December, put forward originally by Scobie, be adhered to without deviation. After the failure of a last round of talks, Sarafis left for Thessaly on 29 November to prepare for what now seemed the inevitable showdown.\textsuperscript{355}

Refusing to believe ill of Sarafis, Wines, in his final report, speculated that the guerilla general’s departure may have been prompted by the fear that “his life would be imperiled should he desert ELAS,” though he acknowledged the rumors that emphasized

\textsuperscript{353} William Hardy McNeill, \textit{The Greek Dilemma; War and Aftermath} (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1947), 155-6. The noted historian was the assistant American military attaché to the Greek government at the time of the December Events.

\textsuperscript{354} Alexander, \textit{Prelude}, 71.

\textsuperscript{355} Iatrides, \textit{Revolt}, 171; Sarafis, \textit{O ELAS}, 533.
Sarafis’ loyalty to EAM/ELAS over his loyalty to the Papandreou government.\(^{356}\) A day prior to Sarafis’ departure there was a last minute attempt to solve the crisis. On 28 November Papandreou agreed to a proposal, originally drawn up by three of his EAM ministers, that stipulated the demobilization of all armed groups in Greece except for the Mountain Brigade and Sacred Battalion and an equal strength ELAS brigade. Yet within a day the EAM ministers reneged on the idea. It is possible, as one scholar has theorized, that the articulation of such a plan demonstrated a lack of communication between the EAM ministers in Papandreou’s government and the communist leadership of that organization. Numerical superiority was the only advantage ELAS held over its potential opponents, who were both better armed and more disciplined. Giving up this advantage would have been tantamount to military and political suicide and so it seems likely that the EAM ministers erred in positing the plan in the first place.\(^{357}\)

EAM/ELAS now made preparations for war. Communist paranoia but also British intransigence had led the nation to the brink of civil conflict. On 2 December the EAM ministers resigned from Papandreou’s government and on that same day Siantos ordered the EAM central committee to begin organizing mass demonstrations in Athens. A general strike was supposed to follow on the 4 December. Meanwhile, he ordered ELAS units from the provinces to prepare to fight, though he hesitated to move large bodies of troops to Athens immediately, perhaps because he feared that any overt moves might alert the British or alarm the moderate members of EAM.\(^{358}\)

\(^{356}\) NARA, RG 226/154, 39/576, “Wines to Chief of OSS, Cairo – 9 December 1944."
\(^{357}\) Iatrides, *Revolt*, 175.
\(^{358}\) *Keimena tes Ethnikes Antistases* [Documents of the National Resistance], with a foreword by the editors of the Historical Section of the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party, vol. 1 (Athens:
Wines, who according to his memoir was staying at a hotel near the heart of downtown, reported that already by the evening of 2 December, “EAM and the KKE” had staged at least one loud, boisterous, and “effective demonstration.” He vividly described the commotion as “megaphonists appeared in all parts of the city. They rang the church bells furiously, and surged through the wards and suburbs shouting, ‘Tomorrow is the day! Arise and strike against the collaborators!’” Clearly, the effect was intimidating even to the British who “…hastily assembled [tanks] on all sides of Omonia [Concord] Square.”

On the morning of 3 December, a Sunday, a massive column of demonstrators marched toward the administrative heart of the capital, Syntagma [Constitution] Square. Not far from where Wines had been staying near Omonia Square, Syntagma Square was where the Parliament building was located. Other critical governmental office buildings were situated nearby. The police and gendarmerie slated to guard these locations were nervous as early that morning a grenade had exploded near the prime minister’s residence. As the demonstrators approached the square, the police fired upon the crowd for no apparent reason. When the smoke cleared, the morning light revealed that more than a dozen people had been killed and dozens more wounded. This massacre of

361 Wines, “A Lesson in Greek,” 225. Omonia Square is at the center of Athens. In his book dealing with the December Events, John Iatrides wonders whether even the highly disciplined EAM organization had the ability to call off the huge demonstration – assuming it desired to do so – that was slated to occur the following day, on 3 December. Wines’ description would seem to argue that the organization did indeed possess that ability. Iatrides, Revolt, 188.
362 “Capt. G.F. Else to Lt. Edward G. Wilson, Acting Chief OSS, Cairo Egypt – 10 December 1944” (NA Microfilm Publication M1642RI, roll 83, frame 686); OSS Record Group 226, NARA, College Park, MD.
innocent civilians gave EAM/ELAS the excuse it needed to strike back at its opponents with impunity, confident that it now occupied the moral high ground. \(^{363}\)

It remains an open question whether EAM/ELAS had sought such an outcome, but from a long-term strategic perspective it was a fortuitous turn of events for the communist leadership. \(^{364}\) The non-communist moderates were now motivated to make common cause with their more extreme brethren and public opinion both at home and abroad ranged firmly behind the organization. And despite the doubts raised over the years by historians possessing the benefit of perfect hindsight, EAM/ELAS could be certain that, on that fateful morning, its forces in the Athens metropolitan area outnumbered those of its main opponents by a considerable margin, and its prospects for an outright military victory were therefore excellent. \(^{365}\)

EAM/ELAS attacked government forces the same day. It seems certain that the communist leadership of the organization discounted, in the words of one historian, “the danger of effective British intervention.” \(^{366}\) Additionally, Siantos and his colleagues failed to demonstrate the same predilection for military strategy that they had shown for political maneuver and intrigue. The fighting, which eventually involved all the British troops in the Athens metropolitan area, lasted the entire month. Outside of Athens, EAM/ELAS and the British desisted from attacking each other, though that did not stop ELAS troops from attacking all of EAM/ELAS’ remaining Greek opponents in the

---

363 Close, Origins, 137.
366 Close, Origins, 135.
countryside. Zervas’ EDES was obliterated in Epirus; formerly collaborationist villages in Western Macedonia were reduced and destroyed, and Tsaous Anton’s nationalist bands in Eastern Macedonia were wiped out. But Athens was the key to the whole struggle and there EAM/ELAS was defeated decisively.367

The ramifications of the so-called “Second Round” of fighting between the communists and their opponents were profound. The British and their Greek clients broke the strength of EAM/ELAS in the Battle for Athens and the submission of the communist-led organization in the rest of Greece was thereafter inevitable. EAM/ELAS also sullied its reputation by committing various atrocities against helpless civilians during the month-long civil war. On 12 February 1945, defeated and humiliated, the leaders of EAM/ELAS were forced to sign the Varkiza Agreement which forced them to disarm and demobilize ELAS and excluded them from participating in the new government. The extreme right, now in control of the state’s security infrastructure, vengefully hounded and persecuted many former guerillas, whether communist or no, in the long night of counterrevolutionary reaction that followed EAM/ELAS’ defeat. By making life intolerable for all former ELAS guerillas, many of whom had simply joined the organization out of purely patriotic motives, these horrific persecutions in turn assured that the cycle of violence would continue for years to come.368

Since Wines evacuated with the last of the OSS/SO personnel on 3 December 1944, he was not in Greece to witness the violence. Within the OSS, and especially

367 NARA, RG 226/190, 74/9, “Report of Elephant Mission – Undated.” The events surrounding the fall of Tsaous Anton are dealt with in a subsequent chapter.
368 Iatrides, Revolt, 287-88.
within the ranks of OSS/SI, there were many voices that placed a large amount of blame for the violence on the British, and especially on Churchill, whose steadfast but irrational support for the king and refusal to take EAM/ELAS seriously doomed all efforts at compromise. Captain G.F. Else, senior OSS/SI officer in Greece during the December Events, for example, in a characteristic report written during the height of the conflict in Athens, made the following observation: “I cannot overstate my impression of the inflexible and yet bumbling way in which [the British] have handled this whole affair…they have on two crucial occasions vetoed agreements reached by the government itself which might have forestalled actual hostilities.”  

Other OSS/SI agents were even more forceful in their denunciation of British policies, Couvaras going so far as to state in his wartime journal, published after the war was over, that “…the British and their rightist Greek allies caused the current civil war, for which they share the additional responsibility of having fired the first shots and spilled the first blood.”

Wines did not share these opinions. Though he recognized the indiscriminate massacre of civilians on 3 December as a tragic and “terrible” event, he refused to lay the blame for what followed on the Papandreou government or the British. “I am entirely convinced,” he wrote in his memoir, “that if this incident had not occurred, some other incident would: some other pretext would have been found; EAM/ELAS was spoiling for bloodshed.”

For him, EAM’s motivations were obvious: “…the Communists are absolutely insistent now…that the existing institutions must be leveled to the ground

---

369 “Capt. Else to Lt. Wilson, Acting Chief OSS, Cairo Egypt – 10 December 1944” (NA Microfilm Publication M1642RI, roll 83, frame 686); OSS Record Group 226, NARA, College Park, MD.
370 Couvaras, OSS, 179.
before their own ideology can succeed and that in the razing of the present social institutions there must be an actual blood purge of each and every person who believes in the established order."

Colonel Paul West, his commanding officer and erstwhile replacement, held similar opinions about EAM/ELAS. The contrast between the viewpoints of these two high-ranking OSS/SO officers on the one hand, and a good majority of their OSS/SI colleagues on the other, is therefore striking and suitably illustrates the difficulties involved in generalizing about the politics of the OSS as an organization.

II. Reflections on the Wines Experience.

In his nearly seven months in Greece, Wines had the opportunity to witness EAM rule in the mountains of Free Greece from the vantage point of an outside observer. During the course of his extensive travels, he participated in, or bore witness to, some of the more pivotal moments of the occupation: the Plaka Agreement, the Psarros murder, and the December Events. He either met or was on intimate terms with most of the significant personalities of the resistance, men such as Aris Velouchiotis, Napoleon Zervas, George Siantos, Stefanos Sarafis, and Chris Woodhouse. Neither a professional soldier nor an academic, Wines was completely unfamiliar with Greece or the Greeks before the war began. Consequently, it may be safe to assume that his viewpoints are emblematic of a typical middle-class American of his generation and are as such unsullied by prior knowledge or preconceived notions, his hatred of communism the one notable exception. It is therefore surprising that his memoir and his reports have received

---

little attention from the scholarly community, an error of omission that this study has attempted to rectify.

Though it is doubtless the case that Wines detested communist ideology, it is also plainly evident that he did not allow that prejudice to color significantly his opinions of individual communists. Moreover, unlike many of the British officers stationed in Greece during the occupation, he treated Greeks with respect and compassion. It is telling that nowhere in the sources is he ever described, even by those who disagreed with him politically or considered him to be Woodhouse’s tool, as either arrogant or overbearing. Sarafis, who knew both the leaders of the AMM well, distrusted Woodhouse, but seemed to consider Wines a sympathetic fellow traveler.

From the historian’s perspective, however, his lack of familiarity with prewar Greece is an impediment in at least one major respect. Not knowing how life was like under Metaxas, Wines was in no position to judge the scope of the social changes wrought by EAM in the mountain redoubts of Free Greece. Without a historical frame of reference, his insights often lack depth and this is perhaps why many researchers have passed up on examining his memoir or his career too closely. But those looking for pointed social commentary and sophisticated political analyses have a plethora of other memoirs and reports to refer to. Wines was, according to all who knew him, an excellent officer, and he seemed to have at least earned the trust of most people he encountered, whether communist commissars or illiterate villagers. His experience thus provides useful lessons about the nature of EAM rule in Axis-occupied Greece, the ambiguity of
American wartime foreign policy, and the contradictions to be found at the nexus between military expediency and political calculus in a time of war.

It should be noted that EAM/ELAS as an organization did little to change Wines’ political biases during his tenure in the mountains. He arrived in Greece at the height of a civil war that EAM/ELAS bore the principal responsibility for inaugurating. From the beginning he was, according to his lights, surrounded by evidence of communist ruthlessness as Zervas was almost hounded to extinction and Greek fought against Greek with little thought to the war effort against the occupier. During the subsequent Plaka negotiations, Wines was impressed with the ideological depth and commitment of the EAM representatives and became even more convinced that EAM/ELAS was less a national coalition of patriots and more a communist front organization whose goal was to subvert the old order and impose its rule once the Germans evacuated.

For Wines, the clearest manifestation of EAM’s treacherous side was the persecution and murder of Dimitrios Psarros. A thorough investigation proved that EAM/ELAS had orchestrated the showdown between its forces and those of EKKA and also that Aris, the most famous of ELAS’ captains, was involved directly in the crime and subsequent cover-up. The fact that Psarros had been a centrist and a friend and erstwhile comrade of ELAS’ commander-in-chief, Stefanos Sarafis, demonstrated to Wines the truth of the contention that, though EAM and ELAS were far from monolithic organizations, the communists ultimately controlled both of them.

As if more proof was necessary, the days leading up to the December Events reconfirmed for Wines the reality of communist dominance over EAM/ELAS. He had
been convinced that EAM/ELAS would attempt an immediate coup in the event of a German withdrawal when he left Greece the first time in June 1944, and neither EAM’s moderate turn, exemplified most clearly by its willingness to join Papandreou’s government of national unity, nor its initial adherence to the requirements of the Caserta Agreement, managed to dissuade him from this belief. Though he provided no explanation for EAM/ELAS’ apparent reluctance to seek an immediate reckoning in his memoir, it is probably safe to assume that he agreed with his colleague Paul West that its failure to do so was probably the result of a realization that a military showdown with the British would be inimical to its long-term interests. When the reckoning finally came, it confirmed to Wines what he had always suspected: “that EAM – ostensibly a “united front” of all the popular Greek political parties – has been so prostituted by the powerful cellular organization of the KKE that it is now, for all practical purposes, the KKE itself.”  

For all their ability to shed further light on the murky origins of the Greek Civil War and on the internal structure of the OSS in wartime, the Wines records are in no way representative of the bulk of American raw intelligence coming out of Greece during the occupation. Intelligence-gathering was the primary responsibility of OSS/SI and the branch did its job well. The officers and enlisted personnel of OSS/SO were not concerned with collecting intelligence but in physically harming the enemy. The historical record is therefore heavily weighted in favor of OSS/SI. This imbalance is problematic from a methodological standpoint because many OSS/SI agents were Greek-

373 Ibid.
American, sympathetic to the EAM movement, and uniformly suspicious of their British allies in the SOE. These factors make study of the Wines record all the more critical.

Yet, as the foregoing chapter has demonstrated, Wines was not without his flaws as a political observer and his bias was not just the result of his background or ideological predilections. As an OSS/SO operative, he was required, by virtue of his operational profile, to work closely with the British. Even if one momentarily ignores the question of ethnicity or experience, the fact that Wines was in close proximity to British personnel, sharing personal hardship and physical danger with them on an almost daily basis, meant that he was more likely than his – by dint of occupation – solitary OSS/SI counterparts to view the British with a sympathetic eye. Moreover, the seemingly congenital American loathing of communism colored his opinions of EAM, while it appears that both he and West may have shared the well-trained soldier’s disdain for the ill-disciplined guerillas of ELAS. In brief, it is fair to posit that OSS/SO field operatives held a generally dim view of EAM/ELAS and this attitude seems to conform more closely to the opinions and beliefs of their superiors in Cairo and Washington.

What all this of course implies is that it would be a disservice to the cause of historical objectivity to base a study of the political conflicts engendered by the occupation and resistance exclusively on the experiences of an OSS/SO officer, no matter his rank or standing. The next chapter will therefore deal with the wartime reports and experiences of arguably the most significant OSS/SI agent operating in Greece during the occupation: Aleko Georgiades. Of Greek descent and distrusting of the British, Georgiades was on the opposite end of the political spectrum from Wines. Though not a
communist, he was a great admirer of EAM/ELAS and remained sympathetic to the cause of the Greek Left after the war was over. Stationed in a faraway corner of Greece, in the Evros prefecture of Western Thrace, Georgiades had no contact with any other OSS mission until after the German evacuation and was not under the command of the AMM. He was essentially an independent operator, a fact which lends his political conclusions a singular weight, and he was fortunate enough to come into contact with and observe a regional EAM organization that was, throughout the duration of the occupation, effectively cut off from its national headquarters and thus forced to develop organically in complete isolation from the party leadership. Georgiades therefore represents the ideal antipode to Wines and studying his mission files can certainly aid in providing a fuller historical picture of the resistance.
Chapter Eight

The OSS in the German-Occupied Evros, Sep. 1943 - Sep. 1944: Part I

I. Greek-Americans in the OSS: A Reappraisal of the Georgiades Files.

Despite the many approaches that attempt to explain the root causes of the Greek Civil War from an interdisciplinary perspective, certain assumptions are shared by multiple scholars, regardless of political ideology or chosen methodology. Commanding the broad allegiance of a large number of researchers of the occupation, one such assumption posits that EAM/ELAS rarely instigated wartime violence but was often victimized by it. Political scientist Stathis Kalyvas has been roundly castigated for stating that this assumption is at present “hegemonic,” even among those scholars (Kalyvas terms them “serious”) who try scrupulously to avoid making prejudicial suppositions or inserting language into their research that might reveal political bias. But even a cursory examination of the secondary literature seems to confirm Kalyvas’ conjecture.374


One of the earlier and more illustrative examples of such scholarship involves an article written by the historian Angeliki Laiou, “Guerillas and Allied Missions in German-occupied Evros,” a piece rendered doubly significant because it concerns one of the most critical OSS sabotage missions of the war. In it, Laiou uses the declassified reports and testimony of a Greek-American SI operative, Aleko Georgiades, to attempt to rebut the statement, put forth by the British wartime commander of the Allied Military Mission, C.M. Woodhouse, that Greek-American OSS agents were “innocent channels of KKE propaganda.” In making this point, Laiou also uses the evidence provided by the Georgiades testimony to argue explicitly for a different, more sinister, interpretation: namely that, in Georgiades’ own words, “the root of most of the trouble in Greece was the British and their allies among the Greek political leaders.”

One purpose of this


378 Laiou here partially alters the words of Georgiades. She is quoting from a private letter that Georgiades sent to the researcher John Iatrides in February 1973. The citation was taken from the second letter in a series of five letters exchanged between the two. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Iatrides for so graciously providing me with copies of the entire set. Contrary to the above version, in that letter, Georgiades actually used the word “evil” instead of the word “trouble.” See A.M. Georgiades, Pittsburgh, to John Iatrides, Connecticut, 21 February 1973, transcript in the hand of John Iatrides. The faulty phraseology was reproduced in a severely truncated English translation of the Laiou study that was published in 1984. See Angeliki Laiou, “The Resistance in Evros,” Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora 11 (Fall 1984): 33-39, 39. In
section will be to demonstrate the flawed nature of Laiou’s analysis of the available material and consequently argue for the need to revise her historical verdict. A more important goal will be to reopen the case of occupied Evros to scholarly analysis.

From the historian’s perspective, the Georgiades mission is interesting for two outstanding reasons, as Laiou herself acknowledges in the introduction to her article. First, the Evros region that the Georgiades mission wanted to infiltrate was, due to the vagaries of the Axis occupation, cut off from the rest of Greece and thus affords the historian a unique opportunity to study the growth of a resistance movement in an isolated environment largely free of outside interference. Second, throughout the course of the entire war, the Georgiades mission was the only OSS mission in Axis-occupied Greece to enjoy almost complete independence from either of the two major British secret services, SOE or ISLD (MI-6/SIS). Evros was, as far as the secret war against the Axis was concerned, American territory. As such, Georgiades’ experiences in Evros provide fodder for some counterfactual speculation, allowing the scholar to appreciate what effect, if any, the friendly American attitude toward EAM/ELAS had on its policies. The Evros mission files thus provide historical insight into the effectiveness of the OSS as a wartime intelligence organization, but also help shed light on the nature of EAM rule in “Free Greece.”

---

the original Greek version of the article (the version examined in this dissertation) the paraphrased statement reads that Georgiades attributed “the responsibility for the political troubles of Greece immediately after the war” to the British. See Laiou, “Antartes,” 302-326, 317.

379 Ibid., 302.

380 Used in this sense, “outside interference” could refer either to EAM/ELAS groups in the rest of Greece or to the British.
Evros is the northeastern-most prefecture of mainland Greece, forming the eastern edge of the country’s historic region of Western Thrace. Surrounded on two sides by Bulgarian and Turkish territory, with only a narrow corridor of land to the west linking it to the rest of Greece, the Evros prefecture was occupied by the Germans during the war. Germany had allotted the rest of Greek Thrace, along with the region of Eastern Macedonia, to its Bulgarian ally as a reward for joining the Axis. Bulgaria responded by immediately annexing the awarded territories and inaugurating an aggressively savage policy of persecution and forced deportation of the local Greek population. Although the Bulgarians certainly desired the Evros prefecture, the Germans decided to occupy it themselves, for fear of provoking neighboring Turkey, whose relations with Bulgaria had always been terrible, and had been downgraded by the war to atrocious.

In late September 1941, the repressive measures of the Bulgarian government toward the Greek population prompted a mass nationalist uprising in the Bulgarian-occupied section of Macedonia that quickly spread to Thrace. The Bulgarian authorities suppressed the revolt and slaughtered thousands of innocent civilians in reprisal. Tens of thousands of panicked refugees fled west into the German-occupied sections of Macedonia and east into Evros. The Bulgarian investigation into the matter

381 All of Evros that is, except the prefecture’s capital (and Thrace’s largest city), Alexandroupolis, which the Germans also awarded to Bulgaria.
382 Evangelos Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia: Civil Conflict, Politics of Mutation, National Identity*, (New Rochelle, NY: A.D. Caratzas, 1993), 104-108. Turkey was a neutral. It entered the war against the Axis on 25 February 1945, but took no active part in the fighting.
concluded that the uprising was initially triggered by small groups of provocateurs who may have been communists, but the German ambassador to Bulgaria discounted the objectivity of this account and theorized that it was a British plot; others suspected that the Bulgarians themselves fomented the revolt to justify further repressive measures.\(^{385}\)

A left-leaning though fairly authoritative Greek account of the rebellion written two decades after the end of the occupation claimed that the principal instigator was a Greek communist named “Aleko” but implied that he had been duped into action by agents of the Bulgarian security service, the “Ochrana.”\(^{386}\) A former ELAS captain in Eastern Macedonia who was an eyewitness to the events later confirmed the central communist role in the revolt but categorically denied any Bulgarian involvement. According to him, the ill-fated revolt was instigated by misguided communists “who out of ignorance of the power matrices and out of a blinkered, ideological faith, were convinced in the victory of the Soviet Red Army, and of the inevitability of a simultaneous communist insurrection within Bulgaria that would drive the Bulgarian occupying troops to rebel.”\(^{387}\)

At any rate, one important result of this massacre was that EAM/ELAS’ organization developed slowly and was somewhat weaker in the eastern sections of Macedonia than it was in the rest of the country, thus eventually allowing, in late 1942, non-communist bands to form there under the leadership of the former Greek artillery

\(^{385}\) Hans-Joachim Hoppe, “Germany, Bulgaria, Greece: Their Relations and Bulgarian Policy in Occupied Greece,” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 11 (Fall 1984): 48. To be more precise, Hoppe, in this citation, claims that the German ambassador believed it to be an “Anglo-American” plot but, since the US was not even a belligerent at the time (and needless to say the OSS had not yet been formed,) it is hard to see how the ambassador could have arrived at that conclusion. There is no evidence that it was a British plot.


\(^{387}\) K. Konstantaras, *Agones kai Diogmoi [Struggles and Persecution]* (Athens: Publisher Unknown, 1964), 44.
sergeant, Antonios Fosteridis, known during the war as “Tsaous Anton.” Moreover, if the September 1941 massacres retarded the orderly development of a communist-led resistance in Eastern Macedonia, the existence of a large Turkish-speaking minority in the Bulgarian-occupied section of Thrace meant that the Evros communists were isolated both from the core guerrilla bands of mainland Greece and from their nearby comrades in the adjacent sections of Macedonia. Although not actively hostile to Greek resisters, the Turkish-speaking population was also not inclined to aid them in opposing the Bulgarian authorities. Therefore, as Laiou herself points out, the communist resistance in Evros developed more or less in an organic fashion, with little input from the EAM/ELAS power centers in Thessaly and Central Greece.

The Georgiades mission to Evros eventually became an integral component of the larger OSS plan to sabotage two key bridges on the rail line connecting Turkey to

---


389 Grigoriadis, To Antartiko, vol. 5, 185. Turkish-speaking Muslims represented a little more than half of the total Greek Muslim population of Thrace. The position of the Bulgarian-speaking Muslim population of Thrace – known as “Pomaks” and accounting for about a third of the total – was somewhat more complicated than that of their coreligionists. The Bulgarian authorities considered them Bulgarians and, throughout the course of the occupation, made consistent but somewhat desultory efforts to co-opt their loyalty. In the event, many Pomaks remained loyal to the Greek state and some even joined the nationalist bands of Tsaous Anton in the latter stages of the occupation. See Tasos Chatzianastasiou, Antartes kai Kapetanioi: I Ethniki Antistasi kata tis Voulgarikis Katehchi tis Anatolikis Makedonias kai tis Thrakis, 1942-1944 [Guerrillas and Kapetans: The National Resistance against the Bulgarian Occupation of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, 1942-1944] (Athens: Kyriakidi Bros., 2003), 169.

Bulgaria. The German government was critically dependent on that rail line for Turkish shipments of chrome ore or chromite, essential to the manufacture of stainless steel. Despite the vast amount of European territory under Axis control, the only reliable supply of chromite for Germany existed within Turkey, a technically neutral country that, despite immense Allied pressure throughout the war, steadfastly refused to sacrifice this lucrative trade.⁴⁹¹

Early in 1943, the stubborn Turkish response prompted American Secretary of State Cordell Hull to request OSS aid in the matter. He asked Donovan to explore the possibility of disrupting the rail shipments by sabotage. Donovan accordingly tasked the head of the Research and Analysis Branch in Washington, the noted historian William Langer, to personally study the feasibility of such an operation. Langer’s reply was negative. He predicted – as it turned out, accurately – that the Germans would quickly be able to find alternative means of transporting the shipments and that they would have little difficulty repairing the damaged bridges. The project was momentarily shelved, but Allied frustration boiled over again in February 1944, and Donovan received a communiqué, sent by Hull and signed by both the American and British ambassadors to Turkey, to proceed with the plan. Lt. Colonel Paul West, head of the OSS Special Operations Branch in Cairo dispatched a highly-trained demolition team to Evros (the team had been on standby waiting for such an eventuality in Istanbul) under the

⁴⁹¹ National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group 169, Entry 157, Box 1, Folder BL-6522, Office of the Administrator, Records Analysis Division, Research Reports and Studies, “Production and Preemption of Chrome in Turkey – 16 September 1943,” 13. For the classic analysis of Turkish diplomacy during the war see Frank G. Weber, The Evasive Neutral: Germany, Britain, and the Quest for a Turkish Alliance in the Second World War (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1979).
command of the Greek-American Army Air Force Captain James Kellis, in March 1944. Kellis, originally of Greek-Egyptian descent, had been previously used by the OSS to report on leftist elements within the Greek Armed Forces in exile in Egypt. Donovan perhaps took a risk in entrusting such a vital mission to an untested young officer (Kellis was twenty-eight at the time), but the fact that he did so speaks volumes about his belief in Kellis’ ability.

The issue of Germany’s potentially vulnerable chromite supply and Turkey’s obstinate refusal to cease providing the ore even prompted an exchange of letters between Roosevelt and Stalin. On 10 March 1944, Roosevelt wrote to Stalin informing the Soviet premier that he was “impressed by the importance of Turkish chrome in Germany” and that he had written a letter to Turkish President Ismet Inönü about the issue, urging him to “decide how the Germans can be denied further access to Turkish chrome” by using Inönü’s “inventive genius.” Roosevelt hoped that Inönü would “recognize this opportunity for a unique contribution to be made by Turkey to what really is the welfare of the world.” Stalin’s reply on 20 March 1944 was pessimistic. “The representation you

---

392 Kellis’ Greek-Egyptian descent and his notable aversion to Greek politics (“he is fed up with Greek politicians”) are briefly described in NARA, RG 226/190 73/33, “OSS Personnel: Administrative – Undated.” His August 1943 report on the chronic unrest in the ranks of the exiled Greek Armed Forces – unrest that would eventually mushroom into outright mutiny against the British and the King in April 1944 – concluded that the communist sympathizers within the army were not, at the time, directed by “foreign agents.” See NARA, RG 226/92, 75/10, “James Kellis, First Lt. A.C. to Lt. Benjamin Welles, Executive Officer, SO Branch: Report on the Greek Army – 3 August 1943.” The April 1944 mutiny is examined in L.S. Stavrianos, “The Mutiny in the Greek Armed Forces, April, 1944,” American Slavic and East European Review 9 (December 1950): 302-311.

suggest making to the Turks is, I think, most timely, although I must say that I have little hope of positive results.”

In the event, the letter was never delivered to the Turkish president. Cordell Hull recalled later that Roosevelt asked him on 20 March if it was still possible to cancel its delivery (the protocol was for the American Ambassador to Turkey, Lawrence Steinhardt, to personally deliver Roosevelt’s letters to İnönü) because Churchill had expressed serious doubts about it. “Mr. Churchill stated that, after consultation with Eden, he suggested that the President’s letter be held in reserve lest the Turks interpret ‘so friendly a message’ as a sign of weakening on the part of the Allies.” Proceeding in the opposite direction, the Allies decided to ratchet up the diplomatic pressure on Turkey. On 16 April 1944, the Turks received a firm warning, issued jointly by the governments of the United States and Great Britain, to cease trade with Germany in commodities “essential to the conduct of war” or risk the implementation of “blockade measures such as the two Governments have throughout the war applied for [sic] neutral countries.” The Allies also proceeded to cut off Turkey from most of its imported oil. As a result of this significant diplomatic and economic pressure, the Turkish

397 Weber, Evasive Neutral, 204.
government ceased all deliveries of chrome ore to Germany a mere four days later, on 20 April 1944.\textsuperscript{398}

It is possible that Washington never informed Donovan and the OSS of the Turkish decision to end chromite shipments. In his account of the sabotage mission, Donovan’s official biographer, Anthony Cave Brown, although aware of the crucial role of diplomacy in ultimately convincing the Turkish government to comply with Allied demands, seems ignorant of the fact that the cessation of chromite shipments occurred more than a month before the successful demolition of the bridges. Kellis and his team arrived in Evros, accompanied by Georgiades, on 8 March 1944, and it took them weeks to coordinate the raid with the local EAM/ELAS guerillas and receive the necessary airdrops from headquarters in Cairo.\textsuperscript{399} According to Kellis’ final report (confirmed by West in his own summary report on the matter), the bridges were blown on 29 May.\textsuperscript{400} But what is far more astonishing than the agents in the field being kept in ignorance of the diplomatic backdrop (a thoroughly unremarkable occurrence in wartime), was the fact that Donovan too, may have known nothing about the Turkish agreement to stop chromite deliveries to Germany. In a comprehensive final report issued to the Joint

\textsuperscript{399} The date of Kellis’ arrival is recorded in Vangelis Kasapis, \textit{Ston Korfo tis Gymprenas: Chroniko tis Ethnikis Antistasis ston Evro} [On the Summit of Gibrena: Chronicle of the National Resistance in Evros], vol. 2. (Athens: Kalvos, 1977), 136. This account, part history, part memoir, is authored by one of the major communist leaders of the EAM/ELAS guerillas, known in the mountains of occupied Evros during the war (and henceforth in this paper) as “Kriton.”
Chiefs of Staff in August 1945, Donovan insisted that the demolition of the bridges was intended “to interrupt the flow of chrome ore from Turkey to Germany.”

One can only speculate as to the reasons why Donovan’s information may have been incomplete, especially given the fact that by mid-June 1944, Turkey had even agreed to cut the rest of its trade with Germany by fifty percent because of continuing diplomatic pressure. Cave Brown implies that, after a series of notable failures throughout the length and breadth of occupied Europe, OSS badly needed a public relations win and a high-profile sabotage operation showcasing smooth cooperation between all major branches of the organization would serve to accomplish that goal. Another possible reason may have been Donovan’s abiding interest throughout the course of the war in trying to achieve Bulgaria’s defection using the full gamut of OSS resources. By the spring of 1944, this was not a priority since Operation Overlord was imminent, but Donovan may still have not abandoned the hope that he could win such a defection even then. A necessary step to the realization of this ambition was convincing the US Joint Chiefs of Staff of the efficacy of subversive operations.

Alternatively, although the demolition of the bridges may not have been responsible for the cessation of chromite shipments from Turkey to Germany, it is

---

401“William J. Donovan, Memorandum for the Joint U.S. Chiefs of Staff, August 1945”; Office of the Director; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1642RI, roll 83, frame 811); OSS Record Group 226, NARA, College Park, MD.

402Before America’s entry into the war, in his first trip to Bulgaria as Roosevelt’s special envoy in late winter 1941, Donovan unsuccessfully attempted to convince the Bulgarian government to not sign the Tripartite Pact. See Ilcho Dimitrov, “Colonel Donovan’s Mission in Sofia,” Bulgarian Historical Review 6 (Fall 1978): 3-14.

403Cave Brown, Last Hero, 440-442. It should be noted that Cave Brown was not the only historian to assert that the Kellis mission succeeded in stopping Turkish chromite shipments to Germany. In a later and more comprehensive study of the mission the historian Barry Rubin also declared that “the flow of strategic material was interrupted.” Barry Rubin, Istanbul Intrigues (New York: Pharos Books, 1991), 255. For details on the Bulgarian plot, see the next chapter.
possible that their destruction precluded any hope for an easy or cost-free resumption of that trade. According to the historian Frank Weber, İnönü made the decision to end the shipments against the express wishes of his foreign minister, Numan Menemencioğlu, who had the support of some in the cabinet. Though the president and the foreign minister had shared a secret ambition throughout the war to use Turkey’s strategic location and economic potential to extract valuable concessions from both belligerents by maintaining a stance of enigmatic neutrality, by April 1944, it was obvious that the Axis was losing. The prospect of a German defeat changed the political calculus and İnönü felt compelled to knuckle under to immense Allied economic pressure and accede to the chromite embargo. But his foreign minister remained unconvinced, hoping that even in the eleventh hour, Turkey might still be able to wrest some benefits from its close economic ties with Germany. The destruction of the bridges essentially squashed any hope that Turkey could indefinitely continue to play both sides against the middle since the severance of all rail ties to continental Europe made the country “more than ever vulnerable to Allied blockade.”

Therefore, the successful outcome of the Kellis mission assured that Turkey would eventually join the side of the Allies.

Whatever the case may be, even before the Allies made the final decision to destroy the bridges, the Secret Intelligence Branch had independently sent Georgiades ahead to liaise with the local resistance and to collect what intelligence he could. The dispatch of a trained OSS/SI agent meant that, in the event a sabotage operation was ever launched, the saboteurs could rendezvous, through a friendly intermediary, with guerillas

---

404 Weber, Evasive Neutral, 208; 201-219.
who knew the lay of the land. Georgiades’ multifaceted mission to create a resistance support network and collect vital intelligence was codenamed *Gander*, while the bridge demolition, run by the OSS/SO Branch, was codenamed *Chicago*. In yet another demonstration of spotty (and potentially lethal if there was ever a security leak) OSS naming practices, all related missions followed the “Chicago” theme. Thus, it is probable that the entire OSS effort, involving OSS/SO, OSS/SI, and the Maritime Branch, was codenamed *Peoria II*, while the bridges – one near Svilengrad on the Bulgarian side of the border with Greece, and one in Antheia, twelve miles east of the Greek city Alexandroupolis – were codenamed *Milwaukee* and *Joliet* respectively. A separate mission to liaise with Bulgarian partisans for further operations was codenamed *Springfield*. If any field transmissions were ever intercepted, the OSS could only hope that few German *Abwehr* or Gestapo agents knew much about the geography of the American Midwest.\(^{405}\)

Georgiades was well-suited to the job. Originally from the Dodecanese island of Karpathos, he immigrated to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1912 when Italy occupied the island immediately prior to the Balkan Wars. An undated internal OSS profile, presumably generated after the events in Evros, described him as “extremely courageous and diplomatic” and extolled his ability to handle “dangerous situations with conspicuous

\(^{405}\) The name of the SI mission comes from A.M. Georgiades, Pittsburgh, to John Iatrides, Connecticut, 31 March 1973, transcript in the hand of John Iatrides; See also NARA, RG 226/154, 41/10, “Rodney Young to Stephen Penrose – Greek Desk, SI, Period January 1 – June 30, 1944 – Undated.” The Chicago and Springfield missions are outlined in detail in NARA, RG 226/92, 75/10, “William E. Duggan, Chief SO for Springfield Mission Report: The Chicago Mission – 20 November 1945.” The “Peoria II” designation comes from Anthony Cave Brown’s *Last Hero*. Laiou seems to accept the designation as fact although she provides no primary reference for it. Nevertheless, this researcher has, to this date, found no mention of the “Peoria II” designation anywhere in the primary source base. But given the Midwestern bias of the other mission designations, it is not implausible to assume that the name “Peoria II” was used at some point in time by the OSS in Evros. See Cave Brown, *Last Hero*, 437.
success.” Perhaps more importantly, the report went on to state that he was “completely sincere, and disgusted with all Greek politicians and politics.” The brief biographical sketch finally concluded by defining Georgiades as “An idealist… [and] a most impressive character [but] not highly educated.” Awarded the army rank of lieutenant before embarking on the Evros mission, Georgiades was forty-five years old at the time, significantly older than the average OSS operative. On at least one documented occasion, his relatively advanced age served to garner him the respect of a noted EAM/ELAS guerilla leader, who freely admitted after the war that “[Georgiades was] older than me, he knew many more things.”

II. Arrival in Theater and the 1943 Summer Crisis.

Rodney Young, the head of the Greek Desk of OSS/SI in Cairo, sent Georgiades to Istanbul in mid-July 1943. After a short delay, Georgiades reached what was to be his base of operations for the duration of the occupation, Edirne, on 8 August 1943. Upon

---

407 NARA RG 226/92A 24/361, “Report on Field Conditions: Greece, Captain Alexander M. Georgiades – 13 October 1945.” Rodney Young was, in civilian life, a classical archaeologist from Princeton. He had a long academic connection to the American School for Classical Studies in Athens and had even joined the Greek Army as a volunteer during the Greco-Italian conflict in 1940-1941 where he was wounded while driving a truck near the front. See A.M. Georgiades, Pittsburgh, to John Iatrides, Connecticut, 7 February 1973, transcript in the hand of John Iatrides. In a typical instance of misinterpretation, Laiou cites a passage in R. Harris Smith’s, OSS to put forward the inaccurate assumption that Young was an inveterate Anglophile. She then implies that he decided to cooperate with the communist guerrillas reluctantly, despite his pro-British tendencies. In the actual passage, Smith simply points out that, in Cairo, Young cooperated smoothly with ISLD – i.e. MI-6 – an organization that was essentially hostile to the SOE: certainly a far cry from loving all things British. See Laiou, “Antartes,” 310; R. Harris Smith, OSS: The Secret History of America’s First Intelligence Agency (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), 127. In an article written a few years later, Richard Clogg makes the contrary but convincing statement that most of the archaeologists on the OSS staff in the Near East (disparagingly referred to as the “Archaeological Captains” by their military colleagues) exhibited a “discernible Anglophobe streak.” See Richard Clogg,
his arrival, Georgiades immediately attempted to communicate with the Evros resistance through various émigré contacts, but he was initially unsuccessful. According to his final report, his arrival coincided with the end of a short but brutal campaign – ostensibly orchestrated by the Gestapo though this is an important point that was never fully clarified by Georgiades – to wipe out an embryonic non-communist resistance network organized, inspired, and funded jointly by the British ISLD (MI-6) representative in Istanbul and the Greek Consulate in Edirne.

Georgiades seemed to believe that the dissolution of this network was largely the result of two key factors: the utter disregard for basic security measures evinced by its principal leaders and their basic hostility to the already established and popular EAM/ELAS organization which prevented meaningful attempts at cooperation. In fact, Georgiades was convinced that fighting the Germans had been a secondary concern for, as he termed it, the “Anglo-Greek” network. The true aim of this initiative had been to “counteract and destroy the already existing EAM/ELAS group which had communistic leadership.” In various other reports and telegrams, Georgiades implied that the “nationalist organization” eschewed cooperation with EAM/ELAS and refused to supply the latter with supplies and weapons. Finally, and according to the chronology provided by Georgiades, in September 1943, EAM/ELAS responded to the nascent threat by arresting a few of the rival organization’s known operators. All were put on trial, and although most were acquitted, some were also executed. The communist counter-

---


insurgency was successful, but it also made EAM/ELAS leery of any contact with Allied liaison officers since, in the isolated reaches of Evros, the guerillas had little ability to distinguish what the real difference was between a British and an American officer.\textsuperscript{410}

The foregoing reveals a basic weakness of the Georgiades reports: he was unclear as to who was ultimately responsible for the eradication of this network, the Germans or the communist leadership of EAM. Laiou reflects this ambiguity in her article about Georgiades, at one point implying that it was the Germans who were responsible for wiping out the network by turning one of its operatives and only half a paragraph later asserting that it was the guerillas who, by inaugurating a series of comprehensive sweeps, were responsible for its dissolution.\textsuperscript{411} The question of accuracy is important in this case, since the extermination of the network occurred approximately three months before a series of far greater massacres and purges, this time certainly perpetrated by the communists, almost destroyed the resistance in Evros and nullified months of OSS planning for the Kellis mission. EAM justified the later round of massacres on the grounds that it was once more defending itself against the nefarious scheming of the British, just as it had done in the summer of 1943. Conversely, German culpability in the downfall of the network provided the entire British-inspired enterprise a measure of historical exoneration. How could the members of the network be considered, as the communists would later charge, reactionary collaborators and class enemies of the people, if they had been themselves victimized by the occupier?

\textsuperscript{410} Laiou, “Antartes,” 309.
\textsuperscript{411} Ibid., 308.
In describing the obliteration of this alleged non-communist resistance network, Laiou relied not only on the contemporaneous field reports of Georgiades but also on a series of five letters Georgiades sent to the researcher John Iatrides in early 1973, detailing his wartime experiences in Evros. She also cited another smaller series of three letters, published in an appendix to a communist memoir, which Georgiades wrote to an old EAM/ELAS acquaintance in late 1973 and early 1974. In all that correspondence, and despite the passage of three decades, Georgiades reiterated the idea that the rival Anglo-Greek network had an avowedly political purpose – the elimination of EAM/ELAS – and had not been concerned with defeating the Germans. He stated this assumption unequivocally, despite the fact that he was never an eyewitness to the violent events of August-September 1943, stuck as he was in Edirne for the duration of the crisis. Laiou nevertheless seems to accept his hypotheses at face value, but when one examines the available evidence closely, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Georgiades was off on a number of his assumptions, especially on the circumstances leading to the demise of this network and the actual extent of British involvement in its creation.

In addition to Georgiades’ field reports and the letters he wrote to various persons after the war, Laiou makes heavy use of the only major communist source, a memoir/history of the Evros resistance written by a high-ranking communist politico of the time, Vangelis Kasapis, known during the war as “Kriton.” It is significant that Laiou accords this memoir almost as much evidentiary weight as she did the Georgiades testimony, essentially paraphrasing whole passages from the work without checking the

---

413 Laiou, “Antartes,” 308.
veracity of the statements made within it against any other source. Unsurprisingly therefore, her interpretation of the entire sequence of events is extremely favorable towards the EAM/ELAS viewpoint.

All the same, on the question of the size and nature of the rival resistance group, other more independent sources are superfluous, as a careful comparison of the Kriton account with the Georgiades field reports yields some interesting discrepancies. For example, in his field reports and subsequent testimonials, Georgiades consistently referred to the rival group as a “network,” implying that it was not a broad-based guerilla movement, but a relatively small group of clandestine agents working on behalf of the British to collect information, sometimes on the German order of battle, more often on the workings of EAM/ELAS. However, in his own account, Kriton made no mention of a British-sponsored intelligence network extant in the summer of 1943, but instead referred to repeated attempts by the Greek Consulate in Edirne (he assumed that the consulate was, in turn, getting financial and moral support from the British Secret Intelligence Service, though he provided no evidence to that effect) either to foster a non-communist resistance organization that would be a rival, in all respects, to EAM/ELAS or, failing that, to wrest leadership of the existing guerilla bands in Evros away from the communists.414

The Kriton account thus brings to light some important factors. Clearly, communist paranoia about the consulate’s real or imagined machinations proves that it

414 Kasapis, *Ston Korfo*, vol. 1, 188-210, 217-233. Kriton did mention a British-funded “network” of agents led by a man named Portokalidis (see below) at another point in his memoir, but implied that this network appeared only after Georgiades’ arrival. In fact, Kriton surmised that the British created this network partly to interfere with Georgiades’ intelligence-gathering capabilities. See ibid., 91.
was still possible as late as the summer of 1943 to find able-bodied men willing to challenge the communist-controlled guerilla bands for dominance in the badlands of Evros. Indeed, Kriton’s frequent and explicit references to “republicans” in Evros attested to the fact that the political loyalties of at least a significant number of guerillas were republican and most had chosen to join up with the EAM movement simply because there was no other organization willing to fight the Germans in the early days of the occupation. Georgiades’ own observations on the political beliefs of the guerillas after his second trip to the Evros region sometime in the late autumn of 1943, confirmed this generalization: “Politically the men are not all well informed. Among them are communists, democrats [republicans]…and even Basilophrones [royalists]…It is my opinion that though the leadership is Communistic, the rank and file are plain people…”

Kriton’s account shows how the communists initially benefited from their numerous urban chapters in all the major cities and towns of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, chapters that were staffed with small groups of ideologically dedicated, highly educated and disciplined individuals who were, because of the oppression of the prewar Metaxas regime, well used to operating on the periphery of the legal system. Even

\[415\] NARA, RG 226/190, 77/87, “Aleko to Roger [sic], Edirne – 12 December 1943.” Apparently, the dates of Georgiades’ field reports differ from the dates he records in his final report by about a month. In his final report, he claims to have had this meeting with the guerillas in early November 1943. See “Report on Field Conditions – 13 October 1945.” The reason for the discrepancy is unclear. However, the dates in the Kriton account match the field reports and not the final report. It should be kept in mind that the final report was, after all, written more than a year after the events in question, although it is hard to believe that someone as obviously meticulous as Georgiades would not have kept an accurate journal.

their opponents in the nationalist bands acknowledged the communists’ greater ability to organize and admitted that it was the key to their success in the resistance.  

Nevertheless, in terms of raw numbers, the ideologically committed communists in Evros remained a political minority, even within the EAM movement that they essentially controlled. In a message to SI headquarters in Cairo sent in the spring of 1944, one of the operatives working for the Georgiades network emphasized this point in explicit terms. After highlighting the apolitical nature of the typical Evros guerilla, he went on to hypothesize that it was precisely this lack of political acumen that was the true “reason the communists though very small in number in comparison with the population have had no opposition to speak of.” Interestingly enough, the report affirmed that “a few have tried to oppose the communists from the beginning, (some are still at it but very anaemically [sic]), but could not hold under the dynamics of the reds who are very vigorous and self-sacrificing [sic] in their tireless efforts.”

Communist dominance of the Evros resistance may very well have been the order of the day in May 1944, but the Kriton account leaves little room for doubt that such was not always the case. Careful perusal of the memoir shows that the summer of 1943 was one of those times when the KKE’s control over the course of the struggle was clearly fraying at the edges. The threat to communist supremacy was dual. Earlier that year, some of the important chieftains of the armed bands in the mountains – including the overall military leader of ELAS in Evros, “Aris,” who was a declared communist

---

417 Papathanasiou, Elliniko Vorra, v. 2, 611.
418 NARA, RG 226/190, 77/87, “Gander, No.9: Observations on Last Trip of Northern Region of Evros Province – 25 May 1944.” It should be noted that the author of this report, most likely one of Major Jerome Sperling’s (see the next chapter) assistants on loan to Georgiades from the Istanbul Desk, claimed that he was actually relaying Georgiades’ own observations on the Evros guerillas.
himself – became restive and started to question the party’s authority. Aris disagreed with his urban counterparts on the practical utility of the armed struggle, the town-based party apparatchiks arguing that direct attacks on German forces were futile and counter-productive, provoking the occupier to brutal retaliatory measures against the civilian population: a population that, as it happens, represented the guerrillas’ only true means of sustenance. In contrast to the strategy of armed confrontation favored by guerrillas like Aris, the urban cadres favored a multifaceted approach that focused on a program of patient rearmament and pinprick attacks against lightly defended positions in the countryside while party leaders engaged in consciousness-raising and propaganda in the towns and cities.\footnote{Kasapis, \textit{Sion Korfo}, v. 1, 95-107. This “Aris” should not be confused with the famous Aris Velouchiotis. The real name of the Thracian Aris was Argyris Dalkaranis (ibid., 56).} 

It is obviously significant that, despite Evros’ relative isolation from the rest of Axis-occupied Greece, the growth of a communist-directed armed resistance followed almost precisely the same pattern it did in the rest of country. Just as the central committee of the KKE in Athens had problems controlling Aris Velouchiotis in the early days of the struggle, so too did the Evros politicos have problems controlling their own Aris. Nothing less than the authentically revolutionary nature of the movement was at stake. In classic Marxist-Leninist terms, any armed movement in the rural periphery had to be controlled firmly by the “vanguard of the proletariat,” in other words a doctrinally sophisticated and committed urban elite. Without central direction, the EAM movement could not be the vehicle for meaningful social change in the postwar world that its leaders hoped it would be. Instead, as happened all too often in Balkan history, it would devolve
into yet another petty armed struggle against a cruel occupier, a colorful but ultimately worthless chapter in the tortured annals of the Greek nation.\textsuperscript{420}

However, this internal challenge, serious as it was, was not the most worrisome problem EAM’s communist leadership had to contend with in the first half of 1943. In late February or early March of that year, the Greek Consulate in Edirne, possibly in cooperation with MI-6, sent a military operative, a certain Major Stathatos, into Evros with a mission to establish a resistance organization independent of EAM. Although in later years Georgiades appeared to be convinced that the British had acted through the Greek Consulate in the Stathatos affair, he admitted that he was never at the time able to prove outright any sort of British connection. “When I arrived in Edirne there were no British. I learned that in the past they would visit the consulate from time to time. I became aware that the network functioned as such: a British Colonel Dipson was the controller and the Greek Consul Kambalouris was the overseer and financier. Demertzis served as the station chief and was the principal liaison for all the Evros operatives and contacts.”\textsuperscript{421}

Nowhere in the existing documents does Georgiades state how he “became aware” of these complex relationships. Nevertheless, since it was his office that had forewarned him about the consulate’s British connection in the first place, Young even going so far as to advise him to cooperate with the existing “allied” network as much as

\textsuperscript{420} Little wonder then that the urban cadres, as reported personally by Georgiades, later labeled such deviant fellow travelers like Aris “Trotskyists,” fearing as they did that their aggression would destroy everything. See NARA, RG 226/190, 77/87, “Alekk to Young – 1 March 1944.”

\textsuperscript{421} A. Georgiades to P. Soulis, Pittsburgh, 3 March 1974, in Ston Korfo, v.2, 316-317. Captain Giannis Demertzis was a Greek officer and native Evrite recruited, according to Georgiades, by British MI-6 to run all of their covert operation into Axis-occupied territory. See NARA RG 226/92A 24/361, “Report on Field Conditions – 13 October 1945.”
he could before he departed from Cairo, it seems needless to doubt the correctness of his understanding in this matter.\footnote{In one of his earliest reports, Georgiades even alludes to the fact that Young knew of Stathatos by name. See NARA, RG 226/190, 2/15, “Alex 13 to Roger – 16 September 1943.”} Furthermore, although the name “Dipson” appears nowhere in the relevant literature, it is most probably the case that Georgiades was referring to the MI-6/SIS station chief for Istanbul, Colonel Harold Gibson.

Gibson, the son of a White Russian émigré, certainly had the reputation of being a staunch anti-communist, though his primary preoccupation in the final years of the war, besides the gathering of intelligence from behind enemy lines, seems to have been the rescue of Jews out of Nazi-occupied Central Europe; an atypical obsession for a high-ranking British intelligence officer.\footnote{Rubin, Istanbul Intrigues, 90-91, 167; Shlomo Aronson, “British Policy, Allied Intelligence and Zionist Dilemmas in the Face of Hitler’s Jewish Policies,” in David Bankier, ed., Probing the Depths of German Antisemitism (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 546.} Indeed, Georgiades himself was tangentially involved in one of Gibson’s multiple attempts to rescue Eastern European Jews from the Nazis in the early part of 1944. He recorded in March that “Demertzis was sent here with a Greek-speaking Jew named Shlewsky, presumably to organize for the help of exodus of Jewish people from Bulgaria.” Demertzis thereafter revealed his distrust of Georgiades but also his personal lack of substantive knowledge (further testimony to how weak the British really were in the region) when he unsuccessfully attempted to bribe the local Turkish authorities to give him independent intelligence on the situation in Evros. Georgiades declined to help Shlewsky, despite being ordered to do so by the head of the Istanbul OSS/SO Branch, Philip Guepin.\footnote{NARA, RG 226/190, 77/87, “Lt. Alekko to Rodney, Edirne – 20 March 1944.”} In another cable to Cairo he explained his reasoning: “Before I knew Demertzis was in on it I said that I would be nice to this man...
[Shlewsky] and help him as far as practicable but finding out Demertzis’ part in this I am dropping the whole thing like a hot potato.”

Georgiades’ manifest paranoia about British machinations was by this point in full bloom. He suspected that MI-6 had staged the entire rescue in part to penetrate his network of local contacts; even Shlewsky was suspect. “The Jew knew too much about me and my work, which goes to prove to me that the less I have to do with Dover [Istanbul] the better I shall like it.” It is unclear whether the rescue mission was scuttled as a result of Georgiades’ refusal to provide aid. Demertzis’ willingness to expose himself and the rescue operation in order to gain actionable intelligence independent of Georgiades would imply that it was. All the same, the remote nature of British involvement in the internal affairs of Evros is plainly evident in the available documentation, Georgiades’ own frequent inferences to the contrary notwithstanding.

A native of Evros, Major Stathatos, the Greek consulate’s operative, was politically a republican Venizelist with strong leftist leanings. Kriton’s assessment after meeting Stathatos for the first time was that Stathatos was poorly qualified for undercover work and intrigue since he was “naïve and guileless to an unbelievable extent.” On the other hand, “his open and personable nature” and his political background as a radical Venizelist made him an ideal candidate for indoctrination into

425 NARA RG 226/190, 77/87, “Alekko to Mr. Young, Istambul – 21 February 1944.”
427 NARA RG 226/92A 24/361, “Report on Field Conditions – 13 October 1945.” Incidentally, the SOE-Middle East files make no mention of any wartime British network of agents in Western Thrace. In December 1943, SOE desk officers were debating the merits of the OSS plan to blow the bridges and concluding it was too risky. See National Archives of the United Kingdom (NAUK), Records of the Special Operations Executive (HS), Reference 3/229 (Africa and the Middle East), CJ93041, “Cairo to Istanbul: 529 Cipher Tel(egram) – 6 December 1943,” “Cairo to Istanbul: 899 Cipher Tel(egram) – 8 December 1943,” and “G.L. Clatton, Foreign Office to Reg. File – 9 December 1943.”
the EAM movement, as many nationally-minded patriots who would otherwise be afraid of a communist-led organization would not hesitate to join one that featured such a well-known republican.\textsuperscript{428} In this way, EAM could turn the tables on the consulate by using its own agent against it.

Kriton’s plan apparently worked and, in a relatively brief amount of time, Stathatos was operating successfully as an important political functionary in the EAM/ELAS hierarchy. Although his controllers at the consulate eventually became aware of Stathatos’ growing connection to EAM/ELAS in Evros, they still felt that his ultimate loyalty was to the nation and its officially recognized government. In contrast, Kriton and his colleagues were convinced that if EAM and the Greek government-in-exile ever came into conflict, Stathatos would side with them. Meanwhile, they could pretend to cooperate with his plans and through him with the plans of the consulate, hoping that their sudden amicability would convince Stathatos’ handlers to trust them and eventually maybe even send them what they most desperately desired: adequate store of arms and ammunition.\textsuperscript{429}

A change in the communist leadership ultimately foiled this plan. In early April 1943, the Bulgarians captured Aris as he tried to enter their zone on a party errand. After holding him for about a fortnight, they surrendered him to the Germans who shot and killed him after he tried to escape sometime before the end of that month. Until a replacement could be found, control of the EAM/ELAS in Evros went to the communist

\textsuperscript{428} Kasapis, \textit{Ston Korfo}, v. 1, 194. The similarities with the Sarafis case are obvious.

\textsuperscript{429} In Kriton’s own words, “…instead of pulling the wool of our eyes, we would be the ones pulling the wool over theirs…” See Kasapis, \textit{Ston Korfo}, v. 2, 44.
party apparatchiks who had previously disagreed with Aris over tactics. These men, led by Kriton, had been responsible for formulating the plan to turn Stathatos, and the death of the unpredictable Aris actually allowed them to pursue even closer cooperation with the consulate.  

It was, alas, a short-lived effort. Before the beginning of May, a new man arrived to take the reins of power in Evros. He called himself “Odysseus.” It was possible, though unlikely, that that was his real name. According to Kriton’s account, Odysseus had reached Evros from the nearby Thracian town of Xanthi (under Bulgarian control) without identifying documents, and the guerillas, after lengthy deliberations, chose him as their leader based on the testimony of local cadres, who claimed that he was a high-ranking member of Xanthi’s central committee. Once ensconced in power, Odysseus forswore the popular front tactic that Kriton and his like-minded comrades had been attempting to implement. His first action as the EAM leader was to issue a written manifesto highlighting EAM’s communist principles and revolutionary agenda, which immediately had the effect, as indeed Kriton predicted it would, of alienating all the moderates in the EAM/ELAS movement, many of whom had been attracted to the organization because of Stathatos’ celebrity.  

As the summer progressed, so did Odysseus’ ideological extremism, and the rift between the communist and non-communist members of EAM/ELAS widened. The

---

431 Odysseus’ true name is not listed anywhere in the primary sources. It is important to note that Kriton scrupulously avoided recording Odysseus’ true name in his account as well. According to an uncorroborated source, his true name was Lefteris Galiadis. See Vasilios Karakoussis, “H Ethniki Antistasi stin Thraki, 1991-1944 [The National Resistance in Thrace, 1941-1944].” Alistrati-Makedonia, *http://www.alistrati-makedonia.de/THRAKI/THRAKI-EthnAntist.html*; Internet; accessed 3 January 2008.
inexorable decline toward internecine conflict was forestalled briefly when Odysseus, in keeping with his developing radical socialist agenda, made a concerted effort to wipe out black marketers and assassinate known collaborators. The popularity he earned with these measures was soon squandered, however, as the list of those persecuted grew to include people with no known connection to the quisling authorities or to the black market, their only crime a failure to endorse Odysseus’ communist manifesto.

Although Kriton glossed over what happened next in his memoir, it seems clear that some sort of decisive break occurred within the guerilla movement. For no apparent reason, Odysseus ordered the arrest of Stathatos in late July 1943. In searching through the prisoner’s belongings, the guerillas found an incriminating letter addressed to the consulate in his possession. In the letter, Stathatos begged the Greek consul in Edirne to send weapons to his guerillas so that the “nationalist anticommmunist resistance” could triumph over its enemies. Kriton believed that Stathatos had been tricked by some of his more anti-communist associates into writing the letter. As he was a popular man in Evros, these men feared his growing connection to the radical wing of the EAM movement and, instead of killing him, which might have had the effect of making him into a leftist martyr, they decided to have Odysseus do their job for them.

Obviously, since Georgiades only arrived in Edirne in the first week of August 1943, there was no mention of the Stathatos arrest in his earliest reports, although he did

---

433 NARA, RG 226/190, 2/15, “Alex to Mr. Young – 8 October 1943” and NARA, RG 226/190, 77/87, “About the Guerilla Band of Evros District – Undated.” Although there is no date on this last report, the events it describes occurred before December 1943.
435 Ibid., 55-59.
mention the incident parenthetically in one of his later dispatches. However, in his final report, dated 13 October 1945, Georgiades made some interesting statements regarding the eradication of what he dubbed an “Anglo-Greek” network around the time of his arrival in Edirne. By cross-referencing these statements with the Kriton account’s description of events and tertiary evidence contained within other primary sources, one can reconstruct the series of events that led to a serious crisis within the guerilla movement in the autumn of 1943. This crisis would eventually, over the course of the next few months, blossom into arguably one of the worst episodes of internecine conflict witnessed during the occupation.

At the crux of the issue are the numbers of people killed or displaced during the upheavals that accompanied the Stathatos arrest in late July. In his 1945 final and comprehensive report, Georgiades estimated that “more than 25 men were caught by the guerillas and executed and several, including a Greek Army Major, Stathatos, who had been appointed by the Consul as the leader of the anti-EAM organization, were caught and held by ELAS guerillas awaiting trial.”

It is important to note that in earlier dispatches sent from the field, Georgiades assumed Stathatos to be one of the principal leaders of EAM/ELAS in Evros, loyal to the cause and certainly not in sinister opposition to the communist leadership, though he did mention that Stathatos was “known” to Rodney Young on at least one occasion. Still, the exact role of Stathatos is, for the researcher, only of secondary concern in this case, especially since he was subsequently

436 NARA, RG 226/190, 77/87, “Alex to Rodney – 22 March 1944.”
released by the communists after acknowledging his errors and recanting. The astounding part of Georgiades’ final report centers around the apparent size of the “nationalist” opposition. “Three hundred and fifteen succeeded in escaping into Turkey. A few days later, another group of 21 men came through…and the Turks started to complain.”

Twenty-five dead, several (probably a little more than a dozen) captured and awaiting trial, and over three-hundred and thirty forced to flee Evros into Turkey, would certainly make any objective observer believe that this violent event represented more than the simple suppression of a rival “network” by the communists. Indeed it is difficult for the researcher to discern who Georgiades was blaming for inciting the mass exodus: the communists or the Germans. In fact, it is likely that he confused the internal communist purge of Stathatos with the simultaneous German persecution of the guerrillas that consequently resulted in the eradication of the Anglo-Greek network. Such a hypothesis seems even more justified when one considers the total size, in active members, of the Evros resistance in the late summer of 1943. In one of his earliest field reports, Georgiades put their number at two-hundred and thirty. Kellis, in a subsequent report, guessed that the number of guerrillas operating in the Evros district about six months later, in March 1944, was “no more than 200,” in his opinion a “very small group.” Therefore, the refugees escaping to Turkey in late August and early

440 Nevertheless, Georgiades makes it clear that the twenty-five “executed” that he refers to in his final report were indeed killed by the guerrillas. Ibid.
441 NARA RG 226/190, 2/15, “Alex 13 to Roger [sic] – 16 September 1943.”
442 NARA, RG 226/92, 575/10, “Final report of the Evros Mission – 15 October 1944.” It is possible, however, that Kellis was simply citing old information that Georgiades had given him when he first arrived
September 1943 likely outnumbered the armed guerillas by more than half. It is unlikely that such a relatively large number of people were all chased out of the prefecture by the communists as Georgiades seemed to imply in his final report:

Because of the laxness in operating, the EAM group was aware of what was going on. On 2 September 1943, we received word...that 115 agents and couriers, as well as members of the Nationalistic organization were held there by the Turks as refugees. Demertzis had some of them brought to Edirne and in an interview I discovered that the courier used by the Consul and Demertzis for their political activities was the former secretary of the Communist party of Evros.\(^{443}\)

The fact that the number one-hundred and fifteen in the above quote referred both to “agents and couriers” and to “members of the Nationalistic organization” clearly demonstrated that, at least in the mind of Georgiades, there was little to distinguish intelligence agents actively in the employ of the British Intelligence Service from guerillas opposed to EAM who might not have had any direct (or even indirect) contact with the British or with the consulate in Edirne. Georgiades’ tendency to assume that all non-communist guerillas were essentially British “agents” probably explained why certain parts of his final report seemingly contradicted other parts. For example, in an earlier section of the report cited above, he casually asserted that the eradication of the Anglo-Greek network had been indeed the work of the Gestapo. The German initiative resulted, two weeks prior to his arrival in Edirne, in the arrest of thirty-eight “agents and couriers [emphasis added],” while “69 others were notified in time to leave for Turkey on their way to Cairo as refugees.”\(^{444}\)

---


\(^{444}\) Ibid.
Georgiades’ evident bias thus makes it extremely difficult to discern what actually happened in Evros in the late summer of 1943. It is only when one compares his account of the events to Kriton’s own that certain discernible patterns begin to emerge. Although Kriton, not unsurprisingly, demonstrated the same unwillingness as Georgiades to countenance the notion that there were local Greek patriots uninfluenced by the British who, nevertheless, may still have been anti-communist, he did, in his memoir, distinguish between the armed guerillas (after all, he was one of them) and those known to be operating intelligence networks on behalf of the British. Among the armed guerillas, Kriton acknowledged there were many with “republican” sympathies. As in the Stathatos case, the EAM leadership suspected that some of the more notable among these had contacts with the consulate and its British backers. But Kriton, unlike Georgiades, seemed to differentiate between such people and actual British-backed intelligence “agents.”

Specifically, the Kriton memoir does make explicit mention of one such network of agents, led by a man named Portokalidis, appearing only after the Stathatos arrest and subsequent release, possibly in October 1943. Kriton surmised that the British created the group as a countervailing measure against Georgiades’ expanding influence, jealous as they were, according to him, to protect their absolute control over Greek affairs. At no point, however, did Kriton ever state or imply that there was any direct connection between the Portokalidis group and Stathatos. Furthermore, according to Kriton, the communist leadership of EAM was aware of this network from the beginning and

allowed it to operate freely on the assumption that it was designed to collect intelligence strictly against the Germans. The network’s ability to threaten directly the EAM/ELAS power structure in Evros seemed in any case negligible: Kriton pointed out dismissively that when it was first formed, the band was composed of Portokalidis “and two Turks.”

Even if the Portokalidis group was extant in the late summer of 1943 – and the dates given by Kriton do not seem to support such a conclusion – it was therefore not large enough numerically to provoke the massive refugee crisis that Georgiades described in his final report. In mid-summer 1943, it seems reasonable to assume that only the Germans had the capability to inaugurate such a comprehensive action that would result in hundreds of people fleeing across the border into neutral Turkey. However, both the Georgiades reports and Kriton’s memoir imply that the communists might have netted unexpected benefits from the German effort, insofar that it revealed the identities and connections of people who had at least been willing to contemplate joining a resistance movement not controlled by EAM.

To what extent such British sympathizers could be termed an allied “network” is a matter of interpretation. Certainly they were not a “network” in the traditional sense, a point that Kriton made, by implication, in his memoir. None of them, with the possible (though improbable) exception of Stathatos, had been trained extensively in intelligence work and none of them seemed to be in regular contact with SIS headquarters, either in Istanbul or Cairo. If the British were involved at all, and, again, there is no reason to doubt Georgiades on this point, it was strictly as distant overseers and financiers. Of

---

446 Ibid., 90-91.
course, it is not impossible to imagine that anti-communist elements within the consulate, men like Kambalouris and Demertzis, thereafter took advantage of British largesse, in money, weapons, and transmitters – all things that Stathatos (and perhaps also Portokalidis, at least according to Kriton) had access to – in order to make an attempt to shake EAM from its pedestal as the acknowledged leader of the Evros resistance. But making the case for this type of British involvement is a long way from claiming, as Laiou does, that the British were evidently disinterested in the “conduct of the war” but were motivated primarily by the desire to create “the conditions for civil war.”

It is moreover the case that the Kriton and Georgiades accounts differ on the proximate cause for the outbreak of violence that summer. Although Kriton certainly did not think the consulate or the British were entirely blameless in the run-up leading to the troubles, he believed that it was Odysseus’ blind fanaticism and gullibility, both traits rooted in his fervent but poorly conceptualized Marxism, that were mostly to blame for the sequence of events that led to the Stathatos arrest and the subsequent evisceration of at least a section of the Evros resistance by the Gestapo. Odysseus’ gullibility, best exemplified by his tendency to trust anyone professing a commitment to socialism, resulted in lax security measures whereby the EAM organization was, by Kriton’s own admission, penetrated twice that summer by German collaborators. Similarly, his premature and nearsighted adherence to a revolutionary Marxist agenda alienated erstwhile republican allies like Stathatos and his followers. These people now had nowhere to turn except into the waiting arms of the British and the Greek Consulate in

Edirne. Despite his visceral hatred of the British and their Greek allies, therefore, even Kriton, a high-ranking member of the KKE, was willing to admit that it was Odysseus’ actions that, in the main, precipitated both the summer purges and the subsequent tragic events of December.\(^448\)

Kriton’s version of events thus leads the researcher inexorably toward a series of interrelated conclusions. First, German counter-insurgency operations were in large part responsible for the mass exodus of refugees in the late summer of 1943. Second, it is more than likely that the Germans enjoyed an intelligence advantage over the resistance not only because of the consulate’s shoddy security practices (Georgiades’ assumption) but also because of Odysseus’ lack of judgment on such matters. Third, the numerous refugees were not British “agents” in the traditional sense of the term, but local Greeks willing to participate in a resistance organization that was explicitly anti-communist. Incidentally, this conclusion puts to rest another of Laiou’s weakly supported generalizations: namely, that the British and the consulate were trying to fashion an anticomunist resistance “out of nothing.”\(^449\) Finally, the communists exploited the chaos that ensued from the German reprisals to identify and purge known Anglophiles from within their own ranks.

In contrast, Georgiades’ apparent belief that the machinations of the British were largely responsible for EAM’s few transgressions in Evros was never shaken.\(^450\) In fact,

\(^448\) Ibid., 37-45; 89-92.
\(^449\) Laiou, “Antartes,” 314. Obviously, the fact of over three-hundred refugees falsifies Laiou’s explicit assertion that there was no one in Evros willing to contemplate joining a resistance movement not controlled by the communists.
\(^450\) NARA RG 226/92A 24/361, “Report on Field Conditions – 13 October 1945.” Incredibly, Laiou went so far as to speculate that the Portokalidis band was possibly connected to an operative working for
it took him a long time to even acknowledge that EAM had transgressed at all. In a report dated 8 October 1943, Georgiades urged Young not to heed negative reports “from various big shots” about guerilla misbehavior, claiming that those executed (he mentioned five specifically) had been informers. He then went on to recommend an alliance with the guerillas in the most forceful language: “I am willing to stake my life on it that we cannot be wrong in taking them on.” As late as December 1943, Georgiades continued to extol the patriotic vigilance of EAM in hunting out quislings, despite increasing signs that the violence was escalating beyond control and targeting the innocent. “Yes the Antartes are terrorizing in Evro [sic] but only profiteers and prodotes [traitors].”

Subsequent experiences did little to alter his high opinion of the guerillas and in his final 1945 report, Georgiades seemed to imply that the events that transpired upon his arrival in the summer of 1943 were a justified reaction by the communist leadership of EAM/ELAS to British meddling in Evros’ internal affairs. Long after the war was over, in a letter to an old communist acquaintance, Georgiades reiterated this opinion, although his recollection of key dates was obviously fading. By that point in time, in late 1973, he was conflating the events of August 1943 with those of December 1943. His confusion about the timing was evinced when he mentioned, in one of these postwar

Georgiades. Whether or not this hypothesis is true (Kriton never even implied such a possibility in his memoir despite his extreme paranoia about the numerous threats faced by the communist leadership in Evros) it still means that Laiou stipulates to the notion that the Portokalidis band was a factor in the internal politics of the region only after Georgiades’ arrival. In short, she too, makes no connection between Portokalidis and the 1943 summer purge. See Laiou, “Antartes,” 319, 45n.

451 NARA, RG 226/190, 2/15, “Alex to Mr. Young – 8 October 1943.”
letters, that the Kellis mission arrived at about the same time the entire summer crisis was culminating and hundreds of refugees were fleeing across the border into Turkey.\(^{454}\) Unfortunately, his final report fails to corroborate this assertion. In it, he clearly points out that the refugee crisis was at its absolute zenith right as he was arriving in Istanbul in late August and before his first foray into occupied Evros. A few pages later, he notes the arrival of the Kellis mission around mid-November of that same year. Unfortunately, the arrival of the OSS demolition team would usher in a new, more disturbing chapter in the annals of the Evros resistance.\(^{455}\)

\(^{454}\) A. Georgiades to P. Soulis, Pittsburgh, 26 November 1973, in Ston Korfo, v.2, 313.

\(^{455}\) NARA RG 226/92A 24/361, “Report on Field Conditions – 13 October 1945.” Even this date may be unsound. See footnote 42 above.
Chapter Nine

The OSS in the German-Occupied Evros, Sep. 1943 - Sep. 1944: Part II


The tenuousness of the British connection and the mounting savagery of Odysseus in persecuting the enemies of EAM/ELAS thus contributed little to affecting negatively Georgiades’ judgment of the guerillas. In contrast, even Kriton felt compelled – ostensibly by the ferocity of Odysseus’ numerous depredations that fatal summer and fall – to retroactively provide some extra justification in his memoir for the guerilla leader’s brutal behavior. Adopting a highly interesting line of argumentation, Kriton at one point noted that the somewhat desultory British efforts in Evros to topple the communists from their perch were all part of a master plan that extended into those parts of Western Thrace and Eastern Macedonia occupied by the Bulgarians. Specifically, Kriton claimed that the true goal of the SIS effort in Evros was to link up with a British mission in the Bulgarian-occupied part of Greek Macedonia led by a certain “Major Miller.” Possibly intent on providing a further excuse for Odysseus’ transgressions, Laiou seizes upon this theory in her article, implying strongly that Statathos’ arrest and the subsequent executions of his alleged cohorts in August-September 1943, were a justified
response to the threat posed by Miller who was “in Xanthi at the time…helping PAO and Tsaous Anton.” 456

Although Kriton did not specify, in the particular section of his account cited by Laiou, when exactly the Miller mission set up its headquarters near Xanthi, he did strongly intimate that it was around the late summer of 1943. 457 The shadowy outlines of such an apparently well-coordinated British conspiracy would thus make Odysseus’ zealous pursuit of Anglophiles in the latter half of that year understandable, if not completely justifiable. If indeed the British were playing such a subtle game, it is difficult to fault Odysseus for reacting in the forceful manner that he did. Kriton’s characterization of Miller as “satanic” in another section of his memoir only serves to reinforce the impression that the communist leadership did what it had to do to maintain itself against a ruthless enemy. Therefore, the exact purpose of the Miller mission and

---

456 Angeliki Laiou, “Antartes kai Symmachikes Apostoles ston Germanokratoumeno Evro: I Martyria tou Alekou Georgiadi” [Guerrillas and Allied Missions in German-occupied Evros: The Testimony of Alekos Georgiadis], in Hagen Fleischer and Nikos Svoronos, eds., Praktika tou Diethnous Istorikou Synedriou: I Ellada, 1936-1944: Diktatoria-Katoni-Antistasi [Proceeds of the International Historical Conference: Greece, 1936-1944: Dictatorship-Occupation-Resistance]. (Athens: Morfotiko Institiouto ATE, 1989), 308. The Panhellenic Liberation Organization, or PAO, was a loosely organized rightist outfit formed by discharged Greek officers and operating principally in Central Macedonia and Thessaloniki in 1941 and early 1942. It was originally called Defenders of Northern Greece [YBE] but was gradually reduced by EAM/ELAS, for all intents and purposes ceasing to exist as a viable organization by the end of 1943. Most of its members were either killed or forced into exile by the communists with a few notoriously choosing to cooperate with the Axis to avoid such fates. Some PAO elements fled into Eastern Macedonia where EAM/ELAS’ organization was significantly weaker and thereafter came into contact with Tsaous Anton. Although the latter was certainly friendly toward PAO, he was not technically affiliated with them, but was an independent operator, despite his staunch anti-communist credentials. See Parmenion Papathanasiou, ed., Gia ton Elliniko Vorrta: Makedonia 1941-1944, Antistasi kai Tragodia (To Anekdoto Archeio-Imerologio tou tote Tagmafarchi Gianni Papathanasiou, Idritiko Melos tis Organoseos YBE/PAO [Concerning the Greek North: Macedonia 1941-1944, Resistance and Tragedy (The Unpublished Archive/Diary of the then Major Giannis Papathanasiou, Founding Member of the YBE/PAO Organization] vol. 2, (Athens: Papazisis, 1988), 616.

the precise timing of its arrival in Eastern Macedonia do seem issues in need of added scrutiny.\textsuperscript{458}

The name “Miller” was in reality the wartime pseudonym of Major Guy Micklethwait of the British SOE. Lt. Colonel Nicholas Hammond, the Deputy Commander of the British Military Mission (BMM) and the senior Allied officer in Northern Greece at the time did send Micklethwait north to liaise with the ELAS guerillas operating in Eastern Macedonia sometime around August 1943. According to Hammond’s later recollection of events, Cairo asked him to see to it that Micklethwait contact ELAS forces in Macedonia, who would then transfer him to Bulgarian-occupied Thrace, a veritable intelligence grey zone as far as the SOE was concerned. Using considerable guile, Micklethwait managed to enter the Bulgarian zone disguised as a Greek Orthodox priest. He immediately began cooperating closely with local EAM/ELAS forces and SOE Cairo was so pleased with his performance that it gave him his own independent command. As Hammond later recalled, this sundering of Micklethwait’s ties to the BMM saved him, as deputy commander, “a good deal of trouble” later on, when Micklethwait decided, under controversial circumstances, to abandon EAM/ELAS in favor of Tsaous Anton.\textsuperscript{459}

Despite Kriton’s insinuations to the contrary, it seems highly unlikely that even a more overt and committed British SIS network in Istanbul than the one Kriton and Georgiades described would know about the existence of or even cooperate with an SOE

\textsuperscript{458} Ibid.

One former SIS agent, Nigel Clive, based during the war in the Zervas-controlled section of Epirus, recalled vividly several instances when his superiors urged him to avoid prolonged contact with SOE operatives while in Greece for fear that he would be infected, according to them, by the SOE’s unhealthy propensity to meddle in the politics of the resistance. Clive immediately understood the relevance of this SOE-SIS rivalry to his own long-term survival in the field, since he was initially dispatched to Greece to replace an SIS operative who had been shot by an SOE agent under mysterious circumstances, the latter alleging that the former had developed a close relationship with the local German garrison and was obviously a double agent.\footnote{Nigel Clive, \textit{A Greek Experience, 1943-1948} (Salisbury, UK: Michael Russell, 1985), 22-30, 56-59.}

Moreover, Micklethwait was not even in Thrace until January 1944. Although Kriton, in a separate section of his memoir, gets the dates right, in the specific section that Laiou cites to allege a British conspiracy he – one can only think purposefully – obscures the key detail that August 1943 was the date Micklethwait entered Eastern Macedonia, not Western Thrace.\footnote{Kriton insinuates that “Miller” was in Thrace by August 1943 in Kasapis, \textit{Ston Korfo}, vol. 2, 77-82, while he provides the correct chronology in ibid., 262-264.} Furthermore, until he switched sides to join Tsaous...
Anton in January 1944 (it was only after his abandonment of EAM/ELAS that Micklethwait moved his headquarters to Xanthi) Micklethwait was assisting EAM/ELAS forces by providing them with supplies in food, medicine, and ammunition. Indeed, a former rightist guerilla officer claimed, in his own memoir of the occupation, that Tsaous Anton’s allies were primarily responsible for orchestrating Micklethwait’s defection from EAM/ELAS, fearing that EAM/ELAS would ultimately use the materiel the SOE was providing them with against their fellow Greeks and not against the occupying forces. The rightist guerillas, with some partial assistance from Micklethwait, ambushed his ELAS minders on 5 January 1944 and abducted the British officer. After his defection, Micklethwait cooperated closely with Tsaous Anton until the end of the war.\textsuperscript{463}

In his postwar correspondence with Iatrides, Georgiades did refer to the Miller mission at one point, in a passage detailing Micklethwait’s cooperation with what he defined as the “nationalist” forces in Eastern Macedonia. As the passage reveals, he did not apparently know that the name “Miller” was a pseudonym (neither did Kriton for that matter), nor was he all that clear on the details of Micklethwait’s own role in the abduction, assuming, wrongly, that he played a central role:

About the middle of August of 1943 a British officer, Major Miller, was brought into the region by the EAM ELAS forces sent from the headquarters of the British mission for the purpose of acting as liaison and receive [sic] instructions. It was upon the arrival of this officer under the pretext of unifying all resistance forces that a serious incident occurred that caused bloodshed between EAM ELAS and the Nationalists. The role that this man played was divisive and quite complicated but the facts are known. In the end his policy failed because EAM ELAS was very well organized and strong.\textsuperscript{464}

\textsuperscript{463} Papathanasiou, \textit{Elliniko Vorra}, v. 2, 634-637.

\textsuperscript{464} A.M. Georgiades, Pittsburgh, to John Iatrides, Connecticut, 7 February 1973, transcript in the hand of John Iatrides. It is unclear what Georgiades meant when he claimed the facts were “well known,” since very little had been written about the Thracian resistance at the time. It is possible that he was referring to
Presumably, the “serious incident” alludes to the ambush that wrested Micklethwait from EAM/ELAS control and the reference to “bloodshed” seems to echo Kriton’s own description of the episode as a cowardly massacre. One thing, however, is clear: the presence of the Miller mission in Eastern Macedonia could not have been the reason for Odysseus’ excesses in either the late summer or the early autumn of 1943. In his contemporaneous reports, Georgiades only mentioned this particular British officer once, in an episode that occurred weeks after the German evacuation, so Micklethwait was obviously a non-factor as far as Odysseus’ decisions in 1943 were concerned.465

Since Georgiades only arrived at his headquarters in Edirne in early August 1943, it took him some time to establish contacts and gather intelligence about what was happening in Evros. For a few weeks after his arrival in Turkey, Georgiades remained committed to the idea that the conflict raging a few miles to the west represented nothing but a minor flare-up. He was more inclined to ascribe his difficulties in making contact with the Evros resistance to the Greek Consulate’s obstructionism (the result of the exiled government’s absolute determination to avoid even indirect support of the communist-led movement) and, interestingly enough, to divisional fault lines separating one OSS desk

---


465 National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group (RG) 226, Entry 92A, Box 24, Folder 361, “Report on Field Conditions – 13 October 1945.” Significantly, Micklethwait’s personnel files make no mention of any conspiracy. In one document he is criticized by a superior for being too “…enthusiastic and possibly overstepping the terms of his brief in order to safeguard the interests of his Andartes.” This criticism is probably in reference to Micklethwait’s attempt to sign a separate peace with the Bulgarians after the German evacuation (see below) and has nothing to do with the events of August-January 1944. See National Archives of the United Kingdom (NAUK), Records of the Special Operations Executive (HS), Reference 9/1030/6 (Personnel Files), C392991, “Lt. Col. J.A. Dolbey to HQ Force 133: Confidential Reports – Officers – 6 November 1944.”
from another. In one of his early reports from Turkey, Georgiades implied that the OSS
Istanbul Desk headed by Lanning Macfarland, a personal friend of Donovan’s, was
putting obstacles in his way because he took his orders directly from the Greek Desk in
Cairo and did not have to go through them. He also cited Major Jerome Sperling, one of
the officers ranking right below Macfarland in the OSS Istanbul hierarchy, as being
responsible for a number of procedural difficulties apparently, according to Georgiades,
because of Sperling’s overly obsessive emphasis on strict security measures.466

In her article, Laiou implies that the conflict between Georgiades and Sperling
went deeper than that and might have been fueled by professional jealousy or petty
bureaucratic rivalry.467 No evidence exists to support such a hypothesis. In reality,
Sperling was a close personal acquaintance of Georgiades’ boss, Rodney Young, who
had actually recommended Sperling for the position in Istanbul. Young and Sperling,
archaeologists in peacetime, met while on a dig in Turkey before the war. What is more,
when Young arrived in Cairo in the early spring of 1943 to take up his duties as director
of the Greek Desk of OSS/SI, Sperling had been a member of his staff.468 Certainly,
Young could have briefed Georgiades on Sperling’s character if he had thought it would
be an impediment to his agent.

466 The comments on Sperling in the earliest letters are rather innocuous; the most notable centering on the
fact that Georgiades’ mission was delayed because Sperling insisted his radio was not working properly.
See NARA RG226/190 2/15, “Alex 13 to Roger [sic] – 16 September 1943.” The reference to Sperling’s
obsession with security is in NARA RG226/190 77/87, “Aleko to Mr. Young – 10 March 1944.”
M1642RI, roll 83, frames 770-71); OSS Record Group 226, NARA, College Park, MD. Anthony Cave
Furthermore, according to the secret postwar testimony of a number of Greek agents on the OSS payroll, Sperling was not hostile to EAM/ELAS and had even been accused by a few of being dangerously sympathetic to the communist-led movement. An internal OSS Security report examining Sperling’s political viewpoints in order to respond to these postwar accusations stated that “Major Sperling has given distinct signs of disapproving of Rightist methods and policies…at least this much seems certain, that Major Sperling is not inclined to cooperate with these people.” It would have been highly uncharacteristic of such a man to attempt to prevent a fellow OSS agent, sent by his close associate Rodney Young, from making contact with EAM/ELAS guerillas in Thrace, internal OSS rivalries notwithstanding.

All the same, it is possible that Georgiades might have been right about the obstacles put in his path by the Istanbul Desk, if for a completely different reason. Shortly after his arrival in Istanbul, in May 1943, Macfarland set up a far-reaching network of operatives tasked with the responsibility of collecting intelligence from Central Europe and the Balkans. Codenamed Cereus, the network was, in comparison to other OSS operations, slick and well-financed. Donovan intended from the beginning to use the network to realize an ambitious project he had been ruminating over since his first trip to the Balkans as Roosevelt’s envoy in 1941. The idea behind the initiative was to use OSS resources – essentially high-profile contacts close to the Bulgarian government – to encourage Bulgaria to defect from the Axis. According to Donovan’s biographer,

---

469 NARA, RG226/144 78/97, “Greek Agent Complaints: Nickles for Security Files – 3 April, 1945.”
470 It was while on this trip that he allegedly succeeded in persuading Yugoslavia to disavow its own ties to the Axis. See chapter five.
Bulgaria’s projected defection was the centerpiece of an even greater plan to create enough chaos among Hitler’s Balkan allies (the plan contained Hungarian and Romanian initiatives in addition to the Bulgarian one) to “force the dispersion of the Wehrmacht before the main invasion of Europe.”

In an article published in 1983, the historian Michael Boll posited that Donovan’s Bulgarian plan so appealed to Roosevelt, Hull, and the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, that it “formed the core of the US-Balkan policy from its implementation.” Given the inchoate and formless nature of US foreign policy in the region, such a statement seems a gross exaggeration. As Roosevelt’s confused bungling of the Greek monarchial issue in December 1943 demonstrated, US foreign policy on the Balkans was a more makeshift affair, frequently encompassing multiple and sometimes conflicting priorities and just as often articulated by a shifting assortment of personalities. Boll’s associated argument, namely that Donovan’s Bulgarian initiative illustrated the depth of the American desire for a postwar world free of spheres of influence, is harder to gainsay. The plan also afforded the US (and by extension the OSS) a rare opportunity to acquire a primary role in the affairs of at least one Balkan nation. This was a role that the British SOE was in any case willing to relinquish to the Americans in return for primacy in Yugoslavia and Greece. But American foreign policy in the Balkans certainly did not hinge on the

---

471 Cave Brown, Last Hero, 354.
473 See chapter four.
success or failure of Donovan’s Bulgarian gambit, nor did Donovan’s intrigues pit the Anglo-American allies against each other as Boll contends.\footnote{Boll, “US Plans,” 124-125. Conversely, George Kazamias, in a more recent article, quotes the then US Undersecretary of State Edward Stettinius Jr. characteristically declaring on the matter of Bulgaria, “American-British-Soviet collaboration is not to be made or unmade over Bulgaria.” See George Kazamias, “‘The Usual Bulgarian Stratagems’: The Big Three and the End of the Bulgarian Occupation of Greek Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, September-October 1944,” \textit{European History Quarterly} 29 (Fall 1999): 338. Regarding the OSS influence on US foreign policy, the historian Anne Karalekas may have been exaggerating when she wrote “what difference did the existence of the OSS make [in the formulation of American policy]? The answer is, unequivocally, none.” Still, the exaggeration was slight. See Anne Karalekas, \textit{Britain, the United States, and Greece, 1942-1945} (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 98.}

For the British, Bulgaria was little more than a sideshow affair and they, at any rate, tended to be “skeptical about such American contacts.”\footnote{Elisabeth Barker, “Bulgaria in August 1944: A British View,” in William Deakin, Elisabeth Barker, and Jonathan Chadwick, eds., \textit{British Political and Military Strategy in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe in 1944} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988), 203. Indeed, British acknowledgment of US operational “predominance” in Bulgaria never stopped the SOE from attempting to set up military missions in that country. See, for example, Stoyan Rachev, \textit{Anglo-Bulgarian Relations during the Second World War, 1939-1944} (Sofia, Bulgaria: Sofia Press, 1981), 87-116, and especially E.P. Thompson’s, \textit{Beyond the Frontier: The Politics of a Failed Mission, Bulgaria 1944} (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Merlin Press, 1997), which details the failed attempt of the famous historian’s brother, Major Frank Thompson of the SOE, to set up a mission in Bulgaria. He was captured and executed by Bulgarian gendarmes in June 1944.} Similarly, as Boll himself acknowledges, the Soviet attitude, at least until the Red Army arrived at the Bulgarian frontier in late August 1944, was non-committal since Bulgarian territory was not adjacent to the territory of the Soviet Union and thus the country would have no immediate impact on Stalin’s postwar plans to construct a security cordon around the socialist homeland.\footnote{Boll, “US Plans,” 125-126.} It is therefore not surprising that, in his follow-up book on the relationship between US foreign policy and wartime Bulgaria published exactly one year after the article under discussion, Boll omitted the reference to a “core” US policy and even went so far as to state that “American involvement in Bulgaria was fortuitous, the result of accidental opportunities” and it came only because “Bulgaria’s proximity to
Greece, Turkey, and the Middle East justified efforts...to deny this land to any unfriendly power or alliance.” In other words, insofar as there was any kind of “core” US policy in the Balkans, it centered on Greece and Turkey, not on Bulgaria.478

Regrettably, the failure of Cereus rendered the entire question of Bulgaria’s defection moot. The network had been penetrated by German counter-intelligence “almost from [its] conception.”479 One of the reasons behind the operation’s failure was that OSS security measures in Istanbul, where the network was headquartered, were plainly inadequate to the task at hand. Georgiades, who maintained close relations with the Istanbul Desk throughout the occupation, wryly observed in one of his reports that he would never “work through the Dover [OSS codename for Istanbul] office under the present set up...I like Mr. McFarlands [sic] reasoning but that is all. The rest are cooking fish with the wrong oil.”480

Approximately one month after writing those words, he again wrote to Rodney Young in Cairo complaining that too many people knew about his work in Istanbul and finishing in an exasperated tone by stating that: “...the less I have to do with Dover the better I shall like it. This in spite of extreme emphasis on security which goes on in there [sic]. They don’t mind breaking others’ security the least [sic].”481 About a week later he reiterated in yet another message to Young in Cairo “I know of no one at Istanbul in

478 Michael Boll, Cold War in the Balkans: American Foreign Policy and the Emergence of Communist Bulgaria, 1943-1947 (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 1984), 2, 188. Still, the shift of policy emphasis to the Mediterranean happened late. According to Kazamias, after the German withdrawal, one of the principal stumbling blocks to persuading the Bulgarian garrison to evacuate Greek territory quickly was American diplomatic intransigence. Apparently, some American policymakers were willing to briefly contemplate allowing Bulgaria to keep some of the occupied Greek territories in return for expanded postwar American influence in that country.
479 Cave Brown, Last Hero, 406.
480 NARA, RG 226/190, 77/87, “Alekko to Mr. Young, Istambul – 21 February 1944.”
whom I have confidence enough to lead me.”

Similar security lapses, multiplied many times over, played their part in contributing to the catastrophic failure of most of Donovan’s pet projects in Eastern Europe, including the Bulgarian initiative, although it seems likely that such an initiative would have failed anyway due to Bulgaria’s understandable reluctance to give up the territorial gains it acquired as an Axis ally.

Thus, there exists an outside possibility that this compromised network might have been one of the causes of Georgiades’ initial difficulties, although it should be emphasized that “Sperling never became involved in the events that engulfed the Cereus organization.”

Georgiades managed finally to enter Evros some time before the end of September 1943. Once there, he made brief contact with Odysseus but was unable to pursue closer cooperation with him because of German “pressure.” He nevertheless managed to send the guerrillas some supplies and money as a token of good faith upon his return to Edirne. For two months after this first brief contact, he heard nothing from the guerrillas and so decided to send a subordinate to ascertain what was wrong sometime in late November 1943. Georgiades’ operative came back with the ominous news that, because of the American’s failure to follow up on the initial meeting, Odysseus had

---

482 NARA, RG 226/190, 77/87, “Iskunder (Alekko) to Rodney – 26 March 1944.”
484 Cave Brown, Last Hero, 356. The entire story of Cereus is outlined in ibid., 349-410. Through Cereus also, Donovan and the OSS made — significant but ultimately fruitless — contact with a number of high-profile dissenters from within Nazi Germany, among them Franz von Papen, former chancellor of Germany and, at the time, German ambassador to Turkey. Through von Papen, in turn, the OSS also made contact with Count Helmuth von Moltke, grand-nephew of the renowned World War I Chief of Staff and founder of the so-called “Kreisau Circle” (named after the Moltke estate in Silesia): essentially a talking group of Moltke’s intellectual and aristocratic acquaintances united by their mutual opposition to the Nazi regime. It is possible that the penetration of Cereus may have led to Moltke’s arrest in January 1944 and eventual execution by the Nazi authorities exactly one year later. See also Richard Breitman, “Other Responses to the Holocaust,” in Richard Breitman et al., ed., US Intelligence and the Nazis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 49-53.
issued an order “that all British, American, and Cairo Greeks entering Evro should be
cought on sight and taken to Hqts [sic].” Apparently, the courier chosen by Georgiades
had absconded with the supplies and money slated for the guerillas. Georgiades dryly
noted in his report: “I hate to be that man today [sic].”

Unconcerned by this demonstration of mistrust on the part of Odysseus and
typically preferring to ascribe the evident hostility of the guerilla leader to prior British
mistakes, Georgiades entered Evros alone and made contact with him on 3 December
1943. Georgiades described Odysseus in a report he sent to Cairo a little more than a
week later:

He has deeply impressed me because though little schooled he has a keen intellect
and a very alert mind. He possesses the powers of leadership without showing any
outward directness. He eats and sleeps very little and almost never takes his
clothes off. The men love him which helps in the manifest self-discipline the men
have. In the 3 days I spent there I did not notice even an insignificant squable
[sic] or complaint, among the men.

Georgiades also admired the forceful methods Odysseus employed to deal with traitors;
methods which he claimed were very effective. “They have to date executed seventy-six
people for various crimes and the guilty ones are scared now.” In his concluding
remarks, Georgiades insisted that forty sub-machine guns and some TNT would be all

486 Ibid. It is interesting to compare this description of Odysseus’ austere habits with Couvaras’ (see
chapter six) description of Aris Velouchiotis: “…an outstanding leader and a brilliant man. A man who
could be abrupt or calm depending on the needs of the moment. A man who could drink enough to get
drunk but who was also capable of abstaining from wine, or even from food, sometimes for many days.
His clothing and food did not differ from his men’s…he had imposed very strict rules on them and on
himself…” Costas Couvaras, *OSS – Me tin Kentriki tou EAM* [OSS: With the EAM Central Committee]
(Athens: Exantas, 1976), 185.
that was required to gain the permanent loyalty of EAM/ELAS and “blow up anything we want blown up from Salonika to Evro.”

Paradoxically, Kriton’s own assessment of Odysseus’ personality and behavior during the fall of 1943 was less sanguine. Kriton recounted in his memoir that the months leading up to 1944 saw an absolute increase in arrests, beatings, and executions of some suspected traitors and quislings but mostly, it seemed to him, of Odysseus’ detractors. Indeed, it was apparent that Odysseus appeared to distinguish little between the two categories. In the first week of December, at precisely the time Georgiades was giving his above positive assessment of Odysseus as an earnest resistance leader, the communist chief ordered the formation of a special “Death Battalion” of mounted volunteers, a roving tribunal whose job it would be to try and if necessary execute any suspected traitors in the various villages under EAM/ELAS control. Odysseus placed his ruthless second-in-command, the aptly named “Telemachus,” in charge of the outfit.

Telemachus’ standards for determining traitorous behavior were not exacting to say the least. Kriton accompanied the Battalion on one of its typical raids to a few villages in mid-December 1943. Upon entering the first village, Telemachus, apparently working on direct orders from Odysseus, ordered the arrest of two suspects, a middle-aged party loyalist whose only crime was to criticize the mayor of the village, a close associate of Odysseus, of corruption and graft (charges that were, according to Kriton,

---

487 NARA RG226/190 2/15, “Alekko to Roger [sic] – 12 December 1943.” Georgiades was clearly assuming that EAM/ELAS was the only credible armed force of resistance in the territory outlined above. He must have gotten such an idea from Odysseus, since he at the time knew nothing about the Bulgarian-controlled sectors of Macedonia and Thrace. Obviously, if Tsaous Anton or the Miller mission had been as threatening to EAM/ELAS as was later claimed by Kriton, it seems doubtful Georgiades would have made such a bold assertion.
manifestly true), and a single mother of two young children abandoned by her husband and forced into the role of village prostitute to secure their survival. She was accused of sharing her bed with an itinerant Turkish-speaking merchant that had, at one point in time, served as a German informant. As the woman had not seen the merchant in months, Kriton suspected that her arrest was supposed to serve as cover for the execution of the mayor’s rival. Within minutes of the arrest, Telemachus passed summary judgment on the two suspects and ordered their immediate execution. Only timely intervention on the part of Kriton – bolstered by the support of the majority of the guerillas, who were, Kriton insisted, outraged and disgusted by the whole pathetic spectacle – saved the condemned from certain death.488

Kriton’s intervention was not without consequences. The moment the Battalion returned to base, Telemachus accused Kriton, in front of Odysseus, of “systematically engaging in obstructionist politics” and harboring secret monarchist sympathies. This was an outlandish accusation to make against a life-long member of the KKE and one of the principal founders of EAM in Evros. Kriton had many friends among the guerillas who immediately vouched for his loyalty and the moment passed. But he later acknowledged that, at the time, he was in a “very difficult position…my life was in immediate danger.”489 Others were not as fortunate. Throughout the month of December and into January, Odysseus purged other high-ranking members of EAM while at the same time ignoring the struggle against the Germans. Random executions of supposed collaborators multiplied and rumors that Odysseus possessed lists with the names of pre-

489 Ibid., 104.
war “Metaxists” slated to be “proscribed” increased the terror of the civilian population to a fever pitch. Kriton recounted how villagers would at night “lock themselves in their homes with an ear to the door…and their hearts would beat at every dog’s bark or at every unusual or suspicious sound.” The crisis reached its apex with the issuance of Odysseus’ final directive, sometime in January 1944: “FIRE AND AXE AGAINST ALL ENGLISH SYMPATHIZERS.”

Authoritative as the account of a high-ranking communist member of the Evros resistance might be, the tale recounted by Kriton is also confirmed by one of Georgiades’ former informants, Dimitris Petritzikis, who decided to join the Evros resistance in mid-January 1944. According to an internal OSS report issued by “Marty,” one of Georgiades’ assistants at Edirne, Petritzikis enjoyed a good reputation amongst the guerillas, as he had early in the war “killed his cousin, a known German informer.”

Presumably because of his standing, Petritzikis was assigned, like Kriton, to the elite Death Battalion headed by Telemachus. On his very first trip, Petritzikis bore witness to an argument between Telemachus and two other members of the group over a young man captured on suspicion of being a German informant. Although the preponderance of the evidence showed the young man innocent of any collaboration with the enemy, Telemachus insisted on shooting him anyway and resented the interference of his two comrades on the boy’s behalf. He threatened them with violence and questioned their adherence to communism. “This is a revolution,” he said, and things have to be done

490 Ibid., 116.
491 NARA RG226/190 77/87, “Present Conditions in Evros: X-5 to Cairo – 3 February 1944.”
even if a few innocent persons are killed. It wouldn’t matter in the long run.”

Petritzikis was with the guerillas when Odysseus arrested Major Stathatos (along with Portokalidis and a dozen or so other men that were captured separately) a second time on charges of attempting to organize a rival resistance movement in cooperation with the Greek Consulate in Edirne and the British. Kriton admitted in his memoir that this second indictment of Stathatos was totally without cause or evidence and based solely on rumor and hearsay. Odysseus, in a strange move and for no apparent reason, then arrested Petritzikis. The suspects were detained for two days then tried by a drumhead “People’s Court.” The day before the trial, Odysseus pulled aside Petritzikis to inform him that he was never a suspect; he had been detained, along with the alleged conspirators, because he was unknown to Stathatos and the rest. Odysseus hoped that the suspects might, as a result, trust him enough to confide in him. Petritzikis had reason enough to have doubts about the guerilla chieftain’s motives, however, when after this interview, he was deposited back with the prisoners and informed by two friends that, although he was now safe, it was their intervention that convinced Odysseus to spare him from the same fate that was to be meted out to the accused. Terrified for his life, Petritzikis watched as, two days later, the suspects were tried and executed.

This execution was the most horrible thing I have ever witnessed in my life and made me think harder how to find a way to escape. First they stripped the prisoners of all clothing, then they hit them with stones on the head and knifed them with small knives. Others they suffocated tying a rope around their necks. After they were dead they cut their heads off and took them to the Ferrai main highway for exhibition to the passers by.

It was not long before Odysseus started to display signs of hostility toward the Americans. Indeed, his change in attitude was evident long before the arrest of Stathatos. Kriton later criticized, in typical apparatchik fashion, Odysseus’ severe lack of judgment in distinguishing friend from foe and surmised that it was a symptom of his ideological degeneration, since “in this way was halted the popular separation between those Anglophiles loyal to the Allied cause and those Anglophile agents of the enemy.” 495 As early as mid-December 1943, the guerillas accosted a courier sent by Georgiades to establish a rudimentary intelligence network on behalf of the OSS. This man, a certain Nicholas Dalamatzis, was forced to flee to Turkey for his life along with half a dozen of his closest associates. Back in Edirne, Georgiades’ operatives were confused. “We do not know why the Antartes were suspicious of the activity of our service.” The account of the refugees did little to allay their confusion and in fact increased their fear tenfold.

The refugees also stated that they were threatened by a representative of the Antartes that he would deliver them…for execution because they were Anglophiles and capitalists, with these words, “You need to be shortened a span and that will not be long in coming.” Panic stricken these refugees escaped…They are not capitalists but farmers and in moderate financial circumstances. 496

The execution of Stathatos proved to be highly unpopular. Kriton believed that it was catalytic in crystallizing the anti-communist opposition in Evros to such an extent that it had major repercussions long after the end of the occupation. “It is a proven fact that one wrong action engenders a fanatical reaction. Therefore, the stubborn political

496 NARA, RG226/190, 77/87, “An Examination of Greek Refugees Crossing the Makra Gefyra, December 18-20, 1943: Marty via X-5 to Cairo – 27 December 1943.”
reaction in Evros during the period of the DSE [Democratic Army of Greece, the name for the communist insurgent army during the Greek Civil War] was undoubtedly the product of Odysseus’ destructive executions, his politics of dissension.”

Contemporaneous OSS reports agreed with this assessment. Remarking on the chaos and panic sparked by the executions and purges and the “unfavorable reaction” of the people to communist methods, one report pointed out that “it should be remembered that Stathatos was very well liked and respected in Evros.”

Nevertheless, Georgiades tried to keep his channel to the guerrillas open. In January 1944, he sent his most trusted courier, a communist by political conviction, into Evros with a letter for Odysseus. It never reached the guerrilla chief. According to the courier’s testimony, one of Odysseus’ henchmen confiscated the letter and lost no time making it clear to Georgiades’ operative who was in charge in Evros. “The village director of the ELAS organization opened the letter I had sent for Odysseus and read it at a meeting, ridiculing it and claiming that if they wanted to send the letter they would; if they didn’t they would destroy it. They as Communists had no superiors or inferiors.”

The crisis escalated exponentially. Georgiades later claimed that it was around this time that Odysseus began to suspect that the American operative was playing both sides against the middle and resolved to eliminate him at first opportunity. Georgiades’ reports at the time of the crisis chronicle no such shift in Odysseus’ generally friendly

attitude toward him. If anything, his most positive and amicable face-to-face meeting with Odysseus occurred shortly before the outbreak of the most extreme violence.  

Whatever the truth of the matter, it was plainly evident that, for Georgiades, the revolutionary anarchy could not have come at a worst time: the Kellis mission arrived in Istanbul at the apex of the crisis, sometime between mid-November 1943 and the first week of January 1944. Georgiades was forced to tell Kellis and his team to hold at Istanbul until the situation in Evros cleared up. In his final report to headquarters, Kellis, somewhat inaccurately, described the population of Evros as being in “a state of civil war” (it was more of a one-sided massacre) around the time of his arrival in theater. On an interesting side note, Kellis went on to state that “800 persons had been killed” during the troubles, twice the number of Georgiades’ contemporaneous estimate.

The delay reflected poorly on Georgiades. He had been in the region since the summer of 1943, and it was his repeated assurances to headquarters that the guerillas would be amenable to the prospect of cooperation that prompted Paul West, the chief operations officer in Cairo, to send Kellis in the first place. Under the circumstances, it was therefore most likely the desperate desire to reestablish some form of contact with the guerillas that forced Georgiades to risk sending Petritzikis into the heart of darkness. To his credit, however, the moment he became aware that Petritzikis had been arrested,

---

502 NARA, RG226/92 575/10, “Final report of the Evros Mission: Captain James G. L. Kellis – 15 October 1944.” It is important to note that the total population of the German-controlled section of Evros at the time – if one takes into account the data provided by the 1940 nation-wide census conducted right before the Axis invasion and ignores factors like the dramatic dislocations caused by subsequent Bulgarian and German depredations – would have hovered around 120,000 or so, excepting the Bulgarian-controlled county of Alexandroupolis. See Topiki Enosi Dimon Koinotiton Evrou [Regional Union of Evros Municipalities-Communities], “Statistika Stoicheia Nomou Evrou” [Statistical Data of Evros Prefecture]; available from http://tedk.evros.gr/stat_6.htm#nomos; Internet; accessed 20 September 2008.
he attempted an immediate rescue. During the course of this ultimately successful rescue attempt, Georgiades was shocked to witness the scale of the horror that Odysseus had unleashed, in the space of a few short weeks since their last face-to-face meeting, on the hapless civilian population of Evros. In a report written a few weeks after the crisis had subsided, Georgiades detailed the many atrocities committed in the name of revolution:

Nevertheless when the damage is all listed, it is estimated that over 400 people lost their lives for no other reason than that they were democrats and did not like the actions of Antartika. A personal grudge of one of the village political leaders was enough to cause death.

Though this anarchy was bad enough the arrival [of new leadership] saved perhaps over a thousand lives. Odysseus had ordered the death of a long list of Anglophiloi, without trial and the “Battalion of death” were on their way to execute the order when the new leader came and made Odysseus write an order returning the Battalion to Limeria [guerilla headquarters]. Whole villages were to be burned.

The circumstances that led to Odysseus’ fall from power are somewhat murky. What is certain is that it was the communist cadres, men like Kriton and others like him, who eventually decided that the depredations had progressed to the point where EAM/ELAS was losing all of its popular support in the countryside. The communist leadership loyal to Kriton sent word to the regional EAM headquarters in Thessaloniki, and it was not long before a new leader, “Athinodoros,” arrived to take the reins of power. Athinodoros promptly ordered Odysseus to surrender his weapons and resign from his position as head of EAM/ELAS in Evros. Odysseus did so without complaint. The reasons for his passivity are a matter for conjecture. As a committed communist he

was not ignorant of the need for party oversight and he may also have felt that his actions had been largely justified. He was then arrested, along with Telemachus and a dozen or so other close associates, and tried as an “enemy of the people” in a public show trial sometime in February 1944. The judges, headed by Kriton, listened – not without some sympathy – to his three-hour long apology but in the end found him guilty and executed him summarily as soon as the trial was over. Odysseus’ associates, however, were eventually cleared of any wrongdoing.  

Georgiades was overjoyed with this new turn of events since Athinodoros made it clear to him that he was much more amenable to cooperation with the OSS. The new guerilla chief’s positive attitude, therefore, meant that the Kellis mission could now go forward. He wrote to Young back in Cairo describing the change in leadership and the death of Odysseus, scarcely able to contain his delight. “I am sorry but my enthusiasm is too great due to new developments among the Antartes…I hope my enthusiasm will not be in vain.”

Nonetheless, the fact was that that he had found it difficult during the crisis to explain the rapid descent of Odysseus into barbarism, and his bemusement continued even after the guerilla leader’s death. His initial hypothesis was that “no doubt the man was mad” and that maybe he and his henchmen “drunk with the power they had gained in the region…overplayed their cards.” But it is clear from the available documentation that, even to Georgiades, this interpretation seemed somehow inadequate.

---

505 Kasapis, _Ston Korfo_, v. 2, 121-129.
506 NARA, RG 226/190, 77/87, “Alekko to Young – 1 March 1944.”
to encompass the magnitude of Odysseus’ crimes. Consequently, he developed an alternative, though parallel, narrative to explain the orgy of violence and maybe even excuse his own gullibility in trusting Odysseus implicitly: Odysseus had been an impostor, possibly even a Bulgarian Ochrana operative, who had, through stealth and guile, penetrated the guerilla organization in order to bring about its destruction from the inside.

The details of this intrigue-ridden but apparently fanciful alternate narrative are revealing. According to his final report, Georgiades, on one of his visits to Evros, noticed that Odysseus was posing as “Partsalides, the communist, former mayor of Kavalla [sic].” This was an astounding charge. At the time, Dimitris Partsalidis was the secretary-general of the national chapter of EAM and a high-ranking member of the KKE. Despite Evros’ relative isolation from the rest of the country, it seems impossible to imagine that anyone would think such an attempt at dissimulation would work, based as it was on the expectation that not one of the communists in Evros had ever met Partsalidis or even seen a picture of him: a prospect made even more unlikely by the fact that Partsalidis had served as mayor of Kavala in 1934 and had also twice been elected to the Greek Parliament as a representative of that municipality in 1932 and 1936. Given that Kavala is less than forty kilometers (about eighteen miles) from the border that divides Macedonia from Thrace, such an expectation would have been at best foolishly optimistic, at worst fatally idiotic.

---

510 Dimitrios (Mitsos) Partsalidis, Diplo Apokatastas tis Ethnikis Antistasis, [The Double Restoration of the National Resistance], (Athens: Themelio, 1978), ii.
Despite the barely credible nature of his assertion, Georgiades insisted that it was he who managed to uncover the deception on a subsequent visit to the guerillas when he “found an old magazine cover with Partsalides’ picture. Odysseus did not at all resemble the man in the picture.” He then confided his suspicions to a local communist functionary, Leonidas Tiakas, who admitted that the communist leadership had also been suspicious of Odysseus and had refused to hand over old party records to him for that very reason. Based on Georgiades’ recommendation, Kriton and another communist leader were contacted and together the men “planned that I should get in touch with Cairo to find out from EAM headquarters in Greece if Odysseus was actually Partsalides.” As further insurance, Tiakas’ wife, who was ill, would request permission to travel to Thessaloniki to see a doctor and while there she would take the opportunity to inform the EAM leadership of the deception and request guidance. The plan went off without a hitch. Once apprised of the facts, the leadership decided to send Athinodoros.

Although Georgiades was invited to the trial of Odysseus, he could not make it because of difficulties he encountered while attempting to cross the border from Turkey. He arrived the next day after the trial and execution, just in time to be informed by Kriton and the rest that the trial had revealed that Odysseus had indeed been an impostor. The details were sordid. “Odysseus had killed the man sent to Evros from EAM headquarters in March 1943, and took his credentials which he presented to the Evros party leaders.
Several bars of gold and a good quantity of hashish was [sic] found in his personal belongings. The general opinion was that he was a Bulgarian Ochrana agent.\textsuperscript{511}

Not surprisingly, Kriton made no mention of a nefarious identity theft in his memoir. On the contrary, he went to great lengths to point out how exacting and rigorous Odysseus’ initial vetting by the EAM leadership in Evros had been. An operative was sent independently to Xanthi, Odysseus’ point of origin, to verify his identity and interview those party members who may have known him personally. The operative from Evros even secured a description of Odysseus’ physical characteristics from a close comrade, who also explained that Odysseus was the highest-ranking member of the KKE in Xanthi to have survived the German purge of 1943, a consequence of Aris’ (the first leader of the Evros guerrillas – see the previous chapter) capture and subsequent confession under torture. Kriton and his comrades were satisfied that Odysseus was who he said he was.\textsuperscript{512}

Moreover, in discussing the circumstances leading to Odysseus’ arrest and execution, Kriton hardly even mentioned Georgiades at all, except to point out how adroitly the Greek-American agent, with the sundry baubles and gifts he frequently brought with him from Edirne, had managed to play on Odysseus’ vanity in order to convince him to do his bidding. Kriton suspected Georgiades of playing a double game and trusted him not a wit. For Kriton, it was Odysseus’ gullible nature, combined with his narrow interpretation of Marxism, which led to his unraveling. “No one can say” he

\textsuperscript{511} NARA RG226/92A 24/361, “Report on Field Conditions – 13 October 1945.” Again, it is perhaps redundant to point out that if Georgiades, an outsider, could so easily find a picture of the true Partsalidis, it is hard, if not impossible, to believe that no else in Evros could do the same.

\textsuperscript{512} Kasapis, Ston Korfo, v. 2, 28-32.
wrote, “that [Odysseus] was an outstanding member of the movement. He was a simple laborer. He understood little of Marxism. He had no great life experiences either. For years he had been separated from the movement. During that time, he found his way alone, like a homing pigeon: through instinct, his class consciousness.”

In more than one instance, Kriton was willing to give Odysseus the benefit of the doubt and often expressed his admiration for Odysseus’ uncompromising commitment to socialism, despite the fact that the guerilla leader had tried to assassinate Kriton at least twice during the course of that fateful winter. He described how moved he and his comrades were by Odysseus’ apology at his trial, an apology that highlighted Odysseus’ “revolutionary career” of struggle and made no excuses for the circumstances that led to his arrest. Finally, Kriton was impressed with Odysseus’ stoic acceptance of the party’s guilty verdict and with the courageous way he met his death, declaring his loyalty to the last: “I die like a communist with no regrets. Hail the vanguard party of the people, the KKE. Hail the socialist revolution!”

For years after the execution, Kriton confessed that he was haunted by the notion that he and the other high-ranking members of the party may have erred in eliminating Odysseus. Though he understood that Odysseus’ actions countermanded willfully the national party line and damaged irrevocably the long-term credibility of the communist movement, Kriton still respected the man’s clarity of purpose. “For a long time I was perplexed (from the fact that Odysseus did what he did not to hurt the Party, but because he was disconnected from it) and tortured by the thought that Odysseus’ execution had

513 Ibid., 113.
514 Ibid., 129.
been a mistake. And I had believed that indeed it was.” Kriton only altered this opinion after he sat down to write his memoir, an act that reminded him “that the right or wrong of an action is, in the final analysis, determined by its consequences. And the consequences of Odysseus’ execution were positive and helpful to the cause of Evrite popular resistance.”\(^{515}\)

It is not all that difficult to comprehend, of course, why the communist leadership chose to maintain the fiction that Odysseus was a Bulgarian plant in front of Georgiades. As Kriton had once told Odysseus, the primary concern was now to, once again, “secure plentiful and modern arms and ammunition,”\(^{516}\) and Odysseus’ excesses had made it a certainty that only a total show of compliance with Allied planning would achieve that end. The OSS had to be convinced that the EAM/ELAS in Evros would never have committed such atrocities of its own accord, committed as it was to the idea of the popular front. Similarly, it made sense that a Greek-American operative like Georgiades would have trouble accepting the notion that an ethnic Greek could have been responsible for such a multitude of crimes against fellow Greeks; especially in the midst of a long and brutal occupation. As the historian Mark Mazower pointed out in a brief examination of Odysseus’ career, Greeks of all political stripes enjoyed keeping their “image of Hellenism pure.”\(^{517}\)

Finally, from the perspective of the communist leadership of EAM, the Partsalidis fiction had the added advantage of allowing Georgiades to think he was a valued member

\(^{515}\) Ibid., 133-134.
\(^{516}\) Ibid., 43.
of the EAM inner circle. It is difficult to discount the impression that the entire affair did
indeed convince Georgiades that he was trusted by the communists. In a jubilant report
to Young, written apparently a few days after Odysseus’ arrest, Georgiades could not
hide his satisfaction in having contributed to the notorious guerilla leader’s capture.
“You see, I feel good because I played a part in it however small.”518

II. The Kellis Mission, Liberation, and the Conflict with Tsaous Anton.

The demise of Odysseus meant that Kellis and his team could finally enter Evros
to complete their mission. Accompanied by Georgiades and a small guerilla escort, they
crossed into Greece in March 1944. Athinodoros had made it clear to Georgiades that
EAM/ELAS was now more than willing to cooperate closely with the Americans in
exchange, of course, for large numbers of weapons and a proportionate amount of
ammunition. With a minimum of fuss, the OSS leadership in Cairo changed its
heretofore negative stance on the issue of arming the guerillas and authorized the delivery
of a large amount of weapons over the course of the next few weeks, a sign, no doubt, of
its commitment to the Kellis mission. According to Kellis’ after-action report, the
guerillas “guaranteed that [the weapons] would be used against the enemy.” Based on
this assurance, Cairo dispatched three major shipments of arms and supplies to Evros
between 3 May and 13 May. Kellis implied that the arms and explosives delivered over

518 NARA, RG 226/190, 77/87, “Alekko to Young – 1 March 1944.”
that ten-day period were enough to outfit adequately about two-hundred guerillas and the half-dozen or so members of his commando team.  

Kriton’s estimate of the number of weapons received by the guerillas in May 1944 was much higher than that. He claimed that, all told, the Americans provided the Evros ELAS units with over seven-hundred and sixty “automatic weapons and long-barreled rifles” including two-hundred and forty Marlin sub-machine guns and “endless” supplies of ammunition. Whatever the actual number of weapons, it is certain that the OSS had created, in the space of a few days, one of the best-armed guerilla bands in Greece. Even so, Kriton and the EAM leadership wanted more. The ready availability of weapons, along with the knowledge that the guerillas were being aided by American troops, galvanized the local population and contributed to a dramatic rise in recruitment.

Two separate teams, comprised of American commandos and guerilla volunteers, demolished the two bridges on 29 and 30 May 1944 respectively. Neither team suffered any casualties. Nevertheless, the overall strategic utility of the operation was questionable. Beyond the fact that chrome ore shipments between Turkey and Germany had already ceased since April 1944, Kellis admitted in his after-action report that the Germans were rapidly able to affect partial repairs, enough to handle at least a portion of the original freight traffic. Nevertheless, for the OSS in Axis-occupied Greece, it represented the most dramatic sabotage operation of the entire war. Its success had also

---

520 Kasapis, Ston Korfo, v. 2, 165-166.
proven the reliability of the ELAS guerillas in combat. Based on this success, and on the recommendations of Kellis and Georgiades, Cairo took the decision to make the American military mission to Evros permanent. When Kellis was recalled to Cairo for a detailed debriefing on 4 June 1944, another Greek-American officer, Lieutenant E. John Athens (USNR), was sent to take his place as the chief American liaison officer to the Evros guerillas. Georgiades, operating from his headquarters in Edirne, continued on as the chief American intelligence officer.\textsuperscript{521}

No doubt timing was another key factor compelling the OSS leadership in Cairo to pursue closer cooperation with EAM/ELAS in Evros. \textit{Operation Noah’s Ark}, the Allied plan to disrupt the anticipated German retreat from Greece was, by the end of May 1944, already active, and the creation of a ready force of well-armed guerillas led by experienced American officers available to tackle future sabotage operations was a welcome byproduct of the bridge demolition. Naturally, Kriton and his colleagues were fully cognizant of their value to the OSS. By August 1944, the EAM leaders felt confident enough to pressure Cairo to provide even more weapons and ammunition, although the guerillas had, since May, accomplished little of military value. In his final report, Athens described this period as “one of general inactivity,” though he put the onus of responsibility on Cairo as everyone was “waiting for the arrival of supplies and operational plans from headquarters.”\textsuperscript{522} Nevertheless, the guerilla captains persisted in


\textsuperscript{522} NARA, RG 226/92, 575/10, “Report of Lt. Athens – Undated.” Athens’ assertion of inactivity should be contrasted with Kellis’ claim, in his final report, that the demolition of the bridges so inspired the guerillas and the local population, that they “immediately thereafter…proceeded to attack all German
claiming that more weapons would be required given the mounting evidence of an imminent German withdrawal in the wake of the Red Army’s lurching but steady advance toward the Balkan Peninsula that summer.\footnote{Kasapis, \textit{Ston Korfo}, v. 2, 177-185.}

In fact, events on the Eastern Front outpaced expectations. On 23 August 1944, King Michael I of Romania, in a bloodless coup, overthrew the pro-Nazi government of the quisling strongman, Ion Antonescu. Romania immediately switched sides and the collapse of the Axis front in that sector meant that Soviet troops would be approaching the Bulgarian frontier far sooner than anyone had anticipated.\footnote{Kazamias, “Bulgarian Stratagems,” 326.} The news of Romania’s defection forced the EAM/ELAS leaders in Evros to speed up their plans, by two full days according to Kriton’s account, to attack the German garrisons still remaining in the prefecture.\footnote{Kasapis, \textit{Ston Korfo}, v. 2, 187-188.}

ELAS units began attacking German troops on 28 August 1944. Kriton’s description of the fighting agrees with the OSS reports from the time that, although small in scale, the running battles with the retreating Germans were intense and involved a considerable degree of popular participation as well. The accounts differ somewhat, however, on the efficacy of the guerilla operations and on the exact number of Germans taken prisoner or killed. For his part, Kriton claimed that the guerillas accounted for over one-hundred and fifty German dead and captured upwards of four-hundred prisoners while taking only minimal casualties. Still, even he admitted that the bulk of the garrisons in the district.” NARA, RG 226/92, 575/10, “Final Report of the Evros Mission – 15 October 1944.”
Germans, including a mechanized infantry regiment sent from Thessaloniki to secure the withdrawal, got away largely unscathed.\textsuperscript{526}

Kellis’ report is the most untrustworthy, since he was not even in Evros during the fighting. He arrived in the prefecture by caique in mid-September, a few days after the German evacuation, bringing with him the last of the OSS weapons shipments slated for the guerrillas. Nevertheless, in his final report, he stated that “of the approximate 1500 Germans in the area, 300 were captured and the remainder were killed or escaped to Turkey. The only garrison which was not overtaken was the isolated garrison of Alexandroupolis numbering approximately 2000.”\textsuperscript{527} In truth, this was a cryptic assertion given that Alexandroupolis was under Bulgarian control at the time, but he may have been mistakenly referring to the relief force sent from Thessaloniki which did indeed, according to Kriton, pass through Alexandroupolis on its way to Evros.\textsuperscript{528}

Lt. Athens, who was there and took a major role in the fighting, pointed out that the guerrillas “fought with heroic courage” and captured about two-hundred and fifty Germans who were treated as prisoners of war and received “excellent” care. He contrasted the laudable behavior of the guerrillas to the barbarism evinced by the retreating Germans who, utilizing attack bombers, thrice strafed villages where only civilians resided for no apparent strategic reason. Athens recorded that the battle for the

\textsuperscript{526} Ibid., 229. As Kriton was proud to assert, however, the departure of the Germans made Evros the first Greek territory to be liberated.

\textsuperscript{527} NARA, RG 226/92 575/10, “Final Report: Kellis – 15 October 1944.”

\textsuperscript{528} Kasapis, \textit{Ston Korfo}, v. 2, 243.
liberation of Evros ended on 31 August with the last of the Germans retreating into Bulgarian-controlled Alexandroupolis, a fact also confirmed by Kriton.\(^{529}\)

Captain James Breece, an SI operative who had parachuted into Evros on 23 August on a separate mission (\textit{Operation Springfield}) to liaise with Bulgarian partisans and penetrate into Bulgaria before the expected arrival of Soviet forces, provided by far the best account of the battle in his final report. Although he reported that the guerillas made a spirited attempt to disrupt the German withdrawal by setting up a series of roadblocks and ambushes along the expected road of retreat, their efforts in the end were frustrated by superior German firepower. Breece admitted that, as a result, “…the Germans withdrew in good order.”\(^{530}\)

Breece was the only OSS operative to provide casualty figures for the guerillas. He claimed that the guerillas lost forty-five men in the battle while he was able to confirm that the Germans lost forty with one-hundred and fifty wounded. His account of two-hundred and thirty German prisoners captured seemed to agree with Athens’ estimate, but he also mentioned that the guerillas were able to seize a large amount of war materiel, including “an appreciable store of German ammunition; a stand of 70 rifles; three heavy machine-guns; 15 automatic weapons, light; 20 cases of grenades; about 50 entrenching tools, and a quantity of other small stores.” Breece remarked that this represented only a portion of the booty captured by ELAS, since he was barely able to confirm a few items visually before the weapons and supplies were redistributed. In fact,


he claimed that he personally observed the guerillas removing “more than 50 ox-carts” of equipment from one village alone. These observations agree with Kriton’s claims that huge stocks of weapons and supplies were seized by the guerillas; enough, according to him, to arm and outfit nearly three-thousand more recruits.531

Despite the immense amount of plunder and the cessation of hostilities in Evros on 31 August, the OSS went ahead with its plan to deliver to the guerillas the fourth and final major shipment of weapons on 1 September. It would have been practically impossible to cancel the exchange in any case since the weapons were already en route from Cairo by late August, accompanied by Kellis, who was returning to help evacuate the SO personnel of the Chicago Mission. Kriton recorded that, in addition to the “standard” number of over four-hundred light sub-machine guns,532 Kellis brought with him eight heavy machine-guns and, when he found out about the extent of the guerilla victory and the number of German prisoners captured, he, in a paroxysm of delight, “took apart” the heavy machine-gun on the deck of the caique and gave it to the guerillas “as a gift.”533

To at least one American member of the mission, Athens’ second-in-command, Sergeant Spyros Kapponis, it now seemed doubtful that these weapons would be used against the enemy, given the rapidity of the German withdrawal and the wavering state of the Bulgarian commitment to the Axis on account of the Soviet advance. But the guerillas were naturally anxious to get their hands on the weapons nevertheless. In a postwar

532 Kasapis, Ston Korfo, v. 2, 179.
533 Ibid., 240.
interview with author Patrick O’Donnell, Kapponis recalled that both he and Athens were at the time afraid that the guerillas would deem the amount of weapons inadequate and execute all the Americans on the spot. Indeed, according to Kapponis, the guerillas did complain and rounded on the commandos in a hostile manner, but after a few tense moments when violence seemed a real possibility, the crisis died down and the weapons were delivered.\(^{534}\)

Obviously, this account differs from Kriton’s version of events. As the story about Kellis and the caique’s deck gun demonstrates, Kriton made no mention of nervous moments. On the contrary, he recalled the meeting as entirely positive but implied that the guerillas no longer were as dependent on the American deliveries as they had been before the action against the Germans.\(^{535}\) That was certainly true, of course, but concealed the fact that there were, after the liberation of Evros, other enemies besides Axis soldiers that EAM/ELAS had to contemplate fighting. For Kapponis at least, there was only one reason why the guerillas would be so anxious to acquire weapons. As he later told O’Donnell, “…they wanted whatever we could give them because they were preparing for their own little tid-bit later on I guess.”\(^{536}\)

Even before the month was over, Kapponis would be proven correct in his surmise. Sometime in the late winter of 1944, the EAM central committee had decided to reorganize the ELAS bands in Evros under a more conventional command structure, designating them the 81\(^{st}\) Evros Brigade. Kriton was named the commander of this unit,

\(^{535}\) Kasapis, Ston Korfo, v. 2, 238-240.
\(^{536}\) As quoted in O’Donnell, Operatives, 108.
and he estimated that, by early September, it was about three and a half-thousand strong.\textsuperscript{537} Desiring to settle accounts quickly with its domestic enemies, the communist leadership decided to send the brigade into the Bulgarian-occupied west to deal with the rightist guerillas of Tsaous Anton who were threatening directly the developing EAM/ELAS organization in Eastern Macedonia. At the time, these rightist bands numbered around 3000 and sat astride strategically valuable mountainous territory a few miles north of the town of Drama, very close to the border with Western Thrace. Though the Macedonian ELAS units were only slightly less numerous, they lacked heavy weapons, and were thus powerless to force a decisive showdown.\textsuperscript{538} Fortunately for EAM/ELAS, the rapidly evolving political situation soon rendered the Bulgarian occupying garrison a non-entity and this made the decision to send the Evros brigade west almost academic.

As the Red Army neared the Bulgarian frontier, on 9 September 1944, the Fatherland Front, a leftist coalition of oppositionist parties in Bulgaria in which the communist party played a primary role, overthrew the government of the pro-Axis Prime Minister Kontsantin Muraviev. The new government signed an immediate ceasefire with the Soviet Union. By 16 September, Bulgarian army units were fighting alongside the Red Army in Yugoslavia and Hungary.\textsuperscript{539} These developments obviously put the Bulgarian garrison forces in Greece in an awkward position. Although it was now, as an allied nation, occupying Greek territory illegally, Bulgaria was still hoping to retain at

\textsuperscript{537} Kasapis, \textit{Ston Korfo}, v. 2, 229. Georgiades claimed that, by the end of September, the troop strength of this unit almost doubled. See NARA RG226/92A 24/361, “Report on Field Conditions – 13 October 1945” and below.

\textsuperscript{538} Papathanasiou, \textit{Elliniko Vorra}, 668.

\textsuperscript{539} Rachev, \textit{Anglo-Bulgarian Relations}, 183-195.
least a portion of its gains. The conflict between Tsaoous Anton and EAM/ELAS
provided the ideal pretext for delaying a withdrawal. As the historian George Kazamias
points out, “the Bulgarians therefore tried to present their military presence as essential
for the maintenance of law and order in the area, though at the same time declaring they
were ready to withdraw.”

Meanwhile, the leftist orientation of the new government meant that Bulgarian
communist partisans, heretofore a negligible force in the political life of the nation,
emerged from obscurity and began to cooperate closely with the guerillas of EAM/ELAS.
Revolutionary committees staffed by radical officers formed within the ranks of the
occupying army, and these too, began to “fraternize” with the Greek guerillas.

According to Kriton, EAM’s close cooperation with the Bulgarian partisans had begun
even before the eviction of the Germans, as the inexorable progress of Soviet forces in
the summer of 1944 made the defeat of the Axis in the Balkans a foregone conclusion.
The proximity of the Red Army heartened EAM’s communist leadership as “reports
circulated that Soviet troops would soon liberate Thessaloniki.”

Before his departure on 1 September, Lt. Athens had been a witness to how close
the cooperation between Greek and Bulgarian communists could be. On 6 August, he
asked the Greek guerillas to put him in contact with nearby Bulgarian partisan forces so
that he could secure their assistance in smuggling Captain Breece and his team into the
country. At one point during the ensuing discussion Athens, worried over whether the

541 Rachev, *Anglo-Bulgarian Relations*, 185.
543 John Iatrides, “Revolution or Self Defense? Communist Goals, Strategy, and Tactics in the Greek Civil
Bulgarians would accept certain preconditions, turned to a Greek communist political leader and expressed his doubts about the willingness of the partisan leader to cooperate. The response he received was illuminating.

“I am not talking to him as one Andarte to another. I will put this up to him as a party order. In the party, I have authority over this Bulgarian. I am telling you all our secrets now, but that is the only way to operate.”

The question of jurisdiction and command was settled without the slightest quibbling or argument. 544

Plainly, these were grim developments as far as Tsaous Anton was concerned. Major Micklethwait, who had been with Tsaous Anton’s forces in Eastern Macedonia since January, decided to try and negotiate a separate surrender agreement with the commander of the Bulgarian occupying garrison, General Sirakov, on 16 September. The SOE and the rightist guerillas were aware that the Fatherland Front government was pressuring Sirakov to collaborate closely with EAM/ELAS and in a few key locations Bulgarian units were already stepping aside and relinquishing local power to ELAS forces. 545 Micklethwait was thus hoping to prevent a seamless transition to communist rule, especially since it was not altogether clear what role the Red Army would play in this unfolding drama. 546 However, fearing that any contact between British officers and Bulgarians might inadvertently extend “official” Allied recognition to the Fatherland

545 Papathanasiou, Elliniko Vorra, 664-665.
Front government at a time when its long-term intentions were still murky, the Foreign
Office asked Micklethwait to cease all contact.  

Despite the favorable political conditions, EAM/ELAS was impatient for a reckoning. Without preamble, Macedonian ELAS forces, now augmented by the 81st Evros, began a comprehensive attack on the positions of the rightist guerillas on 26 September. Georgiades, who was on a tour of the newly liberated areas when the conflict occurred, claimed that the 81st Evros Brigade alone numbered “about 6000 men” at the outbreak of hostilities. Although Tsaous Anton’s forces managed to repulse this first attack, the ELAS units were too numerous and well-armed to be denied victory. By 30 September, the rightists were everywhere in retreat and even some members of the British mission had been taken prisoner. Though a good portion of Tsaous Anton’s forces managed to escape north into the heavily forested mountains straddling the Greco-Bulgarian frontier, many were either captured or killed. In the opinion of at least one officer serving under Tsaous Anton at the time, the Bulgarian aid to the ELAS guerillas had been a decisive factor in the rightist defeat. He also claimed that the prisoners of EAM/ELAS were treated with great brutality, a fact confirmed by Georgiades, who reported that “arrests and murders were a common occurrence in the region. Those not connected with EAM/ELAS were scared to death.”

An event outside the borders of Greece forced EAM/ELAS to halt operations by the second week of October. On the same day of the attack in Macedonia, on 26

---

547 Kazamias, *Bulgarian Stratagems*, 328.
September, representatives of EAM/ELAS, EDES, the Greek government-in-exile, and Allied forces, had signed an agreement placing all guerilla bands in Greece under the command of British General Ronald Scobie, the officer in charge of the British forces slated to occupy Greece after the German withdrawal. Signed in Italy, the provisional seat of the Greek government-in-exile preparatory to liberation, the so-called “Caserta Agreement,” a logical extension of the successful May 1944 unity talks which resulted in the Lebanon Charter, tied the hands of the more extremist elements within EAM and saved Tsaous Anton from certain destruction.\textsuperscript{551}

Since they were now technically members of a united resistance “army” under Allied command, the feuding sides were sent to their respective corners before a final resolution to the conflict could be achieved. Though EAM/ELAS controlled all the major towns and most of the rich farmland of Eastern Macedonia after the cessation of hostilities, Tsaous Anton, with significant aid from the British liaison officers, was able to use the respite to reconstitute his forces in the rugged mountains north of Drama. Still, the reprieve was temporary. When, in December 1944, civil warfare broke out between EAM/ELAS and the British-backed Greek government of Prime Minister George Papandreou, the Macedonian and Thracian units of ELAS attacked Tsaous Anton again, this time on direct orders from General Sarafis at ELAS GHQ in Thessaly. As Kriton would later boast, “This time…despite their fortified positions, we crushed them with

ease. Within one week, what the British had created – with so much effort, intrigue, money, and weapons – turned to cinder and ashes."552

III. Conclusions.

Without a doubt, analysis of the available source base underscores the truth of Laiou’s contention that studying the history of Axis-occupied Evros contributes significantly to better understanding the nature of the Greek wartime resistance. Despite the small size and geographic remoteness of the prefecture, the case of Evros brings to light a number of important themes, among them the relationship between ideology and praxis in the communist-led EAM insurgency, the exact political role played by the various Allied intelligence organizations in occupied Greece – which also, incidentally, highlights the problematic aspects of the Anglo-American alliance – and the diffuse nature of wartime decision-making in the OSS. Finally, Evros allows the historian to indulge in a measure of counter-factualism, since the absence of a substantive British presence in the region demonstrates what could have happened in the rest of occupied Greece if the OSS alone represented the will of the Allies.

However, the evidence presented in these chapters seems to contradict most of Laiou’s historical conclusions. For example, though it was the case that the EAM/ELAS chapter in Evros was to a greater or lesser extent isolated from the national organization, what effect this isolation had on the course of its political development remains unclear. Laiou contends that the excesses of Odysseus resulted from a lack of central control. If the Evros resistance had been less isolated, outside party guidance could have, so the

argument goes, disciplined him and reinforced the conciliatory party line. In this sense, Odysseus’ execution by party organs proved how willing EAM/ELAS was to cooperate with “democratic elements domestically and with the Allies more generally.”

Certainly, it is hard to dispute the contention that, had the national organization had its way, Odysseus would have been neutralized before he could do any lasting damage to the credibility of the party. Of course, this line of reasoning presupposes that the political cadres of EAM had the ability, during the war, to enforce party discipline on the various guerilla captains of ELAS, an assumption that the example of Aris Velouchiotis in Central Greece would seem to belie. But if the regional organizations had waited upon the center for guidance in such matters, it is unlikely there would have been any communist-led resistance of note in occupied Greece. The case of Evros demonstrates the secret behind the strength of EAM/ELAS throughout the country: namely, its ability to adapt to varying local circumstances by relying on the internal consistency of its ideological message and on the organizational talent of its regional representatives.

Kriton faulted Odysseus for his bad sense of timing – a byproduct of the latter’s ignorance of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary doctrine – but not for Odysseus’ commitment to the communist cause. Contrary to what Georgiades might have assumed, it is obvious that for Kriton, at least, Odysseus’ crimes were not a mark of aberrant behavior but the result of a lack of tactical awareness. Odysseus was not a bad communist, just a poor tactician. Indeed, Kriton found it difficult to condemn the guerilla

---

553 Laiou, “Antartes,” 315.
leader outright, even after summarizing the many ways in which Odysseus scuttled EAM’s efforts to unify all resistance movements in Evros under its banner. Although Kriton never stated this directly, it is not unreasonable to presume that he very much believed that Odysseus had exhibited the exact kind of revolutionary zeal in persecuting class enemies in December 1943 that was sorely lacking at the highest levels of the party exactly one year later, when the British defeated EAM/ELAS in Athens and ended any chance of communist rule in postwar Greece.\footnote{Kasapis, \textit{Ston Korfo}, v. 2, 289-300.}

The implicit lesson of all this is that without the dynamism and ideological fervor of people like Odysseus or his predecessor Aris Dalkaranis, who also had his problems with the EAM politicos, there might never have been an active resistance movement in Evros for someone like Odysseus to (momentarily) derail. From the long-term perspective of consolidating wartime gains, it was a good thing that the difficult conditions created by the occupation compelled EAM, in Evros and elsewhere, to rely on the ruthlessness and fanaticism of local functionaries, often against the better judgment of its political leadership. Of course, the example of Odysseus demonstrated the risks involved with such a strategy, as it was always possible that a few ideologues might proceed too far down the path of revolution, forcing unnecessary conflict before conditions on the ground were ripe for change. But such risks were more than outweighed by the immense benefits that EAM derived from the revolutionary ardor of its more independent-minded captains.
Taking all this into account, it is therefore not hard to understand why Kriton displayed the same ambivalence about Odysseus and his legacy that Ioannidis, the second most powerful member of the wartime KKE after George Siantos, displayed about the legacy of Aris Velouchiotis. “We knew that Aris would one day create trouble for us. But we had no one else…just him…so now you try and create a guerilla movement out of nothing. The British had such capabilities…but us? Tough issues…but Aris was a brave lad.”\footnote{Giannis Ioannidis, \textit{Anamniseis: Provlimata tis Politikis tou KKE stin Ethniki Antistasi, 1940-1945}, [Memoirs: Problems of the KKE’s Policy in the National Resistance] ed. A. Papapanagiotou (Athens: Themelio, 1979), 158.} Violent enterprises called for violent men. In summary, it seems that even if the EAM/ELAS organization in Evros had not been isolated from the rest of Greece by wartime exigency, it is still probable that it would have produced a leader like Odysseus.

Moreover, it is important to point out that the EAM central committee in Evros convicted only Odysseus for his crimes against the people of Evros. The guerilla tribunal ultimately exonerated all of his close associates, despite witness testimony that most of them had been involved directly in massacres and purges. The meaning was clear. Odysseus was executed to reopen the lines of communication to the Americans (who were willing to provide weapons and ammunition) and to pacify the brutalized local population that EAM/ELAS relied upon for food and moral sustenance against the occupier. By sundering ties to these twin poles of support, Odysseus’ actions had damaged the long-term viability of the movement. He was for that reason convicted not so much for his depredations against the civilian population of Evros, but for the much worse sin of going against the party line. If the intent of the tribunal had been to provide
redress for each individual crime committed against an innocent during Odysseus’ reign of terror, then his associates too would have been held accountable. Such was not, however, the case.

Remarkably, Laiou provides Odysseus with a justification for his actions. “The crisis among the guerillas of Evros,” she writes, “is generated by Odysseus’ possibly extreme stance; but he had the excuse of trying to frustrate the consistent efforts of the British and of the Greek consulate to create, out of nothing, anti-EAM organizations…The verdict seems unworthy of such a man…”556 Beyond its disturbing ethical implications, this statement is erroneous in two distinct ways. First, the Georgiades testimony makes clear the lack of substantive British involvement in occupied Evros, especially when compared to other regions of Greece. Contrary to the situation in most other parts of the country, the SOE did not send any liaison officers to Evros, while MI-6 was apparently content to work through Greek proxies whom it was not, however, willing to support materially or psychologically. Second, EAM’s chronic wartime paranoia about the possibility of rival movements cropping up in Evros, the testimony of Georgiades and his agents that most of the ELAS guerillas had a dubious commitment to the ideology of communism, and EAM/ELAS’ manifest desire to settle accounts with independent operators like Tsaous Anton so soon after liberation, argue plainly that anti-EAM organizations in Evros, if such had ever existed, would not have emerged “out of nothing.”

Under the circumstances, the overt friendliness exhibited by Georgiades and the OSS toward EAM/ELAS seems naïve and foolish, especially since, for their part, Kriton and his comrades harbored no such positive feelings for the Americans. They distrusted them to only a slighter degree than they did the British. Of course, both sides were using each other to achieve their own goals. For the OSS, the demolition of the two bridges, the prospect of creating a native guerilla force under American tutelage, and the remote possibility of winning Bulgaria’s defection seemed to have obviated the need for caution. In all three cases, the Americans gained few rewards. Most especially, the illusory belief, promulgated assiduously by Kellis and Georgiades, that EAM/ELAS was biddable and compliant to taking orders as long as it got what it wanted, proved extremely damaging to postwar stability. EAM/ELAS commenced bona fide operations against the occupier – operations that were, from a military standpoint, of limited value – only after it became apparent that Soviet forces were approaching Greece. In large part, EAM/ELAS used the weapons provided by the Americans to eliminate ruthlessly its domestic opposition.

Misguided as well seems Georgiades’ burning hatred of all things British. Perhaps this hostility was rooted in the willingness of the British to cooperate with the Greek government-in-exile, the representatives of which seemed to Georgiades craven and incompetent. Whatever the reason, it was a hostility that abided well after the war was over. As Laiou points out, Georgiades assigned to the British the blame for the troubles that beset postwar Greece. At least in the case of occupied Evros, this charge figures unjust. Conversely, the experiences of Georgiades in Evros lend some credence

---

to the postwar statement made by Woodhouse, the commander of the Allied Military Mission in Greece throughout the majority of the occupation, that Greek-American OSS operatives were often “innocent channels of KKE propaganda.” In Georgiades’ case, that assertion is only half-true since, though he was an unwilling, and in some cases maybe even an unknowing, conduit for Odysseus’ bloody revolutionary agenda, he was never, in truth, an innocent.

Conclusion

From September 1943 to December 1944, hundreds of OSS agents filtered into occupied Greece. OSS missions belonging either to the Special Operations branch (OSS/SO) or to the Secret Intelligence branch (OSS/SI) were spread over a wide geographic area, though that coverage was never catholic. Most of the Aegean and Ionian islands were either partially or completely ignored by OSS leaders in Cairo or Istanbul, and the Bulgarian-occupied sections of Macedonia and Western Thrace were effectively isolated from both the Americans and the British until January 1944. From all those hundreds of separate missions, this study has chosen to focus primarily on less than a handful. Reasons of economy and space were paramount in forcing this choice. Nevertheless, in terms of geographic and temporal scope, and from the perspective of overall significance to the American war effort in Axis-occupied Greece, it would not be an exaggeration to state that the missions highlighted in this study were the most important ones of the war.559

By the time of the arrival of the first OSS teams, the Axis occupation was already more than two years old and British SOE teams had been in place for nearly a year. The Americans were thus latecomers to the game and had to adjust their attitudes and policies accordingly. The principal concern was the stormy relationship that existed between

EAM/ELAS and the British. Although the first commander of the British Military Mission, Brigadier Eddie Myers, had been trusted by the communist leaders of EAM/ELAS, he was replaced in August 1943 by his former subordinate, Colonel Chris Woodhouse, because of his perceived incompetence in handling the Greek guerillas. The EAM/ELAS leadership distrusted and disliked Woodhouse, an Oxford-educated classicist perfectly fluent in Greek, mostly because of his obvious talent for political intrigue. Unlike his predecessor, Woodhouse also had good knowledge of the prewar Greek political scene and probably understood better the historical ramifications of a communist-led resistance movement in the mountains of Free Greece.\(^{560}\)

A fatal conundrum plagued British policy in wartime Greece. Winston Churchill and the Foreign Office were committed to restoring the prewar monarchical regime despite the fact that there were good indications to show that such a move would go against the wishes of the majority of the Greek people. Conversely, the SOE and the British military establishment were interested in winning the war and damaging the Axis occupation forces. But they could not do it alone. The cooperation of local resistance forces was essential to success. Unfortunately for British interests, by late 1942, it was patently obvious that the communist-led EAM/ELAS movement was by far the largest and most effective resistance organization in occupied Greece. Its cooperation was essential. However, as a leftist movement EAM/ELAS was automatically hostile to the prospect of monarchical restoration. Thus the longer term political goals of British foreign policy

---

\(^{560}\) The Axis occupation of the mainland began in April 1941 and Crete fell to invasion in May of that year. Myers, Woodhouse, and the other members of the commando team Harling, who were the first British operatives to arrive in country, parachuted into Greece in October 1942.
clashed with the immediate strategic goals of British military planners. As the senior British representative in occupied Greece, Woodhouse tried to maintain the delicate balance, but the short-sightedness of his superiors in Cairo and London complicated his task. Churchill’s stubborn support of the Greek king simplified greatly EAM/ELAS’s position. It allowed the organization to obscure further its communist connections and present itself as a moderate and reasonable alternative to the return of the prewar Metaxist coalition.

On the American side, divergent policy goals were not the problem, largely because there was a total absence of a cohesive policy regarding wartime Greece. President Roosevelt seemed ultimately uninterested in the intricate particulars of the Greek political scene, and this lack of direction from the top had an influence on the OSS decision-making process which was throughout the war conducted in an extemporaneous manner. The one time he did attempt to play a more active role in Greek politics in, December 1943, his intervention had disastrous consequences. The British government, in a strange about-face, had at the time decided that it wanted to convince the Greek king to accede to the principle of a postwar plebiscite. Despite that fact that the president’s own State Department had long held to the notion that a plebiscite was both required and proper before the king could return to Greece, Roosevelt decided to advise George II to reject the British plan. This fateful decision permitted EAM/ELAS to continue using the regime issue as a valuable propaganda tool against its opponents, while simultaneously allowing it to mask its revolutionary agenda behind anti-monarchial rhetoric. An absence of sources means that Roosevelt’s motivations in this matter will forever remain a
mystery though the preponderance of circumstantial evidence seems to imply that equal amounts of indifference and paternalism guided the president’s behavior.

Lacking an overarching policy, the OSS operatives who infiltrated Greece still shared, as Americans, a common Wilsonian commitment to the principles of the Atlantic Charter, and especially to the concept of national self-determination. This often put them at odds with their British colleagues who were much more comfortable with imperial geopolitical constructs such as the notion of spheres of influence. Beyond that, OSS field operatives divided along ethnic lines. Unlike Great Britain, which had enjoyed close cultural contacts with Greece since the nineteenth century and had a multitude of academic experts to rely on for essential knowledge about the country, the US could only rely on Greek-American expatriates to provide similar services in the field. These Greek-Americans, however, were far more prone to view EAM/ELAS with a sympathetic eye, and their hostility toward the British was far more acute than that of their unhyphenated American cohorts.

Still, these were not hard and fast rules. The first American deputy commander of the Allied Military Mission (AMM), Captain Winston Ehrgott, a regular army officer attached to OSS/SO, thoroughly despised Woodhouse and fraternized enthusiastically with high ELAS officials. He was especially close to the ELAS commander-in-chief Stefanos Sarafis. Ehrgott, who was in no way a communist, viewed dimly Woodhouse’s consistent refusal to provide EAM/ELAS with adequate amounts of weapons and ammunition. As a military man, his first concern was to win the war and he found British political machinations both frustrating and confusing. In choosing to be antagonistic with
Woodhouse, who was his senior officer, Ehrgott was acting on his own initiative, yet another indicator of a lack of clear direction from the top. Nevertheless, his behavior provoked worry at OSS headquarters in Cairo. It was not long before he was replaced by Gerald Wines, who was from the start committed to nurturing a strong relationship with the British in occupied Greece.

In country from December 1943 to June 1944, Wines had the opportunity to observe closely the inner workings of EAM/ELAS. He was not pleased by what he saw. His observations should be carefully sifted by the historian, however, as he was definitely biased against the ideology of communism, a predisposition shared by most high-ranking OSS/SO officers of the time. Nevertheless, as the few communist sources reveal, he never allowed these opinions to prejudice his mission and he earned the respect of some important figures within the EAM/ELAS movement, including Sarafis. Wines was present during a few important episodes in the history of the Greek resistance, such as the Plaka conference in February 1944, which the two commanders of the AMM organized for the purpose of ending the civil war that had been raging since October 1943.

Anticipating that Greece would be liberated by an Allied invasion sometime before the end of 1943, EAM/ELAS attacked its largest rival, Napoleon Zervas’ EDES, in the hopes of establishing total control before the German evacuation. The conference succeeded in ending the conflict but it in no way curbed the ambition of EAM/ELAS to monopolize the resistance.

Not long after the conclusion of the Plaka conference, Wines and Woodhouse heard of the forcible dissolution of the small republican group EKKA and the murder of
its leader, Dimitrios Psarros, by ELAS elements under the command of ELAS’ highest political officer, Aris Velouchiotis. An investigation conducted by the AMM revealed that Psarros had been brutally tortured and executed without trial. This fact was subsequently confirmed by EAM/ELAS leadership and by Aris himself. Psarros had been a staunch left-leaning Venizelist patriot and EKKA was a movement that even counted a few socialists among its members. He was killed because he was receiving some limited support from the British and because his area of operations bordered on EAM/ELAS territory. In all likelihood, Aris destroyed EKKA and murdered Psarros on his own initiative. However, he was never punished nor even reprimanded by either the EAM or the KKE central committees.

Evacuated in June 1944 along with Woodhouse, Wines returned to Greece in October of that year just a few days after the final German withdrawal. His purpose was to coordinate the evacuation of OSS/SO personnel. As a result, he was in Greece during the few weeks leading up to the momentous December Events when the British, using Greek government forces as auxiliaries, finally battled EAM/ELAS for supremacy in the streets of Athens. His final report, when combined with the evidence from other firsthand accounts, demonstrates convincingly that EAM/ELAS was not unprepared for a violent confrontation with the Papandreou government and was even contemplating conflict with the British. It is therefore incorrect to imply that the organization was taken by surprise by anything that occurred in the weeks leading up to that fateful clash.

In strategic terms, the most significant OSS action in Axis-occupied Greece was the demolition of two bridges in the distant Evros region in Western Thrace in May 1944.
The agent responsible for preparing the ground by collecting intelligence and establishing contacts with the local EAM/ELAS chapter was Aleko Georgiades, who reported extensively on the progress of his mission and on the character of the EAM/ELAS movement. A Greek-American émigré, Georgiades admired the guerilla organization and consistently urged his OSS superiors back in Cairo and Istanbul to cooperate closely with EAM/ELAS. It is therefore ironic that he was in position to witness the horrific atrocities that the local EAM/ELAS leader, a communist known only as “Odysseus,” committed against the hapless civilian population of Evros, approximately nine months before the German evacuation, in what can only be described as a Jacobin-style revolutionary bloodbath.

The case of Odysseus poses a complex historical problem. EAM/ELAS had no enemies in Evros. The British had tried to infiltrate operatives into the region on at least one previous occasion but had been frustrated in their attempt to do so. Georgiades never came into any direct contact with a British agent during his tenure there. Politically, the population was primarily Venizelist and antiroyalist and supported the resistance with some enthusiasm. The Nazi authorities in Evros, though typically brutal, were not nearly as repressive as the Bulgarian occupiers in the remainder of Western Thrace and in adjacent Eastern Macedonia. The only factor distinguishing the Evros resistance from its counterparts in the rest of Greece was its isolation. Separated from the party center, mid-level cadres such as Odysseus could allow their ideological fanaticism free rein. Thankfully for the civilians of Evros, the region’s isolation was less than total. When the senior communist leadership in Macedonia heard about the atrocities, they immediately
dispatched a political officer to discipline Odysseus. His execution by his own organization cleared the way for closer cooperation between the OSS and EAM/ELAS, which finally resulted in the successful demolition of the bridges about three months after Odysseus’ death. It also allowed the OSS to send EAM/ELAS four major shipments of weapons as a reward for its cooperation. It is important to note that the only person ever punished for the atrocities was Odysseus, despite the fact that he had plenty of help.

The Evros case demonstrates the immense historical value of firsthand OSS accounts. Whatever their inherent bias, they allow the researcher to arrive at certain important conclusions about EAM/ELAS as a functioning organization. Given the paucity of Greek archives and the bias of the British sources, the reports of American field operatives such as Georgiades provide fresh insights into the politics of Free Greece and into the unique mindset of the EAM/ELAS leadership. As such, the OSS reports represent a kind of last frontier for the political or social historian interested in exhausting the possibilities of archival research.

For example, the OSS documents make it apparent that EAM/ELAS was led by men who were committed and independent political actors, ruthless in the pursuit of their long-term revolutionary objectives. At each stage of the occupation, they made rational choices in the hopes of preserving and expanding their power base in the teeth of British defiance. The ultimate goal was to dominate the wartime resistance to such an extent that when Greece was finally liberated, the Allies would have no choice but to acknowledge their authority and allow them to rule the country without complaint. Far from being
victimized by British machinations, the communist leaders of EAM/ELAS were master manipulators in their own right. Their relationship with the OSS proves this contention.

EAM/ELAS went to great lengths throughout the course of the occupation to demonstrate its preference for the American side of the AMM. Sarafis consciously made an effort to woo Ehrgott during that officer’s brief tenure as the American deputy commander of the AMM and, when Wines replaced him in December 1943, he encountered much the same and not only from Sarafis but also from EAM politicos like Kostas Despotopoulo. The EAM effort to garner American sympathy even extended down to junior OSS officers. Lt. Henry Maclean, stationed in western Macedonia from February to November 1944, observed in his final report that “although both the British and American officers continuously took great pains to point out to the Greeks that there was no difference in policy or administration between us, the Andartes still would have allowed an American to stay even if forcing the British to evacuate.”

EAM/ELAS lavished even more attention on Greek-American officers. Kriton singled out both Georgiades and Kellis for special treatment in Evros and the EAM leadership kept Costas Couvaras, commander of the OSS/SI mission Pericles, attached to EAM central committee headquarters from July to November 1944, well supplied with a great deal of dubiously useful intelligence. All three of the officers cited above were proud of their close connections to EAM/ELAS. Their ease of relations contrasted sharply with the near hostility that existed between EAM/ELAS and the British. It goes

561 National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group (RG) 226, Entry 154, Box 39, Folder 568, “Lt. Henry F. MacLean, USNR: Report of Activities and Military Action, Area No. 1(Western Macedonia), Greece – 1 February 1944 to 1 November 1944 – Undated.”
without saying that the OSS operatives were pursuing their own motives in the above instances. But it is also true that Couvaras and Georgiades greatly admired EAM/ELAS and made it clear, in their respective postwar reminiscences, that the true villains of the piece, both during the occupation and after, were the British. After the war, Couvaras even went on to publish a book about his wartime experiences which contained within it a section lambasting the US government’s historic support for anticommunist elements in postwar Greece.562

Significantly, the communist leadership of EAM/ELAS felt no such sympathy for either Georgiades or Couvaras. In his published postwar memoir, Kriton implied strongly that he actively distrusted and personally disliked Georgiades but kept up appearances because he understood that the Greek-American could provide weapons and ammunition.563 In his own postwar memoir, given in the form of an interview to the communist Aleko Papapanagiotou, Giannis Ioannidis, during the war the second most powerful member of the KKE behind George Siantos, openly derided Couvaras. It is worth quoting from this section of the interview at some length:

There was this American agent that we had acquired over at General Headquarters. They had recruited him years before from his job as a waiter at some hotel. They took him over to America gave him a job and made him their spy in the so-called labor section of their agency! So he comes to us as a “laborite,” get it? To cooperate with EAM and the KKE…

So I tell him: “Look, I’ll give you a room and you can sit there and I’ll feed you information…to give to the Americans so they can see…the lies told by the English.” Of course, he could edit that information as he saw fit. I should


point out all this was occurring at the end [of the occupation]. So then I tell him, “We don’t like the English or the Americans. In fact, we hate the English. But we’re not well disposed to the Americans either. So you say you want to help us. If so, tell [your superiors] to drop us some weapons.” I was constantly asking for weapons, only weapons…

…I wanted to take full advantage of him. But [his superiors] were smart. I mean we suckered him but not them…but after a while all this stopped…what probably happened is that his superiors figured, “Look at that idiot, we sent him to sucker them and he was the one who got suckerd.” So it all stopped…but by that point in time we really didn’t need him as much since the end was approaching…but those brand new weapons that they gave us were immediately sent to Athens…three or four separate drops…all of it directly to Athens. That way we were prepared for any eventuality.564

Clearly, EAM/ELAS was preparing for possible fighting in Athens as the end of the occupation approached. The organization was also willing to use whatever resources it had, including exploiting American goodwill, to achieve its ends. It is therefore untrue to state categorically, as the anthropologist Neni Panourgia did in a recent study of the civil war period that, “…a forcible takeover of Athens had never been part of the KKE project…”565 Such pronouncements, repeated often enough in left-leaning scholarly accounts of the occupation as to be considered typical, seem to emerge from a deep-seated need to see EAM/ELAS as the hapless victim of the preternaturally clever British. This assumption is simply not supported by the available documentary evidence.

Another major historical debate that researchers of the occupation have engaged in has revolved around the question of wartime violence. Political scientist Stathis Kalyvas prompted the latest manifestation of this discussion when he wrote an article

---

564 Giannis Ioannidis, Anamniseis: Proovlimata tis Politikis tou KKE stin Ethniki Antistasi, 1940-1945, [Remembrances: Problems of the KKE’s Policy in the National Resistance] ed. A. Papapanagiotou (Athens: Themelio, 1979), 294-295. I am indebted to Dr. John Iatrides for pointing out this specific passage to me. It should be noted that, by the time of the war, Couvaras was already a college graduate. He was never a waiter.

examining the brutal track record of the EAM/ELAS contingent in the Argolid region of
way to emphasize that the violence he described was not just provoked by communist
ideology but was also fueled by the insurgent preoccupation with establishing territorial
control through the practical use of terror and by local hatreds having nothing to do with
any overarching set of ideas – themes he later expanded upon in a major monograph\footnote{567 Stathis N. Kalyvas, The Logic of Violence in Civil War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).} – he was attacked by resistance historians for claiming that EAM/ELAS was responsible in
any way for unjustified violence against innocents.\footnote{568 For the details of this historiographical debate see chapter eight.} The subsequent advent of similar
studies of leftist-inspired violence has lessened the force of this argument.\footnote{569 See, for example, Stylianos Perrakis, “Spetses 1943-1944: Occupation, Resistance, and Terror in Reality and Fiction,” Journal of Modern Greek Studies 25 (Spring 2007): 41-74.} But given
the fact that EAM’s communist leaders had, from the very beginning of the occupation,
adopted the Popular Front strategy of cooperation with the capitalist powers in the
interests of liberation, the debate then morphed into a discussion over who was to blame
for such outbreaks: the leaders of the movement or the rank-and-file? In the case of the
Argolid, the amorphous nature of the violence and the prominence of local and regional
actors in its conceptualization and implementation argued against a top-down theory that
emphasized the ideological control of KKE elites.

The evidence collected in this dissertation can contribute substantively to this
discussion. For example, it is obvious that EAM’s political leaders found it difficult to
control men like Aris and Odysseus. What discipline was enforced came after the fact and was in any case mild in relation to the crimes committed. The schizophrenic reaction of the EAM leadership to outbreaks of revolutionary violence, on the one hand censuring those involved, while on the other hand allowing most of the guilty to escape punishment, is easy to explain. Though the frequent instances of Jacobinism went against the short-term interests of the KKE, the communist leaders of EAM recognized the utility of such revolutionary zeal in the long-term. In the end, both the leaders and the mid-level cadres were victimized, not by the British, but by the beguiling allure of their own ideology. In this regard, it is also important to remember what the psychological mindset of the average communist was in wartime Greece. As communists, most of the local resistance leaders during the occupation had been members of a despised and persecuted political minority before the war. Moreover, many of them, like the wartime head of the KKE, George Siantos, were of Anatolian refugee background, a fact that further set them apart from the mass of the population.\\footnote{David Close emphasizes this point in his \textit{Origins of the Greek Civil War}. See David H. Close, \textit{The Origins of the Greek Civil War} (New York: Longman, 1995), 23.}

Instead of viewing such violence as abnormal or unprecedented, therefore, it is incumbent upon the historian to reach back in time for explanations that emphasize the continuity of the human experience. The comments of the noted historian of early modern Europe, Norman Cohn, are instructive in this case. In his influential book, \textit{The Pursuit of the Millennium}, Cohn attempted to explain the outbreak of what he called revolutionary millenarianism in post-Reformation Europe. Revolutionary millenarians, convinced that the end of the world was at hand and anticipating the new egalitarian society that would
emerge from the ashes of the old, were responsible for savage acts of violence in a Europe rendered helpless by the ideological forces released by the Reformation. In an illuminating passage, Cohn theorized as to their deeper motivations:

This fantasy [of carrying out a divinely ordained mission] performed a real function for them, both as an escape from their isolated and atomized condition and as an emotional compensation for their abject status; so it quickly came to enthral them in their turn. And what emerged then was a new group – a restlessly dynamic and utterly ruthless group which, obsessed with the apocalyptic fantasy and filled with the conviction of its own infallibility, set itself infinitely above the rest of humanity and recognized no claims save that of its own supposed mission. And finally this group might – though it did not always – succeed in imposing its leadership on the great mass of the disoriented, the perplexed and the frightened.\(^{571}\)

The devastation of war and the brutality of the Axis occupation combined to render prostrate the Greek population. Like Old Testament prophets, the communist leaders of EAM/ELAS descended from the Mountain to impose their millenarian vision of social revolution on their reluctant countrymen. Having enjoyed a good measure of success fighting the Nazi juggernaut, they had no reason to believe that this final stage of their revolution would falter or fail. It nevertheless did. That failure was the result of a multiplicity of factors, not least of which was the desire on the part of many Greeks to finally be free of the death, insecurity, and terror that had haunted them for decades. In postwar Greece, the millennium would just have to wait.

---

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Unpublished Archival Sources

United Kingdom

National Archives of the United Kingdom (Kew, Richmond, Surrey)

HS – Records of the Special Operations Executive

HS 3 – SOE: Africa and the Middle East
HS 9 – SOE: Personnel Files

Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives: King’s College, London

Woodhouse Papers


United States

Private Papers.

National Archives and Records Administration (College Park, Maryland)

Record Group 169 – Records of the Foreign Economic Administration

Record Group 226 – Records of the Office of Strategic Services

Published Primary Sources


SECONDARY SOURCES

Journal Articles and Book Reviews


Kazamias, George. “‘The Usual Bulgarian Stratagems’: The Big Three and the End of the Bulgarian Occupation of Greek Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, September-October 1944.” *European History Quarterly* 29 (Fall 1999): 323-347.


___. “Marxism in Greece: The Case of the KKE.” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 3 (Spring 1993): 45-64.


**Memoirs**


Couvaras, Costa. *OSS me tin Kentriki tou EAM* [OSS with the EAM Central Committee]. Athens: Exantas, 1976.


**Books and Online Sources**


