

The Revolution that Failed. The Role of the Greek Communist
Party in the Period 1941-1949.

by

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in
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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
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Prelude to Armed Conflict: Introduction.

"The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) enjoys the dubious distinction of having applied in the course of its history practically all forms of political and revolutionary warfare. From strikes and demonstrations to electoral coalitions, clandestine subversion, and guerrilla operations."

D.G.Kousoulas
Revolution and Defeat.p.VIIII

THE STRUCTURE OF GREEK POLITICS

That in war there is no victory but only varying degrees of defeat is a proposition that has gained increasing acceptance in the Twentieth century.¹ This is much more so the case with regard to civil war. Though the undisputed interest of all people lies in peace, they nevertheless make war. Confucius once pronounced that war arises from where there is deceit and cunning. Both of these elements are integral parts of politics. And if there is any Nation that throughout its history has been obsessed with politics, it is none other than Greece. Man, said Aristotle, is a 'Political Animal', and as such he has a role to play in the public affairs.

Greece and politics have always been two components invariably linked to each other. Combined they have produced a history as turbulent as that of no other Nation. And if there is any tradition that the modern Greeks can be said to adhere to, then it is the tradition of being political, of having a say in the making of their destinies. This study is an attempt to describe and analyze the political events that occurred in Greece within a relatively narrow period of time, the years between 1941 to 1949. However, it seems necessary that an introduction to the period be included, in order to provide the historical and political background against which the events under study can be unfolded.

Modern Greece gained her independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1829. Through subsequent wars, agreements, and territorial exchanges she reached her modern size by the

early years of this century. Today, Greece and her islands occupy the same size as England and Wales and she is slightly larger than the state of New York.² About sixty per-cent and even more of the Greek mainland is covered with rugged mountains and barren rock patches, with the chief mountainous backbone running southwards down the center of what is called 'continental Greece'.³ This geographical configuration which resulted in very low agricultural yields, isolation of Greece from Europe, as well as isolation of the various Greek regions from one another, propelled the Greeks to take to the sea. Thus, Greece became a seafaring, trading nation, and in the course of trading she built up a flourishing merchant marine which by 1939 was the third largest in the Mediterranean.⁴

Despite her small geographical size, Greece like England, has repeatedly influenced the course of human history. The Greek peninsula has always been one of the great crossroads of Europe and, thus, of the world. A crossroad of religions and ideologies, a crossroad of races, nations and of great seaways.⁵ Thus, as is always true in the Greek case, the struggles are local yet the impacts are international. In the case of British policy toward Greece, it has been a maxim since the early nineteenth century that the British Empire required a friendly Greece to protect the flank of British trade routes, and the opening of the Suez canal gave this principle, if possible, even greater importance.⁶

As far as Balkan politics in general are concerned, there always existed two or more sets of interests. One set consisted of the interests of the nations of southeastern Europe. The

others were the interests of the rival nations of Britain and Germany coupled with those of Russia. All these countries had traditional concerns in the Balkan area. Germany viewed the region as a first step closer to the oilfields of the Middle East and of, why not, the Soviet Union. Britain, on the other hand, was trying to salvage whatever she could in the eastern Mediterranean territories. Finally the Soviets, following Tsarist aspirations, wanted to control Konstantinople and the straits or to at least deter the Germans from controlling them. Both Konstantinople and the straits were of extreme strategic importance to Russian and later Soviet foreign policy. Thus, each major power adamantly pursued the good will of all Balkan nations.⁷

Greece, in the years prior to the Second World War, was an underdeveloped nation in both economic and political terms. The country's structure reminded that of nineteenth century western countries. The Greek population, in its greater part, lived in conditions that were many centuries behind those existing in the West. Apart from the inhabitants of major cities like Athens and Thessaloniki (Salonica), many were illiterate and lived on the the margins of poverty and disease.⁸ On the natural defects of the Greek economy was imposed the problem of providing for a million and a half refugees following the Greek military defeat in Anatolia in 1922. Most of the refugees were with no means and their arrival more than doubled the populations of Greece's main cities. This transfusion, however, created certain advantages among which was the gradual development of an industrial base due to the influx of the new 'proletariat'.⁹ The additional man-power made possible a

considerable increase in production, agricultural and industrial. Many of the newcomers were skilled and this provided a new impetus for economic development.¹⁰ However, the arrival of these new Greeks also provided certain negative aspects, one of which was that class inequalities now became more harsh and more visible.¹¹

Politically, Greece stood on very shaky ground in the inter-war years. Between 1924 and 1928, there took place ten government formations, three general elections, eleven military coup d'etats or attempts and there also occurred one military dictatorship which was overthrown by a military coup. The president of the republic was ousted once, resigned twice and even recalled his own resignation on one occasion. One major factor in the political instability of Greece was the role of the highly politicized armed forces and especially the army. The constant military interventions in politics forced many politicians, Liberal and Conservative alike, to involuntarily ally themselves with the army. Thus, through the tolerance of the political world, there were two parallel forces functioning in Greek politics. One force consisted of the legitimate political parties while the other was the army.¹² Even within the army there existed political conflicts of all sorts. Officers were highly partisan whether Royalists or Republicans, Venizelists or anti-Venizelists.*

*Eleutherios Venizelos was an influential Republican politician in the Twenties.

THE GREEK COMMUNIST PARTY: ITS ORIGINS AND PLATFORM

Throughout these politically turbulent years, one further destabilizing factor had been the Greek Communists. The Greek Communist Party was founded in November 1918 under the glowing influence of the successful Russian revolution. The first Greek Communists organized themselves into the Socialist Workers Party of Greece, SEKE in its Greek initials. SEKE joined the Second Socialist International in its early stages, but in 1920 during its Second Congress it was decided that the party should join Lenin's Third Communist International. In 1924 the party changed its name and became the Communist Party of Greece, Greek Sector of the Communist International, (KKE-ETKD).¹³

Despite the great efforts put in by the KKE's few faithful, the party's first steps were demoralizing. In these early years of Greek Communism the KKE failed to see any results in the areas that it focused its attention upon. These areas were the infiltration of the various trade-union associations, the proselytization of the newly arrived proletarian refugees, and the socialist education of the peasants along with agitation within the armed forces.¹⁴ Greece, however, did not prove to be fertile ground for the seeds of Marxism-Leninism. It seemed that the small but ambitious KKE which took upon itself the task of planting these seeds, took on something bigger than itself.¹⁵

Greece, in the first quarter of the Twentieth Century was predominantly an agrarian and petty-bourgeois commercial

country. Industrialization was well below the standards set by Marx for any successful attempt at Communist revolution. In the Twenties, even those Greeks who could in fact qualify as 'bona-fide' proletarians were in effect former peasants. Many of them had recently arrived from the countryside to which they still retained very strong ties. It was life in the countryside and not as urban workers that had shaped their socio-political outlook. Previous extensive land reforms had as a result the creation of countless of small property owning households that had strong emotional attachments to their land, regardless of how large or small it was.¹⁶

"In spite of their low standard of living, few were emotionally prepared to heed the Communist call.. The 'Petty-bourgeoisie' strongly nationalistic and property-minded, remained conspicuously unimpressed by the Communist appeals 'to join the struggle against the capitalist yoke'."¹⁷

Furthermore, this Marxist appeal to abolish capitalism, had little effect on the Greek people who had just discovered capitalism's benefits. This mode of production was still new in Greece and its ills were not yet obvious. As a result, the destitute refugees, the poorly paid factory workers and above all, the members of the middle strata, all considered Communism as an outlandish and even irrelevant theory. Greek politicians, in their majority, tended to dismiss the few active Communists as a group of non-sensical, jargon infested stargazers. They saw no threat in their philosophy.

Greece, then, as a society was well insulated from the

effects of Communist propaganda and agitation. This was a result of a number of reasons:

"The association of the early Greek Communists with their Bulgarian counterparts; the prevailing notion that Communism was an instrument of Slavic imperialism; and the support of the Greek Communists for the separation of Macedonia to form, with the Slavic-held parts of the geographic region, an independent state. The national elite-politicians, military...took such a strong stand against Communism that the party could not gain mass support until many years later."¹⁸

The demand of the Communists for the separation of Macedonia proved to be lethipherous for the KKE. It was seen as a form of treason by the vehemently nationalistic Greeks of all classes. For more than a decade, the Communist assertion for an independent Macedonia resulted in the KKE being branded as the "party of treason". Finally, in April 1935, the Third Plenum of the KKE's Central Committee decided to formally drop the demand and replace it with the proposition of "complete equality for all the minorities."¹⁹

For those who considered the Communists as traitors, some of the party's actions and slogans more than justified that characterization. In the early 1920's, through certain decisions and actions, the Communists succeeded in undermining the Greek war effort which was taking place in Asia Minor. One of the early demands of the KKE had been:

"...the transformation of the active army into a citizens' guard...withdrawal from all wars...withdrawal from any alliance that could lead to war."²⁰

This demand was put forward at a time when the Greek people,

intoxicated by the successes of their armies in Anatolia, pressed for further efforts, even for the conquering of Konstantinople. The Communists, however, created soviets within the crusading forces calling for a "stop to the war that was initiated by the Greek and International bankers."²¹ In this way, the Communists managed to alienate themselves and their theories from the average Greek to whom the notions of 'Internationalism' and of 'Class Solidarity' were alien and incomprehensible. Furthermore:

"The KKE did not hesitate in confessing the reasons for its anti-war crusade, as it did not hesitate in declaring that its decisions are directly dictated by the Third Communist International based in Moscow, and by the Balkan Communist Federation based in Sofia."²²

The KKE's policy towards Greek national security and defense between the years 1918-1941 was characterized by three lines of opinion:

- "1) The army is a tool in the hand of the bourgeois class for the repression and exploitation of the Greek people by the commercial-industrial and the money-lending system-both Greek and foreign.
- 2) All national liberation and defensive wars of Greece as well as military preparations must be condemned and undermined because they are nothing more than expansion of space within which the exploitation of the people can be carried out by the bourgeoisie which is a tool of foreign imperialism through the Greek agents. (Venizelos, King, etc.)
- 3) Sole duty of the KKE and of the worker-peasant classes is the defense of our 'great proletarian fatherland' at all costs. The final objective is the creation through revolution of a soviet Greece within the framework of a greater Balkan Communist Federation ...the KKE as a member of the Communist International is obliged...to execute

the decisions of the organization..."²³

It was by adhering to such theories that the KKE never managed to appeal to the masses in its early stages. Comintern records show that the membership of the KKE during the Twenties never exceeded 2,500 people throughout the country.²⁴

In the first elections that the KKE participated in, it received twenty thousand votes out of eight hundred thousand. However, the negative image of Greek parliamentarism coupled with a series of military coups in the following years, alienated the average voter and as a result in 1926 the Communist Party received forty-two thousand votes and entered parliament with ten seats out of a total of two hundred and eighty-six. This number was by no means big, yet it served to establish the KKE as a legitimate force in the Greek political arena.²⁵

1926 proved a crucial year for the KKE in its internal political workings as well. Since 1924, the first graduates of K.U.T.V., a Soviet school for eastern European communists, had begun to arrive in Greece. These men were highly trained, Russian speaking, and armed with an extreme devotion to Leninist principles and Stalinist practices. They were to play a very important role in the politics of the KKE and consequently Greece in the years to come. Among these KUTVISTS, as they were called, was Nikos Zachariades, the future leader of the KKE. For the time being he and his followers remained in the background of the party's organization. In 1926, however, they made their first move towards controlling the party.²⁶

In the opinion of the KUTVISTS, the party had reached a stalemate only because it had accepted into its ranks petty-bourgeois intellectuals. These were light-hearted individuals with enthusiasm but who could not be anything but a detriment to the party because they could not cope with the harsh realities of adherence to Comintern dictates. For these ideologists, who were Greek first and Communist second, the idea of transferring what were considered Greek territories to Bulgaria proved too much.²⁷ Truly enough, the call for the defence of "our Soviet fatherland" was too unrealistic for many Greek Communists to accept except for those who were seasoned Stalinists.²⁸

Nikos Zachariades, a firm supporter of Lenin's principles of party organization, defined the qualities of a KKE member in these words:

"The member of the party and even more so the stelechi (party officials) belong totally and exclusively to the party. This means that a) the interest of the party is the primary and highest consideration; b) our personal life is organized in such a way that the party and its struggle will benefit most; and c) every action or word must be weighed on the scales of party interest."²⁹

Democratic centralism was, thus, imposed. Democratic centralism was Lenin's principle that cemented together the structural pyramid and the various components of a communist party. It has been described as the basic doctrine of Leninist party management. Democratic centralism is taken as consisting of four elements:

1. All leading party bodies are elected.

2. Party bodies report periodically to their organizations and to all higher bodies.

3. There is strict party discipline and subordination of the minority to the majority.

4. The decisions of higher bodies are obligatory for lower bodies.³⁰

Centralism, believed the KUTVISTS, would have to be rigid, especially under conditions of illegality. Factionalism, even in its most minor forms, must be suppressed mercilessly. Factionalism was seen as contrary to centralism and Bolshevik discipline. KKE members were instructed to carry out all orders, even those appearing to be faulty, because only the leadership was educated and able to form opinions and could thus be in a position to decide for the benefit of the party.³¹

In March of 1929, then Prime Minister Eleutherios Venizelos, proposed in parliament a controversial bill designed to 'safeguard' Greek parliamentary democracy from the undermining subversion of the Communists. The proposed law was not severe, the maximum penalty did not exceed six months in prison. However, the problem lay in the ambiguity with which the 'crime' was defined, thus leaving its interpretation open to law enforcers throughout the nation. These policemen and magistrates were in their majority ignorant, to say the least, of the basic tenets of 'Marxism-Leninism'.³² Nevertheless, the bill passed by Parliament and in June of 1929 was enacted as Law 4229, popularly known as the 'Idionym Law'. During the Parliamentary debate that preceded the passing of the bill, Venizelos stated:

"...I would like to clarify, that the term 'Communism' is wrong. The Law does not seek to strike at Communism. Rather, the Law seeks to strike at Bolshevism. I mean with the term 'Bolshevism' the support of an opinion, that the social order must be overthrown by a minority through the use of force."³³

In actual practise, however, the 'Idionym Law' served as an instrument of persecution not only of Bolsheviks but of all individuals that indicated leftist tendencies.

Following the enactment of the 'Idionym Law', Communist influence decreased significantly. It was now more difficult to attract new members. The deterioration of the KKE became evident in the party's electoral achievements. In 1928, for example, the KKE received only fourteen thousand out of more than one million votes. The party leadership, however, was not primarily interested in counting votes. People who voted for the KKE were seen as long-term assets but they were also considered unreliable compared to the hard core members or 'stelechi'. The latter were the kind of supporters that the party desperately sought. True to its Leninist structure, the KKE needed and sought for persons deeply steeped in Communist Ideology and practice, professional revolutionaries that would follow the Comintern instructions and guidelines without dissent or hesitation.³⁴

Throughout the following years, the KKE attempted to influence all sectors of Greek society. From spreading its message to trade-unions to improving its Parliamentary position through various schemes. In its long term strategy, however, the KKE aimed at showing the bankruptcy of the

existing political institutions and to thus instigate a radical change, hoping that somehow it could control the tide and emerge as leader.

Conditions in the Greek polity at the time showed that the KKE was not off target when pointing out the decadence of the political system.

"...the parliamentary system had been reduced to a mockery. For many years, the political process had been controlled largely by a very thin layer of political activists at the top. In reality political parties were shallow, oligarchic, personalized structures with hardly any organization reaching the grass roots of the electorate... The voter was guided by two overriding political allegiances. First, there was a personal attachment to his favourite deputy, the man representing his area in the Vouli. Often this relationship was determined by personal favors. Second, there was a very broad, almost above party allegiance to the parataxis (camp)...the voter had little influence on decisions that were made at the top".³⁵

Within this interrelated and highly partisan political structure there did not exist any force of objective or neutral disposition. The press, which in many societies plays the role of custodian over political morality and constitutional propriety, seldom did so in the Greek case because its partisan ties ruled out any hope for independent criticism. Pressure groups were rare and unorganized, and they only reinforced the weaknesses of the system since the habitual disregard of constitutional restraints made it much easier for politicians to enact legislation granting all sorts of special privileges.³⁶

Imposed upon this feeble and insipid parliamentary system was the KKE which between April and July 1936 organized more than two hundred strikes. Within a few months the democratic aspect of the state was totally discredited. The political parties were exposed as bands of feuding self-centered politicians with no regard for those who voted for them. While the democratic institutions were losing the respect of the people, both the advocates of a military dictatorship and those working for a proletarian dictatorship were gaining unprecedented strength.³⁷ The question that then arises is whether the KKE conscientiously sought a dictatorial solution in order to later emerge as the representative of those longing for democracy.

In 1936, the parliamentary representative of the KKE, signed a secret agreement with Themistocles Sofoulis of the liberals. Under the terms of this agreement, the Communists accepted the obligation to support a liberal government under Sofoulis. Sofoulis and his liberals, on the other hand, accepted to abolish the notorious 'Idionym' law once they were in power. As well, Sofoulis accepted to take certain measures in favour of the poorer classes.³⁸ The object of this last demand was to perpetuate the instability of the system while at the same time the KKE projected the image of the party concerned with the plight of the unfortunate in Greece.³⁹

The Communists lived up to their part of the deal. Sofoulis, however, under pressure from powerful liberal personalities decided against forming a government with the KKE pulling strings in the background. The Communists were

furious, and in order to take revenge, published in the KKE official paper (Rizospastis) the full secret agreement. This revelation shocked Greek politicians and voters alike. The already tense political situation became worse. Dictatorship from the right seemed imminent and apparently the KKE did not mind. The summer of 1936 was for Greece a period of political unrest. Demonstrations and strikes occurred on a daily basis. To the average Greek, the danger was seen as coming from the left, after all it was the KKE that prided itself in organizing all the marches. Yet Greece was clearly ready for the arrival of "the man on horseback".

THE METAXAS REGIME

In 1936 Greece was a country with no firm government, political institutions, including parliament, had lost the respect of the people. Once the democratic centre disintegrated the contest became one between those forces in the extreme left and right of the political continuum. The idea of a strong man saving the nation was gaining ground day by day. The elections of 1936 had shown that Greek democracy was in shambles. The role of regulator in parliament was left to the deputies of the KKE. This political dead-end made the arrival of the "man on horseback" occur even earlier than expected. For many people in Greece it was a necessary evil.⁴⁰

Ioannis Metaxas, an army general, established himself as Greece's new ruler on August the fourth of 1936. An old German educated soldier, he had no respect or trust for professional politicians. He held them responsible for the woes

of the Greek state. His successful and bloodless establishment of a military regime was no accident. The political leaders who could have blocked his ascendance to power gave up that right by voting Metaxas to the premiership. These narrow minded people, realizing their failures, chose to support a dictatorship rather than working to correct their mistakes.⁴¹

No Greek political party at this time was a party with the western sense of organization. Parties in Greece were entities totally reliant upon their leader, beyond that there existed no structure, no programme and no political essence. There was, however, one exception and that was the KKE. This was the only party with a social programme. It was a party based on an internationally accepted ideology, Marxism-Leninism. The KKE had insight in matters of economy, and it had the ability to execute those policies that it deemed necessary. Furthermore, the Communists, unlike the rest of the Greek politicians, knew life as it existed beyond the limits of Athens. The Communists could and did relate with both the urban factory workers and the village based workers of the land. This is the key to understanding the major role that the KKE played in the following years of Greek politics.⁴² It also makes the arrival of Metaxas strangely suspicious, considering this insight and organizational ability that the KKE enjoyed.

As soon as Metaxas took over, the KKE, like all other political parties, was declared illegal. The Metaxas regime

was essentially a police state. He organized his security and secret forces according to fascist principles. Metaxist agents took over all key positions in the civil service. The press was censored and many books were banned, thus plunging the nation into a period of darkness. Concentration camps and torturing were introduced, civil rights were abolished. Trade-unions were outlawed and all forms of dissent were persecuted. Opposition, formal or not, did not exist.⁴³ Greece, like Italy and Germany had entered a Fascist era.

In conscious imitation of Hitler's Third Reich, Metaxas evolved the concept of the Third Hellenic Civilization. The first was the pagan civilization of ancient Greece, the second the Christian civilization of Byzantium. The third which was to be fashioned under his aegis, would be a combination of the virtues of both.⁴⁴ Furthermore, like the Nazi regime in Germany and Mussolini's fascist state in Italy, Metaxas relied upon "Führerprinzip", that is propaganda calling on an infallible leader. In the Greek case, however, the leader was someone who in twenty years of active political life never once managed to move the people. He had remained a leader of an obscure parliamentary group. Metaxas lacked the charisma that was evident in both Hitler and Mussolini. Yet he had at his disposal and used to the limit the classic tool of all totalitarian regimes. An enormous propaganda mechanism-youth organizations, radio, press, and sensational festivals-all glorified the virtues of his Hellenic civilization. As well, the overcentralized administration and the creation of various paramilitary forces secured his leadership and at the same

time laid the foundations for an extreme right wing movement that was to torment Greece for years to come.⁴⁵

Overall, Metaxas met little opposition to the establishment of his regime. He met very little enthusiasm also. Metaxas disliked democratic politicians because they favoured the parliamentary process, a process he considered ineffectual. Furthermore, he disliked the Communists because they had adopted a form of autarchy very different from his own.⁴⁶ The Communists, however, despite their small numbers, proved a very difficult nut to crack. Their experience in clandestine existence and their superb organizational structure based on cells proved an invaluable asset.⁴⁷ In June of 1937, the central committee of the illegal KKE circulated the following statement:

"The KKE calls the workers and the Greek people to boycott through all forms of struggle the wage drive of Sunday the 13th which is to occur contrary to their will and is intended for the air force...the ammunitions are to be used for Hitler's benefit...they will be used against the struggle for emancipation of the Greek people and they will make Metaxas and his gang even richer... the people must boycott this money collection and fight strongly against all army acquisitions."⁴⁸

In the spring of 1937, the KKE declared:

"The Monarcho-Metaxist dictatorship is an agent of German fascism and is rapidly selling Greece to the Germans."

In November of 1937, a manifesto put out by the KKE's central committee said among other things that:

"Greece is being transformed into a German strategic base, armaments are bought from the Germans, fort construction is supervised by Germans..."⁴⁹

Thus, through underground work and propaganda, the KKE was in effect the only voice rising against the Metaxas dictatorship.

In attempting to suppress the Communist voice, Metaxas struck ruthlessly yet accurately. He gave the Ministry of Public Security to his very close and trusted friend Maniatakis. This ex-officer proved himself to be more than capable of eliminating the KKE opposition. By 1937, a great number of KKE members, including many from the leadership, were arrested and either placed in prison or exiled to concentration camps located in isolated Aegean islands. Certain leaders managed to hide and some even succeeded in reaching Moscow like Georgios Siantos. Overall, however, Metaxas managed to decimate and behead the KKE.

To those who were imprisoned, exiled or were considered Communists and thus had no prospect of a decent career, Maniatakis offered the following ingenious deal:

"...declarations of repentance. Any Communist, regardless of his position in the party hierarchy, was freed on signing a statement containing: A chronological account of his Communist activities, with the names of those who initiated him in the Communist ideology, an account of all party meetings he had attended, the position he occupied in the party hierarchy, ... A summary, including a signed denunciation of Communist ideology, was then published in the newspapers."⁵⁰

This deal proved very tempting to many. They were tired, exhausted and depressed. So long as the Metaxas regime seemed

firm and secure they saw no return for their sacrifices.⁵¹ By 1940, those who had signed, called 'dilosies', were more than thirty thousand.

The declarations succeeded in their preconceived goal which was as Maniadakis wrote in 1939 "to smash the party's internal cohesion rather than to serve as evidence of prosecuting organized Communists"⁵² The declarations proved powerful, they demonstrated a lack of unity and a defeatist attitude within the KKE ranks. As such they provided a bad example for the neophyte members. Furthermore, something that later proved detrimental was the fact that among those who signed were men who belonged to the KKE as stelechi, men like Thanasis Klaras who were considered the pillars of the party. Klaras was to be known later as Aris Velouchiotis, a major figure in the "First Round".⁵³

Maniadakis succeeded to a certain extent in breaking up the KKE mechanism. He was a master in the appliance of leniency combined with toughness, exploitation of personal weaknesses, creation of dissent and confusion within party cells, and above all promises of assistance to those who denounced Communism. He did not succeed, of course, in wiping Communism out.⁵⁴ Communism was and always will be a point of attraction for the dispossessed in the world. The Metaxas regime was a dictatorship and as such it existed against the wish of the people. To survive, it depended on supression of freedom and dignity. The KKE even underground, even disorganized and infiltrated was still capable of

attracting those who opposed dictatorships. These dissidents were mostly students and members of the intelligentsia. Two of the most important segments of any movement attempting to change a system.⁵⁵

THE WAR AND ITS IMPACT

While in Greece Metaxas was trying to stabilize his brand of Fascism, the Second World War had started in Europe. One by one the nations were falling. On the morning of October 28, 1940, the Italian Ambassador to Greece woke up Metaxas and accused him of creating border tension against Albania which was occupied by the Italians. He also accused Greece of allowing British ships into Greek ports. For these and other reasons the Italians were demanding permission to occupy the islands of Crete and Kerkyra, the port of Piraeus and the region of Ipiros which borders to Albania. Metaxas refused to give in and war started immediately between the two countries.

Mussolini had his reasons for wanting to attack Greece. He was following a 'Balkan Policy'. In April 1939 his troops had occupied Albania. The Second World War had been going on for over one year and he still had no major success to his record or any influence upon his German ally. In 1940, German troops had entered Rumania and there was talk of an alliance between Germany and Bulgaria. The Third Reich was, thus, spreading its influence all over Europe while Italy watched from the backstage area. This was unacceptable for the ambitious Mussolini who like Hitler was an advocate of

'breathing space' for his country.⁵⁶

The Greek armed forces were weak. The nation was underdeveloped, its resources limited. The Metaxas efforts to supply and modernize the army had seen few results.

"There were no tanks, no anti-tank artillery and almost no anti-aircraft guns. For the protection of the whole country, including ports and all military installations, from air attacks there were less than 150 anti-aircraft canons. The regular army consisted of about seventy thousand men including five thousand officers...the navy consisted of one cruiser, one destroyer, twenty torpedo boats, six submarines and a few mine sweepers. The airforce had at its disposal one hundred and fifty planes, many of which could not compare with their Italian counterparts in speed or firepower..."⁵⁷

The rejection of the Italian ultimatum by Metaxas was followed by an intense wave of national exaltation. The Italian forces that began to pour across the Albanian frontier were met with fierce resistance. Within a matter of a few days the Greeks had not only pushed the Italian army back to the Albanian border but had counter attacked, capturing many major Italian held posts within Albania. This gave a great boost to the anti-Axis struggle during the dark winter of 1940-41. It gave convincing proof that the Axis armies were not invincible.⁵⁸

As the Italian forces were driven back and the world was holding its breath, the KKE line was that the people should be neutral in this war of the Fascists. However, the nationalistic Greeks disobeyed. the KKE then made a 180° turn in its policy. Nikos Zachariades, managed to send a letter to

the media from his prison cell, the letter stated that:

"...the people of Greece today struggle in a national liberation war against Mussolini's fascism...every fascist agent must be destroyed with no mercy ...every one should take part in the struggle, everybody at his post and the victory will belong to the people of Greece. The workers of the world are on our side"⁵⁹

One month later, on November of 1940, Zachariades wrote a second letter; he had now discovered that the national liberation war had suddenly turned into an imperialist one. Since "the Italians have already been expelled from all Greek territory", he argued, "the war must be stopped and an armistice effected through the good offices of the Soviet Union". This second letter, however, was not published in the press by order of Maniatakis.⁶⁰

An agreement was signed between Germany and Bulgaria in early March. It allowed for German troops to station themselves in various parts of Bulgarian territory. By early April there were four German mechanized divisions and eleven infantry ones stationed on the border between Greece and Bulgaria. In the first three months of the war Greece had declined to accept British troops on her soil so as not to provoke the Germans. Besides it was well known that Britain could not spare any substantial number of forces since they were tied down in North Africa. On the British side, an expeditionary force could provide a couple of advantages: either to stop the German advance in South Eastern Europe or to at least delay it and thus force the Germans to occupy hostile territories. For Metaxas and his military commander

Papagos on the other hand, the acceptance of British help seemed to be a tactical mistake rather than an asset. It would weaken an already ailing front while at the same time provide no more than moral strength to the Greek front. Metaxas agreed, though, to allow British forces to come and help only if the Germans invaded Greece. He died on the 29th of January and one month later the new prime minister Koryzis accepted a detachment of troops from Australia and New Zealand.⁶³

British military help to Greece was mostly a political rather than a military solution. If the British had left the Greeks to their fight without any help, however symbolic, the country would surely be overrun by the Germans and the consequences would be many. Faced with such a treatment of a British guarantee, Turkey would hardly have been encouraged to refute a German request for use of facilities similar to the request made to Bulgaria and to Rumania. If the Germans had occupied Turkey in the spring of 1941, they would have opened the way to the oilfields of the Middle East and of the Caucasus. They would have outflanked British positions in Egypt and Russian ones in the north. Indeed, the Russian campaign may not have been necessary at all. It is, thus, not the least contribution of Greece to the allied cause that she resisted a German attack, and in the process asked Britain to implement her guarantee.⁶⁴

By the beginning of June 1941, the whole of Greece had been overrun and was under the control of a tripartite German, Italian and Bulgarian occupation. The Germans themselves controlled only the most strategically sensitive areas, i.e.

Athens and Thessaloniki, some of the islands, and a strip of land near the Turkish frontier. General Tsolakoglou, the man who signed the Greek surrender without any authorization became prime minister of a puppet government. The Greek government-in-exile along with the King established themselves in London and later Cairo.⁶⁵

By this time, complete confusion prevailed in the ranks of the KKE. Many in the party's higher echelons had made a big mistake. Believing that the Germans were true friends of the Soviet Union, they had adopted a pro-Axis line of thinking.⁶⁶ However, the launching of the attack against Russia freed the Greek Communists from their brief "camaraderie" with Hitler. On July 1st, some of the most capable Greek Communists met and formed a new central committee that was to chart a new course of action. This new central committee called for a "reconstruction of the KKE". The basic duty of the Greek Communists, it declared, was to "organize for the defence of the Soviet Union and for the overthrow of the fascist yoke". Armed resistance against the occupiers was also decided upon.⁶⁷

With the legitimate government far away in London, with the King's position as a national symbol seriously weakened, with the old political leaders lacking the zeal and experience for armed resistance, with the social, economic, and political foundation of Greece crumbling under the crushing weight of defeat and occupation, there was created a vacuum. The initiative for leadership passed to those willing to accept it. The KKE which had waited for this chance a very long time, jumped at the opportunity.⁶⁸

The chapters that will now follow will make an attempt to study the role of the KKE in the years of war, occupation and in the troubled post-liberation period in Greece. The question of why the KKE failed in its effort to rule Greece will be dealt with. What were the mistakes, and they were many, that the Communists made? Overall, the KKE through its role in the resistance, its clash with the British and finally its participation in a large scale civil war will be studied. As well the Greek struggles will be seen within the context of Anglo-Soviet relations and within the post-war East-West animosity. The next chapter deals with the role of the KKE during the German occupation of Greece.

The KKE's First Round: 1941-1944.

"Whatever may be said about the methods and directives of the KKE, it was largely responsible for shaking the Greek people out of the lethargy they had sunk into immediately after the occupation settled on Greece."

Edgar O'Ballance
The Greek Civil War, 1944-1949.

EARLY DAYS OF THE OCCUPATION

When the Germans entered Greece, they expected to find a strong state structure alive with fascist ideals, and a population that would welcome the end of the war because of the suffering it had experienced. The Germans believed that if the Greek people did not fill them with friendship and admiration they would at least treat them with respect and tolerance. The first German commander of Athens stated:

"We come not as enemies but as true friends. The long traditional friendship between Greece and Germany will shine once again..."⁶⁹

Furthermore, Hitler himself, within the plans to use Greece in his "New Order of Things", flattered Greek bravery in the battlefield and specifically ordered that no Greek soldier be taken as prisoner of war.

With the invasion of Greece by the Wermacht, the conquest of all continental Europe by the Axis powers was completed. The war, however, continued strong in Africa and the Mediterranean while the British Isles themselves prepared for a German invasion. The continuation of the war elsewhere along with the inherent desire of the Greeks for freedom, rendered German expectations in Greece erroneous.

The situation in occupied Greece very soon became intolerable. The Germans were indifferent to the structure of the Greek economy. Since Greece lacked any major industries that could assist the Axis war effort, her economy was abandoned and plundered where possible. All sources of production in

the country were transferred to the hands of the Germans and they in turn circulated a money note that resulted in the total collapse of the Greek monetary system.⁷⁰ External trade was ceased while all available food went to the hands of the occupying armies or appeared through the flourishing black market.⁷¹ It has been estimated that during the first winter of occupation about half a million Greeks perished due to starvation.⁷²

The quisling Government of General Tsolakoglou that had taken over was never able to win the support of any considerable number of the Greeks. Inflation and poverty ruled. Whatever efficiency the Greek Government had had under the Metaxas regime gradually disappeared.⁷³ Nevertheless, for the first months of the occupation, in ordinary day-to-day administration, the Greek Government functioned much as it had done under the dictatorship of Metaxas. German control was disguised, operating only behind the scenes on the level of high policy.⁷⁴

It very soon became apparent that the occupying authorities would not forbid the practise of mild republican politics, provided they were not subversive, and in fact encouraged them as an antidote to the pro-British royalist Government-in-exile.⁷⁵ The Nazis, however, had a violent distaste for communists. Nikos Zachariades, the Secretary General of the KKE was taken from his Greek prison cell and transferred to the notorious Dachau concentration camp. Similarly, all leading communists were either jailed or sent off to German prison camps.

THE KKE DURING THE OCCUPATION

Until June 1941, when Germany violated the Ribentrop-Molotov non-aggression treaty by attacking the Soviet Union, the KKE remained overall indifferent. Yannis Ioannides, organizational secretary of the party stated twenty-five years later;

"We saw the German-Soviet treaty as follows: while the British and French tried to provoke Hitler to attack Russia, Stalin succeeded in turning it around. Thus, the Soviet Union would remain neutral and would later play the role of moderator..."⁷⁶

At the end of June 1941, a few days after the launching of operation 'Barbarossa', Hitler's invasion of Russia, the central committee of the KKE convened to formulate a new party line now that "the imperialist war had been transformed into the great patriotic war" for the defence of the Soviet Union. The KKE resolved that it was the fundamental duty of Greek Communists to organize for the defense of the Soviet Union and for the overthrow of "the foreign fascist yoke".⁷⁷

After a five year period of military dictatorship followed by war and foreign occupation, the political world of Greece was split, alienated and too attached to the past. Many politicians were involved in the creation of shadowy resistance groups but in reality they only dealt with matters of secondary importance. Worst of all, the political world failed to see that one party, the KKE, had already set in motion a viable programme of long range strategy. Under

the new temporary leadership of Georgios Siantos, the central committee adapted the party's lines to the new conditions that prevailed. Without denying its basic principles and ultimate goals, the KKE decided to create a national front of liberation. Marxism-Leninism was put to the side, cooperation was pursued with all 'patriotic' forces and individuals. This was a very intelligent new line and totally appropriate to the climate of the period. It only had to be put to practise for the KKE to reap the benefits.⁷⁹

The Greek communists did not waste time. They re-activated the old KKE cell structure and they supported all patriotic expressions against the occupiers. Furthermore, the KKE took initiatives that proved to be very beneficial to the Greek working classes. It resisted German attempts to mobilize Greek labour. Mass demonstrations against forced labour were organized by the KKE, this had as a result that Greece alone in all of occupied Europe did not send workers to German factories.⁸⁰ Gradually, through escapes from prison, secret gatherings and old friendships, the KKE once again found its rhythm within the political arena. Its lost unity was regained and its members once again rallied to a cause.⁸¹

When the sixth plenum of the KKE convened, it was decided that the party should concentrate on three main topics:

"a) All party members...were urged to ...set aside their disagreements, thus sincerely contributing to the reconstruction of the KKE; b) It was clearly stated that the basic duty of Greek communists was to organize the struggle

for the defense of the Soviet Union
and for the overthrow of the foreign
fascist yoke; c) ...while organizing
the struggle...and armed resistance
...only a peoples' Government...can
free the country..."⁸²

CREATION OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT, EAM

In early September 1941, the seventh plenum of the KKE came together and decided to openly speak about the creation of a national liberation front. Some days later, on 27 September, EAM (Ethnikon Apeleutherotikon Metopon) was founded. Its founding declaration stated that:

"Any party or organization will be accepted in the EAM ranks provided that it will accept and work for the goals set by the front."⁸³

The original constituents of EAM were the KKE, the Agrarian Party, the United Socialist Party, the Republican Party, the Union of Popular Democracy, and the Socialist Party. EAM was directed by a committee, drawing one representative from each of the constituent parties. Of the six parties that united to join EAM, four were indistinguishable in all but name from the KKE. Only the Union of Popular Democracy and the Socialist Party were truly independent of the communists. The others were headed by communists and "followed the wishes of the KKE in all things."⁸⁴

Although most of EAM's founding members belonged to the extreme left, they soon realized that resistance based on doctrinaire party lines would probably fail. Either the resistance would be national or it would be nothing. For this reason they named their organization the NATIONAL Liberation

Front, and they welcomed into it citizens of all classes and political beliefs as long as they subscribed to the two basic EAM aims: Resistance to the Axis and a post-war regime based on the peoples will.⁸⁵

EAM's founding Manifesto was designed to easily be accepted by the masses, it was a programme aimed at bringing about a democratic change in Greece, "popular sovereignty based on national independence."⁸⁶ According to EAM, the liberation of Greece would totally depend upon the struggles of the Greek people, outside help was not to be expected or desired. It was also mentioned in the EAM Manifesto that following the liberation of the country, EAM would attempt to form a Government that would secure Greek independence from any "foreign imperialist power".⁸⁷ This statement was targeted at the British. The new post-war regime, EAM declared, together with the form of Government that would develop would be decided by the people through an elected constituent assembly.⁸⁸

"EAM...fired the imagination of young and old alike with the vision of a free, prosperous, just, and progressive Greece. In the desperate hours of the occupation the proclamations of EAM served as a brilliant beacon of hope..."⁸⁹

Very few people realized, however, that within the aims of EAM was also:

"The sovereign right of the Greek people to decide about their Government will be protected from any reactionary attempt that would want to impose solutions contrary to the peoples will, by ALL MEANS available to EAM..."⁹⁰

Furthermore, the eighth plenum of the KKE in January 1942 decided that:

"Our party struggles...for the imposition of a peoples democracy, through which the free Greeks would at last be able to develop their full potential and initiative..."⁹¹

These two resolutions, to stop the "reactionary attempts" and to impose "a Peoples Democracy" were not given much attention by most Greeks at the time. However, they constituted signs of what was to take place later on.

In 1942 and 1943, the KKE which was the principle leading and organizational force of EAM, skillfully exploited the prevailing circumstances. One of these was the vacuum of leadership left after the departure of the official Government. The occupation forces filled the vacuum of authority but not that of leadership; neither they nor General Tsolakoglou's quisling Government could provide the desperately needed leadership.⁹² The communists were wise to fill this vacuum by creating EAM. They invited the old party leaders to help, but because of their background and general outlook these politicians held no desire for the hardships and dangers of underground work.⁹³

"They were afraid of losing their authority...As a result the Greek people turned their backs on the old leaders and entered the ranks of EAM which offered them both a way to resist the enemy and a promise for a brighter morrow..."⁹⁴

The breakdown of the social fabric because of the occupation, also resulted in numbers of the former well off classes now joining the fate of the poor. Destitution

levelled the social distinctions of the past. The KKE was again quick to realize that this meant an automatic expansion of its potential appeal. Thus, in accord with the specific instructions of its eighth plenum, the KKE meticulously avoided any open references to class struggle, proletarian revolution, Marxism, and the like. Instead, the Communists concentrated on exploiting the very strong nationalistic spirit which emerged from the appalling conditions of the occupation.⁹⁵

Many resistance organizations sprang up during the occupation years in all parts of Greece. The most important, apart from EAM, was EDES (Greek National Democratic League) led by General Napoleon Zervas. EKKA (National Party of Social Reconstruction) led by General Psarros was equally important. Neither of these organizations, however, reached the level of popular support that EAM enjoyed. They lacked the nationwide organizational structure given to EAM by the communists.⁹⁶ Most resistance leaders wavered back and forth until:

"...their obvious weakness in comparison to EAM led them to complete dependence on and subservience to the British, and in some cases even to secret collaboration with the Germans and Italians."⁹⁷

These resistance groups were mostly regional, exclusively military and largely dependent upon the personality of their leaders. EAM, on the other hand, was literally a "state within a state". In fact, toward the end of the country's occupation period, EAM was a state in its own right, governing the two thirds of Greece which it had by itself liberated.⁹⁸

"By the summer of 1944, EAM had built a complete state apparatus within free Greece. It had a powerful army, an effective administrative and judicial organization, and a National Council that represented all sections of the country."⁹⁹

CREATION OF ELAS

EAM's central committee remained in Athens working underground throughout the occupation. EAM was in fact directed by the KKE's central committee, some of whose members were also on the EAM committee. EAM was communist conceived, delivered and motivated. The communists saw the need for resistance to become armed, more effective. Thus, on April 10, 1942 EAM announced its decision to put a guerrilla army in the field. This army was to be known as the National Popular Liberation Army. Its Greek initials were ELAS and the name cleverly manipulated Greek patriotic opinion since the name 'Greece' in Greek is 'ELLAS' pronounced the same as ELAS. ELAS became the armed force of EAM, it was in many ways indivisible from the political organization. Both organizations were so interwoven at various levels that all distinctions ceased to exist. EAM became EAM/ELAS.¹⁰⁰

The command of ELAS was put in the hands of a three-man committee. This was comprised of a military leader, a political advisor, the voice and conscience of EAM within ELAS who was responsible for conveying political policies to the field. Finally, the military leader was the scientifically trained commander who would lead the ELAS units into battle.¹⁰¹ Only the general assembly of the 'andartes' (guerillas)

which convened after every battle could pass judgement on the decisions of the military leader. This three-man command structure existed throughout all levels of ELAS.¹⁰² During its peak, ELAS had General Stephanos Sarafis as its military leader, Andreas Tzimas as its political advisor and Aris Velouchiotis as its premier Kapetanios.

On February 16, 1942, EAM stated the goals and aims of ELAS as follows:

- "1) Armed struggle for the liberation of Greece from the occupiers
- 2) Protection of the popular gains from all enemies
- 3) Maintenance of law and order for the occurrence of elections through which the people will decide for their Government."¹⁰³

In March of 1942, Thanasis Klaras (Aris Velouchiotis) received orders from the central committee of EAM and from that of KKE to create a guerrilla force with the intent to fight the Germans and Italians. It should be mentioned at this point that the peasants of the mountains and of the interior of occupied Greece did not themselves initiate resistance activities, rather it was forced on them by EAM and other organizations.¹⁰⁴ Also at this time, Aris Velouchiotis appealed to all Greek politicians to join in active resistance against the invaders. He specifically invited those who took refuge in London and Cairo to come to Greece and participate.¹⁰⁵

From its beginning, ELAS lacked effective military organization and experience. Most of its members, including those in leadership positions, had never served as officers in the Greek army. Those officers who tried to join ELAS were discouraged from doing so.

"EAM regarded most army officers as royalists or fascists. They associated them with the Metaxas regime ...As a result ELAS lacked experienced army officers. There were only a few young ones..."¹⁰⁶

Furthermore, the ELAS command system whereby there always needed to be approval of action by all three men in charge proved to be costly and counter-productive. These shortcomings, however, were made up through a very strict enforcement of discipline and political control. Aris Velouchiotis once stated:

"When we first came to the mountains ...we had a conscious discipline... and from the new andartes, because of this discipline, many became true communists. Thus, each unit now has many communists with iron discipline and the will to make it respected by the rest. Such men make up the nucleus...firm discipline alone can bring about the desired results... this is our secret."¹⁰⁷

POLITICAL COMPLEXITIES

While the resistance movement was gradually growing within Greece, the King and the Government-in-exile were becoming superfluous. They were isolated and with very little contact to the realities of occupied Greece. The Government was more concerned with Greece's post-war territorial claims than with the question of kicking out the invaders. It underestimated the attempts at resistance and failed to see the value of resistance "believing that the risk of reprisals outweighs any possible military advantage."¹⁰⁸

This attitude was not without justifications. In August 1943, the Germans had officially announced that for every Wehrmacht soldier killed in Greece no fewer than fifty Greeks would be executed.¹⁰⁹ Germany could not afford to place many divisions in Greece for occupation duty, for that reason it was decided that the use of terror through reprisals would deter the Greeks from organizing a resistance. This, however, did not stop EAM/ELAS from growing. A German report of 1943 stated that:

"Ninety per-cent of the Greeks today are unanimously hostile to the Axis powers and ready for open revolt... the EAM with its combat organization is the main bearer of the active resistance movement...it represents the greatest danger..."¹¹⁰

Furthermore, the New York "Post" wrote through its correspondent Leland Stowe that "If there is any real resistance in Greece, it centers chiefly in EAM/ELAS..."¹¹¹

From 1943 onward, the central committee of EAM was confronted with the following dilemma: To insist on "National Unity" with the old bourgeois parties and thus compromise with the pro-British forces or to keep its original aims steady, fulfill the unity of the "progressive" forces and attempt to achieve a "peoples revolution in cooperation with other popular movements in the Balkan countries."¹¹² The choice that was ultimately made had a lot to do with the disbandment of the Comintern in May 1943. Although the KKE had lost most contact with the Communist International since 1939, "the war had created many complex problems that demanded

a clear knowledge of both internal and external politics. The character of the war and of the alliances, the aims of the Soviets and of the CPSU, all needed to be clearly understood in conjunction with an international body of communist parties."¹¹³ Thus, when the Comintern dissolved, the KKE was left without any formal ties to the international communist movement. Furthermore, contact with the CPSU was reduced to nil. As Thanasis Hadjis, a member of the central committee of the KKE during the occupation writes: "During the years of occupation we had almost no contact with the CPSU or with the Soviet Union in general."¹¹⁴

"There is no evidence that EAM or the KKE received any instructions from Russia during the first years of the war...in the KKE there was a small group of professional revolutionaries who had received training in Russia before the war...this seems to have been the limit of Russian control over EAM..."¹¹⁵

In the summer of 1943, Yugoslavian General Tempo-Vukmanovich, representing Tito, tried to establish ties with EAM/ELAS as well as with Albanian and Bulgarian partisans. Tempo proposed the creation of a joint Balkan Head-Quarters in order to coordinate the anti-Axis war effort and even the post war attempts at establishing a communist Balkan peninsula. As in Tito's Head-Quarters, so too in EAM/ELAS, there was a growing belief that the Balkan people could and would liberate themselves without foreign (British) assistance. It was also believed that a joint Head-Quarters could very well lead to a post-war socialist Balkan Federation with

no need for Western or Eastern domination. In Greece, Aris Velouchiotis and Andreas Tzimas both took this point of view.¹¹⁶ The EAM leadership, however, saw things quite differently. Vukmanovich's conditions were rejected while at the same time an agreement was signed with the British. Whether this agreement was a result of British fears of a Balkan H.Q. is still not certain. However, at about this time, Tito ordered an end to Tempo's initiative characterizing it politically wrong. Since the Yugoslav partisans were in close contact with the Soviets, it could be taken that Moscow had a say in the collapse of the Balkan agreement.¹¹⁷

Thus, in July 1943, as mentioned above, "the first military agreement of the Greek resistance forces with the Middle East command" was signed and approved. The text included conditions such as:

- "1) All andarte bands are to be known for military purposes as 'National Bands', which title will be the only one used by the allies.
- 2) Greece is to be divided into areas. A competent leader recognized by mutual agreement of Brigadier Eddie as representative of General H.Q. Middle East and of the Greeks, will be appointed military commander of each area...all 'National Bands' in the same area will cooperate fully under the military commander's orders.
- ...8) All Greeks enlisted in the future will be free to choose which 'National Band' they will join.
- 9) If in the opinion of the British liason staff there is any failure to carry out the above agreement, General H.Q.M. East will immediately order the cessation of supply of war material until the failure is rectified."¹¹⁸

The agreement was signed by Brigadier E.C.W. Myers who was in charge of the British military mission in Greece, by Vasilis Samariniotis for EAM and by General Stephanos Sarafis and Aris Velouchiotis for ELAS. In subsequent years, however, this 'National Bands Agreement' was seen by many communists as being faulty and as one of the EAM mistakes that paved the way for later conflicts with the British. The agreement was denounced because:

- "-It opened the road for all anti-EAM groups in Greece.
- It allowed the British to have a say in the command of all andarte forces and even ELAS itself.
- It gave the British the right to inform themselves about every andarte matter through their liaison officers.
- It placed the Greek resistance under indirect British control through the M.East H.Q.
- It allowed all "reactionaries" to side with the British against ELAS, thus paving the way for the conflicts that were to follow."¹¹⁹

The agreement, writes Markos Vafiades in 1985:*

"Opened the road for other surrendering agreements, compromises with the Greek reaction and subordination to British imperialism. This was the first obstacle to the cooperation of our resistance with that of the neighbouring Balkan movements and it ultimately deprived our country of the valuable and decisive assistance of the Soviet Union...this and other later agreements paralyzed Stalin's hands."¹²⁰

* Markos Vafiades was a professional revolutionary and a very important KKE figure in the period under study. In 1946-49 he played a major role in the civil war and was named Premier of "Free Greece". Today he lives in Athens.

BRITISH POLICY IN GREEK AFFAIRS

Winston Churchill was personally very much concerned with the developments in Greece. There were many British investments in the country. Since the turn of the century an International Control Commission, in which the British influence was major, had supervised Greek revenues to insure continued interest payments. In the course of economic depression worldwide, however, these payments had become first irregular and later incomplete. Both British Government officials and private investors feared that even those incomplete payments might be discontinued if a radical form of Government came to power in Greece.¹²¹

As well, Britain had strategic interests in Greece.

"The Greek Ionian islands guaranteed the entrance to the Adriatic. The Aegean islands guarded the approaches to the vital straits, the Dardanelles and Bosphorus...eastern Mediterranean strategy is British Empire strategy, or at least it was before the 1947 Truman doctrine. This was certainly true of Churchill, with his strong sense of empire..."¹²²

Thus, Churchill tried to convince the Allies that the invasion of German-held Europe should start from the Balkan peninsula. At the same time his policy was to support the Greek King and the exiled Government outside of Greece while he supported the "Nationalist" guerrilla bands like EDES within Greece.

While the British attempt to help Greece against Hitler's designs failed, in KKE eyes it served Churchill as an excuse

in order to take an "owner's stand in regard to Greece".¹²⁴
However, Churchill's loyalties were sincere towards the Greek King rather than the Greek people, and this can be justified by the King's position vis-a-vis the Allies rather than his own people. Furthermore:

"Considering that the Greek armed forces were under the British High Command in the Middle East, that all communications with Greece passed through British hands,...that the Greek Government was financed by the British and that British troops would almost certainly liberate Greece from the Germans, it was taken for granted by Greeks of all parties in the Middle East that the British Government had the right to exercise friendly intervention in Greek affairs."¹²⁵

During the years that followed the British never relinquished or planned to relinquish their control.

"From the point of view of the British ...King George and his cabinet had two uses. They embodied the legal Government of Greece, and had a symbolic value for propaganda during the occupation, and still more for the time of liberation...for the immediate present the Government was in a position to raise troops from among the Greek communities scattered throughout the Middle East."¹²⁶

The numbers of these troops had risen since many Greeks, especially officers, took refuge in Egypt after managing to escape from occupied Greece. On 23 February, 1943, these troops organized a mutiny. Committees of soldiers assumed command of units and pressed the then Premier E. Tsouderos to replace certain members of his cabinet with anti-royalist

republicans. There are many reasons to believe that the mutiny was EAM inspired and designed to:

"...disrupt the effectiveness of the Greek units in the crucial months ahead and at the same time to force the removal from positions of leadership of those who, if allowed to return to Greece with Governmental authority, could conceivably block the communist objectives."¹²⁷

The mutiny did in fact prove to be an EAM success since in March the Premier reshuffled the cabinet. Some of the new ministers were known to hold anti-royalist views, and in the following months, through ignorance or design, they "played the communist game".¹²⁸

In March of 1943, the British declared officially that they would support with aid only those bands that were willing in turn to support King George and the Government-in-exile. Immediately EDES under Zervas agreed with the proposition and sent telegrams to the King recognizing his authority. As a result of this action, EDES and Zervas were labeled as traitors and 'fascists' by EAM/ELAS. Thus, an extreme polarization developed with most royalist and conservative elements joining EDES.¹²⁹ This polarization would soon turn into a small-scale civil war between the two resistance organizations.

When the British accepted EAM's proposition to create a joint Head-Quarters under the orders of the supreme commander of the Allied forces in the Middle East, a move that was previously rejected, many interpretations were given. Especially since this involved limiting British officers in Greece to the role of liaisons. Certainly the move was a change

of Foreign Office policy towards EAM. Many argued that the British could not pursue any different type of policy at the time. The acceptance of EAM's conditions, they say, was the result of a purely military necessity. EAM/ELAS were necessary for the proper carrying out of operation "ANIMALS" designed to trick the Germans about the invasion of Sicily.¹³⁰ Others, like Markos Vafiades, argue that the British had learned that at the time there was an attempt to enter into a coalition with the Balkan communists on behalf of EAM through the mediation of Tempo-Vukmanovich.

"...They had to stop any such attempts at cooperation. That is why they (British) pretended to compromise and accepted to sign the ELAS-G.H.Q.M. East treaty, and with all of EAM's proposals included..."¹³¹

Thus, the 'National Bands' agreement was condemned by the communists altogether. The role of the EAM leadership was viewed with suspicion, the role of Tito also, and finally the British were viewed as both exploitative and opportunistic.

Whatever the complexities and intricacies of British politics in Greece were, however, one thing certainly stands out clearly. Within British policy making circles there existed a conflict, one between the soldiers and the politicians.

"His Majesty's Government in the Greek policy were speaking with two voices. The political voice, i.e. the Foreign Office was giving full support to King George and his Government; the military voice, i.e. G.H.Q.M. East, was giving support with arms and gold sovereigns to the King's worst enemies in the Greek mountains."¹³²

The Allied strategy foresaw an invasion of Sicily. This demanded diversion in the Balkans. For diversion to work, the resistance movements needed to be strong and active. These movements, however, ran counter to Britain's long term political objectives. Thus, the conflict between soldiers and politicians, between short and long term objectives became evident in the policies implemented. Until 1943, the demands of the military overrode those of the Foreign Office. From 1943 onward, however, political objectives became paramount and dominated military ones. Thus, all aid towards EAM/ELAS was ceased. Furthermore, Churchill openly came out in support of the King and even went so far as to alienate not only the resistance but the legitimate Government in Cairo by agreeing with the King in not announcing to return to Greece only after a plebiscite authorized him to do so.¹³³ This was one of EAM's biggest demands. The King would only be allowed to return if the people decided so.

The British position in Greece was becoming very delicate. Following the German withdrawal, control of the country would almost certainly fall in the hands of EAM/ELAS. The British officers were realistic enough to realize that not only was EAM the strongest of all resistance groups but that it also enjoyed the support of the majority of the Greek people. Furthermore, ELAS controlled the most strategically significant territories in Greece.¹³⁴ The British military, not hampered with political considerations, accepted this fact. The counteracting influences, however, still created tension.

"Between 1941-1944 the root of the Anglo-American problem in Greece was that... our short term military policy of supporting EAM/ELAS turned out to be in direct contradiction to our long term political policies."¹³⁵

As if to emphasize these contradictions, General Wilson, Supreme Commander of all forces in the Middle East sent the following message to EAM/ELAS in July 1943:

"I would like to pass on to all ranks of the Greek partisan army my thanks and my sincere congratulations for their recent great successes all over Greece...I beg you to assure the partisans...of my esteem for their devotion to the Allied cause...

LONG LIVE THE ANDARTES
General Wilson 136

This telegram was mostly meant for EAM/ELAS, the dominant force in which was the KKE. The party that in December 1942 had decided on three major lines of action:

- "1) To monopolize the resistance.
- 2) To control as much as possible the Greek armed forces in the Middle East that were organized under the British and the Greek Royalist Government
- 3) To upset the prestige of the King and his cabinet, so that all opposition to EAM would be perceived as anti-democratic and reactionary."¹³⁷

The British Government in late 1943 accepted the following proposition put forward by Reginald Leeper the British Ambassador to the Greek Government-in-exile. First-To sever relations with EAM and to try and break up the movement by defaming its leadership while trying to attract the moderate elements from its ranks. Second-King George should in fact declare that he would not return to Greece unless

decided so by the people and to appoint the Athenian Archbishop Damascinos as his acting regent.¹³⁸

When King George, acting on the advice of President Roosevelt, refused to make such a statement, the British policy lost its momentum. However, the aid to EAM/ELAS was interrupted.

"From 1943 onwards, when it was decided that we were not to break off relations with EAM/ELAS...there was probably only one way of saving Greece from internal bloodshed; it consisted of two complimentary measures: One was to knock away the main pillar of EAM's propaganda and strength-the avowed fear that a dictatorship of the Right would be reestablished at the end of the war with the aid of British bayonets-before it would be too late for its removal to have any effect. The other was for strong British forces to drive the enemy out of Greece soon after the invasion of Sicily, when the resistance was at its peak, before there were any serious clashes between rival resistance movements."¹³⁹

The King's political advisor P. Pipinelis wrote in his book "King George" (p.76)

"Since the real authority in Greece is in the hands of the communists and since the Government-in-exile has no powers, there becomes necessary a political solution of cooperation with EAM and as time goes by their expulsion will take place."¹⁴⁰

At the same time in Greece, EAM's decision to not accept the King in a De-Facto way grew more adamant. Georgios Kotzioulas, a Kapetanios in the ranks of ELAS wrote what Aris Velouchiotis once said on the question of the King's return:

"We heard that they want to force the King on us. They cannot do whatever

they want. We have decided to fight for this...no King will set foot here against our will...we shall keep our weapons till the end, so that there will be free elections and a plebiscite ..."¹⁴¹

ELAS FIGHTS WITH EDES

In November 1943, Anthony Eden, Britain's Foreign Secretary sent a report to the War Office saying:

"...the Russians did not show in the Moscow conference any interest for the Greek situation...this could change if EAM took over complete control in Greece."¹⁴²

Thus, a decision was taken. The British would support ELAS's rival EDES in an attempt to weaken communist strength and prestige in Greece. In taking this decision, however, the British disregarded an opinion that was very popular among the Greek people at the time, that EDES was pro-royalist and that the King was seen as "the grave digger of Greek democracy in the past."¹⁴³ Churchill and Rossevelt, in backing the King, failed to take under consideration the concensus in Greece which was against the return of the King. Both men assured George II of their full fledged support and urged him to not make any announcement that would jeopardize his post-war position.

At the same time, EAM made a serious mistake that paralleled that of the British. The mistake was that it focused all of its policies for the post-war period on the single issue of the return of the Monarch. EAM related the democratization of Greece very narrowly with a plebiscite that

would "solve" the question of the King. This narrow focus, however, erased many possible manoeuvres that could have been followed instead.¹⁴⁴

On October 9th, 1943, a civil war erupted in Greece between ELAS and EDES. British liaison officers reported that ELAS was the aggressor and this led to EDES receiving large quantities of British supplies. Throughout the duration of their conflict (Oct.1943-Jan.1944) the two rival bands received the following supplies from the British:

"Food and clothes -	EDES 14 tons
	ELAS 34 tons
Arms and Ammunitions -	EDES 74 tons
	ELAS 22 tons
Gold Sovereigns -	EDES 18,000
	ELAS 927,000

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This British intervention through controlling of supplies succeeded in thwarting the monopolization of the resistance by EAM/ELAS and helped other groups survive.¹⁴⁶ In December 1943 Colonel Chris Woodhouse reported to Cairo that there were signs of rapprochement between the two armies. In January of 1944, however, the conflict escalated as EDES attacked ELAS this time. Colonel Barnes, British liaison officer attached to EDES wrote to Cairo:

"Zervas understands he has to crush ELAS fast so that he could be useful to us, that is the reason we support him."¹⁴⁷

The civil war stopped in February 1944. However, peace negotiations took place only after ELAS through a counter offensive managed to push back EDES forces. Negotiations

took place in Plaka. An armistice was signed on February 29th. Both parties agreed to stop fighting each other and cooperate with the Allied Military Mission against the occupiers. In return they would be supplied with arms. This was a victory for EAM since EDES was virtually trapped in Epirus and could no longer have any hope of expanding and playing a serious role.¹⁴⁸

THE CREATION OF P.E.E.A.

EAM viewed the Second World War as one not between nations but rather between ideologies, a war on many levels between progress and a return to the past. EAM saw itself on the forefront of progress for Greece, throwing the Germans out was just one step. Thus, whoever was not with them was considered an ipso-facto traitor. EDES was seen as a tool of British imperialism and sometimes as a collaborator with the Germans. A German leaflet that circulated in Greece was cited as the proof for this:

"Our enemies are the Allies and the communists...we fight ELAS because it is an instrument of the Allies...when our troops approach EDES positions, you should use the recognition signals so that we can avoid clashes between us..."¹⁴⁹

This leaflet was published in the official newspaper of the KKE "Rizospastis" in November 1943 and it was this kind of propaganda use that alienated most Greeks from EDES and consequently its supporters the British.

ELAS at this time was in virtual control of four fifths

of the mountain areas on the Greek mainland. Furthermore, as Brigadier Myers wrote, sabotage targets of any significance were within ELAS controlled areas. Yet British doubts lingered about ELAS:

"EAM's behaviour all over the mainland of Greece was sufficient to convince me...they were primarily in arms against any competition by other Greek movements, and only secondarily in arms against the common enemy."¹⁵⁰

Whatever the case, the fact is that neither the Greek politicians in Cairo nor the British policy makers ever fully understood the extent of EAM's grip on the people or on large territories. EAM's true role was not realized.¹⁵¹

In his book 'ELAS', General Stepharos Sarafis makes apparent that by the fall of 1944 ELAS indeed believed that it would eventually have to confront the British as well as the Germans. Sarafis tried to warn EAM to prepare for such an entanglement. EAM delayed, however, until it could strengthen its control further.

"On this issue two major trends of thought developed within the communist leadership. One group favoured an aggressive policy of eliminating all potential Greek rivals so that the British would be faced with an accomplished fact. The other group advocated subtler tactics, to allay British suspicions for as long as possible, while building up the party controlled forces for the seizure of power at the crucial moment of transition, before the British had time to intervene effectively."¹⁵²

The second group proved dominant as it was lead by Georgios Siantos the acting Secretary-General of the KKE. As he stated in 1945 "The struggle for National Liberation was the first stage in the people's democratic revolution in our

country."¹⁵³

On 26 March 1944, a radio broadcast from the Greek mountains announced that a Political Committee of National Liberation (PEEA) had been established in "Free Greece". General Euripidis Bakirdjis was its temporary chairman. Obviously imitating Tito's Provisional Government, EAM had created its own Governmental agency as a challenge to the authority of the Greek Government in Cairo.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, the creation of PEEA rejected British intervention in Greek affairs which had been up to now exercised in the name of the Greek Government-in-exile.

"...a new symbol was created towards which the loyalties...could be directed. The repercussions in Cairo were greater than in Greece itself..."¹⁵⁵

The reason for the creation of PEEA was given by its Chairman when he stated:

"Taking under consideration:
1) The great National needs and the demand of the Greek people to create within the country a centralized instrument that will coordinate the efforts and the struggle for National liberation and that will take over the responsible control of the free and liberated territories of Greece and
2) The invitation of December 1943 by EAM to all parties, organizations and the Tsouderos Government for the formation of a Government of National Unity.

We create PEEA."¹⁵⁶

The major objectives of PEEA were stated to be the coordination of the anti-Axis struggle in Greece and the liberation of the country followed by a Government resulting from free elections.¹⁵⁷ Another objective of PEEA and one

that was accomplished was the Assembly of the National Council. This was a parliament with legislative and judicial jurisdictions. It came about through secret elections that were held throughout occupied Greece. The elected representatives were assembled in the small village of Korishades in Eurytania. This was a great accomplishment considering the prevailing circumstances.¹⁵⁸

EAM's Central Committee viewed PEEA as a permanent Government agency. A Government of National Unity was, thus, not seen as necessary in the future.

"PEEA is an instrument based on and rooted in the people. It stems from the people...EAM must support the functions of PEEA..."¹⁶⁰

EAM was now in supreme power, through ELAS it controlled Greece militarily, through its various groups and organizations it controlled her organizationally. Through PEEA EAM, in a way, legitimized its power. In communist eyes, the only serious challenge that could now appear could only come from the British or from the Greek armed forces in the Middle East. EAM tried to meet this challenge by organizing a mutiny in the Greek forces.

"The mutineers demanded that the Greek Government recognize the Political Committee which EAM had established in Greece, as the legitimate representative of the Greek people and accept some of its members into the cabinet. They further demanded the purge of fascists from the army and navy, and an unequivocal statement that the King would not return without a plebiscite."¹⁶¹

Premier Tsouderos resigned. The British initiated a search for a new Prime-Minister. They finally found him in the person

of Georgios Papandreou.¹⁶²

"In the midst of all this confusion Papandreou arrived in Cairo from Athens on April 26. He was a breath of fresh air in the over-charged atmosphere of Greek Cairo; The King turned to him; we all turned to him as the man of the hour."¹⁶³

Up to this time the Soviets had kept their distance with regard to Greece and her affairs. But in April of 1944 this changed. Partly because of the creation of PEEA which the Soviets recognized as legitimate, and partly because of the Greek King's consistent refusal to make any political compromise. The Soviets began criticizing the Greek Government in Cairo and this made Churchill upset. He sent a telegram to Molotov in protest. In September, Anthony Eden contacted the Foreign Office from Quebec, saying that the British should recognize Soviet dominance in Bulgaria only if the Soviets recognize British dominance in Greece "now and after the War".¹⁶⁴ This was the beginning of the "Teheran tendency", the new idea of carving up the atlas into zones of influence dominated by great power overseers. A new Anglo-Soviet understanding on the Balkans began to emerge. The Soviets would control Rumania and Bulgaria while the British would have their hands free in Greece. Molotov replied to Churchill's cable by admitting that "Soviet understanding of Greek affairs is partial due to limited information."¹⁶⁵

Meanwhile in Greece, the quisling Governments succeeded one another in an unstable fashion. General Tsolakoglou held the post of Prime Minister until December 1942, he was

then replaced by K. Logothetopoulos, a physician. He in turn resigned in April 1943 and was succeeded by John Rallis, a professional politician. Rallis remained as Prime Minister until October 1944 when the Germans finally withdrew from Athens and his puppet Government dissolved.¹⁶⁶ Rallis was to be remembered for the creation of the dreaded Security Battalions. These were para-military units composed of fanatical anti-communists who in corroboration with the Germans stifled all attempts at resistance.

With the creation of PEEA, the political situation had become very tense. EAM began to feel invulnerable, the Government-in-exile felt threatened while the British themselves were taken aback from the developments. They called for National Unity, a unity however that EAM believed would involve its dissolution.¹⁶⁷ Churchill wrote to Eden saying:

"...4. If things go badly and EAM dominates the situation, we will be forced to reconsider our decision of maintaining our mission in Greece and thus place the Greek people under the threat of Bolshevism. We either support Papandreou, using force if necessary, or we cease to interest ourselves in Greek affairs altogether..."¹⁶⁸

THE LEBANON CONFERENCE

When Papandreou took charge of the Greek Government in Cairo, invitations were sent to all parties and organizations in Greece to take part in a conference in the Middle East. Such a conference, it was hoped by both British and Greeks,

would be able to unriddle the quarrels that threatened to turn into bloodshed upon the Germans' withdrawal. Papandreou's first job as Prime Minister was to direct this Lebanon Conference as it came to be known. On May 17, twenty five delegates came together in Beirut. They represented the Government-in-exile, the old political parties of Greece, and the three major resistance organizations, EAM, EDES and EKKA. "Reconciliation was not in Papandreou's vocabulary. His one word was unity against EAM."¹⁶⁹

It is now questionable as to why EAM agreed to attend the conference. They probably calculated that a Government of National Unity could at any time be bent to their will through the superior force of ELAS, which in the final analysis would hold power in liberated Greece.

"Another factor that may have governed the communists' policy was the threat of British intervention...there seemed a lively possibility that the British would land troops in Greece and restore the Government-in-exile, even though it were without any representatives of the left..."¹⁷⁰

Thus, secure of their strength in Greece, EAM's Central Committee probably believed that they could transmit that "air" of power in Lebanon and take control of the Cairo cabinet. This, however, did not occur. The EAM delegates

"...suffered a double shock when they came to the Middle East. They lost their self control...on the one hand because of the recent mutiny in the Greek army of the M. East and on the other because of the assassination of Colonel Psarros head of EKKA in Greece. They received a barrage of attacks for both incidents. The EAMites had nothing to answer with...

they should have taken the side of the mutineers who only wanted to fight the Nazis and create a real National Unity Government, but they surrendered..."¹⁷¹

Whatever the case, the EAM delegates had found their match, they were outwitted. As a result they conceded to most conditions put forward by Papandreou. Thus, the new Government was based on the so-called Lebanon Charter. This charter was comprised of eight resolutions that were to serve as guidelines to the new Government. The resolutions of the charter that were soon after condemned by EAM and PEEA were:

"...2. The unification and disciplining of all guerilla bodies in Greece...and the creation of our National army which must be free from any influence of parties and organizations... 3. The end of terrorism in the Greek countryside and the ensuring of personal security and the political liberties of the people...5. Ensuring...at the time of the liberation...the order and security of the Greek people, so that they may be able, free from any economic and psychological coercion, to decide as a sovereign people, on their political regime, on their social regime, and on a Government of their choice."¹⁷²

These resolutions were bitterly criticized by EAM, specifically resolution number two which:

"...means surrender of ELAS to the Papandreou Government. Number three condemns the punishment of the Security Battalions and of the collaborators and gives them a chance to continue their actions...the fifth resolution recognizes the British intervention in the ELAS liberated Greece and the British right to create order as they see it..."¹⁷³

The Government of Unity that emerged from Lebanon was well accepted by Winston Churchill. He was now in control of Greek affairs in contrast to British predicaments at the

beginning of the year. He trusted Papandreou and believed that EAM would be more reserved now that it had entered into the Government. Churchill also knew something that the Greek Communists were not aware of. He could do as he pleased in Greece with no fear of Soviet interference.¹⁷⁴ Presumably, EAM would have acted differently had it known that Washington and Moscow had agreed to Britain "taking the lead" in Greece. The prestige of the Papandreou Government ran high. EAM, however, felt cheated and betrayed. Papandreou had stated:

"EAM's responsibility is that it tried to monopolize the resistance...it made itself equal to the state, its opponents were seen as opponents of the state...the class ¹⁷⁵ army (ELAS) should be disbanded..."

THE CASERTA CONFERENCE

By early September 1944, the Germans began to gradually withdraw from Greece. Political squabbles, however, became more acute. The Papandreou Government had meanwhile transferred its seat to Italy. A conference was decided upon in order to discuss preparations for the Greek liberation. It was to be held in the Italian town of Caserta. General Sarafis of ELAS and General Zervas of EDES participated. With the agreement that was signed in late September, it was decided that all guerrilla bands and all army units that would be in Greece following the German departure would be under the command of the British General Scobie. Both Sarafis and Zervas agreed to this.¹⁷⁶ The communists, however, once more perceived the agreement as a "surrender of the Greek

resistance to the reaction and to the British."¹⁷⁷

"The Caserta agreement deprived the peoples' Movement of its soul, its armed forces, all at a moment when it was in its strongest point and ready to fulfill the revolutionary task of the people and to create a new popular order of things...The surrender of ELAS to the hands of the peoples' enemies was approved in Caserta."¹⁷⁸

Many years later and after the KKE had failed in all its attempts to govern Greece, the main criticism for the agreements of Lebanon and Caserta were leveled against the party's leadership. It failed to estimate, the critics said, the true character of the war and of the Allies. This mistake was combined with an underestimation of EAM's power and an overestimation of the British capacity to effectively intervene in Greece.

"All this lead to a policy of surrender and retreat of the people to the plutocratic and imperialistic forces...the Caserta treaty was the military surrender that followed the political one in Lebanon. The leadership lost its direction and its revolutionary aims. It forgot the class character of the war and the COINCIDENTAL alliance between the USSR, the USA and Great Britain. It considered this alliance as permanent. As a consequence it saw a possibility of creating within Greece a similar alliance with domestic plutocrats..."¹⁷⁹

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EAM/ELAS

Many pages have been written about the role of ELAS in the struggle against the Germans. From the Right, this role is reduced while from the Left it is exaggerated. Colonel

Chris Woodhouse who observed things from very close, wrote that for ELAS "action against the Germans was secondary." One thing for sure about ELAS, however, is that it gave significant problems to the occupiers as is seen in the Wermacht documents and it tied down several German divisions that could have otherwise been used in other fronts. General Sarafis, the non-communist military leader of ELAS wrote in his book 'ELAS':

"ELAS achieved through armed resistance:
1) The raising of the morale of the people, distribution of Greek production to Greek people, improvement of the standard of living, and the frustration of German attempts to mobilize Greek labour to Germany.
2) ...military achievements...tied down several divisions...ELAS inflicted the following casualties to the enemy:
German dead 16,062
 wounded 6,504
 prisoners 1,878
Bulgarian dead 1,305
 wounded 1,037
 prisoners 2,238
Italian dead 1,988
 wounded 735
 prisoners 1,073" 180

Sarafis goes on to argue, that all this was accomplished by ELAS without any significant help from the Allies.

"Throughout the occupation period, the Allies gave to ELAS the following material ONLY:
10 mortars
30 machine guns
300 automatics
3000 rifles
30 machine guns
very little ammunition." 181

Arming its men was a very big problem for ELAS. Weapons were scarce and the British never fully committed themselves to

supplying communist ELAS. Thus, the andartes had to rely upon the weapons they captured from the enemy.¹⁸²

ELAS's social significance was in a way equally important.

"Greek peasants began to develop a political conscience due to the creation of democratic conditions that for the first time allowed the people to rule themselves ...justice was administered by elected magistrates and a new legal code came into being, one based on the mountain heritage of the people..."¹⁸³

Chris Woodhouse, British liaison officer in occupied Greece wrote:

"Communications in the mountain areas ...were never so complete either before or after. Even the roads were improved and used by EAM/ELAS...the gifts of the technological and cultural civilization for the first time appeared in the Greek mountains. Schools, self-administration, courts, public services, things that ceased to exist during the war were once again functioning. Theatres, factories, local parliaments came into existence for the first time. A collective form of life substituted the individualistic one...EAM/ELAS pioneered something that no Greek Government had ever considered, the creation of an organized State in the Greek mountains."¹⁸⁴

General Sarafis wrote that before EAM/ELAS started its resistance role:

- 1) The countryside was full of traitors, exploiters and foreign agents.
- 2) Greek men and women associated with the enemy soldiers to a point where there was a "threat of corruption of the family units".

3) Famine and misery ruled the land and the people had become desensitized to the suffering of their fellow humans.

4) Many were caught in the frenzy of making easy money at the expense of the hungry and destitute, the black market was everywhere. And so on and so on.

In the Fall of 1944 it had become apparent that the British would not be able to spare troops for the liberation of Greece. Prime Minister Papandreou telegraphed London from Italy arguing:

"During my meeting with General Wilson it became obvious...only a small detachment was earmarked for Athens. The consequences of this will be a) The liberation will be considered an EAM accomplishment b) My Government deprived of Allied forces will become a hostage of EAM c) The British prestige will suffer a decline d) when the British troops do become available there will be no reason for them to come to Greece, since the liberation will be over."¹⁸⁵

By this time, EAM numbered about two million members out of a total population of seven million. It was incomparably superior to all rival groups in organization and enthusiasm. EAM had every reason to suppose that once the Germans were out of the way it would be able to take over the undisputed control of the country. There, indeed, seemed nothing that could possibly stand as an obstacle.¹⁸⁶ The British, however, thought otherwise.

EAM/ELAS were determined to gain complete control of the country. The British were determined not to let the Government pass into the sole control of the left. Both sides were playing

for time and feeling each other. Such was the situation when the Germans finally abandoned Athens.

"Within the country the two sides, EAM and its enemies were as deeply estranged as ever. The Government of National Unity was a frail fabric, barely disguising the chasms..."¹⁸⁷

The Papandreou Government arrived in Athens on October 18, 1944. British troops had landed in Greece three weeks earlier, coming ashore on the mainland first at Patras. As the Germans withdrew, the andartes began to come down from the hills and the mountains into the towns and cities. By the end of October, the German evacuation was completed. Greece was finally free. The troubles, however, were not over. Rather they were now starting. The 'First Round' had ended. The stage was now set for more conflict. The British became "the enemy". The 'Second Round' was about to begin.

The KKE's Second Round: October 1944-January 1945.

"Each side was convinced of the evil intentions of the other; Each side believed that it enjoyed popular sympathy and support in its cause. Working at cross purposes they made compromise impossible."

John Iatrides
Revolt in Athens.

THE EARLY DAYS OF LIBERATED GREECE

When the British detachments landed at Patras on October 5, 1944, they found EAM/ELAS in virtual control of the whole of Greece. EDES, however, under General Zervas held a few square miles in the Epirus regions of North-Western Greece. The Government of 'National Unity' under the Premiership of Georgios Papandreou, including the PEEA ministers, arrived in Athens on October 18. Real authority, however, remained in the hands of EAM/ELAS.¹⁸⁸ As the Germans abandoned the cities and towns that they had occupied, ELAS units entered them several days before any of the British arrived. A characteristic of this transition period was that EAM made no forceful bid for power.

"...no attempt to consolidate against the arrival of the Government. Instead their leaders welcomed the British officers and Greek officials."¹⁸⁹

Yet, Prime Minister Papandreou had prior to October 18 telegraphed Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden, expressing his fear with regard to EAM power.

"I am seriously disturbed by the situation developing in Greece where the regions evacuated by the Germans are being occupied by EAM in the name, they say, of the Greek Government... political means for coping with it are no longer adequate. Only the immediate appearance of impressive British forces in Greece...will suffice to alter the situation."¹⁹⁰

In continental Greece ELAS was successful in taking physical possession of practically the whole of the countryside and occupying all the cities, towns and villages-except

for Athens, Piraeus, Patras and some other key cities in which they allowed the British troops to exercise authority.

"Ostensibly to keep order in a countryside entirely devoid of official Government security forces, the EAM formed its own Gendarmerie..another EAM sponsored organization was the EA (National Co-operative) which had the object of helping and rehabilitating those who had suffered under the occupation..."¹⁹¹

EAM had asked for permission for ELAS units to station themselves in Athens, but Papandreou would not allow it, putting forward the excuse that all barrack accommodation in the city was either in use or earmarked for British and Greek Government forces. The ELAS troops were, thus, forced to remain outside the Athens area. This, of course, was one of the Government actions that served to alienate the ELAS guerrillas from Papandreou and the British.

Churchill had instructed the British General Scobie to establish his GHQ in Athens, to maintain law and order and to help the Papandreou Government set up its administration. Scobie was initially ordered not to interfere in local politics. (Scobie's forces consisted of almost 15,000 soldiers.)¹⁹² However, not everyone viewed the British position in Greece as Scobie and Papandreou did. On October 6, 1944, the New York Times had reported that:

"The British invasion of Greece...is more properly an 'occupation' for politico-military objectives rather than an assault...The political objective is the traditional one that has governed British policy in the Mediterranean for years - to maintain a Greece...friendly to Britain in her sphere of influence."¹⁹³

Whatever the actual reasoning behind the British

intervention in favour of the Papandreou Government may have been, the fact remained that following liberation Greece was in a condition far worse than ever before.

"The structure on which M. Papandreou's Government stood was rotten with dis-organization, tendencies of anarchy. There was no settling down to real work. In every sphere there was a deep rooted chaos which no one could unravel...more Tommy-guns...than shovels...more singing and oratory than thinking and planning."¹⁹⁴

Inflation in the economy was rampant. Greek money (Drachmae) was almost worthless.

"All the drachmae in circulation on 27 October...could have been withdrawn for £100,000...one billion drachmae ...could buy only a cigarette...At one stage the price of the daily bread ration rose to eighty billion drachmae, compared with three billion a fortnight before."¹⁹⁵

The economic hardships were compounded by the fact that all ministries related to economic matters were relegated to the PEEA members. These men, however, were interested primarily in exercising political influence on the Government rather than salvaging the economy of the nation.

As more and more troubles fell upon Greece, two factors were at work hindering a solution to the country's many problems. Politicians were full of many theories and ideas, but they were quite incapable of taking any practical steps, and party politics were causing an internal conflict that was a detriment to co-operation.¹⁹⁶

"It would be problematic, within the mental asylum that was Athens in October and November, if the Papandreou Government could maintain its coherence."¹⁹⁷

Around this time, the forces that could be counted upon to be loyal to the Papandreou Government in all circumstances were: The police and the gendarmerie in Athens, the EDES troops in North-Western Greece with the city of Yannina as their base, some guerrilla units under one Tsaous Anton in the Greek-Bulgarian border area, and the British troops under General Scobie.¹⁹⁸

"...to complete the picture we must add three more groups...the private army X ...the security battalions...and the armed peasants under Michalagas..."¹⁹⁹

The rest of Greece was in the firm hands of EAM/ELAS which occupied its towns and villages as well as the countryside, not only with its combat units but also with its armed police force, the 'Ethniki Politophylaki'.

Although the power and authority of the 'National Unity' Government was severely restricted and all power rested with EAM, it was obvious that the Communist strategy for the time being was to move strictly within the framework of legality.²⁰⁰ General Spiliotopoulos, first official military commander of Attica later declared that:

"If ELAS had attempted to take over by force, I could not do anything to resist them. I could not depend on the Security Battalions or on the police if EAM had decided to step out of legality..."²⁰¹

KKE'S DEMOCRATIC-LEGAL BEHAVIOUR

There is almost no doubt that in the initial stages EAM had no intention of taking Government power through the use of force. If EAM wanted to do so, then its repeated

political and military compromises by the signing of various treaties and agreements were inexplicable.

"The example of Tito is characteristic. He refused to recognise any authority other than his own and issued direct warnings to Churchill in case the British intended to intervene militarily in Yugoslavia...if the KKE had decided to use force in order to take control, it is very improbable that it would wait until December of 1944 in order to do so."²⁰²

It is now clear that to the orthodox and vehemently Stalinist KKE, the time was not ripe for an attempt at revolution.

According to Lenin's teachings, the time is ripe for a communist revolution when:

- a) The forces hostile to the Communists are weakened by conflicts amongst themselves.
- b) The petty-bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats have lost the confidence of the workers; and
- c) The proletariat is determined to support the communist party in the struggle for power.²⁰³

In considering whether these "Leninist" conditions existed in Greece immediately following the country's liberation, one can see that in the first case, the forces hostile to the KKE were not in conflict amongst themselves. The two major ones, the British and the Papandreou Government worked together and collaborated in both theory and practise.

In examining the second of Lenin's conditions, that is the neutralization of the middle segments of the population, Professor Kousoulas in his book Revolution and Defeat argues

that in fact these elements were successfully manipulated by EAM and were therefore discredited in the eyes of the masses by linking themselves to the Germans first, and later on the British.²⁰⁴ This, however, was not the case. EAM itself was comprised of centrist as well as communist elements. The Government of "National Unity", which in a way personified liberal ideology, attested to the fact that the moderate, "petty-bourgeois" politicians were in no way neutralized. The KKE together with EAM had welcomed this government and even participated in it through the PEEA ministers. The democratic solution had not yet been discredited.

Finally, the last condition necessary for revolution according to Lenin, did not in fact exist until after December 3, when the Government totally alienated itself from the masses by firing upon an unarmed demonstration. After that it was in a way inevitable that a revolution would erupt. It is this writer's belief that prior to that day, the necessary conditions for revolution as put forth by Lenin, did not in fact exist. The KKE, comprised of well studied "Marxist-Leninists" was almost certainly aware of this. Perhaps this is the reason, then, that the party did not initiate its revolution until all its legal, democratic attempts had been rendered useless and ineffective. It is the KKE's mistake, however, that it waited this long before attempting to forcefully seek power. Revolutionary change, which the KKE pursued, can only come through revolutions. Capitalism can be modified but not replaced through legal means.

Even after December 3, that is after the clashes with the Government forces had begun, there were serious disagreements within the EAM ranks with regard to the strategy and the size of its military effort. A great portion of EAM members still believed in a democratic, compromise solution and in fact hesitated to participate in an all-out attack against the British. In the first days of the 'December Revolution', ELAS troops were given orders not to attack British positions but to concentrate on the Greek Royalists and Police forces. Thus, after the 'Second Round' was over, only two hundred and thirty-seven British troops had been killed, a very small number if the size of the fighting is considered.

"One more paradoxical fact than can be explained by EAM's search for a political solution is that only a few attempts at reinforcing ELAS troops in Athens had taken place. The EAM leadership, instead of concentrating all its forces in Athens, attempted instead an offensive in Epirus against the weak and scattered EDES bands."²⁰⁵

It is highly unlikely that EAM/ELAS would mismanage its military efforts in such a way had they decided and agreed upon an all-out revolution. Rather, it seems that the KKE was drawn into a revolutionary reaction while at the same time still hoping for a democratic-legal solution. If the KKE wanted total control of Greece, it should have taken over immediately following the German withdrawal.

"Had they taken over, only through a very costly invasion could they have been ousted—an invasion that would not be allowed by allied pressure and by public opinion...

The fact that they did not take over Athens in October, prior to the arrival of Scobie's troops, is a definite proof of their sincerity..."²⁰⁶

In 1950, Vasilis Bartzotas, a member in the Central Committee of the KKE reported to his party's Third Conference, that:

"On October 12, 1944, we easily could have seized power using our ELAS First Army Corps alone. We did not seize power because we did not have a correct line, because we all vacillated...instead of going ahead, instead of organizing the struggle for power... we capitulated and kept order."²⁰⁷

In answering the question of why the KKE did not seize its October opportunity, we must take into consideration that its leader was Georgios Siantos. Siantos, like others in the KKE high echelons, belonged to that generation of Greek Communists that had suffered much as a result of the "Idionym Law" enacted by Venizelos and by the Metaxas persecution later on. Siantos spent most of his communist life either in prison or in exile. To him legality was too precious an accomplishment for the KKE to risk losing in undertaking a revolution. Thus, all his attempts and efforts were geared toward the preservation of the KKE's legal-democratic facade. Another explanation is the one given by Edgar O'Ballance,

"Within the KKE there were two schools of thought. One that advocated revolution by force, and the other that advocated revolution by political infiltration and disruption. As it was anticipated that the Allied Liberation Force would be strong and well armed... it was reasoned that it would be suicide to match ELAS against it, so it was planned to keep ELAS in the background for later use, and to concentrate upon political infiltration and disruption to pave the way to final seizure of power."²⁰⁸

Although the KKE hesitated to instigate a seizure of power in October of 1944, it attempted to do so in December. The reasons for this change of heart will be examined in the following pages.

THE EVENTS THAT LED TO THE DECEMBER REVOLUTION

Following the liberation of Greece, the main political problem was how to transfer power from EAM/ELAS to the Constitutionally 'legal' Government of Georgios Papandreou. The transfer of power meant the disarming of all resistance groups. It was mainly the failure of finding^a a disarmament formula favourable to all parties that led to the Athens revolt in December.²⁰⁹

"EAM/ELAS agreed that now that Greece was free, their armed forces should be disbanded. But they demanded that the 'regular' units be disarmed too. It was the refusal of Papandreou and the British to accept this condition that led to the fighting of December 1944."²¹⁰

One more basic problem that the Papandreou Government was faced with was the punishment of Greek war criminals and Nazi collaborators. However, despite the insistent demands of the Left, the Government showed little will to tackle this highly emotive question, nor did the British authorities appear to regard it as a high priority.²¹¹ Papandreou at this time initiated a formal plan of re-organizing the police and the gendarmerie, but this took the form of recruitment of former traitors and collaborators. Members of the clearly fascist Security Battalions were also recruited.

These men were eager to show loyalty to the new Government and in the process effectively terrorized their opponents.

"...as a result EAM/ELAS instigated raids in the areas where there was recruitment of collaborators into the police...the British supported and adopted very quickly this spontaneous regrouping of extreme Right-wing forces."²¹²

On December 10, the Observer published an article in which it stated that:

"The Greeks have freshly in memory not only the German occupation but also the long years of totalitarian Royalist dictatorship that preceded it...the Greek left has been overcome by fear and misgivings at the prospect of being left at the mercy of its Royalist opponents who are armed to the teeth and apparently enjoy Allied protection."²¹³

Many people, including the moderate elements within the Greek Government agreed that it was necessary to punish the collaborators. However, if this popular demand for an immediate purge and punishment was to be satisfied, the Government forces would have to be weakened, leaving ELAS as the only Greek military force of any significance.

"However much the moderates in the Papandreou cabinet might wish to placate the natural urge for the punishment of the guilty, they were most reluctant to face EAM without some counterweight to ELAS. As a result...no serious attempt was made to remove wartime collaborators from the city police and the gendarmerie."²¹⁴

On November 7, Papandreou announced that ELAS must be disbanded by December 10. The EAM police force, the EP,

would come under the command of the Government until December 1 when it would be disarmed and replaced by a new organization of police called the National Guard (Ethnophylaki). EAM responded that it was willing to have ELAS demobilized and its police units dissolved, but only if the recently arrived Greek Mountain Brigade, the Sacred Regiment and the Security Battalions—all Right wing-were simultaneously dissolved.

"There is little doubt that initially EAM had been prepared to have ELAS disarmed and demobilized, and the resistance bands replaced by a National Army. The EAM leadership appeared content to pursue its objectives by political, not military means."²¹⁵

On November 22, General Scobie met with both General Zerva of EDES and General Sarafis of ELAS. He ordered them to demobilize their armies. Zervas immediately complied, but Sarafis who led an incomparably stronger army refused to obey Scobie's order and asked for written ones signed by all the ministers of the Greek Government—including those who belonged to PEEA. In a way, this refusal to obey Scobie, constituted a violation of the Cazerta agreement which was signed earlier by Sarafis on behalf of ELAS²¹⁶ Sarafis later wrote in his book

The Elsas:

"Scobie told me that ELAS terrorizes the people and does not allow them to come into contact with the British. If this continues, he said, there will be clashes and the British Government will take all measures to restore respect. You

should also know, Scobie went on, that a guerrilla army cannot face a modern one armed with heavy weapons, tanks, airforce and navy."²¹⁷

C.M. Woodhouse writes that General Scobie did in fact induce a very negative reaction in the Communists because of his autarchic personality, thus, it was in a way inevitable that KKE policy returned to revolutionary violence.²¹⁸ General Gialistras, author of a Greek Government propaganda booklet, wrote that:

"If the British General Scobie had been less firm, the communist hordes would have dominated, in such a case it would have been difficult to oust them; Greece would have been behind the Iron Curtain."²¹⁹

Prior to the rejection of Scobie's orders by Sarafis, negotiations had resulted in Papandreou approving a plan for the demobilization of the Mountain Brigade together with EDES and ELAS. Later on, however, Papandreou reversed his position and insisted that the Mountain Brigade remain intact. That is when General Scobie intervened and presented the resistance leaders with his order of the day. On November 27, the EAM ministers in the cabinet, proposed a compromise. They suggested the formation of a mixed division consisting of the Mountain Brigade, the Sacred Regiment, and EDES unit, and an ELAS brigade equal in arms and men to the combined strength of the three other units. Under this plan the Right need not fear the Left and vice-versa. Papandreou initially approved the plan but later he made public a different one which he claimed originated from the EAM ministers.

"This Papandreou plan kept the Mountain Brigade, the Sacred Company, an EDES brigade and an ELAS brigade, but the latter was to equal only the EDES brigade in strength...This left the ELAS brigade outnumbered two to one..."²²⁰

Both Papandreou and the British claimed that the EAM ministers accepted this plan and later rejected it under communist pressure; hence EAM was blamed for the collapse of the negotiations and the start of civil war. The British Ambassador in Athens, Reginald Leeper, later wrote that:

"The next day the EAM ministers though they had drafted it themselves, refused to sign the agreement and Zevgos produced an alternative draft which put everything back in the melting pot. The Central Committee of the Communist Party had issued its orders and the ministers had to obey."²²¹

On November 29, the Communist minister Zevgos approached Papandreou with the final EAM plan calling for the dissolution of all Right wing forces as well as of ELAS. Papandreou admitted that the plan was reasonable but unfortunately not feasible because of the British refusal to accept it.²²²

"General Scobie now brought the crisis to a head. On December 1, he issued an order for the disbandment of all guerrilla forces on December 10. The six EAM ministers denounced this as an interference in internal Greek affairs and resigned the same day. At the same time the EAM Central Committee revived the ELAS Central Committee which had been disbanded upon liberation and ordered a mass meeting at Constitution Square for December 3."²²³

In late November, Secretary General of the KKE, Siantos, issued the following general directive:

"Trusting our organized popular forces, a large portion of which are armed, we have made it a condition for the disbandment of ELAS that all armed forces of the opposition, including the gendarmerie, should be simultaneously disbanded. The British have refused this and are pressing the opposition to start a civil war which may begin at any time. We are ready to take up the challenge."²²⁴

On November 30, under the heading 'Who Wants Civil War?', Rizospastis the official KKE newspaper asked:

"Who...has reneged? How many days have gone by since the Prime Minister signed the agreement to send the Mountain Brigade on an indefinite leave? How many days have gone by since it was officially declared that the Gendarmerie would be disarmed and dissolved? Who, has therefore, reversed his position?"²²⁵

Convinced that the KKE might now enter into an offensive and that a stern warning was necessary in order to discourage such an event, General Scobie issued his "December Order" that called for the demobilization of all andarte forces. This order was immediately followed by a statement issued by the British Government in London and designed to underline Churchill's firm support of both Scobie and Papandreu.

"The Prime Minister wishes it to be known that General Scobie's message of December 1 to the Greek people, stressing the need for unity and emphasizing our full support for the present Greek Government, was made with the knowledge and entire approval of His Majesty's Government."²²⁶

EAM immediately launched a counteroffensive, publicly challenging the right of a British military officer to intervene in such a manner in the Greek nation's internal

affairs. ELAS pride as well as the national pride of many Greeks was injured. Opinion began to sympathize with EAM/ELAS. Furthermore, the American Ambassador Mr. MacVeagh, recorded in his diary on November 30 that Premier Papandreou was attempting to 'placate the communists by giving them a brigade of ELAS, to parallel the Mountain Brigade, but of course there would be an EDES formation too, and the airforce, and the Sacred Regiment...The Rightists would predominate on the whole. Suspicions are understandable..."²²⁷

The EAM countermove relied for its success mainly on the educating of the masses as to the movement's position and objectives. Georgios Siantos succinctly managed to put forward the demands of his party and of EAM/ELAS in one of his public speeches in which he stated that:

"We agree to have all volunteer units that were organized at home and abroad to be demobilized and replaced by a National Army; an army formed by regular conscription, commanded by cadres purged of traitors and fascists."²²⁸

Furthermore, Rizospastis daily provided the Greek public with the views of the Communist Party.

"We ask for all volunteer bodies to be dissolved...we ask that by December 10 all major leaders of the National betrayal be tried...we know, Gentlemen of the reaction, that you threaten the Greek people with a civil war... the Greek people and their National organizations await you with calm, the calm that stems from certainty and strength."²²⁹

POLITICAL BRINKMANSHIP AND THE BALANCE OF FORCES

It is the belief of many people, Communists and non-Communists alike, that Winston Churchill had planned a military clash with the Greek Communists whether or not they attempted violent ascendance to power. On November 7, Churchill telegraphed Anthony Eden:

"In my opinion, since we paid a high price to Russia for freedom of movement in Greece, we should not hesitate to support Papandreou by using British troops...This means that the troops must intervene to suppress illegal actions...I fully expect a clash with EAM and we must not shrink from it provided the ground is well chosen."²³⁰

Within the responsible circle of Greek and British authorities, the initiative had at this time passed exclusively to the latter, just as the initiative of their opponents had passed exclusively to the KKE.²³¹

"Like a pendulum the Central Committee was swinging between two poles: the need to organize for combat by seeking outside support, and the hope of progressing along the legal path without succumbing to the provocation...EAM was holding back until events should force it to react; the city was swarming with British agents, and any effective preparation for the struggle would now be tantamount to provocation. Every day, little by little, the Resistance was being overtaken by history."²³²

Around December, the advocates of patient infiltration ended up believing what the advocates of a violent revolution had believed all along, that the only road to power lies through

force.²³³ The real causes of the Athens revolt, writes L.S. Stavriaros, were the policies of Papandreou, the provocations of the Greek Rightists, and the blatant intervention of the British.²³⁴

"Whatever the aims of the British policy may have been, it did force EAM/ELAS to choose between outright capitulation and armed resistance...Thus the resources of the British Empire were thrown against ELAS. And the Rightists were lifted...to a position of authority."²³⁵

Churchill's role in escalating the tensions to actual armed confrontation is also mentioned in the relevant literature:

"Without Churchill's support, the Greek Right would never dare to start the civil war against the Left. Thus, the final responsibility for December rests with Churchill."²³⁶

Winston Churchill was indeed uncompromising. Stalin's stance with regard to Greek affairs gave Churchill a feeling of security in administering whatever policy he saw fit. Thus, he decided to crush EAM/ELAS, an organization that he characterized in the House of Commons as Trotskyist-an obvious gesture towards Stalin.²³⁷

"Churchill considered the Greek Resistance Movement as a simple military operation in the war against Germany, he could not see that it consisted of a dynamic political force, one that he could not activate or de-activate whenever it pleased him."²³⁸

Thus, the December events in Athens can be seen as something that the British Prime Minister had planned with political and diplomatic means at his disposal. The

Communist assertion is that since 1943, in order to destroy the whole of the Greek Left wing Resistance Movement and to reestablish the pre-war "colonial dependence" of Greece upon Britain, Churchill planned and later on successfully completed the discrediting of Greek Communism.

"It was a part of Churchill's policy to put back together his Empire, and to secure his lines of communication and defense against the Soviet Union."²³⁹

It is easy to sympathize with EAM's position. They had risen to supremacy in Greece during the years of occupation through discipline, hard work and immense sufferings. They saw no reason why they should willingly relinquish the power which they had won and give to the Right a chance to organize itself and to challenge EAM supremacy.²⁴⁰

By early December the stage was set for open conflict. It was to erupt on December 3rd. As negotiations gave way to armed confrontation, a discussion of the forces and their strength is necessary.

The Greek Government forces numbered around fifteen thousand men including the Security Battalions. The British initially had at their disposal about five thousand troops half of which consisted of Military Police, relief workers, engineers and administrators. During the December fighting, however, there were transferred from Italy at least ten thousand battle ready troops, thus raising the total of British forces in Greece to fifteen thousand men.²⁴¹

On the other hand, EAM/ELAS had available a total of

fifteen thousand three hundred and fifty men in the Attica region. Many of these men, however, did not participate in the battles for various reasons.²⁴² With regard to weaponry, both the British and Greek forces were fully armed with British issued top of the line weapons. The British forces also possessed tanks, artillery, combat aircraft and a strong navy. ELAS had to rely on weapons that its men had captured during the occupation for most of which there was no available ammunition. This was the balance of the opposing forces in December 1944. The actual battles started following the dramatic events of December 3rd.

THE 'BLOODY SUNDAY' DEMONSTRATION

On December 2nd, EAM asked for and received permission to stage a mass demonstration in Constitution Square at the center of Athens. Later on the same day, however, Ambassador Leeper and General Scobie together urged Mr. Papandreou to cancel the demonstration. Papandreou complied and notified EAM of the reversal of the decision at about eleven o'clock the same night. Telephones and radios were rare in Athens, especially among the working class. It proved impossible, even if it had really tried, for EAM to effectively call off the demonstration.²⁴³

On Sunday, December 3rd, tens of thousand of EAM supporters took part in the demonstration. They were mostly unarmed women and children.

"There was no fighting with the Police. Then suddenly firing began and the bright December morning was transformed into 'bloody Sunday'".²⁴⁴

One of the eyewitnesses was the British officer W. Byford-Jones. He later wrote about his experiences in Greece, including an account of what occurred on that day.

"The squad of Police above emptied their rifles into the procession...I thought at first the Police were firing blanks, or that they were aiming for above the crowd...but the worst had happened... men, women and children...fell to the ground, blood trickling out of their heads and bodies either on to the road or on to the flags they had been carrying. I shall never forget that scene... There was little shelter for the demonstrators, and while a few hid behind walls and trees most of them lay flat on the ground while the firing continued over them. For over half an hour the shooting continued, all of it from the Police, and the EAM supporters still lay on the ground."²⁴⁵

Twenty demonstrators were killed and about one hundred and forty were wounded. The road was opened for civil war.

Papandreou stated:

"Our conscience is clear, all responsibility before history and the nation weighs upon the leaders of the extreme left."²⁴⁶

Demetrios Partsalides, Secretary-General of EAM, echoed the views of his organization when he declared that "henceforth, Mr. Papandreou is an outlaw. The people will fight for their liberty without counting the sacrifices."²⁴⁷ By contrast, the official report issued by the Papandreou Government with regard to the incident, stated that:

"...the first shots were fired by armed demonstrators who were supplied with hand grenades...most of the dead demonstrators, as was proven by the Coroner's inquest, were killed by hand grenades, of which no use was made by the Police.--"248

In 1958, however, some one finally accepted the responsibility of giving the Greek policemen the order to fire upon the demonstrators. The then Police Chief Angelos Evert confessed that "...there was a belief that the state would cease to exist...at that moment and based on orders that I had received, I personally ordered the forceful dissolution of the demonstration..."249

Prime Minister Papandreou offered to resign and asked the Liberal's leader Themistocles Sofoulis to form a new Government. Winston Churchill, however, intervened in support of Papandreou. On December 8, Churchill stated in the House of Commons, "I also directed our Ambassador to do his utmost to prevail upon Mr. Papandreou, who seemed to wish to resign, to remain in power."*250

In his truly great work The Second World War, Winston Churchill wrote that at the time he had ordered Scobie to prepare for war against EAM/ELAS.

"We need another eight or ten thousand foot soldiers to hold the capital and Salonica for the present Government... I fully expect a clash with EAM and we

* Churchill had telegraphed Ambassador Leeper on December 5 saying that: 1) This is no time to dabble in Greek politics ...the matter is one of life and death. 2) You must urge Papandreou to stand by his duty, and assure him he will be supported by all our forces if he does so...his only chance is to come through with us...

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must not shrink from it provided the ground is well chosen...Do not hesitate to act as if you were in a conquered city where a local rebellion is in progress...we have to hold and dominate Athens. It would be a great thing for you to succeed in this without bloodshed if possible, but also with bloodshed if necessary."²⁵¹

But if Churchill expected war, so did the EAM leadership. And both sides proved adamant in their stance. On December 7, the ELAS Central Committee made the following declaration to the Athenian people:

"...the battle for freedom and total independence has begun. We did not ask for it, they imposed it upon us. Our struggle is purely internal. The British Allies must remain neutral and we assure them they run no risk. But if they strike at us we will be forced to strike back and the responsibility rests upon Mr. Leeper and Mr. Scobie...Forward for the final victory...for our democracy..."²⁵²

Furthermore, General Sarafis issued a statement to General Scobie in which he argued that:

"the Government has ceased to represent National Unity. The Police killed 28 citizens and wounded 150...Our struggle today is not one of anarchists but of free people desiring freedom and independence...we will never surrender because Greeks never surrender to invaders."²⁵³

THE FIGHTING BEGINS

On December 4, the situation became very tense as ELAS units appeared in the suburbs of Athens. There followed clashes between them and the Government security forces.

When it was realized that an armed revolt had broken out, General Scobie ordered all ELAS units to move out from the Athens and Piraeus area, stating that if they disobeyed they would be treated as enemy troops. British troops on patrol in the city engaged in battle with ELAS and two of the latter's battalions were successfully disarmed. By December 6, British troops had become deeply involved in combat with ELAS troops on the streets of Athens.

"The British position was so critical and the request for reinforcements so urgent that Field marshal Alexander flew in to see for himself what the situation was...He found that the British and Greek Government forces were virtually besieged in a small vulnerable area in the center of the city;...he diverted the 4th division which was on its way to Italy to Greece."²⁵⁴

In Britain there was a storm of protest. A heated debate took place in the House of Commons regarding the Greek situation and Mr. Churchill's handling of it. Seymour Cocks of the Labour Party made an eloquent appeal:

"It is none of our business to interfere in a friendly and foreign country to prevent the overthrow of a dictatorship...I would rather have my right arm burnt off at the wrist, leaving a blackened and twisted stump, rather than sign an order to the British Army to fire on the workers of Greece..."²⁵⁵

Winston Churchill replied by stating:

"...We stood on the foundation of fair, free elections. It takes all sorts to make a democracy, not only the Left wing or even Communists...the clamour to shoot everyone politically inconvenient is not democracy. Grabbing power

and shooting opponents is not democracy, but the very opposite...a carefully planned coup'd'etat by murder gangs without any votes having been cast in their favour is a masquerade and mockery of democracy ...Poor old Britain has assumed a thankless burden.."256

Churchill went on to argue that the use of force is sometimes necessary in order to prevent greater bloodshed. The responsibility, he said, lies within the British and Allied military sphere.²⁵⁷

On December 8, 1944, Prime Minister Churchill won a vote of confidence in Commons. He won by a margin of 250 votes. But of over 450 members present only 309 voted and many of those who voted for the Government did so not because they endorsed its Greek policy but because they were reluctant to have a change of Government while the World War still continued.²⁵⁸ In the Allied nations the Press consistently attacked Churchill on the Greek issue and in Britain such journals as the London Times and the Observer were disapproving. Churchill declared:

"...there is no case in my experience ...where a British Government has been so maligned and its motives so traduced in our own country by important organs of the press or among our own people."²⁵⁹

Meanwhile in Athens, the war continued. On December 12, ELAS representatives called upon General Scobie and presented him with some cease fire conditions:

- 1) Withdrawal of ELAS formations to the line laid down by British H.Q. on Dec. 3, until a solution of the whole military question is reached by a Government of National Unity.

- 2) Simultaneous withdrawal of the Mountain Brigade
- 3) Disarmament of the Gendarmerie... members of the Security Battalions to be interned until trial
- 4) British forces in Greece to be used solely as was envisaged in the Cazerta Agreement; and
- 5) Resolving by Democratic means of all the country's political and military problems...²⁶⁰

The British General, however, laconically replied that ELAS must cease its fire and evacuate Attica.

On the 20th, Scobie announced that an all-out British assault on ELAS troops was about to begin. As ELAS units received blow after blow from the British forces, their morale began to decline together with discipline. Perturbed by events in Greece, Mr. Churchill, on December 24th, personally visited Athens in order to evaluate the situation. His country's relations with the United States were becoming strained over Greece, and, moreover, he wanted his troops out of Greece and in use elsewhere as soon as possible. A meeting of all sides took place presided by Archbishop Damascinos. Apart from Churchill, Harold MacMillan and Anthony Eden were also present as was G. Siantos for EAM/ELAS. The meeting failed to bring about a cease-fire, but it resulted in a reluctant agreement that Damascinos be appointed Regent.²⁶¹

At the same time that ELAS was fighting the British and the Government in Athens, the majority of ELAS troops participated in a major offensive against EDES in Epirus under the leadership of ELAS' most competent leaders, Sarafis and Aris Velouchiotis. Throughout these events, the British troops

stationed in cities other than Athens faced no hostility from the outnumbering ELAS forces. General Sarafis twice urged an immediate attack on British units in Northern Greece and especially Thessaloniki, but both times the ELAS Central Committee decided against such a move.

Following Scobie's offensive, British positions were improving. A second major assault started on January 3.

"ELAS fought back bitterly. Their losses averaged thirty dead and twenty four wounded for each street lost. British casualties were above normal."²⁶²

ELAS now realized that it could not defeat the British. By January 5 it was all over. A week later an armistice was signed. One reason for the ELAS surrender may have been the sharp decline of morale following a Soviet gesture that indicated lack of sympathy for the Athens revolt.

"The day before the appointment of the Regent, Vushinsky summoned Politis, the Greek Ambassador to Moscow, and announced the appointment of Sergeyev as new Soviet Ambassador to Athens. This Soviet gesture...was interpreted as showing open disapproval of the Communist revolt. When the news reached the ELAS ranks it caused a great deal of distress and confusion..."²⁶³

With regard to Soviet support of the December revolution, many claimed that the whole event was Kremlin inspired and directed. There is no evidence, however, to support such a claim. On the contrary, several KKE leaders, devout Leninists, later criticized the December Revolution as a tactical mistake. In any event, the fact remains that "during the

Communist revolution in Greece, the Soviet Union cautiously avoided any interference in, or criticism of the British actions there."²⁶⁴

John Iatrides, in his detailed study of the December events, Revolt in Athens, argues that throughout the duration of the revolt, the Soviet Union made no detectable effort to influence the origins, course or outcome of the crisis.²⁶⁵

"...the Soviet Union had nothing to do with the Greek Second Round. At the same time...the Greek Communist Party was Moscow oriented, hoping for guidance and assistance from afar. It received precious little of either."²⁶⁶

THE VARKIZA AGREEMENT

In mid-February of 1945, a conference was set up in the resort town of Varkiza near Athens in order that an official end be put to the fighting. Meanwhile, General Plastiras had replaced Papandreou as the Greek Prime Minister. Archbishop Damaskinos reluctantly agreed to take part in the conference,

"The idea of meeting Communist leaders at a conference is most repugnant even to men as broadminded as the Regent. Being above party politics does not for him mean being above right and wrong."²⁶⁷

As a result of the conference, an agreement was signed to be known as the 'Varkiza Agreement'. It provided that:

- 1) ELAS surrender its arms within two weeks
- 2) The KKE and EAM should be recognized as legal political organizations, although they were not to be represented in the Plastiras Government

- 3) Elections and a plebiscite on the Constitutional question should occur within a year
- 4) Legal persecution of those implicated in the uprising should be confined to those who violated criminal laws and should not extend to political offenses; and
- 5) The purging of...security battalions...should begin at once.²⁶⁸

The agreement as signed, represented a political retreat for the EAM leaders. They had demanded from the beginning that they be given representation in the cabinet and that amnesty be extended to all who were involved in the uprising, not just the leaders. The Varkiza conference was chronologically coincident with the Great Power Conference in Yalta. This, however, was not known to the EAM delegates. It was known, though, to the British. Georgios Siantos justified the agreement,

"We had the choice of either signing or continuing the armed struggle...we did not surrender without conditions. It was an agreement beneficial to the people not to the Right. We did what we could for the people..."²⁶⁹

The agreement was seen as a mistake, however, by many Communists. Nikos Zachariades stated many years later that:

"...the Varkiza Agreement was a mistake. We did not have to surrender our weapons. We should have fought outside Athens...we needed confidence..."²⁷⁰

Sarafis offered an explanation as to why EAM/ELAS signed the Varkiza treaty,

"The EAM Central Committee looked more toward a political solution rather than a military one...they thought the misery of the Greek people would

have been extended if the war continued, the people were exhausted and in need of aid. Thus, they decided to sign the agreement."²⁷¹

On February 28, 1945, ELAS surrendered its weapons and thus ceased to exist. In actuality, ELAS surrendered more weapons than was provided for in the agreement. Some Communists, however, like Aris Velouchiotis regarded the Varkiza deal as a betrayal. Aris argued that:

"The struggle must not stop. If we can't carry on in the cities, we should do so in the countryside. The British would then be forced to renegotiate. Thus, we can achieve better conditions for our men than those in Varkiza."²⁷²

Aris had always been a hard core Communist. He believed that power indeed comes from 'the barrel of a gun'. He sharply criticized the KKE's and EAM's political surrenders in the name of legality.

"...when the British proved their imperialistic policy, the EAM leadership continued to believe in a stable democratic evolution...they failed to prepare the people, even late, for the inevitable clash with reaction and the British..."²⁷³

Aris refused to abide by the conditions of Varkiza. He toured the Greek mountains along with his followers in a futile attempt to rally the veteran ELASistes to carry on the struggle. When he was denounced by the KKE leadership and particularly the newly arrived Nikos Zachariades as a 'traitor' and a 'renegade', Velouchiotis chose to commit suicide.

AFTER THE VARKIZA AGREEMENT

When Georgios Siantos was asked by reporters whether EAM would continue to exist, he explained that the first of two parts in the EAM programme had been achieved, that is, the liberation of Greece from the 'foreign yoke'. The second part, however, was to safeguard popular liberties and ensure the democratic evolution of the country. For this second point, Siantos said, EAM was struggling and would continue to do so in the future. Siantos described the December revolution as a conflict between two opposing currents, a popular movement which sought a new and better future, and the old order which considered the political status quo as immutable. He denied strongly that the revolt was a planned coup'd'etat by the KKE.²⁷⁴ Prime Minister Plastiras, however, thought otherwise. Upon returning to Greece from self-imposed exile in France, he stated:

"A small miscreant gang of Anarchist elements has a long time since launched on the Nation a cruel civil war, after having misled a number of patriot Greeks either by fraud or by force."²⁷⁵

Siantos himself, like almost all Communist leaders, was later criticised and denounced for his handling of the December Revolution. Nikos Zachariades wrote in his book Problems of Leadership that:

"the strategy of the KKE's leadership during that period was the strategy of Siantos, that is, the strategy of capitulation to the British...which delayed and finally shattered the Revolution...which promoted the plans and aims of the British."²⁷⁶

Dimitris Vlantas, a top KKE official during December, stated with regard to Siantos that:

"...he was an agent provocateur and a British spy. Thus he managed to stifle the National Resistance Movement during the occupation and later in December... his leadership brought us to defeat...if one signs the 'Lebanon Charter', the 'Caserta Treaty', then the movement has already been brought to its knees, what is the need for a 'December'?"²⁷⁷

Zachariades also accused Siantos of being a suspect character.

"In the sector of Revolutionary vigilance, the criminal blindness and complacency of the leadership allowed Siantos, who was an agent of the class enemy, to carry out his treacherous deeds, to sell out and destroy the revolution..."²⁷⁸

On December 10, 1944, the Observer had published an article in which it argued that EAM was the most widely representative group in Greece and that the great majority of Greeks stood firmly behind it. Why, then, did EAM lose everything? One big mistake was that ELAS troops were not concentrated but rather were dispersed and most of them sent to Epirus to chase EDES. A further mistake was made when ELAS was expected to transform itself into a positional army overnight. ELAS was started as a guerrilla army, trained in the 'hit-and-run' principle. Positional warfare should have been avoided.

"Overnight, the KKE seemed to expect ELAS to turn itself into a conventional army, able to function smoothly

as a 'corps' in a completely new and unfamiliar form of warfare. The members of the KKE Central Committee tended to be rather weak on military strategy, tactics and reasoning."²⁷⁹

In the end, not only did the KKE suffer a military defeat but it had also taken a beating from an ideological point of view. A mistake was also made in the terms of the Varkiza agreement. The amnesty that was agreed upon, did not include offences of the criminal code and this proved fatal to all former ELAS members. Many were arrested because their participation in the Revolution was interpreted legally as a common crime. Tens of thousands of resistance fighters were jailed and executed because of this neglect on the part of the EAM leadership.²⁸⁰

At Varkiza, Siantos's pursuit of legality sent him straight back into political defeat. He had an army of fifty thousand men and controlled four fifths of the country; but he had been so thoroughly demoralized by the lack of immediate military success that he surrendered virtually without conditions.

"Siantos did not know how to use his armed force to intimidate, but he allowed himself to be intimidated by 'legality'...nobody at the conference underestimated the power of the partisans as much as he did."²⁸¹

John Ioannidis, a high KKE official later lamented,

"There were millions of us in EAM and 450,000 in the KKE, too many for everyone to be a good Communist. If we'd had 100,000 real militants, we'd have been able to seize power."²⁸²

In 1946, Dimitris Partsalides of EAM stated that:

"...no one thought the British would occupy Greece, whose people had stood by England at a difficult moment of the war."²⁸³

In answering the question of why the Soviets did not help the Greek Communists in their revolution, Markos Vafiades offers the following answer.

"In its agreements, the KKE accepted total British domination. It placed ELAS... under British military leadership...even if Stalin wanted to he could not influence events after that...we were betrayed by our leaders. Stalin was fighting a war. Stalin like Churchill was a chief of state, not a party leader."²⁸⁴

Vafiades also blames Britain for the December Revolution.

"England realized that Greece was moving towards popular sovereignty. ..she saw that the majority would vote for EAM. Because England did not want to and could not afford to lose Greece, she attacked us. She challenged and provoked us. England wanted to totally dominate Greece and thus she interfered. England is to blame."²⁸⁵

The British Ambassador Leeper, however, saw things otherwise.

He wrote that:

"Great Britain would have been shamed in the eyes of Greece and of the world, with a shame that would not have been forgotten in Greece, had we stood by and watched an armed minority seize power, and it would have been too late to stop the massacre of many innocent people that would have ensued."²⁸⁶

The Communists and the British were not the only ones to be blamed. The Right and Center parties were by no means guiltless. Their refusal to disarm the Mountain Brigade whose members were sworn enemies of EAM, gave the latter

genuine grounds for the belief that the Right was planning its own coup.²⁸⁷

Although ELAS initiated the actual combat in Athens after December 3, the 'Second Round' does not seem to have represented an all-out bid for power. Papandreou had in October stated that throughout Greece, EAM/ELAS were handing power over to the Government representatives in the newly liberated areas. Is it conceivable that EAM would have given its power to Papandreou only in order to try and seize it back a few weeks later?²⁸⁸ Raids by British patrols on ELAS strongholds produced documents with details of EAM preparations for taking over the civil administration of the nation.

"One felt on reading them that a civil war which involved the British could not have been intended. Civil war, yes, for the necessary extermination of their opponents, but otherwise peace seemed the obvious prerequisite for the fulfillment of their plans."²⁸⁹

Outside Greece, the situation was much misunderstood. To the Allied public it seemed strange that British troops should be fighting against men they had been taught to believe were heroes of the resistance. The explanation they received from the Allied Press correspondents in Athens was broadly that British policy was determined to force the King upon an unwilling people.²⁹⁰ As Richard Clogg writes, however, the most likely explanation for the somewhat half-hearted December revolt was that the EAM leaders were not aiming at a full take over of power, but rather at securing the removal of Prime Minister Papandreou.

"Since at least 1943, Papandreou had been determined to thwart an EAM bid for power and had showed a great deal of energy and determination in forestalling such an eventuality. If Papandreou could be removed from office and replaced by a more reliable politician...then EAM might well in time aspire to power in a constitutional manner"²⁹¹

Had the Greek Communists decided upon an all-out revolution, it is only reasonable to expect that they would have followed Stalin's tactical instructions on creating a revolution:

"Never play with insurrection, but when beginning it firmly realize that you must go to the end; you must concentrate a great superiority of forces at the decisive point, at the decisive moment...you must act with the greatest determination."²⁹²

Looking back on the events of December 1944, it is obvious that the Greek rebels did not show determination nor did they concentrate their forces to a level of superiority. The outcome proved fatal. All Communists and their fellow travellers were purged, as Evaggelos Averoff writes:

"...during the first weeks of 1945, if one had taken part in EAM/ELAS, it would be difficult for him to live in a village or small town. He would have to disappear in the anonymity of a city."²⁹³

Since the December uprising, any connection with EAM during the period of foreign occupation aroused and even until recently still aroused suspicion. In a way, it became deplorable to have participated in the resistance movement.

"This...has had the paradoxical effect of making it almost respectable to have collaborated with the Axis, and even to have belonged to the Security Battalions."²⁹⁴

Thus ended the Greek December Revolution, better known as the 'Second Round'. EAM and more so the KKE now found themselves increasingly alienated from the vast majority of the Greek people who succumbed to a reign of "white terror" and Right-Wing retaliation. The arrival of Nikos Zachariades, however, who in early 1945 was liberated by the Allies from the Nazi concentration camp in Dachau, brought new hopes and aspirations to the KKE and its supporters. It was believed that a fresh start could and should be made. The 'Third Round' would follow.

The significance of the 'Second Round' lay in that the Communists, who in the course of the fighting perpetrated many atrocities, came to be hated by a large number of previously indifferent Greeks. The KKE was blamed for all the country's recent suffering and its members were branded as traitors conspiring with foreign support to destroy the Greek state. Moreover, this hatred was directed not only at the Communists but at all those who had been their associates. A Thermidorian reaction engulfed the nation and kept it in perpetual turmoil. It also subverted the country's recovery and contributed to the opening of the 'Third Round' in 1946. Thus, by the beginning of 1945, the KKE found itself back in 'square one'. It had realized, however, that in revolutionary times there is a need for revolutionary programmes rather than retreats and compromise. With that in mind, it decided to re-evaluate its policies.

The KKE's Third Round: 1946-1949.

"A Marxist can under no circumstances consider civil war to be abnormal or demoralizing. A Marxist stands on the ground of the class struggle, not of social peace....No moral condemnation of civil war can be allowed from the standpoint of Marxism."

Vladimir Lenin.
Collected Works, Vol. X, p. 85

THE PERIOD FOLLOWING VARKIZA

Barely two months after the signing of the 'Varkiza Agreement', the London Times described the situation in Greece as follows:

"EAM and its followers are being penalized in a variety of ways. Former ELAS men are beaten up, arrested and tried on trumped-up charges. Hundreds of employees...are being discharged for what is described as 'anti-national' activities, which simply means membership in EAM...Thus the Varkiza pact...has become a dead letter. Fresh strife is brewing..."²⁹⁵

The ones most responsible for the nullification of the Varkiza deal were mainly the Greek rightists and their British backers. They had never agreed with the implications of the pact. Following the December clashes, the Greek right-wing had risen from impotence to power by virtue of the British army. The Greek Rightists had every intention of remaining in power. However, if the terms of Varkiza were applied, the left may very well have risen from its ashes because of its superior organization and its popular social reform program.²⁹⁶ Thus, the rightist newspapers in the cities soon were denouncing Varkiza as an 'anti-national' act of appeasement, and rightist bands in the provinces "flouted the pact with their terrorism".²⁹⁷

In many areas anti-communist armed bands continued to move about, searching for and punishing men who used to belong to the new disarmed ELAS. Thus, a principal aim of the Varkiza settlement, the removal of all weapons from unauthorized groups had failed miserably.²⁹⁸ At the same

time, the High Command and officer corps of the army and the security forces were made the instruments of the extreme Right. Furthermore, the city police and gendarmerie were based on the security forces of the occupation, with many of their members still belonging to the illegal fascist organization 'X'.²⁹⁹

The situation in general had become chaotic. On the one hand, communist inspired strikes occurred each day. On the other hand, various gangs of right-wing terrorists murdered, robbed, and pillaged under the eyes of the official authorities.³⁰⁰ This 'white terror' was tolerated by both the Greek government and the British officials. "Members of the organization 'X' together with policemen and soldiers constantly harassed, searched and ill-treated leftists in the various neighbourhoods."³⁰¹ What was worse, there was an inevitable tendency to assume that any member of the resistance was as adamant a Communist as the hard-core members of EAM/ELAS. Thus, 'resistance became very nearly a crime and collaboration very nearly a virtue.'³⁰² The Courts also created some bitterness in 1945, by ruling that the dreaded Security Battalions had been created only to maintain law and order against "criminal elements."³⁰³

Thus, while the KKE diligently tried to behave in accordance with the letter of the Varkiza deal, the royalist Right terrorized Greece and carried on what the Greek Communists have called a "one-sided civil war". In June of 1945, the KKE newspaper Rizospastis wrote that:

"The politburo of the central committee of the KKE has made the following decisions: The supreme and demanding necessity for our country today is peace, unity, work, and recovery. He who attempts to break this unity and does not allow the people to rest, to recover, and to work, then he is an enemy of the people of Greece."³⁰⁴

The rightist extremists, however, thought otherwise. According to evidence collected by EAM, the casualties of right-wing terrorism in the period that followed Varkiza were:

"1. Dead	1,192
2. Wounded	6,413
3. Arrested	70,000
4. Sexually molested	165
5. Robberies	6,567
6. Illegal terrorist groups	166
7. Illegally armed terrorists	20,000"

³⁰⁵

In the midst of these conditions, the KKE held its seventh congress in October 1945. Its leader once again was Nikos Zachariades who had returned to Greece in May 1945 after spending the war years in the Dachau concentration camp. The congress condemned the right-wing terror and warned that if the persecution of leftists did not stop, the KKE would answer by meeting force with force.³⁰⁶ The seventh congress, then, served as the instrument of deciding to take up arms. The final decision that led to the 'Third Round', however, was taken during the second plenum of the KKE's Central Committee on the first anniversary of Varkiza in February of 1946. "After weighing the domestic factors and the international situation", Zachariades stated, "the plenum decided to go ahead with the organization of the new armed struggle against the 'monarchofascist' orgy."³⁰⁷

On the thirtieth of August, in a speech in Thessaloniki, Zachariades warned that:

"Our patience has its limits. If the situation does not normalize and become democratic we will fight back against the monarchists. Hundreds of thousands of honest Greek workers demand a reply to the crimes and murders, we cannot restrain them any more, self-defence will become a national duty..."³⁰⁸

The road to open conflict was being readied. All acts of resistance against the occupiers, clashes with the Germans, the Security Battalions, executions of traitors were now considered crimes and the perpetrators were jailed by the thousands. On the other hand, terrorism against the left was going unpunished.

A principle cause of revolutions and one of their many justifications has always been the failure of a sovereign to protect his subjects. Without this failure, revolutions would hardly be possible, seeing that a sovereign powerful enough to protect his subjects is powerful enough to prevent -or suppress revolution. The danger of revolution should be a constant reminder to all governments of their duty to protect their subjects against violence.³⁰⁹ The Greek Government clearly failed in this duty. Thomas Hobbes wrote many years ago in his Leviathan that:

"The obligation of the subjects to the sovereign is understood to last as long, and no longer, than the power lasteth by which he is able to protect them. For the right men have by nature to protect themselves, when none can protect them, can by no covenant be relinquished."

The Greek state failed to guarantee the protection of some of its subjects. The state did not even exist in certain areas as the following order issued in October of 1945 by the organization 'X' proves.

"Kingdom of Greece
National Political Organization 'X'
Pellana, Laconia

We hereby declare that a curfew is in effect for those people belonging to the KKE. Curfew time is from 7 p.m. until 6 a.m. Any movement of Communists is forbidden unless there is permission of Organization 'X'"³¹⁰

The Greek Communists felt betrayed and threatened. They therefore very reasonably organized in order to try to achieve a sense of security for themselves and their families. Their taking up of arms was a reaction rather than a somber pre-meditated decision aimed at the overthrow of the state. Had the state guaranteed them their basic rights as citizens, clearly the need for a new rebellion would not have existed. Vasilis Bartzotas, a leading member of the KKE later wrote that "it was very obvious that the enemy was trying to exterminate our movement by force, essentially there was no other road left to us except that of taking up arms. If we did not do so we would have been enslaved or eradicated both as people and as a party."³¹¹

In understanding, however, the communist justification of taking up arms, we must also understand the reason for the existence of the "white terror". In the course of the December revolution the communists were guilty of many atrocities which rendered them "criminal" in the eyes of many people. These atrocities which included murders and

abductions, mainly against the rightists, had as a result that following the ELAS defeat, a Thermidorian reaction took over. While the majority of the Greek population desperately sought peace and unity, the until recently persecuted rightists believed that it was their turn now to dominate the situation and exercise their authority over the former ELASites. In the process, new atrocities took place, this time against the Communists. This had as a direct result the renewed communist attempt to seize power in 1946.*

THE TIMING OF THE ELECTIONS

Within the chaotic political atmosphere that prevailed, discussions were started on the issue of Parliamentary elections. From the start, it became obvious that the royalists wanted the elections to be held as soon as possible in order for them to reap the benefits of the anti-EAM sentiment that followed the December events. As well, the rightists counted on exploiting the fears of the majority of Greeks that were the consequence of the "white terror". On the other hand, the left and center parties wanted the elections to be delayed as much as possible. The KKE argued that honest elections could not be held unless certain conditions existed. These were:

1. Recognition of the resistance movement and an end to the persecution of ex-ELAS members.

* See F.A. Voigt's The Greek Sedition for a conservative, "right-wing" view description of the period before and during the 'Third Round'.

2. General amnesty for all democrats in both Greece and the Middle East.
3. A purge of fascists, Nazi collaborators and traitors from the armed forces as well as from the internal-security forces.
4. A thorough democratization of both the civil service and judicial mechanisms.
5. Drawing up of new and up-to-date voter registration lists.³¹²

With the Regent's consent, however, elections were announced for March 31, 1946. A number of prominent members of the Sofoulis Government resigned over this issue and the Prime-Minister himself called for a postponement until stability and order could be restored. To the delight of the royalists, the British Government vetoed any change in the timing of the elections.* The British also refused to consider demands that the armed forces and the police be purged of right-wing extremists before election day. Thereupon the KKE and the rest of the Greek Left announced their decision to abstain, charging that, with "British connivance, the elections were to be a cruel hoax designed to pave the way for the return of an unpopular King."³¹³

On October 8, the central committee of EAM sent a telegram to Prime Minister Attlee, and Presidents Truman and DeGaulle condemning the decision to hold early elections. EAM argued that there were no guarantees that free elections

*The British Labour Government that had replaced Churchill's Conservative one, very curiously maintained Tory foreign policy in Greek affairs until its withdrawal from that Country in 1947.

could take place. Early elections, EAM argued, aimed at "legalizing a monarchist quisling right-wing that could not survive without foreign military support."³¹⁴

Whether the decision of the Greek Left to abstain was an error or not is still a matter of heated debate. The decision, however, was the result of a turbulent discussion within the KKE's top body, the Politburo. Dimitris Partsalides argued that he was told by Moscow officials to "take part in the elections and depending on the results to either act democratically or take up arms."³¹⁵ Gousis, also a Politburo member, later confided to N. Mertzos that:

"In the discussion held, I supported abstention...Partsalides disagreed based on what the Soviets had told him. The final decision was to participate...stating beforehand that we would not recognise the results since...there were no guarantees. In this way, we would expose the British attempt to save the monarcho-fascist regime while at the same time we would have some deputies of our own... Partsalides and Siantos later sabotaged this decision saying that EAM had not accepted it, so in the end we abstained."³¹⁶

The Communists were not the only ones who did not participate in the elections. Many Liberals decided to also abstain because it was proven impossible for them to effectively campaign in Right-Wing held territories. The following telegram sent by a Liberal candidate provides an example of the atmosphere in the Greek countryside.

"The present situation with regard to law and order makes it difficult for the Liberal party to participate in the elections. Armed bands terrorize the people...no terrorist has been

arrested...democratic candidates find it difficult³¹⁷ to communicate with the voters..."³¹⁷

Vice-Premier Kaphandares, resigning on March 9, called the forthcoming elections a "comedy" and stated flatly that "the responsibility rests undoubtedly with the British Government because its armed intervention in December and the defeat of the Left gave full freedom to the Right-Wing to establish a terrorist regime."³¹⁸ In a way, Kaphandares was right in blaming the British, they were in control. All decisions of any significance were subject to a British veto. As W.H. McNeill has written, "Britain's political as well as economic influence in Athens had turned Greece into a client state whose sovereignty had all but disappeared."³¹⁹

This new rightist threat that engulfed Greece was far more dangerous and severe than the one from the Left was. Intervention against the Communists had been a relatively clean-cut and uncomplicated affair. The KKE had resorted to armed aggression and the British had matched force with force. The royalist methods, however, were far more insidious. There terrorists were dispersed throughout the land and they:

"...infiltrated the armed forces, organs of public security, and the civil administration. They directed the machinery of government by 'remote control' and therefore never felt the need to make an open bid for power."³²⁰

The Right-Wing terror, however, also provided certain benefits to the KKE. It forced many people to not only remain in EAM but to also continue participating in politics and to

even join the Communist party. Ordinary democrats entered prison to be transformed into militant Communists.

"...the British and the Government through their oppressive policies gave to the KKE tens of thousands of members and followers that it could not normally obtain, University professors, civil servants, scientists,..."³²¹

ELECTIONS

The elections of March 31, 1946 were observed by an allied mission consisting of some 1,200 British, American and French officials divided into several hundred teams and travelling across the nation to check on campaign practises and insure the fairness of the outcome. The role of these observers, was, however, largely ceremonial and perhaps even deceptive, as most of them knew nothing about Greece and her people.³²²

The final results of the elections did not become known for several days. It speedily became evident, however, that the royalists had won. Of the 2.2 million voters registered, slightly more than 1.1 million voted, making it possible for the Left to claim that nearly half of the population had supported it by abstaining. It is difficult to establish how large the actual following of the Left was. The allied mission's (AMFOGE) report on the outcome estimated that only 9.3 per cent of the electorate had abstained for political reasons; but this figure was received with general skepticism in Greece, and exposed AMFOGE to charges of Right-Wing

partisanship and deliberate bias against the Left.³²³

In the chamber that ensued, parliamentary discipline among the Royalists proved imperfect. A group of them frequently criticized their Government for being too cautious. Being extremists in the fanatic bitterness against the Left, these deputies often advocated measures that could plausibly be called fascist. The Republican bloc was so small that their votes were not needed to assure a Royalist majority. This was made possible by the Left-Wing decision to abstain. Had the Communists voted and won some twenty per cent of the chamber's seats, then the Royalist majority would have been smaller, and it would seldom have been possible for the extreme Rightists to break away from their government.³²⁴

The Communist decision to abstain was later seen by some Greek Communists as a major mistake. Vasilis Bartzotas wrote in 1982 that the decision might have been correct if "we had immediately started an armed struggle, then, it would have been the weapons that decided. Since, however, we decided to gradually enter into an armed rebellion, then, the decision to abstain from the democratic process was a big mistake."³²⁵ Markos Vafiades also denounced the decision to abstain as beneficial to the British.

"The British succeeded in isolating our movement and depriving it of any legal means even within the pseudo-democratic facade that the reactionary regime had created, while promoting fascist terrorism."³²⁶

Whether the Communist abstention was indeed a major mistake for the Left is not so clear. Believing that it was

would greatly enhance the significance of the parliamentary institutions that according to Marxist-Leninist theory should be subordinate to the general class-struggle of the people outside of parliament. The KKE abstention, however, may very well have been a serious tactical error, but this is quite different from saying that it ran counter to Marxist fundamentalism.

In retrospect it can be said that the elections themselves were a mistake. The opposition parties had very few opportunities to present their case because of Right-Wing terrorism and the general uncertainty. There should have been a postponement.

"It would have allowed time to revise the electoral lists, which in turn would have removed the principle reason for abstention. The opposition parties also would have been able to organize themselves and to participate in the campaign. And the presence of the Allied mission for six months or a year, instead of one month, would have acted as a brake on rightist excesses during the campaign."³²⁷

In September of the same year, the plebiscite on the issue of the King's return took place and not surprisingly, 68.9 per cent voted in favour of the monarchy. King George returned to Athens at once. For many Greeks he served as the symbol of the nation's victory over communist enroachment. He soon died, leaving the throne to his younger brother Paul.³²⁸

THE UNCERTAIN BEHAVIOUR OF THE KKE

The major objective of British policy in Greece between April 1944 and February 1947 was to establish an independent and non-communist state ruled as a parliamentary democracy under the aegis of a Monarch. Greece was to be non-communist in order to safeguard Britain's strategic interests in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Greece was supposed to be governed by a regime accountable to the people. Any dictatorship, however friendly to the British, was bound to be more of a liability than an asset.³²⁹ "Our aim", wrote Anthony Eden in November 1944, "is a Greece-whether Royalist or Republican-prosperous, our friend, and at peace."³³⁰ Clearly, however, the existence of a strong and dissatisfied Left-Wing in Greece meant that the British aims could not be achieved without further bloodshed. The defeat of the Communists in the 'Second Round' did not herald the end of troubles for either Greece or British involvement in Greek affairs. On the contrary, a war-ravaged economy combined with bitter political divisions succeeded in keeping the country in turmoil and in a state of large scale disaffection. Far worse, a civil war as devastating as the war and the enemy occupation combined would very soon begin.

Despite the surrender of thousands of weapons by ELAS following the Varkiza agreement, many more were secretly hidden. KKE officials justified this move because:

"...our opponents did not recognize the national resistance movement of EAM/ELAS while they recognized

the Nazi collaborators and traitors. Furthermore, the failure to guarantee and to provide a general amnesty for political offences meant that our people were left to the mercy of the fascist terrorists."³³¹

Yannis Ioannides, a member of the KKE leadership, later revealed that "even before the delegation returned from Varkiza" he had given orders to conceal weapons "whether or not an agreement was signed."³³²

One can only assume that by this time the KKE was following not a particular plan but relied, rather, on everyday developments and charted its policies accordingly. Thus, there followed a sort of "hermaphrodite" policy making as Markos Vafiades later characterized it. Here emphasizing peace and unity, there threatening to re-activate ELAS, on one hand abiding by legality and professing loyalty to democratic procedures, while on the other hand abstaining from the elections and hiding weapons, the KKE leaders showed a certain uncertainty. This wavering back and forth, like most KKE actions, was later criticized by the Greek Communists. Markos Vafiades said that:

"While we talked about a peaceful solution, we did not fully use peaceful means nor did we fully use insurrectionary means. For at least two years, the KKE followed a 'hermaphrodite' policy that resulted in rendering our movement totally impotent by 1947. Many comrades were wastefully lost..."³³³

The mass rallies that the KKE staged showed that it could have achieved very good electoral results. The party's leaders, however, decided to abstain, thus succeeding in isolating themselves and the KKE. Furthermore,

despite the decision to abstain, the leadership failed to concentrate the party's resources on a war effort. This in itself was a major mistake. It opened the way for thousands of arrests and executions of Leftists who could have otherwise taken to the mountains and contributed to the rebellion that was later started. Vafiades openly condemned Nikos Zachariades for this inconsistency and accused him of "consciously sabotaging the movement."³³⁴

In retrospect, it becomes clear that the KKE did not embark upon its armed revolt with total faith in its power. It rather sought to use the rebellion as a bargaining chip in its endless quest for deals and agreements. The KKE leadership, of which he too was a member, has been accused by Vafiades as "staggering and following a compromising course instead of pulling its resources together and creating a vast movement able to successfully carry out an armed revolt."³³⁵ "The party leadership", Vafiades argued, "overestimated its legal options and created illusions as to the possible solution of the problems. They did not know what they were doing."³³⁶ Vafiades has specifically blamed Nikos Zachariades for the KKE's ambivalent posture.

"If we examine the facts from the moment that Zachariades returned to Greece... his actions were unnatural, unrealistic, and in the final analysis geared toward serving interests that ran counter to those of our movement...on a line with the Anglo-American interests who even after Varkiza still took Communist power under serious consideration..."³³⁷

The personality of Nikos Zachariades truly deserves some study. Since his reassumption of the KKE's leadership, he was drawn into contradictory statements and actions. He condemned Aris Velouchiotis for denouncing the Varkiza pact, yet he later attacked the pact himself starting a civil war in the process. While he emphasized work and unity, he nevertheless threatened that the ELAS battle cry would soon be heard again.

The arrival of Zachariades from Dachau gave the persecuted communists of Greece a great boost in their moment of defeat and suffering. It was believed that the party would now be able to rise again under the 'infallible' leadership of Zachariades. Thus, the KKE General-Secretary was treated as a demi-God with all the perplexities that can stem from such a treatment. Nothing that he did was seen as wrong. When Velouchiotis, the people's idol, was denounced and driven to suicide, this was seen as necessary for party discipline and coherence. It was "the only way that the party would progress."

Zachariades initially recognized the dominant British position in Greece as well as all decisions pertaining to the dissolution of ELAS. He ruled out armed struggle as counter-effective. Later on, however, Zachariades altered his views drastically.³³⁸ He began to see armed struggle as a means of pressuring the Government to behave democratically. He did not abandon this view of armed struggle even after the civil war was in full swing.³³⁹ Furthermore, Zachariades

always considered Siantos as his subordinate and as someone inferior, for Siantos was not a KUTVist. Thus, when he returned from Dachau and found Siantos at the head of a party that had hundreds of thousands of members and millions of followers, it was natural that he would have felt cheated and left out. Zachariades, then, developed an 'inferiority complex'.³⁴⁰

"With a new rebellion, free of the mistakes that Siantos had made and under his leadership, Zachariades sensed that he too could taste glory..."³⁴¹

His new status as the "infallible hegemon" of the KKE gave him room to implement whatever policy he saw fit. After all, Zachariades was a trained "Stalinist" and a firm believer in "Democratic Centralism". In his haste to give the party a revolutionary direction, however, he failed to study the objective and subjective conditions of his time. Were they as suitable for revolution as they were when Siantos was leader?

The masses participated in strikes and demonstrations for their political and economic rights from July 1945 up until the end of 1946. This, however, signified a rise in the will of the people to effect a change rather than a commitment to start a new war after more than five years of embattlement. The lack of serious determination in the people became evident in 1946, when all strikes and demonstrations ceased following the Government's implementation of new and even more severe anti-labour measures. Furthermore, "it is a fact that the

urban proletarians did not offer measurable assistance to the civil war effort. The people were not ready to participate in a new uprising."³⁴²

The conditions necessary for a successful revolution, in this writer's opinion, were not there. Zachariades failed or did not want to realize that the people desired a change but not one that would involve another war. Change had to come about through peaceful means. Propaganda alone proved insufficient to convince the masses of the necessity of taking to the mountains once more. Revolutions and armed struggles ripen internally only when they are created through a revolutionary crisis that develops into a revolutionary situation through conditions that Lenin described. A revolutionary crisis never lasts long, it is the moment when the state is paralyzed. To believe that one can go ahead with revolution in the absence of a 'revolutionary crisis' is but an idle dream. True Marxism-Leninism is against the artificial creation of a revolution from 'outside'. The existence of all necessary conditions is mandatory. Lenin once declared that "we do not want the power when we are in the minority."³⁴³ The history of revolutions has shown that an authority, state or revolutionary, is steady only when it relies on the will of the majority of the people who are disaffected.

During its second plenum, the KKE decided to strike back at the "fascist terrorism". This decision was based on certain factors. First, the "rise of worker revolutionary conscience", and second, the "one sided civil war already under way against

the KKE and its followers."³⁴⁴ In justifying his ambiguous policies as well as the final decision to resort to armed insurrection, Zachariades later claimed that some of those present during the second plenum wanted to continue the "submissive policies that had been adopted ever since Varkiza."

"...others wanted an immediate transition to armed struggle...the (final) decision was a compromise. The KKE would not initiate aggression but it would be ready, if reconciliation failed to meet force with force."³⁴⁵

As events later showed, reconciliation did indeed fail. Negotiations and political dialogue gave way to gunfire.

CIVIL WAR ERUPTS

The Greek Communists generally regard February 12, 1946 as the official opening of the 'Third Round'. This is the date on which a new army, comprised of former ELASites was formed. It was called the 'Democratic Army of Greece' or DSE, (Dimokratikos Stratos Elladas). The central committee of the KKE selected Markos Vafiades to take charge of the army and named him General. Vafiades arrived in the Yugoslav town of Bulkes where there were about five thousand ex-ELAS members already. The Greek Rightists always claimed that the existence of this small 'army' in Bulkes was sufficient proof that the KKE had pre-arranged the 'Third Round' from long before. Gerasimos Maltezos, a KKE official present in Bulkes at the time, wrote in his book O Dimokratikos Stratos Elladas that:

"...we sent to Bulkes, immediately after Varkiza, those who were most vulnerable to vigilantism and persecution. This does not mean that the KKE planned a civil war since by itself, the party demobilized an army of 100,000. It is more likely that the top leadership wanted to get rid of seasoned guerrillas who, like Aris Velouchiotis, could prove to be a threat to party discipline."³⁴⁶

By September 1946, General Markos had established several small bases in the mountains just inside Greece near the Yugoslav border. The reason for this decentralization was Markos' firm belief in the virtues of guerrilla warfare. The need for some sort of command and staff organization, however, was necessary and in October of 1946 Markos formed a 'GHQ' in the field. He was now able to command personally any operation of significance.³⁴⁷ During October, General Markos intensified his "hit-and-run" raids with the object of obtaining supplies for the coming winter and of demoralizing the enemy. In the beginning this was the National Guard and the Gendarmeries, but later became the Greek National Army, (GNA).

Morale was a major factor. In the opening stages of a guerrilla war, the initiative always lies with the rebels. The DSE was not seeking a military victory, but to undermine the authority of the state, both politically and economically. Markos' troops therefore avoided direct and open confrontations. With the advantages of surprise, flexibility and mobility, the DSE struck where it chose and then disappeared.³⁴⁸ Against such an enemy it was impossible for the full strength of a conventional army to be used. Nor was the GNA trained to meet such tactics.

"In the start of the war, the GNA had 92,000 men. This seems like a satisfactory number to the layman who thinks it is enough to combat a few thousand guerrillas. Yet, the number was small for the strategists who knew the army had to protect the frontiers, the cities, all facilities, warehouses, roads, bridges and on top of that to fight against a highly mobile group of rebels. Greece, in her entirety, needed to become a front."³⁴⁹

The disparity in numbers, then was illusory. The rebels also had many advantages that they utilized under Markos. The mountain terrain for example that was very familiar to the DSE tended to neutralize the GNA's material superiority. Furthermore, Vafiades counted upon a significant 'fifth column' within the GNA which existed until the Greek state decided to exile all Leftist conscripts rather than risk the infiltration of the Armed Forces.

Throughout 1946 and 1947, as a US army study quoted by Lawrence Wittner in American Intervention in Greece states, "the Communist forces maintained the initiative in the struggle for control of Greece."³⁵⁰ Drawing on classic guerrilla warfare tactics, the Democratic Army, lightly equipped and unimpeded by support services or territorial responsibilities, enjoyed excellent mobility and tactical flexibility. Although the GNA conducted many minor "clearing operations" during this period, it met with little success. The rebellion was slowly growing. In 1947, Colonel Charles Lehner, Commander of the US military mission in Greece, stated that there was "nothing wrong with Greece that time,

forceful US guidance and American dollars would not correct."³⁵¹
Fortified by such assumptions, American political and military authorities gradually began to replace the diminishing and costly British influence in Greece.

THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

In 1946, Ilias Tsirimokos, Leader of the Greek Socialist Party stated that:

"The Monarchists argue that Right-Wing terrorism exists because a rebellion is taking place. They forget, however, that a rebellion is taking place because terrorism exists."³⁵²

This opinion, however, was not shared by the Anglo-Americans. By the end of 1946, British leaders began to realize that something was inherently wrong with Britain's Greek policy. By that time it was too late for a fresh start. Britain could no longer afford the costs of continued intervention in Greece.³⁵³ The Greek situation was an embarrassing one for the British Labour Government which continued Churchill's policies in regard to Greece. A year of liberation had not sufficed to establish anything that could reasonably be called recovery. "Uncertainty and distress still plagued the country. The Government held power only by a sort of constitutional fiction, being based neither on elections nor on any theory of dictatorship."³⁵⁴

Unless the British decided to abandon Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean to the Soviets, they were compelled to maintain their influence in the region. A friendly Greece,

however, demanded British troops as a physical and moral protection against the Communist threats to her "democratic integrity".

"The development had not been foreseen neither by Greeks nor British at the time of liberation. It made of Greece a client state...and effectively limited (terminated) the sovereignty of the Greek Government."³⁵⁵

Thus, in February, 1947, the Labour Government decided to withdraw from Greece altogether, leaving the country's fate in the hands of the Americans.

In retrospect, it is natural that the Greek struggle is regarded as one of the crucial episodes in the "Cold War" since it led to the famous "Truman Doctrine" in March, 1947. The "Truman Doctrine" was something that the Soviets feared all along. Yet the Greek Communists were slow in anticipating it and later in appreciating it. Until well into the latter part of 1946, the Communist press in Greece treated the Americans as a secondary factor in the Mediterranean balance of power. A change of tone became noticeable only in the late summer of 1946 and only after increasingly strong statements were made by the Truman Administration and by the American President himself.³⁵⁶

Prompted by a series of almost "panic-stricken" telegrams from their representatives in Athens, as well as by the desperate appeals of Greek ministers to Washington, President Truman and General Marshal moved steadily in the direction of intervention. The probability of such an intervention was denounced by the KKE as soon as it came to its attention.³⁵⁷

On 23 March, 1947, President Truman sent a special message to Congress requesting a grant of \$400 million for the assistance of Greece and Turkey. The message made it clear that the Eastern Mediterranean was now regarded as a vital American interest, and it was suggested that "totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States."³⁵⁸

On an international and historic level, the "Truman Doctrine" was of great significance. It marked the beginning of American "containment strategy" designed to curb Soviet expansionism. This strategy evolved further two months after the President's appeal with the announcement of the "Marshal Plan". Because of this plan, Europe, which lay in ruins, managed to reconstruct itself in a short period of time. It was the era when it seemed as though American dollars could achieve miracles.

The enunciation of the "Truman Doctrine" marked a new stage in Greek developments. The size of the American military and financial aid to Greece because of the "Truman Doctrine" and the "Marshal Plan" was unprecedented. This aid, however, had its negative consequences insofar as it implied a constant control of Greek politics by American officials.

"It was enough for the Americans to threaten to cut down or interrupt their aid to get the Greek ministers to comply with almost anything. This explains the ease with which the United States could impose political directions and people even after the civil war."³⁵⁹

YUGOSLAVIA PROVIDES AID TO THE DEMOCRATIC ARMY

From the start of the 'Third Round', it was clear that the DSE received its military and logistical assistance primarily from Tito's Yugoslavia. Tito apparently felt a sincere sense of political solidarity with the Greek Left. Furthermore, although the KKE probably never offered Tito any explicit territorial concessions in return for his support, it is logical to assume that Tito nevertheless held certain aspirations, principally in Macedonia. To a lesser extent, Bulgaria and Albania, who both provided the DSE with some assistance, shared these motives.³⁶⁰

Yugoslavian aid was very important to the Greek guerrillas, although it represented only a small fraction of the assistance channelled to the Athens Government by the British and later the American Governments. No aid, however, came to the DSE from the Soviet Union. In subsequent years Yugoslav leaders made no secret of the Russian hostility to the Greek uprising. C.M. Woodhouse, in the book The Struggle for Greece, (p.182) quotes Tempo-Vukmanovich as writing in 1950 that:

"The leadership of the Soviet Union had no interest whatever in the victory of the people's revolutionary movement in Greece, because Greece was geographically remote from the Soviet Union (hence intervention of the Soviet army was out of the question), and because it was outside the sphere of interest of the Soviet Union (by agreement between the Governments of the Soviet Union and the Western Imperialists).

Milovan Djilas, Yugoslavia's Vice-President during this period, recalled in his book Conversations With Stalin

that "the Soviet Government took no direct action" to aid the Greek Left. In trying to offer an interpretation of Stalin's peculiar stance Djilas wrote that:

"Perhaps he reasoned that the creation in the Balkans of still another Communist state...in circumstances when not even the others were reliable or subservient, would hardly have been in his interest, not to speak of possible international complications, which ...could...endanger his already won positions."³⁶¹

Vladimir Dedijer, Tito's biographer, reports in his work Tito Speaks a conversation that Stalin held with Edvard Kardelj, the Yugoslav Foreign Minister. Stalin argued that:

"...we do not agree with the Yugoslav comrades that they should go on helping the Greek partisans. In this matter we think we are right, not the Yugoslavs. It is true we also have made mistakes...in the case of China we admit we were wrong...but that is not the case with you in the Balkans. It is not the case with the Greek partisans, and the Yugoslav comrades should stop helping them. That struggle has no prospects whatsoever."³⁶²

Djilas also mentions in Conversations With Stalin that Stalin argued with Kardelj about the American interests in Greece. "What do you think...the United States, the most powerful state in the world will permit you to break their line of communication in the Mediterranean Sea; Nonsense. And we have no navy. The uprising in Greece has to fold up, svarnout (roll up)."³⁶³

In a speech to the Yugoslav Parliament on March 31, Tito denounced "American Imperialism" as "openly threatening . with war countries that will not submit to its financial and

imperialistic dictatorship." He went on to denounce the Athens Government's "unlawful terror over the democratic masses in Greece and over the Macedonians in the Aegean Macedonia."³⁶⁴

Washington policy-makers, however, failed to appreciate the fact that, despite Moscow's propaganda, Stalin was making serious efforts to halt the Greek Rebellion. The result was that the Americans, blinded by the 'Cold War' atmosphere, rejected "important opportunities for compromise that could have put an early end to the Greek civil war."³⁶⁵ Despite the American emphasis on Soviet responsibility for the Greek conflict, no solid evidence emerged to indicate that the rebellion there was motivated or assisted by Stalin's foreign policy. According to Greek intelligence, most of the weapons used by the DSE came from non-Communist nations. Nevertheless, American policy-makers persisted in defining the Greek conflict as primarily a matter of Soviet aggression. "U.S. officials consistently failed to perceive any distinction between Soviet foreign policy and that of the Balkan Communist nations."³⁶⁶

Driven by this sort of bitter anti-Communism, American officials remained largely ignorant of the growing conflict between the governments of the USSR and Yugoslavia. The American Secretary of State even went so far as to declare that: "Tito does not differentiate between the aims of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union of which from the viewpoint of his personal allegiance, Yugoslavia already forms a part."³⁶⁷

THE BREAK BETWEEN TITO AND STALIN

The KKE, like the United States and the rest of the world was taken by surprise when the rift between Tito and Stalin finally occurred. By this time, the KKE had entered into the trap of total dependence upon Tito for the success of the DSE. The fate of the Greek rebellion was tied to that of Tito.

The Yugoslavs believed that they had liberated their country on their own. Stalin disagreed. He believed that the Balkans were liberated by the Soviet Red Army. Other disagreements followed. These included the question of Trieste, the Balkan Federation and the control of Albania. Tito felt that the Soviets were not supporting his claims strongly enough and he wrote to Stalin that:

"We demand that everyone shall be master in his own house. We do not want to be used as a bribe in international bargaining."³⁶⁸

Tito criticized the behaviour of Soviet soldiers and officials in Yugoslavia. He lectured the Communist parties of other countries for their lack of militant programs and leadership. Finally, when Tito found out that he was being spied upon, he did the same to the Soviets.³⁶⁹ Thus, there was no alternative for Moscow except to carry out the "excommunication" of Tito. In June 1948, the Cominform expelled the Yugoslav party in an angry proclamation. The expectation apparently was that Tito's regime would collapse. It did not. Titoism, instead, spread.

Tito's expulsion from the Cominform provided a negative surprise for the KKE. It created a dilemma. Yugoslavia was the source of the DSE's aid. Markos' troops always relied on crossing into the Yugoslav border when in trouble. The Soviet Union on the other hand, although it had offered no assistance, nevertheless remained for many Greek Communists like Zachariades the "Motherland" of international communism.³⁷⁰ Gerasimos Maltezos wrote that:

"The change of Yugoslav policy altered the balance of power in the Balkans in favour of American imperialism. Consequently the Soviets had to change their Balkan policy as well. It follows then, that we (DSE) should have changed our policy also...we should have started to rely on our strength alone..."³⁷¹

The effects of the Titoist convulsion spread quickly through the Balkans. Albania and Bulgaria soon disassociated themselves from the Yugoslavs. But it was by no means certain as to how the Soviet-Yugoslav breach would affect the Greek rebellion. At once, terrible strains developed within the DSE leadership. "Although the rank and file of the Democratic Army was only vaguely aware of the Tito-Stalin split, the situation was different at the top."³⁷² The conflict sharpened between Zachariades who remained a staunch Stalinist, and Vafiades who was unwilling to break with Tito. To make matters worse, the two protagonists were already divided about tactics, and even on the question of whether the rebellion should be continued at all.

Markos Vafiades had a deep respect for Tito. They were

both Nationalists as well as Communists. Tito also respected Vafiades. The Yugoslav delegate in the United Nations always mentioned the DSE and General Markos in the best of terms. Thus, when the break occurred, Moscow almost certainly asked the KKE to purge those who were ready to take up "Titoism".³⁷³ On January 20-30, at a meeting of the KKE's central committee somewhere in the Grammos mountains, Nikos Zachariades led the party Stalinists in a purge of Vafiades and other "suspect" officials from their posts in the KKE and in the 'Free Greek Government' that was created a while back and in which Vafiades was the Premier. Although the Vafiades ouster occurred ostensibly for reasons of "ill health", Zachariades accompanied it with denunciations of "opportunism" and "right deviationism."³⁷⁴

Markos Vafiades has blamed his expulsion from the KKE on the fact that he disagreed with the dictatorial Zachariades on the manner of waging the rebellion. "We were a partisan army and that is how we should have stayed... Zachariades' position that we should become a tactical army and abandon the "rabble" of ELAS was unrealistic. It led us to defeat."³⁷⁵

Zachariades argued that the DSE could not achieve a final victory if it continued to rely on guerrilla warfare. It had to evolve into a regular revolutionary army that could participate in large-scale positional battles and be able to hold towns and territory. Only then, the KKE leader believed, could the DSE win the war. Vasilis Bartzotas, a leading

officer in the DSE, agreed with Zachariades. However, "this transformation", he argued "should have occurred in 1946 or early 1947. That is when the DSE still held the upper hand."³⁷⁶

Holding a different opinion, Vafiades is even today adamant in his beliefs. "We did not have to lose if we followed partisan methods." he argues.

"We would have prolonged the rebellion and this would have hurt our opponents psychologically...they would want to negotiate...there were many in the party who supported my views but did not rise up because Zachariades had established a regime of terror..."³⁷⁷

In November of 1948 Vafiades submitted a pessimistic appreciation of the rebellion's prospects to the Soviet and KKE politburos. This was his "platform". In it he argued that the DSE must revert to "intensive, guerrilla-type activity, by small, mobile, lightly armed contingents, saboteurs and snipers, able to choose when and where to fight." "The object," he wrote, must be to cause "a continuous military and economic haemorrhage."³⁷⁸ Following his platform and denunciation, Markos was sent on sick leave to Albania and thence to Yugoslavia. His role was over. The sole power now rested with Zachariades.

THE DEFEAT OF THE DEMOCRATIC ARMY OF GREECE

"Life has proven that the Zachariades policies were wrong" writes Vasilis Bartzotas, "he wasted more than fifteen months and during this time, the Athens Government

gave us severe punishment...people were lining up to go to prison and exile instead of to the mountains."³⁷⁹ Harilaos Florakis, the present leader of the KKE stated in 1977 that:

"The outcome might have been different if our strategy depended on a short-term struggle...Since we had not won by 1947, it was impossible to win after that...1947 was our last chance..."³⁸⁰

Many years after the ouster of Vafiades, Dimitris Partsalides wrote that "while Zachariades insisted that Markos had psychological disorders, the Soviets argued that it was the Vafiades position that should of been followed."³⁸¹ Gerasimos Maltezos, who played a key role in the DSE, accused Vafiades of not being a true Marxist-Leninist and of taking refuge in libels against the "worthy KKE leadership". Maltezos wrote that:

"Markos, even today, remains a Titoist and his words are therefore of no value. He followed the orders and served the interests of the Yugoslavs who tried both covertly and openly to sabotage the DSE."³⁸²

The year 1949 was the one during which the DSE was finally defeated. Tito had by now begun to progressively reduce his assistance until finally he decided to close down the borders. This closing of the Yugoslav-Greek frontier on July 10 was a deadly blow to the Greek Communists. During the latter stages of the war, Tito had continued to fully support the KKE perhaps thinking that this attitude could win the Greeks over to his side. It was only when the Zachariades leadership came out openly in support of Stalin

that Tito decided to cease his aid to the rebels. Nevertheless, Zachariades sent a telegram to Tito in which he expressed the gratitude "of the Greek people to the New Yugoslavia, that alone had supported them."³⁸³

The situation had now become critical for the Greek Communists. On the Greek Government side the appointment of General Papagos as supreme commander of the GNA had an astonishing effect. In late 1948, the Communist news agency "Free Greece" announced that "at this critical moment, the Provisional Democratic Government is ready to accept an honest ...agreement..."³⁸⁴ The Athens officials, however, would not hear of a settlement. Under the forceful and non-political leadership of Papagos, the GNA was successfully deployed in the field. Its preponderance in manpower and material was for the first time producing results. In the fall of 1949, and with the assistance of American fighter aircraft which used Napalm bombs, the last strongholds of the DSE in the Vitsi and Grammos mountains were overtaken. The rebellion was defeated. The DSE announced that its leaders had decided to "ceasefire" to "prevent the complete annihilation of Greece". The DSE had been forced to retreat because of a "material disadvantage" and "Tito's treacherous defection."³⁸⁵ This time it was really over and the KKE was totally defeated. The cost was over 158,000 dead, of whom about half were Communists and the remainder Government troops, security personnel and civilians.

The Greek civil war of 1946-1949 was in a way unavoidable. The KKE had surrendered without conditions by signing the "Varkiza Agreement". Because of Varkiza, it was impossible for democratic institutions to evolve in Greece. A Right-Wing regime was established that 'depended on the British bayonets for its survival.'³⁸⁶ Because of the KKE's constant political retreats, this Right-Wing regime supported by a terrorist underground attempted to once and for all eradicate the Greek Communist movement. It succeeded only after a lengthy and costly civil war which had the result of Greece becoming a client-state of the U.S.

One unavoidable consequence of every war is the repression that the victor always exercises over the vanquished. Greece was no exception. Former partisans who could not be simply prosecuted for common-law offences were held to be spies because they had been agents of "Bulgarian Pan-Slavism", and they were tried by court martial.³⁸⁷ Every right inscribed in the Constitution was counterbalanced by an emergency law which "trampled down the appropriate safeguards." "Administrative persecution" became an entrenched institution, and was part of the framework in which post-war legality was set up in Greece.³⁸⁸ In the final analysis, however, the decisive heritage of the Greek civil war was not so much the huge material destruction, as the unprecedented loss of Greek life and the "political, ideological and cultural gap that developed between the 'nationalists' and the remnants of

Greece's progressive forces."³⁸⁹ After almost fifteen years of dictatorships, wars and civil strife, Greece was once again free to pursue prosperity in a peaceful and democratic way. The scars of the Communist 'rounds', however, ran deep. After a succession of Right-Wing Governments with the brief exception of a Centrist one in the early sixties, Greek politics culminated in a military dictatorship that lasted for seven years.

The next chapter will examine the question of why the KKE failed in its attempts to seize power in Greece. What were the KKE's mistakes? What were the comparisons between ELAS and Tito's partisans and why did they reach different ends? A theoretical examination of each 'round' will be offered in an attempt to evaluate the role of the Greek Communists and to answer the question of why they failed.

Analyzing the Defeat of the KKE's Revolution: Conclusions.

"Woe to him that claims obedience when it is not due;
Woe to him that refuses it when it is."

Thomas Carlyle

"Power grows from the barrel of a gun."

Maο Tse-Tung

THE KKE FROM 1941-1949

Carloa Marighella, A Brazilian guerrilla leader, once proclaimed that "in an immoral age it is one's moral duty to disobey." Political disobedience and ultimately revolution were paths commonly pursued by the "Marxist-Leninists" of this century for whom the capitalist system is an immoral one. In some cases revolutionary tactics have led to communist success, but more often than not, revolutions have met with defeat. All attempts, however, successful or not, have proven that there exists no one specific formula suitable to all revolutions. Rather, revolutionary communism is a dynamic theory which needs to adapt to specific political, geographic and other conditions that vary widely from one country to another.

Defeat is what the Greek Communist Party met with in the course of its revolutionary attempts between the years 1941-1949. The failure of the KKE to effectively transform Greece into a communist society showed by 1950, despite communist successes elsewhere, that capitalism far from collapsing, had acquired a capacity to defend itself from within. American and earlier British determination in Greece provided evidence to the effect that the Western world could support its members and in the process demonstrate that certain "scientific laws" of historical development are indeed amendable. The reasons why the KKE failed to implement its revolutionary goals will be the focus of this chapter.

The entanglement of Greece in the Second World War and the foreign occupation that ensued provided an unprecedented opportunity for the Greek Left. The Communist party was now able to rid itself of the label of treason with which it had been tainted and to rally all progressive elements in the country in order to fight for national liberation. To this end, the KKE appealed to the Greek people for the establishment of a National Front that would organize the resistance against the occupying forces. EAM, as the front was called, succeeded in arousing hundreds of thousands of people, regardless of political creed, who were eager to fight under the banner of all-national interests for the common cause of freedom.

EAM, just like its counterpart in Yugoslavia, never made clear to the Greek people its ultimate aims of establishing a Communist regime. The movement was described in purely nationalistic terms. Everyone willing to fight the enemy was welcomed in it. EAM proved to be an all embracing organization. It administered local communities, organized armed resistance and even managed to hold elections for a Provisional Government in occupied territories. EAM spoke on behalf of the nation. Millions of people and more than ten political parties joined its ranks. It was the Communist Party, however, which directed all EAM policies and activities.

By the middle of 1943, EAM and its army ELAS had succeeded in dominating the political and military situation in Greece. The movement's influence even stretched as far as

the Greek Royalist army in the Middle East. ELAS itself was powerful, well organized, and proved capable of liberating large parts of Greece. A new revolutionary atmosphere prevailed, one which the people of Greece had embraced. The old regime had collapsed and its values seemed to be bankrupt. This, however, was not how things were seen by the Greek Government-in-exile and by its British supporters.

During the occupation, the KKE had been successful in gaining total control over the Socialist-Republican camp as incorporated in the EAM coalition. Consequently and as long as this coalition remained intact, the Communists represented the most powerful force in Greece. Yet there was no immediate move on behalf of the KKE to militarily capitalize on this advantage.³⁹⁰ Once the people realized their new power and rallied under EAM in order to effect a radical transformation of Greek society, the KKE unlike Tito's party in Yugoslavia lost its momentum. The party lost its "grass-roots" contact with the base of the movement and as a result wavered back and forth showing what can only be characterized as a lack of revolutionary zeal and ability. Doubts began to set in and this opened the road to a series of compromising retreats directed toward the Greek Royalist Government and the British officials.³⁹¹

The KKE failed to appreciate the mass appeal that it enjoyed through EAM. The coalition had managed to draw support from a popular base much broader than a Communist one.

This transformation of revolutionary methods to more moderate ones placed the EAM movement in an exceptional situation. On the one hand the people through their revolutionary fervor and the power of ELAS continued their struggle in liberating Greece. On the other hand, the movement's leadership retreated and followed a chain of politically compromising solutions. It is not the least of the KKE's mistakes that it recognized the exiled government by signing the "Lebanon Charter" and thus placed its faith on the old parliamentarism which in Greece had proven ineffective as the pre-war Metaxas dictatorship had made evident. These two contradictory lines of policy were followed by the KKE throughout its attempts to seize power and it was this irresolute stance that in this writer's opinion provided the main impetus for the KKE's ultimate defeat.

If EAM/ELAS had taken power in October 1944 immediately following the German withdrawal, and if it had managed to enter into a cooperative agreement with the resistance movements of the other Balkan nations, something that Tito had proposed as early as 1942, then it would have proven difficult if not impossible for the British to intervene as they did through the use of force. But even if the KKE leadership had known and expected that the British would intervene in force, they should have nevertheless taken a determined stance and carried out their revolution because "when a revolution is under way and the movement hesitates to act, then the movement ceases to be revolutionary and consequently

drives itself to defeat."³⁹³

Although EAM was led by the KKE which professed to be a "Marxist-Leninist" party and although the KKE's leaders were devout communists and students of the Bolshevik revolution, they nevertheless proved to be "clumsily opportunistic, without a clear political program."³⁹⁴ As a result, the KKE reneged on its ambitions and retreated at a time when all conditions were present for the successful completion of its revolution. The "Lebanon Charter" was followed by the signing of the "Cazerta Agreement" through which ELAS was placed under British command. Later on, even after the previous agreements were exposed and condemned by the KKE, its leadership signed the "Varkiza Pact" which rendered ELAS impotent even though the majority of its forces remained intact. Thus, it becomes obvious that the KKE's revolution failed because to a large extent the party's leadership proved incapable of correctly measuring the balance of forces and showed a lack of revolutionary determination at the moment when it was most necessary.

One of the first EAM mistakes was that the movement placed its policies for the post-war period on the question of the King's return. By linking the democratization of Greece to a plebiscite on the future of the monarchy, many possibilities for political flexibility in the future, were erased. Another major EAM mistake is that it allowed ELAS to participate in a civil war against EDES during the foreign occupation. This gave ELAS the image that it advoc-

ated only violent solutions and it allowed Winston Churchill to claim that "Tito kills Germans while ELAS kills Greeks."

Many of EAM's mistakes, as will be seen later on, were a result of the KKE's inability to adapt its tactics and strategy to the conditions in Greece. The truth is that KKE's leaders were not politicians but neither were they soldiers. They demonstrated an inability to correctly negotiate from a position of strength and as a result were successfully manipulated by men like Papandreou, Scobie and Leeper. Furthermore, apart from Velouchiotis who was only a Kapetanios and Sarafis who was not a Communist, the KKE leaders were not good soldiers either. They failed to use military force effectively and this became evident during the December fighting when most of ELAS was engaged in Epirus while the future of Greece was being played in Athens.

Something that the KKE's leaders did excel in was clandestine subversive activity. Their experience from the Metaxas dictatorship and from the German occupation gave them the opportunity to rise to a revolutionary situation. The qualities and skills, however, that were necessary in such a situation seemed to be absent from the Greek Communists who lacked a Lenin or a Tito amongst them. As well, the situation had reached the attention of the Greek politicians in Cairo who were in league with the British. These men, by staying out of contact with the resistance in Greece, tended to equate the whole EAM movement with the few hardcore Communists who led it. They began to fear that EAM

would stifle democracy and through an alliance with the Soviet Union would attempt to threaten British interests in the region. Thus, the British together with the Greek politicians in the Middle East attempted to curbe the KKE's influence in Greece and in the end proved very effective in doing so.

THE KKE'S STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Throughout the period under study, the KKE remained faithful if not subservient to the Soviet Union. Internally it was governed by "Democratic Centralism". Permanent decisions were taken in the name of the central committee by the party's politburo in which the Secretary-General and his close followers retained the majority. These decisions were transmitted downwards to the lower party organs as a collective decision. Disagreement at this point was forbidden and was considered tantamount to treason.³⁹⁵

During the years of occupation and until after the signing of the "Varkiza Agreement", the acting Secretary-General of the KKE was Georgios Siantos. In the period from 1945-1949, the KKE was once again led by Nikos Zachariades. As mentioned earlier, Zachariades was a KUTVist, a devout "Stalinist", and a leader who enjoyed tremendous support within the KKE. As a "Stalinist" he was dictatorial. Nikos Mertzos writes that "no one ever stood up against Zachariades' decisions, those few who attempted to do so were ousted and sometimes even murdered."³⁹⁶

Although both Siantos and Zachariades controlled the KKE and consequently EAM with an iron hand, they proved to be weak and feeble in their encounters with outside politicians. For a while the KKE leaders appeared to follow a steady gradualist course, confident that time was on their side. When it became evident, however, that "the future did not by right belong to the Left, and when the Government with strong British support, sought to strengthen its position by augmenting its military might, they raised shrill voices of frustration and fear."³⁹⁷

John Iatrides argues in his work Revolt in Athens, that the failure to clear up the issue of the King's return and the confusion and ineptness which surrounded the Government's plans to demobilize the guerrillas, aroused the KKE's worst fears and led its leaders to desperate manoeuvres.³⁹⁸ Thus, when both the Government and the KKE proved to be nervous and inflexible, the country was plunged into a civil war which no one had wanted.

THE QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP

One of the principle factors that militated against the Communist effort to achieve power in Greece was the lack of capable leadership. The KKE produced no leader remotely the caliber of Tito.³⁹⁹ Llewellyn Woodward is quoted by John Iatrides as arguing that:

"If the Greek Left-Wing parties had produced a leader as able as Marshal Tito, British policy toward Greece might have ended in an

unwilling acceptance of a Communist regime imposed on a population which, as in Yugoslavia, was for the most part non-communist."⁴⁰⁰

"On the other hand", Woodward goes on to say, "if Belgrad had been as accessible as Athens to a small British force of occupation, the course of events in Yugoslavia would have been different."⁴⁰¹ A condemnation for the KKE's leading personae is given by Iatrides himself when he argues that "Given the atrophic and seemingly anti-nationalist nature of the Communist movement and the mediocrity of its leaders, a Titoist stance in Greece is almost impossible to imagine."⁴⁰²

Max Weber described political leadership and authority as being "traditional", "rational-legal" or "charismatic". Without going into an analysis of each category, it is necessary to point out that none of these categories seem to fit the leadership of the KKE. Although Aris Velouchiotis and Markos Vafiades seem to have been charismatic in a Weberian sense, neither one became leader of the KKE. On the other hand, both Siantos and Zachariades evidently shared an authority that was based on both "tradition" and "rational-legality" within the Greek Communist movement. Neither man, however, possessed that quality which in times of revolution has shown to be of extreme importance, that is the quality of what Weber called "charisma".

Machiavelli in The Prince used three theoretical constructs in discussing the various problems of political leadership: "virtu, fortuna and necessita". By "virtu", he meant

the mastery that some men acquire over forces operative in political situation; by "fortuna", those events over which no human being has any control and by "necessita", the limitations placed on human choice by the society in which political decisions must be made.⁴⁰³ As Machiavelli explained, a leader must rely on all three. Virtuosity, fortune and necessity cannot be isolated. They are inseparable and interrelated.

In placing these theoretical constructs to practical ends, one can see that the KKE evidently lacked a leader who could achieve "virtu", a mastery, that is, over the unfolding political situation. What one sees in the KKE is a leadership clearly overtaken by developments and unable to avoid them let alone master or direct them. Unlike Tito, the Greek Communist leaders allowed history to over-take them offering only spasmodic resistance. They failed to take advantage of their mass appeal and power and thus rise above the "necessita" and the "fortuna".

"Although fortune is beyond the control of men, it may be influenced, or its influence mitigated by the actions of men. Mastery in politics is often accompanied by good fortune, whereas a disequibrated social system and narrow-minded or weak leadership seem to invite misfortune."⁴⁰⁴

The KKE's leadership proved to be a weak one and in the end, far from altering its "fortuna" or "necessita", it compounded its own problems in a negative way.

The Third Congress of the KKE under the leadership of

Nikos Zachariades in October 1950 declared that "the faulty leadership of the party during the German occupation resulted in the party losing power and ultimately the revolution. The blame lies solely with Georgios Siantos who consciously betrayed our revolution."⁴⁰⁵ Georgios Siantos had indeed made mistakes. He incorrectly estimated the balance of forces as well as misjudging British reaction to the bid by ELAS. The Siantos leadership underestimated the British capacity to intervene as well as the political will of Churchill who knew he could count on substantial reinforcements as well as Stalin's neutrality. Thus, December 1944 saw unequipped and ill-treated ELASites take on British tanks and war experienced troops while the competent forces of ELAS participated in an irrelevant civil war against EDES hundreds of miles away from Athens.

In December 1944, ELAS lost the battle of Athens but not the war. Yet the Siantos leadership "shamelessly compromised".⁴⁰⁶ It signed the "Varkiza Pact" through which ELAS surrendered its weapons without getting anything in return. Furthermore, under the Government's characterization of "common crimes", all ELAS resistance acts were condemned and their perpetrators left prey to Right-Wing terrorists. 1945 became the year of the Right, just like 1944 was the year of the Left. The EAM leaders under the direction of Siantos fell into the traps that were set for them by the more skillful Government of Papandreou. Gerasimos Maltezos writes that:

"The opportunistic KKE leadership continued its compromising attitude towards the British conquerors even after it disarmed ELAS...with its denunciation of Aris, it condemned all attempts of defense against the rightist terror...the leadership caused our fighters to be disappointed, and it caused the decline of our revolutionary movement among the masses."⁴⁰⁷

THE KKE LINKS ITS MOVEMENT WITH THE WEST

One crucial mistake made by Siantos was his refusal, for nationalistic reasons, to enter into an agreement with Tito. Instead the KKE went with the British. Thus, the revolutionary movement in Greece, found itself linked to the West while in Yugoslavia, Tito and his Partisans achieved their communist goals. The second mistake through which the KKE found itself closer to the British was the decision to send EAM delegates to Cairo in 1944. These delegates failed to achieve any positive results and were successfully manipulated by Premier Papandreu. The agreement that was signed was subsequently denounced by the KKE. Thus, the KKE leaders created an organic tie with the West through their recognition of the British and of the Government of "National Unity". By contrast, Tito recognized neither the Yugoslav Government-in-exile nor the Yugoslav King.⁴⁰⁸ The KKE, however, agreed to recognize and participate in the "National Unity" cabinet despite the fact that EAM had already created its own governmental instrument PEEA.

When Josip Tito announced the formation of his Provisional

Government, he declared that it was the only legal government in Yugoslavia, taking the place of the King and his Royalist Government whose legal right to represent the Yugoslav people was declared null and void.⁴⁰⁹ Vladimir Dedijer wrote that when Ivan Subasic, the representative of the Royalist Government, arrived at a meeting with Tito and stated that the Partisan National Committee should be incorporated with the Royal Yugoslav Government, Josip Smodlaka, the Committee's Commissar of Foreign Affairs replied with the words "You have neither people, nor army, nor territory."⁴¹⁰ As a result an agreement was signed by which Subasic in the name of the Royalist Government recognized the "National Committee" as the sole authority in the country, and the National Liberation Army under Tito's command as the sole army. Furthermore, the Yugoslav agreement condemned as traitors all those who had collaborated with the Germans.⁴¹¹ This was an area which proved most troublesome for EAM in Greece.

Meanwhile, in Greece, where EAM held the undisputed power, PEEA incorporated itself into the Government of "National Unity". It, thus, entered into an alliance with the British and the Royalists, the KKE's historical "enemies". Another matter in which the KKE, unlike Tito, compromised was the formation of a National Army. This army would, the KKE agreed, include guerrillas from all political sides as well as the royalist army of the Middle East.⁴¹²

This policy which the KKE pursued and which had as a

result the joining of the Greek revolutionary movement to the aspirations of the British Empire, had as a further result the British military intervention in December. This intervention, which the KKE criticized as being a "blatant interference in Greek internal affairs", set the communist movement in Greece back to the beginning after having come very close to attaining power in the country. Unlike the British backing of the determined Tito in Yugoslavia, Churchill chose to oppose EAM rather than remain neutral as the Greek Communists had hoped.⁴¹³

Examining the KKE's actions in retrospect, it becomes obvious that the Party's leadership was not determined to use force but neither was it determined to rely solely upon legal, parliamentary means in order to seize power. The actions of the Communists and the agreements they signed tended to prejudice the party towards political means. The general mood, however, signified a forceful takeover. In the end it becomes evident that the KKE leaders did not know themselves which road to pursue. Unlike Tito in Yugoslavia, the KKE followed the line "a little of everything".⁴¹⁴ A pattern thus emerges one that shows political roads followed until they failed, after that it was the turn of violence. This pattern, however, was wrong. By the time the KKE realized that its political methods had failed, it was too late to effectively organize an armed takeover. The people were confused. Furthermore, in the eyes of world opinion the KKE was bound by the agreements which it had willingly signed.

As a result, the KKE leadership repeatedly found itself between two alternatives and in the end had no alternative.

Enver Hohja, the Albanian Communist leader, wrote that "the Greek people fought heroically for their freedom which was denied to them by the leaders of the Communist Party. Through the mistakes of these leaders, all hopes for victory through legality were lost."⁴¹⁵ Hohja went on to condemn the KKE leadership for:

"...basing its hopes in legal actions and parliamentarism. Thus, the party found itself disarmed and out of touch with the people...a false sensation was created to the effect that the revolution could win through elections, this resulted in the paralysis of the revolution by the blows of reaction..."⁴¹⁶

From the beginning of 1945 until the middle of 1946, the KKE found itself in a situation of "peace and war", attempting to defend itself democratically while at the same time trying to stave the Right-Wing persecution of its members. Seen from this perspective, the "Varkiza Deal" can be considered a success for it allowed the KKE to be politically active and legal. In 1950, however, Nikos Zachariades speaking on behalf of the KKE condemned the pact despite the fact that he had earlier accepted it and had even denounced Aris Velouchiotis who alone had attacked the agreement. The contradictions are obvious. They are also characteristic of the KKE's overall policies of the period.

THE MISTAKES OF THE KKE UNDER NIKOS ZACHARIADES

In 1945, the return of Zachariades brought to the KKE an atmosphere of political optimism. It also brought a wave of renewal which directly influenced the disheartened Communists. The political message of Zachariades was that the time was now ripe. The Balkans had become Communist and it was the turn of Greece. The mistakes of the past would not be repeated. The party members were jubilant. Zachariades, however, was not above mistakes either.

In understanding the errors committed by Zachariades, a brief description must be made of his personality. He was, as mentioned above, a devout 'Stalinist' and a strict disciplinarian. He ruled the party with an iron grip and tolerated no dissent. The methods, however, that had proved effective in the years of clandestine activity and conditions of illegality were not the ones necessary in 1945. By this time the KKE was at the head of a vast movement comprised of millions of people and enjoyed a popularity that was for the KKE unprecedented. It is natural for Zachariades to have been taken aback. His long detention in Dachau and absence from the "glories of ELAS" had alienated him from the party and he developed, as Markos Vafiades argues, an "inferiority complex" that drove him to pursue power when the time was not right through methods that were not reasonable.⁴¹⁷

ELAS had taken to the mountains in order to wage a war against the foreign invaders. The Greek masses understood

that and therefore stood firmly behind EAM. In 1946, however, the situation was different. The KKE, because of the 'Second Round', had been perceived as deviantly violent. The general population became alienated from the KKE and identified rather with the National Government. The people had once again entered into their pre-war "bourgeois attitude" and Communism was once again seen with suspicion. In short, the masses had begun to view the KKE in the same light as in the pre-war years. Greece was not fertile ground for Communism especially now that a dictatorship, a war, a foreign occupation and a revolution had occurred and reduced Greece and her people to conditions of misery. Furthermore, ELAS had been voluntarily disarmed.

The decision of Zachariades, that the KKE should abstain from the 1946 Parliamentary elections compounded the party's troubles. The Third Congress of the KKE in 1950 declared that:

"...the Congress denounces the opportunistic mistake of the 1946 abstention. This had a negative impact on the preparation of the second uprising because it deprived the party from the serious possibilities that were offered by participation in Parliament..."⁴¹⁸

By "possibilities that would be open", the Greek Communist Party meant the "better education of the masses, isolation of the monarcho-fascists and bourgeois parties, and exposure of Anglo-American policies in Greece."⁴¹⁹

Seen in retrospect, it is probably accurate to assume that the KKE and EAM could have achieved a fairly strong

parliamentary position had they taken part in the elections. They chose, however, to undermine Parliament rather than work through it. Thanasis Hadjis, a member of the KKE leadership at the time, stated that in 1946 the party had decided to participate in the elections and thus take advantage of the existing "parliamentary illusions". "Zachariades", however, "believed that the situation was revolutionary and that we shouldn't dabble in parliamentary procedures." This, he thought, "would alienate the people from the armed struggle that was necessary to follow."⁴²⁰ In 1950, Zachariades himself characterized his decision to abstain as a "tactical error".

"In deciding to abstain we believed that we were unmasking the British and depriving them of the opportunity of presenting Greece as an orderly and peaceful European country after a popular, parliamentary verdict. We believed that by taking part...we would cultivate parliamentary illusions among the masses. We believed that by abstaining we deprived the enemy of such an opportunity and we prepared the people in the best possible way for the new armed conflict..."⁴²¹

This statement indicates, however, that Zachariades viewed both participation and abstention as means to the same end, armed struggle. A paradox is evident. While the KKE fought to maintain its legality and sacrificed ELAS in order to do so, it nevertheless undermined this legality by abstaining from the elections, and contemplated a new struggle, which no matter how justified, was seemingly doomed to failure. The abstention, however, was only a tactical error and not

a major one. It aimed at exposing the Greek Government's inability to prevent Right-Wing terrorism. The participation of the KKE in Parliament would not have done much good to that effect, since the "white terror" was beyond the Government's control anyway. What was a major mistake, however, was the way the armed struggle was carried out once it was under way.

THE CONDITIONS FOR REVOLUTION

The KKE believed it was justified in undertaking to organize an armed struggle in 1946. In the eyes of the party there was a need to defend its members as well as to correct all previous wrongs. This decision was a revolutionary one and suitable to the KKE's outlook and image. Gerasimos Maltezos has written that "denial of such a revolutionary stance is an act of opportunism and of counterrevolution. Revolutionaries should always fight force with force."⁴²² Thus, once it decided to abstain from the elections, the KKE had no alternative but to go to war.

Notwithstanding the above position, however, the party's leadership was obligated to correctly weigh the balance of forces, to judge the prevailing conditions, and to organize the rebellion in such a way that the chances for success would be maximized. The KKE at this point had no army while the Greek Government had organized a modern one. One further factor contributing to the difficulty of a new rebellion was the presence of British troops. These were well organized

and supported by tanks, a navy and an airforce. To counter such a presence, the KKE needed if not a sizeable army, at least a revolutionary motivation which would serve as an equalizer and which was clearly absent. Even after the 'Third Round' was under way, it became obvious that only a small percentage of the KKE's faithful went to the mountains. Many preferred to stay in the cities and risk imprisonment rather than death. Thus, from the beginning, the DSE lacked motivation, quality and quantity of fighters.⁴²³ One reason for the lack of revolutionary zeal was the fact that the conditions of the time were not ripe for revolution.

According to Lenin, the time is right for a revolution when:

- 1) The forces hostile to Communists are weakened by conflicts among themselves;
- 2) The petty-bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats have lost the confidence of the workers; and
- 3) The proletariat is determined to support the Communist Party in its struggle for power:

"Insurrection must rely upon a revolutionary upsurge of the people... insurrection must rely upon that turning point in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced class of the people is at its height and when the vacillations in the ranks of the enemy and in the ranks of the weak, halfhearted and irresolute friends⁴²⁴ of the revolution are strongest...

Lenin had also warned that "the history of insurrection teaches that the oppressed masses have never won in a fight to the death without being reduced to despair by long

sufferings and acute crises of every kind".⁴²⁵

There appears to be no direct evidence that points to a major and acute crisis present in Greece in 1946. Conflict, as defined by Lenin, did not exist among the members of the Greek Government or the armed forces. What quarrels did in fact exist were trivial and took place only insofar as quarrels take place within any government. Furthermore, the economic state of Greece was fairly stable since reconstruction efforts provided work and UNRA provided relief.

As far as the readiness of the proletariat to support the revolution, the fact is that even within the KKE leadership there were many who wanted to abide by Varkiza and avoid an armed conflict. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, many rank and file members preferred prison to life as guerrillas.⁴²⁶ Thus, there seems that a substantial portion of Communists did not believe in revolution at that time. Even the KKE's allies, the small "bourgeois" parties that had participated in EAM, did not agree with a new uprising and distanced themselves from such an option.

As for the Greek Labour movement, its history was a turbulent one. By 1946, however, a U.S. intelligence report considered "seventy percent of organized labour Leftists."⁴²⁷ In Greece, the urban proletariat, however, was minute and mainly concentrated in the few major cities. The KKE which doctrinally was a worker's party made the mistake of assigning too much importance to this small proletariat at the expense of the peasants. Greece, at the time, was seventy

per cent rural. She was an agrarian country with an agrarian economy. Yet the KKE was too doctrinaire to allow the rural peasants to play any role despite the fact the ELAS had been mostly comprised of peasants. The KKE proved to be too narrow minded in this respect and failed to allow for a reality that went against its dogma. Marxist-Leninist theory wanted the urban worker to carry out the revolution and Zachariades was too much of an orthodox "Leninist" to understand that Greek conditions demanded a different approach. Unlike the KKE, however, this problem was successfully tackled by both Mao and Tito. Both these leaders succeeded in identifying the problem and unifying the notion of proletarian with that of peasant. They, thus, carried out revolutions the success of which was largely due to the peasantry of their countries.

In Greece, while the KKE relied upon the urban proletariat, it turned out that the proletariat was not willing to suffer for the revolution. Gerasimos Maltezos writes that "the working masses proved unwilling to march to their deaths...the urban workers provided no help throughout the armed struggle..."⁴²⁸ From the above evidence, the conclusion seems to be that while the will for a change was there, it was not a radical will and it was one which favoured peaceful rather than violent means. Clearly the KKE had misjudged the conditions of the time. Nikos Zachariades, however, thought otherwise. Professor Kousoulas quotes him as offering justifications for the revolution even as

late as 1950.

"What was the situation in 1946? First of all domestically: On this there was no disagreement. We all agreed that the situation was ripe, that we should take up arms and fight. But we had also to examine the external factors. What backing did we have? The People's Democracies were behind us...our effort in this area was directed towards isolating the British, to prevent their immediate armed intervention, while relying on the People's Democracies in order to begin the attack on domestic reaction."⁴²⁹

Zachariade's appraisal of the situation seems to indicate that in his hurried effort to undertake revolution, he failed to correctly estimate both the internal as well as the external conditions. He relied on the People's Democracies and consequently on Stalin, obviously unaware of the agreements made in Yalta. What help he did receive in the end came solely from Tito who assisted the DSE out of a personal sympathy for its struggle. There was, however, no organized assistance given by the Soviet Union or the People's Democracies. Thus, Zachariades threw the KKE and Greece into a civil war which was doomed to end in a Communist defeat because he falsely appraised the situation and at the same time refused to adapt a form of struggle and a theory more suitable to the Greek realities, something that Mao and Tito had already done in their own victorious revolutions.

THE MISTAKES OF THE THIRD ROUND

The failure by Zachariades to correctly judge the revolutionary conditions in Greece was not in itself a major

mistake. The mistake lay in the form with which the struggle was carried out. Ernesto Che Guevara wrote that the Cuban revolution proved to the "Marxist-Leninists" of the world that:

- 1) Popular forces can win a war against an army;
- 2) It is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making a revolution exist; the insurrection can create them; and
- 3) In underdeveloped America* the countryside is the basic area for armed fighting.⁴³⁰

Lenin himself had urged adaptability and flexibility in waging a struggle. In Volume II of his Collected Works he stated that:

"...forms of struggle arise of themselves in the course of a movement ...Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and attack."⁴³¹

As Regis Debray has argued, in Cuba a revolution had triumphed in the virtual absence of Marxist theory while the strategies developed by the Communists had failed.⁴³² Che Guevara remarked that "the example our revolution has set in Latin America, and the teachings implied in it, have destroyed all coffee-shop theories." Contrary to these theories that wanted revolutions to fail when all conditions

* Underdeveloped South America of the fifties resembled Greece of the forties.

were not present, Cuba proved that:

"a small group of determined men with the support of the people and without fear of death...can defeat a regular and disciplined army...agrarian revolutions can be made; we must struggle in the countryside, in the mountains, and from there take the revolution to the cities."⁴³³

In other words, the Cuban revolution demonstrated that revolutions could in fact succeed in the absence of the right conditions if only the forms of struggle are modified to allow for particular circumstances which vary from country to country.

Contrary to Leninist doctrine, Guevara argued that the countryside offers a distinct advantage over the cities in times of revolutionary uprising. In the countryside, the guerrilla can begin the transformation of society and do it on two fronts. He begins to structure the future governmental apparatus and, simultaneously, he is transformed through contact with the oppressed people and his near-total dependence upon them.⁴³⁴ This is what happened in Greece with ELAS. Guevara referred to the process as "proletarianization".

Regis Debray also agreed with Guevara's account on the advantages of the rural as opposed to the urban terrain. He disagreed, however, with Guevara's thesis that "it is not necessary to wait until all the conditions necessary are fulfilled; the insurrectionary centre can create them". The Leninist conditions in question are "objective", that is

favourable or unfavourable conditions which exist irrespective of the revolutionary party's ability to alter them.

Lenin wrote that:

"To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class...insurrection must rely upon a revolutionary upsurge of the people ...upon that turning point in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height..."⁴³⁵

For Guevara, the only conditions necessary were of an economic and sociological character. "The oppression that the people suffer and the abuse that results from their station in life" were for Che the only conditions to be fully satisfied in rural America. Therefore, anytime is a good time to declare a revolution. All that is necessary is willing and determined combatants, the subjective condition.⁴³⁶ As we saw earlier, however, the KKE was far from being determined in 1946 when it attempted its own revolution. In Guerrilla Warfare, Guevara provides a reservation for the feasibility of revolution in countries whose governments maintain an appearance of constitutional legality and against which all forms of struggle have not been exhausted. In examining the Greek case, we can see that the Government did indeed enjoy a constitutional legality which the Communists themselves had endorsed. Furthermore, as the KKE abstention indicates, all forms of struggle were not exhausted. Thus even if this shortcoming was made up by the KKE's determination, the revolution in Greece was still far from succeeding

if one takes into consideration Guevara's warning.

Apart from its lack of revolutionary determination, the KKE made the further mistake of having its leadership remain in Athens even after the rebellion was under way. Furthermore, the party chose to develop its armed forces in a gradual manner and in phases. This gave time to the Government to better organize its army and to purge it of Communist sympathizers.⁴³⁷ While the General H.Q. under Markos Vafiades was in the mountains, the party leadership insisted on staying in Athens and keeping there many potential fighters. Zachariades was trying to cling on to orthodox "Marxism-Leninism" that wants revolutions to be carried out within the urban centers under the guidance of the urban proletariat. He felt awkward in leading a revolution of the countryside.

Regis Debray attacked the Communist parties which maintained their existence in the cities while attempting to lead an armed struggle in the countryside. He deplored the denigration of guerrillas by parties.

"When it is not neglected, the guerrilla force is the aimless victim of the naive, political juggling acts of a party which treats it as just one more pawn to be manipulated in response to the political machinations of the ruling class."⁴³⁸

The mountain, argued Debray, "proletarianizes the bourgeois and peasant elements, and the city bourgeoisifies the proletarians...even a comrade who spends his life in a city is unwittingly bourgeois in comparison with a guerrillero... when a guerrilla group communicates with city leadership... it is dealing with its bourgeoisie."⁴³⁹ For Debray, legal

forms of struggle are incompatible with armed struggle; they cannot be integrated into the same revolutionary process. For this reason, argued Debray, any attempt to coordinate the two is doomed to failure.⁴⁴⁰ Fidel Castro, the leader of the Cuban revolution wrote that:

"...it is absurd and almost criminal... to try and direct the guerrillas from the city. The guerrillas were not viewed as a force capable of developing to the conquest of power... but as an instrument of negotiation."⁴⁴¹

Lenin emphatically accepted partisan warfare, in order to support a revolution. "Marxism", he said, "does not tie the movement to any particular combat method. It recognizes the possibility that struggle may assume the most variegated forms. For that matter, Marxism does not invent those forms of struggle... Marxism will never reject any particular combat method, let alone reject it forever."⁴⁴² However, as Debray argued, once guerrilla warfare is decided upon, that task becomes the focus and all efforts must be geared to the practical organization of the armed struggle with a view to achieving unity on the basis of "Marxist-Leninist" principles. "In organizational terms, this means abandoning political principles for military ones and party discipline for military discipline. The principle of 'Democratic Centralism' must be suspended once it has presided over the determination of a military strategy. Henceforth and until victory is assured, intraparty democracy must be replaced by the military chain of command."⁴⁴³ In the case of the KKE, not only was "Democratic Centralism" not suspended, but the city based leadership even went so far as to place orders regarding the manner in which

military operations were to be carried out.

In 1948, while the civil war was in full swing, Zachariades made the mistake of wanting to replace Vafiades' hit-and-run tactics with those of positional warfare at a time when the conditions for such a transition were not there. This resulted in a conflict between the two men and contributed to the already existing divisions within the Party's leadership. In analyzing the correct form of guerrilla warfare, Mao wrote that:

"Guerrilla strategy must be based primarily on alertness, mobility, and attack. It must be adjusted to the enemy situation, the terrain, the existing lines of communication, the relative strengths, the weather, and the situation of the people ...in guerrilla strategy, the enemy's ..vital points must be harassed, attacked, dispersed, exhausted, and annihilated."⁴⁴⁴

Under the insistence of Vafiades, the DSE had remained until 1948 a collection of small insurgent units practising mobile guerrilla tactics. General Markos believed that if this policy was continued, he would gradually wear down and exhaust the GNA, and at an opportune moment he would convert his forces into conventional ones and "close in for the kill, precisely as Mao Tse-tung was doing in China at the time."⁴⁴⁵ Markos Vafiades, unlike Zachariades, was certain that a premature conversion of the DSE into a conventional force would be fatal to the revolution's success. Time, the essential factor for an insurgent, he insisted was on his side.

"Hit and run...without giving any rest to the enemy. There is in all this ...a negative quality, an attitude of retreat, of avoiding frontal fights. However, this is consequent upon the

general strategy of guerrilla warfare, which is the same in its ultimate end as in any warfare: to win, to annihilate the enemy."⁴⁴⁶

This was also the attitude of General Markos. Zachariades, however, was once again becoming impatient. He had calculated that time was running hard against the Democratic Army. Thus, he pressured Markos to convert his forces into a more traditional army, capable of fighting positional warfare. Vafiades disagreed and as a result was ousted and bitterly denounced.

It is recognized by theorists of guerrilla warfare such as Clausewitz, Mao, and Che Guevara that "strategic defence" is the second phase of development in a revolutionary war. This stage occurs at a time when the guerrilla army becomes powerful enough to take over and control large areas and cities. This transition allows the revolutionary army to directly and frontally challenge its opponent, to deliver the final blow and thus succeed in its revolutionary goals.⁴⁴⁷ The transition, however, should occur at the right moment.

Nikos Zachariades made the fatal strategic error of wanting to pass from the guerrilla to the conventional stage at a time when the DSE's opponent was entering a new period of strength and cohesion, mirrored in the American aid and the cooperation of the national leadership under the King and the Government.⁴⁴⁸ As Edgar O'Ballance argues in The Greek Civil War, "By the end of 1947, Marko's guerrilla tactics had

the GNA tottering...The Democratic Army held four-fifths of Greece, and Government supporters could not move far outside the towns in safety. All this had been achieved by well-organized and well controlled guerrilla tactics."⁴⁴⁹ Markos Vafiades clearly understood the need of the DSE to convert into a regular army, he estimated, however, that the time was not yet right.

"Had the KKE listened to General Markos, there would have been no pitched battles with heavy, irreplaceable losses, or attacks on defended towns, as the GNA would have had little to hit out at. In tiny mobile groups, the Democratic Army could have survived much longer."⁴⁵⁰

Another setback for the KKE was that its "Mountain Government" had not been recognized by anyone, not even the Government of the USSR or the People's Democracies. This caused Zachariades to act in haste, to attempt to take over, through a conventional army, a substantial town in order to provide his Government with a capital.⁴⁵¹ The DSE's attempts, however, failed, proving that the time was not right for positional warfare.

Zachariades was certainly aware of the "Truman Doctrine", yet he chose to underestimate American determination or maybe overestimate the support given by Tito and that which would come from Stalin. He seemed to believe that only direct American intervention through use of troops could endanger the DSE's position. He also seemed to believe that such an intervention would produce an international outcry.⁴⁵² He

failed to learn from the experience of his predecessor during the British intervention of December 1944. It now becomes clear, however, that Stalin had no intention of supporting the KKE. He had agreed in Yalta that Greece was in the Western "sphere of influence". Furthermore, as Vladimir Dedijer pointed out, Stalin was afraid to confront the United States because he lacked a navy and atomic weapons.

Whether the DSE remained a guerrilla force or became a regular army, is not very important to the final outcome of the 'Third Round'. Certainly, Marko's guerrilla tactics were right and even justified until the middle of 1948. In the following year, however, conditions began to change rapidly. Despite the DSE's improvement in weapons, the balance of power was becoming more favourable for the GNA. The Government could afford much more material and many more men than could the KKE. Furthermore, the "Truman Doctrine" guaranteed the government's supply lines.⁴⁵³ These factors had led Zachariades to conclude that time was working against the uprising. The DSE had only two alternatives: to surrender or to keep on fighting and hoping for a miracle. The latter is what he chose. Whether Markos was right, or whether Zachariades was, the DSE was clearly doomed.

THE EFFECTS OF THE "TRUMAN DOCTRINE"

Many students of the period have concluded that one major factor that contributed to the DSE's defeat was the large aid given to Greece as a result of the "Truman Doctrine".

This aid, it is argued, changed the balance of "class power" in Greece.⁴⁵⁴ Evaggelos Averof, a member of many conservative governments in post-war Greece, has concluded that "the assistance given by the United States allowed the Greek state to survive despite its economic paralysis. It allowed the Greek armed forces to modernize."⁴⁵⁵

American Government officials had never believed that there could emerge a political settlement that would end the civil war in Greece. The American concern was to "stamp out the communist revolt and influence".⁴⁵⁶ The problem lay in that because of its war-time resistance and its post-war sufferings, the KKE had become an influential force in Greek politics with deep roots in the country's social, cultural, and politico-economic life. Naturally the Communists had no intention of being stamped out. Many Greeks, however, were reluctant to pursue a civil war to its end. To them a political compromise seemed preferable to wholesale bloodshed and destruction. For this reason, American policy-makers found their most consistent allies in the Greek Right-Wing. This reliance on the Rightists deepened the determination of all those involved. It deepened the Americans' especially for it was not certain that the Right would emerge victorious on its own.⁴⁵⁷

The Americans had great material wealth at their disposal. They lacked, however, political experience, intelligence, and the ability which the British had shown of foreseeing and facing complex political manoeuvring. Like many

times in their later history, the Americans relied heavily on their material and economic superiority. The KKE on the other hand, was called to face the Americans only in that sector in which the Americans excelled and the Communists lacked. Thus, it was natural for the KKE to suffer immeasurable losses. In this writer's opinion, a major cause of the KKE's defeat was the fact that while the western world placed all its resources to the aid of the Greek Government, the KKE received only sparse and insufficient support. The "Truman Doctrine" was a major cause in the Greek Communist defeat. Had American aid not arrived when it did and in the volume in which it did, the final outcome might very well have been different. The American aid brought new hope to the Greek Government and gave the GNA the essential material supremacy necessary to defeat the KKE's insurrection.⁴⁵⁸

THE EFFECTS OF THE TITO-STALIN RUPTURE

The official KKE leadership blamed the DSE's defeat on three "negative factors", one of which was the "betrayal of Tito".⁴⁵⁹ In blaming Tito, Zachariades later stated that "if we could foresee in 1946 that Tito would betray us, we would not have embarked on a civil war."⁴⁶⁰

It has by now become evident, however, that it was the KKE that betrayed Tito. This "betrayal" was caused by the inability of Zachariades to break away from his "orthodoxy" and side with Tito against Stalin. Blindly believing in Stalin, the KKE made a fatal mistake in 1948 by denouncing

Tito. Apart from being the only one helping the KKE's rebellion, and for which reason loyalty was necessary, Tito was looking for allies in this critical for his party time. He would have, therefore, welcomed the support of the KKE and in return would have continued his valuable assistance.⁴⁶¹

Knowing, however, that Zachariades was in full control of the KKE, it was natural that the party would side with Stalin. This resulted in Tito closing down the borders between the two countries. Thus, the DSE could no longer survive since a large-scale guerrilla war effort can only be successful if it is supported by the countryside or if it is assisted by open borders and neighbouring backers.

THE KKE'S DIVIDED LEADERSHIP

Nikos Zachariades was replaced in 1941 by Georgios Siantos. ELAS was ruled by three men, Velouchiotis, Sarafis, and Tzimas under the control of Siantos. Unlike Tito's party, then, the Greek Communists were plagued with divisions of opinion and strategy from the start. By 1946, there were two main factions within the top echelons of the KKE. One faction was led by Zachariades who favoured International Communism, and who placed his faith on Stalin as the acknowledged fountainhead of true Marxism. The second faction was led by Markos Vafiades, who favoured a form of National Communism very close to that of Tito. Furthermore, Vafiades favoured closer collaboration with Tito, and was, much like Tito, disillusioned by the lack of Soviet support.⁴⁶²

"The whole history of communism and the communist parties', writes Edgar O'Ballance, "seethes with heresy and counter heresy, as rivals use every twist and turn to grasp power and the means of enforcing their own particular interpretation of Marxist doctrine upon the people".⁴⁶³ Such was the case in the late 1940's within the KKE as Zachariades proceeded with a purge on a grand scale. The attacks were most savage against Siantos, long dead, and Vafiades. Siantos, the leader of EAM, was pronounced by Zachariades to have been "a lifelong agent of the class enemy". Vafiades, whose removal from the "Free Government's" Premiership had been attributed to reasons of "ill health", was denounced and ridiculed as "an incompetent arriviste who had never been a true communist in his life".⁴⁶⁴ Vafiades, himself, accused Zachariades of being an "agent-provocateur working for the British".⁴⁶⁵

The doctrinal differences between the two factions extended to matters such as the Slav-Macedonian problem, the use of propaganda, and they also extended into the sphere of military strategy and tactics. The KKE managed to retain the facade of unity for quite sometime. The purges and denunciations, however, provided the world with the real picture. What is worse, they occurred at the most critical moment of the DSE's effort. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that one more cause of the Communist defeat in Greece was the discord within the KKE's leadership.

CONCLUSIONS

Chalmers Johnson has argued in Revolutionary Change that of all the characteristics of a society that is changing and in need of further change, the one that contributes most directly to a revolution is "power deflation", the fact that during a period of change the integration of a system depends increasingly on the deployment of force.⁴⁶⁶ The second cluster of underlying causes to a revolution, says Johnson, has to do with the ability of the society's legitimate leaders. If they are unable to develop policies that will maintain the confidence of the system's actors, a loss of authority will ensue. When this happens, an elite and its use of force will no longer be considered legitimate.⁴⁶⁷

Johnson goes on to argue that the course of action open to a system's leaders during a power deflation range from conservative change to its polar opposite, complete intransigence.

"The successful implementation of conservative change depends primarily on two factors: the elite's familiarity with social conditions, and its ability to determine which elements of the value structure are indispensable to the continuity of the culture."⁴⁶⁸

Elite intransigence, by contrast, always plays a role in the breaking out of revolution. "In its grossest form", says Johnson, "elite intransigence is the 'frank', willful pursuit of reactionary politics by an elite—that is, policies that tend to exacerbate rather than rectify a dissynchronized social structure."⁴⁶⁹

In the case of post-liberation Greece we can see a society suffering from an acute case of "power deflation". The country's leaders, however, instead of attempting to diffuse the revolutionary situation, acted with "intransigence". They implemented "reactionary" policies that contributed to society's disaffection. When a society is beset by "power deflation" and by a loss of authority, the sole basis of interaction becomes the primitive logic of "deterrence, maintained by the elite's monopoly of armed force." Under these conditions, argues Johnson, the threat of revolution is at its maximum.⁴⁷⁰ This is exactly what occurred in Greece between 1944-46.

Looking at the period 1941-1949 in retrospect, it can be argued that Britain's and later America's achievement in Greece was to prevent the Communists from taking power. It can also be said that Western policy benefited Greece, but only if one assumes that parliamentary democracy is a superior form of government to communism; "and that Greece stood a better chance...from British intervention than she would have had had she been led by the KKE."⁴⁷¹

"During the years 1945 and 1946, a series of rightist-dominated governments misruled the country. Their only program was to perpetuate their power and to get the King back. They persecuted non-Royalists...allowed an incredibly corrupt oligarchy in Athens to wreck the national economy...These governments failed completely to give the people what they so desperately needed—food, shelter, jobs, and security."⁴⁷²

No less than seventeen different governments ruled

Greece between the battle of Athens in December 1944 and the Diomedes cabinet in June 1949. All men and parties ruling Greece ever since the liberation were consistently right of center.⁴⁷³ Royalism and conservatism gained steadily at the expense of both socialism and republicanism. Royalists insisted that Greece's salvation lay in the return of the Monarch. There seemed to be no middle alternative. One was either Royalist and hence anti-Communist or anti-Royalist and consequently Communist.

"By the middle of 1945", writes Geoffrey Chandler, "the prisons were full...long detention in overcrowded prisons meant...that prisoners go in as ordinary people and come out as communists."⁴⁷⁴ Within this extremely polarized atmosphere, entered the Americans. They assumed that there was a communist conspiracy directed by the Soviets. They also assumed that the Communist "bloc" was monolithic. "If Yugoslavia was aiding the Greek guerrillas", the Americans reasoned, "the Russians must be doing so as well".⁴⁷⁵ Thus, the Greek conflict was placed within the more general framework of the newly declared "Cold War". There is no evidence, however, to support the view that the Soviets aided or even supported the Greek revolution. On the contrary, Stalin seems to have been quite willing to sacrifice the KKE in exchange for a free hand "to suppress non-communist elements in Eastern Europe."⁴⁷⁶ It would not be the last time that the Soviets would side with an "enemy" over an "ally".

Apart from Soviet unwillingness to support its effort, the KKE made the mistake of misjudging the conditions necessary for a successful revolution. The DSE suffered from a lack of manpower as well as poor morale. A Greek Government study stated that only twenty per cent of the DSE's soldiers were volunteers.⁴⁷⁷ Morale was low in the DSE's ranks as well as in the Greek countryside. Maltezos writes that:

"During the resistance years betrayals were few because the character of the struggle was one of national liberation. During the Third Round, however, in every town there were people loyal to the King and the Government willing to betray us..."⁴⁷⁸

Normally, says Johnson, socialized men do not resort to violence except as a last resort, although the perception of what constitutes a last resort may be colored by an ideology.⁴⁷⁹ The Greek Communists by 1946 perceived violence as the only way to gain power. Had they realized, however, from earlier on like Tito and Mao that "power comes from the barrel of a gun", and had they pursued that road following the country's 1944 liberation, the story of the KKE would have been dramatically different. Instead, they chose to abide by legality. They pursued alliances with the royalists, the republicans, the British, and in general with all those who were considered their "class enemies".

In Yugoslavia, on the other hand, Tito's National Parliament (AVNOJ) deprived the royalist Government-in-exile of its authority. While this was a risky move, it nevertheless

showed the world and especially the British that because of Tito's determined stance, they had to reconcile themselves to a "fait accompli". "The balance of forces in Yugoslavia became such that it was clear to every realistic politician what sort of regime would emerge from the war."⁴⁸⁰ Tito had realized from early on the situation of his party and he later confessed that:

"I felt myself to be an independent leader from the very beginning in 1941; I felt completely independent, especially when we saw that nobody would help us and we were on our own."⁴⁸¹

The shifting balance of power in the Balkans, the Tito-Stalin split in 1948, the mediocrity of the KKE's leaders, the divisions within its politburo, the determination of the Truman administration to shoulder the weight of the anti-communist struggle previously assumed by Churchill, the cohesion of the non-communist forces, the adherence of Stalin to his agreement with the West, the missed opportunities by the KKE, and finally the increasing vigour instilled into the GNA by American aid and by General Papagos, all these contributed to the final defeat of the Greek Communist revolution.⁴⁸²

The Greek Communist Party initiated a revolution at a time when the conditions for its success were not present. In 1946, the majority of the Greek people preferred work and reconstruction to revolution and further unrest. This move by the KKE, however, was not in itself a mistake. The Communists were justified in feeling cheated, and the persecution they suffered seemed to warrant a change. Furthermore, as

the Cuban revolution has since shown, all "necessary" conditions need not be present for a communist success. Where the mistake of the KKE lay, was in the mediocrity of its leadership which was called to the forefront at a time when the need was for exceptional personalities. The Greek rebellion, then, had to face not only a determined Western world but also its own ineffective leaders. It was only natural, then, that defeat came when it did.

The KKE pursued legality and political compromise at the time when the conditions for revolutionary change were present. The Greek Communists sought deals and agreements in their mistaken belief that the Greek "bourgeoisie" and its Western allies would sit idly by while communism would take its leading place in the country, something they felt was theirs by right. ~~They~~ failed to listen to Marxist warnings that capitalism can be defeated only through a struggle which will first reduce them to "despair and anguish". By pursuing such a road, the KKE proved itself to be non-revolutionary. Not drawing the proper lessons from its political defeat, the party then attempted to revolutionize, and to use force in its quest for power. By that time, however, the conditions were reversed. The time was now suitable for politics rather than warfare. Once again the leadership failed to correctly estimate the circumstances. Worse yet, in undertaking the revolution, it made blunders and proved itself incapable of governing a party let alone a nation. It was to the KKE's misfortune that at the most critical

period of its time its leaders proved to be smaller than the times. Had the KKE included in its leading ranks a man like Mao or Tito, the outcome might have been different. History and therefore revolutions are shaped by great men following exceptional policies. The KKE unfortunately was blessed by neither.

Thus ended the Greek Communist revolution. By its failure it joined many other unsuccessful communist attempts that took place both before and after throughout the world. What distinguishes the Greek revolution, however, is that it occurred at a very critical time in the world's history. At a time when a new balance of international power was emerging, characterized by the "Cold War". It was to the Greek Communist Party's bad fortune, that its revolution occurred at a time when western capitalism was determined to reassert its authority.

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