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The Communist Army of Greece, 1947-1949:
A Study of Its Failure

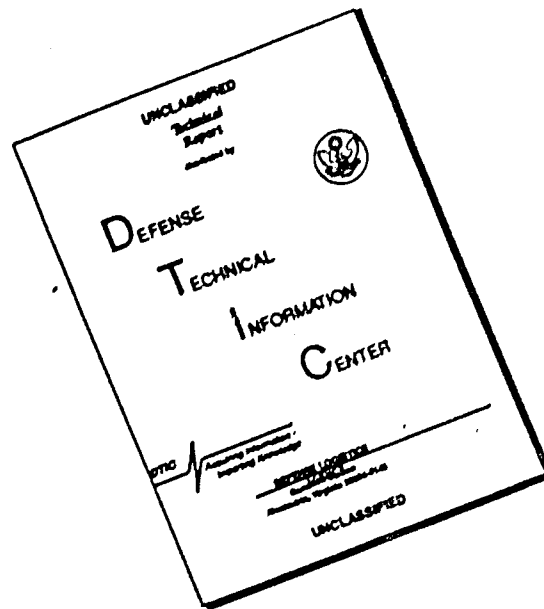
Thomas A. Haase, MAJ, USA
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027

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A Master of Military Art and Science thesis presented to the
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Investigation reveals that the Greek Communist Party strategically lost the war when the Central Committee reintroduced the question of the creation of an independent Macedonia as part of the Party's objectives. On the military side of the problem, the decision by the Communists to switch from sub-conventional to conventional warfare was the most serious mistake made. This change of policy was predicated on the existence of a large popular base from which to operate. This study demonstrates that there was no large popular base.

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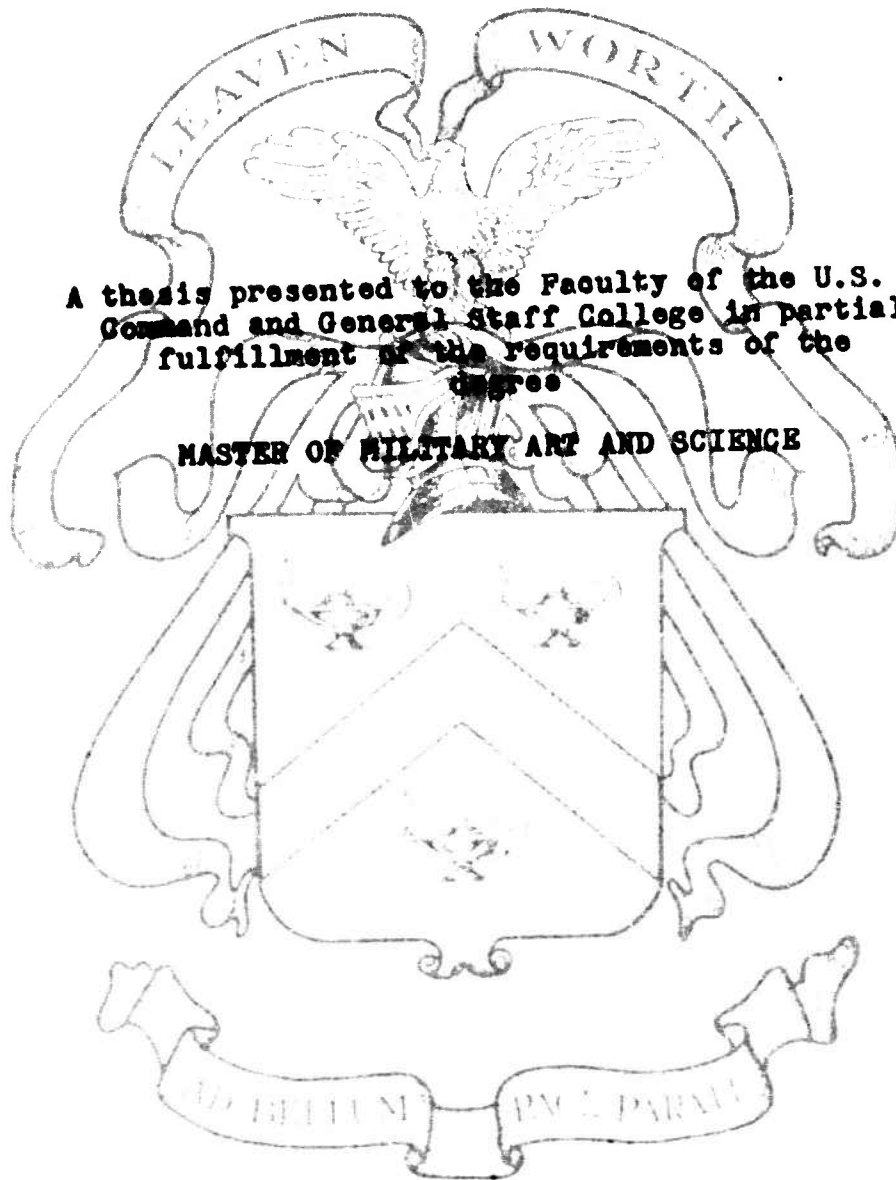
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A STUDY OF ITS FAILURE

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

**THOMAS A. HAASE, MAJ, USA
A.B., Xavier University, 1965
M.A., University of Cincinnati, 1974**

**Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1976**

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate Major Thomas A. Haase

Title of Thesis The Communist Army of Greece 1944-1949:

A Study of Its Failure

Approved by:

[Signature], Research Advisor

[Signature], Member, Graduate Research Faculty

[Signature], Member, Graduate Research Faculty

[Signature], Member, Consulting Faculty

Accepted this 23rd day of April 1976 by [Signature]

[Signature], Director, Master of Military Art

and Science.

This opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the individual student author and do not necessarily represent the views of either the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency.

ABSTRACT

This research project is designed to examine the empirical evidence available to date concerning the reasons for the defeat of the Communist Army of Greece in 1949. This work is the result of this author's endeavor to understand and evaluate why the Communist Insurgency failed in Greece.

This failure is specifically addressed herein to determine whether the Communist defeat was the result of military action or political turmoil within the Communist Party of Greece. In order to answer this question, the study provides an historical interpretation of all the significant events during the existence of the Party from 1919 to 1949.

Investigation reveals that the Greek Communist Party strategically lost the war when the Central Committee reintroduced the question of the creation of an independent Macedonia as part of the Party's objectives. On the military side of the problem, the decision by the Communists to switch from sub-conventional to conventional warfare was the most serious mistake made. This change of policy was predicated on the existence of a large popular base from which to operate. This study demonstrates that there was no large popular base.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is very difficult in extracting oneself from the daily pace of activities to indulge in a critical review of a particular aspect of history. This is especially true in the area of the Greek Civil War where there seems to be a monopoly on the examination of this historic event by a very few authors. It is with the idea of reevaluating this War and of providing some fresh insights regarding this historic event, that this study is undertaken.

The fact that I have pursued this project to its end, and that the initial zeal did not falter to the point of doing only what was necessary to fulfill a requirement, is primarily due to my mentor, Professor Joseph R. Goldman, at the Command and General Staff College. For the inordinate amount of time he spent working on the project with me, and for his guidance and assistance, I wish to express my sincere gratitude.

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INTRODUCTION

The Civil War that raged in Greece from 1947 to 1949 was the first full-scale Communist "War of National Liberation" in Europe during the Atomic Age. This research effort will endeavor to widen the spectrum of knowledge concerning the reasons for the defeat of the Communist guerrillas in this Civil War.

The failure of Greek Communist Insurgency is most often attributed to the closing of the Yugoslavian border by Tito, which deprived the Communists of a safe sanctuary into which they could retreat with impunity. Another reason proffered for the defeat was the massive American military aid that was given to the Greek Forces, thereby allowing them to overwhelm the guerrillas. It is the purpose of this study to reexamine the reasons for the defeat of the Communist Army in 1949. In order to accomplish this examination, the scope of the paper will be to determine if the primary reason for the failure of the Communist Army of Greece in 1949 was military action on the part of the Communist Army, or the political turmoil that existed within the Communist Party of Greece, or perhaps even a combination of events somewhere between these two extremes.

With that stated purpose and scope as parameters on the subject of the Greek Civil War, this study is intended to provide an analysis of the Communist failure to achieve victory against the Government of Greece.

In order to describe the historical setting for the events contained herein, it is not necessary to relate the exploits of Alexander the Great or even Constantine. There are, however, certain aspects of Greek history that should be mentioned in at least a chronological sequence for one to appreciate fully the events discussed in this study.

Greece was under Ottoman rule for four hundred years. This Turkish domination ended by an armed insurrection that eventually lead to Greek Independence in 1829. Subsequently, the country was ruled by a monarchy for the rest of the century. There was nevertheless a successful Revolution against the King in 1843 for the purpose of obtaining a Constitution. By 1864 the Constitution imposed limitations on the Sovereign similar to those imposed on the kings of England.

On the international scene, during the century following the Greek Revolution, the Greeks fought three wars against Turkey, between 1821 and 1908, for the independence of areas they considered part of Greece. This Irredentism culminated in an attempt to dominate a large part of Asia Minor. This last military operation, in 1922, which was a disaster for Greece, finally killed the expansionist dream

for the restoration of the great glory of Classical, or Byzantine Greece.

The "Megali Idea," the Great Dream or Idea, was dead. The Greeks were free to turn their attention to social and economic problems. As a consequence of this introspection, the Monarchy came under attack. The major domestic political concern in the Interwar Era was the Constitutional Question. This was basically the Question of where the King fit in the Greek political sphere in what the Greeks called a "Crowned Democracy." In the attempt to resolve this and other issues, the Army revolted in 1922. Shortly thereafter, by 1924 a Republic was established which endured coups until 1935 when a National Referendum returned the King to the throne.

The major external event that impacted on the Greek scene during the 1920's and 1930's, was the massive population exchange that occurred as a result of the defeat of the Greek Army in Asia Minor in 1922. This enforced repatriation of the Greeks from Anatolia increased the population of the homeland by twenty percent and thus contributed to the development of a rural and urban proletariat.

By 1935 there emerged a rather large Communist organization in Greece which was regarded as a part of a Pan-Slavic wedge trying to cut into Greece. The widespread feeling among many Greeks led to the re-emergence of Russophobia, which was translated into a real dread of the Slavic hordes to the North.

On 4 August 1936, the King used the pretext of a Communist threat to the security of the Nation to dissolve the Government and establish a dictatorship under John Metaxas. The Communist Party was forced to exist as a clandestine organization during the era of Metaxas. This underground existence, together with the elimination of other opposition parties by the Dictator, helped to establish a cohesive infrastructure that produced the only united political party during the subsequent German Occupation. Metaxas governed Greece throughout the turbulent Pre-War Period and the heroic victory of Greek arms against the Italian Invasion of 28 October 1940. By the end of April 1941, however, Germany had occupied all of Greece.

After the Second World War, the Communist organization, that had blossomed as a Resistance Army against the German Occupation, engaged in two unsuccessful armed confrontations with the legal Government of Greece. These attempts occurred between December 1944 and December 1949 with Communist control of the country as the objective.

In order to evaluate the reasons for the failure of the Communists to achieve a victory, this study will be divided into five chapters. The first two chapters provide a history of the Communist Party of Greece and introduce the proximate causes of the Civil Wars. The third chapter is an examination of the efforts by the Communists to organize an Army capable of conducting guerrilla operations against

the Government in order to secure political influence. The study is focused on the military application of strategic and tactical thought by the Communists during the initial stages of organization. The fourth chapter primarily evaluates the political structure of the Communist Party and their Army during the 1948-1949 period.

In the last chapter the study addresses the reasons why the Communists failed. In short, the strategic and tactical mistakes (both political and military) that led to the defeat of the Communist Insurgency in 1949, in light of the information presently available, will be evaluated.

Chapter 1

ORGANIZATION OF THE KKE

The origin of the Communist Party of Greece, or the KKE, can be traced back to November 1918 when the first national meeting of Greek Socialists took place at the Persaeus Hotel in Athens.¹ The reported purpose of the KKE organization was to provide solutions to the social problems which were infecting the country. This utopian idealism developed potential for violent revolution when the Greek Socialists became the Communist Party of Greece.²

In the formative stages of the new Communist Party in Greece, two divergent trends took shape: one faction was inclined to favor union of the Party with the Communist International; and the other favored non-involvement without international affiliation.³ The segment of the Party that favored union with the Communist International, received support in 1919 and 1920 from the Bolshevik Regime in Russia.

¹The official name of the Communist Party in Greece is the Kommunistikon Komma Ellados and will be abbreviated as KKE throughout the rest of this study.

²Edgar O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949 (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 30.

³Dimitrios G. Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 2-3.

This occurred because the Soviets sought to spread their influence through the medium of the Comintern.⁴ The faction favoring non-involvement with external organizations failed and the pro-Comintern group, with external assistance, prevailed.

The Communists' organization of Greece in the 1920's and 1930's existed amid an agrarian society. This meant that the social conditions of Greece did not fit the classic model for a proletarian revolution in the Marxist tradition. The urban proletariat consisted of close to 36,000 workers who were employed in about 2,000 industrial concerns throughout Greece. The total population categorized as urban dwellers ranged from 18 to 22 percent.⁵

In contrast to pure Marxist Doctrine, the original KKE was composed of a small group of intellectuals and students who admired the Russian Revolution. This group, after its formal adoption into the Comintern, rigorously followed Moscow's variety of Communism. This adherence to Kremlin Doctrine proved to be detrimental to the successful operation of the KKE in later years.

The KKE, in pursuance of achieving a Marxist revolution, managed to infiltrate the existing poorly organized

⁴Arthur E. Adams, Stalin and His Times (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1972), pp. 10-11.

⁵Douglas Dakin, The Unification of Greece 1770-1923 (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1972), p. 249.

trade unions by "snapping up key positions until about half of them were Communist-controlled or dominated."⁶ The KKE found a ready source of recruits within these organized unions which were in a rudimentary stage of development. Another organization that proved to be a target for exploitation by the KKE was the Army. During the early 1920's, the Greek military establishment was in shambles after the catastrophe in Asia Minor, in which the Greek Army was defeated by the Turks.⁷

After this defeat, the KKE claimed that during the Asia Minor campaign, small elements of the Greek Army were members of the KKE, and that these uncoordinated elements disrupted communications and betrayed classified information to the Turks. The KKE asserted that these elements were acting as agents for the Soviet Union, knowing that the Soviets supported Kemal under the terms of the Turko-Soviet Treaty of 1921. Therefore, they acted in consonance with the Communist

⁶O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 30. One exception to the unions being poorly organized was the maritime union. The area of the greatest infiltration however occurred among the tobacco workers, especially those from Asia Minor.

⁷See A.A. Pallis, Greece's Anatolian Venture and After (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1937) for a detailed account of the Greek attempt to secure Smyrna and its hinterland as a Greek possession and the total defeat of the Greek military at the hands of Mustapha Kemal. Additionally, it must be pointed out that the Greek Army had been part of an expeditionary force against the Russians in 1919 and this precluded rapid development of friendly ties between Greece and the Soviet Union.

International's objectives.⁸ In December 1924, the Third Extraordinary Congress formally enrolled the KKE into the Third Comintern; simultaneously the KKE adopted a policy of support for the establishment of a Macedonian state.⁹

In reality, the KKE accepted what the Greeks perceived as a Slavic Thesis, that a Slavic Macedonian nationality existed and desired to establish itself in the ancient territory of Macedonia.¹⁰ The Macedonian Question erupted into a contest between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece for certain territories along their common border, which came into being as a result of the Balkan Wars and the First World War. The greatest prize to be achieved by the establishment of a Slavic Macedonia state would have been access to the Aegean by Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. To most Greeks the Slavic struggle for Macedonia was an attempt to de-Hellenize northern Greece and to undermine the Greek state. This problem, and its effects on the KKE will be explored throughout the remainder of this study. To imagine that the Greek Communist veterans were the originators of this proposal is difficult. It would seem, in order

⁸Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 11.

⁹To KKE apo to 1918 eos to 1931, (Athens, 1947), Vol. I, p. 358. Cited from Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 1.

¹⁰Macedonious, Stalin and the Macedonian Question (St. Louis: Pearlstone Publishing Company, 1918), pp. 23-24. Also Elizabeth Baker, Macedonia (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1950), p. 3.

to be accepted by the Greek Communists, that moral coercive power and Party discipline were brought to bear on the infrastructure of the KKE. After all, their own ethnic compatriots from Asia Minor were located in that area.

The problem of providing support for the founding of an autonomous Macedonia would become a millstone around the neck of the KKE:

From the early days of the party no other issue has caused more trouble in its relation with the Greek people and within its ranks than the so-called "national question," i.e., the party's continued¹¹ agitation for a separate Macedonian state.

In January 1926 the KKE was outlawed for the first time as a direct result of an act of the Party's newspaper, Rizopastis (Radical), which proclaimed support for Macedonian Independence:

The KKE's slavish adherence to the Comintern line of thought, its support of the Balkan Communist Federation and its advocacy of autonomy for Macedonia and Thrace were contrary to the¹² majority Greek opinion and inclination.

After this, the KKE was an unpopular party within Greece. Even within the Party the "National Question" was

¹¹ Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 1. This whole problem of a plan to create an independent Macedonia, with the accompanying difficulties that would certainly ensue between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece, was known as the National Question. The Bulgarian Communists hoped to impose their will on the Yugoslavian Communist Party to acquire control of the Macedonian territory in Yugoslavia.

¹² O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 30. Pangalos, the dictator of Greece in 1926, was having problems with Bulgaria and the outlawing of the KKE was directly aimed at the Bulgarians.

too much for the "petty-bourgeois intellectuals" who thought as nationalistic Greeks. Consequently, a nonviolent purge occurred; and by 1927 the KKE was considered nothing more than a mere mouthpiece for the Soviet party line in Greece:¹³

From 1927 to its ultimate defeat in 1949, the KKE followed a Moscow-oriented party line. During the period between 1920 and 1932, the KKE had no major influence in the political sphere. This was probably due to the fact that the early Party was comprised mostly of intellectuals and, therefore, was small.

The parliamentary system, which was dominated by powerful political figures of the time, was not swayed by a party of some 2,500 members. The KKE, because of its intellectual and proletarian base, had not penetrated the mass of agrarian peasants to form a Popular Front. Unlike the other Balkan countries there was no problem in the area of land reform. Since there was no land issue among the peasants, there was no major Agrarian Party. This unique situation in Greece precluded major exploitation of the farmers by the Communists.¹⁴

¹³Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 29.

¹⁴Ibid. There was one small agrarian party in Greece, but it did not have much political experience. In 1909 the land question was resolved. This was the culmination of certain redistributions of lands in 1821 and 1881.

Consequently, in order to increase the performance of the KKE in 1931, the Soviets dispatched to Greece Nikos Zachariades,¹⁵ a Moscow-trained and trusted adherent of the strict Bolshevik line. This man knew that "the test of real success could only consider (sic) a tangible approach towards the revolutionary conquest of power by the party."¹⁶

In December 1931 the Fourth Plenum of the KKE voted Zachariades to be the head of the Party. In 1935, primarily owing to an internal Party controversy over whether the KKE should follow national or international objectives, Zachariades, by combining splintered factions of the Party, became the first man to fill the newly-created post of Secretary-General of the KKE.

Under Zachariades, between 1932 and 1935, a cell-type infrastructure was built. This organization was used to create labor unrest which served to improve the meager political standing of the KKE in Greece. Most of these endeavors ultimately failed owing to lack of popular support.

¹⁵ Nikos Zachariades was a Greek born in Nicomedia in 1920. Between 1922 and 1925 he studied in Moscow at the Communist University of Eastern Europe. In 1926 he was imprisoned in Greece for agitating in favor of a Macedonian state. After his release he returned to the Soviet Union from 1928 to 1931. Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 289; also see O'Sallance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, in passim.

¹⁶ Franz Borkenan, World Communism: A History of the International (New York: W.W. Norton, 1939), p. 177.

Among these various efforts there was one notable success in attaining political power by the KKE; and that came in 1936. It was the high-water mark for the KKE in the legitimate application of political influence during the interwar period. This power was achieved by the combination of leadership by Zachariades; his refutation of a program for Macedonian Independence; and the introduction of proportional representation.¹⁷

Proportional representation was introduced in 1932 by the Liberal Party because it had lost popular support. The Liberals hoped that by the employment of this system they would minimize the electoral losses that would certainly occur under the old majority system. Under the majority system the winning party took all of the parliamentary seats from a district. This electoral change had unforeseen consequences. It allowed a small party to acquire seats in the parliament and to exercise political power far in excess of its actual strength.

Zachariades was quick to realize the potential for the KKE of a system of proportional representation and started to take actions designed to capitalize on this new possibility. In the short span of four years under Zachariades' leadership,

¹⁷Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 70. Proportional representation was used in Greece from 1924 to 1928 and was reintroduced in 1932.

the Party membership increased from about 19,000 to 100,000.¹⁸ This was accomplished by taking advantage of the political instability and the worldwide economic crisis. The KKE also renounced the unpopular policy of support for an independent Macedonia. This disavowal removed the major stumbling block in the recruitment of new members. The other factor that substantially aided recruitment from discontented groups, was the disunity exhibited on the part of the Government. The first manifestation of turmoil in the Government in the post-war era occurred when the Monarchy was replaced by a Republic. During this constitutional transition, the new Republic endured many assaults; the last two occurred in 1933 and 1935, when Liberal elements attempted coups.¹⁹ Largely as a result of these events the Monarchy was reestablished (3 November 1935).

The overall effect of the leadership of Zachariades, and the electoral system of proportional representation, was that the KKE acquired fifteen seats in Parliament. These seats allowed the Communist delegates to dictate the selection of the next prime minister, given the even distribution of seats between the Monarchists and Liberals.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 97.

²⁰ O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 30. The Liberals stated publicly that they would not form a government with the Communists. There was only one vote difference (Monarchists 143, Liberals 142) between the two major parties within the Parliament.

In 1936, the KKE sponsored mass-demonstrations in the large cities in support of their representatives. Zachariades was largely responsible for the instigation of the riots that ensued, and took them as a sign of popular support for the KKE.

In view of this newly-acquired mass-support, the Party decided to push the process to the revolutionary stage by proclaiming a General Strike for 5 August 1936.²¹ If the Communists had been trying to produce a Fascist-type regime, within the legal Government of Greece, they could not have picked a better time.

The conclusion that conditions were ripe for a Revolution probably led the Party to a false sense of security and power. The large increase in membership, together with the seemingly decisive power of their delegates in Parliament attenuated the real power of the government in the minds of the KKE.²²

The power of the Government, regardless of apparent weaknesses, was exercised with alacrity. On 4 August 1936 the King, George II, established a dictatorship under Metaxas.²³

²¹Dheka Khronia Agones (Ten Years of Struggle), (Central Committee of the KKE, 1946), p. 132.

²²This was because none of the major parties would cooperate with the Communists. See also Everett J. Marder, Southeastern Europe, II, 1 (1975), pp. 53-69.

²³Metaxas was an ex-military man and a member of Parliament at that time. He controlled less votes than the Communists. From 1936 to 1940, he was the dictator of Greece.

Metaxas had convinced the King that the Communists would threaten the Constitutional Monarchy, if they were successful in the strike set for 5 August.

The organization of the KKE was attacked ruthlessly and destroyed by Metaxas's secret police. The large party, which Zachariades had developed, disintegrated between 1936 and 1940.²⁴ But the lessons learned from the underground survival of the Party during the Dictatorship of the Fourth of August, would produce a KKE that was capable of plunging Greece into a devastating Civil War in 1946.²⁵

The dragnet that Metaxas used against the Communists produced the leader of the KKE: Zachariades was incarcerated until the invasion of Greece by Germany in 1941. At that point, contact was lost and Zachariades temporarily disappeared from the Greek stage, having been deported to a German concentration camp.

Metaxas also employed his Security Police to achieve the disintegration of the KKE, by creating through his agents a parallel government-controlled Communist Party; Politburo; and newspaper "vying for the allegiance of the remaining party followers and spreading even more confusion with their conflicting and partly police-directed pronouncements."²⁶

²⁴Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, pp. 112-125.

²⁵O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 30.

²⁶Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 114.

As a result of the Government's efforts, the KKE was almost eliminated. On 27 April 1941, as the Nazi forces entered Athens and began the German Occupation, the Communist Party of Greece was a skeleton organization without effective leadership.

Under the German Occupation, a spontaneous revolt against the invaders began in the mountain areas of Greece.²⁷ In Greek history, this was an area that had a rich tradition of rebellion against oppression. In the Pindus Mountains the Greeks historically conducted guerrilla warfare, especially the various forms of insurgency during the centuries of Turkish rule.²⁸ The legend of the heroic Guerrilla Fighter was reborn in 1941.

There are some who proclaim that these Guerrillas were organized, or inspired, in their initial stages by the Communists. Based on the historical example of previous insurgent movements in the mountains, and the deplorable state of the KKE in 1941, it is very improbable that the Communists were solely responsible for this Resistance effort. The organization of the overall Resistance movement after 1942 was, in large part, done by the

²⁷ John Campbell and Philip Sherrard, Modern Greece (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1968), p. 175. This work presents some cogent reason why these authors think the Resistance effort in Greece was not completely spontaneous. Also see Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 11.

²⁸ Athenian, Inside the Colonels' Greece (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972), p. 11.

Communists; but the initial Resistance was completely spontaneous in nature.²⁹ It is logical to conclude that the Greeks did not wait to be organized against the tyrant, but immediately fought for their freedom as they had done for centuries.

After the National Greek Government fled from Greece in 1941, the KKE started to reorganize. George Siantos, a new leader, emerged to replace Zachariades.³⁰ He recognized the need to push the Party objectives aside for a while and concentrated on the immediate needs of his occupied country.³¹

It is important to highlight one of the dominant themes that constantly influenced the Party leadership during the

²⁹ Dominique Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949 (London: NLB, 1972), pp. 11-12.

³⁰ Extracted from Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 298. George Siantos was born in Karthitsa in 1890, son of a poor family of tobacco growers. His formal education did not go beyond fourth grade. He worked from the age of thirteen as a tobacco worker in Karthitsa. At the age of fifteen he became a member of the Tobacco Workers' Union and soon began to take part in strikes, demonstrations, and riots. He joined the Party in 1920. In 1934 he became the Secretary of the Piraeus party organization. He was arrested in 1936 and did not regain his freedom until September 1941. He was elected Secretary of the Central Committee in January 1942 and was the leading figure of the party throughout the resistance. He was a nationalist. Also see Dominique Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, in passim.

³¹ The Germans released many Communists from jail and thus aided the KKE's reorganization. It must be remembered that Russia and Germany were still allied at this time. See W.A. Murtley, and others, A Short History of Greece (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), p. 145.

hostilities of this period, 1941-1949. It is not a new concept but one that helps in explaining the Party's failure to expand, during the early days of the Resistance, while illustrating the Party's inflexibility in attempting to superimpose the Russian model of Revolution within Greece:

The Central Committee was deeply suspicious of the emerging movement, rooted as it was in rural banditry flavored with folklore. The insurrectional model current at the time leaned heavily on the urban proletariat, and its adherents tended to an atavistic Stalinist distrust of the peasantry. ³²

The KKE did not understand the rural struggle that was developing in the mountains. They were blinded by their Ideology of Urban Insurrection; consequently, the Party leaders could not fully comprehend the scope nor potential of the rural struggle. There were exceptions, however, and Andreas Tzimas, a member of the Politburo and later Political Officer of the Communist Army, urged the Party to organize a Communist Resistance Movement in the mountains. ³³

O'Ballance, in The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, states that the KKE founded a Resistance Army on 27 September 1941. ³⁴

³² Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, p. 11.

³³ Eudes states that Andreas Tzimas was a Mountain Man, a native of Macedonia. He was more refined and cultivated than the other early insurgents. Tzimas managed to overcome the Party's reservations about rural insurrection and sent a man to organize the resistance in the mountains. Ibid., p. 7.

³⁴ O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 149.

However, Stavrianos reports that the actual date the KKE announced its decision was 10 April 1942.³⁵ The unit that was established to gain control of the resistance movements was called the National Liberation Front, or EAM.³⁶

Tzimas sent Aris Velouchiotis to the mountains to create the military arm of EAM.³⁷ It was called the Greek Popular Liberation Army, or ELAS.³⁸

ELAS took great care to conceal its true Communist identity. This effort included recruiting a respected non-Communist member, Stefanos Saraphis, a Republican, as the Commander of ELAS. It was, nevertheless, completely controlled by Communists.³⁹

³⁵ L.S. Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity (Chicago: Henry Regonery Co., 1952), p. 65.

³⁶ The official name was Ethnikon Apeleftheretikon Metopon (the National Liberation Front) and it will be identified as EAM throughout this study.

³⁷ Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, pp. 6-8. Aris's real name was Thanasis Klaras. His nom-de-guerre derived from the god of war, Ares. He was born in Velouchi. Aris's family belonged to the liberal bourgeoisie. In 1929, at age twenty-three, he became a leader of the Young Communists. In July 1939, during the dictatorship, he signed a public confession of repentance for being a Communist. As Klara he was a marked man and subsequently changed his name. Tzimas befriended him and propelled him to the head of the new movement. Also Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 149-150; O'Hallance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 51.

³⁸ The official name is Ellinikos Laikos Apelftherotikos Stratos (Greek Popular (or National) Liberation Army) and it will be referred to as ELAS throughout this study.

³⁹ C.M. Woodhouse, Apple of Discord (London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1948), p. 60.

The name of ELAS had a popular, as well as emotional and patriotic appeal, since it reproduces the sound of the Greek word that is the name of their country (Hellas). ELAS's and especially EAM's policy was to "establish in Greece, by force or political infiltration, a People's Democracy."⁴⁰

As a consequence of the philosophy of patriotic resistance, the leadership of EAM/ELAS insured that military operations were conducted against the Germans. The military aspect, however, was always of secondary importance, when compared to the goal of insuring the existence of an adequate force with which to establish undisputed political control within Greece on Liberation Day.⁴¹

As a corollary of this political objective, there existed the requirement to destroy, or bring under ELAS's dominance, any other resistance movement. This goal was achieved in December 1944, when ELAS defeated the only other major resistance movement that posed a threat to the Communists, the Army of EDES.⁴² But by late 1944, however, British military presence had replaced the destroyed Republican organization thereby nullifying ELAS's gains.

⁴⁰Campbell and Sherrard, Modern Greece, pp. 174-195.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 175.

⁴²This organization, Ellinikos Dimokratikos Ethnikos Syndesmos (Greek Democratic National Army), known as EDES, was supported by Britain during the war and if this had not been done "the whole of Greece would have been controlled by EAM/ELAS when the Germans left it." Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, pp. 82-83.

Subsequently Great Britain sponsored and supported the returned Government of National Unity.

The war within Greece during the Occupation, and the First Civil War (December 1944), was fought by the same Communist leadership. In retrospect, it can be seen that divergence existed within the highest echelons of the KKE:

There was a conflict between the flexible "opportunist" line, which Siantos supported, and the dogmatic line advocated by the new generation of Party cadres, which was characterized by unconditional alignment with Moscow. ⁴³

Siantos probably reached the highest position in the KKE by not adopting an extreme stance on either side of the Party's internecine struggles concerning which policy the Party should adopt on the National Question. The major antagonist of Siantos was Yiannis Ionnides,⁴⁴ who was part of the revolutionary group and adhered to the dogma of Moscow's infallibility.⁴⁵

Ionnides and his followers had reached the same conclusion as Tzimas with regard to the mountain struggle:

⁴³Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 29

⁴⁴Yiannis Ionnides was a barber by trade. Born in Volos in 1901 and a Party member since 1923. He studied with Zeehariades in Moscow and returned to Greece in 1931. He was jailed under Metaxas and liberated by a guerrilla band during the Occupation. Ibid., p. 157.

⁴⁵Campbell and Sherrard, Modern Greece, p. 175.

...except that in their eyes the final struggle must be led by the revolutionary elite following the canonical model of the October Revolution. Aris and the Kapetanios - the mountain, bearded guerrillas, "roundheads" - were suspected of all the libertarian sins. 46

Even within the revolutionary camp of the KKE, opposing courses of action could be recognized. Tzimas had been sent to the mountains to insure the compliance, on the part of the leaders of ELAS, to Party doctrine. He tried to achieve this, but one major problem seems to have been ever-present: the cadres of the KKE and EAM were in Athens and did not understand the realities of a rural resistance.⁴⁷ As was mentioned previously, the Athens leadership did not attempt to adopt the Soviet model of Revolution to the local conditions, but Tzimas, as an on-the-spot observer, would try to accomplish that task.

The task was facilitated because the milieu in which ELAS operated was sympathetic to the guerrilla cause.⁴⁸ As an outgrowth of this, the KKE, through ELAS, had an enormous opportunity to capitalize on the conditions prevalent in the mountains but failed to exercise that opportunity. The reason for this failure was that the KKE did not have a social program; probably due to the lack of trained cadre in this field.

⁴⁶ Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 157.

⁴⁷ Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 62.

⁴⁸ Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 41.

It had a good military system, however, and exercised competent administration in the mountain areas.

There were many programs initiated by ELAS in the two-thirds of Greece that it controlled but these efforts had no lasting effect. The chief characteristics of the administrative system of ELAS were the establishment of councils for local self-government and rapid dispensing of justice by People's Courts. Other shortlived programs, such as a limited land reform program and the creation of youth movements, failed to produce the popular-support base that EAM/ELAS wanted to create.⁴⁹

The failure to institute effective programs in the mountains was a direct result of the separation of the ideological headquarters in Athens from the implementing unit in the mountains. The KKE's failure to appreciate that the conflict in Occupied Greece had to be political in nature at all times, not just on Liberation Day, would be the major strategic error committed during the Occupation.

An effort to correct this inadequacy in the overall program was made by offering the command of ELAS to Stefanos Saraphis, a well known Republican officer and a figure in the abortive Venezelist coup of 1 March 1935, who once organized his own resistance movement.⁵⁰ It was a common belief that Saraphis

⁴⁹ Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, 1943-1949, pp. 81-85.

⁵⁰ O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 82; also see Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 50. Colonel Saraphis was one of the most prestigious figures in the Greek Army. He had supported Venizelos in 1916 in the pro-Allied, anti-Monarchist Revolt. For his hand in the 1935 coup Metaxas exiled him.

was forced to take command at actual gunpoint, but this is unlikely in view of his subsequent writings. It is certainly probable that strong pressure was brought to bear in order to accomplish this change of allegiance. It could have been threats to his family or, what is more likely, the threat of reprisals among his guerrilla followers. Nevertheless, the KKE certainly realized the advantages to be accrued by the enrollment of Saraphis:

The political impact was considerable, and large numbers of officers who had been hesitant about joining the underground began flowing into ELAS, where their numbers soon rose as high as seven hundred. ⁵¹

The next major political effort to emerge from the KKE was the establishment of the political Committee for National Liberation, or PEEA, in March 1944.⁵² This was the result of the leaderships' desire to be recognized officially by the British. The British controlled the purse strings of the Resistance and demonstrated close cooperation with the legal government of Greece and only a permissive tolerance of ELAS. The Party also attempted to change its urban political outlook, which hindered its appreciation of the rural-mountain struggle by the creation of the PEEA, a front for the KKE.

In order to understand fully the ramifications of this complex situation, one must realize that from a small core of

⁵¹Ibid., p. 61. Saraphis took command of ELAS 20 May 1943.

⁵²The official title was Politiki Epitropi Ethnikis Apeleftherosis (Political Committee for National Liberation). It will be referred to as PEEA in this study.

resistance fighters, a mass movement finally evolved. During the build-up there was no change in the higher levels of the Party leadership, not a single man who joined the Party "was admitted to the top echelons of the Party leadership."⁵³

The KKE leadership, attempting to show the connection it had with the people, and also to demonstrate possession of some political power, instigated a mutiny in the Greek forces of the Middle East Command that were part of the exiled Greek Government.⁵⁴ The KKE thought that this action would cause Great Britain to recognize its political base.⁵⁵ As a second objective of the mutiny there was an attempt to acquire legitimate political power within the exiled Government of Greece. The exiled Government had taken up residence in Cairo after the fall of Crete; but because of the lack of communication with Occupied Greece had lost contact with political developments in the homeland until 1943. In late 1943 and early 1944 the PEEA had attempted to portray itself as the Government of the People of Occupied Greece, and, therefore, entitled to be part of the Government after Liberation.

The results of these efforts to achieve legitimacy culminated in the Lebanon Conference of May 1944. According to Edward Forster, a historian:

⁵³ Kudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 67.

⁵⁴ O'Hallance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, pp. 182-187.

⁵⁵ Constantine Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy (London: Penguin, 1969), p. 83.

It has never been satisfactorily explained why EAM agreed to attend the Lebanon Conference. This party had certainly not renounced its policy of gaining control of Greece. It is possible that it foresaw the Allies would free Greece and that it calculated that it would be to the Party's ultimate advantage to have some place in the Government. ⁵⁶

Forster omits the most important question: Why did EAM/ELAS in the guise of the PEEA even consider participation, to achieve an ultimate advantage when, in fact, it already had the means and capability of realizing its goals? Perhaps there is only a slight difference in perception, but it will be well-worth exploring in some detail how some previous preconceptions of the KKE affected events prior to, and after, the conference.

The image of the guerrilla in the mountains, coupled with the long tradition of rural, primarily agrarian, rebellion, combined to present an unorthodox view of Marxism. It was not the ideal Communist Revolution; but it was a real Revolution. The KKE was prepared to renounce this movement at what it believed would be the decisive moment for achieving the Russian model.⁵⁷

It must be assumed that the KKE felt that it was in possession of an infrastructure capable of executing Urban Revolution, which would be the Revolution of the Proletariat

⁵⁶ Edward S. Forster, A Short History of Modern Greece, 1821-1956 (New York: Praeger, 1957), p. 220.

⁵⁷ See Joseph Stalin, Marxism and the National Question, (New York: International Publishers, 1942), p. 9.

and definitely not an Agrarian Revolution; and, therefore, could accept the points of the Lebanon Conference. Specifically, this meant that after Liberation the forces of ELAS and the Greek Middle East Forces would all be demobilized by a Government of National Unity.⁵⁸ There was also an agreement, signed at Caserta, which put ELAS forces under British control for the Liberation of Greece. The signing of this agreement on 26 September 1944 was also designed to secure British favor, in the form of money and arms, for ELAS. This is a key point in subsequent historical development, because the manner of implementing the Caserta Agreement and the points of the Lebanon Conference would provide the immediate causes of the First Civil War.⁵⁹

After the Conference, the KKE had to decide if it would consolidate its mastery of Greece before Liberation, or enter the PEEA into the National Government and strive to achieve control by political infiltration.⁶⁰ This latter

⁵⁸ Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, pp. 188-191.

⁵⁹ Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 305. The author states the main points of the conference as follows:

- (1) the reorganization of the Greek Armed Forces in the Middle East.
- (2) The unification of all guerrilla forces under the command of the Greek Government of National Unity.
- (3) The people of Greece would have a free choice of a political regime after Liberation.

⁶⁰ Floyd A. Spencer, War and Postwar Greece (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952), pp. 69-71.

course of action was initially followed, but there are divergent notions of why and how this came to pass. C.M. Woodhouse, a member of the British Military Mission to Greece during the Occupation, believes that Moscow ordered the KKE to infiltrate the Government rather than resort to violence.⁶¹ This opinion was based on what Woodhouse might have known concerning the preliminary talks between the Soviet Union and Britain regarding post-war spheres of influence in the Balkans.⁶² On the other hand, the Greek Government has produced documents that report the Communist Party of Greece was free to decide upon the tactics to be employed in achieving the final objective of their endeavors.⁶³

Some additional points must be considered to gain an appreciation for the complexity of the events leading up to the Civil War. First of all, the famous Percentages Agreement⁶⁴

⁶¹Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 115. This opinion was probably formulated by the author after the fact. Since it would have been almost impossible for Woodhouse to have known this information while actually in the mountains of Greece with ELAS.

⁶²Sir John Wheeler - Bennett and Anthony Nichols, The Semblance of Peace: The Political Settlement After the Second World War (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 197.

⁶³Greek Under-Secretariat for Press and Information, The Conspiracy Against Greece (Athens, 1947), p. 11.

⁶⁴In October, Stalin and Churchill divided the Balkans into spheres of influence. For example the USSR had 50 per cent influence in Yugoslavia and so did Britain. In Greece it was 10 per cent for the USSR and 90 per cent for the British. Wheeler-Bennett and Nichols, The Semblance of Peace: The Political Settlement After the Second World War, p. 197.

precluded the direct assistance of the USSR to the Greek Communists. It is uncertain if the contents of this Agreement were known to the KKE. They were probably not, but if these were known it would tend to substantiate Woodhouse's contention.

The Greek Government reported that a "Contingency Plan" for the military take-over of Greece had been developed by the KKE.⁶⁵ This plan was not implemented upon Liberation, and there is probably only one person who influenced Siantos not to execute this option. He was Colonel Popov of the Red Army, who arrived in Greece in July 1944.⁶⁶ The contention that the British-Soviet Agreement (the Percentage Agreement) was the only thing that can account for the decision to infiltrate the Government is not completely valid.⁶⁷ There were many other factors that entered into Siantos' decision to infiltrate the Government.

One of these factors was Siantos' discovery of a major defect within the KKE, the lack of external assistance.

⁶⁵ Spencer contends that there was no plan. Spencer, War and Postwar Greece, pp. 71-72.

⁶⁶ Rickham Sweet-Escot, Greece: A Political and Economic Survey 1939-1953 (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1954), p. 41. Also see Campbell and Sherrard, Modern Greece, p. 100.

⁶⁷ Kousoules, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 197. Eudes and others contend that the KKE did not have knowledge of the agreement between Stalin and Churchill.

Consequently, he sent Tzimas to Tito to request assistance:

The Greek Communists believed that as soon as Germany was defeated the Soviet Union would devote more attention and offer more substantial support to small wars of liberation in the countries already freed from the Nazis. 68

Siantos realized the intrinsic value of external support and believed that he required that support to win his objectives; but there was no response from Tito during October and early November.⁶⁹

Greece experienced a political power-vacuum in October, 1944. The Germans had already withdrawn, but EAM/ELAS did not act to seize power before the Government of National Unity could establish itself as the de facto Government. "Jilted by the Soviets, the Old Man [Siantos] had not been able to find the courage to embark ELAS on a solitary adventure in the second half of October."⁷⁰ Based on the previous history of discipline to orders within the KKE, the inaction of Siantos, not the effects of the Percentage Agreement, caused the Greek Communists to miss the chance to fulfill their primary goals of the entire Resistance Movement.

⁶⁸ Stephanos Zotos, Greece: The Struggle for Freedom (New York: Crowell, 1967), p. 161.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Zotos, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 165; and Campbell and Sherrard, Modern Greece, p. 180.

Once the opportunity was lost, why did the Party later alter its position from one of infiltration to one of armed aggression?⁷¹ Before attempting to answer this question, a brief survey of the international situation in 1944, as it pertains to Greece, is warranted.

There were political forces outside Greece, especially among the Allied Powers, that exerted a dominating influence on the conduct of internal affairs on the Greek scene. Their effect on the KKE can only be surmised from the modus operandi of the Party in the post-Liberation period. One consequence of this pressure was the apparent immobility of ELAS in October and November. ELAS may not have been so inactive had the Greek Communists realized fully the subsequent importance of the Percentage Agreement. The KKE did not know the extent of the commitment by Churchill to support the Greek Government.⁷² In view of these conditions, the KKE was operating in a state of flux in relation to the international, as well as the national, power struggle.⁷³

By late November the situation had not drastically changed as there were still British troops in Greece. But the

⁷¹ Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 82. Tsoucalas contends that there was never any intention on the part of the KKE to use armed rebellion.

⁷² Winston S. Churchill, Their Finest Hour, (Boston: Houghton Mills, 1953), p. 254.

⁷³ Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 216.

KKE, even as late as 28 November, still abided by the agreements of the Lebanon Conference.⁷⁴ This can only be explained by the Communist's desire to achieve recognition by Great Britain and a strict adherence to the idea of political infiltration.

It does not seem completely accurate to explain the rapid transition from a policy of infiltration to insurrection in late November as simply that the KKE "realized that if they complied with the government wishes to disarm they would lose a superiority of men and material."⁷⁵ The forces of ELAS numbered about 40,000 troops, while the Government had at its disposal approximately 20,000 men. The difference in strength was impressive but not very meaningful. The KKE realized that the relative combat-power of these forces was nearly equal. The training and modern weaponry available to the smaller force compensated for its numerical weakness.⁷⁶

On 28 November the PEEA submitted a proposal for disarmament to the Government, but on the next day refused to sign or honor its own proposal. The idea that they had not realized the disparity in combat power, resulting from reduction to equal numbers of ELAS and Government troops in a new

⁷⁴Spencer, War and Postwar Greece, pp. 71-72.

⁷⁵Campbell and Sherrard, Modern Greece, p. 160.

⁷⁶Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, pp. 214-216.

integrated National Army, seems to presuppose stupidity on the part of the KKE.

There had to be other factors which entered into the decision to change from infiltrating tactics to violence:

The political victory the EAM Central Committee was seeking to achieve by armed pressure did not seem so very inaccessible; but only if one understands the tenacity of Churchill who, defying American public opinion and strong internal opposition, meant to show how he could struggle for democracy against all totalitarian assaults on it.⁷⁷

EAM enjoyed certain advantages. In addition to its exploits against the Germans,⁷⁸ it physically controlled most of the provinces within Greece through the administration they had established during Occupation.⁷⁹ After a buildup of Government and British troops in November, the Communists did not enjoy the same superiority of forces that they had at the time of Liberation:

It is easy to sympathize with EAM's position. They had risen to supremacy in Greece during the years of occupation through hard work, danger and

⁷⁷Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 203.

⁷⁸Eudes lists some of the military operations conducted by ELAS. Ibid., p. 227.

⁷⁹Stavrianos gives a detailed description of the EAM administration in ELAS controlled areas. Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, pp. 80-81; also Stefanos Saraphis, Greek Resistance Army: The Story of ELAS (London: Farleigh Press Limited, 1951), in passim.

suffering. They saw no reason why they should of their own will relinquish the power they had won⁸⁰

Eudes, in his book The Kapetanios, states that Tzamis got a commitment of support from Tito for their proposed Insurrection during the night of 28 November 1944, and that Ionnides convinced Siantos that:⁸¹

The line of least resistance led straight as an arrow to the outcome desired by their enemies.⁸²

The combination of these two events provide the missing links to the question of why the KKE acted as it did on 29 November.⁸³ On that date the KKE threw down the gauntlet to the Government by refusing to cooperate in a plan for demobilization. The KKE had decided to launch a coup to seize power by naked force, and "even if the coup were to fail, a gaping wound would be dealt to the Greek body politic...."⁸⁴

⁸⁰William Hardy McNeil, The Greek Dilemma: War and Aftermath, (New York: Lippincott, 1947), p. 130.

⁸¹Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 185. The extent of this commitment is not known, but it was probably not of great significance for material support. The psychological import must have been profound.

⁸²Forster, A Short History of Modern Greece, 1821-1956, p. 226.

⁸³Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 124; and Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 84.

⁸⁴Stephen G. Xydis, Greece and the Great Powers 1944-1947 (Thessaloniki: Institute of Balkan Studies, 1963), p. 62.

The EAM ordered a demonstration for 3 December 1944 to protest the Governments' policy and the order of the British commander, General Scobie, to disarm ELAS by 10 December.⁸⁵ The demonstration that occurred on Sunday was at first authorized by the Government and then cancelled. However, it was too late, and the ensuing violence inaugurated the First Civil War.

⁸⁵Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, pp. 216-217. For an eyewitness account of "Bloody Sunday," see W. Byford-Jones, The Greek Trilogy (London, 1946), pp. 138-140. One of the best works on the events of December 1944 is by Iatrides. See John O. Iatrides, Revolt in Athens: The Greek Communist "Second Round": 1944-1945 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), in passim.

Chapter II

THE ORIGINS OF THE CIVIL WAR

The bloody Civil War that followed the demonstration in Athens on 3 December 1944 resulted in the apparent defeat of ELAS. In reality, it resulted in the defeat of the very small portion of ELAS that was around Athens. EAM realized, however, that continued resistance would have meant total destruction in the face of the overwhelming combination of Greek and British military power. Additionally, since the Yalta Conference was to open in February some influence may have been exerted by the Russians at this time to achieve a cease fire in Greece. Consequently, the KKE indulged in peace talks.

When the Peace Conference opened on 2 February 1945 at Varkiza, Siantos did not employ the considerable forces of ELAS that still remained intact. He also failed to use them as a bargaining lever. He was probably unduly influenced by the need to acquire legality for the KKE. Siantos hoped to insure the KKE's ability to continue its struggle by means of political infiltration after the cessation of hostilities.

The crucial question of the Varkiza Conference was that of amnesty. It was not clearly resolved for all members of

ELAS, but the leaders of the KKE and EAM were assured of it. As a result of the Varkiza meeting, ELAS was disbanded.⁸⁶

The disintegration of ELAS had a profound effect on the average resistance fighter:

...who comprised most of ELAS's troops...but had no place in the commissars' revolution.

In their eyes, all the discredit which had been heaped upon the traditional politicians had rebounded onto the revolutionary politicians who preached Revolution by the industrial proletariat in a bureaucratic jargon to which they were profoundly allergic.⁸⁷

The Communists failed to take advantage of their most important asset -- the People, the Rural Proletariat. The reasons behind this failure were discussed in the first chapter. The end result was that the Communists had not indoctrinated the people during the three years of the Occupation.

Whether Churchill knew this or not, he presented a myth to the world to justify British military intervention to force the disbandment of ELAS. That myth stated that the Battle of Athens, the First Civil War, was fought against Communism.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Stefanos Saraphis, Greek Resistance Army: The Story of ELAS, p. 32. The last page of this work contains the author's disbandment order and farewell address to ELAS.

⁸⁷ Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 233.

⁸⁸ Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 120.

Churchill's solution was oversimplistic. The most plausible explanation of the events leading up to the Civil War in the period immediately after Liberation, was that the Occupation of 1941-1944 forced the legally-constituted Government of Greece to work in a vacuum insofar as the internal affairs of the Mainland were concerned.

The Government had left Greece under the onslaught of German troops and was at Cairo for most of the war. The King, however, spent a great deal of his time in England rather than Cairo with the firm support of the British government,⁸⁹ and there were no major political leaders from Greece in the Government at Cairo. In 1944 the King's Government returned to Greece and proceeded to reestablish a carbon copy of the pre-Metaxas era.

During the absence of the legal government, however, a new type of order was born, matured, and reached a degree of self-sufficiency in Greece. The Government-of-Occupation, EAM/ELAS, was the government to the majority of homeland Greeks. On top of this, there was a strong Republican sentiment, both within and outside Greece.

It can be concluded from the variety of political affiliations, that the real cause of the first Civil War was the irreconcilable differences between these diverse orders. The confrontation that materialized in this situation

⁸⁹Churchill, Their Finest Hour, p. 257.

led inexorably to armed confrontation. Also there were severe reprisals by the Rightists against ELAS after the war which only served to exacerbate the situation.⁹⁰

The conflict in December 1944 was not, as Churchill reported, a single engagement between Democracy and Communism, but between different democratic elements and the pressure applied by two of the three traditional Great Powers. The fighting terminated in the Treaty of Varkiza which dismantled ELAS and started the KKE on a new legal road. This new avenue led to the same destination; and the job of the KKE was to salvage the wreckage and prepare for the next round - the Third Round.⁹¹

The First Civil War had demonstrated clearly that in guerrilla warfare political and military objectives are inseparable, and that the leadership must be very able in both fields. It was apparent that the KKE did not possess these attributes, otherwise they would have presented a fait accompli to the Allies in September 1944 when the Germans withdrew.

⁹⁰ Frank Smothers, William Hardy McNeill, and Elizabeth D. McNeill, Report on the Greeks (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1948), p. 152; and Campbell and Sherrard, Modern Greece, p. 183.

⁹¹ The First Round was the Communist term for the attack of EDES by ELAS in 1943; the Second Round was the First Civil War of December 1944-January 1945; and the Third Round a Second Civil War occurred between 1946-1949.

The Varkiza Agreement, therefore, was signed by the KKE in order to enable them to work for their aims by political, rather than military, means. Once ELAS was disarmed, the KKE leaders had to rely on the principles stated by the Great Powers at Yalta. They firmly believed that the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union would cooperate in "helping (the) Liberated Peoples to create freely chosen democratic institutions."⁹²

Not all members of ELAS subjugated themselves to the conditions set forth at Varkiza, or hoped-for Allied support. Some 3,000-4,000 Communist cadre-type troops crossed over the northern borders of Greece.⁹³ Additionally, a number of ELAS units, some as large as a battalion, found the conditions of the Agreement unacceptable because of persecution by the Right-Wing elements within the Greek body-politic. These Rightists hunted down the former members of ELAS as common criminals. Consequently, these groups were forced into the mountains.⁹⁴

⁹² Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, pp. 144-145.

⁹³ O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 113; and Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 92. Also Kousalas, Price of Freedom, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1953), p. 149. Kousalas reports figures of 20,000 refugees to Yugoslavia, 5,000 to Bulgaria, and 23,000 to Albania.

⁹⁴ O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 113. Also Eudes gives a vivid narration of the mysterious demise of the founder of ELAS, the intrepid Aris. He also gives the types and sizes of some of the units that did not comply with the Varkiza Treaty. Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, pp. 234-59.

While the Varkiza Agreement was being implemented for all ostensible purposes, the KKE conducted a soul-searching evaluation to discover the reasons for the debacle of December 1944.⁹⁵ The Eleventh Plenum of the KKE's Central Committee (April 5-10, 1945) declared:

...the British military intervention "had interrupted only temporarily" (the normal democratic) development, and proclaimed that the basic purpose of the KKE was to struggle for the eradication of Fascism, for securing democratic evolution, for democratic revival,⁹⁶ and for "popular democracy."

This was only rhetoric to cover up the real magnitude and extent of the defeat of the First Civil War. The Party decided its own mistakes were: (a) that the Central Committee had not moved to the mountains in time to adequately prepare ELAS for the political victory desired; (b) ELAS was not trained sufficiently to be able to defeat British troops; and (c) the most experienced troops were kept out of the Battle of Athens.⁹⁷ This mea culpa on the part of the leadership did not save the overall structure of ELAS. In April two of the major Socialist Movements, which were part of EAM but were not

⁹⁵Zotos states that EAM gave instructions to its followers to carry on their efforts to subvert the government even before it signed the treaty. Zotos, Greece: The Struggle for Freedom, (New York: Crowell, 1961), p. 161.

⁹⁶Xydis, Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-1947, p. 89.

⁹⁷Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 253.

Communists, broke away from what was by then a Communist organization.⁹⁸ This revealed the true identity of EAM/ELAS.

The next month, on 30 May 1945,⁹⁹ the Moscow-trained Secretary of the Party, Nikos Zachariades, arrived back in Athens from his internment in the German concentration camp in Dachau.¹⁰⁰ He immediately reaffirmed that only a "Peoples' Republic" would solve the difficulties in Greece. But at the same time the wartime leaders of the KKE were guilty, according to Zachariades, of not adhering to the doctrines of Lenin and Stalin.¹⁰¹

Although there is no hard evidence that the Soviets encouraged or directed the ensuing events after the Varkiza Pact, it should be remembered that the Russians used instruments (such as the Lublin Government in Poland) to work their will in East European countries. It can be seen that the

⁹⁸These socialist elements formed a new political parties known as the Popular Democratic Union and the Socialist Party of Greece.

⁹⁹Various dates are reported for the return of Zachariades, but they all fall within ninety days of 30 May 1945.

¹⁰⁰Xydias, Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-1947, p. 93; and Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 219.

¹⁰¹O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, pp. 208-215; and Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece 1943-1949, in passim.

same type of ideological and political impetus could be employed in Greece where a full-scale Communist Organization existed:

But it appears to be beyond any reasonable doubt that Soviet influence was as important for the resumption of the armed struggle in 1946 as it had been for the softening of the Communist position in the middle of 1944. 102

Even though many have praised Stalin for his adherence to the Percentage Agreement,¹⁰³ the Soviet policy of non-intervention in Greek affairs did not last long. It must be remembered, however, that throughout the entire existence of the KKE there is no evidence to suggest that Greece ranked very high on the list of Soviet priorities. This is particularly true in the immediate post-War era. Other issues received the thrust of Soviet attention, specifically the Soviet Occupation of Iran and the pressure exerted on Turkey for a base in the Straits, and retrocession of two provinces.

On the other hand, just because Greece did not merit the full attention of the Soviets did not imply that there was no Russian intervention or interest in the area. The first evidence of Russian intervention in Greek affairs after

¹⁰² Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 101; and Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, in passim. Also see Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, in passim.

¹⁰³ Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 223.

the War came through Tito, who on 8 July 1945, called for "an end to the oppression of 'Slavic minorities in Greece by Monarchofascists.'"¹⁰⁴ In July 1945, the USSR no longer had to pursue a policy of abstention in Greece, since their efforts to impose absolute Communist control of Eastern European countries had met with significant success.¹⁰⁵ This meant that the Percentage Agreement had almost vanished.

In June 1945 the Twelfth Plenum of the KKE's Central Committee reflected this attitude in the views of the reinstated Zachariades.¹⁰⁶ In order to adequately investigate how this man's views integrated into the overall Communist strategy, it is necessary to expand temporarily from the microcosm of the internal Greek scene and briefly scan the international milieu during 1945-1949.

During this time, the Soviet leaders certainly lamented the failure of the KKE's effort to establish a People's Democracy within Greece. One can infer this from the overall scheme of the Soviet Union, which was to subjugate Greece as part of the overall plan to acquire the Straits of the

¹⁰⁴Zotis, Greece: The Struggle for Freedom, p. 161; and Kousoulas, Price of Freedom, p. 121.

¹⁰⁵Poland and Rumania are examples.

¹⁰⁶Kousoulas, Price of Freedom, p. 149.

Dardanelles.¹⁰⁷ If this goal had been achieved, the Soviet Union could have enjoyed almost exclusive control of the eastern Mediterranean.

The American position was at variance with this Soviet objective. President Truman stated that the United States favored open and free international navigation rights in the Straits.¹⁰⁸ If American policy could prevail it would, in effect, neutralize Soviet strategy in the area.

But the Soviets persisted in asserting their position and on 21 January 1946 the USSR, in pursuance of the aforementioned strategy, filed a Letter of Protest to the Security Council of the United Nations. This Letter addressed the presence of British troops in Greece and their support of the Greek regime.¹⁰⁹

The subtle distinction that was made between the British troops in Greece, and the British government's support of the Greek government, may have been the last vestage of the Percentage Agreement. This was due to the fact that:

¹⁰⁷Cyril Falls, "Aftermath of War: The Greek Army and the Guerrillas," Illustrated London News, LXII (September 27, 1947), p. 346. Falls gives an analysis of the complete Russian scheme in the Balkans as it was perceived in England in 1947; and Kousoulas, Price of Freedom, p. 151.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 152. The Soviets had asked for a naval base in the Straits, unrestricted passage of their war ships, and closure of the Straits to warships of non-Black Sea powers.

¹⁰⁹Xydis, Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-1947, p.136.

...by the middle of 1945 the Soviet's attitude had also hardened. During the Potsdam conference, Molotov presented a memorandum to the British in which he stated for the first time that the Soviet Union disagreed with and protested against the way Britain was handling the Greek problem "on the grounds of an old and indefinite authorization."¹¹⁰

Stalin, in his attempt to achieve Soviet aims in the Dodecanese Islands of Greece (formerly held by Italy), demanded a military base there and even specified its location. All parties realized, however, that as long as British troops were in Greece, any conflict could have enormous international ramifications. Consequently, the main thrust of Soviet and KKE policy with regard to England was to secure the removal of British combat power.¹¹¹

The Greeks, in collaboration with the British, countered the Russian demands in the United Nations. They pointed out that there were major border-violations by forces from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania that could be very detrimental to the national security of Greece. This offered the British a reason to remain on Greek soil.

Although the Soviets had raised what was to be called the "Greek Question" in January 1946, it was not until September, after more charges and countercharges were made, that the United States' representative to the Security Council proposed

¹¹⁰Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 100.

¹¹¹The reader can draw a comparison to a similar demand made on the United States by the Communists in the Republic of Viet Nam.

the establishment of a Subcommittee for investigating the allegations.¹¹² The Soviet representative at first vetoed this proposal, but when Greece reintroduced the issue at a later date, he finally agreed to a Commission.¹¹³ In time, the Council adopted the published results of the United Nations Special Commission on the Balkans (UNSCOB). This report substantiated the Greek claims that there were border violations and acts of support for guerrilla operations within Greece by Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania.¹¹⁴

In viewing these outside influences, at least those outside the sphere of the KKE, there is a possibility that one can conclude that the KKE did not enjoy the blessings of Moscow in its preparation for, and participation in armed rebellion. This observation is possible because the Soviets agreed to the UNSCOB and certainly knew what the findings would be in advance. It is also possible that this conclusion occurred because according to Milovan Djilas, Stalin said that

¹¹²U.N. Security Council Official Records. Record Number Nine. U.N. Publication 1946-1947, p. 239.

¹¹³Kousoulas, Price of Freedom, pp. 174-175.

¹¹⁴See the Report by the Commission of Investigation Concerning Greek Frontier Incidents. U.N. Doc. 5/3600 Vol. I, para 2, in The United Nations and the Problems of Greece, Department of State Publication 2909, 1947. Also Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 281. Eudes states that the Commission did not do a complete investigation since its used only witnesses and documents produced by the Athens government.

"the uprising in Greece had to be stopped and stopped quickly."¹¹⁵ This has also led many to believe that Stalin said this in light of his acceptance of the Percentage Agreement.

The fact that the Percentages Agreement was dead has been demonstrated. Likewise, it is apparent that the KKE was allowed to pursue its goal of establishing a People's Democracy. It is logical to conclude, in view of the obedience that Zachariades had demonstrated to Moscow, that an order by Stalin to halt offensive operations would have been obeyed. Besides, in 1948, Stalin put the real question to Kardelj:

"Are you sure that the Greek partisans could triumph?" "Certainly," said Kardelj, "but only if foreign intervention does not increase in Greece and the Greek Partisans do not make serious political and strategic mistakes."

It is the latter part of this statement that will provide the major focus of this paper. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to return to the internal processes of the KKE.

¹¹⁵ Milovan Djilas, Conversations with Stalin (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1962), p. 182. Stalin's motivation, for wanting the war stopped, was probably based on his fear of retaliation by the West if he encroached too much onto what was considered the free world. The free world was not the same as that contained in the spheres of influence of the Percentage Agreement.

¹¹⁶ Vladimir Dedijer, Tito (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), p. 321.

Since it is certain that Zachariades was an International Communist, which in the KKE meant one who adhered to the Moscow line of Communism, it would be inconsistent to believe that he did not follow the dictates of Moscow. Sometimes his unmodified acceptance of Soviet doctrine worked to the detriment of the KKE. For example, when Zachariades returned to Greece he immediately spoke out in favor of abandoning Greek territorial claims to Northern Epirus, which was a portion of southern Albania.¹¹⁷ This course of action, however, was not in line with what the majority of Greek Communists wanted. Ultimately, Zachariades modified his statements on this subject to support inclusion of this territory in Greece.

To demonstrate that his change of opinion did not contain any contradictions for an adherent of International Communism, it is only necessary to envision the total objective of Communism in the Balkans. Northern Epirus was already within the Soviet orbit, but in view of the overall anticipated results of a Communist Greece, the effect would be the same in the long run. This can be illustrated in that the:

Soviet policy was to coordinate Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria into some sort of satellite Balkan Communist Federation, and it [Soviet Policy] was not adverse to a large chunk of northern Greece...which worried the

¹¹⁷Kousoulas, Price of Freedom, pp. 130-133.

Greek Communists, many of whom were nationalists¹¹⁸
as much as Communists.

There were, however, between the time that Zachariades returned to Greece and the outbreak of hostilities, certain conditions which the Communist used to their advantage in the post Civil War period. These sets of circumstances substantially aided in their endeavor to launch the "third round." An examination of these conditions will provide a basis for explaining the proximate causes of the Second Civil War.

As a point of departure in the search for immediate causes of the War, the ultimate reason, the complete political control of Greece, must be reemphasized. It was toward this final goal that all Communist efforts were directed. Accordingly, in June 1945, at the Twelfth Plenum of the Central Committee, Zachariades, personally untouched by the stigma of defeat in the December Revolution, stated that the KKE would follow a temporary strategy of political infiltration "to gain time, for undermining the opponent, and to gather forces, to pass then, to the attack."¹¹⁹

In order to implement this strategy, the Communists indulged in furious anti-Governmental vituperations while

¹¹⁸O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 114; and see Dedijer, Tito, p. 321.

¹¹⁹Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 221.

it "vociferously trumpeted the Party's intention to struggle for the setting up of a Peoples Republic...."¹²⁰ This call-to-arms was the overt manifestation of a decision on 15 December 1945 to shift from infiltrating tactics to armed insurrection. The next year, 1946, would see the effects of this decision.¹²¹

In the thirteen months following the Varkiza Agreement, there were many allegations and countercharges between the forces on both sides. One of the most devastating incriminations launched by the Greek Government against the Communists, followed the discovery of the remains of 8,000 hostages who had been murdered by ELAS in January 1945. In order to foil the effects of this charge, EAM reported that 1,289 persons were executed by the Greek Government and over 30,000 victims were tortured for their Leftist affiliations after Varkiza.¹²²

It is obvious that there was considerable expression of emotions and brutality by both sides during 1945-1946. But this is only one example. There are many more that were just as

¹²⁰Xydis, Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-1947, p. 136.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 140. Xydis mentions that the Soviet new agency TASS devoted considerable space to the speech by Zachariades.

¹²²Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 94; and Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 260. Eudes presents a detailed statement of figures in various categories. Variances between figures given by different sources on this matter are minimal, (e.g. 1,289 executed as compared to 1,219 executed).

volatile. They were used by the KKE to justify its decision to instigate armed rebellion.

Zachariades certainly realized that the long-range objective for armed insurrection was the attainment of political power.¹²³ To achieve this, the KKE identified the Government's weakness very early in the planning stage; and viewed this as a favorable prerequisite for the resumption of hostilities.¹²⁴ The Communists realized that there was not only political upheaval, as evidenced by a succession of caretaker governments, but also large scale social and economic chaos in Greece after the war.¹²⁵ In order to exacerbate the situation, the KKE plotted to insure that every government should fail until there was no alternative but a takeover by the Communists.¹²⁶ This course of action was strictly in line with the infiltration policy adopted after the First Civil War.

One element of a combination within the KKE's plotting was an attempt to influence the political outcome of

¹²³Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 87.

¹²⁴Campbell and Sherrard, Modern Greece, p. 182.

¹²⁵Forster, A Short History of Modern Greece, p. 227.

¹²⁶Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 261. The governments of Plastiras, Voulgaris, Kenellopoulos and Sophoulis failed in 1945-1946. These governments did not fail because of Communist pressure, but because of economic problems within Greece after the war.

elections held in March 1946. They ordered mass abstentions from the polls by Party members. The boast that "one half of the Greek population" would be excluded from representation in Parliament, as the KKE claimed, proved to be false. However, by employing this tactic the KKE hoped to be able to claim all the votes of the people who abstained in support of the boycott, and additionally they could claim all the votes of those who did not normally vote.

In reality, less than ten percent of the registered voters abstained for political reasons.¹²⁷ There were 1,850,000 Greeks registered, and 1,117,000 voted.¹²⁸ Regardless of their lack of demonstrated electoral strength, the KKE recognized that a fundamental problem existed in the political structure of the Greek Government, since it was plagued by constant turnover of administrations. This was the very thing that the Communists were trying to achieve but due to miscalculations on their part they were not prepared to capitalize on this opportunity. They believed that there had to be more areas of conflict with the Government that would serve solidly popular support for their revolutionary activities.

¹²⁷ Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, pp. 96-97; and Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 263.

¹²⁸ U.S. Department of State. Report of the Allied Mission to Observe Greek Elections Publication 2522 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 20. Also see New York Times, 26 July 1946.

The KKE did not have to look very far to find another area of confrontation. The Right-Wing excesses committed against members of the Left only served to intensify the desire for armed resistance. Albeit unintentionally, the Right was forcing many ex-ELAS fighters into what was not only a Communists' camp. In order to support these assertions, some examples are warranted. In early June 1946 the Royalist Government invoked a drastic emergency measure. It established summary courts empowered to pass death sentences for using arms against the authorities. The "Extraordinary Measures for Public Order" of 7 June 1946 authorized house-to-house searches; made strikes illegal; and imposed heavy penalties for armed rebellion.

F.N. Spencer, in War and Postwar Greece, contends that the KKE did nothing to justify these measures taken against them. Although, in substance, he is correct this is not totally true. Prior to the enactment of this measure, some Leftist bands had already taken to the hills¹²⁹ in violation of the Varkiza Treaty. However, they presented no significant threat to the Government. On the other hand, the Greek Rightists and the British were responsible for the

¹²⁹Smothera, Report on the Greeks, p. 152; New York Times, 17 July 1946; and Spencer, War and Postwar Greece, p. 98.

nullification of the Varkiza Pact.¹³⁰ Former ELAS men were beaten, arrested, and tried on trumped-up charges.¹³¹

By taking action against known and suspected members of EAM/ELAS, the Right had increased the membership of the Left. For example, it dismissed university professors and barred them for life from any public position, largely because they had fought in the Resistance. At the same time, professors who had collaborated actively with the enemy, or were appointed by Metaxas, were retained.¹³²

The Rightist "Terror" continued to be a major contributing factor in the resumption of hostilities, because it played right into the Communists' hands by continuing to provoke incidents; especially in the provinces.¹³³ Communist newspapers appealed outright for the "democrats" to "take to the hills" and to defend peace and liberty.¹³⁴

¹³⁰Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 149; and O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War, 1944-1949, p. 113.

¹³¹London Times, 17 April 1945.

¹³²Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 177.

¹³³Zetis, Greece: The Struggle for Freedom, p. 168; and Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 136.

¹³⁴Spencer, War and Postwar Greece, p. 98; and see New York Times, 29 July 1946.

Another significant advantage that materially contributed to the overall decision for resuming hostilities, was the fact that all the countries on the northern border of Greece were within the Soviet sphere of influence.¹³⁵ It was increasingly clear in 1946 that Greece's Northern neighbors were helping to promote disorder in Greece.¹³⁶

The Greek Communists realized very early the tremendous strategic importance of the Soviet domination within Greece's northern neighbors:

In the middle of December 1945 the Party had made contact with representatives of Tito and Dimitrov at Pietrich, on the Bulgarian frontier. The neighboring countries had promised substantial aid in the event of an insurrection in Greece....¹³⁷

The area north of the Greek frontier also provided a safe sanctuary for conducting coordinating meetings. This certainly provided the KKE with direct access to all of its supporting elements at one time:

According to most reliable information a secret meeting was held yesterday [7 August

¹³⁵Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 232.

¹³⁶C.M. Woodhouse, The Story of Modern Greece (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 258. Also Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 179; where he states that the Communists started to take over the armed bands in the hills and used the support from north of the border to expand their base of operation.

¹³⁷Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 258.

1946] at Corni in southern Bulgaria, in which Yugoslavian, Bulgarian, and Greek Communists participated under the chairmanship of a Russian agent...to draw up plans for a general rising in¹³⁸ Greek Macedonia....

At this time, the summer of 1946, the KKE realized that their goal of achieving the removal of British troops and influence would soon be accomplished. It would come to pass not as a result of their positive actions, or those of the Soviet Union in the United Nations, but ultimately by default on the part of the British government. The actual date for withdrawal of British troops was not known, "but it was fore-shadowed by their concentration and steady reduction."¹³⁹ Most important of all was the realization, on the part of the KKE, that the Athens Regime could not exist without the financial and military aid from Great Britain.¹⁴⁰

It was true that Britain was beginning to feel the economic strain of keeping military forces in Greece. The British requirement for total funding of their Greek program for 1947 was to be over \$250,000,000.¹⁴¹ It became apparent by 1946, not only to the KKE but to the United States as well,

¹³⁸ New York Times, 19 August 1946.

¹³⁹ Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 268.

¹⁴⁰ Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 257.

¹⁴¹ Wheeler-Bennett and Nichols, The Semblance of Peace: The Political Settlement After the Second World War, p. 563.

that the British would soon be leaving Greece.¹⁴² The KKE envisioned a lucrative opportunity to act in the power-vacuum that would be created by British withdrawal. In the minds of the leadership of the KKE this created a second chance, a chance to make amends for the failure to act during the power-vacuum of October 1944 when the Germans retreated.

In understanding the KKE's decision to make an armed bid for power, despite the apparent wreckage of the Party, it must be pointed out that they did enjoy the above-mentioned advantages in 1945-1946. There was one large bonus that the KKE enjoyed during this period. The Communists were recognized as a legitimate political party, and were able to carry out campaigns of propaganda against the Government, in order to capitalize on the political instability existent at the time.

The sum of these forces and their interaction within the leadership of the KKE, led to the conclusion that the time was "ripe" for armed revolution.¹⁴³ Of all the factors that contributed to the resumption of Insurgency, probably the most significant factor was the external help obtained from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania.

¹⁴²Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 235.

¹⁴³Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, pp. 236-239.

In the preceding chapter, it was noted that the determination of Siantos in late November 1944 was inversely proportional to the amount of external assistance available. But in 1945 the meeting between Greek, Bulgarian and Yugoslavian Communists in Petrich provided the catalyst for the resumption of hostilities.

This meeting must be examined:

The actual discussions [at Petrich] have not been disclosed, but they must have referred to the feasibility of the venture as well as to the military help which the Yugoslavians and Bulgarians were prepared to offer. To what extent aid was offered, whether or not the Soviet Union openly encouraged the Greek Communist Party to take up arms...are questions that cannot be answered.¹⁴⁴

At Petrich there was no Soviet representative.¹⁴⁵ This in itself leads to various interpretations on whether Stalin could have "asked Yugoslavia and Albania to give clandestine material aid and support [to the Greeks].¹⁴⁶ But no definite conclusion can be drawn from this Soviet absence.

It is also possible that Tito offered material support, and a military camp at Boulkes, for the insurgents in return "for approval of the unification of a greater

¹⁴⁴Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 100.

¹⁴⁵Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 259.

¹⁴⁶O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War, 1944-1949, p. 122.

Macedonia which required territorial concessions from Greece."¹⁴⁷

In retrospect, the sources available indicate that there seems to be a logical sequence within these events which can support the contention that the factor of external support was the quintessence of the KKE's decision in switching from its policy of infiltration to open warfare. The meeting at Petrich occurred in December 1945. In January 1946 the Soviet Union put forth its complaint to the United Nations on the Greek Question. Additionally, in February 1946, at the Second Plenum of the Central Committee, Zachariades established a politico-military unit tasked to "examine the prospects for an immediate seizure of power."¹⁴⁸ In March 1946, when Zachariades was in Yugoslavia for talks with Tito, he was promised "all out help."¹⁴⁹

Tsoucalas, in The Greek Tragedy, states that even after the promise of external aid, and as late as August of

¹⁴⁷Campbell and Sherrard, Modern Greece, p. 182.

¹⁴⁸Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 259. Also Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 231. Kousoulas quotes from the Kenourghia Katastasi, Kenourghia Kathikonta by Zachariades with regards to this plenum: "after weighing the domestic factors, and the Balkan and international situation, the Plenum decided to go ahead with the organization of the new armed struggle."

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 237. This information was taken from a report of the Sixth Plenum in 1949.

the same year, the Communists still hoped to avoid armed confrontation.¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, Zachariades reported that there was no such attitudes and that the KKE had agreed that the time was ripe for rebellion in February.¹⁵¹

Zachariades certainly reported what he believed to be true and there is no apparent reason to challenge the veracity of his statement. It is necessary, however, to point out that the two seemingly contradictory views are not in fact mutually exclusive. Zachariades was correct, but at the same time the contention of Tseucalas cannot be dismissed as unjustifiable. Because on 12 May 1946, Zachariades stated that the Communists ought "to seek a political solution to the problems of Greece."¹⁵² This speech undoubtedly produced some confusion even among Party members. Zachariades' reasons may be explained by his desire not to prolong the departure of the British troops by instigating internal disorder, at least not until the armed element of the KKE was ready.¹⁵³

Simultaneously, with the realization of all the indications in favor of the war, there were certain facts that the KKE perceived as detrimental to its cause. Zachariades,

¹⁵⁰Tseucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 101.

¹⁵¹Zachariades, Dheka Kronia Palis, p. 40.

¹⁵²Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 235.

¹⁵³Zachariades, Dheka Kronia Palis, p. 40

in his book, Ten Years After, offers what he calls "the thinking" of the KKE in 1946:

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.

We had to take into consideration the fact that we should not provoke the British into intervening immediately.

Our effort in this area was directed towards isolating the British, to prevent their immediate armed intervention, while relying on the People.¹⁵⁴

On the surface, at least, the conditions for armed insurrection seemed to be present in Greece in 1946. The internal political conditions were unstable; the reprisal against the Left served only to polarize the issues; and there would be a power vacuum upon the anticipated withdrawal of British assistance to mention but a few.

Below the surface there were, nevertheless, certain forces and trends that would negate the superficial advantages enjoyed by the Communists. One of these was the return of the King of Greece to power, which momentarily produced a stabilizing effect on the political leadership of the country.¹⁵⁵ Also, the events of 1946, from the viewpoint of the National Government crystalized the differences between Greece and her

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 238.

Communist neighbors to the North, and her friendly neighbor, Turkey, on the East.¹⁵⁶ This same trend of clearly identifying the opposing power forces within Greece was apparent. The large multi-organizational ELAS was dead. As a result the Communists stood alone.¹⁵⁷

Another fact, perhaps best identified as psychological, had the potential to cut the sinew of the KKE and ultimately destroy its structure. It is best expressed as follows:

This is the essential difference between the Greeks and those Balkan peoples which the USSR had so far (1945) successfully penetrated. Bulgarians and Yugoslavians felt a racial kinship with the USSR that was independent of ideological sympathy. A Bulgarian or a Yugoslavian could be a Communist and a Nationalist at the same time; a Greek could not.¹⁵⁸

As a corollary to this, the Communists once stripped of their image as a broad popular coalition, as was the case with ELAS, had to make it clear where they stood ideologically.¹⁵⁹ This requirement only served to amplify the failure of the Communists during the occupation when they did not prepare the mass of peasant-soldiers of ELAS for the ultimate struggle.

The last major fact that impinged on the apparent ripeness for Insurrection was the lethargic attitude of the

¹⁵⁶Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 272.

¹⁵⁷Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 102.

¹⁵⁸Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 114.

¹⁵⁹Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 102.

majority of the Greek people. This was evident on both sides of the political spectrum.¹⁶⁰

In the last analysis, the plans of the KKE to acquire political domination of Greece in 1946 were based on the assumption that the Movement would receive support from the Communist block countries; and that the British would not intervene.¹⁶¹ But carrying out the plan of conquest by armed rebellion by the Communists required an armed force. The creation of that army and the tactical and strategic options available to the Communists are the topics of the next chapter.

¹⁶⁰ Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 178. He states the government is sick and Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 102 gives the reasons for the Communists. Basically the people were tired of war.

¹⁶¹ Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 236-239.

Chapter III

THE CIVIL WAR

Zachariades revealed, in 1950, that the third round was definitely not a spontaneous reaction of "democratic citizens to alleged oppression by the British and Greek authorities."¹⁶² On the contrary, it was a deliberate decision made in February 1946 by the Central Committee of the KKE in order to expand Soviet control to the Aegean. The KKE launched their initial armed aggression on 30 March 1946 on Litokhoron, a small village on the east side of Mount Olympus.¹⁶³

Zachariades had realized that his decision to boycott the election on 1 April, closed off the only legal means of obtaining political power. Consequently, the "gain-time" strategy, that had been adopted after Varkiza, was now obsolete. All of the factors mentioned in the preceeding chapter

¹⁶²Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 232; and McNeill, The Greek Dilemma: War and Aftermath, p. 23.

¹⁶³Ibid., p. 239. See Campbell and Sherrard, Modern Greece, p. 182.

¹⁶⁴Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 262. "The isolated groups of partisans scattered about the country took this incident as the starting signal for the third round. They began digging up the buried weapons." Also New York Times, 6 December 1946.

contributed to the renewed hostilities; but the decision of Zachariades to order military action was certainly the proximate cause of the new armed aggression. Violence was now necessary to achieve any measure of political power.

At this time there were about 3,000 Greek Communist soldiers at Bulkes above Belgrade, in the Yugoslavian loop of the Danube. Mostly, they were the remnants of the December Revolution in Athens. In early 1946 the Party began an Inquisition, initially at Bulkes, to "introduce the...order of Stalinist orthodoxy."¹⁶⁵ This campaign was to be supervised by Ioannides.

The Greek Communist Party initially watched as small bands went to the hills. The Communist organ Laike Phone (People's Voice) in Salonika called for Democrats to "take to the hills."¹⁶⁶ Shortly after the incident on 30 March, the trained cadre from the Bulkes Training Camp were:

...being shipped from Bulkes to Skoplje to Bitolj, where they received food, blankets and uniforms and are sent into Greece via Dragos and Krateron. ¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Budes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 251. Also see Zotos, Greece: The Struggle for Freedom, p. 169. New York Times, 1 December 1946, reported 5,000 guerrillas at Bulkes.

¹⁶⁶ Spencer, War and Postwar Greece, p. 98; also McNeill, The Greek Dilemma: War and Aftermath, p. 23.

¹⁶⁷ New York Times, 6 December 1946. The article also stated. "Often the returning emigres do not get arms until they enter Greece, where other secret organizations supply them with Sten guns, mortars, Italian automatics, Bazookas, machine guns, Mausers, grenades, mines and other weapons. Only rarely do bands come openly from foreign soil into Greece...."

There was also a training camp in Albania at Korree. From all of this, one can conclude that this Rebellion was not the exclusive result of a purely domestic affair. The combined effects of the tacit approval of Stalin; the assistance provided by the countries on Greece's northern border; and the internal repression inflicted on the Communists and non-Communist Leftists by the Right contributed to produce the Civil War. The Greek government referred to this war as the "anti-bandit war" (Antisymmoritikos Agon).

It is necessary to examine the organization, training, tactics, logistics and recruitment of the Democratic Army of Greece, Democratos Stratos Ellados, or DSE, to appreciate fully the outcome of the War. This study will also demonstrate the integration of political influence at every stage of DSE evolution, as this had a most significant impact on the ultimate demise of the DSE.

In August 1946, Markos Vafiadis,¹⁶⁸ commonly called General Markos, or Markos, was chosen by the KKE to accomplish the tasks of building the Army and applying military pressure on the National Government. Being an able strategist and

¹⁶⁸Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 108. For biographical material consult O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 123. At that time Markos was about forty years of age, "General" Markos had come from Asia Minor as a refugee in 1923. When still in his teens, he joined the Greek Communist Party and had been imprisoned for his political activities. During the Occupation of Greece, he was with ELAS in a political capacity. Markos had been in command of the ELAS's Macedonian Corps and had a flair for soldiering.

tactician, Markos opted to use hit-and-run warfare. The original band of fighters under his command did not exceed 4,000 men.¹⁶⁹ But what was the mission given to Markos?

From the initial moves of the high command of the KKE, it would seem improbable that Markos received an open-ended mission to engage Greek National Forces for the purpose of defeating them. First of all, the necessary command and control links to facilitate communication between Athens and the mountains were not established. This fact alone would negate the contention that an all-out war was planned by Zachariades. In all probability, the head of the Communist Party merely used this initial application of force as an alternate method to secure political power or to force new elections.

During the spring and summer of 1946, Leftist-oriented bandits drifted into the hills. The Communists, as during World War II, took charge of these small bands as they were formed.¹⁷⁰ The method of operation of these bands, after they were under the control of Markos, followed the primary

¹⁶⁹New York Times, 21 March 1947: "The total strength of all bands operating in Greece is estimated for the last four months of 1946 as follows: in September 1946, 3,000; in October, 4,000; November, 5,000; and in December, 8,000." Markos believed he needed 50,000 men to win.

¹⁷⁰Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 174. The initial order from the Central Committee only authorized a very limited number of guerrillas to operate in the mountains of northern Greece. It is conceivable that the dire economic situation of the country, in the immediate post-war period, significantly aided the KKE in this initial buildup.

rules of Guerrilla Warfare. These groups selected a target, concentrated their forces, and initiated a surprise attack against the chosen target. During this attack they would try to achieve one or more of the following main objectives:

(1) to obtain food and clothing; (2) to obtain ammunition; (3) to forcibly or voluntarily recruit young villagers; (4) to drive out the military authority within a given area; and (5) to terrorize the local population so that villagers would not assist the Greek Military or Civil Authorities. After achieving their goals, or being forced to disengage upon arrival of Government troops, the Guerrillas would retire back to their mountain hideouts.¹⁷¹ The one unbreakable rule of this mode of warfare was never to engage a superior force in a pitched battle.

The ultimate purpose of these tactics was to demoralize and weaken the Greek National Forces (GNF), while at the same time building a guerrilla force to the point that its power was equal to the Government forces. The moment of transition between these phases is the Achilles' heel of a Guerrilla Operation. If at the time it occurs the people and the military have not become demoralized, in all likelihood, defeat would follow.¹⁷² However, once this transition is achieved, the

¹⁷¹ Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 239. See New York Times, 21 March 1947.

¹⁷² D.G. Kousoulas, "The Crucial Point of a Counter-guerrilla Campaign," Infantry, Vol. 53 (January-February 1963), 18-21.

guerrillas could adopt a conventional style of combat and totally defeat the National Forces.¹⁷³

Some acquaintance with the organization of the DSE is needed for a full appreciation of the role it played in the ground-combat phase of the war. During the First Stage (March-September 1946), there were small groups of 7-10 men infiltrating into the hills. They joined together with other groups only for offensive operations. During Stage Two (October 1946-March 1947), detachments of 70-100 men were formed under a commander and a political officer. Some of these units had a few automatic weapons. These detachments were under the supervision of the regional "self-defense" Party organization which provided intelligence and supplies. By the end of the second period, regional commands existed in separated mountain complexes, with each command having a military commander, a political officer, and a logistics officer. On 26 October 1946, the General Command of the Greek Democratic Army (DSE) was organized with General Markos as its Commander. Under this headquarters there were the following regional commands: Peloponnese; Roumeli; Epirus, Thessaly; Central, Western, and Eastern Macedonia; and Western Thrace.

¹⁷³Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 274. The actual number of guerrillas at any one time is not documented. The figure quoted here is a rough estimate which reflects a good approximation of guerrilla strength. Eudes states that: Markos managed to build his effective strength to 6,000 in October. He then announced the creation of the Greek Democratic Army (DSE) on 28 October 1946.

During the Third Stage of the Guerrilla War, commonly called the Conventional Stage, beginning in the spring of 1947, the DSE was organized into brigades (700-1,300), battalions (200-400), companies (50-100), platoons (20-60), and battle groups (10-20). The brigades were organized into divisions in September 1948.¹⁷⁴

To field a guerrilla army in an undeveloped country, it is necessary to train men in the basic military skills. In Greece there were a number of ex-ELAS fighters in the ranks of the DSE. These, however, were not mere soldiers but cadre. This cadre trained guerrillas in Yugoslavia at Bulkes and Korree in Albania, as well as in the mountains of Greece.¹⁷⁵

The defeat of the Communists in the First Civil War showed that the classical Proletarian Revolution was no longer valid. Modern weapons made the old form of popular revolution a thing of the past. In addition to the Manichean Bourgeois and Proletariat Class-Struggle within traditional Communist Doctrine, a new dimension was added: foreign assistance could be received by either side to ensure success. To have

¹⁷⁴Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 240. It was from this time on that methods of conventional warfare were actually employed by the DSE. See Appendix A for estimated guerrilla dispositions and strengths in 1948.

¹⁷⁵Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisana and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, pp. 250-2. It gives a good account of the training and indoctrination process used by KKE. Also see New York Times, 16 December 1946.

the legal Government ask for assistance is permissible, but for guerrillas it is different. If they ask for or receive aid from abroad, it is tantamount to aggression by a Foreign Power on the state wherein the guerrillas operate. The labels of foreign agents and anti-nationalists can then be heaped upon the guerrillas, creating a propaganda, or psychological, advantage for the Government.

Communique Number One from the DSE denied that Communist bands in Macedonia and Thessaly received "material assistance from foreigners or from foreign territory."¹⁷⁶ However, the veracity of that statement was impugned since two Yugoslavian officers, (found in military uniforms) had been slain near Salonika.¹⁷⁷

The initial success of the DSE was not surprising. But there was a certain irony in the early achievements of the DSE. The Party had not decided to fight in 1946.

The Central Committee's orders were: "Stay in in the towns, no running away to the mountains." ¹⁷⁸

.....

Zachariades had no more faith in former ELAS officers than he had in the new movement forming in the mountains.... ¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ New York Times, 21 November 1946. Also see New York Times, 6 and 28 December 1946. Both contain accounts of training camps for guerrillas in Communist countries.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 2 September 1946.

¹⁷⁸ Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 267.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 267-268.

The leader of the Party clearly did not envision a major military effort at that time. The military force that could have been arrayed against the Government was very large. Zachariades, however, did not permit the full mobilization of all the urban guerrilla assets at his disposal. Markos was certainly aware that time was against the Insurrection if a rapid build-up of forces did not occur, but if the Central Committee insisted on keeping its troops in Athens and Salonika, Markos said: "If the Democratic Army is to develop, it must make its effort now or never (Fall 1946)."¹⁸⁰

So far it is apparent that the military arm of the KKE was anxious to engage in hostilities, and the reaction by Markos to the constraints of his superiors is understandable. He was given a mission of fighting the national forces but not of winning. He also was aware that "despite vague promises Stalin sent nothing at all, except a few Soviet officers to act as observers."¹⁸¹ O'Ballance suggests that Markos had to make concessions to the Yugoslavian government for the help given by them to the Greeks,¹⁸² and that these agreements would have been very detrimental to Greece should the KKE ever come to power. From the evidence available to date, this contention

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 294.

¹⁸¹ O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 131.

¹⁸² Ibid.

does not seem valid. The actual intricate machinations that occurred will be reviewed, but it is unlikely that concessions could be given since the decision was to fight only a limited war to achieve the overall political objectives. Lastly, it would be inconceivable that a Communist field commander would make any political agreements without the consent, or representation, of the Greek Politburo.

Zachariades, for reasons that seemed to be associated with his desire to be recognized by Stalin (besides being motivated by the fact that Bulgaria had been delivered to the Soviet Bloc in 1946), insisted on certain points:

1. Recruitment must be undertaken exclusively on a voluntary basis.
2. Markos must accept only individual volunteers and refuse to accept any organized bodies from the governmental army which might express the intention of joining the andartes en masse.
3. Armed activity must be restricted to attacks on monarchist bands; the regular army must not be touched.
4. Only defensive actions would be permitted. No Party organization was to be set up within the partisan groups.
5. We are maintaining our "conciliatory" line, plus all our activity must contribute to this end. 183

The truth seems to be that Zachariades did not trust this Movement in the mountains. It can be concluded that

¹⁸³Endes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 269. The contradictions contained between the third and fourth point are probably due to the fact that Zachariades had not established precise objectives he wished to achieve with this military force.

Zachariades clung tenaciously to the canonical model of an urban insurrection. By doing so he deliberately limited the development and momentum of the Insurgent Movement:

Militants who were called up were forbidden to desert to the self-defense groups (in the mountain): The result, in a country whose police files had been growing for twenty years, was that activists and sympathizers were handed over to Security as soon as they showed their faces at a recruitment center. ¹⁸⁴

The overall result of the continued implementation regarding this irrational policy, was the internment of some 50,000 potential guerrillas in the Government's concentration camps. ¹⁸⁵

The KKE's, and especially Zachariades's, atavistic mistrust of revolutionary zeal by the Greeks condemned them to repeat history. The Central Committee's repeated dictum to stay in the urban areas led to what should have been considered inevitable. The Greek Government acted. Some three hundred ex-officers, all former sympathizers or members of ELAS, were arrested and exiled. This pre-emptive strategic move by the Government would have enormous consequences in the mountains. The most apparent result of this governmental action was the inability of the Communist to produce a competent officer corps when the DSE started to employ large-scale tactics.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 266.

¹⁸⁵Consult Spencer, War and Postwar Greece, p. 111; and Sweet-Escot, Greece, p. 75. The camps afforded the opportunity to indulge in polemical argumentation for democracy vis-a-vis concentration camps in the political area of many western countries.

In other areas, the DSE used every method to continue its struggle. For example, in the field of logistics there was no air resupply, but:

Weapons from Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria were delivered on muleback or by conscript peasant women to northern areas, or by small ships, loaded in Albania to guerrillas in the Peloponnese and coastal areas. 186

Fortunately for the DSE in 1946, the Greek Navy lacked the means to control guerrilla movement along the coast.¹⁸⁷ There was never a surplus of supply in the DSE, but by the same token for the first two years there was never a large deficit in logistical support.

Since there were adequate supplies for the prosecution of the War, the other ingredient in the equation for the application of combat-power was personnel. Only ten percent of the total DSE force structure was Communist, and about twenty percent of the total force was women. There were undoubtedly some Guerrillas who were common outlaws, however, the contention of the Herter Report on Greece by a Congressional Committee on Foreign Aid was amiss, the report concluded that there was "no appreciable support for the guerrillas among the Greek people."¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶McNeill, The Greek Dilemma: War and Aftermath, p. 39.

¹⁸⁷U.S. Department of State, Third Report to Congress on Assistance to Greece and Turkey, Economic Cooperation Series No. 3 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1948), p. 2.

¹⁸⁸U.S. Congress, Select Committee on Foreign Aid, Herter Report on Greece (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1948), p. 22.

Even after Zachariades expressly forbade the broadening of the guerrilla warfare on the basis of conscription and set 10,000 as the limit for guerrillas, Markos continued to increase the size of the DSE. It would seem that since only 18 percent of the party were workers, Zachariades tried to balance the KKE's "faulty composition." Obviously, support for the Insurgents was present. Also, there was another reason for early accessions to the ranks of the DSE:

A notable upsurge in recruitment was credibly reported in the countryside to members of this team (United Nations) after Zervas' mass arrests and deportations without trial in March 1947. 189

On the other hand, there are cases to indicate that not all recruits were inducted in a completely voluntary manner:

Men who were not ready to volunteer, when faced by the alternative of joining up or suffering violent retaliation or even death, found it safest to serve in the guerrilla ranks. 190

This situation, however, can be viewed from a different perspective. In order to insure that no retaliation was taken by the Government against his family, the recruit had to leave an impression that he was an involuntary recruit.

¹⁸⁹Smothers, Report on the Greeks, p. 153. Also consult New York Times, 25 July 1920. There are "new recruits who prefer freedom in the mountains to captivity in the islands." Zervas was an old enemy. He had commanded EDES in its fight against ELAS.

¹⁹⁰McNeill, The Greek Dilemma: War and Aftermath, p. 38.

Within the DSE there was another talked-about source of manpower. The DSE membership, as well as some members of the Greek Government, thought that there was an International Brigade in being in 1947. The purpose of this unit was to aid the DSE.¹⁹¹ At the same time, a Memo received by the American Secretary of State from Mr. Miner of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs addressed the subject:

There is no definite information that an international brigade is in existence or that international elements have so far participated in the fighting in Greece. There are, however, in Yugoslavia and Albania sizeable foreign groups which have received some military training and could readily be used...These foreign groups include: (a) more than 25,000 Greek minority elements (Moslems and Slavo-Macedonians); (b) the International Youth Brigade which numbers approximately 50,000...; and (c) perhaps an additional group of from 1,000 to 6,000 of various nationalities, including Spanish Communists, reported by a variety of sources to be undergoing military training in Yugoslavia. 192

Also, our Department of Defense had measured the impact of an International Brigade, or Volunteers. It was their finding that if the number exceeded 20,000, then there would have to be outside military help to maintain the Greek National Forces (GNF).¹⁹³

¹⁹¹U.S. State Department, Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Publications number 8592. Vol. V (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 258. The War Department became part of the Department of Defense in 1947.

¹⁹²Ibid., p. 293.

¹⁹³JUSMAPG Report, National Archives Building, Records of Joint Chiefs of Staff, Record Group 123, File 370.2. This is reprinted in appendix B of this study.

O'Ballance submits that Markos was convinced that a victory in the field could only be achieved when the "International Brigades arrived." This, however, was unlikely. In reviewing the transactions with the Communist neighbors to the north of Greece, there is not even the slightest hint of personnel assistance from these countries. On the other hand, it is difficult to envision Markos or the KKE not asking for support in both men and material. But it is unlikely that the DSE rested its complete reliance on a nebulous chance of external aid, especially in the field of manpower.

By the end of 1946, Markos had over 6,000 men with which to implement the policy of the Third Plenum of the KKE Central Committee, which decided between 12-15 September to "transfer the centre of gravity of the party's activities to the military-political sector."¹⁹⁴ By March 1947 the DSE had about 13,000 armed men with some degree of training.¹⁹⁵

It is ironic that the KKE decided to escalate the War to a conventional state in the fall of 1947, when their Achilles' heel showed the most. Neither the Greek people nor the Greek military exhibited any signs of demoralization. This was the most serious strategic mistake of the war.

¹⁹⁴ Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 247.

¹⁹⁵ O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 133; Also Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 278. A description of the type bandit in the DSE was in New York Times, 2 December 1946.

As proof of this, it is necessary to point out that the soldiers of DSE did not have a strong logistic base to support this change. They did, however, exploit to the maximum the elaborate etiquette of the cold war precluding the GNF from crossing into the sanctuaries across the border.¹⁹⁶

The Communist guerrillas knew that in a conventional war that they would have to seize territory.¹⁹⁷ But they also knew that they were not strong enough to engage the National Forces in open combat and defeat them. This was a realistic approach, despite the fact that there was political instability in the Greek Government at the time. Instead, they waged a War of Attrition.¹⁹⁸ History has shown that this type of warfare is very difficult to counter by regular troops and also produces a morale problem on the Government's side. "Had it been possible for the rebels to adhere to these tactics, the war might still be in progress."¹⁹⁹

It must be remembered that during the period of rapid build-up on the part of both sides, the Communist Army, with 10,000 men, adhered to guerrilla warfare.²⁰⁰ But by the end

¹⁹⁶ Sweet-Escot, Greece, p. 60.

¹⁹⁷ Foster, A Short History of Modern Greece, p. 232.

¹⁹⁸ Zotos, Greece: The Struggle for Freedom, p. 169.

¹⁹⁹ Sweet-Escot, Greece, p. 60.

²⁰⁰ New York Times, 1 July 1946, 17 July 1946; 3 August 1946; and 9 November 1946. Each gives an account of a guerrilla raid. Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 239; Also Tsoucalas, Greek Tragedy, p. 108.

of 1946 the Greek Armed Forces were at 90,000 men, even though a large portion of these forces was in para-military organizations. At the same time it was discernable that with supplies and reserve call-ups a great force could be mobilized by the Government, since the urban centers and large areas of the countryside were under its control.²⁰¹

Markos knew that his force had to fight hard to counter the overwhelming GNF. But one prominent author in the field of modern Greek history, Woodhouse,²⁰² has claimed that the leaders of the DSE reduced their guerrilla activity while UNSCOB was in Greece. This view seems to be at variance with the comments made by Markos to the Communist member of the UNSCOB in March 1947. All of Markos's answers reflected the then current set of principles that the partisans were fighting to defend.

In the claim made by Woodhouse that the level of activity was reduced during the UNSCOB visit, he fails to consider that the Committee had to wait for three days for Markos to return because he was away conducting operations. This single fact that the Commanding General was engaged in military operations, confronts the assertion of Woodhouse.

²⁰¹Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 238.

²⁰²Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 278.

Markos responded to a UNSCOB member's questions:

"What are the aims of the Democratic Army?"

"The Democratic Army is fighting, and will continue to fight, for independence and for the people's rights. It is against all foreign interference in Greek internal affairs, since it wishes the people to be master of its own destiny and to have the right to decide for itself on the nature of its institutions."

"How can the Greek problem be solved?"

"EAM outlined a very specific programme. The British must leave Greece and the Americans must not be allowed to take their place." 203

Markos steadfastly pursued the achievement of the goals he cited to UNSCOB. He was firmly convinced that the KKE had lost its capability of gaining control of the Government by political actions alone.²⁰⁴ Therefore, it is logical to conclude that Markos could not have seen any benefit from decreasing the only effective tool the KKE had to achieve some nebulous reward from the United Nations. At that time the United Nations was still in a formative stage and certainly a long way from Greece.

By April 1947, both sides had completed the muscle-flexing stage of hostilities and were prepared to engage in a major campaign. An event occurred on 1 April that gave certain benefits to the Government side by decreasing the instability of the Greek Government:

²⁰³ Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 287.

²⁰⁴ O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 135.

On April 1st, 1947, King George II of Greece died and was succeeded by his brother, Paul I. Many hoped that the new King would be able to weld the political parties together, as he was generally popular and was not tainted with the Fascist Mataxas smear, as had been his brother. 205

Perhaps as a result of a national commitment under a new King, the Greek National Forces launched their first major operation against the Communist bandits. This was "Operation Terminus."

The result of this first large-offensive effort by the GNF ended in a march through guerrilla territory, because the units of the DSE simply withdrew before the regular troops.²⁰⁶ The Government, however, believed that this operation had killed, wounded, or captured sixty percent of the 1200-1500 bandits originally estimated to be operating in the 900 square kilometer area.²⁰⁷ In fact, Markos personally led his troops out of the encirclement that the GNF tried to execute.²⁰⁸

On 20 April 1947, Siantos died of a heart attack. This meant that the strongest bastion for conservatism was gone. At the time, however, the accomplishments on the part of the DSE were, broadly stated, positive:

²⁰⁵ O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 137.

²⁰⁶ Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 187.

²⁰⁷ New York Times, 21 April 1947. Also detailed accounts of the operation are found in the New York Times for 10 April 1947; and Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, pp. 290-292.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 292-293.

But the signs for the future were not encouraging. There was fatigue; the millstone of dogma; ruthless opponents were turning the country into a desert. The Democratic Army - fifteen-year-old freedom fighters, armed women - needed aid from fraternal countries and reinforcements from the towns.²⁰⁹

The problem of reinforcement or replacement of losses in the DSE was to be the most critical difficulty experienced by the Communists during the War. There were very poignant reasons for this. First of all, the Central Committee had ordered what could have been the "cream of the crop" to stay in the cities until it was too late. Additionally, even if this had not been the case there was no organization to ferry fighters to the mountains from the large cities.²¹⁰

Zachariades was paying a high price for trying to maintain the cloak of legality around the KKE. This was a defect in his overall strategy since it did not provide any advantage to the military effort that he had ordered. The rewards for this policy were also lacking because the revolutionary concepts precluded any alliance with the Center or Left political forces in the country. This should have been clear to him,

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 295, and George Stavrides, Ta Paraskenia Tou K.K.E. (Athens, 1953), p. 588. Stavrides describes the effect of Siantos' death on the KKE.

²¹⁰ Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 246. The Central Committee said: "Only cowards want to go and join the Mountain." This precluded the early establishment of some type of "underground railroad" to supply recruits from the urban areas in southern Greece to the mountains.

when the effort to back Sophocles Souphoulis as Prime Minister in a new Government failed:

Thus Zachariades could only benefit from this "legality" by waiting for the right moment to launch the urban insurrections. These hopeful visions were totally invalidated by everyday reality. 211

Meanwhile, in the mountains, Markos' army reached an effective strength of about 35,000 in the summer of 1947.²¹² From that point on, recruitment was almost impossible. This was because the Government initiated the call up of entire year-groups of reservists, rather than only the politically-reliable recruits.

The reality of the situation must have been apparent to the leadership of the KKE. Markos must have realized that it would only be a matter of time before the plentiful supply of recruits dried up. The only plausible explanation for the failure of the DSE to capitalize on accessions to its ranks in 1946-1947 had to be dogmatic adherence to the dictums of Zachariades and his adherence, in turn, to the Principle of Urban Insurrection.

On top of the logistical and personnel problems, there was among the "allies" of the DSE the first open evidence of disunity. Stalin certainly did not like the independence

²¹¹Ibid., p. 294.

²¹²The 35,000 figure is probably not realistic unless the author is counting all the support troops and combat troops. American intelligence estimated the strength at about 25,000.

displayed by Tito in his continuing efforts for unification with Albania, much less the welcome accorded him on a recent state-visit to Bulgaria. But this was incidental, compared to the substantive talks between Georgi Dimitrov, the Bulgarian Premier, and Tito to achieve a Balkan Federation. This venture was also opposed by the Soviets who did not want any Balkan Pact at that time.²¹³ It can be assumed from the lack of progress in establishing a Balkan Union that extreme Soviet pressure was applied.

In the opposing camp, in 1947, there was a major shift, almost imperceivable at first, that would ultimately ensure the military destruction of the DSE. During the preceding summer, Prime Minister Tsaldaris stated that unless the drachma was supported by outside monetary aid it would collapse.²¹⁴ The question of aid to Greece by the United States had arisen for the first time at a Cabinet-level meeting of 25 September 1946, at which time a paper from the Department of State had been discussed.²¹⁵ In the Fall the United States Ambassador to

²¹³Kousoulas, Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party, p. 250. See John Campbell, Tito's Separate Road (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 113; also Harry Hodgkinson, Challenge to the Kremlin (New York: Praeger, 1952), pp. 175-176.

²¹⁴New York Times, 2 July 1946.

²¹⁵Reitzel, Kaplan, and Coblenz, United States Foreign Policy: 1945-1955. (Washington: Brookings Institute, 1956), p. 110. The actual paper, classified top secret, was dated 21 October 1946.

Greece, Lincoln MacVeagh, in conferences with the King of Greece, had outlined the conditions which would be necessary before American aid was extended.²¹⁶ The main emphasis was on the establishment of a broad representative base for the Government.

Soon after, a report of the United Nations Economic and Social Council was published. It stated that Greece would continue to need foreign assistance "during the 'difficult period' after the termination of the work of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration" on 30 June 1947.²¹⁷

As a step toward granting aid, President Truman authorized an American Economic Mission to Greece to examine conditions there and recommend measures that should be taken by the United States for the reconstruction of the country. Paul Porter, Head of the Mission, left for Greece in early January in order to conclude the mission's work by the end of April.²¹⁸

Porter found that the Greek economy was in no condition to support the country's military forces without British aid.²¹⁹ In a top-secret report, Porter indicated that for the year ending 31 March 1947, \$272 million had been expended and \$185 million received by the Greek Government. He projected for

²¹⁶Stephen G. Xydís, Greece and the Great Power 1944-1947, pp. 400-405.

²¹⁷New York Times, 10 January 1947.

²¹⁸Ibid.

²¹⁹McNeill, The Greek Dilemma: War and Aftermath, p. 34.

1947 an expenditure of \$421 million and \$256 million in revenues.²²⁰ On 17 February, Porter reported:

There is really no State here in the Western concept. Rather we have a loose hierarchy of individualistic politicians, some worse than others, who are so preoccupied with their own struggle for power that they have no time, even assuming capacity, to develop economic policy. ²²¹

Three days later, on 20 February 1947, the American Ambassador believed the collapse of Greece's Government was imminent. The next day the Secretary of State received an appeal from MacVeagh and Porter recommending a decision to assist Greece with military equipment, since Greece was receiving neither adequate economic assistance from the United States nor sufficient military aid from Britain. The situation was exacerbated when Lord Inverchapel, British Ambassador in Washington, delivered to the State Department a formal notification that Great Britain could no longer extend financial assistance to Greece after 31 March 1947.²²²

The rebirth of the Guerrilla Movement in 1946 had provided the British a ready pretext for rushing to the aid of the Greek monarch. This action was justified on the ground that Greece was suffering aggression from Socialist countries.

²²⁰U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, p. 18.

²²¹Ibid., p. 20.

²²²Ibid., p. 44. This was not a surprise announcement. The State Department was aware of British intentions before 21 February.

A more pressing force, the monetary drain on the Exchequer, soon proved the dominant factor in the British reaction.

A power vacuum was also developing in Greece with the withdrawal of British support. The Soviets were undoubtedly eager to fill this vacuum by using the Greek Communists to make a direct bid for power.²²³ This would give the KKE a chance to rectify their previous defeat in the streets of Athens.

With the delivery of Lord Inverchapel's note the British were really asking whether the United States was prepared to assume a greater part of the responsibility for world peace and stability. President Truman and Secretary of State Marshall decided to make an urgent appeal to Congress to appropriate large sums of money immediately for saving Greece from collapse.²²⁴

It took an economic crisis to bring home to the United States the importance of its interests in the eastern Mediterranean. There was far more at stake in this Crisis than the appropriation of money for a small country or the economic plight of Great Britain. The American interest in Greece was not based on mere sentiment. The position of Greece was critical in our eastern Mediterranean strategy. Should

²²³Theodore Couloumbis, Greek Political Reaction to American and NATO Influences (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 26. See Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation (New York: Norton and Co., 1969), in passim.

²²⁴New York Times, 28 February 1947.

Greece turn Communist, Turkey would be politically isolated. Without Turkey, Iran would be in danger of falling to the Communists.

In a classified letter from the State Department to Ambassador MacVeagh, dated 14 November 1946, a memorandum regarding Greece was enclosed. It contained the United States' position on Greece:

The strategic importance of Greece to United States security lies in the fact that it is the only country of the Balkans which has not yet fallen under Soviet hegemony....

We cannot afford to stand idly by in the face of maneuvers and machinations which evidence an intention on the part of the Soviet Union to expand its power by subjecting Greece to its power and to its will, and then using Greece as an important stepping stone for a further expansion of Soviet power. 225

As regards the American intentions toward Greece this memorandum illustrates the early planning and thoughts of the State Department. It was in the interest of the United States, that the Government of Greece be assisted in becoming strong enough to handle its internal problems, thus precluding a sudden increase in assistance during a state of near or actual, Civil War.

The main line of American policy had been to resist the expansion of Soviet influence. The argument for helping

²²⁵Letter from Henderson to Ambassador MacVeagh, 14 November 1946, Department of State files, National Archives Building, File 868.24/11-1446. Record Group 334.

Greece was that if Greece fell, the political and military alignment of that part of the world would change. Turkey would have become vulnerable. The Soviet Union would have access to the Mediterranean.²²⁶

The United States was probably guided in its actions by a twofold objective; first, to promote an anti-Communist government; and second, to insure stability within that government and a long-range economic recovery.²²⁷ When the British could not allocate funds after 31 March 1947 for Greece, the stark alternatives facing the United States were two -- either the assumption of the responsibility for maintaining a bastion of freedom on the southeastern flank in Europe, or allowing Greece to become a Soviet satellite in the Communist sphere of influence.

Secretary Marshall ruled out the second option when he said: "This government has been endeavoring in various ways to assist in the restoration of the economy of Greece."²²⁸ A strong appeal for American assistance was received by the State Department from the Greek Government on 4 March 1947.²²⁹

²²⁶ William Reitzel, The Mediterranean, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1948), p. 90.

²²⁷ Coulombis, Greek Political Reaction to American and NATO Influences, p. 193.

²²⁸ New York Times, 5 March 1947.

²²⁹ U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of United States, 1947, p. 69; contains documents that reveal the United States government requested the Greek government to include in its appeal a request for "American personnel to help supervise and administer any United States financial aid extended to Greece."

The stage was now set. All the elements necessary for American action were present. This orchestration of events culminated in what would soon be called the Truman Doctrine. It was outlined by the President on 12 March 1947:

I believe that we must assist free people to work out their destinies in their own way.

The United States has received from the Greek government an urgent appeal for financial and economic assistance.

...assistance is imperative if Greece is to survive as a free nation.

I therefore ask the Congress to provide authority for assistance to Greece and Turkey in the amount of \$400,000,000 for the period ending 30 June 1948.²³⁰

Congressional reactions to the President's policy were varied.²³¹ At that time the military was not in favor of aid in supplies and equipment in the quantities asked.²³²

The Soviet reply to the Truman Doctrine was quick in coming. Moscow denounced the Truman Doctrine as "but a

²³⁰David M. Robinson, America in Greece, a Traditional Policy (New York: Anatolia Press, 1948), pp. 190-195. See New York Times, 13 March 1947. For an account of the speech announcing the "Truman Doctrine" and the debate it set off in the United States, see J.M. Jones, The Fifteen Weeks (New York: Viking Press, 1955)

²³¹The two-month debate is contained in the Congressional Record, 80th Congress, Vol. 93, Parts 3 and 4 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1947). Also House Document, 80th Congress 1st session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1947), Document No. 171.

²³²New York Times, 16 March 1947.

smokescreen for expansion."²³³ The Soviets charged the President's speech proposed new interference in the business of other states.

Worldwide reaction to the Speech only confirmed that the preservation of Greek Democracy was only one of the reasons for American intervention. The chief reason why the President wished to give aid to Greece was strategic. Stavrianos has remarked that if Greece were located "at the top of Patagonia", the U.S. could care little for its democratic problems.²³⁴ This is undoubtedly true. Greece, is, however, one of the most strategically-located countries in Europe.

The President submitted two bills to provide aid to Greece and Turkey. They were introduced in the first session of the Eightieth Congress -- H.R. 2616 and S. 938. The Economic Mission, in its final report, recommended immediate United States financial aid to Greece in the amount of \$300,000,000.²³⁵ To quiet Congressional fears of American military involvement, Dean Acheson, acting Secretary of State for General George C. Marshall, stated to the House Foreign Affairs Committee that American troops would not "take the field" against guerrilla forces in Greece. Furthermore, United States Military Missions

²³³New York Times, 14 March 1947; also Alvin Z. Rubinstein, editor, The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 201

²³⁴Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 3.

²³⁵New York Times, 1 May 1947.

would not even train Greek troops, but would be confined to the functions of the military-aid program, providing supplies and equipment.²³⁶ The Greek-Turkish Aid Bill passed the House on the 9th of May by a vote of 287-107; the Senate had passed it on 22 April by a 67-23 vote.²³⁷

This law provided for economic assistance and military equipment to Greece. The number of American military personnel was not specified. All military functions, with respect to aid in Greece, were to be under the control of the Chief of Mission and stateside coordination was channeled through the State-War-Navy Coordination Committee.

The first period of the Civil War, from February 1946,²³⁸ till the fall of 1947, can be labeled a period of extensive

²³⁶ Ibid., 21 March 1947. Messrs. Acheson, Clayton, and Porter testified on H.R. 2616 before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on 20, 24, and 28 March respectively. Their testimony is printed on pages 1, 63, and 123 of the House hearings of the 80th Congress, 1st Session. Messrs. Acheson and Clayton testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 24 and 25 March. This testimony is printed on pages 4 and 63 of the Senate Hearings, of the 80th Congress, 1st Session, and also in the Department of State Bulletin, 4 May 1947 supplement, p. 835.

²³⁷ Second Quarterly Report, p. 1.

²³⁸ Kydis, Greece and the Great Powers, pp. 138, 161. Kydis and Tsoucalas (p. 108) maintain the decision the launch the "third round" was reached as early as December 1944. Eudes would not concur in this analysis since he actually dates the decision for war in late Summer 1947. Eudes' arguments are very convincing.

build-up and small-scale combat operations. But on 10 September 1947 Markos' letter to the London Times was published. He states: "We are always prepared to come to an understanding...." But it was at this same time Zachariades declared that the KKE would "not negotiate."²³⁹ Immediately thereafter, on 12 September, the Third Plenum of the Central Committee met. Markos refused to attend the Plenum because only six of the twenty-five regular members would be present. This, of course, was the Plenum that shifted the center of gravity of the party from legal to extralegal means of achieving political power.

What caused this series of events or what relationship existed between them and the proclamation of a Democratic Government in December 1947 is not readily apparent. In view of the scarcity of material on the events which occurred in the fall of 1947 on the Communists' side; no documented conclusion can be stated. There are, however, certain aspects that can be examined.

First of all, and most readily apparent, is the contradictions in the statements of Markos and Zachariades. Markos claimed that the Communists were willing to negotiate, but Zachariades denied it. There had to be a breakdown somewhere in the KKE structure at this point.

²³⁹ Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, p. 291. Also Markos knew that the Center or Left members of the Parliament wanted to negotiate. According to Report on the Greeks it was common knowledge.

Markos, who by this time was a popular leader,²⁴⁰ had evidently accepted the thesis of applying military pressure to achieve a desired goal. It must have been obvious to him that the Politburo would not allow any conversion toward all-out war. Otherwise, the order would have been issued in the beginning to preclude the devastation of the central core of the Guerrilla fighters, by governmental agencies.

But at the same time it is quite possible that Markos learned of the intent to have a Plenum the purpose of which was to declare war on the state. This must have been the case, in order to adequately explain the letter to the Times. Markos realized that in the fall of 1947 he had expanded to his maximum strength. "Recruitment problems had become insoluble."²⁴¹ It is possible that Markos tried to exploit the political pressure on the legal government before the decision to go to the Third Stage of Insurgency was made.

At the other end of the spectrum, the head of the KKE probably saw that Anna Pauker would successfully deliver the country of Rumania into the Soviet block in a short time.²⁴² Zachariades seems to have wanted to force Stalin to provide support and recognition for his endeavors. This would support

²⁴⁰O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 130.

²⁴¹Ibid., p. 303.

²⁴²Actually occurred in December.

the establishment of a Communist government in Greece in December. Besides, it might help to secure the blessings of Moscow if they employed the guerrilla units within the framework of a regular army. In support of this Eudes states that:

It only remained for him (Zachariades) to mutilate the Democratic Army and apply the strategy used by the Red Army in the plains of the Don to Greek mountain conditions, before the drama could end.... 244

The essence of Eudes argument is certainly validated by subsequent events, but the real issue at this point is the strategic environment the KKE wanted to construct. Markos probably realized that if the Movement went from guerrilla to conventional warfare at that point in time, the ultimate defeat of the DSE was assured. He knew that the basic preconditions for successfully accomplishing the shift were lacking.

On the other hand, Zachariades must have envisioned the futility of this indirect aggression because of the vacuum within which the KKE had to operate. There was no legal representation in the Government. The state, taking advantage of this fact, effectively decimated the urban support that had existed. And finally there was the immediate prospect of massive military aid from the United States which would inevitably be applied against the Communists.

²⁴³ Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 303.

By the end of 1947 the battle lines were drawn.²⁴⁴
The opening battles had taken place but the story of Markos
versus Zachariades and the ultimate defeat of the DSE are the
subjects of the next chapter.

²⁴⁴E.G. Aslanis, Guerrilla War in Greece 1946-1949
(Athens: Hellenic Armed Forces Command, 1969), p. 20-23.
This work mentions that a marked change took place in the
DSE at the end of 1947. The author is a colonel in the
Hellenic Air Force.

Chapter IV

THE DEFEAT OF THE KKE

In early 1948, massive American aid provided the bulwark for the Greek defense. It was also during 1948 that the reorganization of the Greek armed forces occurred.²⁵⁵ The significance of this fact was not lost on either side. The Communists knew that the longer time it took to achieve victory, the stronger the National Forces would become, especially with American aid.

In all probability there was direct pressure put on the KKE to achieve a quick victory. This can be inferred from the fact that "what Moscow was now looking for was the chance to have Markos Vafiades replaced."²⁵⁶ In order to explain this attitude, on the part of Moscow, it is necessary to examine what actions Markos took to elicit the response.

Certainly one of the reasons behind this Russian attitude was the failure of Markos to achieve the goal set forth by the Third Plenum for a military victory. This is

²⁵⁵Field Marshal Alexander Papagos, "Guerrilla Warfare," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Jan 1952), 215-230.

²⁵⁶Zotos, Greece, p. 179; and also Kousoulas, Price of Freedom, p. 178.

only part of the answer. Other factors led to this desire to replace Markos.

There was a myriad of events that contributed to the establishment of the final Soviet view. Their attitude started to take shape shortly after the Second World War when Tito demanded mastery of his own house from the High Priest in the Kremlin.²⁵⁷ But the Heretic did not repent and continued to defy Moscow. Stalin threatened what amounted to excommunication but to no avail since:

Tito, objecting to the complete economic domination of his country by Russia, was bent on pursuing an independent course both nationally and internationally. In the Balkans, Tito insisted on establishing his Federation of Slavs of the South.²⁵⁹ This show of independence infuriated Stalin....

Ultimately, on 28 June 1948, Stalin carried out his threat and read Tito out of the Cominform.²⁶⁰ This action had a direct bearing on the Greek Civil War because there were still

²⁵⁷ Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 200. For the type of internal deviation of the Yugoslavian government see P.D. Ostovic, The Truth About Yugoslavia (New York: Roy Publishers, 1952), p. 253. An excellent description of the events within Yugoslavia which led to the establishment of Titoism are found in a book by Ulam. Adam B. Ulam, Titoism and the Cominform, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 96-135.

²⁵⁸ H.F. Armstrong, "Tito and Stalin," Atlantic, Vol. 55 (October 1949), p. 31.

²⁵⁹ Zotos, Greece, p. 178. Moscow would initiate action to insure loyalty within the KKE. This is one of the reasons for the drive to eliminate Markos.

²⁶⁰ The Cominform replaced the Comintern as a means, especially in the Balkans, of controlling the formation of the cordon sanitaire around "Mother Russia."

two diverse and irreconcilable elements within the KKE,²⁶¹ just as there had been from the beginning of the Party. One side, under Marcos, was favorably inclined toward Tito,²⁶² and the other faction of the Party, under Zachariades, favored Stalin.

It is at this point that one common misconception must be addressed. There is a widespread belief that Stalin wanted the guerrilla war stopped.²⁶³ A short investigation will repudiate this contention.

Despite the differences that existed between Stalin, Tito, and the KKE, the war in Greece was a War of Liberation. Consequently this war certainly contributed to the overall objective of world-wide domination under Communist control. Secondly, the Kremlin never did withdraw its support from the Insurgents until the DSE ceased hostilities. Finally, the Russian political support for the KKE never stopped:

...during the discussion of the Greek question by the General Assembly of the United Nations in the fall of 1948, the Soviet Union continued the familiar attacks against the Greek Government and "foreign intervention in Greece. ²⁶⁴

²⁶¹The struggle came into the open in January 1949.

²⁶²Kousoulas, Price of Freedom, p. 178; and Spencer, War in Postwar Greece, p. 117.

²⁶³Kousoulas, Price of Freedom, p. 224. DiJalas, Conversations with Stalin, p. 182. Many other authors convey this idea either directly by quoting DiJalas or by inference.

²⁶⁴Kousoulas, Price of Freedom, p. 178.

The Soviets in 1948 certainly profited by the aggression against the free world in Greece in the form of a Communist insurrection. It must be remembered that in 1948 Stalin directly confronted the West with the unsuccessful Berlin Blockade, and Moscow certainly could have viewed the Greek Insurgency as a bonus-factor in its efforts in Berlin in spite of the low priority placed on the Greek Civil War by the Kremlin.

Consequently, in view of the Tito problem, it can be seen that it was beneficial for Moscow to pursue a policy of support for Zachariades against Markos since Zachariades fell within the category of a "trusted agent." There were also events within Greece which materially contributed to the demise of Markos.

On 10 September 1947 Markos, in his letter to the London Times, offered compromise and reconciliation. This was probably a result of his own interpretation of the orders from the KKE, that the DSE was only a pressure force to achieve political ends. It does seem ironic that within a week (12-15 September), the Third Plenum shifted the center of their activity to the politico-military sector for the reasons stated in Chapter III. Somehow this must have signalled to Markos that Zachariades would undoubtedly assume the role of Commander at some future date. If not on his own, then Markos certainly reasoned this as a consequence of the purge of

Kapetanios²⁶⁵ that Zachariades initiated. This purge was probably the result of Zachariades' desire to undermine the support for Markos among his group. This was accomplished by the same method he had used to purge the camp at Bulkes.

This purge was the direct result of the program of the Third Plenum since Markos refused to sanction the program of the Plenum, and thereby started on the open road to destruction within the KKE. As an outgrowth of the resolutions by the Third Plenum, the KKE needed to change the strategy of the war.²⁶⁶ The new strategy and, in reality, a new tactic, stemmed from the decision of Zachariades to escalate the war from a guerrilla-based insurgency to conventional warfare in order to achieve a more rapid victory than Markos could promise with guerrilla warfare. This inherently called for the adoption of new tactics by the DSE to achieve their strategic goal. Zachariades believed that:

...the only hope of further progress was to seize and hold an administrative centre and a continuous stretch of territory which they could claim to govern.²⁶⁷

The tactic of securing territory in support of Zachariades new strategy "bestowed an unexpected victory on the

²⁶⁵Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans in Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 303.

²⁶⁶Sweet-Escot, Greece: A Political and Economic Survey, 1939-1953, p. 61; and Zotos, Greece, p. 176.

²⁶⁷Campbell and Sherrard, Modern Greece, pp.183-4.

government forces."²⁶⁸ When the DSE made the first attempt to implement this new plan at Konitsa, the result was a tactical defeat of the Communist guerrillas. The Insurgents tried to fight a set-piece battle with regular troops and thereby violated the basic rule of guerrilla warfare. In reality, the DSE engaged conventional combat forces without having attained a conventional level of proficiency in modern warfare.²⁶⁹

Markos insisted that the Democratic Army abandon set-piece battles that were an inherent part of the new conventional strategy.²⁷⁰ In all probability, this was the immediate cause of the downfall of Markos. But the fundamental error committed by Markos was strictly political. He had not consented to the directives of the Third Plenum in a manner befitting a good Communist, especially among a Central Committee that was composed exclusively of international Communists after the purges ordered by Zachariades.

²⁶⁸ Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans in Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 309.

²⁶⁹ Zotos, Greece, p. 176; and also Voigt, Greek Sedition, p. 209. Voigt claims this attack was the "heaviest offensive" of the KKE since December 1944.

²⁷⁰ Sweet-Escot, Greece: A Political and Economic Survey, 1939-1953, p. 62. Here Sweet-Escot states the fundamental tactical error contained in the new policy of Zachariades. "These departures from sound tactics on the part of the rebels were exactly what the Government forces wanted, for once the rebels could be attacked in the open and en masse the superiority of the British and American equipment the Government army possessed was bound to tell in the end. But so long as the rebels refrained from tactical errors of this type, the only tactics the Government could employ was to mount a series of long and expensive major offensives designed to clear all rebel personnel out of a given area."

In 1948, notwithstanding the large-scale governmental offensive, Operation Terminus, the DSE was still intact.²⁷¹ The aid which Americans provided to the Greeks did not play a significant part in the military activities of 1948.²⁷² In fact, some areas of Greece which had not been affected by guerrilla bands previously, now had insurgent organizations.²⁷³

In the fall of 1948, with the appearance of conventional formations, American Intelligence had known that there was a problem within the high command of the DSE,²⁷⁴ but continued to believe that Markos was in charge of the operations of the DSE.²⁷⁵ Kousoulas and Zotos both assume that Markos was in command until January.²⁷⁶ All of the major authors in this field noted the definite and distinct switch in tactics from

²⁷¹Tsoucalas, Greek Tragedy, p. 110.

²⁷²Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans in Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 326. Also see 5th Report, p. 2. In 4th Report p. 3 is a concise description of Operation "Crown" in June 1948.

²⁷³McNeil, The Greek Dilemma: War in Aftermath, p. 38. Bands existed within 20 miles of Athens.

²⁷⁴U.S. Army JUSMAPG Report, p. 150.

²⁷⁵The only exception to this generally accepted conclusion that Markos was still in command until about January 1949 is Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans in Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 304.

²⁷⁶Kousoulas, Price of Freedom, p. 178. Also Zotos, Greece, p. 179.

sub-conventional to conventional warfare evidenced in the autumn of 1948, but assumed that Markos had instituted the change.

Eudes, in The Kapetanios, quotes from conversations with Markos to support his conclusion that Markos was relieved from actual command in 1947, when he repudiated the change in strategy which was favored by Zachariades.²⁷⁷ To the combatants, Markos was still the head of the DSE and all orders continued to bear his name.

In reality, the split between the two men had become irrevocable. Zachariades prevailed in this contest because he had successfully stripped away the underlying support for Markos in the purges which he directed.

On 20 August 1948, Markos was ordered to Albania following a quarrel with Zachariades. Markos was extremely apprehensive about carrying out this order because other Kapetanios had been eliminated while executing similar orders. Markos moved as rapidly as possible toward the Albanian border, hoping to cross it before an execution squad could catch him. He finally reached the Russian embassy in Albania.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁷ Campbell and Sherrard, Modern Greece, pp. 183-4.

²⁷⁸ Markos effectively disappeared for a number of years until interviewed behind the Iron Curtain, where he lives at the present time, if he is still alive. Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans in Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 305-331.

There was indeed a plan to kill Markos.²⁷⁹ But the executioners could not catch Markos; once he reached the Russian embassy, he was safe. Why the ex-leader of the DSE received sanctuary in the embassy is unknown, but he was removed from the Greek scene for the duration of the war. Markos' departure brought to a close the long internecine struggle among the top leaders of the Party:

The struggle inside the KKE between the nationalists and the supporters of the Cominform ended in the victory of the latter. 280

It is a reasonable deduction from the aforementioned ensemble of facts, that the final deposition of Markos could be attributed to his alleged favoritism toward Titoism. Also, there was Markos' opposition to the Guerrilla leadership's grandiose idea for escalation from the solid Guerrilla base of his own making, to a new order of battle based on all-out warfare. Finally, the unfavorable reaction to the Third Plenum by Markos certainly led to his ultimate dismissal from the Party by the Fifth Plenary Session of the KKE in January 1949.

Markos correctly assessed the defects of the Communist escalation of the War. The change necessitated a Herculean

²⁷⁹ Eudes, The Kapetanos: Partisans in Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 330-331.

²⁸⁰ Sweet-Escot, Greece: A Political and Economic Survey, 1939-1953, p. 65.

effort in the area of logistics which the DSE never produced, nor was capable of establishing, without massive external aid. Other areas of major concern in establishing a conventional force were not accomplished by the Communists:

In their struggle during the latter half of 1948 to build a standard-type regular Army from guerrilla groups, the Greek Communists political leadership encountered many difficulties which they erroneously thought could be overcome merely by faith and fanaticism. 281

Successive attempts to acquire a capitol and territory all resulted in failure.²⁸² The conventional tactics employed by the DSE ensured their ultimate defeat on the battlefield. The guerrilla had given up his greatest asset -- mobility, at a time when he had not achieved all the desired conditions for escalation to the conventional stage.²⁸³

The actual fighting culminated in the Grammus Mountains in August 1949, with the military defeat of the DSE²⁸⁴ as a

²⁸¹U.S. Army JUSMAPG Report, p. 154.

²⁸²Grevena in November 1948. Karditsa in December 1948. Nauussa in January 1949. Veigt, Greek Sedition, pp. 1-3.

²⁸³Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 203. Here is a good account of a battle of a superior army against a guerrilla force fighting a conventional battle.

²⁸⁴Figures vary, but between 5000 to 8000 of a total DSE force of 15,000 escaped to the northern countries along the border.

conventional force. A detailed account of this action is contained in numerous works.²⁸⁵

Even though the Army had been defeated in the field there remains the question: "Why did all opposition to the Government cease?" Not only did military activity stop, the Communist Party of Greece ceased to function, at least for a while. An examination and interpretation of political events will reveal some of the answers to the question of what was the reason or reasons for the failure of the DSE and the KKE in 1949.

The steps that Zachariades took should not be viewed as irrational, because he was not a military man, and most likely did not appreciate all the intricate problems associated with the projection of power by a military force. This appears to be the only rational explanation of his action to force an early end to a War that he had, for all purposes, lost by keeping the Army in the cities until it was too late. Zachariades came to understand that the American aid was to be the critical difference between successful insurgency and failure. The outcome ultimately rested on the amount of time it took to convert aid into combat power, or conversely the time it would take the DSE to win before the aid became

²⁸⁵U.S. Army JUSMAPG Report, pp. 179-197. Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans in Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, pp. 324-350. Kousoulas, Price of Freedom, p. 265-270.

effective. This must have been the driving force behind Zachariades' attempt to adopt conventional tactics.

Another factor that influenced the KKE during 1948 was the real dilemma presented by the Cominform's decision to disavow Tito.²⁸⁶ On one side, the Insurgents received vital supplies through Yugoslavia; the border of Yugoslavia that is contiguous to Greece offered them a sanctuary. And on the other side, the Guerrillas were dependent on the good will of the leader of the Soviet Union, since a great deal of the DSE's ordinance originated in Eastern Europe.

The Cominform decision forced the KKE to make a decision. At the fourth Plenum on 28 June 1948²⁸⁷ the Party, under the dominating personality of Zachariades, voted. They supported the Cominform decision, but for once they showed some imagination by keeping this decision a secret in order not to alienate Tito. It was not until the Fifth Plenum, 30 January 1949, that Zachariades attempted to restore orthodoxy to the KKE.

The period of silence on the part of the KKE on the Tito issue could not last for long. It may be conjectured that Zachariades realized the political expediency of this

²⁸⁶ McNeill, The Greek Dilemma: War in Aftermath, p. 42. Also see Kousoulas, Price of Freedom, p. 179.

²⁸⁷ Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans in Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, p. 327.

act and therefore adopted it. But it must be pointed out that a complete purge of all the followers of the popular Markos had not been accomplished; and the transfer of command to Zachariades within the DSE was not fully implemented until January 1949. It was at this time that the official announcement of Markos' resignation was published.²⁸⁸

This action signalled that Zachariades had established his power base and now was free to perform in his characteristic manner. He had to align himself with the Orthodox Party Line. Consequently, the Fifth Plenum (January, 1949) fits conveniently into the overall scheme of Zachariades' plans since it was at this point that Markos was expelled from the Party.

In one area there is no need for conjecture, because it clearly demonstrates the complete return to the Orthodox Party Line. The Cominform, in 1948, ordered the abduction of certain Greek children. It was announced over the rebel radio that:

...in accordance with an agreement made with the Cominform, Greek children between the ages of 3 and 14 would be evacuated from rebel-held areas to Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, and Yugoslavia to protect them from the effect of the war. 289

²⁸⁸ Sweet-Escot, Greece: A Political and Economic Survey, 1939-1953, p.

²⁸⁹ Kenneth Matthews, Memories of a Mountain War, Greece: 1944-1949, (London: Longman, 1974), p. 88.

Much controversy was generated by this decision. Many Greeks undoubtedly saw this as an attempt to blackmail the parents of the children within Greece.²⁹⁰

Thereafter, this entire situation proved detrimental to the Communist Cause.²⁹¹ The Greek Government exploited this decision as a propaganda weapon. This "child stealing" evoked memories of the dark days of the Devshirme System of Ottoman rule, when the Turks levied a tribute in the form of Christian children. For Greeks, child-abduction, in any form, is one of the symbols of tyrannical oppression.²⁹²

In evaluating Zachariades' strategy it is in the political sphere that a major reason for the ultimate defeat of the DSE and the KKE can be found. It is also the area that Zachariades did not control. The United States Secretary of State sent a letter to the Director of the American Aid program in Greece,

²⁹⁰ Sweet-Escot, Greece: A Political and Economic Survey, p. 71. Red Cross estimates reached 23,700 in 1948 for the number of children taken across the border.

²⁹¹ This author believes that it is possible that the Cominform decision was prompted by a desire to acquire a group of young children who would become properly educated. They would eventually be used as infiltrators back into the Communist Party of Greece. This would assure the "keeping of the faith" within the KKE.

²⁹² Tsoucalas, Greek Tragedy, p. 111. Consult Eudes, The Kapetanios: Partisans in Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949, pp. 317-319, for an excellent account of this entire matter. Also see Voigt, Greek Sedition, pp. 1-3. Voigt gives an emotional description of a guerrilla raid on Karditsa in which 835 children were abducted.

Mr. Griswold, and explained the intent of the Soviet Union, as it was perceived in Washington:

1) to set up in Greece a Communist-controlled government which would force Greece into a Soviet-dominated Balkan bloc; and 2) to separate Macedonia from the remainder of Greece in order to make Grecian Macedonia part of a Yugoslav or Balkan Federation. 293

These Soviet objectives had to be modified by 1948 when Tito was expelled from the Cominform. Tito's demise fueled the flame of desire in Bulgaria to strive for the creation of an independent Macedonia, from territories which had fallen to Greece and Serbia after the Second Balkan War. Bulgaria saw a distinct advantage in pressing for a declaration by the Cominform on the question of Macedonia.²⁹⁴

Bulgaria desired the creation of this new state because she thought that it would fall under Bulgarian hegemony, due to the fact that the majority of Slavs in the area were of Bulgarian descent. Another major advantage for pressing the issue in 1948, was that the Yugoslavian claim to dominance in a Macedonian state had been nullified by the expulsion of Tito. Finally, there was a desire to regain control of an area of Aegean coastline.²⁹⁵ Voigt adequately

²⁹³ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, Vol. V, p. 220. This same type of analysis was reported in the New York Times, 21 March 1947. "There is a communist dominated plot to liberate Greek Macedonia and combine that area with Yugoslav Macedonia and Bulgarian Macedonia to form a 'Free Macedonia'".

²⁹⁴ McNeil, The Greek Dilemma: War in Aftermath, p. 44.

²⁹⁵ Under Secretary for Press and Information, Greece, p. 35.

expresses the overall aim of the Cominform in the Balkans, namely the creation of a Macedonian State that would be under some form of Soviet influence.²⁹⁶

Woodhouse asserts that the USSR did not view Greek Macedonia as part of Greece.²⁹⁷ This seems to be a carry over of the notion that the Percentages Agreement was somehow still existent. As previously mentioned, the Government of Yugoslavia was definitely not in favor of a Macedonia under Bulgarian control.²⁹⁸

But this claim by Yugoslavia was of no consequence since Stalin had Yugoslavia expelled from the Cominform.²⁹⁹ So far the actions of the Soviets and of Greece's northern neighbors seem to be divorced from direct influence in the Civil War since the KKE was not a party to the discussions or the decisions. The purpose of giving this summary of events preceeding the Cominform announcement is to demonstrate how inexorably these events are directly related to the Insurgency.

²⁹⁶Voigt, Greek Sedition, p. 14.

²⁹⁷Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 280.

²⁹⁸Elizabeth Baker. Macedonia, (London Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1950), p. 15.

²⁹⁹The ideology of Titoism and how his state was guided toward socialism is adequately covered in a book by Alfred G. Meyer, Communism, (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 187-189.

In February, the Cominform publically announced the desired goal of the Insurgency in Greece:

...to create an independent Macedonian State out of the relevant areas of Greece, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria. 300

Zotos points out, quite correctly, that this made it clear that Moscow was in control of the Greek Communist Party, and that its leadership favored the creation of an independent state under the aegis of the Cominform.³⁰¹ It can be seen that Tito must have viewed the indorsement by the KKE of the Cominform's decision as a personal affront. This is possible since Tito was out of the Cominform and an independent Macedonia would have to be under the dominant influence of Bulgaria. Others have avoided the intricate problem of why Tito closed the border, and what effect this action had on the outcome of the war by simply stating that this was the reason for the Communist defeat.³⁰²

From the past history of nationalism within the KKE, along with the strong national feelings among many of the Guerrillas, not to mention the general public, there was an immediate rejection of the idea of an Independent Macedonia

³⁰⁰ Sweet-Escot, Greece: A Political and Economic Survey, p. 63. Also see Zotos, Greece, p. 180.

³⁰¹ Ibid., Also see Tzoucalas, Greek Trilogy, p. 112.

³⁰² Campbell and Sherrard, Modern Greece, pp. 184; and Kousalas, Price of Freedom, pp. 178-9.

because it would entail the ceding of Greek territory for the purpose of creating a non-Greek state.³⁰³

It has been demonstrated that the relationship between Tito and the DSE or more specifically the KKE certainly had to alter after the Cominform vote. The public pronouncement by the KKE in support of the Cominform can be viewed as a ploy by Zachariades, to show Stalin his loyalty. Basically, the action of the KKE put a tempting prize within the grasp of Bulgaria, since an independent Macedonian state would fall under Bulgarian influence.

It would seem logical that the announcement by Tito on 10 July 1949 to close the frontier to Greek partisans was a direct attack on the KKE, as well as a retaliatory move by Tito against the Cominform. This is obvious in the case of the KKE, but with regard to the Cominform, it is more complex. Tito has not written an account of this action, so his actions are open to some interpretation. It would seem that Tito, realizing the desire on the part of Bulgaria to secure the dominant interest in Macedonia, tried to secure the defeat of the inept Insurgency Movement in Greece to foil the Bulgarian scheme. This defeat could accomplish two things. First, the Yugoslav portion of Macedonia was now excluded

³⁰³Zotos, Greece, p. 178. This work as well as many others support this general conclusion. They pointed out that a minority of guerrillas from the Slavo-Macedonian area of Greece favored a separate state.

from an independent Macedonia, but the combination of the Greek area of Macedonia (with its access to the Aegean) and the Bulgarian part of Macedonia might be viable. So if Yugoslavia insured exclusion of the most crucial element of the three, then the idea of an independent Macedonia under Bulgarian control would be violated. Additionally, since his expulsion from the Soviet-bloc, Tito was forced to turn to the West. The closing of the border (which he started to implement in the early part of 1949) could be a bonus in his search for friends in the free world.

The closing of the border produced an orphan. No one would claim responsibility for the Greek Civil War. So the defection of Tito was a good ideological excuse for the demise of the DSE.

At this point, all of the major military and political factors at play in the Greek Civil War have been discussed. But the most significant fact on the military sphere that seems to this author to transcend the chronology of battles, plenums, and the internecine struggles within the KKE, is the basic premise that the Guerrillas had not won in 1948; and by 1949 the full effect of American aid was beginning to tell. On top of this, the Communists insured their defeat by revitalizing the National Question on the political front.

The effect of the announcement of the creation of an Independent Macedonian People's Republic became synonymous with treason to the average Greek:

To the average nationalistically minded Greek, it amounted to treason. The effect of such a development was to improve the morale and determination of the anticommunist Greek Army. 304

In September 1949 the guns fell silent. It is hoped that this study had demonstrated that the DSE was defeated long before the final battles of August-September 1949. The real reverse which the Guerrillas suffered, was the multitude of political mistakes and strategic miscalculations which only underlined the military defeat. The combination of these two factors insured the total defeat of the DSE/KKE.

³⁰⁴Couloumbis, Greek Political Reaction to American and Nato Influence, p. 29. Also see McNeill, The Greek Dilemma: War in Aftermath, p. 43. Additionally there was great consternation among the soldiers of the DSE.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS

Although the purpose of this study was directed toward reexamining the historical evidence concerning the Communist defeat during the Greek Civil War, there is no prima facie evidence to support any single conclusion on the subject. It is certainly possible, however, to combine certain events in producing coherent justification for the conclusions found in this chapter.

This study attempted to establish the fundamental reasons underlying the demise of the Communists in the Greek Civil War, 1946-1949. The pertinent facts, concerning the development of the KKE from its inception through the end of the Second World War, are noted in the first chapter. These were given in order to establish the ideological base from which the KKE never deviated throughout its existence.

The ideological affiliation to the Soviet Union (as the fountainhead of all Communist doctrine) provided the millstone that was to hamper the early expansion of the KKE. This is true since there was a large number of Greek Communists who recognized purely national interest rather than international Communist goals. This was particularly true when the KKE adopted a policy of support for an independent Macedonia.

This policy produced a bitter internecine struggle within the Party between the "National Communists" and the "International Communists". The downgrading of this issue under the new leadership of Zachariades, from 1931 until the end of the Second World War, significantly increased the credibility of the KKE. Zachariades, on his own authority, removed the issue of an independent Macedonia in order to increase the size of the Party. This fact, plus the multiorganizational complexity of the Communist-controlled Resistance Movement, accounted for the rise of the Communist Army of ELAS.

The amount of military control that ELAS had at its disposal in Occupied Greece was extensive in most areas of the country. It was during this period that the KKE led to win a wide-spread popular base for its ideological struggle against the Government. This occurred because there was no trained cadre to indoctrinate the populace. This defect was never corrected.

It was demonstrated throughout this work that both ELAS and the DSE failed to indoctrinate the people under their control, especially in the socio-political sphere. When the hit-and-run raids of the DSE became full-scale attacks, designed to conquer territory, they had to have popular support. Without a large base the movement would fail. This was precisely what happened. After seven years of inadequate management the KKE collapsed.

This shortcoming must be remembered when analyzing the reasons for the origins of the 1944-1945 Civil War. It

is maintained by this author that the dichotomy that existed between the returned Government of National Unity and the military administration of EAM/ELAS produced the Civil Wars. The remainder of the study sought to determine the reasons for the Communists' defeat in the 1946-1949 Civil War.

Most authors³⁰⁵ view the closing of the border with Yugoslavia as the single major cause for the defeat of the DSE. This is an after-the-fact conclusion. There is certainly no way to refute that the closing of the border by Tito played a major contributing role, but it was not one of the main reasons for the defeat.

While the closing of the border was not the main reason for the Communists' failure in 1949, it is possible to contend that the first of two main political reasons for the demise of the KKE, other than the previously mentioned inadequate indoctrination of the people, was ideological conflict with Tito. This conflict was expressed in terms of the conflict between the supporters of Markos and those of Zachariades. When on 4 February 1949 the "Free Greece" radio announced the resignation of Markos it was making a direct attack on Tito. It has been pointed out in Chapter Three that Markos was inclined toward Titoism; but he had not been in a position of power since August 1948. Consequently, when Zachariades

³⁰⁵ O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 179; Tsoucalas, The Greek Tragedy, p. 113 are just two examples.

assumed power and publically deposed Markos it was an affront to Tito.

In any case, the important point is that the Greek Communist Party supported the Cominform against Tito. The key issue in this decision was the question of which segment of the Party, the Nationalist or the Internationalist, would dominate. The latter prevailed. As a result, Tito decided to take measures against the new threat on his southern border. He publically declared the closing of the border on 10 July 1949. Actually, Tito had cut off virtually all aid to the guerrillas as far back as November 1948.³⁰⁶ Therefore, the border closure was only the aftermath of a political decision by the KKE.

The second political mistake of the Communists, and probably the greatest, was the revival of the problem of an independent Macedonia. This single fact, more than any other, caused the political solidification of the majority of anti-Communist elements within Greece. This Communist position gave life to the Greek National Forces, because now it was no longer a Civil War but a War of Aggression against Greece. The common soldier had a cause for which to give his life.

This unification within the Greek Army was matched by a breakdown within the DSE. The common soldier of the DSE was

³⁰⁶ This was immediately after the KKE voted it back the Cominform vis-a-vis Tito.

totally confused. He did not understand, owing to lack of indoctrination, why he was fighting to give up part of Greece. Herein lies the paradox between the leaders of the international brand of Communism in Greece and the Nationalists of the KKE. From the Communists' viewpoint, this was the tragedy that doomed them to failure. To be sure, Zachariades removed the Greek Nationalists from command and control positions within the DSE. He could not control the nationalist Communists within the ranks of the DSE.

These two main political mistakes of the KKE are not the normal reasons given for the defeat of the KKE, but are certainly viable in view of the results of this study. At this point, the military mistakes that were the main contributing reason for the Communists' defeat must be addressed.

The Democratic Army was primarily a Guerrilla Army using guerrilla tactics. "By the end of 1947 these guerrilla tactics had the GNA tottering."³⁰⁷ Once Zachariades changed the status of the war from sub-conventional to conventional, the DSE's conventional force was no match for the Greek Army.³⁰⁸

The switch in the methodology of warfare by the Communists was the result of various political-military

³⁰⁷O'Ballance, The Greek Civil War 1944-1949, p. 218.

³⁰⁸This basically substantiates what the majority of authors state on this matter.

influences. The leadership of the KKE could project a need for rapid victory, at least by the summer of 1947. The United States had promised massive support to the Government of Greece and the actual materialization of that aid would be detrimental to the KKE. This was one of the influences that drove the KKE to seek an early victory.

Additionally, a motivating force for a quick victory was the need to achieve the maximum utilization of available forces before the continuing internecine struggle started to fragment the DSE into national and international segments. Here Zachariades made an error in judgement. It seems that the more organized the DSE became, especially in the formation of a conventional force, the more evident were the divisions within the Party.

All of these desires to achieve an early victory were predicated on the existence of a large popular base from which to operate. The non-existence of a popular base has been addressed. There remains, however, the question of size. This is relevant to every aspect of a study of the Greek Civil War. The size of the force was directly linked to the ideological conception of an urban revolution as opposed to a rural revolution. The Ideology of Urban Insurrection, which applied to only a minority of the Greek population, dictated the resulting military defeat of the Communist forces in the field.

When Zachariades, to achieve a political goal, ordered a small armed insurgency in the mountains of Greece, he committed the basic mistake of ELAS. The leadership and the implementing headquarters were arbitrarily divorced. The reunification of these elements would produce the traumatic Zachariades versus Markos controversy.

This disagreement was fundamentally political, but the catalyst that initiated the chain of events leading to its resolution was the type of mobilization ordered by Zachariades. Zachariades' mobilized only a small force. This failure to execute a mass armed insurrection in 1946 was the ultimate cause of the failure of the Guerrilla War. It was the fatal wound, from which the DSE never recovered.

Once the KKE/DSE engaged in conventional warfare, without the large popular base, the fate of the Insurgency became preordained. No amount of allegiance to Stalin or to Tito could save the DSE. The defeat of the DSE was essentially the result of miscalculations by the KKE in fundamentally political decisions. It seems to this author that the military defeat of the Communist Army was inflicted by the leadership of the KKE.

The total effect of the main military and political mistakes of the KKE/DSE culminated in a cease fire. The order came on 18 October 1949. "The Democratic Army had not laid

down its arms; it has only put them aside."³⁰⁹ The military confrontation was over, but not the war.

During the events related in this study, this author believes that certain lessons can be gleaned. The first observation is that even though many might contend that external control of the KKE, especially by the USSR, was paramount in the Greek Tragedy from 1941-1949, there is little evidence to support this idea. It would seem that the KKE's struggle was very low on the list of Soviet priorities, and that even in areas where there was assistance, there was no firm control.

Another point that seems to be apparent in this struggle (which may be useful in future wars against Communist insurgents) is that there was large-scale internecine struggle within the Greek Communist Party. This was apparent to the participants, even as the War progressed; but no measures were taken by the Government or by American advisors in exploiting this situation to the extent possible. Strategic military planners should calculate options to exploit division within the leadership of a Communist Army in an insurgency movement.

The options available are numerous but they must be oriented toward a specific situation in a specified country. In Greece, there was a failure to exploit, the idea that

³⁰⁹ Stavrianos, Greece: American Dilemma and Opportunity, p. 205.

aggression was committed against the state. This attack against the nation, if successful, would result in a Greece that was not sovereign but a puppet government of Moscow. The strategic planners failed to exploit the innate nationalism that exists in the Greek people.

There was an economic option that was not exploited to the maximum extent possible. The economic conditions of Greece were very bad in the post-war period but the Communists did not claim to insure economic development. This fact was not used by the Government to demonstrate that the Greek Democracy was moving toward a stated economic goal.

The basic premise for a successful counterrevolutionary war seems to be the ability of the legal government to portray itself as the only source wherein the grievances of the people can be satisfied. In the end, the Greek Government was able to achieve this goal. Consequently, the victory that the KKE/DSB sought continually eluded them.

The Greek Civil War allows the historian, as well as the military professional, to analyze the Communist defeat. It does not, however, present a picture of complete victory for anti-Communist forces.

The war goes on today in Greece. The Communist Party has reemerged, albeit divided, from the ashes of 1949. It has new forms, new shapes, new platforms, but the ultimate objective is the same, the control of Greece by a Communist Government. The challenge, then, for the National Government is to continue struggl

effectively against the Communists if the "Cradle of Democracy" is not to become a coffin for the Greek nation.

APPENDIX A
GUERRILLA DISPOSITIONS AND STRENGTH
1948

1	Peloponnese	800
2	Roumeli	3,200
3	Othris	400
4	Euboea	120
5	Olympus	700
6	Vermion	11,000
7	Mourgana	1,500
8	Grammos	5,500
9	Vitsi	2,500
10	Kaimaktchalan	1,500
11	Beles	600
12	Serres	600
13	Kerdyllia	310
14	Khalkidhiki	320
15	Boz-Dag	600
16	Xanthi-Kometini	1,000
17	Evros	<u>1,600</u>
TOTAL		22,350

Extracted from JUSMAPAG History, National Archives
Building, Modern Military Records, Section NNMM,
Record Group 334, Box 145.

ID/IG/71497
Col. Collins/elg
23 July 47

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF:

SUBJECT: Intelligence Division Special Briefing

ESTIMATE OF EFFECT OF THE PARTICIPATION OF
"INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS" IN GREECE

I. The Problem

To estimate the effect of committing progressively increasing numbers of Communist international "volunteers" to the guerrilla fighting in Greece upon the Greek Army and the United States Aid Program.

II. Facts bearing on the problem

1. The present Greek Army strength is 120,000 of whom approximately 50,000 are combat troops. Guerrilla strength is estimated to be 12,000. In the past, the Greek Army has employed approximately a five to one ratio of superiority in clearing operations. In the recent actions against more orthodox tactics, a ratio of about three to one has been used.

2. The operations of the Greek Army have inflicted between 10 and 20 percent casualties on the guerrillas, but guerrilla strength has been maintained.

3. Both Greek Army and civilian morale have fluctuated widely with the Army's fortunes and reports of outside aid to either side.

4. International volunteers previously employed under similar circumstances in other countries have been well trained, well equipped and aggressive. It may be assumed that guerrilla volunteers raised to fight in Greece will be experienced soldiers. They will be capable of shifting their forces laterally along the Greek frontier.

5. The tactics employed by the guerrillas have rendered outlying Army units subject to attack by overwhelming forces and have made vulnerable the Army's lines of communications.

6. Guerrillas have been able to secure or force civilian cooperation in areas where the Army was not in control.

III. Discussion

1. In the current anti-guerrilla operations the Greek Army with a maximum commitment of forces has met with some successes but has succeeded to only a limited extent in reducing guerrilla capabilities and by a very narrow margin retains the initiative.

2. It is believed that under present circumstances, the Greek Army must continue large scale anti-guerrilla operations throughout the winter. The United States Aid Program will probably not become fully effective until spring. To counter this program additional material aid now being given to the guerrillas by the Soviet Balkan satellites may be expected to increase. It is estimated that during the next year the Greek Army can raise a maximum force of from 180,000 to 200,000 dependable troops.

IV. Conclusions

1. At the present time, an increase in guerrilla strength by the progressive commitment of 5,000 volunteers would probably stalemate Greek Army offensive operations. If committed as a unit, 5,000 volunteers could take and hold for a limited time some town which could be used as the capital of a "Free Greek Government." The present United States Aid Program when fully effective would enable the Greek Army to regain the initiative.

2. An increase in guerrilla strength by the progressive commitment of 10,000 volunteers, would enable the guerrillas to gain the initiative. The commitment of 10,000 in units would permit the guerrillas to take and hold a given area throughout the winter. In either case, Greek Army and civilian morale would be very seriously impaired. The Greek Army would have to be increased by at least 30,000 and the United States Aid Program correspondingly enlarged.

3. An increase in guerrilla strength by the progressive commitment of 20,000 volunteers would permit the guerrillas to hold a given area and in addition to cut Greek Army lines of communications thus requiring withdrawal of Greek units to areas where lines of communication could be held. Army and civilian morale would be lowered to the critical stage. Greek Army units outside a few key areas of troop concentration would probably be subject to annihilation or disintegration. In anticipation of such an increase in guerrilla strength, the Greek Army would have to be increased over its present strength by a minimum of 60,000 and the United States Aid Program increased correspondingly.

4. An increase in volunteer strength to some point between 20 and 40,000 would require outside military assistance to prevent the disintegration of the Greek Army and to insure the stability of the present constitutional government in Greece.

5. Available evidence does not permit an estimate at this time of the possible extent of the introduction of international volunteers into the guerrilla war in Greece.

V. Action open to U.S.

1. Continued efforts through vigorous action in the UN to stop foreign assistance to Greek guerrillas.

2. In the event the introduction of significant numbers of international volunteers becomes a confirmed possibility reexamine the situation with a view to further increasing the size of the Greek Army, with a consequent increase in the United States Aid Program.

	1		WDGID
	2	1 To note	
		2 Information	Col Collins 71497
MID 907		Intelligence Division Special Briefing	24 July 47

Forwarded.

FOR THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE:

1 Incl
Memo for C/s

LAURIN L. WILLIAMS
Colonel, GSC
Executive

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