

one little reason to believe that Greece will soon have the internal discipline, realistic outlook, and the vision to earn for itself a significant place in the post-Cold War international arena.

Guerrillas at Bay
The Rise and Fall of the Greek Democratic Army:
The Military Dimension
Civil War in Greece: 1946-1949

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AT THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR, WHEN A DEVASTATED Europe was hoping to raise itself out of the ashes, the Greek people took up arms again, this time against each other. The Greek civil war was a bitter and costly internal struggle between two ideologically irreconcilable camps, the Communists and the nationalists. How bitter can be seen even in the nomenclature. The central government and its allies referred to the Communist guerrillas as "bandits," whereas the guerrillas referred to the nationalists as "monarcho-fascists."

The Greek Communists failed and practically destroyed the country in the process. While their ultimate failure was speeded up by the Truman Doctrine, the weakness of the guerrillas was inherent in the situation itself, in the structure, tactics, and strategy of the Greek Democratic Army, GDA, and their dependence on open borders with their Balkan neighbors.

The roots of the civil war in Greece are not the subject of this paper. Suffice it to say that they extend far back in time, beyond the German occupation during the war, the enormous physical devastation of the country and the subsequent spoils-of-war "percentages agreements" of 1944, which gave Britain 90 percent control of Greece. For most of the twentieth century until then, Greece had been racked by political instability, intra feuds between royalists, republicans, and Communists, glaring economic and social inequality, and insufferable corruption. Internal disaffection was so great that two rounds of the civil war were

fought while World War II was still in progress.¹

The civil war proper, however, is considered to have begun in the spring of 1946. The Truman Doctrine was promulgated a year later, in March 1947. Yet, at the beginning of the winter of 1949, the insurgents were still on the offensive. Nonetheless, severe cracks had already appeared in their structure and organization, and by August of that year the war was virtually over. It took more than two years from the beginning of American involvement, hundreds of thousands of casualties, and the virtual colonization of the country by the Americans, to achieve that victory. But without the internal disintegration of the GDA, it might have taken longer.

Who Were the Guerrillas?

The insurgent guerrillas of the Greek civil war originated in the Communist-supported resistance movement against the Germans during the Nazi occupation: the National Liberation Front or EAM, and their guerrilla unity, the National People's Liberation Army or ELAS. Their position was so strong that in May 1944, as the end of the occupation came into view and the central Greek government (that had existed in exile) was reformed, they were invited by the central government to join a coalition. Friction with the British-sponsored resistance organization, the National Republican Greek League or EDES—which the ELAS had already fought in 1943—continued, however, and in December 1944, the Mountain Brigade of the regular Greek army, massively assisted by British tanks, crushed the ELAS forces in the Athens area. In the Varkiza Agreement of February 1945, the Communists agreed to disband and the government promised amnesty to the EAM/ELAS members. Neither side complied with the agreement. In December 1946 the ELAS began to reorganize under the leadership of Markos Vaphiades and the Greek Communist Party, the KKE. They changed their name to the Greek Democratic Army (GDA) and retreated to the mountains.

Greece is an ideal country for guerrilla warfare as so much of it is rocky and mountainous territory, interspersed with villages and wooded areas.² The villages can serve as convenient supply depots and the woods as hiding places. Furthermore, northern Greece borders Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria, Balkan countries which, at the outbreak of

¹ See the author's "Civil War and Foreign Intervention in Greece: 1946-1949," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 25 (4 October 1990).

² Sir Clifford Norton, the British Ambassador to Greece, noted that even the Germans found the countryside an obstacle to overcoming the resistance of the Greek guerrillas during World War II. Norton, to the Foreign Office, Athens, Oct. 3, 1946, London, the Public Record Office (PRO), FO 371/58786.

the war, had Communist regimes which supported the guerrillas' struggle.

Vaphiades, or "General Markos" as he was known, was a Smyrniot by birth, a refugee as a result of the Graeco-Turkish war of the early 1920s, a tobacco-worker by trade, who had served several terms of imprisonment in the Communist cause. Even though the British had found him "unremarkable," he developed a romantic image in the Greek countryside.³

The guerrillas were drawn from virtually all classes of the population, although the majority were peasants from northern Greece and the Peloponnese. The hard-core Communists constituted only about 20 percent of the total strength. Guerrilla leaders were as diverse as their soldiers: they had been tobacco workers, school teachers, and lawyers and all were thoroughly familiar with the territory in which they were to operate.⁴ There were few career officers from the regular Greek National Army (GNA) who had deserted to the guerrilla units. Most of the "Kapatianos" had had previous military training, and long experience in mountain fighting,⁵ that they gained in the resistance forces during World War II and during the first rounds of the civil war. Veterans of ELAS and EAM, who had previously fled into the neighboring Communist Balkan countries, began in March 1946 to infiltrate back into Greece from their camps in Bulkes (in Vovvodina, north-east of Belgrade), in Koritsa, Albania, and in Mandritsa, among other places, in Bulgaria.⁶

An important element in the guerrilla movement were the Salvophones or Slavo-Macedonians. They were residents of Greek Macedonia, who spoke a Slav dialect very similar to Bulgarian, and were concentrated in the northern regions of Greece, in Florina, Kastoria, and Pella. They numbered nearly 100,000. Many of them had been blamed for openly cooperating with the enemy during the occupation, particularly with the Bulgarians, with whom they had an affinity of blood and language, and had experienced relative independence during that time. In return for collaborating, they had been given special food rations and privileges.⁷ Penalized now by the Greek government

³ Kenneth Matthews, *Memories of a Mountain War: Greece 1944-1949* (London, 1972), p. 134-35. Matthews was the BBC Balkan correspondent.

⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "Greece," March 1948, no. SR-10, 4-7, Harry S. Truman Library, President's Secretary's File, Box 259.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Central Intelligence Group, "The Greek Situation," Feb. 7, 1947, No. ORE 6/1, p. 11, Harry S. Truman Library, President's Secretary's File, Box 254.

⁷ American Consulate, Salonika, to American Embassy, Athens, Nov. 6, 1946, Washington, D.C., U.S. National Archives (USNA). 868.00/2946.

for their wartime collaboration, many of them opposed reincorporation into a Greek state of the repressive type that existed before the war and so supported the Macedonian Liberation Front (NOF), which itself had been represented in the EAM. Ultimately, the large number of Slavophones among the guerrillas was detrimental to guerrilla success, since they supported the insurgents not because they were pro-Communist but because they were against the Greek State (see below).

Organization of the Guerrillas

A rare glance into the guerrilla system of organization, supply, logistics, etc.—as a matter of fact, “a far clearer picture than we had before”—was given to western intelligence by Kenneth Matthews, the BBC Balkan correspondent. Matthews was abducted by the guerrillas from his hotel in Mycenae in north Peloponnese in October 1948 and became a “guest” of the authorities of the “Provisional Government of Free Greece” in that area. His interviews and “amiable conversations” and the written answers to questionnaires he had distributed, helped to secure an interesting picture of the GDA forces in the Peloponnese, about 4,000 strong, in late 1948.⁸

Matthews saw no artillery. The majority of men had pistols and small arms but not all were armed. One man in four was an unarmed ammunition carrier. Ammunition was not plentiful and it was very carefully husbanded. Live ammunition was not used for training. “The ‘Andartes’ told M. that 50 rounds were fired by the GNA for every one of theirs.” The term “Andartes” was used by the guerrillas to signify that they were true patriots and folk heroes. (The Andartes were the Greeks who had resisted the Ottoman Turks and the Nazis.)⁹ Booty captured from GNA or gendamerie units was the main source of weapons for the guerrillas of southern Greece, who had no direct link to supply bases in northern Greece or in the Balkan states. Recruits, on completion of their training, went into their first battle unarmed, with the object of capturing a weapon on the field of battle.

Transport was entirely by mule. The mules were “borrowed” from the villagers and used generally on a ferry system between villages, being returned to their owners on completion. Commandeering of mules was done “with a light hand” and peasants were not necessarily forced to surrender their animals if they had “very strong” reasons against doing so.¹⁰

⁸ “Notes of Interrogation of Mr. Kenneth Matthews,” *British Monthly Intelligence Review*, Nov. 1, 1948, PRO, FO 37/72217/R12585.

⁹ Ibid. See also Howard Jones, *A New Kind of War: America's Global Strategy and the Truman Doctrine in Greece* (New York and Oxford, 1989), p. 248, note 2.

¹⁰ “Notes of Interrogation of Mr. Kenneth Matthews.”

The guerrillas lived entirely off the countryside, levying food from the villages, cooking it themselves, feeding at a mess, and sleeping in the open. Two meals a day were normally taken, consisting of meat or soup and plenty of bread. The Andartes were careful not to impose too great a burden on any community, each village only being required to feed small parties. (If more than one night was spent in any one place, Matthews was moved to a different house each night. This may have been for security reasons, but appeared to be more with the idea of “distributing the load.”) Radio sets were supplied to the Andartes by their “Free Government” and “Radio Marcos” was listened to carefully and widely quoted. It came through very indistinctly, however, and was often jammed by the authorities in Athens.

Fresh recruits were given 15 days' training before going into battle. The Andartes contrasted this with the four and a half months given to the recruits in the GNA “at which they scoffed.” Training in weapons was without ammunition. Care of arms, fieldcraft and stalking, use of cover, and a certain amount of close-order marching were “more in the nature of gymnastic exercise than a military operation.” Recruits were trained by instructors, some of whom were women. The groups were small—five or six to each instructor—while the remainder played games or did exercises. Guerrilla clothing varied. Some had stars, insignia of rank. For the rest, the only distinguishing mark was the “D” on the cap, for Democratic Army. A courier system was used for carrying messages and a certain amount of private mail. There was one long-distance cross-country telephone and local telephone systems operating from brigade headquarters. There was a wireless transmitter posted on one of the mountains which was in constant touch with the north. (This, by the way, was how Marcos responded to Matthews' queries.) Intelligence gathering was quick and the Andartes appeared to have early information on the movements of the GNA. (GNA intelligence on the guerrillas was inferior, and always out-of-date, sometimes by as much as twenty-four hours. In guerrilla-controlled areas, it was impossible for the GNA to obtain any information from the villagers and shepherds.)¹¹

Matthews was shown no fortifications or trenches and assumed that if heavily attacked, the guerrillas would retreat to the mountains and organize there a last-ditch defense.

Discipline and morale were very impressive. There was some forced recruiting in areas controlled by the guerrillas, backed by threats of reprisal against the families. Immediate obedience of orders was dis-

¹¹ Ibid. On GNA's intelligence see the author's “Civil War and Foreign Intervention in Greece,” p. 505.

cernable and appeared to be voluntary—desertion would at anytime be a simple matter. However, punishment for desertion was immediate execution; some officers were shot after being blamed for military reverses.¹² As much as terror was involved in the maintenance of discipline, there also existed orderly court martials that dealt with offenses.

There were no signs of the guerrillas in the Peloponnese being a “private” army. Loyalty to Marcos was complete. A strong sense of injustice and grievance appeared to act as a sufficient stimulus to the guerrillas’ loyalty. Morale was high “and the majority of the Andartes appeared to have a superiority complex.”

Much of the guerrilla propaganda was addressed to women, offering them a far freer life and greater opportunities under GDA rule. This had a considerable attraction for the young women of rural Greece, where the position of women was often deplorable. Thus, the guerrillas could offer these women something “very much better than the life of drudgery and seculsion endured by the great majority of the Peloponnesian women.” There was also a dark side to the life of the Simoritises or Andartisses, the women guerrillas. There were reports that some were used sexually by their male counterparts and later abandoned to misery, disease, and shame. This was the harsh fate for these young peasant women, who consequently could not return to their villages. Some became prostitutes.¹³

Matthews was let into the guerrilla strongholds—probably the first western journalist to have been allowed in—and returned with sympathetic impressions from the Peloponnese. (See below for contradictory reports of a less idyllic nature concerning the guerrilla treatment of civilians.) Reports about the GDA similar to those of Matthews appeared, as could be expected, in the French Communist daily, *L’Humanite*. Simone Teris, the paper’s correspondent, spent two months in GDA territory. She described in length how poorly clad the GDA’s troops were. They were dressed in all sorts of uniforms. Their footwear was in an especially bad state. Instead of shoes, some wore dried animal skins tied with leather straps to the leg. Only one guerrilla in five wore boots and one in every ten had to go barefoot—and yet: “During the two months I spent in liberated Greece, I did not once hear a complaint.” The correspondent saw not even one weapon that had not belonged previously to Italians, Germans, British, or Americans

¹²David Close and Thanos Veremis, “The Military Struggle 1945-49,” paper presented at the Copenhagen Colloquium on the Greek Civil War, April 1988, p. 30.

¹³Mary Henderson, *Xenia—a Memoir, Greece 1919-1949* (London, 1988), pp. 172-74. Henderson was the *Time-Life* correspondent in Greece at the time. See also Peter Calvocoressi, *Survey of International Affairs, 1947-1948* (London, 1954), pp. 180-81.

thus refuting western allegations that the soldiers of the GDA were armed by Soviet Bloc countries.¹⁴

While Teris’ impressions might be considered “heavily loaded,” those of Henry Grady, the American Ambassador to Greece, can surely be taken as hard evidence. Grady reported in November of 1948 that the guerrillas continued to maintain a tight grip on their positions in spite of US assistance to the heavily armed and trained GNA, markedly superior in numbers, supplies and weapons. In contrast to the “spoiled and pampered” GNA, he described a

bandit organization of some 25,000 men, fed with what they could steal or buy locally, clothed in remnants, armed with old weapons found in Greece or others supplied by their northern neighbors, transported on their own or their donkeys’ legs and trained by their own leaders on both sides of the Greek frontier. The bandit land army is not backed by a single airplane, heavy gun, or naval vessel.¹⁵

And if further “objective” substantiation was needed, this British Foreign Office report, submitted at about the same time, provides it:

the latter [the guerrillas] have shown more determination, more initiative, more energy, and more imagination, inspired one can only assume by some sort of faith in their cause, which seems to be sadly lacking in the rest of the Greek Nation and Army. Terrorism and iron discipline may play a large part in maintaining the cohesion of the Democratic Army but something more than this is necessary—at any rate, in the leaders—to make an army fight well as the bandits have fought in the Vitsi.¹⁶

Indeed, that “something more”—apparently a profound belief in their mission—was clearly discernible in the conduct of the guerrillas.

Guerrilla Objectives and Tactics: Creating Chaos

The main overall aim of the insurgents was to topple the government in Athens, an aim which could be best achieved through the total disruption of daily life in urban and rural Greece alike. Chaos was the keyword. Lawlessness and anarchy were bound to undermine the

¹⁴Reprinted in the Soviet daily, *Trud*, March 25, 1948. See also British Embassy, Moscow, to Foreign Office, April 1, 1948, PRO, FO 371/72210/R4019.

¹⁵Grady to the Secretary of State, Nov. 22, 1948, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), 1948, Vol. 4 p. 188.

¹⁶PRO, FO 371/72217/R12516.

authority of the government, while unemployment, hunger, and destruction were bound to promote the idea of Communism. The psychology of the Greeks and their western allies was at stake. The insurgents' objective was:

to wear them [the Greeks and their allies] down by stages, with intervals to lull them into a sense of false security. To achieve this, the state forces have become the first target, the bandits playing "hide and seek" with them in the mountains, to disillusion and wear them out by vicious and widely-scattered attacks and frequent diversions. The second objective is to keep this country in a permanent state of unrest, which would ultimately produce a complete collapse of the country's economy. The third and most vital objective to them at the moment is to make Greece so expensive a military and economic commitment that the United States would withdraw her interests, rather than continue to pour money and arms into this country on her feet.¹⁷

The name of this game was "winning Greece by default" and it was the guerrilla way at the beginning of the war.¹⁸ Despair was inevitable:

During a trip through the lovely Greek countryside, a peasant I talked with typified Greece's national psychosis. He was a wearily and discouraged man, prematurely old, his face lined and wrinkled, his hands upturned in a gesture of mute despair. "Four times in my lifetime my home has been destroyed," he said, "—by the Turks, the Bulgars, the Nazis, and the guerrillas. Why should I build it up again?"¹⁹

In 1946, the war started with mining and sabotage and then turned to attacks, first on the Gendarmerie and then to attacks on units of the National Army, the GNA. In 1947, guerrilla tactics and targets underwent a change. While most of their strength was in Thessaly and western Macedonia in the north, near the borders of the Balkan states, the guerrillas shifted their forces southward with the arrival in early

¹⁷British 10th Infantry Brigade Fortnightly Intelligence Review, in American Consulate, Salonika, to the Secretary of State, Feb. 4, 1948, USNA, 868.00/2-448.

¹⁸George F. Kennan, "Position of the US with respect to the Use of US Military Power in Greece," Nov. 30, 1949, USNA, Policy Planning Staff, No. PPS/46.

¹⁹Paul A. Porter, "Our Chances in Greece," Aug. 7, 1947, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, The Southern Historical Collection, Ethridge Papers, No. 3842. Porter served (1947) as the Head of the American Economic Mission to Greece.

1947 of the UN Security Council Commission of Investigation Concerning Greek Frontier Incidents. This was done *inter alia* to prove that guerrilla action was locally engendered and not imported from Greece's Communist neighbors.²⁰ The Peloponnese and also Crete became battle grounds for the guerrillas:

Peloponnesos is "sacred homeland" of Greece, where the War of Independence began [in the 1820s against the Ottomans] and was won, whence have always come Greece's best fighters. If these fighters [GNA's] in [the] north learn that their homeland [is] in flame, their morale will be shattered and will to fight destroyed.²¹

Guerrilla activities in the Peloponnese, apart from shattering GNA's morale, forced the GNA's troops to move south, thus weakening their already weak deployment along the northern borders. This development added to the already wide dispersion of GNA manpower. The Peloponnese campaign brought an easy victory to the GDA: while the best GNA troops were engaged in continual fighting in the north against the guerrillas in the Grammos and Vitsi mountains, only armed civilians and the little-trained National Defense Corps battalions faced the guerrillas in the interior.

The consequences of this for the government, the economy, and the civilian population were overwhelming. Attacks on towns and villages, pillaging, mining, demolition, and forced recruiting took a heavy toll. During the summer of 1948, for example, more than 4,400 southerners including women, were forcibly recruited. Thousands of mines were laid and approximately 300 vehicles (including trucks, trains, and carts) were thus destroyed. In July-August 1948 in this region alone, the guerrillas demolished more than 300 bridges, roads, railroads, water systems, and technical works. Close to 300 villages were attacked or looted. About 600,000 people became refugees.²²

This stage of guerrilla warfare reflected a complex of military and political problems. There was an urgent need to acquire territory in the north, in order to maintain access to the Balkan states. This conflicted with guerrilla attempts to concentrate efforts in the south. Yet, fighting in the southern interior was more efficacious in sabotaging the

²⁰Central Intelligence Agency, "Greece," March 1948, 4-7 No. SR-10, Harry S. Truman Library, President's Secretary's File, Box 259.

²¹American Embassy, Athens, to the Secretary of State, Nov. 29, 1947, Harry S. Truman Library, President's Secretary's File, Box 180, Greek File.

²²Department of State, Fifth Report to Congress on Assistance to Greece and Turkey, for the period ended Sept. 30, 1948, pp. 8-9, Harry S. Truman Library, Papers of Harry S. Truman Official File, Box 1278.

economy and thwarting government efforts at rehabilitation—and, as noted before, it also highlighted the authenticity of the Communist revolt and buttressed its claim to setting up an alternate government on Greek soil—termed by British Intelligence as “reasons of political prestige.”²³

A foothold in the north was also needed for the operation of a guerrilla airforce. They required a base with a landing strip and aircraft facilities on Greek territory, close to the Communist Balkan countries so that aerial support from these countries would appear to be emanating from Greek territory.²⁴ However, operating on two fronts simultaneously created a serious manpower problem. This strategy proved irreversibly detrimental because the fate of the guerrillas was eventually determined by their acute inferiority in numbers. The effect was not immediate. It was felt at the last stages of the war, when guerrilla ranks dwindled and their replacement sources dried up, while GNA troops reached the figure of 300,000. In the meantime, however:

the bandits continue to do more or less whatever they like, wherever they like in the countryside, and it has only been due to a certain lack of initiative on their part and ignorance of their own strength that the situation is not worse.²⁵

In the summer of 1947, the authority of the Greek government was in effect confined to Athens and its surroundings. The north of the country was virtually in guerrilla hands. Victory for the Communists seemed imminent. The government faced severe social, political, and economic crises, with runaway inflation, incompetence, corruption, political murder, and a total lack of confidence in the authorities. This made the chances for reconstruction remote. If disarray, lawlessness, unemployment, and hunger were the recipe for Communism, it was only a question of time before Greece could become a people's democracy. During this virtual war of attrition against the GNA and the central government, there was a chance that the US government would become fed up with Greece and withdraw military and economic aid. The guerrillas were said to:

prey on right-wing villages, on trucks transporting food and supplies, on food and supply depots, and on units and individuals of

²³Intelligence Report, Part 1, Oct. 12, 1948, PRO, FO 371/72248/R12202/G.

²⁴Memo by British Embassy, Moscow, Feb. 11, 1948, PRO, FO 371/72239/R2396/G.

²⁵British 10th Infantry Brigade, Fortnightly Intelligence Review, No. 17, Nov. 22, 1947, USNA, 868.00/11-2447.

the Greek Armed Forces — and they employ murder and ruthless methods without compunction. They operate principally in remote mountain areas not accessible to motor vehicles (including jeeps) and so are almost immune from government forces.²⁶

Government machinery outside the larger centers was seriously affected. Police stations were closed and no taxes were collected. In districts controlled by the guerrillas, taxes were collected by them and in north-west Macedonia, for example, “a 60% bandit tax” on crops had been instituted. Difficulties were reported in the transport of tobacco from the farmers to the processors, owing to the lack of security.²⁷ Villagers in threatened areas were reported to be sleeping in the fields at night. Many near the Gulf of Corinth put out to sea during the hours of darkness “to avoid the bandits.”²⁸ GNA policy to keep the guerrillas confined to the higher mountain levels in winter had not been too successful and the guerrillas were able to trickle down to the lower levels for pillaging, a failure which resulted in an increase in the number of refugees.²⁹ The railway line between Thessalonike and Alexandroupolis was rarely open more than twice a week. Trains and tunnels were blown up at an increased pace. The bridges on the Alexandroupolis-Ormenion train line were blown up and diversionary lines were laid across the stream beds, with the result that they were washed away every time it rained.³⁰

As a result of guerrilla raids, the grazing of flocks was confined to estates and farms, whereas normally, they would have been in the hills. Large numbers of sheep and goats, driven down from the hills, were slaughtered. (“Athens butchers are profiteering at the expense of the flock-owners and are actually trying to spread panic to induce the latter to sell.”)³¹ Night ploughing and night work on the maintenance of irrigation and drainage channels were suspended after agricultural workers refused to work at night. Tractors and other machinery had to be brought back from the fields every evening, resulting in a loss of time and extra

²⁶American Consulate, Thessalonike, to American Embassy, Athens, Nov. 6, 1946, USNA 868.00/10-2946.

²⁷British Consulate-General, Thessalonike, to British Embassy, Athens, July 17, 1947, PRO, FO 371/67076/R10152.

²⁸British Police Mission, Athens, Monthly Report, August 1947 (Continental Greece), Sept. 30, 1947, PRO, FO 371/67131/R13547.

²⁹American Consulate, Thessalonike, to the Secretary of State, Jan. 7, 1948, quoting British 10th Infantry Brigade, Fortnightly Intelligence Review, USNA, 868.00/1-748. On the refugee problem see Angeliki E. Laiou, “Population Movements in the Greek Countryside During the Civil War,” in Lars Baerentzen, John O. Iatrides, Ole L. Smith, *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War 1945-1949* (Copenhagen, 1987), pp. 55-103.

³⁰British Vice Consul, Cavala, to the Consul General, Thessalonike, Feb. 21, 1948, PRO, FO 371/72209/R2766.

³¹British Embassy, Athens, “Notes on Visit to Copais Area 5-6 March 1948,” PRO, FO 371/72210/R3438.

wear on the tracks. Labor costs to farmers for reaping, for example, increased more than twentyfold, in some cases to half the value of the crop itself. Many farmers stopped cultivating their lands. Fields were almost completely deserted; the absence of people working on the land was "very noticeable."³² Wheat fields were burnt. Wheat stacks were booby-trapped. The severity of these damages can be better appreciated if one realizes that 60% of the population lived from the land and 70% of Greek exports were agricultural.³³

Devastating guerrilla attacks were also launched against industries, flour mills, lignite and chrome mines in Macedonia, power plants, water supply systems, and dredging equipment. Telegraph poles were destroyed and wires and cables removed. Textile factories, wool-processing workshops, hydro-electric plants, brick factories, state hospitals, and other public buildings were specifically chosen as guerrilla targets.³⁴

The Peak and Decline of the Guerrillas

While sowing destruction everywhere and bringing the government in Athens to the verge of collapse, the winter campaign of 1948/49 was apparently highly detrimental to the GDA.

First of all, they changed their basic strategy from classical guerrilla warfare—hit and run attacks and retreat to safe havens, conducted by small, agile units—to a more conventional form. (The reasons for this change will be discussed later.) They now launched major attacks using inter alia artillery and mortars against GNA concentrations and civilian centers, with the attacks sometimes numbering in the thousands. Once they succeeded in capturing territory, they attempted to hold it against heavy GNA counterattacks. The new strategy had a harmful effect not only because of the losses they suffered but also because it was becoming more and more difficult to replace personnel and equipment. Conventional tactics required building fortifications, which in turn required a new kind of manpower and the deployment of troops between one fortification and the next. The coordination between the various new bodies required a serious upgrading of communications and the building up of an extensive administration, all of which channelled off people from combat. For a war where numbers counted very

³²Ibid.; see also report by British Consulate, Thessalonike, June 30, 1948, PRO, FO 371/72214/R8110.

³³Central Intelligence Agency, "Opposition to ECA in Participating Countries," Feb. 10, 1949, No. ORE 68-48, Harry S. Truman Library, President's Secretary's File, Box 256. ECA—The US Economic Cooperation Administration, established 1948.

³⁴Ibid.; see also Dept. of State, 7th Report to Congress on Assistance to Greece and Turkey, for the period ended March 31, 1949, Harry S. Truman Library, Papers of Harry S. Truman Official File, Box 1278.

heavily, these changes were crucial. The attacks on the towns of Naousa, Karpenision, and Florina reflected this new situation and helps to explain the volume and magnitude of these changes.

Naousa

The attack on the town of Naousa in northern Greece will illustrate the basic change in guerrilla tactics and aims. The battle and the resulting anxiety and horror marked a turning point in the civil war and in the GDA's attacks on civilian concentrations.

Naousa was a prosperous town, situated in a fold of the hills west of the Edessa-Berria road, with a population of 15,000. It was described as "one of the most industrious and pleasant little places in Macedonia," with textile and rope manufacturers and fruit and wine industries.³⁵ A considerable volume of trade was carried out with Thessalonike and beyond. The town is entirely dominated by the mountains which rise steeply behind it and the eastern approached to it are controlled by foothills. A garrison stationed within the town had little chance of holding it, as it would always be in full view of an attacking force coming from the west.

The attack on Naousa was thoroughly prepared, along orthodox military lines. The GDA made probing attacks along the Ardea-Edessa-Naousa line between 22-28 December 1948. Then, between 1-11 January, they carried out diversionary movements in various areas east of the Axios. As a matter of fact, GNA forces were operating against such diversions in Kerdillion when the Naousa attack began. Guerrilla harassment along the Ardea-Naousa line was again reported on 11 January but attracted little attention and, owing to bad weather, there was no air reconnaissance.³⁶ At 23:30 hours that night, the guerrillas launched their attack on Naousa and on the heights north and south of it, taking the garrison completely by surprise. The GDA force consisted of the 10th GDA Division, composed of three brigades, altogether around 2,000 troops. The garrison of Naousa at the time of the attack counted a total of 520 men.

The strongholds of the GNA and the Gendarmerie were besieged and overcome. By the afternoon of 13 January, the town was in GDA hands. Holding the hills which dominated the town, they held off GNA reinforcements, while the guerrillas inside the town carried out their plans "in a most business-like and calculated way," without undue interference from the outside.³⁷ Only after their planned destruction of the

³⁵British Police Mission, Salonika, Jan. 20, 1949, PRO, FO 371/78357/R1042.

³⁶Report by Colonel Dodson, British Military Mission, Athens, Jan. 24, 1949, PRO, FO 371/78357/R1447.

³⁷British Police Mission, Thessalonike, Jan. 20, 1949.

town's industrial and social infrastructure, did they withdraw, as planned, in the early hours of the morning. Saturday, 15 January, the GNA entered the town, at 09:00.

The GDA's aims were to generate disorientation among the population and discredit the regime in Athens, along with its foreign supporters. Propaganda was therefore an integral part of the attack. Walls of houses were covered with slogans ("the Democratic Army guarantees all," "Hurrah for Markos and Zachariades," "Long live the youth of the people," "Fellow countrymen join us in bringing the war to an end as soon as possible," "Strike monarcho-fascism relentlessly"). They entered homes and urged the occupants to help them in their struggle, "which is already nearing its end." The guerrillas urged "reconciliation"—that well-known Communist gambit.³⁸ When government ministers, officials, and journalists visited Naousa after the attack, they sensed the weariness and anxiety of the terrorized population:

We want reconciliation. Don't you see the damage they've done? Enough's enough. We can't take it. They're devils. They're not afraid of anything or anybody. They'll come back in a few days and what they did to Naousa, they'll do to Thessalonike. You can be certain they'll do what they say. What are you waiting for? This is a chance to make friends with them. They say themselves that they hold a gun in one hand and an olive branch in the other. Two of them [two Naousans] more violent than the rest started beating their breasts and shouting, 'We can't stand it any longer. We've go to make friends with them.'³⁹

Through the exertion of pressure on the civilian population, the GDA hoped to force the government to sit down and talk to them, to recognize them as partners to negotiations because as a military force, the GDA was in danger of extinction: the acute increase in casualties coupled with the enormous growth of the GNA in numbers and firepower were bound to lead to its defeat. The GDA's 1948/49 winter raids on civilian centers were an effort to check the deterioration in its status and to survive the war militarily and politically.

The blows inflicted on the Naousans were indeed terrible (though not a single word about them appeared in a recent pro-guerrilla Greek publication about the war.⁴⁰ The major aim of the GDA was to smash

³⁸Press Office, Greek Ministry of Press and Information, Thessalonike, Jan. 18, 1949, PRO, FO 371/78357/R1447.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Solona N. Grigoriadi, *Dekemvris Emfilios 1944-1949* [The Civil War of December 1944-1949] (Athens, 1984), p. 404.

the economic life of the town. The textile works were completely destroyed by fire and looting. The rope factories were beyond repair after the guerrillas ransacked them. The hospital—"a fine and well-equipped institution . . . one of the finest of its kind in Greece"—was blown up and what remained was looted and then burned. The town's power station was destroyed. Almost every shop was looted and burned. Municipal buildings, the Gendarmerie, the town hall, the Eparchs Office, the social security building, the employment bureau—all were razed to the ground. The mayor, managers of textile factories, schoolmasters, lawyers, and other public figures were murdered on the spot, some in front of their workers and pupils. Hundreds of horses, mules, donkeys, cows, and sheep were killed. The scene after the guerrillas had withdrawn was extremely desolate, with

dead here and there and smouldering ruins on all sides . . . mules and horses had been killed in the streets and added to the general confusion, with craters in the roads, burst water pipes, and pools of blood, together with the pervading smell of burning and decomposing flesh. The behavior of the people was strikingly phlegmatic—due to their being completely dazed with horror or just Macedonian "dourness" or both.⁴¹

In all, the picture was ghastly and terrible, with gruesome scenes of corpses with intentionally mutilated bodies, tangled masses of burnt out carriers, jeeps, and armored cars. More than 500 people were abducted, more than 80 soldiers and civilians were killed, and close to 300 were missing. The wounded were in the hundreds. Guerrilla casualties were reported to be around thirty.⁴²

The GDA expected the attack to reverberate in Athens and even in Washington. It did echo but not in the direction expected by the guerrillas. Nobody negotiated with them after Naousa. The government's very ability to rule and protect its citizens was gravely questioned. Yet, in the kind of war conducted in Greece and in the solutions planned for it outside Greece (i.e., in Washington), no room was left for negotiations and compromise. The Greek civil war was a race between the inevitable disintegration of the guerrilla movement (changed to a conventional army) and the psychological, social, and economic breakdown of the population and its implications for decision-making in Athens. The GDA was the first to succumb. In civil wars, civilians are the first

⁴¹British Police Mission, Salonika, Jan. 20, 1949.

⁴²Report by Colonel Dodson, British Military Mission, Athens, Jan. 24, 1949, PRO, FO 371/78357/R1447.

to suffer, but ideological civil wars do not end in reconciliation. They end in total defeat for one of the contenders. The Greek case was no exception.

The extent of casualties was beyond the capabilities of the GDA to absorb or to replace. In winter 1949 alone, for the period from 19 December 1948 to 31 March 1949, total GDA casualties (as reported by the GNA) were 8,497 guerrillas killed in action, captured, or surrendered in the areas of the Peloponnese and Macedonia.⁴³

In previous years, the guerrillas had utilized the winter months, when GNA offensives were restricted, for the purpose of buttressing its organization and ranks. In 1949, the guerrillas failed to increase in strength and suffered casualties considerably in excess of the number of persons they were able to abduct or recruit. Casualty figures indicated that in order to maintain an average strength of 20,000, the GDA had to replace its entire force three and a half times over throughout the war.⁴⁴ However, mounting losses during the first half of 1949 reduced guerrilla strength to its lowest figure since October 1947, with increasing difficulties in obtaining replacements. It should be noted that a force of about 20,000 to 23,000 seemed to be the optimal number the guerrillas were able to equip and keep supplied within Greece. Previously, whenever their strength had fallen below that figure, they had been able to replenish it with very little delay, by means of drafts from across the frontier or forcible recruiting. Another indication of the shortage of GDA recruits was the growth in the proportion of women guerrillas. During the summer of 1949, the average of 30% fighting "she-bandits" rose in some units to 50%.⁴⁵ At the same time, the GNA forces were about 300,000 strong (and megalomaniacs were toying with the idea of 1,000,000).⁴⁶

It remains to be explained how the GDA, which was so close to winning the civil war in 1948, had to admit a terrible and tragic defeat in the summer of 1949.

Disintegration of the GDA

In order to maintain its fighting strength in the face of casualties, the composition of the GDA was changing. It was due not only to the

⁴³Dept. of State, 7th Report to Congress on Assistance to Greece and Turkey, pp. 4-5, Harry S. Truman Library, Harry S. Truman Official File, Box 1278.

⁴⁴*Ibid.* pp. 2, 9.

⁴⁵British Embassy, Athens, to Foreign Office, June 23, 1949, PRO, FO 371/78358/R6284.

⁴⁶Anna Pauker, the Romanian Foreign Secretary, believed it to be in the Communist interest that the GNA be increased to a million men strong, thus exhausting US resources. British Foreign Office minutes, Oct. 12, 1948, PRO, FO 371/72248/R12202/G.

greater preponderance of women: it was due also to forcible recruiting, to the fact that the average age of its soldiers was being continuously lowered, as was the level of political loyalty. In all, the human structure of the Communist guerrilla movement in 1948-49 was totally different from the core of ELAS "graduates" that formed the GDA in 1946. Close to 80% of the GDA were under 25 and many were teenagers.⁴⁷ There was forcible recruiting of Turks in Thrace but they turned out to be more of a liability, as hundreds of them gave themselves up, together with their arms, to GNA patrols.⁴⁸

Similarly, the fact that in 1949, the majority of the guerrillas were Slavophones, was another indicator of the difficulties faced by the GDA. As pointed out before, the Slavophones' loyalty to the guerrilla cause was doubtful. A persecuted and discriminated-against minority, they had joined forces with the guerrillas against the Greek government. Their wish was to quit the Greek state and form an autonomous, if not an independent, entity in Macedonia. The fact that they constituted the majority of the guerrillas greatly denigrated the latter's cause among the Greek people themselves, including the Greek guerrillas. When, in 1949, the pro-Stalin KKE came out in support of an independent Slavophone Macedonia—designed to cordon off Tito's Yugoslavia in the south—in return for further Slavophone armed support, the remaining sympathy that Greek Communism still had was reduced even further.

Mounting losses and growing demands for more troops for additional duties and large-scale operations posed insurmountable obstacles for the GDA command. Indeed, guerrilla casualties were far beyond the GDA's ability to replenish its strength. In December 1946, there were 9,285 guerrillas and their losses amounted to 285. A year later, the figures were 20,350 guerrillas and 1,630 casualties. In December 1948, 24,985 and 2,560. In the January-March quarter of 1949, total guerrilla losses amounted to 12,240 killed in action, captured, or surrendered. In April 1949, there were 19,880 guerrillas and their casualties amounted to 3,629. In the August 1949 Grammos battle that effectively ended the civil war, GDA losses were 922 dead, 765 captured, and 179 surrendered. In July, the GDA still had 16,400 names on their nominal roll; at the end of August, there were only 3,710. Figures issued by the Greek government indicated that between June 1945 and March 1949, guerrilla losses had totalled more than 78,000 (29,000 killed, 13,000 captured, and 28,000 surrendered). No figures were issued for

⁴⁷Close and Veremis, p. 30.

⁴⁸British Vice Consul, Cavalla, to the Consulate in Thessalonike, Feb. 21, 1948, PRO, FO 371/72209/R2766.

the wounded but they must have been two to three times these figures. Close to 4,000 civilians were reported executed or killed by the guerrillas. In comparison, the GNA casualty figures for the same period were given as 11,000 killed, 23,000 wounded, and 8,000 missing.⁴⁹

It is not my intention to deal extensively in this article with the Greek National Army, but something must be said in passing to explain their emergence in the spring of 1949 as the strongest force in the Balkans.

At the beginning of the war, the GNA was in total disarray. They were low in morale and subsequently low in achievement in the field. From the beginning of 1946, the government had been appealing to the British and Americans to enlarge the GNA, train it, and provide it with modern equipment. The United States, under the Truman Doctrine, was called on to finance the expansion of the GNA, but they were not prepared for unlimited spending. In November 1948, Ambassador Grady wrote to the State Department that the key to success, according to the Greek way of thinking, was always "more men, more money, and more equipment." Yet, the 263,000 American-fed, clothed, and equipped men, trained and advised in operations by American and British officers, "has been unable to make appreciable progress . . . against a bandit organization of some 25,000."⁵⁰

Radical changes in command, organization, and strategy were to be made instead but additional—and, as it turned out, decisive aid—was also forthcoming. Aside from increasing family allowances and thus, improvement of the soldiers' morale, probably the most important element was the revamping of the previously moribund Greek Air Force, the Royal Hellenic Air Force (RHAF). By 1949, long-range and quicker "Harvards" and "Spitfires" were in use, with heavier guns and heavier bombs. More "Dakota" and "Anson" troop carriers were employed. Napalm and night bombing with incendiary bombs became the practice. The RHAF in fact became the spearhead of offensive tactics against the guerrillas and considering that the guerrillas had now become organized in larger, more conventional formations, the RHAF could locate them with alacrity and operate successfully against them.⁵¹

The Soviet Bloc and the Guerrillas

The Truman Doctrine resolved to halt the spread of Communism

⁴⁹Numbers taken from Table Showing Strength and Casualties of the Guerrillas from June 1946 up to April 1949, FO 371/78358/R4331; C. M. Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* (New York, 1976), p. 283; Edgar O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War, 1944-1949* (London, 1966), p. 192.

⁵⁰To the Secretary of State, Nov. 22, 1948, FRUS, 1948, 4:188-189.

⁵¹HQ, RHAF, Report No. 15, Activity of Air Force During July 1949, Sept. 15, 1949, p. 4, PRO, AIR 46/46.

in a country assigned under the Percentages' Agreement to the western bloc. However, Russia's commitment to the Greek insurgents was not quite as clear, and it is certain that the march of political events in the Soviet Bloc itself was reflected on the battlefield and was undoubtedly one of the most serious internal blows to the guerrilla cause.

In June 1948, Tito's Yugoslavia was expelled from the Soviet Bloc. If American military aid began making inroads into the insurgents' military capabilities, the "excommunication" of Yugoslavia gave the quietus to the GDA. While there is no evidence that mercenaries or even foreign "volunteers" assisted the Greek guerrillas, this does not mean that advice and substantial aid from their "natural" allies were not forthcoming.

The Russian Zone of Germany, for example, was an endless source of ammunition and weapons for the guerrillas. Wehrmacht ammunition dumps (mainly anti-tank shells and grenades) were transported in their entirety to Greece via Poland.⁵² The Czechs supplied the GDA with hundreds of trucks. There were also four training, re-equipment, and supply bases on Czech territory, in Harrochov, in northern Bohemia, in Bratislava, Korsice, and Brno.⁵³

Romania extended help to the wounded, caring for 600 of them in April 1949, at the Palace Hotel in Sinaia. They also maintained national committees which disseminated information about the Greek Communist cause and solicited funds for it. In Bucharest, there was a nucleus of Greek Communists, who acted as a sort of permanent liaison staff. The trade unions allocated specific hours or days in factories to work for democratic Greece, and small but regular deductions were made from their wages for this cause. Collection boxes were placed in all state shops. There were posters calling for help to Greece and there was even a "Greek Week" (25 March-3 April 1949) on behalf of the GDA. Every opportunity was used to issue protests about the "barbarities of the 'monarcho-fascist' government."⁵⁴

The Hungarians also provided mostly non-military assistance to the Greek guerrillas, although in April 1949, a train derailment outside of Budapest revealed an arms shipment on its way to the guerrillas. However, for the most part, the Hungarians followed the Romanian pattern.⁵⁵

⁵²Report by Intelligence Division, HQ, Control Commission for Germany (British Element), Berlin, Oct. 3, 1947, PRO, FO 371/67122/R13718/G.

⁵³British Embassy, Prague, to Foreign Office, Oct. 3, 1949, PRO, FO 371/78440/R9584; UN General Assembly, record of the 304th meeting of the First Committee, New York, Nov. 1, 1949, No. A/C.1/SR.304, UN Archives (UNA), DAG 1/2.1.3:7.

⁵⁴British Legation, Bucharest, to the UK Delegation to UNSCOB, April 5, 1949, PRO, FO 371/78382/R4102.

⁵⁵British Legation, Budapest, to UK Delegation to UNSCOB, April 15, 1949, PRO, FO 371/78382/R4321.

Tactical guidance was provided by the Russians. The shift of guerrilla activity from areas close to the northern borders of Greece into the southern part of the country was said to have been masterminded by the Soviets, to coincide with an inspection by the UN Commission visiting Greece in 1947, to give the impression that the war had little to do with Greece's Communist neighbors.⁵⁶

However, with minor exceptions, the bulk of this aid was moral: moral support to the guerrillas and a moral uplift for their benefactors, including the Russians. The fact of the matter is that the authorities in these countries contented themselves with drumming up goodwill. Real help, however, for which the agreement of people of Communist countries is not necessarily required, was just not forthcoming.

Much has been written about Stalin's adherence to the Percentages Agreement and his aspirations to have a free hand in eastern and central Europe, in return for his non-intervention in Greece. His reservations concerning the close ties between the Communist guerrillas and Tito have also been discussed at length. Fearing a conflict with the west over Greece, Stalin dissociated himself from the revolt of the KKE and when he was dissatisfied with the growing ties between the GDA and Tito, he forced the KKE to take an anti-Yugoslavian stand in the clash between Belgrade and the Cominform. However, the tragedy and destruction which were the lot of the KKE were the result of its belief in the imminent arrival of aid from Moscow. "Εἴμαστε ἀπόλυτα ἱκανοποιημένοι" (we were completely satisfied with Stalin's promises), the KKE declared.⁵⁷ As we know and as indicated by the KKE's complaints, published years later by the party archives (in the Greek newspaper *Αύγη*, December 1979-January 1980), the situation was very different.⁵⁸

Before entering into a discussion of relations between the Balkan countries and the Greek guerrillas, it would be useful to color in briefly some of the historical background which figured in the situation: because of their geographical proximity, the interest of these countries in Greece's future was never entirely magnanimous. Uneasy relations with its neighbors had always figured in Greek history.

The Yugoslavs, for example, had always wanted an outlet to the Aegean Sea, an issue which caused a number of rows and treaties between Belgrade and Athens (as in 1923 and 1929). Also, despite

⁵⁶Minutes of meeting, Interdepartmental Committee for Aid to Greece and Turkey, June 11, 1947, UNSA, RG 353, Lot 122, Box 7.

⁵⁷*Αύγη*, 12 December 1979, documents from the KKE Archives published by Philipou Ilyou. On the Soviet Union and the KKE see Peter J. Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism 1944-1949* (Ithaca and London, 1989).

⁵⁸*Αύγη*, 12-13 January 1980; *Αύγη*, 30 December 1979.

official denials, Yugoslavia coveted all of Aegean Macedonia, including Thessalonike. With regard to Albania, the central government of Greece still considered itself in a state of war with Albania because of the participation of Albania nationals in the 1940 Italian invasion and occupation of Greece. Greece, on the other hand, had a territorial claim to the northern Epiros, which did little to alleviate the situation. Finally, relations between Greece and Bulgaria had always been marred by the former's demand to rectify the border between the two countries and the latter's claim to the entire province of western Thrace, with its outlet to the Aegean Sea. All of these claims and counterclaims notwithstanding, the three countries were all now part of the Soviet Block and naturally, for this and their own national reasons, were interested in a Greece which would be friendly to them and sympathetic to their claims. In the eyes of the British Ambassador to Belgrade at the beginning of 1948, the situation looked like this:

3. Viewed from here, it would not seem that Markos or the KKE/EAM are in a position to answer back or to do other than they are told. Markos's various bases in Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria are vital to him. It is to northern neighbours that he most looks for all supplies and reinforcements and it is on their territories alone that bandits could take refuge if things went ill for them. If this lifeline were cut, Markos would surely soon degenerate from a menace into something like a nuisance.

4. But . . . may it not also be true that conversely, the northern neighbours are also committed to support Markos willy-nilly? . . . [T]he Slav Bloc would hardly wish to risk the inevitable loss of face which would be their lot if Markos failed.

5. But there is a further consideration why, at this stage, it would seem unlikely that the northern neighbours should have made provisions for active aid to Markos' conditional on the annexation of the Macedonian area to an autonomous Macedonia and that is because at present, they are hardly in a position to make terms of this kind. As things are, a strong, prosperous, and non-Communist Greece would always be viewed by the northern neighbours, if not as a direct menace to their own Communist regimes, at least as a perpetual question mark and as a possible springboard for western "imperialist" designs against them. They must therefore . . . go ahead with their present plans. . . . In short, they are committed to doing all in their power to establish a Communist regime in Greece and are as yet in no position to start quarrelling amongst themselves about where or how the Croat frontiers, with the new "Peace-Loving and Brotherly" State of Greece (if it can be got),

are to be drawn.

7. The hook-up between northern neighbours and Greek Communists is of such a nature that neither side at present is in a position to disengage. It can only be loosened by the march of events.⁵⁹

Ambassador Peake, though hardly a prophet, made a number of important observations—first of all, that the territorial “give and take” of the Balkan countries and the guerrillas had to be held in abeyance until some future time. Secondly, that without help from the northern neighbors, Markos would fail. And thirdly, that disengagement would only come about by the “march of events.” One of the “events” materialized six months later, when Tito and Stalin fell out: Yugoslav “disengagement” and Markos’s failure were soon to follow.

To return to the contribution of the Balkan countries to the guerrilla successes, all the evidence indicates that the guerrillas’ entire strategy was based on unrestricted access to the territories of Greece’s Balkan neighbors. The areas occupied by the guerrilla forces along the frontiers of Greece and the Balkan states were, for the most part, uncultivated and deserted, although large numbers of guerrillas managed to sustain themselves in these areas. The inference that their supplies came from beyond the border—from Albania, for instance—was supported not only by ample evidence from witnesses but also by direct UN observation of certain routes leading into Greece. Hospitals offering special surgery, eye tests, and X-ray examinations, as well as training bases, supply centers, weapons workshops, etc., were provided by the Balkan states, inside their territories. The number of persons in these bases, which the guerrillas and Balkan authorities persisted in calling “centers for Greek refugees,” consistently decreased just before any major guerrilla military operation.⁶⁰ Accordingly:

The strength of the [guerrillas] lies in their ability to retreat, rest, re-arm, and re-group in non-Greek territory, without fear of disturbances, in the fact that the proportion of guerrilla strength devoted to actual combat operations is very high, because the auxiliary services of training, supply, hospitalization, etc., are furnished by the satellite governments.⁶¹

⁵⁹Sir Charles Peake, British Ambassador, Belgrade, to Foreign Office, Jan. 9, 1948, PRO, FO 371/72237/R475.

⁶⁰UNSCOB report to the 4th session of the General Assembly, August 2, 1949, No. A/AC.16/800, New York, UNA, RAG-1/91. On UNSCOB, the UN Special Committee on the Balkans, see Amikam Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War. The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans 1947-1952* (New York, 1990).

⁶¹U.S. Policy Planning Staff, Report on U.S. Aid to Greece, Nov. 24, 1948, UNSA, No. PPS/44, pp. 501-02.

Supply of arms, ammunition, food, clothing, etc., were the common features of the assistance given by Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria to the GDA. The use of their northern neighbors’ territories was a facility taken for granted by the guerrillas. Unrestricted entry was not allowed but friendly and helpful attitudes were maintained by frontier guards and entry could be arranged to implement tactical and strategic plans or to obtain logistic support. There were occasions when these territories were used for artillery fire into Greece. Coordination of the movement of Greek guerrilla supplies and troops on the relevant frontiers or across the three countries implied some overall direction, not necessarily controlled by the guerrillas. To American eyes, it seemed that “as three northern neighbors were jointly responsible for aid, it would be a mistake to attempt to assess individual degrees of guilt.”⁶² Yet, there were variations in the assistance provided by the three northern neighbors. At one time, it was the Albanians who were the most generous. A five-mile strip of Albania’s territory along its Greek frontier had been cleared of civilians on the pretext of the “existence of cholera in Greece.” The GDA thus could maneuver freely in and out of Greece and Albania.⁶³ However, being the weakest and poorest among the three, Tirana suffered from the GNA’s raids and aid was gradually scaled down, in particular with regard to the free use of its territory. On the other hand, the Albanians were not popular among the Greek guerrillas because of their wartime record. Greek patriotism was stronger than supra-national Communist camaraderie.⁶⁴

Bulgaria’s help manifested itself *inter alia* by allowing the GDA to make use of a concrete road running parallel to the frontier on the Bulgarian side. Sofia’s aid was said to be “extended more openly than by other countries,” the reason being the failure of the Greek Government to regain control of large areas in the Evros region, a fact which simplified guerrilla support by Bulgaria. The guerrillas also used concentration camps in Bulgaria “for non-cooperative abducted Greek nationals.”⁶⁵ Additional aid was given according to the above-mentioned Hungarian and Romanian models. Lectures were occasionally given on the necessity of helping the Greek guerrillas to conquer Greece, so that Bulgaria would regain “its own territory on the Aegean Sea.”⁶⁶

⁶²US Embassy, Athens, to Secretary of State, Aug. 25, 1948, USNA, 501.BB Balkans/8-2548.

⁶³US Embassy, Athens, to Secretary of State, Dec. 17, 1947, UNSA, 501.BB Balkans/12-1947.

⁶⁴US Embassy, Athens, to Secretary of State, Aug. 25, 1948, USNA, 501.BB Balkans/8-2548.

⁶⁵British Military Attache, Notes on Tour in Central and Eastern Macedonia, Nov. 22-29, 1947, PRO, FO 371/67074/R16574/G; American Embassy, Athens, to Secretary of State, Aug. 25, 1948, USNA, 501.BB Balkans/8-2548.

⁶⁶UNSCOB Report, Aug. 1950 - Aug. 1951, The Hague, Dutch Archives, Series No. 999.212, UNSCOB.

However, neither Albania nor Bulgaria matched the quantity and quality of Yugoslav aid. Tito's fear that the British might do to his people in Belgrade what they had done to the ELAS in Athens in 1944 was reflected in the amount and kind of support given to the GDA. The Yugoslav Committees of Assistance for the Greek People, under the auspices of the trade unions, were organized in a strongly centralized structure: the national committee, the republics' committees, the country, district, city and war committees, with subdivisions for the trade union, the youth cells, etc. The committees accepted donations of clothing, footwear, foodstuffs, and money and delivered them to the GDA via specially designated liaison bodies and officers. These collections provided an excellent channel for the delivery of military supplies, "a conveniently fictional cover behind which the Yugoslav Government will deliver to Markos whatever it feels the situation warrants." Indeed, Belgrade managed, to a large extent, to mask its military contributions to the GDA. What was discovered was "the visible portions of the iceberg."⁶⁷ The rest — the military and logistic help — were not seen by the public and much effort was invested in keeping it disguised. The example of the guerrilla center in the Yugoslav town of Boulkes will serve as an adequate example.

Boulkes was known as the largest camp for left-wing Greek refugees in Yugoslavia, situated some 30 kilometers northwest of Novi Sad. Its main business was reported to be in agriculture. The camp was organized into groups of 150 each, one of which was composed of women and children. There was a printing press and a camp paper (*Φωνή τῶν Μπούλκες* — *The Voice of the Boulkes*). For a time, the chief activity of the camp seemed to have been supporting itself through the cultivation of the surrounding area of 20,000 acres. In winter 1946, military instruction started in Boulkes, consisting of a two-to-three-month course. Training was given to candidates for company and battalion commanders. Training under arms did not take place but weapons were issued subsequent to departure. In 1946 for instance, two guerrilla brigades — the "Zachariades" and the "ELAS" — each with 300 men, organized and trained in the camp. A similar number of trainees continued to use the camp until the end of 1948. Instruction was partially in military tactics, mostly in political ideology. Two factories in Boulkes produced shirts and underwear, for delivery to the guerrillas across the frontier. Of a population of about 4,500 to 5,000, the military in Boulkes comprised about 10%.⁶⁸

⁶⁷American Embassy, Belgrade, to the Secretary of State, March 22, 1948, USNA, 868.00/3-2248.

⁶⁸US Legation, Sofia, to Dept. of State, March 26, 1947, USNA, 501.BC Greece/3-2647.

There is further evidence of Yugoslav assistance by Tito's biographer, Vladimir Dedijer, to the effect that under Aleksander Rankovic, the Head of the Yugoslav Security Services, Belgrade's aid to the Greek guerrillas amounted to approximately 50,000 rifles, locally-made light machine guns, heavy German machine guns, German anti-tank weapons, 10,000 land mines, clothing for 12,000 men, and 30 trainloads of food.⁶⁹ This may, to some extent, reflect *post facto* the Yugoslav desire to show their adherence to the Greek guerrilla cause in the fact of heavy Cominform allegations to the contrary. However, the rupture between Stalin and Tito and subsequent Yugoslav disengagement—when added to the intensive American-supported military buildup—finally determined the outcome of the Greek civil war.

In January 1948, the KKE, the Greek Communist Party, loyal to the Soviet Union, relieved the pro-Tito Markos of his post as Commander of the GDA and as Premier and Minister of War of the Provisional Greek Democratic Government. The Central Committee of the KKE alleged that it was a necessary step, owing to Markos's "serious illness." Markos was also dropped from the Politburo, accused, among other things, of conducting "a chauvinistic policy" against the Slavo-Macedonian troops since his days in ELAS. It was apparent that the Stalin-Tito rift had started to shatter the balance of forces and stability of the Greek guerrilla movement and the KKE. A large-scale purge of the pro-Tito "right-wing deviationists" got underway and they were retroactively denounced for advocating limited, sporadic guerrilla activity. The denunciation went even further afield, charging them with having been discouraged by their defeat at the hands of the British in 1944 and, thus, ready to enter a "treacherous truce with Athens."⁷⁰

Moscow was less concerned with the tactics and strategies of the guerrillas than it was in isolating them from Yugoslavia and strengthening their links with pro-Moscow Albania and Bulgaria. It was only a matter of time before Yugoslavia perceived the dangers inherent in allowing pro-Moscow guerrillas free movement on their southern border. If they were to succeed in Greece, they might conceive of Tito as their next target. The Yugoslav Foreign Minister was quoted in *Borba* at the time as making this assessment:

The Greek Communist leaders had forgotten the interests of the democratic movement in Greece and judged participation in the

⁶⁹Vladimir Dedijer, *Novi Prilozi za Biografiju Josipa Broza Tita—Treci Tom* [New Additions to the Biography of Josip Broz Tito, Vol 3] (Belgrade, 1984), pp. 265-67.

⁷⁰Guerrilla radio communique on the 5th Plenary Session of the KKE Central Committee, Feb. 4, 1949, PRO, FO 371/78395/R1791; Decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the KKE, *Λεύθερη Ελλάδα* [Free Greece], 15 Nov. 1948. KKE, *Επίσημα Κείμενα, Τόμος Έκτος 1945-1949* [Official Texts, Vol. 6, 1945-1949]. (Athens, 1987), p. 307.

struggle against Yugoslavia more important than the struggle against foreign interference in Greek affairs. The Greek Communist leaders had spread fictions about Yugoslav collaboration with the Monarcho-Fascist forces and with Anglo-American officers. . . . If the leaders of the Greek Communist Party thought that Yugoslavia's moral and political support for the Greek democratic movement was not necessary and that everything that it had done could be made the subject of slander and insults, then of course the new Yugoslavia would not press its aid on anybody.⁷¹

In July 1949, the borders with Yugoslavia were closed and strict restrictions placed on any guerrilla bases still on Yugoslav soil. At the end of August 1949, the guerrillas were smashed by the Greek National Army in the north and by October, there remained only a few scattered groups of hungry and dazed guerrillas, whose commanders had abandoned them a month earlier. The KKE ceased fighting and the "Free Greece Radio" issued a message to the effect that:

They ["the monarcho-fascist slaves and their foreign masters"] imagine that they won because the Democratic Army preferred to stop the butchery, since they, reinforced also by the treachery of renegade Tito, had decided to leave nothing standing on the soil of this country.

But they deceive themselves in a deadly way when they imagine that the Democratic Army exists no more.⁷²

Thousands of guerrillas, some with their families, moved into the Balkan countries and from there, they scattered all around eastern Europe, only to find themselves under various degrees of confinement.⁷³ The Greek Communist Party rejected the idea of resuming armed struggle as a tactic expressing the "bourgeois mentality of despair and lack of perspective," as it would offer the opponents the opportunity of delivering "a crushing blow against the fighters and officers of the People's Revolutionary Movement."⁷⁴

In time, small groups of three or four guerrillas were sent back to Greece for political agitation and reorganization of the KKE in the villages. Others were instructed to reorganize the People's Agrarian Party (Λαϊκὸν Ἀγροτικὸν Κόμμα, a wartime member of the National Liberation Front, the EAM) and to establish small cells of supporters.

⁷¹Edvard Kardelj, July 24, 1949. For text see also British Embassy, Belgrade, to Foreign Office, July 25, 1949, PRO, FO 371/78448/R7166.

⁷²Free Greece Radio, 06:45 hours, Oct. 16, 1949, PRO, FO 371/78360/R9995.

⁷³Dept. of State Report, "The Soviet-Satellite Participation in the Greek Guerrilla War," Oct. 7, 1949, USNA, 868.00/10-749.

⁷⁴KKE resolution, monitoring of GDA radio, Oct. 9, 1949, PRO, FO 371/78418/R10593.

Later on, the Central Committee of the KKE, which then had its headquarters in Bulgaria, would relocate itself in Greece.⁷⁵ It was pathetic that members of the Provisional Democratic Government busied themselves with a Greek translation of the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin and that "Free-Greece Radio," removed from Yugoslavia to Romania, became the single remaining link between the KKE and the People of Greece.⁷⁶

Conclusion: Greek Society, Greek Communism

We will repeat briefly the conclusions relating to military matters. In order to present a clearer picture, we will also mention some inputs stemming from Greece's society and their relevance to the success and failure of Greek Communism.

As has been mentioned earlier, the Greek guerrillas moved too rapidly towards conventional warfare. In theory, this stage could have been more successful had either one or two conditions been met: the arrival of massive foreign aid or the collapse of the GNA.⁷⁷ None had happened. Nor was time on the side of the GDA: massive and effective foreign support was being given to the enemy and the GNA was not collapsing. The Nationalists were continuously improving: their commando pursuit groups finally mastered the best military weapons and fighting methods against the kind of guerrilla and conventional warfare conducted by the GDA. After a long period of shying away from direct confrontation towards the end of the war, frontal confrontation with the guerrillas became the catchword of the new *esprit de corps* and with RHAF cover, GNA ground fighters became the spearhead of offensive tactics against the guerrillas. Numbering more than a quarter of a million troops, the GNA practically smothered the GDA. Furthermore, the Cominform was not helping. Stalin was doubtful of the KKE's chances to win the war and in any case, he was not ready to commit himself before the GDA had actually done so. It meant the *coup de grace* for the Communist uprising; in cold war Greece, western foreign intervention was inevitable and effectively tilted the balance.

Communism as a revolutionary ideology never enjoyed large support in Greece. There was a large middle class and a large rural population and a proletariat, which had begun to emerge at the beginning of the twentieth century, between the two world wars. The urban bourgeois, like most of the rural population, strongly adhered to ideas

⁷⁵UNSCOB Report, August 1950 - August 1951, Chapter 3, Dutch Archives, No. 999.212 UNSCOP.

⁷⁶Report of UNSCOP to the 4th Session of the General Assembly, Aug. 2, 1949, No. A/AC.16/800, UNA, RAG-1/91.

⁷⁷See also D. George Kousoulas, "The Crucial Point of a Counter-Guerrilla Campaign," *Infantry*, Jan.-Feb. 1963.

like religion, nation, family, and property, and the Greek working class, coming from the countryside to the urban centers, still had strong rural allegiances.⁷⁸ In fact, most of the KKE members in the 1930s came from the petty bourgeois intelligentsia.⁷⁹ It is true that the early 1940s saw hundreds of thousands joining the ranks of the KKE and the EAM/ELAS. Yet, it was not so much Communism which attracted them as ELAS resistance to the German occupation. "There were millions of us in EAM and 450,000 in the Communist Party — too many for everyone to be a good Communist."⁸⁰ Indeed, after the end of the occupation, membership in these organizations declined sharply and when the civil war erupted, the situation of the KKE was no better: in the urban centers, the National Army, and the police had the tough upper hand that threatened any mass support for the Communists and, as already noted, in the villages, the party continued to arouse resistance to what was perceived as anti-religious, anti-patriotic, anti-property ideology.⁸¹

The majority of those who tilled the land in rural Greece owned it. Agrarian revolution was not a must. As a result, not very many peasants viewed the KKE and the GDA as their redeemers, and it was only forced recruitment which turned the Greek peasant into the main manpower source for the GDA, required for replenishing the ranks thinned by casualties.

The cities under government rule, especially Athens, were hostile grounds for guerrilla and KKE supporters, a situation which was detrimental to them: "Anyone familiar with modern Greek history should know that whoever controls Athens has the best chance of gaining control over the rest of Greece."⁸² Being in the minority and lacking broad public sympathy, the KKE and GDA were easy prey for the government propaganda, which depicted them as pariahs. Guerrillas,

⁷⁸ Evangelos Averof-Tossizza, *By Fire and Axe. The Communist Party and Civil War in Greece, 1944-1949* (New Rochelle, NY, 1978), p. 5; D. George Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat, The Story of the Greek Communist Party* (London, 1965), p. 39. On the socio-economic origins of the Communist insurgency in Greece see also R. V. Burks, *The Dynamics of Communism in Eastern Europe* (Princeton, 1961); William H. McNeill, *The Metamorphosis of Greece Since World War II* (Chicago and London, 1978); McNeill, *Greece: American Aid in Action 1947-1956* (New York, 1957). Burks found that support for Communism is a function of topography: when topography enables easy communication between places, communism is more prevalent. *Ibid.*, p. 56. McNeill, *American Aid*, pp. 12-14, relates the membership of Greek peasants in the GDA to the lack of food supplies in mountainous villages.

⁷⁹ Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat*, p. 39.

⁸⁰ Yannis Ioannides, a KKE leader and a member of the guerrilla government, in Dominique Eudes, *The Kapetanios, Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949* translated from the French by John Howe (New York and London, 1972), p. 224.

⁸¹ Eudes, *Kapetanios*, p. 305.

⁸² Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat*, p. 211.

party members, their supporters and families were harshly treated by the government and its troops and even subjected to atrocities. When the guerrillas appeared to be rescuing their children by transferring them to the north, they were accused of kidnapping. See how the fate of the kidnapped — or rescued — children was reported:

Two cases are shown to a class of [Greek] children of about 7 or 8 years old in Bulgaria. The teacher tells the children that one case belongs to God and the other to Stalin. She then asks the children to pray that the case belonging to God be filled with chocolates, but this fails and the case is empty. The same is applied to the case belonging to Stalin, and the case is full of chocolates. . . . This story is horrible for everyone who has children of his own and who has any notion of the impressionability of the soul of a child. . . . This is a definite part of the attitude of the people and the countries behind the Iron Curtain.

Facts ceased to have meaning: what prevailed was incalculable in Greece and abroad. In the end, in England — but mainly in America — the public was convinced that a dehumanized, ruthless Communist minority was trying to enslave the Greeks. This cancelled out any inhibitions in helping the Greek Nationalists, either economically or militarily, and resulted in the virtual American colonization of Greece. No country of comparable size had ever received such generous help.⁸³

In short, the GDA was dependent (1) on the few thousand party cadres who managed to flee the wrath of the authorities in the cities and escape to the mountains; (2) on the forcefully-conscripted peasants; and (3) on the Macedonian Slavophones who willingly joined the guerrillas but for reasons of their own. But another difficulty for the GDA in light of the fact that enthusiasm for Communism was not widespread was that ever since 1944, ELAS fighters were closely identified with the KKE and international Communism in Greece and around the world. No matter what kind of friction there was between the party and leftist military echelons, including the fact that the KKE initially objected to the eruption of the civil war in 1946, identification persisted. Thus, whenever the KKE stumbled (by supporting Macedonian independence, for instance), the guerrillas were bruised. Greek government propaganda, by discrediting the KKE, was able at the same time to discredit the GDA. On the other hand, the KKE's attempts to ride the waves of Greek national feelings — as against the charge that they were pursuing an international and therefore alien ideology — were

⁸³ William H. McNeill, *Greece: American Aid in Action, 1947-1956* (New York, 1957), pp. 65-66; UNSCOB, Memorandum No. 14, 14 Feb. 1950, Report on the Repatriation of Greek children, p. 8. The Hague, Dutch Archives, Series No. 999.212 UNSCOB.

pathetic. Their accusations that the United States and the Athens Government were ceding western Thrace to Turkey in return for the latter's help in the civil war were received with contempt.⁸⁴

Under these difficult circumstances, the party and the guerrillas had to cooperate while fighting for their own and Communism's existence, but harmony did not prevail. There were schisms at every turn that proved detrimental in the extreme to the uprising in Greece. Cities versus villages, guerrillas versus conventional warfare, Communist Secretary-General Nikos Zachariades versus Guerrilla Chief Markos Vaphiades, party cadres versus the rank and file, veterans of the resistance and of World War II EAM/ELAS versus the new guerrilla recruits and KKE members, pro-Titoists versus pro-Stalinists, Slavo-Macedonians versus Greek nationalists, adherents to a political settlement versus supporters of a military solution, and a revolution of the proletariat versus an insurrection of the peasants. There was no way that the KKE/GDA struggle for power in Greece could succeed in the face of so much discord. Neither the party nor the guerrilla movement could avoid destruction in the face of these cleavages.

The dispute between Zachariades and Markos was military, political, and personal but it remained dormant as long as the guerrillas stayed in the mountains and Zachariades led the party from Athens. The moment the party was banned in late 1947 and its leadership forced to escape to the mountains, it was only a question of time before it would come into the open.

Nikos Zachariades never particularly favored the armed uprising because he feared reprisals of the magnitude of 1944/45: he sought rather a political victory for the Communists. He even went so far as to blame the guerrillas for launching the "second round," so that the British would have an excuse to crush the Communists.⁸⁵ He nevertheless remained a political leader even after the purge of Markos in late 1948, when he took over command of the GDA. He then expected the guerrillas to do the impossible and tilt the entire military balance in their favor, making the KKE a partner in talks for a political settlement and thus enhancing its status in the Communist world. On this issue, Zachariades clashed with many in the guerrillas who preferred small military achievements as stages on the long road to victory, as did Markos. The consequent explosion was inevitably vicious, as shown by the words of Zachariades to Markos at the November 1948 KKE Politburo meeting (convened to discuss the "*oportounistiki platforma*" of Markos):

. . . You'll become a worm and crawl before me, your 25 years

⁸⁴ *Αύγη*, Jan. 4 and 10, 1980.

⁸⁵ *Communist Revolution and Defeat*, p. 211.

in the party will take a trip and you'll start from the beginning or you'll leave your head in Moscow because you insulted Stalin.⁸⁶

There was not much cooperation either between village and peasant guerrillas — the majority of the GDA as of 1948 — who were called by the KKE to liberate the working class of the Greek cities. Since the 1930s, the party advocated the orthodox Marxist urban revolution or, to put it more crudely, the GDA peasants were supposed to shed their blood for the Greek city-dwellers. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the GDA ever helped the peasants in tilling their land. On the contrary, there is plenty of evidence that the guerrillas harvested the peasants' crops, confiscated their sheep and mules, and kidnapped their children. The case of Naousa, where the civilians were treated brutally in order to exert pressure on Athens, is an ample illustration of the alienation of the Greek people engendered by the Greek Communists.

Nor do we find GDA fighters or veterans of EAM/ELAS in the top echelons of the party. Mutual suspicion was too great to overcome. The party was not considered infallible by the guerrillas and those who dared question the inequality in the rations of food and clothing between them and the party cadres were jailed and prosecuted. No wonder that the GDA's rank and file frequently complained to the KKE's Central Committee that they hardly found attentive ears among leading echelons of the Party and the GDA.⁸⁷

The Communist disaster in the Greek civil war was due firstly to the fact that neither the working class nor the peasants were in a position to sustain a Communist revolution and secondly, to the fact that its leadership never successfully combined the necessary military and political astuteness. There was no such combination in Greek Communism of a political leader and a strategist. Zachariades attempted to tilt the military balance through use of the GDA's resources and by waging conventional warfare in the hope of bringing about a change of heart in the Cominform's capitals — and active intervention on behalf of Greek Communism. While such an assessment might have been politically correct as regards the Kremlin's fence-sitting vis-à-vis

⁸⁶ Quoted by Markos Vapheides in "Ο Μάρκος Βαφειάδης απαντά στο Μέτσο Παρτισαλίδη για τη συνάντηση με τον Στάλιν, τη Βάρκιζα, και την καταγγελία Ζαχαριάδη" [Markos Vapheides replies to Metsos Partsalides on the meeting with Stalin, Varkiza, and the condemnation of Zachariades], *Anti*, 52, Athens, Sept. 4, 1976, p. 34. See also Nicholas Pappas, "The Soviet-Yugoslav Conflict and the Greek Civil War," in Wayne S. Vucinich (ed.), *War and Society in East Central Europe. Vol. 10: At the Brink of War and Peace: The Tito-Stalin Split in a Historic Perspective* (New York, 1982), p. 227; Decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee, 15 Nov. 1948, *Επίσημα Κείμενα*, pp. 299-316.

⁸⁷ Eudes, *Kapetanios*, pp. 67, 251; Decisions of the Politburo of the Central Committee, 25 Aug. 1948, *Επίσημα Κείμενα*, p. 281.

the Greek civil war, it was an erroneous assumption about the GDA's ability to tilt the military balance on its own. Markos, on the other hand, advocated guerrilla warfare until the arrival of external support—which he regarded as a prerequisite for victory. This was a good assessment of the GDA's limited military capacity, but a gross misreading of world Communist intentions, which radiated political caution in committing itself to the not-yet-proven might of the GDA.⁸⁸

Zachariades was described as an orthodox Marxist and a mediocre—and entirely unoriginal—social theorist, who was burdened by conservative theories and the influence of Moscow.⁸⁹ However, to do him justice—although he was quoted to the contrary—he apparently realized that under the present circumstances, neither the peasantry nor the proletariat were ripe for revolution. The proletariat was crushed under government persecution. Suspected KKE cadres needed a special permit to move from one suburb of Athens to another. Applications were to be submitted 48 hours in advance. The peasantry contemplated no revolution. They were heavily dependent on state subsidies and support and would hardly turn against their government.⁹⁰ What appeared to him therefore as the quickest way to establish a Communist foothold in Greece was the seizure of towns in the north. Capturing more villages was not an asset anymore, certainly not one that would convince the Cominform countries that Communism in Greece merited their unstinting support. By thus amassing and deploying the largest GDA formations, Zachariades believed that the Greek cities would collapse within a relatively short time. However, Zachariades did not have time. The Eastern Bloc was going to desert him if he could not produce quick and convincing gains in Greece and owing to massive American support, the enemy was getting better and better. The GNA was able to pursue the GDA to the remotest of corners. As long as the GDA was able to retreat to its Balkan neighbors, it had a capacity to regroup and begin again—but, as already noted, more and more restrictions were placed on their movements and with their bases on the territories of their Balkan neighbors, the GDA easily lent itself to the change of foreign invaders.⁹¹

⁸⁸Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece*, pp. 222, 231; Grigoriadi, *Δεκέμβρης Εμφύλιος*, p. 360; D. Gousidi, *Μάρκος Βαφειάδης—Μαρτυρίες* (Thessalonike, 1983), pp. 17-19. See also Markos's memoirs, *Απομνημονεύματα, 1944-1946*, Vol. 3 (Athens, 1985), *passim*.

⁸⁹Harris Vlavianos, "The Greek Civil War: The Strategy of the Greek Communist Party, 1944-1947," Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford, 1988, pp. 289, 324, note 22. See also Zachariades's theoretical work, *Τα Προβλήματα—Καθοδήγησις στο ΚΚΕ* [The Leadership Problems of the KKE] (Athens, 1978).

⁹⁰*Αυγή*, Dec. 28, 1979; Constantine Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1967), p. 38; Vlavianos, "The Greek Civil War," pp. 298-99.

⁹¹Chalmers Johnson, *Revolution and the Social System*, (Stanford University, 1964),

Finally, the basically political frustrations of the Greeks who gathered around the KKE were all but consumed in their resistance to the Germans. The social conflicts discernible in the period between the two world wars had been solved or disappeared. The refugees from Asia Minor had been integrated into the country. The agrarian reform in the 1930s by the Metaxas regime had taken the sting out of most of the peasants' problems. A parliamentary system, the first since the dictatorship of Metaxas, was offered to the Greeks (1946). American dollars reduced the social and economic problems that the World War and the civil war had produced. Moreover, the propaganda machine of the government in Athens convinced the Greeks that all their hardships—whether economic, political or social—could be laid at the door of the Greek Communists and their external supporters. The result was that the KKE was no longer perceived as the epitome of Greek patriotism, as they had been during the World War, but merely as a political force, motivated from abroad, struggling for power, and not very successful at that.

The (stillborn) Greek Communist revolution lacked a broad social base and a definite direction. It did not stem from social problems. It got, however, the manifestations of a struggle for power, an obvious reaction in the face of the political persecution of Communism in Greece. It also took the shape of a struggle for national liberation: some of the KKE wrath and much of its propaganda were turned against the British and later on, against the Americans. The Greek government and its western allies also termed the war a struggle for national liberation, a war against an alien ideology and its supporters from across the border.

Hoover Institution Studies, No. 3, p. 63.