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Abstract

From 1940 to 1945, Churchill's foreign policy in South-Eastern Europe was geared towards maintaining Greece in the British sphere of influence. Even after the election of a Labour government in the summer of 1945, for the next year and a half the Albion's policy focussed on the preservation of British influence in the tip of the Balkan Peninsula. However, in what appeared to be a major reversal of policy in February of 1947, the British informed the United States that they could do no more in Greece, and in so doing manipulated the Americans into assuming support for their interests through the declaration and implementation of the Truman doctrine.

The reasons behind the British decision to surrender Greece to the United States after being determined to hold onto it for so long, and the question of whether or not they quietly manoeuvred the United States into assuming support for British interests are the central issues of this thesis. Furthermore, the fact that British troops remained in Greece into 1948 and beyond could indicate that their situation was not as desperate as they presented in February 1947. Additionally, this shift may not have been as significant as it seemed initially since the American intervention allowed British strategic interests in the Mediterranean to be preserved at a dramatically reduced cost.
Dedication

To Almighty God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

Who had faith in me,

When no one,

Including myself, did.
Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank my wonderful mother Corinnee, my father Dean, and my brother Nic, for their support and encouragement from the time that I began this program. I do not deserve to have been given such a wonderful family, and I fear that I will never be able to repay them for the love, support and friendship they have shown me. I have learned so much from each of you. I would also like to thank my uncle Ted Paravantes for his advice and encouragement throughout the process of finishing my Master’s Degree.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to my many friends and coworkers who have lived through this process with me over the past six years. All of you have helped make the journey bearable, but I would like to single out the Howells. You have all become like my second family. Thank you for your support. I would also like to thank my instructors at UCC (now TRU) Drs. Michael Gorman, John Belshaw, John Fudge and Andrew Yarmie, for their instruction, letters of reference, and questions regarding my progress at Simon Fraser University.

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I have also been very fortunate to have had such wonderful teachers from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of all Saints in Kamloops. Fathers Roman Tsaplan, Mykhaylo Pozdyk and Igumen Simeon Weare have, by their example, allowed me to begin to learn faith, humility and dedication. I would also like to thank Margaret Gardiner, Librarian at the SFU Kamloops Library, for always helping me to get the resources that I needed to complete the research for my Thesis. Your kindness and help did not go unnoticed or unappreciated.
Many thanks go to the members of my examination committee who made themselves available at great inconvenience to themselves, to read my work and offer valuable criticism and comments. Drs. Dimitrios Krallis and Lara Nettelfield’s thoughtful revisions were crucial to the finishing of this Thesis.

My deepest thanks are reserved for my senior supervisor Andre Gerolymatos for seeing me through this process. His comments, revisions, suggestions, and guidance have made this thesis what it is. He has also helped gain a greater understanding of this dark period of Greek history and has reminded me, through his own work and through his help with mine, of the human cost that is paid conflicts such as these. Sadly it is a lesson that is seldom learned, and often not discussed. Additionally, his support, kindness and understanding during my mother's illness and death will never be forgotten and I will always be grateful.

Khoritsi mou, Agapimene mou, my girl, my beloved. I am sorry that it took me so long to find you. Thank you for waiting for me.

PS: My thanks for Rydley and Achilles, my running buddies, who give so much without saying a word, and who keep me company while the rest of the world is sleeping.
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## Glossary

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMFOGE</td>
<td>Allied Mission for the Observation of Greek Elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEM</td>
<td>British Economic Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLO</td>
<td>British Liaison Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMM</td>
<td>British Military Mission</td>
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<td>BPM</td>
<td>British Police Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSE</td>
<td><em>Dimokratikos Stratos Ellados</em>&lt;br&gt;Democratic Army of Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td><em>Ethniki Allilengyi</em>&lt;br&gt;National Solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAM</td>
<td><em>Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo</em>&lt;br&gt;National Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDES</td>
<td><em>Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Syndesmos</em>&lt;br&gt;National Republican Greek League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELAS</td>
<td><em>Ethnikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos</em>&lt;br&gt;National People’s Liberation Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>Foreign Office (British)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNU</td>
<td>Government of National Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KKE</td>
<td><em>Kommounistiko Kommo Ellados</em>&lt;br&gt;Communist Party of Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Security Battalions</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOE</td>
<td>Special Operations Executive</td>
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Introduction

Throughout the early 20th century British interest in Greece went through varying periods of activity and dormancy. However, by 1942 the British had committed significant resources to training and equipping resistance groups opposed to the Axis occupying forces, and to supporting the Greek government in exile. Once the occupation ended British aid to Greece increased dramatically but the outbreak of violence in Athens in December 1944 alerted Britain to the scale of divisions within Greece foreshadowed the difficulties they would face in the future attempting to implement their policies. Though the Varkiza accord (February 12th 1945) was expected to stabilize Greece by settling many of the issues that had been plaguing the country since liberation, the two months following the agreement were extremely chaotic. Much of the aid coming into the country found its way into the hands of anti-communists and government supporters, thereby slowing the distribution of food and increasing the instability throughout the small Balkan country.

Some authors have argued that British intervention in Greece was aimed at preserving their strategic interests in the Mediterranean by repressing the Greek people and by controlling the Greek government.¹ Others have stated that the

creation of a stable parliamentary democracy was their objective. Furthermore, the role that the British played in the origins of the Cold War has been largely overlooked, particularly in reference to their actions in Greece. Regardless of the underlying British intentions, they committed significant resources for a prolonged period of time to this small, unstable Balkan nation. However, in major reversal of policy in February 1947, the British informed the United States that they could do no more in Greece. Less than a month later, American president Harry Truman appeared in front of the United States Congress and delivered his famous address in which he recommended a significant amount of aid to Greece and Turkey to prevent the two countries from falling under communist control. This thesis will argue that after having committed significant resources for many years to maintain Greece in their sphere of influence, the British decision to withdraw from Greece was a plan designed to manipulate the Americans into assuming support for British strategic interests in the Mediterranean.

This research has been limited by the author’s inability to access the untranslated Greek works, having to rely instead upon British and American sources and the works that are available in translation. The study opens with a description of the historical background of the period under examination in order to familiarise the reader with the conditions in Greece at that time. It is followed by a summary of the most relevant sources for the study of the said subject. Next, the developments in Greece and in Britain will be discussed and then placed in context with events in the international sphere in order to demonstrate the bearing that

these international and domestic considerations had on British policy makers, especially as they debated whether or not to maintain Greece as a client state.

Finally, the British declaration to the United States will be compared to their actions in order to determine whether or not they deliberately manipulated the Americans into the declaration of the Truman Doctrine, or whether American policy was simply a result of circumstance and of developments in the international sphere. Traditionally, the American assumption of responsibility in Greece has been attributed to the postwar redistribution of power and their ability to use their financial superiority to enforce their policies. This Thesis offers a new analysis of one of the defining documents / speeches of the modern era, the Truman doctrine, and through it, offers a re-evaluation of the role of the British in the origins of the Cold War.

It is the hope of the author, that in addition to offering a new avenue for research into this area, that this thesis reminds the reader of the human cost that is paid during times of conflict, and although it is necessary to study the individuals who effected the course of events, the people who were affected must not be forgotten. If this study fails to accomplish the later, than I fear the significance of the former will be dramatically reduced, and the fault will lie solely with the author.
Chapter 1: 
Historical Background: From Metaxas to Occupation

The history of the modern Greek state is linked to the great powers of Europe, especially the British. Although Britain, Russia and France established Greece as an independent nation with the Treaty of London in 1832, and though they installed Otto of Wittelsbach, a Bavarian prince, as king, it was the British who became the most heavily involved in Greek affairs in the course of the nineteenth century. British influence in Greece continued through the nineteenth century when in 1864, the British urged King George I to adopt a more democratic constitution, reducing royal influence in the Greek political system and extending the franchise to all adult males. Over the next sixty years Greek irredentism caused some difficulties for the great powers. Greece attacked Turkey three times between 1897 and 1922, and took part in two wars in the Balkans in 1912 and 1913. These difficulties continued into the First World War as the Greek government was divided over which side to take. The deposed Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos supported the Entente, while King Constantine favoured the Alliance. In 1917 the British intervened and restored Venizelos to power, forcing the king into exile and bringing Greece into the war on the side of the Entente. This forced change was just the latest in a string of such alterations that underscored the deep political divisions within Greek society and which undermined the effectiveness and

credibility of succeeding Greek governments. However, a few years later when the war-weary Greek people restored the pro-German King Constantine, the British resented it and for a time abandoned the Greek cause contributing to the defeat of the Greek army in Asia Minor in 1922. This defeat and the subsequent execution of “The Six,” men formerly in positions of power and deemed to have been responsible for the catastrophe, deeply divided not only Greek society, but the Greek armed forces. The divisions in Greek society were exacerbated by the arrival of nearly one and a half million refugees from Asia Minor as a part of the population exchange laid out in the Treaty of Lausanne. Furthermore, the 1930s world wide economic depression led to the collapse of the Greek economic system.

Between 1922 and 1939 the traditional close ties between Britain and Greece were replaced by a long period of dormancy. British policy towards Greece was not overly concerned with Greece’s strategic value because the possibility of war in the Mediterranean was not taken seriously. For their part, the Greek politicians were content to maintain good relations with Britain because of British military power in the Mediterranean. The traditional economic links of the early 20th century had begun to wane and by 1935 Greece had closer economic ties with Germany than with Britain, due to favourable trading terms established between Germany and Greece. Their economic relationship developed soon after Greece had defaulted on her loans from the British, making the British hesitant to grant any more, thereby forcing Greece to look towards Germany for financial support. Germany had recovered from the depression faster than Britain had, and was able

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to provide greater trading opportunities to Greece under more favorable conditions.\(^5\) There were only two significant exceptions that briefly reawakened British interest in Greece during this period. The first was the Italian invasion of Abyssinia on October 3rd 1935, and the second was British recognition of the Greek government that restored the Greek monarchy by force.\(^6\) General George Kondylis’ coup coincided with the Abyssinian crisis, and on October 15\(^{th}\) 1935, the Foreign Office instructed the British Ambassador in Athens to make contact with his new government in order to secure Greece as an ally in the event of a military crisis in the Mediterranean. Once King George II returned on November 25\(^{th}\), he attempted to heal old wounds left by the 1922 defeat and the previous coup attempts. He dismissed Kondylis as premier and appointed Constantine Demertzis in his place to lead a caretaker government pending new elections. Next he offered a general amnesty for civilians and military personnel. However, General Alexander Papagos advised him to maintain a homogeneous army (i.e: one composed almost exclusively of royalists), so the King merely pardoned the previously purged republican officers, thereby maintaining the divisions within the armed forces.\(^7\) However, with the abating of the Abyssinian crisis British interest in Greece decreased and Britain focussed on restoring relations with Italy. Though at first the British assured military support to Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey in the

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\(^7\) Evangelos Spyropoulos, *The Greek Military (1909-1941) and the Greek Mutinies in the Middle East (1941-1944)* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1993) p. 46-47. A general amnesty included a pardon for criminal convictions in addition to reinstatement of previous positions within the armed forces, while a pardon merely removed the criminal conviction but did not reinstate the former position.
event of Italian aggression, once the crisis had ended, Britain backed away from those commitments.\(^8\)

While Demertzis led the Greek government, the Greek Communist Party (KKE) had begun to participate in it. The depression and population influx from Asia Minor greatly influenced the development of the KKE, and, despite their small numbers and perceived political insignificance, the KKE had managed to secure fifteen seats in the parliament in the January 1936 elections. These elections created a stalemate in the parliament as the KKE’s seats were courted by the liberals who had been unable to create a coalition government with the populists.\(^9\) Rumours of the Liberals’ agreement with the communists resulted in General Papagos informing Demertzis that the military would not support a government in which the KKE played a role. However, before the military could intervene in Greek politics once again, King George replaced Papagos with General Ioannis Metaxas as minister of war, thereby eliminating the threat of another coup but placing Metaxas in a position to ascend to power. Metaxas became Demertzis’ deputy premier, and when Demertzis died on April 13\(^{th}\) 1936, Metaxas replaced him.\(^{10}\)

Metaxas established a dictatorship in Greece which lasted from 1936 until 1942 when King George II (in exile) re-instated the constitution. Metaxas came to power in the midst of the economic and social turmoil that had plagued Greece since its defeat at the hands of Turkey in 1922. His regime attempted to stabilise

\(^8\) Gerolymatos, Guerrilla Warfare, p. 40-41, 44.
\(^9\) J.S. Koliopoulos, Greece and the British Connection, 1935-1941, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) p.6. The main parties in Greece at this time were Royalists and Venezelists, the latter being further divided as Liberals and Populists.
Greece by suspending the parliament, abolishing all civil rights, establishing a youth movement and by controlling the media. It was a government not unlike the fascist regimes of Italy and Germany in functionality, however, unlike those two nations Metaxas did not head an ideologically motivated movement, nor did he rely on a political party. He was an authoritarian who ruled with the support of the king and he relied on the military and police. Metaxas oversaw the imprisonment and persecution of many Republican and Venezelist officers, and he used the secret police to destroy the KKE by placing most of its leaders in prison. As a result of Metaxas’ repression, the communists and venezelists were forced to operate underground in order to survive, and the general population, by no means enamoured with the dictatorship was resigned to it.

In 1936, British ambassador Sydney Waterlow believed that supporting the Metaxas regime was in British interests in spite of its repressive nature, even though the Foreign Office was suspicious of the dictator. However, King George II was pro-British, unlike his father Constantine who favoured the Germans, and the armed forces were devoted to the King. Metaxas, who received his officer’s training in Germany, held some sympathies for the Germans, and was always cautious about offending them, especially considering the close and favourable economic ties between Greece and Germany and Metaxas had no desire to have

10 Spyropoulos, pp. 48-49.
13 Koliopoulos, p.60.
14 Gerolymatos, Guerrilla Warfare, p. 44.
Greece enter another European war.\textsuperscript{15} However, after the German occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia British policy changed from appeasement to opposition to Germany, and the British began to issue guarantees to Poland, Yugoslavia and Greece. Metaxas attempted to reassure the German Ambassador Prince Zu Erbach of Greece’s neutrality, but also informed him of King George II’s pro-British attitude.\textsuperscript{16} The British had doubts about Metaxas because of these factors but he was tolerated as a result of King George II’s loyalty to Britain. Furthermore, there was very little they could actually do at this point in time to remove him from power.\textsuperscript{17}

By 1938 Metaxas was increasingly suspicious of British plots against him, and his fears were not without foundation.\textsuperscript{18} By this time Ambassador Waterlow had reversed his earlier position and advised the Foreign Office that the Metaxas regime might be overthrown and he recommended that if that occurred, the British should not support it. Furthermore, Waterlow denied Metaxas’ request for an Anglo-Greek alliance, thereby leaving Metaxas free to pursue his policy of neutrality. Next, when Britain did not oppose the Italian invasion of Albania, Metaxas grew even more suspicious of British intentions. It was only after Italy promised to respect the territorial integrity of Greece on April 10\textsuperscript{th} 1939 that Britain and France issued their guarantees of support to Greece.\textsuperscript{19} However, Britain opposed the renewal of the Greek-Italian pact of friendship. Even though this agreement supported British policy to keep Italy neutral, it was opposed

\textsuperscript{15} Gerolymatos, \textit{Red Acropolis}, p. 31-32.
\textsuperscript{16} Gerolymatos, \textit{Guerrilla Warfare}, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{17} Gerolymatos, \textit{Red Acropolis}, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 31.
because in the event that Britain should find herself at war with Italy, the agreement would close Greece and her ports to the British. Therefore, between 1938 and 1939, while still protecting Greek neutrality for Greece’s negotiations with Italy and its trade with Germany, British policy attempted to ensure that British interests were not compromised. However, when war broke out in September 1939, British opinions about Greece’s strategic value were greatly affected by Turkish ambitions. Should Turkey remain neutral, Greek ports would become very valuable, however, if Turkey were to ally herself with Britain, then the value of Greek ports would be diminished.

In July of 1940, British activities in Greece included British intelligence agents from both the newly formed Special Operations Executive (SOE) and MI6. They were beginning to prepare the Greeks for a possible German occupation by cashing weapons and training saboteurs. Prime Minister Winston Churchill charged the SOE with organizing, training and equipping resistance groups across occupied Europe, and acting as a liaison between the British government and those groups. The SOE had an office in Cairo and another in London, as well as in the Far East. It was composed of both military and civilian personnel who did most of their training at secret facilities in Scotland, but it had to requisition its equipment from the military with the approval of the Foreign Office. Therefore, at its inception, the SOE was destined to come into conflict with but be dependant upon the government agencies with whom it was supposed to operate. Many in the

19 Gerolymatos, Guerrilla Warfare, pp. 46-47.
20 Koliopoulos, pp.114-119
British Military felt that the SOE wasted needed supplies on questionable endeavours with uncertain results. The Foreign Office disliked the SOE because officially it was not under the Foreign Office’s control. This dislike would grow as events in Greece unfolded and it had an immediate impact on the implementation of British policy in Greece.\(^22\)

On October 28\(^{th}\) 1940, Mussolini issued an ultimatum to Greece that would have turned Greece into little more than an Italian satellite.\(^{23}\) With Metaxas’ immediate and complete refusal of Italian demands, the Foreign Office’s concerns about him were lessened.\(^{24}\) His opposition to Italy quieted his external critics, and many of Metaxas’ internal opponents supported him, because of national security needs.\(^{25}\) The exception was the KKE whose policy was confused because of the Nazi-Soviet pact. Even though the Foreign Office was now supportive of the Metaxas regime, by 1940 they had begun to pressure the Greek leader to release political prisoners and cooperate with the regime’s opponents. However, these political reforms were not an immediate concern to Metaxas while Greece was at war. Although the Italian attack on Greece had made Metaxas less hesitant about asking the British for aid, he still requested the aid remain secret for his regime did not wish to arouse the suspicions of the Germans. Metaxas’ main source of apprehension was that the Greek victories against Italy and the British decision to move troops to mainland Greece and to Crete had increased the likelihood of a


\(^{23}\) Gerolymatos, Guerrilla Warfare, pp 48-51.

\(^{24}\) Gerolymatos, Red Acropolis, pp. 32-33.

\(^{25}\) Spyropoulos, p. 56.
German invasion. Meanwhile, the SOE performed many duties in Greece as it acted as a liaison between the Foreign Office and the beginnings of what would become the Greek resistance groups, in addition to its duties of equipping and training saboteurs. The SOE’s activities in Greece were kept secret because post-occupation planning may have implied that the defeat of Greece was inevitable, thereby undermining the will of the Greek military. The SOE was also charged with coordinating action against the expected German occupation forces, and to relay intelligence to the British government about the Germans and the Greek Resistance should an occupation occur.

When Metaxas died from a bout of tonsillitis on January 29th, 1941 his death left a major void in the Greek Government. The British encouraged King George II to fill the gap himself but the king instead appointed the former head of the national bank, Alex Koryzis, to lead the dictatorship although General Alexander Papagos retained control of the army corps. In spite of Metaxas’ death, plans continued for the deployment of British troops in Greece. However, the SOE’s ongoing efforts to recruit and train saboteurs demonstrated the British belief that should Germany invade Greece, there was very little chance that the Wehrmacht could be stopped. The decision to send the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to Greece was made over the objections of the Chiefs of Staff and the Commander in Chief for the Middle East. However, Prime Minister Winston

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26 Gerolymatos, Red Acropolis, pp. 33- 34.
30 Koliopoulos, p. 214.
Churchill decided to send troops to Greece with the hopes of stopping a German advance, but it became mainly as a demonstrative act for Yugoslavia and Turkey and a supportive one to a loyal ally in King George II. When the Germans invaded Yugoslavia on April 6 1941, they quickly overran the Yugoslavian defensive position and it took them only days to reach Macedonia, not weeks as had been anticipated by General Papagos. The British and Greek forces were quickly overrun, falling back again and again until they were finally evacuated by the Royal Navy.

As the military situation was deteriorating, so to was the political situation in Greece. In the chaotic months following the death of Metaxas, the King lost an opportunity to establish a government that had the confidence of the Greek people, first by choosing to surround himself with monarchists and second by agreeing to have the government in exile to be moved to London. In so doing he completely isolated himself from the Greeks who were fleeing to the Middle East and who could have given him realistic appraisals of conditions in Greece. On the other hand, the British had an opportunity to force the Greek government to become more representative, but instead, viewing the King as a client, they made the decision to support him. On April 21st 1941, three days after the new Prime Minister Koryzis had committed suicide, General Papagos recommended that the remaining British Forces, the Greek Government and the Greek King be evacuated to Crete. However, the Germans attacked Crete sooner and with greater force than was anticipated, forcing another evacuation, this time to Cairo. As the Germans

assumed control of Greece and established a quisling government under General George Tsolakoglou, the Greek government in exile was coping with numerous divisions over the war and post-war territorial guarantees. However, most of the Greek political leaders in exile were concerned with the constitutional issues of the time.

As the gap between Republicans and Royalists continued to widen in February 1942, King George reinstated the constitution and signed a decree ending the Metaxas regime, but this decree did not mend the divisions within the government. The king was not popular, and being so far removed from the country which he was supposed to govern allowed his opponents to challenge his right to do so. 33 Furthermore, since the occupation began, groups within Greece had been forming that opposed his return. The KKE had created the National Liberation Front, EAM, in September 1941 and had charged it with liberating Greece, guaranteeing the country complete independence and forming a provisional government after liberation using “any means at its disposal.” The KKE was careful to hide its communist role and creatively formed EAM as a coalition of many of the Greek parties opposed to the occupation. 34 In 1942 Komninos Pyromaglou and Colonel Napoleon Zervas established the National Republican Hellenic League, EDES. Its objectives were to take up arms against the occupational forces, to restore order after their withdrawal and to establish a Republic. In practice Zervas and Pyromaglou focused mainly on forming

33 Gerolymatos, Red Acropolis, pp. 39-41.
resistance groups and fighting the Germans rather than developing or pursuing the active re-organisation of Greek society. As for the KKE, its leaders believed in a workers' uprising in the cities to forward its political and social agendas. However, some members of the KKE believed in the necessity of guerrilla warfare. As a result EAM formed the People's Liberation Army of Greece, ELAS, in January of 1942, and by March of 1942 ELAS had begun to organize guerrilla bands. At the height of their power, EDES had about 5000 members. It relied on volunteers to make up its numbers, but they never amounted to much more than a quarter of the 20,000 guerrillas that ELAS commanded when the British returned to Greece in October 1944. As the occupation continued, EDES had difficulty getting new recruits because men who were not yet involved in the resistance were often reluctant to leave their homes undefended, particularly in the north where the Bulgarians were in control. It was with these two groups that the SOE would concentrate their efforts. However, the fact that neither of them at this time were inclined to accept the return of a Greek government that was officially recognised and supported by the British government would cause many problems for the British in the near future. The SOE informed the Foreign Office that while some of the resistance groups would do what the British asked, the Republicans, Venizelists and Communists would not do what the government in exile asked them to do. The proposed solution to this problem was to have the government in exile radically alter its policy by promising to hold a plebiscite before the King would return to

36 Papastratis, p. 123.
Greece. This was not a popular option to the Foreign Office under the leadership of Sir Anthony Eden, and the Foreign Office constantly pressured the SOE to force the issue with the various emerging factions. The Foreign Office was unwilling to accept the fact that in Greece, those who were most willing to revolt, were also those least willing to accept the return of the king. As the war continued, most of the resistance leaders who took part in resistance activities did so, not to fight the occupying forces, but to secure their places in the post-occupation political environment in Greece. It was a problem that would continue to affect the course of resistance activities in Greece throughout the occupation.\(^{39}\) However it was not long before the Greek government in exile and the various Greek resistance groups were confronted with an impending disaster in Greece.

Though the British were the only significant naval power in the Mediterranean at this time, the Allies did not plan to launch a land based attack on the occupiers in Greece. They decided instead to implement a policy of encirclement and they blockaded Greece. This blockade, coupled with the Axis confiscation of foodstuffs for their war effort rapidly created shortages of food. By mid-1942, there were already signs of a possible famine. After many pleas by the Greek Government in Exile, the British Government decided to allow small shipments of food to come to Greece from Turkey.\(^{40}\) These shipments, while welcomed, were of insufficient quantities to fend off a famine during the winter of 1942-43. In spite of the dire predictions for the people of Greece, the Foreign

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39 Sweet-Escott, pp.10-11.
Office would not increase the shipments of food to the country, even though it did allow food to be shipped to Vichy France.\textsuperscript{41} Though it cannot be said whether the existence of the shipments to France was known to the Greek people or to the Greek resistance, or whether or not they had a detrimental impact on public opinion of the British in Greece, they do serve as an indicator of the Foreign Office’s priorities. The Foreign Office acted as though the post-war opinions of the people of France and of General DeGaulle were more important considerations than the lives of the people of Greece, which while unfortunate, was not surprising given the size and significance of France. Additionally, while the Greek people suffered, those claiming to be acting on their behalf, the Greek Resistance, the Greek government and the British, did not share the hardships of living through a famine. The British were using the blockade to defeat Germany, and the Foreign Office believed that shortages of food would make it more difficult for the Germans to administer their occupied territories.\textsuperscript{42} Ironically, what turned out to be the most influential factor in encouraging resistance was the brutality of the occupational forces and the devastation they wrought upon Greek society.\textsuperscript{43} The Italians and Bulgarians were put in control of key areas, and quickly Greece was stripped of all material and food surpluses, leading to a deep hatred of the occupying forces. Whatever the justification for the blockade, the end result was that thousands of Greeks starved to death. Though the King and Tsouderos begged

\textsuperscript{41} Papastratis, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{42} John Louis Hondros, Occupation and Resistance: The Greek Agony, 1941-1944 (New York: Pella, 1983) p.75-77
\textsuperscript{43} Gerolymatos, Red Acropolis, p. 46.
the British to lift the blockade, the British refused. This refusal illustrated the lack of importance the British placed on the objectives of the Greek government in exile. As Mark Mazower put it, referring to the quisling authorities in Greece, “the tens of thousands of victims who died of hunger in the first winter of occupation testified to the political and administrative impotence of the Greek state machine in Athens. In effect, Greece barely existed as a political entity.” The same could be said of the Greek government in exile, and in spite of its apparent insignificance the British continued to support it. The reason for continued British support of the Greek government was that the Greek monarchy was an ally and represented legitimacy. Though C.M. Woodhouse believed this support was based on King George’s staunch loyalty to Britain during the first phase of the Second World War, Andre Gerolymatos argued that had the British not supported the internationally recognised government of King George II, they would have indirectly given credibility to the quisling government in Athens. Therefore, in the absence of any viable alternatives, they had no choice but to support the king. In spite of this support, the British government refused to consider the territorial issues raised by Tsouderos until the end of the war. Instead they focused on training resistance groups that could keep the occupational forces occupied, thereby tying up troops and equipment that otherwise might have been used elsewhere in areas such as North Africa and later, Sicily. However, this strategy

44 Gerolymatos, Red Acropolis, p. 41.
47 Gerolymatos, Red Acropolis, p. 44-46.
48 Sweet-Escott, p. 12.
was not favoured by the Greek government in exile who felt that the support of such groups would undermine their attempt to govern the country upon their return. On the surface British policy was supporting King George II and the war effort, but through the actions of the SOE, British policy was supporting groups who desired the collapse of the Greek government. The SOE’s agents made contact with Venezelists, communists, and other Metaxas opponents as part of Churchill’s famous quotation “to set Europe ablaze.” The traditional British intelligence services such as MI6 had contacts with monarchists and other pre-occupation supporters of Metaxas. However, it seemed from the outset that British Policy leading up to and during the Second World War was destined to keep Greece as divided as it had been in the 1920s. This may have been a deliberate plan to keep Greece weak, and therefore continuously in the British sphere of influence. The SOE used republicans and communists because they were the most willing and able to operate underground. On the other hand, most of those loyal to the king and the Greek government were satisfied with the current political situation and if they decided to resist the occupation at all, it was decided too late. They were therefore of little use to British intelligence.\(^9\) Though the occupying forces presented a common enemy, the forces that would rise up to oppose these occupiers had diverging political agendas. The British expected that these agendas would be put aside until the end of the war. However, it was too much to expect of a war-weary population that would suffer terribly during the Occupation and Civil War. As 1942 drew to a close, Greece was in the grip of a brutal famine, and the Greek government in exile and the British debated their next course of action. The

violence and uncertainty of the 1930s was to continue throughout the 1940s, and as had happened countless times over the previous hundred years, considerations beyond the control of the Greek government in exile and the resistance groups in Greece, would determine the course that British policy would soon take.

**Review of Literature**

In order to ascertain whether or not British Policy in Greece between October 1944 and March 1947 lead to the declaration of the Truman doctrine, it is necessary to be familiar with what had already been written about this period. While most of the following works supported the premise that the British desired to retain Greece in its sphere of influence, the extent to which the British were prepared to keep it, at least in the sphere of the West, is in dispute. Most of the works about this time in Greece, if they addressed the above question at all, tended to land on the side fortune, rather than design, being the cause of the American’s assumption of support for British interests in Greece by March 1947.

The following works were crucial to establish either the background for the Thesis, to provide an overview of events in Greece up to 1947, or to address the critical argument of this project. These sources were, Heinz Richter’s work *British Intervention in Greece, from Varkiza to Civil War: February 1945 to August 1946*, *British Policy Towards Greece During the Second World War, 1941-1944* by Procopis Papastratis, C.M Woodhouse’s books *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949*, and *Apple of Discord: A Survey of Recent Greek politics in their International Setting*, Robert Frasier’s book *Anglo-American relations with Greece: The Coming of the Cold War, 1942-1947*; John O. Iatrides’ article

Works to Establish Background

Nicholas Hammond’s book Venture Into Greece is an autobiographical account of the author’s experiences while he was deployed in Greece as a British liaison officer from October 1942 until his return to England in September 1944. Though this book deals with events prior to the main period in question, it is extremely valuable because of the insight it offered into British policy during the German occupation of Greece and the problems that these policies would create for the British upon their return, namely the outbreak of hostilities in Athens in December 1944. Hammond’s work highlighted the operational difficulties that SOE agents had to deal with when attempting to implement the policy directives of the foreign office, especially when those directives were incompatible with the objectives of the various resistance groups with whom the SOE was supposed to operate.

British Policy Towards Greece During the Second World War, 1941-1944 by Procopis Papastratis was an examination of events in Greece between the British withdrawal in 1941 and their return in 1944. Dr. Papastratis’ central issue in
this study was the client status of Greece and the day-to-day involvement of the foreign office in Greek affairs. Like Hammond’s work Venture Into Greece, Dr. Papastratis’ work dealt primarily with events in Greece prior to the British return in October 1944 and it provides valuable background information for the critical period between October 1944 and March 1947.

Nigel Clive’s work A Greek Experience: 1943-1948, is an account written by another British liaison officer whose task in December 1943 was to report on German troop movements in Epirus, the region of Greece controlled by Napoleon Zervas and the EDES resistance group. In December 1944 Clive found himself in Athens as a member of the staff of the British embassy witnessing the December uprising, and his book contained his reflections upon these events. Unlike many of the other sources whose contributions to this thesis were based mainly on their explanation for the political developments that occurred in Greece, Nigel Clive's work also contained insight into the appeal that the Greek lifestyle held for many British diplomats (p 180). The book painted a vivid picture of Greek life during the various phases of the civil war, involving all aspects from the political to the social and the aesthetic realities of life in Greece at this time. Though not a focal point for this thesis, one of the elements that the works of Hammond, Clive, and Woodhouse shared were the commentaries about the relationships that each developed with individuals in the resistance. It was extremely valuable to learn about the individuals whose reports and actions played significant roles in the formation and implementation of British Policy in Greece between October 1944 and March 1947, in order to assess how deeply involved the British were in Greek affairs. It
was crucial to establish the depth of British investment in Greece in order to support one of the crucial premises of this Thesis; the likelihood that the British would have sought a policy that allowed their policy objectives to be preserved, even if it were by another power.

Works of Overview

Heinz Richter examined British foreign policy in Greece from the perspective of the left. In British Intervention in Greece, From Varkiza to Civil War: February 1945 to August 1946, Richter uses evidence from the British Documents on Foreign Affairs (BDFA), in addition to numerous sources from the Greek government, the KKE, other left-wing groups, various newspapers, and many secondary sources. Richter attempts to prove that British Intervention was aimed at re-establishing the British Empire, protecting its communications and Mediterranean access to the Middle East, in addition to building a barrier against the Soviet Union (p. vii). Though his analysis is extremely detailed, Richter’s belief that as a superpower, Britain could enforce her will on Greece and crush Greek democracy was not supported by the findings of this Thesis. The British had numerous difficulties before and after the occupation, getting Greek resistance and political leaders alike to follow British directives. Furthermore, this Thesis demonstrated how British policy was driven primarily by self-interest and the fear of rapid Soviet expansion. The British Empire became a liability that they could no longer afford (their crown jewel, India, was promised independence by 1946) and a new policy was sought that used American power to support British interests.
Woodhouse’s first work, *Apple of Discord*, was published in 1948 before the Civil War ended and is therefore more of a political commentary of British Policy in Greece than a historical account of it. As such, his method of research is to rely only upon his recollections for his narrative. Unlike Richter and Papastratis, Woodhouse does not explain British Policy decisions as an attempt to re-build the empire. He states that the purpose of this book was twofold. First he attempts to explain the divisions in Greek society that grew out of the German occupation, and second he tries to justify British policy in Greece to show that neither it nor any other policy could have completely succeeded there (p.vii-viii). Woodhouse explains in detail the various actions taken by successive Greek governments as they took office and the effect (or lack thereof) that they had on the conditions in Greece. He also recounts the various agreements and conferences that took place throughout this period, and these accounts were particularly insightful since the author played no small part in many of them, particularly in the implementation phase. In this work, Woodhouse also places the blame for the violence in Greece on the Greek Communists, and their political and military arms EAM/ELAS, stating that they “deceived” the British about the firepower that they possessed (p.211). Furthermore, Woodhouse argues that should the British have decided not to intervene in Greek affairs at any point they would have indirectly supported one side or another: i.e. British involvement helped the Right, and their withdrawal would have helped the Left (p. 251).

Woodhouse’s later work, *The Struggle for Greece* explains British Policy in Greece during this period using more extensive research than *The Apple of
Discord. It is an authoritative work in the field of modern Greek history, and one that no student in this field can do without. Woodhouse criticised the Foreign Office for their pursuit of goals that were incompatible with the realities in Greece at the time, leading to one of the recurring themes of this study; the difficulty the British faced of reconciling short-term military objectives with long-term political considerations. As far as the British were concerned, each policy decision went through several departments, from the cabinet to the Foreign Office, to the Chiefs of Staff and various ministries, delaying the implementation of these policies. As a result of the delay, once a decision had been reached it was often after the crisis for which it had been formulated had passed. Furthermore, by this time it had been so modified by the various departments that it was no longer recognisable as the original policy. On the other side was the KKE, and Woodhouse attributes its failure to the frequent changes in KKE policy which resulted in frequent changes of KKE leadership. These changes caused a widening gap between the party and the suffering masses of the Greek people, and reduced confidence in the party as a whole. However, Woodhouse’s main theory as to the failure of the KKE was its inability (or refusal) to realise that the Soviet Union was not going to come to its aid (p. 287-289). With thirty years between the publication of Apple of Discord and the Struggle for Greece, numerous new sources came to light and could be the reason for the change of methodology and method between the two books. His later work used many sources, both secondary and primary, which were unavailable to him in the late 1940s.
By using Greek communist sources to supplement recently opened British and American documents in addition to numerous memoirs, Peter J Stavrakis’s book *Moscow and Greek Communism* constructs a detailed account of what the Soviet Union hoped to achieve in Greece during the various phases of the Greek Civil War. Stavrakis shows that despite the KKE’s fanatical loyalty to the USSR, Stalin’s own policy was not one of expansion into Greece, but rather one of caution. Stavrakis’ work supported this Thesis demonstrating how desperate the KKE was to elicit Soviet support and how determined the USSR was to prevent an American/British intervention in Greek that could jeopardise the Soviet interests in Eastern Europe. Additionally, this work was invaluable while attempting to assess the impact of the percentages agreement on events in Greece and the course of the civil war. It also provides valuable insight into Soviet/KKE relations, and helped highlight the KKE’s blind devotion to a state that continually ignored it. Furthermore this work was particularly useful because it illustrates that though American and British fears of Soviet plans for Greece may have been exaggerated, a communist Greece would undoubtedly have fallen under Soviet influence.

A more nuanced perspective on British intervention in Greece is offered by John O. Iatrides. In his article “Revolution or Self-Defense? Communist Goals, Strategy and Tactics in the Greek Civil War,” Iatrides explains that during the various phases of the conflicts in Greece the KKE alternated between political and military action to secure their objectives, often in opposition to the instructions they were receiving from abroad. Iatrides states that the KKE naturally held revolutionary ambitions, but in the aftermath of the December 1944 uprising it was
weakened and sought a compromise. However, due to the rising levels of violence against the Left in Greece and the failure of other political groups to work with the KKE, the Greek communists turned to armed force, and Iatrides argued that “the civil war was the result of a Communist revolution that benefited greatly from the violent tactics of the anti-Communist forces that controlled the post-liberation governments” (p.8). However, the author concludes that instead of compromising like the French and Italian communists did in their respective governments, the KKE would likely have followed the Czechoslovak example of overthrowing an elected coalition government (p. 9). Iatrides therefore lays the blame for the conflict at the feet of all the parties that were involved. He believes that the conflict was not inevitable, but because of bad decisions, personal motives and inaction on the part of the great powers (to differing degrees to be sure), the situation in Greece continued to deteriorate until the fighting finally ended in 1949. Though he uses a traditional methodology (primary and secondary sources) Iatrides’ method was nuanced and he used numerous Greek sources, particularly those of members of the KKE or of “communist intellectuals” (p.6-7) to explain how the Greek communists reacted to international developments, particularly to the lack of aid from their communist neighbours, and how these developments impacted the actions of the KKE. Furthermore, Iatrides shows how the USSR’s instructions to the KKE to participate in elections and to search for compromise until 1947 were repeatedly disregarded, and how the “concrete indications” of soviet approval for assistance to the KKE after 1947 were never followed through in sufficient quantities to be successful (p.32-33). This article provides valuable background,
explaining the objectives of the Greek communists rather than those of the British. Iatrides included a wealth of evidence external to Greece, such as evidence from the Soviet Secret Service and the Yugoslavian Communist Party. Unlike Richter who downplayed the long-term strategic planning abilities of the KKE, Iatrides describes how its plans remained constant, but its tactics changed as its leaders responded to shifting conditions on the domestic and international fronts, much like the British did. Dr. Iatrides’ method, coupled with a nuanced approach to the analysis of events in Greece during and immediately after the German occupation was a valuable model to follow for this Thesis and, like the work of Stavrakis, helped solidify the background necessary to support this Thesis’ main premise. While still relying on primary sources, the next work analysed events in Greece from the perspective of US ambassador Lincoln MacVeagh.

Ambassador MacVeagh Reports: Greece, 1933-1947 was indispensable in the examination of American observations of Greece between 1944 and 1946, and was critical in the effort to establish the background for American involvement in Greece after March 1947. The hundreds of dispatches and letters of Ambassador MacVeagh that make up this book were edited by John O. Iatrides. MacVeagh’s position made him an ideal observer who, much like his government, followed the constantly changing conditions in Greece between the Varkiza agreement (February 1945) and the British withdrawal (September 1947), but did little to influence the events on which he was reporting. One of the most significant aspects about this work are the frequent references to the suffering of the Greek people, a fact that is often overlooked in the discussion of politics, and of the people
involved in them. The Ambassador wrote scathingly about the fickle nature of Greek politicians who, as far as he could see were more concerned with securing their positions in the cabinet than actually governing their country. Another value of this work lay in what it did not contain, i.e., directives from the US state department. The near complete absence of instructions from Washington in regards to US policy in Greece could be interpreted as their desire for information but not for action (ex. p. 409). They, like the Soviets wanted to keep informed of developments in Greece, but were content to allow events to unfold on their own and this work is valuable because it shows how the Americans were content to allow the British a free hand in Greece. It indirectly supports the premise of this thesis because up to 1946, the United States for all intents and purposes, was largely inactive in Greece. However, in March of 1947 something changed and they decided to become more involved. Dr. Iatrides method uses the previously unpublished primary sources of Ambassador MacVeagh (his diary and several hundred dispatches) to describe events in Greece during these turbulent years, and the result was a successful, if sobering account of bureaucratic inaction leading to disaster.

**Critical Works**

Each of the following works were used to firmly establish the depth of British involvement in Greece, particularly between July 1945 and July 1946, in order to demonstrate the likelihood that they would not have surrendered Greece without a plan to protect what they had invested there and their strategic interests in the Mediterranean. G.M. Alexander’s *The Prelude to the Truman Doctrine:*
British Policy in Greece 1944-1947, was undoubtedly one of the most valuable sources for this thesis. Alexander argues that immediately after the Second World War the British viewed a democratic Greece as indispensable to their security interests. However, they soon discovered that the ineptitude of the Greek political leaders, economic disaster in Greece, and rampant political radicalization made their intervention necessary, but extremely difficult. Furthermore Greek affairs were inextricably linked to the relations between the Big Three, and as their relations deteriorated, so too did conditions in Greece. Though Alexander illustrates how the worsening conditions in Greece and in Britain eventually forced the British to abandon the country to the United States, he views the American takeover as a product of circumstance, not of design (p. 250). Interestingly, the research Alexander uses in the building of his arguments parallels this thesis to a certain extent. Alexander clearly illustrates the high level of British engagement in Greek affairs, particularly when Ernest Bevin took office, and how quickly the situation deteriorated forcing the British to declare their withdrawal to the United States. However, Alexander argues that these developments do not constitute a conscious design on the part of the British to manipulate the United States into declaring the Truman doctrine and is contradicted by the work of Robert Frasier.

Robert Frasier’s book Anglo-American relations with Greece: The Coming of the Cold War, 1942-1947, is divided into two parts, the first dealt with British involvement in Greece during the Second World War, and the second with their decision to pull out of Greece in February 1947. For the first section he attempts to prove that had circumstances been slightly different, the British could have
succeeded in creating a stable democratic government in Greece. For the second section he theorises that the Americans took over in Greece to rescue the British from the deteriorating situation in which they found themselves. My first criticism of Frasier’s work is in regards to the British decision to pull out of Greece in February 1947. It appears as though the decision was made months earlier, as indicated by the first troop reductions beginning in September of 1946. Another criticism of Frasier’s work is his use of sources to put forward the theory that that a secure democratic government could have been established in the wake of the German occupation. There were simply too many factions with too many weapons and too much instability in Greece for any government to function in an open and stable manner. Though Frasier accurately covers the American’s lack of interest in Greece prior to 1947, his suggestion that Minister Bevin manipulated the United States into taking over in Greece to provoke a Russo-US conflict seems far-fetched at best. However, his assertion that the US takeover in Greece was a deliberate British plan does seems likely considering the diplomatic exchanges between Britain and the USA in early 1947, and considering the significant role Britain continued to play in Greece after March 1947 (See Howard Jones, A New Kind of War).

Howard Jones’ work A New Kind of War, argues that American policy towards Greece was a focal point in the development of a global strategy designed to combat totalitarianism. Though the narrative begins in March of 1947, it supports the premise of this Thesis by discussing the negotiations between the United States and Britain over the American assumption of responsibility for
Greece, the most telling part of which was the agreement to keep British troops in Greece into 1948 and beyond. Had the British situation been as desperate as they presented in February 1947, then it is unlikely that significant numbers of British troops would have remained in Greece after March 31st 1947.

Accompanied by the works of Frasier, Alexander and Jones, Dr Gerolymatos’ work Red Acropolis Black Terror, is crucial in order to connect the various threads of international considerations, and the ways in which they affected events in Greece and vice versa. This book is particularly valuable for the insight it offered into British actions during the initial phases of the Greek Civil War up to the Treaty of Varkiza. Dr. Gerolymatos’ method was diverse and exhaustive, using many unpublished memoirs, diaries, newspapers, and many secondary sources, to support his objective to “give the conflict a face” (p. ix) making his description of events much more personal and many of the previously published works on the subject. The works of Woodhouse, Hammond, and Clive, with their accounts of their actions in the individuals with whom they interacted, are the only others that come close to the level of empathy that Dr. Gerolymatos achieves. Furthermore, this Thesis’ assessment of British objectives for Greece, and the degree to which they were prepared to keep or surrender it, would not have been possible without Dr. Gerolymatos’ work. This Thesis could not have adequately explained the breadth and depth of the British and Greek relationship until March 1947 without it.
Method and Arguments

Though there are differences in method between these authors in many cases it is more accurate to describe these differences in terms of their scope. Many of the sources used by Iatrides, Woodhouse, Gerolymatos and Frasier were unavailable to western scholars prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, and the candid primary source information that they garnered as a result of these international changes in the availability of previously classified or unpublished material, may be the reason for the expansion of methods in this field. In addition, each work in this review had contributed to this field of history and perhaps the most significant contribution that each has made was to keep this issue alive in academic debate. Woodhouse did so by using his experiences, and later new evidence, to explain the British policy decisions that affected the people of Greece at this time. Frasier did so by explaining British policy in Greece and which factors influenced their decisions. Richter and Papastratis rekindled debate about this period by offering new and controversial interpretations of British actions in Greece in the mid-1940s. Also, as a result of the expansion in the availability of primary sources that related to this period of Anglo-Greek history, the works of Iatrides, Gerolymatos, Jones and Frasier succeeded in presenting a much more complete analysis of events which in turn allowed them to present more nuanced theories about the role of the British in Greece during the 1940s. However, some of the above works contained gaps in research, inconsistencies in theory and some methodological flaws.

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50 Since Alexander’s work was written in 1982, it did not have access to many of the sources used by Gerolymatos, Frasier or Jones.
Heinz Richter had the tendency to contradict himself. While discussing the possible outcomes of the Greek state he described “these clear alternatives were to a certain extent overlaid and blurred” (p.xi), leading the reader to ask how something could be cleared and blurred at the same time. Later when discussing the ELAS’ retention and concealment of large amounts of weapons after agreeing to be disarmed Richter stated that it was “a fact which must not be overlooked” (p.111). However, when he discussed these events in more detail in a later chapter, he stated that “over the next few weeks, the EAM and KKE leaderships fulfilled the obligations they had assumed at Varkiza” (p.240). Finally, Richter was not successful in proving that British objectives in Greece were part of their bid to “crush the whole Greek Resistance in order to restore the semi-colonial dependence of the past” (p. vii). He did not adequately take into account developments both in England and on the international front that were much more influential on British Policy makers with regards to Greece than a romantic notion about the restoration of former imperial glory or the destruction of Greek democracy. Papastratis’ work was extremely detailed and well-written, and it presented an interpretation of British intervention in Greece similar to that of Richter, but it focussed instead on the years Greece spent under German occupation. Like Richter, Papastratis argued that Britain’s main objective in Greece was to restore their pre-war influence there and that every action they took was to forward that objective. Though the author’s central issue seemed to be accurate in reference to the Foreign Office, it was not proven when discussing the whole British Government. In fact, Churchill’s focus on the restoration of the
Greek monarchy seemed to have damaged British influence in Greece, and though securing British influence in Greece was definitely a priority for the British government, the defeat of the Axis took precedent over any notions to restore the Empire. One of the most glaring criticisms of Woodhouse’s *Apple of Discord* is the lack of any secondary sources. Nevertheless, this fact has not seemed to weaken the relevance that this work has for the purposes of this thesis; after all, Woodhouse was heavily involved in the implementation of many of the policies that the British Government formulated for Greece. The criticism over the lack of secondary sources could not be applied to *The Struggle for Greece*. Perhaps the only criticism that could be drawn about this work is that though Woodhouse claimed that there was no consistent policy on the part of the British to re-install King George, the evidence available today, and the fact that the Greek King did regain his throne, seemed to indicate otherwise. The only criticism of the remainder of the above mentioned works as they relate to this thesis is that the period between March 1945 and March 1947 were dealt with only briefly, if at all.

Currently there is little scholarship dedicated exclusively to British Policy in Greece between October 1944 and March 1947, and even less that attempts to ascertain the role that the British played in the declaration of the Truman Doctrine and the origins of the Cold War, providing a fascinating avenue for the focus of this Thesis. Most of the scholarship dedicated to the various phases of British involvement of the Greek Civil War has been conducted along partisan lines. In so doing, it has lessened its relevance to the modern world by trapping its research in the terminology of the Cold War, though the terminology itself can be instructive.
The areas pertinent to future study would be to continue to examine the policy decisions of the British and the Americans, and whether or not they were still influenced predominantly by international and domestic considerations from March 1947 until the end of the Greek Civil War in 1949, and whether or not the Americans felt manipulated by the British. By re-examining British policy in a more nuanced way, taking into consideration the depth of their pre-Cold War engagement in Greece, and the pressures that it placed on British decision makers, and the degree to which British strategic interests influenced the United States, new insights into the origins of the Cold War and the role the British played in the declaration of the Truman Doctrine may be gained.
Chapter 2:
From Occupation to Liberation:

British policy at this time had two main objectives in regards to Greece. The first was to build up the guerrilla forces to harass the occupiers and the second was to maintain, and to a certain degree restore the prestige of the King and the Greek government in exile. Though on the surface these policies seemed complementary, in practice they were almost completely incompatible. They were flawed from the outset since those upon whom the British relied to fulfill the first were also the least likely to accept or even support the second. Not only did this create problems in Greece, but it created many problems between the various British agencies responsible for operations in Greece, notably the Foreign Office and the SOE.

Though the SOE had been in Greece since 1941 training saboteurs, the first SOE mission to the Greek resistance in the mountains came in October 1942. Nicholas Hammond, CM Woodhouse and Brigadier ECW Meyers were parachuted into Greece to destroy the Georgopotamos railway bridge.\(^5\) Despite the cooperation of both ELAS and EDES guerrillas in this operation on the 25\(^{th}\) of November 1942, the leaders of the KKE Giorgos Siantos and Yiannis Ioannidis had by this time determined that the other resistance groups including their socialist allies, needed to be eliminated. The KKE wished to prevent their political

\(^5\) Hammond, p. 15-16.
opponents from having the support of any armed forces. 52 George Siantos and Yiannis Ioannidis had decided to seize power, but their means and timetable to do so were not firmly set. At first Siantos advocated a peaceful transition and the participation of the KKE in the government, if only to buy time to prepare for armed struggle.53

In November 1942, tensions between the British and the Greek Resistance grew when the British government, with the support of the Greek and Yugoslav governments in exile and the Special Operations Executive (SOE), declared its intention to restore the independence of Albania. This declaration led to the first of the mutinies of Greek forces in the Middle East and served to discredit the Greek government which was viewed as unable to control its own armed forces. Further complicating matters was King George himself and the opposition that most of the Greek resistance felt towards his return. Although gold sovereigns played a large part in Napoleon Zervas’ change to support of King George, the threat posed by EAM was also a factor, particularly among the members of EDES. Zervas was among the first to recognise the threat to the British posed by EAM’s growth in the absence of Axis forces in the Peloponnese.54

On March 8th 1943, Sir Anthony Eden re-iterated a policy of “full support for the Greek King and his government, even at the expense of some loss of active

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52 Iatrides, “Revolution or Self Defence?” p. 5.
53 Ibid., p 13. This planning ability of the KKE was disputed by Heinz Richter, in his 1986 work British Intervention in Greece, where he claimed that hiding weapons, and using the Varkiza Agreement as “a tactical retreat to win time to re-group...does the strategic planning capabilities of the KKE too much credit.” Richter, p. 240.
54 Mackenzie, p. 462. His warnings went largely unheeded until the Cairo Conference where the British finally realized how ELAS had grown. After the Conference British supply levels to ELAS were altered in favor of EDES. See Gerolymatos, Red Acropolis, pp. 80-82, and Papastratis, p. 155.
What Eden and the Foreign Office failed to grasp was that with some 10-12,000 armed men, ELAS was the only force large enough at the time to do anything against the occupying forces. Additionally, active effort was so low and ineffective already, that any reduction, however minor would mean that there was nearly no action against them at all.

Prime Minister Churchill made the SOE’s tasks more difficult when he ordered that unless operational necessity dictated otherwise, aid to the Greek resistance “would favour the groups willing to support the king and his government.” However, this statement was not binding, and beyond stating that His Majesty’s Government supported King George, the SOE was free to work with ELAS. The SOE continued to work with all groups that were opposed to the occupation, and attempted to keep them from turning on each other. Had Churchill’s recommendation been followed through, it is unlikely that any aid would have been given to any resistance groups throughout the German occupation, during which the British supplied the Greek Resistance groups with food, clothing, weapons and gold. Despite the conditions of the War in Europe at this time, the amount of aid ELAS and EDES received was impressive, especially considering the logistical problems that were involved suppling them.

Interestingly, though EDES was much smaller than ELAS, the British would deliver over three times more ammunition and weaponry to them than they did to ELAS. They were hesitant to arm ELAS, fearing that a strong communist presence

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55 Mackenzie, p. 461.
57 Papastratis., pp. 151-54.
in Greece would result in the severance of the country's ties with Britain.  

In spite of the coordinating and peace-keeping efforts of the SOE, by the spring of 1943, ELAS had begun to attack the smaller resistance groups in Greece, and soon turned its attention to EDES and its supporters in what would become know as the Greek Civil War's "First Round." They also intensified their attacks the police, believing that they were collaborators, even though, out of a force of 14,000, the Germans executed 782 of them as saboteurs.  

Major fighting erupted between ELAS and EDES when the Germans began pulling men and supplies out of Greece in 1943 in order to bolster the assaults on the Russian front. Since the Germans were no longer able to maintain complete control over the peninsula the resistance groups became more brazen. Later, as the Germans were withdrawing they left quantities of weapons to both sides in an attempt to foster more violence thereby slowing the Allied recovery of Greece and tying up men and supplies that might otherwise have been used against them.  

The resulting propagation of weaponry across Greece greatly increased the level of instability. Furthermore, despite the objections of their chief military adviser Theodoros Macridis in April of 1943 (and later in November) the leaders of the KKE approved plans for the capture of Athens after the German withdrawal. Macridis advised them that ELAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EDES</th>
<th>ELAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food and Clothing</td>
<td>14 tons</td>
<td>34 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms and Ammunition</td>
<td>74 tons</td>
<td>22 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Sovereigns</td>
<td>18,000 coins</td>
<td>927 coins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Papastratis, p. 155.

58 Oct 1943 to Jan 1944

59 David H. Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War* (London: Longman Press, 1995) p. 65-66. After 1945, when the Civil War was in its most violent stage, the *gendarmes* suffered casualties twice as high as the newly formed Greek national army because, unlike the soldiers, when *gendarmes* were captured, they were executed automatically. ELAS would then go a step farther and take reprisals against the families of the *gendarmes*.  

60 *ibid.*, p.66.
would not be able to oppose the British forces expected in Greece at its liberation. Further complicating matters was another mutiny of the Greek forces in the Middle East on July 8th 1943. Though fermented by EAM, the fact that this revolt was put down by British troops fuelled the KKE’s propaganda campaign, and widened the gap that the British needed to bridge in order to control and coordinate resistance against the Axis occupiers.

By the summer of 1943, the task of coordinating resistance activities in Greece against the Axis had largely been completed. The British believed at the time was right to increase their actions because the Africa Korps had nearly been defeated in North Africa, and plans for the invasion of Italy were under way. British agents in Greece began to spread the rumour that liberation was at hand, however, rather than encouraging ELAS, these rumours caused ELAS’ leadership to withdraw from participating in coordinated actions against the Axis. Their most experienced units were withdrawn, forcing the British liaison officers to bypass ELAS general headquarters and instead to coordinate their subversive activities with local ELAS commanders. This bypass of the ELAS chain of command increased the levels of mistrust between the ELAS leadership and the SOE operatives, but also demonstrated the relatively high level of cohesion in the ELAS hierarchy throughout Greece. On the other side, EDES had cooperated with the SOE and carried out a number of successful operations. However EDES also aroused British suspicion when some members of its Athens organization began to

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61 Iatrides, “Revolution or Self Defence?” p. 6.
react to the growth of EAM/ELAS by advocating violence against the Communists and by supporting the formation of the Security Battalions by the Germans and the Quisling Greek government. Therefore, while the Greek right was struggling to form a cohesive national policy, the strength of EAM was being demonstrated by the fact that it had a military wing, ELAS. This enabled the two organisations, often indistinguishable from one another, to operate simultaneously on the military and political fronts. Furthermore, the KKE was initially determined to hide its connections to EAM in order to avoid alienating potential recruits with anti-communist views and EAM by late 1943 out-paced EDES’ recruiting. The KKE avoided the use of communist slogans, instead focussing on patriotism, vaguely defined ideas about the empowerment of the people and economic development to create a sense of unity among its members and to attract new recruits. By mid 1943 the British had become aware of the KKE’s control of EAM/ELAS, but even after the KKE’s ties to the leaders of EAM/ELAS became known, the Foreign Office continued to press the SOE to supply ELAS with arms. This was done in order to provide ELAS with the means to create a diversion in Greece for the Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943. Therefore the Foreign Office placed itself in a very difficult position. It knew that supplying the Communists in Greece with weapons could cause problems in the future however, it was also aware that no

63 Mazower, “Introduction,” After the War Was Over, p.14
65 Iatrides, “Revolution or Self Defence?” pp. 13-16.
66 Stathis N Kalyvas, “Red Terror: Leftist Violence during the Occupation” in Mazower, After the War was Over, pp.144-145. The electoral results for the areas around Argos in 1936 showed the combined the score of the Monarchist parties was 71.3%, the Venizelists won 27.1%, and the Communists achieved only 0.75% of the vote. Nationally, the Monarchists achieved 47.59%, the Venizelists 44.17%, and the Communists 5.76%. Taking these figures into consideration, it is difficult to imagine that in less than 8 years, they would control this area of Greece.
substantial diversionary actions could be successful without ELAS. Though some diversions took place and succeeded in diverting two Axis divisions from Sicily, in effect they had little significant effect on the Axis’ fighting ability, and the SOE continued to face the problem of reconciling short-term military objectives with long-term political ramifications.

The SOE often pointed out how the policy of the Foreign Office conflicted with the job that it had to do. This in turn allowed the SOE’s enemies in Britain to assert that it had a policy of its own, and that it was not committed to following the policies of the British Government. However, it is important to note that at this time Ambassador Reginald Leeper, based in Cairo, was given complete control over the political aspects of the SOE’s work in Greece. Therefore, the SOE’s task was hindered even further as the often un-realistic objectives of the Foreign Office were forced onto the SOE. The Foreign Office seemed to be trapped in the old notion of Empire, expecting a post-war return to the pre-war status quo in Greece. The SOE had to deal with the reality that those who resisted did so for their own reasons and to further their own agendas, and between March and June of 1943, British Policy shifted from hostility to ELAS, to support, and then back to hostility to an even greater degree.

As tensions between EAM/ELAS and the rest of the resistance Groups continued to rise in 1943, the SOE was faced with the impossible task of

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69 Ibid., pp. 14-16.
70 MacKenzie, p. 463.
coordinating a unified Greek Resistance. Furthermore, the extent to which EAM had grown since the spring of 1943 was not fully appreciated by the British until the Cairo conference to which Brigadier ECW Myers brought many of their representatives.

The Cairo Conference

The purpose of the conference was to avert a civil war in Greece by establishing the parameters for reconstituting the Greek government, firstly as a broad coalition with the participation of the KKE, and secondly by guaranteeing that King George would not return to Greece unless he was invited by a national referendum. Brigadier ECW Myers brought representatives from the main resistance groups in Greece to Cairo to meet with the Tsouderos government to negotiate these issues. Up to the end of the Cairo conference of August 1943, the KKE seemed certain that their domination of EAM/ELAS could force the Greek Government in exile to work with them as partners. However, King George spoke openly of his reluctance to work with the KKE, and when Churchill ordered ambassador Leeper to support the King, Leeper overreacted and sent all of the resistance representatives back to Greece including those who were not part of EAM. Myers and the SOE bore the brunt of the blame for bringing the guerrillas to the conference even though the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the foreign office had supported the plan to use domestic forces to fight the Germans. Shortly after their exclusion from the conference the KKE used ELAS to begin the systematic extermination of opposing resistance groups, indicating their shift to military
action to secure their political objectives.\textsuperscript{74} The KKE’s leaders were sceptical that they could achieve their objectives through the political process alone because of British intervention, and they believed that they may have to rely on open violence instead.\textsuperscript{75}

Grigoris Farakos, a leading communist intellectual and historian of the KKE stated that its actions against the other socialist partners in the EAM coalition proved that no government of national unity would have been able to function.\textsuperscript{76} This hostility was demonstrated all over Greece to varying degrees, but it had particularly disastrous consequences in the Peloponnese. Prior to the German occupation, most of the people in this area were monarchists and the KKE was very weak. However, in a few years the main division in Greek society would shift from the Royalist vs. Republican to the bloody Right (White) vs. Left (Red) split. After the Italian surrender to the Allies in September 1943, there were no Italian troops occupying the Peloponnese, and the Germans lacked the resources and military forces to fully take over the occupational duties in the area. As a result EDES and ELAS clashes were far more frequent. EAM/ELAS continued the long-standing dynamic of violence in political relations which triggered reprisals from other members of the resistance. This in turn fuelled the conflict between the SOE and the foreign office.\textsuperscript{77} The Foreign Office viewed the Civil War as demonstrating

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{72} Iatrides, “Revolution or Self Defence?” pp. 8-9.
\item \textsuperscript{73} MacKenzie, pp. 465-466.
\item \textsuperscript{74} Iatrides, “Revolution or Self Defence?” p. 10. A year before the liberation of Greece the Soviets were aware of the KKE’s plans. A soviet intelligence report cited by John O. Iatrides in this article quoted Yannis Ioannidis, one of the KKE’s leaders, as saying “our ultimate goals remain the same, the destruction of classes and the establishment of socialism.”
\item \textsuperscript{75} Iatrides, “Revolution or Self Defence?” pp. 8-11.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p 6.
\item \textsuperscript{77} Gerolymatos, \textit{Red Acropolis} pp. 85-86.
\end{itemize}
that the occupational forces were unable to control the mountain areas of Greece. It convinced the British military of the necessity of continuing support of the Greek resistance to harass German forces as a diversion for allied operations in Europe. However, the Foreign Office’s continued support of the Greek monarchy hindered those objectives. The SOE was aware of ELAS’ strength and numbers, and proposed a plan to separate EAM from ELAS by creating a Regency Council headed by Archbishop Damaskinos and the Venizelist General Plastiras. However, King George refused to accept this proposal, and the failure to do so ensured that the constitutional questions in Greece remained a significant obstacle to reaching an accommodation with those who opposed the monarchy or to counter the influence of the KKE. Over the next few months fighting continued between ELAS and EDES, with the greatest number of casualties being among the civilians who were caught in the fighting. Finding a resolution to end the civil war became even more important as the allies planned Operation Overlord. The British believed it was vital to cooperate with Tito in Yugoslavia and the resistance in Greece in order to occupy as many German divisions as possible. Therefore the foreign office was not prepared to sacrifice its relationship with EAM/ELAS, instead seeking to contain and marginalize its influence. To this end, against the wishes of Prime Minister Churchill, the Foreign Office was prepared to accept EAM/ELAS representatives in the new coalition government. After fourteen meetings, and numerous proposals and compromises, and an armistice was signed on the 29th of February 1944. 78

The Plaka Agreement was intended to settle conditions in Greece, allowing

78 Ibid., pp. 86-88.
the resistance groups to cooperate in the harassment of German troops as they withdrew from Greece. However as had happened numerous times over the previous year, the group upon which the Foreign Office relied most heavily to honour this agreement, EAM/ELAS, was also the least inclined to accept it. In March EAM established the Political Committee of National Liberation (PEEA) which essentially became a rival for the Greek government in exile. The formation of PEEA and another mutiny of Greek armed forces in the Middle East severely damaged the prestige of the Greek government in exile, and strengthened the image of EAM. In light of these developments, the Foreign Office and King George decided to appoint George Papandreou as acting premier on April 26, 1944. He was chosen because of his contacts with the various resistance groups, but also because of his earlier warnings to the British of the growing influence of the KKE.79

In May 1944 the foreign office stated, "Our long-term political and military objectives are to retain Greece as a British sphere of influence and to prevent Russian domination of Greece which would gravely prejudice our strategic position in the Eastern Mediterranean."80 The British feared that a Communist-dominated Greece would sever its ties with Britain, become a part of the Soviet world, and cut off British access to Turkey and the oil fields of the Middle East.81

79 Gerolymatos, Red Acropolis pp. 89-90.
80 Cited in Papastratis, p. 198. and Henry Butterfield Ryan, The Vision of Anglo-America: The U.S.-U.K. Alliance and The Emerging Cold War, 1943-1946. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) pp. 122-23. Ryan also stated "One might note the remarkable extent to which attitudes that characterise what we call the Cold War, and particularly America and the Cold War, can be found in Britain's policy as its officials reacted to the Greek crisis."
The British Prime Minister held particularly poor views of the Greek Communists. His disdain for and suspicion of the KKE was equalled only by the KKE’s mistrust of the British and their post-war objectives. This intransigence and suspicion was highlighted on May 17th 1944 when representatives from almost every political party in Greece arrived in Lebanon for a conference that was intended to create a government of national unity (GNU) in Greece.

The Lebanon Conference

George Papandreou was confronted with an extremely confident and powerful KKE in Lebanon. Over the four days of the conference the Papandreou government, backed by the British, sparred with the KKE over the roles that each would play in the new GNU. In the end, though EAM managed to gain a few vaguely defined ministries, the conference was a victory for Papandreou. Furthermore, one of the main articles in Lebanon charter was the unification of all resistance groups into a single armed force under the control of the GNU. On July 2nd, 1944, the KKE released a list of “final terms” for its acceptance of the Lebanon charter. These terms encompassed such areas as EAM having the right to approve the commander in chief of the Greek armed forces and that EAM would receive six ministries out of a total of fifteen in the new government. However, Papandreou rejected these terms, and in so doing, forced the British to directly support his government and oppose the communists. As a result, by the middle of July 1944 it appeared that events in Greece were headed towards an immediate and violent conflict. Furthermore, earlier in the month the KKE was encouraged with the arrival of nine Soviet officers, led by Colonel Grigori Popov, who had been
dispatched to Greece to gather intelligence. However, rather than promising supplies and recommending that the KKE pursue armed insurrection, both the members of the Popov Mission and the Soviet ambassador in Cairo Nikolai Novikov, encouraged the Greek communists to participate in the Papandreou government. As a result of the Soviets’ instructions, not only was a conflict avoided, but the KKE accepted all points of the Lebanon agreement and joined the government of national unity.

Though a contrast may be drawn between British policy in Greece where the communists were opposed, and British policy in Yugoslavia where the communists were supported, the decision to aid the communists in Yugoslavia was due to the fact that the Right-wing groups in Yugoslavia had sided with the Germans. Furthermore, at the Naples Conference in August 1944, Marshall Josip Broz Tito assured Churchill that he would work with the Yugoslav government in exile and the Yugoslav King to form a new national government. Lastly, in Yugoslavia Tito did not place himself under Stalin’s authority and there were no Soviet instructions ordering Tito and the Partisans to cooperate with the British. In Greece, Stalin ordered the KKE to work with the British and the GNU because he wanted to avoid increased allied action in the Balkans. In Yugoslavia, the British could rely on no such overriding authority and therefore had to work with Tito. In Greece, the KKE was so devoted to the Soviets that its leaders followed Moscow’s

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83 Gerolymatos, Red Acropolis, p. 121.
orders, even to the detriment of their own agendas and begrudgingly accepted its orders.\textsuperscript{87} However, both the Soviets and the British were concerned over whether or not the United States would accept spheres of influence in the Balkans. These concerns were settled in secret in the fall of 1944.

**The Percentages Agreement**

Although Germany was on the defensive by October 1944, Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union were still dependent upon each other in the alliance against the Third Reich. Stalin felt that the KKE's actions threatened to disrupt the alliance and could force the British and Americans to take serious action in the Balkans. Unknown to many, including the British liaison officers in Greece and the KKE, Churchill and Stalin met in Moscow in October of 1944 and entered into secret negotiations over their respective spheres of influence.

Churchill proposed that the USSR would have 90 percent influence in Romania, the British would have ninety percent influence in Greece, and in Yugoslavia the influence would be shared on a 50/50 basis. Churchill wrote these figures on a piece of paper, added "Hungary 50/50, Bulgaria, Russia 75\%," and Stalin put a check mark on the paper with a blue pencil.\textsuperscript{88} Everything that the KKE had done in Greece since before the occupation began, was relegated to a piece of paper used by Winston Churchill to determine the future of the Balkans for the rest of the

\textsuperscript{87} Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism*, p. 4.

It has also been argued that the percentages agreement simply ratified an already existing agreement that had been in place since early 1944, which would explain British actions towards the KKE prior to the Moscow conference. The American government was less than enthusiastic about Churchill’s agreement with Stalin, fearing that it would lead to future confrontations over spheres of influence. Roosevelt would have preferred a consultative arrangement, where future actions could be discussed to dispel misunderstandings, and to limit the possibility of exclusive spheres. However, Churchill objected to that notion saying “if everybody is to consult everybody else about everything before it is taken... a consultative committee would be a mere obstruction, always overridden in any case of emergency by direct exchanges between you and me, or either of us and Stalin.”

As a result of British and Soviet support for the Percentages Agreement, the U.S. government reluctantly agreed to it, but refused to become involved directly in Greek affairs until the British forced their hand by pulling troops out of Greece in 1946. Heinz Richter argued that the percentages agreement was the embodiment of the British plan to re-establish the empire, and that the people of Eastern Europe were sacrificed for the security of British communications and access to Middle Eastern oil. Whatever the case, this agreement was kept secret, and the KKE

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90 Papastratis, p. 200.
91 Roosevelt and Churchill quoted in, Ryan, pp. 135-137. This quote demonstrates the difference of how the British and Americans viewed the world. Roosevelt wanted to move beyond the old "sphere of influence" notions. Churchill on the other hand seemed always eager to define who controlled which areas, consulting with the least amount of people possible.
93 Richter, pp. vii – ix.
continued to hope for Soviet aid. However, none was forthcoming, and Soviet orders, far from helping the KKE, actually weakened it.

Stalin used Greece to entice Churchill into the Spheres of influence agreement, guaranteeing him control of Romania, but he had to restrain the KKE to do so.94 As for the British, the Percentages Agreement caused them to be overconfident of their position in Greece and they made an immediate blunder after the Moscow conference by deciding to withdraw the SOE. The work that the SOE had done in Greece during the occupation was not enough to keep the British government from relieving it of its duties and in October of 1944, as Churchill and Stalin were meeting in Moscow, the SOE was pulled out. In the process, the British government deprived itself of three years worth of experience and detailed corporate knowledge of the political, social, and militaristic conditions in the country. Just as the labours of the SOE began to yield results, the British government turned all of its operations over to an inexperienced military mission, discarding the relationships and knowledge that SOE agents had built with resistance and community leaders alike. However, Stalin had given them a free hand in Greece, and where British intentions were demonstrated by direct action, Soviet intentions were demonstrated mainly by inaction.

By October 1944, the Red Army had liberated Hungary and Yugoslavia, and was well positioned to enter Greece should it have been ordered to do so. Instead, the Red Army turned west to continue the assault on Germany, a direct result of the percentages agreement.95 Additionally, according to Adam B. Ulam,

95 Iatrides, “Revolution or Self Defence?” p. 12.
Stalin had never been extremely supportive of foreign communist movements. Though he was the ‘de-facto’ head of world-wide communism as leader of the USSR, his attitude towards world revolution was “essentially lukewarm.”96 Twenty years after he came to power, Stalin’s sentiments had changed little. He needed the Western Allies to defeat Germany, and the KKE and its requests had to be restrained in order to preserve the Alliance and his hold on Eastern Europe. This is why the KKE was encouraged to participate in the Greek Government of National Unity and the elections, but not encouraged to pursue armed struggle.97

The war in Europe was raging still, and even though the Germans were on the defensive, they were not yet defeated. The Soviets also needed the British and American allies’ continued support against the Germans on the Western Front, and it is likely that any confrontation in Greece would have diverted needed men and material from that effort. For their part the British and especially the Americans did not want to appear as anti-communist at this time because they needed Soviet support as well, particularly in the Pacific. In fact, Roosevelt’s main priority prior to the successful development of the Atom Bomb was to secure Soviet aid in the war against Japan.98 Therefore, as a result of the Popov Mission and the instructions that it conveyed to the KKE, the KKE allowed the British liberation forces to land in Greece, even though the KKE had the manpower to stop them.

96 Adam B. Ulam, Stalin: The Man and his Era. (New York: Viking Press, 1973) pp. 264-66. His “Socialism in One Country” speech, though basically Marxist in sentiment, clashed with the traditional communist ideals of uniting with and relying on external communist movements to spread socialism. Stalin was determined to speed up economic development at home, but to many communists, especially Trotsky, “socialism in one country” was an abandonment of the struggle for political revolution abroad.


98 Glantz, Mary E. FDR and the Soviet Union: The President’s Battles Over Foreign Policy. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005) p. 250
The British landed in Piraeus in early October 1944, and the first British troops arrived in Athens on the 14th. They were followed by the Greek government on the 18th. Their immediate objective was to disarm all the guerrilla groups, especially ELAS, since it controlled 75 percent of the country outside of Athens, and to reform the Greek Government. From April of 1944 onward, the objective of British Foreign Policy in Greece was to create a non-communist parliamentary democracy, and the Percentages agreement gave them the freedom to accomplish that goal. However, once they returned to Greece, events did not go exactly as planned.

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100 Alexander, p. 245.
Chapter 3: October 1944 to July 1945

During this period, the main problem that the British faced while attempting to establish a parliamentary democracy in Greece was that only the political extremes had armed forces. Therefore, the moderates that the British hoped would be able to assume power had to be supported militarily. 101 The main question for this period then became how much support was warranted in order to achieve their objectives and as conditions worsened, whether support could continue to be offered to Greece at all.

In October 1944, EAM/ELAS was numbered, equipped and organized well enough to oppose the British landing had they been ordered to do so. On the other hand the British came ashore looking for a confrontation with the KKE in an attempt to separate the moderates from the extreme Left and Right in order to isolate them and to allow Greece to develop democratically. On November 7th 1944, Churchill wrote to Eden, "I fully expect a clash with EAM and we must not shrink from it, provided the ground is well chosen....we should not hesitate to use British troops to support the Royal Hellenic Government under M. Papandreou." EAM responded with an oath to achieve "the complete liberation of Greece from the foreign yoke" and called on ELAS to "plunge into the final battle." 102

101 Alexander, p.246.
102 Woodhouse, The Struggle for Greece, p. 113.
The British and the Greek government were determined to form a new national army in order to ensure autonomy and sovereignty. By mid-November 1944 British forces in Athens, combined with the nationalist Mountain Brigade numbered about 8000 men. Though they outnumbered the second rate ELAS troops whose forces were encamped outside the city, this brigade was composed of the soldiers that survived the mutinies in the Middle East and former members of the Sacred Company, and was hated by the forces of the Left.

At the end of November 1944, the new Greek Government of National Unity (GNU), headed by George Papandreou, designated December 10th 1944 as the day that all the members of resistance groups in Greece would disarm themselves and then become part of the new national army. 103 ELAS’ leaders refused to disarm because they believed that it would be difficult for the British to hold their positions in Athens and Piraeus, and because they were threatened by the increasing size of the anti-communist forces in Athens. 104 Mutual suspicion was at least as high at this time as it had been before the Second World War between the Monarchists and the Republicans. 105 General Scobie, who was more of a clerk than a combat officer, found himself embroiled in a political powder keg which was about to explode into violence and for which he was unprepared. In the Month leading up to the December Uprising, the KKE continued to press the GNU on the key issues of punishing collaborators, the purging the military and the police and

105 Kalyvas, pp. 150-151.
preventing the demobilization of EAM/ELAS.\textsuperscript{106} However, the British were not prepared to allow an armed force that was not under the control of the GNU to operate in Greece and the conditions were set for an armed confrontation between former allies in the streets of Athens.\textsuperscript{107}

**The December Uprising**

The Battle for Athens took place between December 3rd 1944 and January 17th 1945.\textsuperscript{108} On December 2nd 1944, EAM organized a general strike in Athens to protest the formation of the new National Army and police force. Police were posted in Constitution Square in the morning of December 3rd 1944, but they were unable to prevent the assembly of a crowd. As it gathered, its members chanting and carrying signs, the first shots were fired at about 10:45 A.M. Though both sides claimed that the other fired first, it is likely that the KKE was counting on hostilities erupting in order to mobilize popular support against the GNU and the British.\textsuperscript{109} ELAS began its offensive against the police in Athens the next day, but refrained from attacking the British or the Mountain Brigade at this point.

Churchill urged General Scobie to maintain order in Athens and to neutralize or destroy all EAM/ELAS bands approaching the city. He wrote “do not hesitate to act as if you were in a conquered city where a local rebellion is in progress.”\textsuperscript{110} As a result of the Percentages Agreement, the British knew that they could now engage EAM/ELAS without fear of Soviet reprisals. However, the

\textsuperscript{107} Kousoulas, p. 189.
\textsuperscript{108} Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 224.
\textsuperscript{109} ibid., p. 217.
British officers who took over for the SOE operatives in October 1944, consistently failed to accurately assess the resolve and tactics of the Greek resistance. Another factor that affected the course of the fighting in Athens was the composition and command of ELAS forces. Not only were they second rate reservists, but they were led by General Siantos, whose own military experience was limited. Siantos' strategy was not for full military action but rather for series of small engagements that could discredit and destabilize the Papandreou government, but not enough to force the British to mobilize their soldiers. Therefore, he delayed until December 7th before allowing the forces under his command to retaliate against British troops that took part in the fighting in Athens. With inexperienced and inept combatants on both sides, the conflict was destined for a stalemate.

On December 6th General Siantos ordered his soldiers to seize various government buildings in an attempt to symbolically and literally assume the role of the Papandreou government. Though this assault was turned back by the Greek police and by British sentries, it triggered a week of street fighting in Athens, and on December 14th, ELAS increased its attacks on British units. Peace talks on December 12th between Siantos and Scobie failed, and the fighting continued until December 15th 1944 when the new British commander General John Hawksworth arrived in Athens with nearly 50,000 soldiers which decisively shifted the balance.

of power in the city to the British.\textsuperscript{114} However, the advantage of this development could not be fully implemented because of events in Western Europe. The course of the war was altered by an unexpected German offensive and the British could not press their advantage in Greece. On December 16\textsuperscript{th} 1944, the Germans launched a winter campaign in the Ardennes, which overran thousands of Allied troops and captured or destroyed tonnes of military material. After the D-Day landings in June, the Allies had believed that the War would be over by Christmas, but the Battle of the Bulge extended the War for another six months. For Greece, the result was that overnight the fighting in Athens took a backseat to the fighting in France, and British material and attention was diverted from Greece back to Western Europe. Therefore, the fighting in Athens lasted much longer that it would have otherwise. What is most significant about this conflict is that it made the British believe that the KKE was determined to seize power in Greece, and it proved to the KKE that it could not hope to do so without substantial amounts of foreign aid.\textsuperscript{115}

On December 26\textsuperscript{th}, the KKE’s leaders attended preliminary peace talks. However, after two days of fruitless discussion the only agreement that was reached was to nominate Archbishop Damaskinos as Regent. On the 29th of December Churchill returned to England in an attempt to convince the Greek king to accept the creation of a Regency, which was only accomplished after Churchill threatened to recognize the new Greek government instead of King George. Meanwhile, back in Greece, the KKE implemented disastrous policy of taking

\textsuperscript{114}Gerolymatos, “The Battle for Athens,” p. 49.
hostages in order to punish those they claimed were collaborators. Thousands of people were abducted and marched out of the city, being forced to live in very difficult conditions in the middle of winter, and many died.  

On January 3rd General Hawksworth, launched an offensive against ELAS that cleared Athens in under two weeks, and on January 11th 1945, General Scobie met with delegates from ELAS discuss an armistice. Over the next few days, ELAS forces had withdrawn almost completely out of the surrounding areas. Although Hawksworth and Scobie desired to continue the offensive against ELAS until it was destroyed, the German offensive in the Ardennes and the political considerations of continuing to fight a wartime ally in EAM/ELAS, forced a cessation of hostilities. By January 17th, most of the fighting had subsided, and news of the atrocities ELAS had committed during the previous five weeks of fighting began to circulate in newspapers and other media. The support EAM/ELAS had previously enjoyed in western media was diminished, and the British began to rebuild the shattered Greek economy and infrastructure.  

The Varkiza Accord

January 1945 saw many changes for all the parties in Greece. On January 12th, 1945, the British Ambassador in Athens Mr. Reginald Leeper, complained

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118 Woodhouse, The Struggle for Greece, p 135, and Ryan, pp. 139-145. Throughout the initial stages of the British Clash with ELAS, the press in the USA and Britain were extremely critical of Churchill and the British army repressing what they believed was a popular movement, which had heroically resisted the German occupation. However, once reports about mass abductions and killings and the photographs of dead bodies had begun to circulate, that support diminished.
about the British Press saying that it was being irresponsible in what it was reporting. He went on to warn Eden, "there can be no understanding between the Greek government and the hard core of irreconcilable communism that is EAM." The British press continued to attack the course of action that the British Military was following in Greece to a point where Leeper commented "it would be very much better if the British Press, who are in no position to judge, would refrain from premature comment which, if unfavourable, can only play into the hands of the other side."\(^\text{119}\) Leeper ended his letter with a statement of support for General Plastiras’ request for military equipment which he could use to prevent the communists from regrouping in the Macedonian mountains.\(^\text{120}\) The mistrust of the communists was growing, and, coupled with the fact that in late December, the British Military had been in a position to completely wipe out ELAS but had stopped short, laid the foundations for future troubles. It was not until February 12\(^{th}\) 1945 that a peace accord was signed. The accord, which became known as the Varkiza Agreement, was signed one day after the Yalta conference ended.\(^\text{121}\) The Treaty was signed on February 12th 1945, however, despite the lofty objectives of the treaty, the only significant achievement of Varkiza was to end the fighting in Athens.\(^\text{122}\) British Policy in Greece was focussed on establishing a functioning Parliamentary Democracy that included members from the moderate


\(^{120}\)ibid., “Doc R 936 / 4 / G,” p. 21. Leeper wrote, “Never have we been more conscious than during the last few days of the harmful effects of the ignorance of British public opinion about the real situation here. The refusal of the British press to accept the facts as they are has enabled these utterly discredited Communists to masquerade as patriots and when their strength was broken, to escape full punishment of their misdeeds.”


\(^{122}\)Gerolymatos, Red Acropolis, p. 182.
political groups in the country and the British hoped that the Varkiza accord would accomplish that objective. One of the first conditions of the treaty required EAM/ELAS to surrender its weapons in order to be able to participate in the political process. Partial clemency for those who had participated in the December uprising, the formation of a new non-political Greek army, an Allied-supervised plebiscite and by elections within the next year were also included in the treaty.123

In a discussion at the British Embassy in Athens on February 15th 1945, Ambassador Leeper stated that he believed that Varkiza represented the vindication of British Foreign Policy in Greece despite the criticism that the British had been taking both at home and abroad. This sense of optimism and vindication was echoed in a speech that Churchill delivered the same day. He talked of Greece’s bright future and of the misunderstanding of the efforts of the British and the Greek Government in many parts of the world.124 Anthony Eden also delivered a short speech expressing his belief (or hope) that Greece had found internal peace, unity, and strength. The Ambassador, Prime Minister, and Foreign Secretary were anxious to close this chapter and focus on defeating Germany.

By early 1945 everything seemed to be in place for Greece to begin to overcome its social schism and to recover from the effects of the occupation. The optimism the British expressed was mirrored by EAM after Varkiza and it seemed that the KKE was finally prepared to participate in the new Greek government. On February 15th 1945, the Central Committee of ELAS ordered the demobilization of

123 Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, pp. 229-230, and Preston, Part III, Vol. 25, Doc R 3056 / 4 /19, pp. 72-75. It is significant that at Varkiza the British agreed to hold the plebiscite before the elections, but would later reverse that decision.

its remaining forces while reminding its "fellow fighters" to remain vigilant to ensure that the government honoured the articles of Varkiza.\textsuperscript{125} However, British objectives for Greece were challenged again as the optimism expressed by these declarations lasted until March 3\textsuperscript{rd} 1945 when the Central Committee of EAM directed a letter to the Greek government complaining that the Articles of Varkiza were not being honoured. Prior to the signing of the treaty, the main threat to the British objective of establishing a parliamentary democracy in Greece came from the Left. However, once it was signed, the main threat came from the forces of the Right.

Where confronting the Left had been a straightforward objective for the British government, confronting the Right was far more complicated. The members of the KKE were relatively easy to identify but the members of the extreme right were not. They dominated the armed forces, the civil services and the government, and the British could not remove them without dismantling the state machinery they had spent the previous four months building.\textsuperscript{126} Therefore, as the Soviets continued to show no interest in the affairs in Greece, and the Communists were reeling from the defeat of ELAS in Athens, the British attempted to work with the Plastiras government but the forces of the extreme right began to undermine the Varkiza Accord.

\textsuperscript{126} Alexander, p. 247.
The White Terror

By March of 1945, there were signs that conditions in Greece were worsening and the Varkiza accord was not being honoured. The KKE stated that its press was being harassed, that many of its members were still being held in prison and it protested the appearance of armed groups in the countryside.\(^{127}\) D. Partsalides, Secretary of the KKE, listed many examples of Varkiza violations.\(^{128}\) Partsalides stated that EAM offices were being ransacked, and that “unprecedented terrorism” was being perpetrated in areas all over Greece such as Patras, Kaparelim and numerous other villages. Partsalides recounted how a military unit at Krieouki was “humiliating, reviling, insulting, plundering and, maltreating” the returning ELAS people and refugees, and that in Halkis the National Guard seized the EAM offices.\(^{129}\) The examples that Partsalides mentioned were extensive and indicated that the Greek Left believed that the Greek government and the British were allowing the provisions of the Varkiza Agreement to be violated. The British were still the real power in Greece supplying the government with military materiel and money and had they desired to prevent elements of the Right from exacting revenge on the Left for their actions during the occupation, they could have at least


\(^{128}\) *ibid.*, p. 124.

\(^{129}\) *ibid.*, pp 125-126. He stated that the chief of the New Philadelphia Gendarmerie was prohibiting the sale of EAM newspapers, that the director of the Soteria Hospital was prohibiting the reading of Left-wing press in that institution and that “Policeman E. Loucopoulos of the 15th Police Precinct” was threatening to execute new vendors “on the spot” if he caught them selling Left-wing newspapers.\(^{129}\) Partsalides listed many examples of the left-wing press being repressed or attacked in other parts of Greece such as Piraeus and Patras, and then continued his letter discussing the continuing arrests of left-wing sympathisers, and of the “situation in the countryside.” He described the reprisals that were being taken against current and former members of EAM/ELAS: “The responsible agents of EAM, the men who led and who were guiding spirits of the liberation movement, are persecuted with special rage. Hundreds of democratic citizens have been arrested, among them Lalakis Roufos, the lawful Mayor and the eminent doctor (and) Thrasyvoulos Constantinou who is the secretary of EAM.”
hindered them. The final document in the EAM White Book was a pamphlet written on behalf of the Central Committee of EAM by Partsalides, who appealed to the Allies powers to intervene on the KKE’s behalf. Dated March 12th, 1945, the letter re-stated the violations of the Varkiza Agreement and concluded with a threat that the current conditions in Greece could create dangers of “new internal and external complications.”¹³⁰ In spite of this letter, the destruction of the Left wing press continued all over Greece and EAM offices were ransacked, but the worst of the violence was in the countryside. The destruction visited on the Left was mitigated only by the close proximity of British troops and when there were none in the vicinity the right wing forces operated without restraint.¹³¹ Even if the KKE was simply naïve expecting to see the full implementation of Varkiza only a month after it had been ratified, the optimism that had been present in Mid-February was now gone. The significance of Partsalides’ letters was that they indicated the Left’s perception of Varkiza’s total failure. This foreshadowed more policy changes for the British in Greece as they reacted to the rising tensions in the country and the corresponding rising cost of attempting to meet their objectives.

The failure of Varkiza to immediately settle conditions in Greece was a setback for the British Government, and over the next few months British Foreign Policy in Greece changed as a result of developments on the international front and by events in Greece. The British attempted to build a stable government that was capable of operating with greater independence but the newly formed Greek government was fracturing by not meeting the conditions that had been set out at

¹³⁰ ibid., “Document No. 121”, pp 130-134.
¹³¹ Richter, p. 147.
Varkiza. Many in the Greek government wanted to hold the plebiscite on the return of the monarchy prior to the general election. However, Ambassador Leeper recommended that the plebiscite should be delayed in light of the current instability and the intense debates going on in the Greek government about the constitution. He informed the Foreign Office that a prematurely-held plebiscite could be detrimental to the parties that supported the return of the monarchy and that it would be wise to delay it until the people were in a more “normal” state of mind, capable of viewing the future of their country with less “jaundiced eyes.”

This was the second significant shift in British policy after the Varkiza Accord was signed, (the first being the issue of forming a coalition that included the KKE), and was the result of the domestic volatility in Greece. Furthermore, the ability of the British to deal effectively with the growing tension in Greece was undermined once again by developments on the international front. The USSR, having been invaded twice in the previous thirty years through Poland and needing it as a buffer state, invaded and occupied it on March 15th 1945.

In Greece, the difficulties for the new government were also a result of the movement of the Right in the coalition. By April 7th, the Plastiras government had fallen due to “neatly timed Right-wing intrigue,” and a left-center government replaced it led by Admiral Voulgaris. The new Greek Prime Minister filled his cabinet posts with individuals consisting almost exclusively of professors and

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132 Preston, Part III, Vol. 25, “Doc R 5105 / 4 / 19,” p. 89. As a result of the atrocities that ELAS had committed towards the people of Athens at the end of December 1944, many Athenians viewed the return of the monarchy as their only defence from the communists. See Alexander, pp 92-96 and Gerolymatos, Red Acropolis, pp. 178-183.


This cabinet drew criticism from the parties on the Left, and on April 17th 1945, Leeper informed Eden that the extreme Left press had been more anti-British than usual that week. It had accused the British embassy of setting up the Voulgaris government in order to create a Royalist dictatorship through the Regent. Leeper then informed Eden that since the Varkiza agreement had been signed British and National Guard troops had recovered over 2000 weapons from ELAS sympathisers. However, as was revealed in the hostilities that would later occur, ELAS members had hidden many arms and munitions, either as a defensive precaution or for planned future operations.

On April 19th 1945, the new Minister of the Interior Mr. Constantine Tsatsos gave an interview to a Reuter’s correspondent in Athens about the violence and how he perceived the current and continuing role of the British in Greece. He stated that he believed that the British presence was vital for the restoration of order in Greece and that they should not leave until the Plebiscite was held. Though he admitted that left-wing newspapers had been repressed and that reprisals against the left had been taking place, he explained them as a result of the general characteristic in Greece being the fear of EAM. Major General G.R. Smallwood, the new commander of the British forces, explained that the actions of the National Guard, whose members the KKE accused of many reprisals and repressions, were to be expected. He also stated that many of the National Guard battalions that had fought in Athens during the December Uprising were now

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137 Richter, p. 111, Kousoulas, p. 224.
engaged in the restoration of law and order but to expect that there would be complete impartiality was naive. The British Commander also stated that it was "surprising" that these incidents had not been more frequent and more violent. Smallwood's comments, while not explaining British policy, demonstrated a significant change in the British role in Greece at this time. Though they could contain small uprisings and clashes, they did not have the resources to combat a full-scale civil war, and as a result they allowed the forces of the Right to continue to operate. Furthermore, the prejudice against former ELAS members in the armed forces and civil services was well known to the British, but they viewed that which was taking place as a natural result of fear and bitterness towards the KKE.

Even though recruitment for the new armed forces had begun on April 11th, the British had no doubt that a certain amount of discrimination against former ELAS members was occurring but they stated that once the units had been formed and properly disciplined they would be prepared to admit many of those who were excluded at the present time. Though the discrimination and reprisals were violations of the Varkiza accord, the British solution was to investigate the allegations by arranging for a Greek General to investigate his own forces for reports of reprisals against communists. This was only one example of many known Varkiza violations that would come to light as the battle over the implementation of the Varkiza agreement raged. But as allegation after allegation

139 It is important to note that most of the officers and men of the National Guard had been members of the collaborationist Security Battalions during the occupation. See, Gerolymatos, Red Acropolis, pp. 96-97.
was made, the British did little as they were faced with the problem of maintaining Greece as a sphere of influence with limited and shrinking resources.

The situation was further exacerbated by the return of Nikos Zachariadis to Greece in May, 1945. The prewar leader of the KKE returned to Greece after having been liberated from a concentration camp. Under his renewed leadership the KKE’s ranks were purged of many of the officials who had negotiated the Varkiza Agreement thereby removing the KKE’s impetus to follow its articles and as a result it became even less likely that either side would honour the Varkiza Accord. Zachariades also attacked the Greek government for the white terror that had been taking place and for the continuing British patronage of the Greek government.\textsuperscript{142} Oscar Cox, the lend-lease administrator, echoed his sentiments in Washington.

"Already, for example, as you are well aware, some of the people on the Hill are asking why lend-lease supplies should be used to kill some of our Greek friends."\textsuperscript{143}

Even members of the American Congress was taking notes and becoming critical of the British handling of affairs in Greece. In spite of increasing international attention, the British continued to support the Right to the detriment of the Left.

Three months after Varkiza, things were not looking like they were going change and it was because neither side was willing to make the first gesture of trust. The new Greek army would not accept Leftists because ELAS would not disarm, and ELAS would not disarm because its leaders did not trust the new Greek army.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{143} Gardner, Spheres of Influence “Cox to Hopkins, December 19th 1944,” p. 218.
\textsuperscript{144} Preston, Part III, Vol. 25, Doc R 9478 / 4 / 19, pp 261-262..
In spite of the poor economic conditions and the rising violence in the countryside, the Greek cabinet passed a new electoral law on June 5th. On June 8th Prime Minister Churchill received a telegraphic message from Ambassador Leeper about the continuing violence in the Greek countryside. He informed Churchill that the public in Greece had increased its interest in Right-wing violence and the Greek Government had been warned by the Liberal party to control the actions of the National Guard, the police and the royalist terrorist groups allegedly acting in collusion with them. In response, the Greek government stated that while they were fully aware that these excesses were taking place, they had to rely on the gradual replacement of the National Guard by the gendarmerie, which in turn was dependant on the on the arrival of the British Police Mission. Even though this seemed to be a positive step towards stabilizing Greece, it indicated another fundamental problem which would plague the British throughout this period. They attempted to solve a Greek problem using experts in the field from Britain and though their goals may have been the same, their ability to meet those goals was undermined because the paradigms of the GNU and the British were very different.

Furthermore, since the beginning of June 1945 the Greek government had been requesting that the British military should assume full responsibility for organising, administering, disciplining and training the new Greek army. However, on July 12th, Eden informed the British Ambassador that the British government had turned down that request. Eden stated that it was the intention of the British

\[145\] Preston, Part III, Vol. 25, Doc R 9885 / 4 / 19, p. 265. A month earlier, on the 8th of May, the Greek Government requested the British to “send a mission to Greece to reorganise the gendarmerie, the police and the prison system.” In response, the British sent Sir Charles Wickham,
government for the Greek government to assume the above-mentioned responsibilities, and indicated the desire of the Tory government to decrease their involvement and commitment to Greece. However, Eden suggested that the head of the British forces in Greece act as an advisor to the Greek Military. All of these developments, plans for the election, the formation of trade unions, the reformation of the police and the army were part of British policy to strengthen the governing institutions and the economy while internationally and domestically, maintaining an image that they were as “hands off” as much as possible. Furthermore, by ensuring that Greece could sustain itself and that the communists could not assume power by force, the British would be able to retain Greece as a sphere of influence without having to maintain a strong (and expensive) military presence there. However, these few months were the last for the Churchill Government’s Foreign Policy decisions for Greece. Varkiza not only marked the end of the Second Round of the Greek Civil War, but the beginning of the end for Winston Churchill.

Throughout the course of the war, Churchill had dedicated himself to doing everything in his power to defeat Germany. Flying around the world, meeting with allies and formulating allied policy had left him little time to deal with domestic issues in England. That responsibility he had entrusted to his Labour Party deputy Prime Minister, Clement Attlee. Since the fall of 1944, the British parliament had been setting its sights on an election in 1945 once Germany had been

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defeated.\textsuperscript{149} The coalition government, which had set aside political differences to unite the country to fight the Axis had begun to splinter once the defeat of the Third Reich appeared imminent. One of the first signs that the coalition was falling apart was the criticism that Churchill received from labour MP’s for his treatment of EAM/ELAS and the rest of the Greek Left during the December Uprising.

In the year and a half between the Cairo conference and the Varkiza agreement, the British view of the KKE had gone through numerous dramatic shifts; from allies to suspicious friends, to open combatants. British policy towards Greece had also changed, initially focussing almost exclusively on resistance against the Germans and the return of King George, then broadening to include the formation of a Parliamentary Democracy and the ramifications that events on the international front had in Greece and vice versa. The KKE made a major mistake engaging the British in Athens in December of 1944 however, though the KKE had tipped their hand showing the Allies that they were prepared to control Greece by armed force if necessary, the British refrained from destroying them.

In the 6 months following Varkiza, numerous international events drew British attention from Greece. The defeat of Germany and Japan, in addition to the troubling Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe and the British elections contributed to a growing directionless political vacuum in Anglo-Greek relations. The political factions in Greece on both the Left and the Right were free to disregard the peace accord because there was less and less overriding authority to enforce their compliance, but the Left hoped that once the British elections had been conducted

\textsuperscript{148} Kenneth Harris, \textit{Attlee}, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982) p. 244.  
that British foreign policy would become more accommodating. As Labour Party leader Clement Atlee was poised to replace Churchill a Prime Minister, many expected British-Soviet-Greek relations to improve.\textsuperscript{150} In Greece, Zachariades was quoted in \textit{Rizospastis} that “the British elections will change the system of (foreign) intervention.”\textsuperscript{151} However, the expected pro-left shift did not occur with Atlee’s election. Despite having pre-eminent Labour leaders as the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, British policy in Greece became even more hostile to the Greek communists. This occurred not only because of international developments, but also because EAM/ELAS’ status as an ally had been granted by the previous British administration. With the change from a Tory to a Labour government, the pressure to adhere to wartime agreements may have been diminished.

This rising hostility to the KKE was also bred out of the realities of what the Second World War had done to Europe. France had been devastated and deeply divided by the German Occupation. Germany was defeated, broken and defenceless. Italy was bankrupt and Eastern Europe was rapidly being swept up into the Soviet sphere of influence and the new Labour government in England realised that it was going to have to protect itself by participating in the rebuilding of Western Europe.\textsuperscript{152} Furthermore, by the end of the summer of 1945, the USA seemed intent to free itself from the wartime alliance with Britain leaving her alone to deal with a rapidly and aggressively expanding USSR. These realities began to take the gleam off the idea that socialist ideals could bridge the gap between Britain and the USSR, or, in relation to the affairs in Greece, bring the KKE and its

\textsuperscript{151} Preston, Part III, Vol. 26, Doc R 13134 / 4 / 19, p. 44.
affiliates to participate in the Greek government. Britain needed the crises in Greece to come to a quick end in order to be able to redirect British troops and funds to Western Europe. After the election of the summer of 1945, Churchill and Eden were replaced by Atlee and Bevin, and where the former had been attempting to extricate themselves from Greece, the latter decided to commit more resources to maintaining Greece as a British sphere of influence. 1945 would be a year of extreme turmoil for Greece. Behind Britain’s policy decisions of 1945 was the spectre of Soviet aggression and expansion, and they would have to decide whether or not to expend the manpower to secure the Greek countryside against the rising violence that was taking place. The “White Terror” drove many ELAS members and Left-wingers into the mountains where they had to band together for protection. As a result, the groundwork for the emerging Democratic Army of Greece, the DSE, was in place by the end of 1945. Ambassador Leeper believed the only solution was for the British to assume executive power in Greece because in his view, the country was incapable of generating the type of leadership necessary to help it obtain freedom. However, his plan was not favoured since it would have required an increased role for the British at a time when they were attempting to diminish it. Interestingly, it was Eden and Churchill who best understood the futility of trying to re-mould the Greeks into a British model. They had believed that it was far more detrimental to maintain Greece as a dependent, than to have it engulfed in chaos and lost as an ally. As it came to power in July 1945, the Labour government implemented a policy that precariously combined the non-intervention advocated

132 Morgan, pp. 233-234.
by Churchill and the assumption of control favoured by Leeper. The results of this policy were disastrous for the people of Greece.

153 Alexander, p. 248. This belief may also have been a result of British control of Cyprus which afforded them a Mediterranean port regardless of developments in Greece.
Chapter 4:  
From July 1945 to March 1947, Conclusion and Analysis:

British policy towards Greece at this time, more so than any preceding period, was characterised by an increased focus on the preservation of British interests in Greece and in the Mediterranean. The new British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin had grown up in poverty, worked in unions, led trade unions, had been the Minister of Labour during the War, and although he was characterised by others and himself as a socialist, he had no love for communists. During the War, Bevin was outspoken in his support for Churchill’s government’s policy of opposing the EAM/ELAS movement in Greece. He was also a supporter of the Commonwealth and of a British military and economic presence in the Middle East. To secure British access to Persia through the Suez Canal, a non-communist Greece was essential and it held the added bonus of cutting off the Soviets from the Mediterranean if the need arose. This chapter will illustrate that although a plan to manipulate the United States into assuming responsibility for Greece was likely not conceived until July 1946, Bevin did increase British involvement in Greece up to that point with the objective of maintaining a British presence in Europe. However, as conditions both in Greece and in Britain worsened, it is reasonable to assume that the British would have sought a policy to solve their economic difficulties without compromising their national security

154 J.T. Murphy, Labour’s Big Three: a Biographical Study of Clement Attlee, Herbert Morrison and Ernest Bevin, (London: the Bodley Head, 1948) pp. 222-223. Murphy wrote of Bevin “He never forgets that he belongs to the working class and to the people with whom he has worked.”
interests. The most logical policy to do so would be to manoeuvre the United States into assuming responsibility for Greece in March of 1947.

By this time two members of the “Big Three” had been replaced and as a result, the relations between, and the priorities of, Britain, the United States and the USSR were altered. Strategically, Greece was an important but not vital country for the British and the Americans. The Americans’ main concern at this time was the defeat of Japan, and even after the Japanese surrender on September 2nd, they remained intensely focussed on the pacific sphere. The new threat looming in the Pacific was the possibility of a communist China as Mao Tse Tsung was embroiled in a civil war against the nationalist Chiang Kai-Shek. Soon after the armistice with Japan was signed, the United States began to focus on rebuilding the Japanese economy and government. Following the Allied example of rebuilding efforts in Western Europe to oppose communist expansion, they believed that the most effective barrier to communism in the pacific would be an economically powerful Japan.\textsuperscript{156} The new government under Harry Truman was operating quite differently from the wartime administration of Roosevelt.\textsuperscript{157} Therefore, with regards to Greece, at this time the Americans kept appraised of developments but they were content to leave the country in the hands of the British. As for the Soviets, Stalin appeared to be comfortable to let events unfold on their own. Though a communist

\textsuperscript{155} Morgan, pp. 235-236
\textsuperscript{156} Morgan, p. 234.
\textsuperscript{157} Glantz, pp. 1, 179-180. In order to implement his policies towards the Soviets, which often met with fierce resistance from the various bureaucracies in his administration, FDR had reorganised the key departments that dealt with the USSR. By the summer of 1945, the reorganised departments were being replaced by a new bureaucracy; one that was determined to stand against further Soviet expansion. This shift occurred for many reasons but some of the main ones were the US support of global “open door” trade, a shift in public opinion against the USSR, and the Soviet actions in the Middle East and Eastern Europe.
Greece would have been beneficial, Stalin was not willing to jeopardise his claim to Eastern Europe by provoking the Allies and openly helping the KKE. He continually advised the Greek Communists to participate in the elections and in the government, and he answered their continuous requests for weapons and other supplies with vague statements of future support, giving them enough hope to keep fighting but not enough to actually sustain their efforts.\textsuperscript{158} By this point, Britain was experiencing severe financial hardships, and the conflict in Greece was a major risk to the significant economic investments Britain had made to the Greek government. The previous administration’s support of the Greek Monarchy stemmed from the King’s staunch loyalty to Britain at the beginning of the war, but Bevin’s support of the Right in Greece stemmed from the post-war economic and social realities he was facing. In a memorandum he presented to the cabinet on August 14\textsuperscript{th} 1945, he stated that it was vital for the British to maintain their influence in Greece in order to safeguard their strategic interests in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{159} Furthermore, as a result of Soviet involvement in Poland, and by US involvement in France, Bevin believed that it was crucial for Britain to maintain her presence in Greece in order to maintain her status in the postwar world order.

Atlee and Bevin, committed Labour Party socialists with a labour party bureaucracy behind them, saw elections as the solution to their problems in Greece which would in turn allow them to deal with the looming threat of the Soviet

\textsuperscript{158} Iatrides, “Revolution or Self-Defence?” p. 18-20. Stalin’s paranoia was later demonstrated in Stalin’s speech on February 9\textsuperscript{th} 1946 when he declared that “peaceful coexistence” with the West was unlikely and that the USSR would continue to increase its power.

\textsuperscript{159} Alexander, p. 129.
1945: September – December

In September 1945, as Greece was once again in the midst of a massive economic crisis, the issue of holding the plebiscite before the elections was under review. Archbishop Damaskinos flew to London and proposed to Bevin that the allied powers support a plan to delay the plebiscite for three years. Bevin then met with the American Secretary of State James F. Byrnes to determine the American stance on this issue. Byrnes stated that although he was hesitant to delay it for three years, he would assume joint responsibility with the British for the proposal. Although this plan failed to promote unity among the various political parties, under their pressure Voulgaris proclaimed elections for January 20, 1946. However, the decision did not improve conditions in Greece, and economic and political disorder grew to such levels that ambassador Leeper believed that the British had to assume executive power in order to save the country. However, after having involved himself in the constitutional affairs of Greece already, Bevin was hesitant at this time to become any more engaged. On October 9, 1945, Bevin informed ambassador Leeper that the Greeks had to learn how to govern their country for themselves. Leeper informed Damaskinos of Bevin’s intentions but nevertheless felt entitled to recommend the formation of a left-center government, but the Regent remained focused on forming a cabinet composed of both royalists

160 Murphy, pp 1-16.
and Republicans because he believed it would promote unity. This decision did not have the desired effects.

Between September and November 1945, the Greek government was reconstituted 3 times. Acting Prime Minister Admiral Vougaris resigned on Oct 9th 1945, and until the first week of November 1945, no one could be convinced to form a coalition government. M. Sophoulis formed a government which lasted only two days, so the Regent then assumed the presidency until November 2nd. Bevin instructed ambassador Leeper to inform the Regent to create a government of all parties willing to work together with the exception of the extremes on the left and right (i.e: the KKE and the royalists). However, Bevin's message arrived too late. The next Prime Minister, M. Panayiotis Kanellopoulos, formed a government and even though he attempted to fill his cabinet with individuals who would appeal to both liberals and royalists it was badly received by the press. Being somewhat withdrawn from the highly politicised atmosphere of the previous administrations Kanellopoulos did not have the partisan support from any area necessary to form a stable government. By the 15th of November he resigned and was replaced by M. Sophoulis on the 26th, whom again it was believed, could form a government with the “widest possible unity.” However, this new government excluded the

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162 Ibid., pp.141-143.
163 Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, pp.252-253.
164 Alexander, p. 145.
165 Richter, pp. 289-290, Alexander, pp. 148-150. Further complicating matters was the pending expiration of the Anglo-Hellenic armed forces agreement on January 1, 1946. This agreement had freely provided the Greek Army with weapons rations and uniforms, and its expiration would mean that these items would soon have to be purchased.
communists and the socialists and committed “the tactical error of freeing them from responsibility for the welfare of their country.” Furthermore, as the governments continued to change there was a lack of economic and fiscal policy to deal with the economic catastrophe that was unfolding in Greece, and despite Bevin’s stated desire to refrain from interfering in Greek affairs his actions indicated the opposite. His decision to postpone the plebiscite and his instructions to Damaskinos resulted in a Republican government.

Furthermore, in accordance with Bevin’s plan to hold elections as quickly as possible, at the end of November 1945 advance parties of the Allied Mission for the Observation of Greek Elections (AMFOGE) arrived in Athens. Their preliminary report illustrated the growing role that the Americans would play in the future of Greece. However, AMFOGE’s arrival did not guarantee the endorsement of the elections by the KKE. On December 12, 1945, it declared that it would abstain from participation in the committee for the registration of its members and then from the elections completely. Their abstention would make it difficult for the British to show Greece’s communist neighbours that a fair and open election was taking place. However, plans for the election continued in spite

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168 Richter, pp. 291-292.
169 Preston, Part IV, Vol. 5, Doc R 155 / 1 / 19, 45. AMFOGE provided for 663 American personnel and 195 vehicles to arrive in Greece to help administer the elections. For the remainder of the year, the main focus of the British was to help prepare Greece for the elections. When AMFOGE left Athens on December 9, 1945, they had decided that the British commitment to the elections would be 362 persons and 114 vehicles. AMFOGE returned to Athens on the 29th of December 1945, and its commander, Colonel Fiske of the US Army, declared that his headquarters would be established in Athens in early January 1946. The personnel of AMFOGE were trained in Italy and were then brought to Greece one month before the elections on the 31st of March 1946.
170 Iatrides, “Revolution or Self Defence?” p. 20.
of the protests from the KKE. In his summary of 1945 in Greece, Sir Reginald Leeper summed up British and Greek sentiment as he saw it.

“I do not think that the Greeks yet appreciate how much has been done for them by their British Allies. This arises partly from the fact that they feel we are here primarily in our own interest because Greece is necessary to us...and Anglo-Greek relations have on the whole become less cordial during the past year. The British troops resent the fact that the Greeks do so little to help themselves and expect so much to be done for them by us... It says much for the patience of the British temperament that things have gone as well as they have during the past year...If I believed that Greece was to continue as at present for many years to come, I would take a very bleak view of her future, but I believe that the Greek people are very much better than their present politicians and that if we can help them to stand on their feet again they may produce better men to conduct their affairs.”

1946 - January to September

The main issue that the British would deal with over these months was the holding of the elections, which, despite Bevin’s claims to desire the establishment of an independent Parliamentary Democracy, would allow the British to maintain their position of influence in Greek affairs. Once that was accomplished they could deal with the plebiscite on the return of King George which would represent the successful implementation of their longest standing policy objective. The increasing American role was demonstrated on January 11th when the United States’ government granted Greece a twenty-five million dollar loan in an attempt to mitigate the economic crisis and to create a favourable atmosphere for the
successful holding of national elections. This was followed by a 10.5 million pound loan from the British Government to stabilise the drachma on January 24th 1946. Bevin stated that it was necessary to stabilize the Greek economy before the elections could take place, but he warned the British Parliament that all of the financial assistance they were giving would only be of value if it were part of a larger economic plan. However, this economic aid to the Greek government was overshadowed by a Soviet demand on January 22nd 1946 for Britain to withdraw her troops, which they stated were preventing the Greeks from obtaining freedom. The Soviets continued their attack on the British presence in Greece by lodging an official protest with the United Nations and by re-iterating their demand for a British Withdrawal. Even though the Greek Ambassador to London, M. Sophianopoulos, issued a statement to the British press stating that the British troops were in Greece at the request of “successive Greek Governments,” there was considerable fallout from Russia’s demand. The KKE received powerful ammunition for its escalating propaganda campaign against the British and Greek governments, and it may have been encouraged by Stalin’s comments. Leeper believed that this statement would encourage the Greek Communists even more because they would interpret it as the Soviets saying to the KKE that their time had come to be high on the list of Soviet foreign policy. It is also possible that as a result of the Soviet Union’s statements, EAM was encouraged to boycott the

173 ibid., Doc R 1352/2/19, p. 59 and Doc R 868/1/19, p. 94 and Doc R 1375/1/19, p. 98 and Doc R 2196/1/19, p. 105.
elections, just as Zachariadis had been stating it would do since September of 1945. When the March 31st election was held, the Leftist boycott resulted in a decisive victory for the Right.\footnote{Iatrides, "Revolution or Self-Defence?" p. 21} However, this decision proved costly to the KKE. Zachariadis had made the success of the Greek Left dependant upon outside factors that he could neither predict nor control, namely the support of the Soviets or other communist nations, and none of them properly assessed US interest in the Mediterranean and Middle East.\footnote{Ole E. Smith, "Communist Perceptions, Strategy and Tactics, 1945-1949" in Greece at the Crossroads: The Civil War and its Legacy, John O. Iatrides and Linda Wrigley eds., (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 1995) p. 100.} Though the election had taken place with relative calm, the results spelled disaster for Greece. As Woodhouse stated in reference to the 1945 governments that excluded the communists, the KKE's boycott of the elections once again freed its members from taking responsibility for the wellbeing of their nation and shortly thereafter they focussed on pursuing the armed struggle.\footnote{Woodhouse, Apple of Discord, p. 253, and Smith, p. 96.}

In April, Zachariadis boasted to his potential supporters in the USSR and Yugoslavia that by eluding the provisions of the Varkiza Accord, ELAS had retained a considerable number of machine guns, rifles and other military equipment.\footnote{Iatrides, "Revolution or Self-Defence?" p.20-22.} Throughout March and April of 1946, Zachariadis attempted to enlist the aid of Tito and the Yugoslav communist party since the KKE planned to field an army of fifteen to twenty thousand armed guerrillas but it still needed substantial foreign aid to do so.\footnote{Smith, pp. 96-98.} However the KKE had a setback in April when Stalin ordered the KKE to search for a compromise to prevent "an untimely armed
intervention by the British."\(^{181}\) Apparently the Soviets still believed that the British were determined to hold onto Greece, and Bevin’s continued interference in the Greek government seemed to support their view. Though he stated that the Greeks had to learn how to form their own government he also believed that the British should have a say in its composition. He instructed the new British Ambassador M. Clifford Norton to inform Premier Tsaldaris that the most suitable government for Greece would be a broad coalition.

Meanwhile the USSR continued to attack the British as imperialist, pointing out their large military forces stationed around the world, especially in Palestine, Iraq, and Greece, and it was not until the Paris Council of Foreign Ministers in May 1946, that the United States began to take over the brunt of Soviet hostility from the British. International tension was further increased by the Soviets’ refusal to sign on to a twenty-five year non aggression pact with the Western Powers. The situation in Germany was deteriorating as well, as the British and American zones in Berlin began to unify in reaction to the instability in the Soviet zone, and the British and Soviets remained entrenched in their nearly irreconcilable positions in every arena.\(^{182}\) It is therefore not surprising that the inability of the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union to guarantee non-aggression or to sign any agreements of significance would encourage instability in Greece between the forces of the extreme Right and Left. If the patrons of the extremes in Greece could not reach an understanding, how could the communists

\(^{181}\) Iatrides, “Revolution or Self-Defence?” p. 21. Zachariadis would later choose to ignore the order, submitting an official request to the Soviets on September 12th 1946 for weapons. The KKE requested 8000 rifles, 15 heavy mortars, 50 light mortars, 250 machine guns, 10,000 grenades and 150,000 dollars per month.
and non-communists be expected to do so? Therefore the people of Greece were faced with an armed faction on the Left that increasingly believed that the only route to power was now through violence, a government on the Right that was detaining thousands of people without trial and was incapable of dealing with the economic crisis, and the British who were increasingly ignored by all of the factions in Greece. Though the various Missions continued their work, their impact was dramatically lessened as a consequence of the British decision to remove their troops.\textsuperscript{183}

On May 13, 1946 with the approval of the British, the Tsaldaris government announced that the plebiscite would take place on September 4\textsuperscript{th}. Perhaps realizing the mistake it made by not participating in the March elections the KKE began to urge its members to register in order to be able to take part in the plebiscite. However, this measure was taken too late to make much of a difference since the forces of the Right were firmly in control and the British continued their preparations to leave.\textsuperscript{184} Throughout June and July 1946, as fighting between the Communists and various right-wing forces was escalating, Premier Tsaldaris met with various British and American diplomats in his attempts to secure greater foreign loans to rebuild Greece. However, the dramatic increase in right-wing violence in Greece and destabilize the country to such a level that increasing British investment was not likely.\textsuperscript{185} By the end of July 1946, the Chancellor of the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{182}] Morgan, p. 246-248.
\item[\textsuperscript{183}] Weiler, p. 158. Another reason for the troop withdrawal was in order to remove the Soviet justification for maintaining their troop levels in Eastern Europe.
\item[\textsuperscript{184}] Richter, p. 521. It is possible that it was at about this time in the British had decided to pass on the problem of Greece to the Americans, but the decision may also have been made a few months later as conditions in the rest of Europe were worsening.
\item[\textsuperscript{185}] Alexander, pp. 202-206.
\end{itemize}
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Exchequer informed Prime Minister Attlee that the British “had reached a point where we could do no more,” and “for the next year or so we should have to deny our friends, including the Greeks, any future credits.” Britain had reached the breaking point financially and though they wanted to be sure that their policy in Greece since November 1944 had not been a complete failure they were caught in the post-war economic crisis. Shortly thereafter, the Greek Government began to look towards the United States for financial assistance. Prime Minister Tsaldaris had feared that the British would be offended by his approaching the US for financial assistance but the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied that far from objecting “he would welcome such a step” because at the present time the Americans were in a better position financially than the British. In Paris, the Greek Prime Minister spoke with American Foreign Minister Byrnes about future loans from the Export-Import Bank and Byrnes replied that if the Bank began to get short of funds he would ask the US congress for more. From this point on the Greek government would increasingly be aided by the United States and this marked the beginning of the decisive shift in British Policy in Greece.

Britain could no longer manage her affairs in Greece the way she had after nearly seven years of being heavily involved. The majority of the decisions the British would now make with regards to Greece were designed to facilitate their exit, at least publicly. Furthermore, conditions in Greece worsened and showed no signs of abating. On August 13th 1946, Bevin received a dispatch informing him that the first efforts of the Greek government to co-ordinate on a large-scale anti-

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187 ibid., Doc R 10729 / 8523 / 19, p.41.
communist action between the Army and the gendarmes had been largely unsuccessful which was mainly due to a lack of communication and a failure to define which group would have situational control over the other. Bevin’s Charge d’Affaires D.W. Lascelles, then informed Bevin that the Greek forces in Northern Greece were operating with the powers of marshal law but the Greek Government was not admitting it because it did not want to admit that conditions were unsuitable for holding the plebiscite, and Bevin was therefore concerned with the international reaction to the plebiscite when it was held on September 1st.189

Though Bevin had stood up in parliament and said that the Russians “wanted to go right across the throat of the British Empire,” and had spent much of his tenure as Foreign Secretary opposing Russian expansion and influence at every step,190 he wanted to ensure that there could be little or no objection to the process of holding the plebiscite. Fortunately for Bevin, the plebiscite took place without significant incidents, and the result was an overwhelming victory for the Royalists.191 British reports about the levels of violence after the plebiscite however showed that clashes were increasing in Thessaly, the Peloponnese, and Western Macedonia and that the communists were reinforcing their armed bands. Though the gendarmes seemed to be dealing with the situation well, the British observed that the same could not be said of the Greek Army who, “appearing to have had little heart for the arduous, dangerous, and often disappointing operations

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188 Morgan, p. 252.
190 Murphy, Labour’s Big Three, 232.
191 Preston, Part IV, Vol. 6, Doc R 13501 /1 / 19, pp. 57-58. In the Village of Kotili in Western Macedonia a garrison of gendarmes and soldiers was overcome; and 22 were killed and 21 were captured. The election results, cited in “Preston, Part IV, Vol. 6, Doc R 16571 / 1 / 19, p. 285,” were a 68.9% vote in favour of the return of King George.
necessary to round up Communist guerrillas during the summer."\textsuperscript{192} It was into these conditions that the Greek Monarch returned to Greece.

King George II made his formal entry into Athens on September 28\textsuperscript{th} and Ambassador Norton felt that it would be difficult to integrate the king into the new Greek political structure, believing the Royalists would probably become disillusioned with him since he preferred to associate with "British officials" and his "English friends," and to read his English newspapers. In addition to coping with the return of the King, September 1946 was the worst month for organised acts of violence directed against the state since the Varkiza Agreement had been signed.\textsuperscript{193} Through the British kept troops in Greece over the next year, the return of King George II may be seen as the symbolic end of their engagement in Greece and British troop reductions began when the King returned. In order to accomplish their withdrawal they allowed the forces of the Right in Greece to consolidate their power. It was an option at the time that would allow the British to retain Greece, if not in its sphere of influence, then at least as an ally, without having to maintain a troop presence that they could no longer afford.

Over the previous year British Policy had continued towards the creation of a parliamentary democracy in Greece and the national army to support it. The holding of elections and the plebiscite, and the reformation of the justice system and the economy, were key parts of that plan. However, these measures became a mechanism not for greater British control, but to help lure the United States into Greek affairs. This expediency, while successful for the British, had disastrous

\textsuperscript{192} \textit{ibid.}, Doc R 14232 /1 /19, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{193} \textit{ibid.}, Doc R 15177 /1 /19, pp. 281-282, Doc R 15503 /1 /19, p. 282.
consequences for the people of Greece who would have to live through another three years of war and economic disarray, dealing with the insecurity, violence, and hardships that followed.

1946: October to December

Though as yet there has been no released (or discovered) British document to confirm or deny the theory that the British deliberately manipulated the United States into assuming support for British objectives through the declaration of the Truman doctrine, an answer may be surmised by the actions of the British during their final months in Greece. Between the return of King George II and Harry Truman’s address in March 1947 the British continued their troop withdrawal. It was a slow process for many reasons, not the least of which was the right-wing trend of the Greek government, and the rapidly escalating violence between the Greek Army and the Greek Left. Though it took 6 months to secure, and only after British Troop reductions had begun in September, in October 1946 the Yugoslavians decided to help the KKE with money and supplies with Stalin’s approval. Aside from increasing the violence in Greece, the supplies for the DSE and the composition of the Greek government made it difficult initially for the British to get assurances of aid for Greece from the United States. On November 9th 1946 Ambassador MacVeagh, speaking to Ambassador Norton, said bluntly that “the American Government could hardly be expected to rush to the help of Greece while extreme Right-wing elements...held important positions in the government.” As the Greek government applied for more loans from the
American and British governments, Liberal and Left wing presses wrote that such loans should only be granted if the Greek government broadened its political platform, but the escalating violence throughout the country, while preventing that from happening, also continued to create high levels of anxiety, especially as the anti-government bands seemed to be operating out of neighbouring countries with increasing frequency. 195

On December 12th 1946, Minister Papandreou, basically admitting that Greece was embroiled in war again, said that appeasement was impossible and “the question was now whether Greece should defend herself against the Communist Party or submit to it.” As 1946 drew to a close, conditions were not much more promising than they had been a year earlier. The government of Attlee had worked for a year and a half to bring Greece out of the shadow of the occupation and the early stages of the civil war. Unfortunately, the international conditions created by the widening gap between wartime allies contributed to Britain’s inability to overcome those very challenges. As another New Year approached, there was little in the way of optimism facing it and in his dispatch to Foreign Secretary Bevin on December 28th 1946, Ambassador Norton said, “Nothing in Greece seems to stay put for very long, except the Acropolis.” 196 By the end of 1946, it certainly seemed as though the British were in as desperate situation as they presented. The Chancellor of the Exchequer could lend no more money, the people in England

194 Smith, p. 96-98.
196 ibid., Doc R 143 / 4 / 19, pp 117-118. It seemed that by this point every development, whether it was political, social, or economic, all contributed to the increasing violence.
were using food stamps, even as the violence in Greece was worsening the British
continued to remove their troops, and everything they had worked for since
October 1944 was in jeopardy. Because Greece was the only Eastern European
nation to have a diverse democratically elected government it became an important
symbol for the West, and the Americans would have to make a decision on
whether to support it or not, and as tensions between the USSR and the United
States began to escalate US reservations about helping Greece began to
dissipate.\footnote{Smith, p. 98.}

At the end of 1946 Atlee stated that in his opinion that the nations
bordering the Soviet Union could not be made strong enough to form a barrier and
that the British did not have the resources to make them so. Furthermore he stated
that it was difficult to know how much Soviet policy was dictated by fear of attack
from the United States and Great Britain, or by expansionism, and perhaps the
British should attempt to reach an agreement with Russia to mutually disinterest
themselves from these “border” nations.\footnote{Foreign Office, Public Records Office, Private Collections (London) “Atlee to Bevin, December 9\textsuperscript{th} 1946,” FO 800, p.475. It seemed as though Atlee was more aware of or more concerned with Britain’s economic state than Bevin.} However, Bevin vigorously opposed
Attlee’s suggestion. He believed that to withdrawal from Eastern Europe and the
Middle East would be “Munich over again, only on a world scale with Greece,
Turkey and Persia as the first victims in place of Czechoslovakia.” Bevin then
stated that to withdraw would also be very damaging on British-American
relations, since the British were dependent upon them economically and militarily,
and because it had taken great effort to persuade the United States that the
maintenance of the British position in the Middle East was in their strategic interests. Furthermore, Bevin believed that being linked to the United States the British would be able to negotiate with the Soviets from a position of strength.\textsuperscript{199} As a result of his need of Bevin's support in the cabinet and upon his influence with the trade unions, Attlee gave way to Bevin's policy, and committed Britain to the coming Cold War.\textsuperscript{200} Therefore, if there were a plan to manoeuvre the United States into assuming support for British interests in Greece, it seems likely that it was made at some point near the end of 1946.

\textbf{1947 : January to March}

Though Attlee had been looking to disengage Britain from some of her international obligations since the beginning of 1946, by January 1947, the only areas that he felt he could do so were Greece and Turkey because he believed that in these countries the Americans could be persuaded to take Britain's role.\textsuperscript{201} The next tangible sign to the British that the Americans would become more directly involved in Greece came on February 15\textsuperscript{th} in Washington. General Marshall stated "it is to the interest of the United States and of all the United Nations that Greece be assisted to maintain her independence and national integrity."\textsuperscript{202} On February

\textsuperscript{199} Foreign Office, “Bevin to Atlee, January 9\textsuperscript{th} 1947,” FO 800, p. 476.
\textsuperscript{200} Weiler, pp.161-162
\textsuperscript{201} Harris, pp. 299, 304. Although Attlee initially intended to keep to the “short and arbitrary deadline” of March 31\textsuperscript{st}, After Truman’s declaration on the 12\textsuperscript{th} of March, he consented to delaying the complete removal of Britain’s armed forces until the Americans’ aid had begun. Attlee ordered Minister Bevin, who was currently in Moscow, to inform Marshall that the British would stay in Greece past the March 31\textsuperscript{st} 1947 deadline, to facilitate the transition. See, Preston, Part IV, Vol. 12, Doc R 3708 / 50 / G and Doc R 3935 / 50 / G, pp. 142-143, for the complete dispatch.
\textsuperscript{202} Preston, Part IV, Vol. 12, Doc UR 1248 / 25 / 851, p. 122, and, Iatrides, “Revolution or Self-Defence?” p. 23. In the same month as a reaction to the American announcement, the KKE decided that the Democratic Army of Greece (the DSE) should go on the offensive. Zachariades was now well aware of the growing tension between the USSR and the United States, and, foreseeing greater
19th 1946, Bevin instructed the British ambassador to the United States, Lord Inverchapel, to deliver a memorandum to the US State Department regarding the situation in Greece. It expressed the British desire to have the United States assist the Greek armed forces and economy since the country was on the verge of collapse. It also stated that Britain’s aid to Greece was expiring on March 31st, after which the British would unable to grant any further assistance whatsoever. Though this memorandum shocked the State Department, it quickly decided to convince the American people and Congress of the need to for the United States to assume a more significant role “in the direction of world affairs,” and to seize the opportunity given to it by Britain’s decision. 203

Since the end of the Second World War, the US government had opposed the USSR’s practice of spreading its influence through various local communist parties, but had done little to stop it. 204 However, on March 12th, in a move that made the Unites States’ opposition to the expansion of Soviet influence official, President Truman addressed the US Congress about giving aid to Greece and Turkey. Truman informed the US congress that “assistance is imperative if Greece is to survive as a free nation.” After summarising Greece’s non-military needs and requests, Truman addressed the military situation in the country.

“The very existence of the Greek State is today threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by communists, who defy American involvement in Greece in the future, he wrote to Stalin on January 12th 1947 begging him for more money. The result of the letter was a contribution of 33,000 dollars from several communist parties. 203 Alexander, pp. 243-244. 204 Close, Greece Since 1945, p. 32.
the government's authority at a number of points particularly along the northern boundaries...the Greek government is unable to cope with the situation. The Greek army is small and poorly equipped. It needs supplies and equipment if it is to restore the authority of the government throughout Greek territory. Greece must have assistance if it is to become a self-supporting and self respecting democracy. The United States must supply that assistance."\textsuperscript{205}

This announcement committed the United States to assume the role that the British had been performing in Greece since 1944 and the British achieved their objective of turning over their responsibilities in Greece to the Americans. The British government could no longer justify expensive foreign commitments and when they reached their breaking point, the Americans took over and finished the job as patrons of a non-communist Greece; a role the British had performed for so long. Attlee was anxious to extricate Britain from Greece so his government could focus on rebuilding Britain and Germany. It appeared as though the Soviets were going to end up controlling Poland, they already had a foothold in Eastern Germany, and Attlee believed that Britain's security depended on a non-communist Germany that would serve as a buffer against Soviet expansion into Western Europe. Attlee also had a friend and ally in Harry Truman who found Attlee's calm and straightforward nature much easier to deal with than Churchill's didactic and confrontational nature.\textsuperscript{206} Though Atlee had been elected in the near euphoric period immediately following the defeat of Germany, the enthusiasm had rapidly dissipated as it became clear that the greatest threat to Britain was now the Soviet

\textsuperscript{205} Preston, Part IV, Vol. 12, Doc R 3426 / 50 / 19, pp. 138-141.
\textsuperscript{206} Harris, pp. 247-248.
Union. A new world order was emerging, and, symbolic of the end of the old Greco-British relationship, on April 1st 1947, King George II died suddenly of a heart attack.\footnote{Preston, Part IV, Vol. 12., Doc T 6802 / 6802 / 379, p. 143.} It was sadly ironic that so much blood was shed in the years following the German occupation, over the return of a king to Greece whose return would last barely six months.

Though there is no released document that contains any concrete evidence of a British plan to force the Americans into assuming their role in Greece, the fact that they dispatched an official memorandum to the State Department indicating that they were unable to aid Greece any further, would seem to indicate a plan on their part to force the Americans to take over.\footnote{Robert Frasier, Anglo American Relations with Greece. The Coming of the Cold War, 1942-1947, (London: MacMillan, 1991) pp.179-181. The debate on these issues is ongoing, exemplified by the works of Frasier and Alexander.} Furthermore, the fact that in the spring of 1948 the British informed the Americans that they would allow their troops to remain in Greece for an indefinite period, could perhaps indicate their manipulation of the United States into believing that the British situation was more desperate then it actually was.\footnote{209}

Despite the promise of American aid, the British still played a significant role in Greece beyond October 1947 when the American aid program actually began. As the Soviet threat continued to grow in 1947, the Americans finally decided that it was time to take action and they did so in an overwhelming manner, sending millions of dollars in aid and military supplies to fight the DSE. As it was for the Axis in the Second World War, once the Americans became involved it was only a matter of time for the DSE until it was defeated. With no significant
international aid, the DSE was unable to last the decade in Greece being defeated in November 1949. Whatever the motivations and fears of the parties involved in Greece, the end result of the actions the KKE and the three superpowers was that many Greeks suffered and died. There were almost a million casualties in the occupation and civil war out of a population of only eight million, and that, more than anything else seems to be the sad truth of this “moment” in time. Perhaps Britain’s Ambassador, Sir C. Norton, delivered the best summary of this dark chapter in Greek history.

“the sufferings caused by the war and occupation, the growth of the Greek maquis, its demolitions and the inevitable German reprisals, the final outbreak of civil war and its suppression by British troops have left, besides material destruction, black memories, vendettas, fears and hatreds which will not die out in our time.”

Unfortunately, he was right.

Epilogue

The question of whether or not British foreign policy in Greece between October 1944 and March 1947 was success or failure is a difficult one. The answers will vary depending upon the criteria used in the analysis of these events. From the outset, the Foreign Office was determined to re-install King George and that objective was accomplished. In addition, the British were determined to prevent Greece from falling under the Soviet sphere of influence and, whether that occurred because of the percentages agreement and the resulting British actions in Greece, the US involvement in Greece or a combination of the two, they were

209 Jones, p. 154.
successful in this objective as well. Also, if in the long-term, Britain failed to exclusively retain Greece in her sphere of influence, it was at least kept in the Western sphere of influence. And whether or not the Americans felt manipulated, they did assume Britain's responsibilities in Greece.\textsuperscript{211} American involvement in Greece also represented a change in the balance of power in the world as the pre-war superpowers of Britain, France and Germany were replaced by the Soviet Union and the United States. Though the British maintained their roles as advisors and observed the worsening conditions of the escalating civil war, they did less and less to curb them. The British shifted from protesting a coalition government in 1943 to supporting one in 1945, they initially wanted to hold the plebiscite before the elections in 1946, but then decided to hold it later, and then there were many occasion where the British gave no direction whatsoever to the Greek government, allowing it to flounder, as the British dealt with more pressing international concerns such as the Battle of the Bulge, the Yalta conference, the German surrender and the Polish Question. Underscoring these developments was the fear that the British and the United States had of the USSR and its rapid expansion. Greece was a problem for the West, and both the Americans and the British experienced their share of successes and setbacks in their policies there. As for the Soviet Union, only it of the three great powers involved in Greece experienced the total failure of its foreign policy.

Stalin was extremely cautious when dealing with Greece because he did not wish to encourage western intervention. However, he was so cautious that events in Greece overtook his policy decisions. The outbreak of Civil War at the end of 1946

\textsuperscript{211} Frasier, pp. 145-154.
convinced the United States of the USSR’s militaristic intentions, whether they were real or perceived, and as a result, the “strategic commitment” of the United States to Greece that Stalin had hoped to avoid was realised. 212 Though the Soviet Union officially maintained its "hands off" policy towards Greece from 1944 until the end of the Civil war in 1949, the Greek Communists received aid from neighbouring communist countries, but it was not nearly enough to compete with the American financial and military aid that was guaranteed to the Greek government. Even though they had not been directly involved in the affairs of Greece until 1947, the Americans kept well informed of the situation there, and they believed that the most pressing concern was the weakness of Greece's economy. Without emergency aid and "long-range" economic planning, the country would collapse, and endanger America's access to oil and its attempts to constrain Soviet expansion. 213 A state department release of August 12th, 1947 stated:

It is the view of the United States government that Greece is in grave peril. This peril results from the guerrilla warfare now being waged against the Greek government by communist-led bands actively supported by Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia and by the Communist party of Greece. It is perfectly clear the governments of these three northern countries are working in close conjunction with the Greek communists with a common objective - the establishment in Greece of a minority totalitarian government which would be subservient to the communist-controlled countries. 214

Not only did the Greek government receive concrete support from Britain and the

214 Department of State, American Foreign Policy, 1941-1949, Vol. 1 (New York: Arno Press,
United States, whereas the KKE received only a few soviet military advisors and vague promises of support that were never followed up, the Greek government was internationally recognised. The KKE consistently opposed British initiatives in Greece, particularly where the economy and government were concerned, based on the assumption that when the time came the Soviet Union would lend its assistance. Therefore, it may be argued that the success of British Policy in Greece was also due to Stalin’s fear of giving the British and the Americans an excuse to become involved in Eastern European affairs.

The war had bankrupted the Albion, and though it had managed to survive, and though it was successful in many of its objectives for Greece and its strategic interests in the Mediterranean, British success did not come without a price. It was paid not only by the British, but by the people of Greece, and for them British Policy must be considered a failure. Though it was the communists who lamented the loudest about the injustices of the postwar period in Greece, and while the leaders of the various factions on all sides of the political spectrum in Greece fought amongst themselves, their people were suffering. It was the common Greek who went without food, clothing, medicine and security, and it is because of their memory that this study was undertaken.

**Future Studies**

There are numerous avenues for future studies regarding the question of British manipulation of the United States. Though the pre-March 1947 developments may seem to support the view that British success was a product of

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1971) p. 765.
circumstance not design, the British actions afterward would seem to contradict that premise. Prior to the declaration of the Truman doctrine both Attlee in Bevin expressed a desire to have the Americans assume their responsibilities in Greece, the latter going so far as to speak of the degree to which the Americans were convinced that British strategic interests were in their own interests as well. Furthermore, the fact that British troops remained in Greece into 1948 and beyond would indicate at the very least that their situation was not as desperate as they presented in February 1947. However all of this evidence is circumstantial and until a document is released or is discovered that confirms or denies a British plan to manipulate the United States into assuming support for British interests, and any conclusions drawn from the available evidence will remain unproven. Furthermore, whether or not the United States felt manipulated by the British is another opportunity for further examination, but is one that would require an examination of events from 1947 onwards. Additionally, the impact that British, Soviet and American foreign policy had on the Greek people (i.e., those not in the resistance or the government), in terms of their perceptions of the civil war, their day to day lives, and the aftermath of the various policy decisions, would provide intriguing avenues for future research.
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### Appendix

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<td>Aug 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Germany launches Operation Sea Lion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Aug 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Britain begins to bomb Berlin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan, Metaxas refuses British offer of aid.</td>
<td>Aug to Sept, British win the Battle of Britain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Metaxas dies. 58,000 British troops are sent to Greece.</td>
<td>1941</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Greece surrenders to Germany.</td>
<td>April 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Germany invades Greece through Yugoslavia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Germans occupy Athens.</td>
<td>June 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;, Germany invades the USSR.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Germans capture Crete. Sept, EAM formed by the KKE.</td>
<td>Sept 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;, Germans reach Leningrad.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Dec 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Japan attacks US navy at Pearl Harbour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring, King George II and P.M Tsouderos visit the Middle East. Summer, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; ELAS battalions take the field in Mt. Olympus region. Aug, Zervas begins to organise EDES. Sept, Gorgopctamos railway bridge destroyed in first and only joint Greek resistance action.</td>
<td>Dec 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Britain and USA declare war on Japan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Dec 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Germany and Italy declare war on USA, which reciprocates.</td>
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<td>July, National Bands Agreement is brokered by BLO’s to coordinate resistance between Right and Left wing Andartes. Aug, First armed clashes occur between ELAS and EDES. Oct, after the Italian Government’s surrender, the Italian forces in Greece are disarmed, and in some cases executed.</td>
<td>1942</td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Sept 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Germans launch main attack on Stalingrad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; – 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;, Lebanon Conference attempts to reconcile differing parties and to form a Government of National unity. Sept 26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, “Casserta Agreement” defines the areas in which the resistance groups could assert themselves while simultaneously placing them under the command of General Scobie.</td>
<td>Oct 23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;, Axis withdraws across North Africa to Tunisia following the Battle of El Alamein.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Nov 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Allies launch Operation Torch and land in North Africa. Nov 19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, the Red Army launches a winter offensive that surrounds the German troops at Stalingrad.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;, General Von Paulus surrenders the German forces at Stalingrad. Feb-May, RAF begins massive bombing campaign on German cities.</td>
<td>1943</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;, USSR announces the dissolution of the COMINTERN. May 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Axis armies in North Africa surrender. July 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Allies launch Operation Husky and land in Sicily. July 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; – 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, German Army launches an attack at Kursk in the largest tank battle.</td>
<td>108</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
GREECE

Sept, Germans withdraw from the Peloponnese.
Oct 18th, Government of National Unity lands in Piraeus just as the last German troops are leaving Greece.

Dec 3rd, Demonstration in Athens leads to the outbreak of hostilities between EAM/ELAS and the British.

1945
Jan 1st, Archbishop Damaskinos nominated as regent.
Jan 8th, ELAS leaders agree to end hostilities by midnight on Jan 15th.
Jan 10th, Former EAM/ELAS members Stratis and Tsirinokos defect and form their own parties.
Feb 12th, Varkiza Agreement signed and outlines the program of the new government.
May, Nikos Zacharides, prewar leader of the KKE returns to Greece.
June, Aris Velouchiotis killed near Arta fighting the National Guard.

1946
Jan 21st, Greek Government declares martial law in the Southern Peloponnese.
Jan 24th, Anglo-Greek pact gives Greece 10.5 million pound loan.
Mar 31st, Greek general election held on recommendation of the British, despite a boycott of the elections by the KKE.
Apr 18th, Tsaldaris becomes Greek Prime Minister.
Sept 1, Greek Plebiscite paves the way for the return of the Greek Monarchy. Coincides with intensified fighting between the Right and Left.
Sept 28th, King George II returns to Athens.

1947
February 19th – Britain informs US State department that it can offer no further assistance to Greece whatsoever.
April 14th, Markos Vafeiadi, leader of the DSE ordered to switch from guerrilla tactics to conventional warfare.

EUROPE

battle of the War.
Nov 28th to Dec 1st, Tehran Conference takes place in Iran

1944
June 4th, Allies enter Rome.
June 6th, Operation Overlord begins with the D-Day landings in Normandy.
Aug 22nd, Allies enter Paris.
Sept 29th, Red Army invades Yugoslavia.
Dec 16th, Germans launch an offensive that became known as the Battle of the Bulge.

1945
Feb 4th-11th, Yalta Conference takes place.
Feb 15th, Allies reach the Rhine.
April 20th, Red Army enters Berlin.
April 30th, Hitler commits suicide in Berlin.
May 2nd, Berlin surrenders.
May 7th, Germany surrenders unconditionally.
June 5th, Allies finalise the division of Germany into US, British, French and Soviet zones of occupation.
July 17th to Aug 2nd, Potsdam Conference takes place. Coincides with the British election that elects Attlee as Prime Minister.
Sept 2nd, Japan Surrenders
Nov 20th, Nuremberg trials begin.

1946
Jan 1st, Soviet-Polish pact confirms the Curzon Line.
Mar 5th, Churchill gives a speech in the USA that calls on western democracies to oppose the USSR.
July 15th, Truman signs a bill of credit for 3.75 billion dollars for Britain.
Dec 2nd, Byrnes (USA) and Bevin (Britain) agree to the economic fusion of the US and British zones of occupation in Germany.

1947
Mar 12th, Truman Doctrine declared.