GREECE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

It is indeed an unusual experience for an ancient historian to lecture on a theme of contemporary history. The experience is doubtless valuable for the ancient historian. Its value for contemporary history may be most charitably regarded as indeterminate. Historians present will, I am sure, agree that the profession is beset with obstacles, frustrations and difficulties. But there is one difficulty which the ancient historian can assume he will not encounter; that is, to have his assertions challenged by eyewitnesses to the actual events. In this room there are indeed such eyewitnesses. Among them are Professor William H. McNeill, who wrote the first good and responsible book on Greece during the Second War,[1] and Professor D.George Kousoulas, whose really admirable history of the Greek Communist party is of a significance far exceeding the specifically Greek context.[2] To both these scholars this lecture is greatly indebted. Those familiar with this period of Greek history are aware of its fantastic complexity. This complexity explains the over-simplified and dogmatic character of what follows.

The First World War was ignited by an incident in the Balkans. The Second World War was not. Throughout the difficult and increasingly dangerous years from 1918 to 1939 the Balkan nations, both victors and vanquished, faced extraordinary difficulties — the acquisition of new territories or the loss of old, the problems of minorities and exchanges of population, industrial and technological backwardness, the legacy of centuries of Ottoman rule, with the resulting economic difficulties which in turn produced increasing social unrest. The promising Balkan Pact of 1934, as the event proved, was to be without effect. The various Balkan nations viewed the coming of general war with helpless foreboding.

The problems confronting Greece were manifold. The Balkan wars of

1. *The Greek Dilemma.* Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1947.

2. *Revolution and Defeat. The Story of the Greek Communist Party.* London: Oxford University Press, 1965.

1912 and 1913 had more than doubled the area of the Greek state. But this triumph was immediately followed by the First World War which had a most divisive effect on the political life of the nation and, as a result of the failure of the Gallipoli campaign, created another active front between the Central Powers and the Allies, a front which ran across Greek Macedonia. The effect of these prolonged military operations on the area is obvious. The Allied victory seemed to assure to Greece the opportunity to acquire those coastal regions of Anatolia which for millenia had been inhabited by Greeks. But the catastrophic defeat of 1922 forever ended the "Great Idea" and Greece was forced to receive within her borders one and a half million refugees, about one fifth of her own population, from Turkey and also Bulgaria; Turks and Slavs left Greece for those two countries. In the seventeen years before the outbreak of the Second World War few nations were beset by so numerous and seemingly insurmountable problems as was Greece.

It would be inappropriate for an outsider to express an opinion on the controversy which raged during these years between the "Royalists" and the Venizelist "Republicans," and, for our purposes, it is unnecessary to examine the political events of the period. But perhaps it may be permissible to suggest that the intense passions aroused by the "Constitutional Question" diverted the energies and very considerable abilities of Greek political leaders from what was surely the most important single problem, and opportunity, confronting the nation — the development of the northern regions acquired in the Balkan Wars. I do not suggest that nothing was done. The valley of the lower Strymon river was drained; works of reclamation were pursued around Lake Yiannitsa in Macedonia and elsewhere. But these projects were hardly completed before the outbreak of the Second World War. And the whole western region of the new territories, that great mountainous massif comprising western Macedonia and Epirus, was not the beneficiary of any such extensive schemes of development. It is notable that precisely this area was to be a main base for the Communist guerrillas during the Axis occupation of Greece and also during the second Communist attempt to sieze power in the postwar period.

A country beset by such economic, social and political difficulties could well be held to be a promising target for Communist agitation, and indeed the inception of what was to be the Greek Communist Party took place as early as November, 1918. We need not here attempt to sketch the policy, organizational experiments and tergiversations of the party during this first phase of its existence, activities which were frequently inconsistent and sometimes ridiculous. By 1931 the Party had come firmly under the control of

Stalinists as personified by its new leader, Nikos Zachariadis, an Anatolian refugee schooled in the Soviet Union. But the Party did suffer from a disability which it never entirely overcame—its ambiguous attitude towards the "Macedonian Question." Were the Macedonian regions to remain an integral part of Greece or were they to become an "autonomous" republic within a larger "socialist" Balkan federation, a federation which, in the eyes of most Greeks, would necessarily be dominated by Slavs, directly or indirectly supported by the Soviet Union. The party was frequently to shift position on the "Macedonian Question."

The great depression of the nineteen-thirties of course had a disastrous effect on the precarious economy of Greece and thus created conditions which the Communist Party decided could be successfully exploited. Although the Party entered candidates for Parliament, it never seriously envisaged the possibility of gaining power by constitutional means and it regarded the small number of deputies it could elect primarily as agents for propaganda and obstruction. In the elections of June 9th, 1935, the Communist-dominated "Popular Front" received less than one hundred thousand out of over one million votes cast. The restoration of the monarchy in the person of King George II did not bring an end to the continuing political altercations in Athens. The next elections, those of January 26th, 1936, were tragically indecisive. The "Royalists" and the "Republicans" each held approximately the same number of seats, 143 and 141, and thus the balance of power lay with the fifteen deputies of the Communist-dominated "Popular Front." The leaders of the two major parties could not reach a permanent agreement. The Liberals sought support from the "Popular Front" by a secret agreement and formed a government. But the Communists revealed the agreement and soon thereafter revealed that the "Royalists" also had sought their support. Both established parties were thus discredited.

This is the political background for the appointment of John Metaxas as Prime Minister on April 14th. He received a decisive vote of confidence in Parliament. In May of 1939 serious riots broke out in Thessaloniki in which underpaid tobacco workers played a leading role and these riots convinced the leaders of the Party that Greece was on the verge of a genuinely revolutionary situation. The Party decided to hold a general strike on August 5th. On the fourth of August Metaxas, with the approval of King George, suspended the articles of the constitution. The Communists were caught completely by surprise. Their organizational structure had been thoroughly penetrated. There

was no general or effective resistance to the new regime. It was accepted because, at the time, the majority of Greeks felt that there was simply no other alternative.

The Metaxas regime had been described as "fascist." That it was authoritarian and thus a dictatorship is beyond question. But it did not produce a coherent ideology and was not racist. (The old and considerable Sephardic Jewish community in Thessaloniki was not molested.) The Communist Party had been immediately disrupted. Most of its leading figures were arrested. Particularly effective were the "declarations of repentance" wherein Communists recounted their activities and associations, denounced Communist ideology, and signed the statements which were then published in the press. The effect of the "declarations" on the Party was disruptive in the extreme. Among those who signed the "declarations" was the later notorious ELAS guerrilla leader Ares Velouchiotis, whose real name was Athanasios Klaras and who, it is said, came from the only family in Lamia to maintain a French governess. Non-Communist political leaders who would not accept the regime were relegated. Decrees issued by the regime sought to improve the lot of the peasants and workers. And Metaxas dissolved all political parties, including his own.

The Italian assault on Greece in October of 1940 united the country. It is unnecessary to recall those moving events which are one of the splendid chapters in the millenial history of the Greek people. The effective resistance and counter attack of the Greek army and the resulting humiliation of the Fascists forced the intervention of the Wehrmacht, and Greece, inadequately supported by the British, was overrun by the Germans in March and April of 1941. There had been some controversy as to the actual importance of Greece's resistance to the Fascist aggression in the larger picture of the Second World War. It is sufficient to observe that the need to regroup their forces after the unanticipated Balkan campaigns caused the Germans to delay their assault on Russia by some weeks. That assault was frustrated by the early and unexpected coming of the Russian winter.

The period of German occupation (for the Italians until their withdrawal from the war in September of 1943 had no real voice) from the spring of 1941 to the autumn of 1944 forms the background for the events which were ultimately to produce the Truman Doctrine and the direct involvement of the United States in the affairs of Greece. These were years of extraordi-

nary complexity. We can here only attempt to describe the chief factors involved and the main lines of the political developments.

The methods of the occupying power were characteristic. The Germans were interested in controlling the centers of population and the important lines of communication. They made no attempt to exercise a tight control over the entire country. They sought to maintain their position, when challenged, by calculated ruthlessness, the execution of hostages and, on occasion, the destruction of villages with their inhabitants. The Sephardic Jews in Thessaloniki were of cource exterminated. The Quisling government in Athens was without significance or respect. The established Greek government and King George had withdrawn to London and ultimately to Cairo. In Egypt they were joined by many political figures who escaped from Greece from time to time. The Greek political community in Greece and in Egypt continued to devote its energies to the "Constitutional Question." The declared policy of the British was to continue to support King George, to whom they were greatly obligated, and his government-in-exile. The British ultimately agreed to make the King's return to Greece after the war subject to a vote of the Greek people. What survived of the Greek armed forces together with volunteers was assembled in Egypt. These forces were, it was hoped, to participate in the liberation of their country.

Within Greece itself the salient development was the gradual emergence of the Communist Party as the dominant factor, aside, of course, from the occupying forces. It may seem extraordinary that the Party, thoroughly disorganized and dispirited by the counter measures of Metaxas, should have been able so effectively to exploit the opportunity created by the occupation. The explanation is simple. There was no other element in Greece thoroughly schooled in the techniques of clandestine organization, and after the German invasion of Russia it was of course the Party's duty to oppose the invader. The Greek people were united in their opposition to the Axis and any organization which purported to offer effective and disinterested leadership to that opposition was bound to receive wide-spead popular support. This opportunity the Communists seized. In September of 1941 there was founded the "National Liberation Front," whose Greek initials were EAM and became its usual designation. The EAM purported to be a coalition of six parties. In fact, Communist control was complete, although control was deliberately, and for a considerable time successfully, concealed. In September, 1942 the EAM issued a statement entitled "What Is EAM And What Are Its Aims." It was widely circulated. Superficially there was nothing in the statement which could not be accepted by any

patriotic Greek. The word "Communist" did not appear. However, one article. 5. a., of the statement of the organization's aims is, in the light of later events, most significant: "The formation of a Government (i. e. after liberation) from the leaders of the National Liberation struggle, *from the parties and bands which guided the struggle during the fight and during victory*." The real objective of the Party was to use the EAM and its military arm ELAS, the initials of its Greek designation "National Popular Liberation Army," as instruments for the establishment of Communist control over Greece, a regime whose existence would confront the Allies as an accomplished fact when liberation finally came. In comparison with this primary objective active opposition to the Germans was a very secondary matter whose chief utility was as a means of gaining popular support, above all recruits for ELAS. The motive of these recruits was of course simple patriotism. But once inducted into the ELAS cadres they were subjected to an intensive and continuous indoctrination.

The first guerrilla units had come into being by the summer of 1942 in the rugged mountain terrain of central Greece. One non-Communist band led by the Republican colonel Napoleon Zervas, EDES—"National Republican Greek Association" — did maintain itself as an effective guerilla force throughout the occupation albeit only because of continuing support from the British. The other non-Communist bands were to be absorbed or liquidated by ELAS. Their leaders were either induced or forced to accept posts in ELAS or were rendered utterly ineffective. By the summer of 1942 the guerrilla forces of Zervas, the EDES, and ELAS under the lapsed Communist Ares Velouchiotes, who was accepted into the EAM but not into the Party, were small indeed. Within the coming year they numbered 5,000 and 20,000 men respectively. ELAS proceeded to create an elaborately organised army formally subdivided into regular military units with political officers to indoctrinate the men and keep an eye out for disaffection. In units of less than company size the political officers were unidentifiable *agents provocateurs*. Such an army was altogether too elaborately structured for classic guerrilla operations and at the same time was not of sufficient quality to engage the Germans in formal combat. But these were not the reasons for its creation. The ELAS army was to enable the Communists to control Greece when the Germans withdrew.

On October 1st, 1942, a new element was added. At that time the British and Imperial forces in Egypt were engaged in the struggle with the Africa

Corps. GHQ Middle East decided to infiltrate British officers into Greece by parachute to cut German lines of communication and deprive the Africa Corps of supplies. These officers were under the Special Operations organization which was responsible to the Ministry of Economic Warfare, the Foreign Office and the Commanders-in-Chief. The possibilities for confusion are obvious. It is to be emphasized that initially the objective of the mission was to harrass the Germans with whatever Greek assistance might be found locally. The mission established contact first with ELAS and then with EDES. The immediate objective was to destroy the Gorgopotamos bridge in central Greece, a key point on the railway line to the north. Attempts to gain the support of ELAS, commanded by Ares Velouchiotes, were unavailing until the mission also gained the support of EDES. ELAS, unwilling to allow EDES to gain the credit of being the only guerrilla band to participate in the operation, then decided to support the mission. The Gorgopotamos bridge was destroyed on November 25th and 26th, 1942. This was the only military action during the occupation in which both EDES and ELAS cooperated. GHQ Middle East then decided not to withdraw the British officers but to have them remain in Greece and attempt to give military direction to guerrrilla operations against the Germans and Italians.

It may be repeated that the objectives of the British Mission, as we may now call it, were exclusively military. From its point of view all guerrilla bands, whatever their political affiliations, were worthy of support as long as they agreed to fight the Axis. It was not, and at the time could hardly have been, apparent to the Mission that in supporting a guerrilla band with arms and gold pounds (both initially in limited quantities) one unwittingly enabled the organization to embark on operations whose objective was political, operations which without the Mission's support would have been impossible or at least much more difficult. And it is understandable that, from the point of view of the guerrilla bands, this support could appear to be tantamount to the recognition of the organization's political existence by the British authorities. EAM/ELAS regarded the presence of the British Mission as an aggravating and potentially dangerous intrusion, for, if the Mission's announced policy of supporting all patriotic guerrilla bands were successful, the Communists' long range objective of using the ELAS military organization as the instrument for establishing the Party's control over Greece would be frustrated. The objectives of EAM/ELAS and the British Mission were irreconcilable. Moreover at that time none of the active guerrilla organizations favored the King and the government-in-exile, and so the activities of the British

Mission amounted to something like a foreign policy towards Greece quite distinct from that of His Majesty's Government.

By the spring of 1943 the irreconcilable political objectives of the guerrilla bands were becoming very apparent to the Mission as well as the increasingly hostile attitude of ELAS towards its rivals and towards the Mission itself. As early as March, 1943, GHQ Middle East through the Mission in Greece attempted to unite the guerrilla organizations under general British supervision. A definite understanding seemed to have been achieved by the "National Bands" agreement of July, 1943, wherein specific areas were assigned to each band and an attempt was made to control the bands' relations with each other and to assure cooperation. But the series of defeats suffered by the Axis in North Africa and the ever more evident disintegration of the Fascist regime in Italy led to the belief that Greece would soon be liberated, a belief strengthened by the studious Allied attempts to induce the Germans to decide that the coming Anglo-American invasion would be launched against Greece, not Sicily. This conviction of an imminent "liberation" caused EAM/ELAS to move against its rivals in Greece. Such attacks took place after Tripoli and Stalingrand, after Tunis and Bizerta, and after the invasion of Sicily.

In August of 1943 a delegation of leaders of the chief resistance organizations in Greece was brought to Cairo by air. The most numerous and effective delegates were those of EAM/ELAS. The confrontation of the delegates with the Greek government-in-exile revealed with startling clarity the all but total ignorance of the Greek government and the British authorities of the state of political opinion within Greece. The Communist representation in the delegation immediately, and most skillfully, raised the question of King George, thus concealing the great differences between themselves and the other resistance organizations and appealing to the existing political opinion in Greece as well as that of the numerous Greeks in Egypt. There was no meeting of minds and no agreement between the delegation on the one hand and the Greek government and the British Foreign Office on the other. After a stay of some little time in Cairo the delegation returned to Greece. Its visit had, however, for the first time revealed to His Majesty's Government the complexity and peril of the situation within Greece. It was becoming apparent that what could be done to restrain EAM/ELAS should be done.

Convinced that liberation was near and that the British were determined to bring back King George, ELAS moved against the rival resistance organ-

izations. This was civil war. Only EDES survived but with diminished effectiveness. Moreover the acquisition by ELAS of large quantities of arms from the Italians when the latter surrendered in September 1943, greatly increased ELAS' military resources. But the out-and-out civil war, fought in Greece between Greeks while the country was under enemy occupation, severely damaged the prestige of EAM/ELAS, cost the organization the confidence of the British, and greatly reduced the effectiveness of guerrilla activities against the Germans. And Greece had not been liberated. EAM/ELAS had miscalculated and in so doing had revealed its true objectives.

The summer and fall of 1943 saw the advent of the Americans. The attitude of the Americans toward the complex Greek situation may best be described as a combination of good intentions, preconceptions and naiveté. Greek affairs were acknowledged to be a specifically British interest, and the role of the United States was never clearly defined. American officers were assigned to duty with the British Mission in Greece, which then became the Allied Mission, but the command remained British under GHQ Middle East. The various Greek political parties and factions, including the EAM, sought the ear of the Americans and attempted to gain American support against each other and against the British. And the Greek agents employed by the American intelligence service in Greece on occasion in their reports advanced their own political points of view. It is little wonder that the British tended to view the American presence as, at best, an irritating intrusion. Generally speaking, the State Department supported the Greek policy of the Foreign Office.

In late February, 1944, the so-called "Plaka Agreement" was signed by the surviving guerrilla organizations and the Allied Mission. Its aim was to end the civil war between EDES and ELAS. The terms sought to unite the guerrilla forces to oppose the Germans, to regulate and control their relations with each other and to place them effectively under the command of GHQ Middle East. Then suddenly on March 26th there was announced the creation in the mountains of the "Political Committee of National Liberation," PEEA. This purported to be nothing less than a provisional government. Posts in the "Political Committee" were offered to distinguished public figures, such as Professor Alexander Svolos, who were not Communists. Within Greece, particulalry in the mountains, the "Political Committee" was received without much enthusiasm. Amongst the Greeks in Egypt it was received with acclamation. There were demonstrations in Cairo and Alexandria.

EAM/ELAS of course viewed the existence of a national Greek army over-seas which was loyal to the government-in-exile with deep apprehension. The disruption of those forces was therefore a prime objective. The announcement of the creation of the Political Committee provoked the desired crisis. Demands were made for the reconstitution of the government-in-exile. Mutinies broke out in the army and navy. They were only put down, primarily with British assistance, in late April. The Greek forces in Egypt were disarmed. They no longer existed as effective military and naval units. This, for the Communists, happy result was achieved by the EAM because of the confused and exacerbated political tension among the Greeks in Egypt. But the Communists had again miscalculated. They had believed that the Allies would return to Greece in April or early May.

A new government was formed in Egypt which announced on April 14th that EDES and ELAS were sending representatives to Egypt to discuss the formation of a "government." But in Greece on that very day ELAS attacked and dispersed the only surviving guerrilla band aside from EDES and killed its leader. The delegation from Greece which arrived in Egypt included three representatives of the Political Committee, two from EAM, and one each from ELAS and the Communist Party. In Egypt a new government had been formed under George Papandreou, who had recently arrived from Greece and who was thoroughly familiar with the Communist tactics and aims. A meeting of the political leaders was held in Lebanon. The so-called "Lebanon Agreement" was signed by all the representatives, including the Communists, on May 26th. The new "Government of National Unity" was to reorganize the Greek armed forces, unify all guerrilla forces and place them under its control, enable the Greek people freely to choose their form of government, put an end to terrorism, and hasten the sending of relief supplies to Greece. The Communists had now committed themselves to participation in the government. But after the conclusion of the agreement EAM/ELAS delayed the sending of its ministers and in early June the demand was made that ELAS continue as organized until after liberation, that the commander of all guerrilla units be an ELAS officer, that six very important ministerial posts be held by the Political Committee, and that "a branch of the government be immediately sent to Free Greece." Papandreou, with British support, refused these demands. Once again the situation seemed to be approaching crisis.

By the spring of 1944 the British and the Russians reached agreement as

to their respective spheres in southeast Europe. Greece was to remain Britain's concern. The Greek Communist Party was seemingly unaware that the socialist motherland had abandoned it. On July 26th, after an un-announced landing on the most secret British airstrip in Thessaly, a Soviet mission reached the ELAS headquarters. There was immediately a radical reversal of the attitude of EAM-ELAS to the Allied Mission. Suspicion and hostility were transformed into friendly cooperation. On August 2nd EAM/ELAS agreed to take cabinet posts but requested that Papandreou be replaced as Prime Minister. This demand was unequivocally rejected. On September 2nd the six members of the EAM formally took the oath as members of the "Government of National Unity."

But in Athens there were increasingly frequent instances of EAM terrorism. Actually in two meetings held there in early September EAM/ELAS decided on an armed uprising, while at the same time, surely following the Russian suggestion, the Party had joined the "Government of National Unity." A basic provision of the "Lebanon Agreement" had been that the guerrilla organizations come under the control of the government. On September 26th a meeting was held at Caserta in Italy which was attended by Zervas, the head of EDES, and by Saraphis, the commander of ELAS. An agreement was signed by the guerrilla leaders, the Greek government and the British according to the terms of which all guerrilla units were to be placed under the Greek government which in turn was to transfer the command to the senior British officer commanding the liberation forces. On October 8th at a meeting with Churchill and Eden in Italy Papandreou urged that there be sufficient British troops in Greece to frustrate any Communist attempt to sieze power. The two British statesmen assured Papandreou that the question would soon be settled. Shortly afterwards in Moscow Stalin agreed that British would have predominance in Greece. Russia seemed definitely to have abandoned the Greek Communist Party as an instrument of policy, at least for the immediate future.

On October 18th the Greek government and the British forces entered Athens amidst scenes of general jubilation. The troops under Lt. Gen. Scobie's command were designed to be used for purposes of peaceful occupation. They were inadequate in numbers and equipment for sustained combat with ELAS. But, remarkable as it must now seem, the possibility for such a conflict seems not to have been seriously envisaged. British policy was now in the hands of a number of different agencies, civilian and military. The knowledge and advice of British members of the former Allied Mission, men inti-

mately familiar with EAM/ELAS, were not used. It is to be noted that the German withdrawal from Greece was not seriously hampered by ELAS.

The great problem confronting the restored government was ELAS, for as long as ELAS maintained its separate existence as an army it would be a continuing threat; the aim of the government was to disband ELAS and create a new national army based on conscription. The Communists, who at that time controlled most of Greece through EAM/ELAS, realized that the disbanding of ELAS would leave the Party isolated as a minority. There were protracted negotiations between the government and the EAM. On November 27th three members of the "Political Committee," at Papandreou's request, submitted to the Prime Minister the draft of a solution. It was immediately accepted. The Greek army in Egypt was to demobilize as were EDES and ELAS. The new national army was to be composed of the Mountain Brigade, which had served in Italy; the Sacred Battalion, composed of officers; a unit of EDES; and a brigade of ELAS. The numbers and armament of the latter were to equal those of the other three units. The agreement was publicly announced. It seemed as though the crisis had been surmounted.

But on the same day, November 27th, the Communist Party reversed its position. The government was presented with extreme and unacceptable demands, such as the disbanding of the Mountain Brigade and the Sacred Batt alion. What were the reasons for this sudden reversal of the Communists? There seem to have been three: 1) the realization that the British forces were much less numerous than had been expected, 2) advice from Tito to take advantage of that opportunity, and 3) an indication from the Russians — this is plausible conjecture not supported by specific evidence — that the Greek Communist Party might, if it chose, attempt to sieze control of Greece by force but that the Party would not receive overt support from the Soviet Union which would accept no responsibility if the attempt failed.

Open conflict is generally held to have begun with the elaborate demonstrations organized by the EAM on the cloudy Sunday, December 3rd. Actually the Party had made the decision to fight five days earlier. The British had by now concentrated their troops at Athens, Thessaloniki and Patras. There were no hostilities in the last two cities. The war was the Battle of Athens which raged from December 3rd, 1944, to January 11th, 1945, when a truce was signed. The conflict is still known as the "Civil War." In fact it was a battle between the ELAS army and the British. The Greek government had only the mountain Brigade, the Sacred Battalion and remnants of the Athens police. For

a time the situation was precarious, the British controlling only the heart of Athens. But reinforcements were brought from Italy and by the end of the battle there were around 60,000 British troops in the Athens area. The immediate beneficiaries were the Germans; during the Battle of Athens there were no large scale Allied operations on the Italian front. The official attitude of the United States, to the considerable exasperation of the British, was one of strict neutrality.

The bitter conflict in Athens during the winter weeks of 1944-45 was for Greece a disaster. Aside from the physical destruction, the political killings and the wholesale deportation of hostages by ELAS, the fighting delayed for some months the shipment of food and other supplies, medical in particular, into the country and thus inflicted untold and unnecessary suffering on the Greek people who had already suffered more than enough. The result was utter revulsion against the Comminist Party and all its works.

On February 12th, 1945, an agreement was signed at Varkiza on the coast of Attica between the Greek government and the EAM. Its provisions included articles on liberties, the ending of martial law, amnesty for political crimes committed during the "Civil War," the release of hostages, the creation of a national army, demobilization — primarily of ELAS, a purge of the civil and security service, and the holding of a plebiscite "which should finally decide on the constitutional question." However, on September 20th the American Secretary of State and the Foreign Ministers of Great Britain and France — Russia abstaining — issued a statement advocating the creation of a government "which would facilitate the restoration of stable tranquility in Greece. Only when these conditions are in due course firmly established will it become possible to hold a free and genuine plebiscite to decide on the future regime of Greece." This was the first inter-Allied statement on Greece and the first occasion for the United States directly to assume a share of the responsibility for solving the Greek problem. On March 31st, 1946, elections, carefully supervised by Allied observers — Russia again abstaining — gave an overwhelming majority to the "Populist," i. e. royalist Party. On September 27th King George returned and was received with an enthusiasm almost amounting to hysteria.

The repudiation of the Communist Party by the Greek people could hardly have been more complete. Faced with the obvious deterioration of its power and prestige, the Party decided once again to resume guerrilla warfare. The first attack had actually taken place in Thessaly as early as the

night of March 30th-31st. Great Britain, the only Allied power to stay the entire course of the second World War, from 1939 to 1945, was exhausted and could no longer sustain the burden of defending Greece. This was the background for the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine on March 12th, 1947. The United States assumed the responsibility of supporting the Greek state against Communist aggression and insurrection.

University of Wisconsin CHARLES F. EDSON