

# *Abstracts*

*J. S. KOLIOPOULOS*

## UNWANTED ALLY: GREECE AND THE GREAT POWERS, 1939-1941

Greece's international position and national security in those years have, until recently, been examined mainly from the point of view of contemporary official Greek policy. This has led to the development of a semi-official Greek historiography, essentially as an extension of war and post-war Greek foreign policy and its requirements. The purpose of this paper is to examine, on the basis of sources newly made available, the governing assumptions and premises of this historiography, and to pursue a re-evaluation of contemporary developments, free from a number of these assumptions and premises, which are not supported by evidence and which have generally misguided scholarship. The main thesis of this paper is that the Greek government in that period failed, for reasons that had to do with the policy of Britain and Italy in the eastern Mediterranean as well as with the nature of the ruling regime in Greece and Greek appraisals of the country's strategic value, to secure an alliance with Britain to ward off an Italian attack, and accepted such an alliance against Germany at the insistence of the British government.

*Z. N. TSIRPANLIS*

## THE ITALIAN VIEW OF THE 1940-41 WAR. COMPARISONS AND PROBLEMS

The aim of this study is a critical examination of the Italian historical sources and their comparison with Greek views. The writer points out that a great many relevant works were published in Italy

immediately after the Second World War with the intention of clarifying the reasons for the war, describing events, and emphasizing the outcome from the time of the clash between the Greeks and the Italians in the mountains of Epirus and Albania (October 1940 - April 1941).

The evidence of the Italian writers is arranged and compared with the Greek views under the following three chronological and thematic headings: 1) The diplomatic incidents according to the memoirs or the diaries of Emanuele Grazzi, Luigi Mondini, Galeazzo Ciano and Francesco Jacomoni, and on the basis of the documents published by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 2) The military events as they are presented in the memoirs of the Italian generals (Pietro Badoglio, Sebastiano Visconti Prasca, Mario Roatta, Francesco Pricolo, Quirino Armellini, Ugo Cavallero), in the recent three-volume publication of the history section of the Italian General Staff, in the censored letters of the ordinary Italian soldier and citizen, and in the Italian army songs; 3) In journalistic, chronographical, and historical writings produced after the war, such as the works of Mario Rigoni Stern, Gian Carlo Fusco, Aldo Lualdi, Carlo Baudino, Mario Cervi, Jeanne Baghiou, et al.

The writer reaches certain conclusions with regard to the reasons behind the Italian defeat and the Greek victory, compares the numerical strength of the opposing forces in terms of men and arms, and assesses the positions of Italy and Greece in international terms in October 1940.

#### *D U Š A N L U K A Ć*

#### AGGRESSION OF ITALY AGAINST GREECE AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE OF ITALIAN EXPANSION

Basic motives of the Italian October 1940 aggression against Greece are reviewed and analyzed in this article, together with the results and consequences of Greek victories over Italians which were relevant for the development of events in the Balkans in 1941.

Successes of Germany in the West and its fast penetration to the South-East, and particularly the entering of German troops in Rumania at the beginning of October 1940, stimulated Mussolini to attack

Greece. He believed that the attack will be successful and that the war will quickly end in favour of Italy.

Due to preparations of Germany for the attack against the USSR, Hitler's interest was not the expanding of war to the Balkans. That is why he tried to persuade Mussolini not to attack Greece. But when the attack began, Hitler believed that Italy shall soon overcome Greece, so that he aimed all his efforts to prevent the intervention of some neighbouring countries into the conflict.

However, the Greeks — unified and determined to defend themselves as much as they could — not only did not give in but instead succeeded to defeat a much more numerous Italian army, while seriously challenging to throw out the occupation armies from Albania and the Balkans.

Even new offensives by the Italian army did not bring to Mussolini any success. The other Axis power — Germany, therefore had to engage itself in oppressing the resistance of the Greek people.

Heroic resistance of the Greek people during the six month period against one of the Axis powers had deeply influenced further developments and relations at the South-East of Europe. The victory of Greek arms discovered to the world the weakness of the block of totalitarian powers, while at the same time contributing to the weakening of internal confidence between Germany and Italy. The resistance of Greek people against a powerful aggressor contributed to the strengthening of anti-fascist powers in the neighbouring countries, as well as to reviving the faith that even the small countries are able to resist the aggression by the great powers. By its bravery and unity in the struggles against more numerous enemy, the Greek people confirmed its permanent adherence to the traditions of the liberation struggle.

#### ROBIN HIGHAM

##### BRITISH INTERVENTION IN GREECE, 1940-1941: THE ANATOMY OF A GRAND DECEPTION

After the Italian attack on Greece at the end of October 1940, the British responded with limited air support and some supplies from their meagre stocks in the Middle East. In January General Wavell

was ordered to make a larger offer, which was limited to artillery, and this Prime Minister Metaxas properly refused. But after the latter's death, Churchill and Eden in London pushed aid and active British support into the Greek government. Wavell was a realist and an expert at deception of the Allenby school, as he had already demonstrated with his Western Desert defeat of the Italians. Understanding the technical problems of making a stand in Greece, a country then devoid of proper communications and especially of airfields and defensible ports, he engineered a grand deception to send a token British force to the Aliakmon Line hoping that the Germans would attack long before they could be in place and thus save his resources. His object was to deceive Churchill and thus prevent another Norway, Dunkirk and Dakar.

*N. HAMMOND*

MEMORIES OF A BRITISH OFFICER SERVING IN SPECIAL OPERATIONS  
EXECUTIVE IN GREECE, 1941

The author is better known as a historian of ancient Macedonia and Epirus. Than as a wartime soldier, whose familiarity with pre-war Greece and with the Greek language brought him into the Greek theatre of operations in 1941. He enjoyed unusual freedom of movement and a wide range of experience, because he was attached first to the Special Operations Executive in Athens and then to its «paranaval» branch in Crete. Immediately after the war he wrote down his memories for members of his family to read. (It is these memories which are published here on the initiative of the Director of the Institute for Balkan Studies).

*ALEXIS ALEXANDRIS*

TURKISH POLICY TOWARDS GREECE DURING THE SECOND  
WORLD WAR AND ITS IMPACT ON GREECE-TURKISH DETENTE

The outbreak of World War II had a major impact on the Greek-Turkish friendship which throughout the 1930 became a pillar of

stability and a starting point for the development of a spirit of cooperation among the Balkan nations. Adopting a strict interpretation of its Treaty obligation towards Greece, Ankara refused to participate in the Struggle of the Greek people against Fascist and Nazi aggression in 1940-41. Greek disappointment with Turkey intensified when in November 1942 Ankara enacted the infamous Varlik taxation. Nor did some minor turkish gestures of assistance such as thedes patch of foodstafs to the starving urban masses of Greece managed to overcome Greek disenchantment with the overall attitude of Ankara during the War. Yet, the Turks were determined to avoid involvement in the War, which meant that they were prepared to risk dissatisfy the Greeks.

*C. SYVOLOPOULOS*

ANGLO-HELLENIC TALKS ON CYPRUS DURING THE AXIS CAMPAIGN  
AGAINST GREECE

The recent publication of the Greek Foreign Ministry «Greek Diplomatic Documents 1940-1941» (Athens 1980), brought forward interesting new material relating to the proposals of the Korizis government (Mars-April 1941) for the cession of Cyprus to Greece. The large number of references allows for a close examination of the conditions and arguments used by the Greek Government, and for the British reaction. The British position, however, is made sufficiently clear from additional research at the Public Record Office, which showed the negative attitude of the British Government, and the final refusal in the beginning of June 1941.

*D. J. DELIVANIS*

GREEK ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL EFFORTS 1940-1

Greece was able to master the economic and financial problems connected with fighting the Italians 1940-1 and the Germans 1941 thanks to the stocks accumulated in peace time. War material, foodstuffs, raw materials, fuels and manufactured goods needed for the fighting forces, both Greek and Commonwealth, dispatched from the

United Kingdom did not reach Greece on time as they had to be carried via the Cape Town and the Suez Canal. On the other hand the U. K. financial aid promised when the war started was punctually remitted and contributed a lot to increase the confidence of Greek people to their currency despite the war and facilitated the covering of war expenses abroad.

C. M. WOODHOUSE

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE GERMAN  
WITHDRAWAL FROM GREECE IN 1944

The relative ease with which the German forces were able to withdraw from the Aegean Islands and the Greek mainland in the late summer of 1944 has been the subject of much speculation. It has been suggested that there may have been «tacit connivance» on the part of Churchill to allow an unhindered withdrawal by the Germans with a view to confronting the Red Army advancing from the East. The present article examines evidence relating to this subject advanced by Dr. Hagen Fleischer and Dr. Lars Baerentzen.

It is pointed out that such a decision by Churchill could not have been made effective without the knowledge of many subordinate officers. Of this there is no evidence, either anecdotal or in writing. Military operations against the retreating Germans were in fact ordered to be carried out both by allied forces based in Italy under General Maitland Wilson and by guerrilla forces in Greece, reinforced by allied teams. These operations were of limited effect, but were never deliberately discouraged or countermanded.

Naval operations in the Aegean were also of limited effect. In some cases British ships and aircraft were reported to have withheld fire on German convoys, but it is not known why. The main purpose of the British high command seems to have been to compel the surrender of the entire German force once it was concentrated on the German mainland. Contacts with the Germans took place for this purpose, but the object of the latter was to secure agreement to an unhindered withdrawal. Both sides failed to achieve their object. The Germans were nevertheless able to force a successful retreat, but without any connivance — so far as the evidence goes — on the part of the British.