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The 1924 Plebiscite for Democracy

For the Symposium I suggest a paper that will present the plebiscite for democracy that took place in April 1924 in Greece, based on unpublished material that have been found in Public Record Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in France. The title of the paper will be “The plebiscite of 1924” and it will focus on questions about the meaning of the specific plebiscite and the way it was made. Until today, the impression is that the specific plebiscite expressed the true feelings of the Greek people about Monarchy and led to the establishment of Democracy. Through this paper, the mentioned view will be disputed. The purpose is to examine the reasons why the people voted for Democracy and to make an analysis of the plebiscite based on figures found in primary sources.

The first part of the paper will present the political situation of Greece following the elections of 1923, when the issue of the regime arose, until April 1924 when the plebiscite took place. The above presentation seeks to make an introduction to the general context of the Greek political scene of the period, in order to facilitate the understanding of the analysis of the plebiscite. Hence, the second part of the paper will focus on the analysis of the plebiscite, presenting firstly the figures found. The inquiring of the reasons why people voted for democracy as well as the means that were used by the government in order to assure the positive vote for democracy will follow. Finally, based on the previous analysis, an attempt will be made to explain the significance of this plebiscite for the political scene of that time.

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Title

“The Special Operations Executive in Greece 1941-1944:

The case of the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones”

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The aim of this paper is to make a contribution to the wider debate relating to the British intervention in occupied Greece 1941-1944 by highlighting the policy of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) towards the third largest national resistance organisation, the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones.

Since the early months of the occupation three main resistance organisations appeared in Greece. The largest resistance organisation nation-wide was EAM (National Liberation Front) and its guerrilla branch ELAS (Greek People's Liberation Army), controlled by the Greek Communist Party. The second largest resistance organisation was EDES (National Democratic Greek League), a republican, right wing group. The third one, also of a republican political orientation, was the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones. All national resistance organisations brought back to the surface a number of political issues that had equally to do with pre-war unresolved discords, as well as with post-war political issues. Along with the struggle against the invader, the Greek national resistance organisations made their own different proposals over the fate of post-war Greece. Eventually, these disagreements, reinforced by personal ambitions of the leaders of the resistance proved more powerful than the common hate against the invaders. The result was a civil conflict between EAM-ELAS and all republican resistance organisations.

The British and especially the Special Operations Executive (SOE) had an active role within that civil conflict. The SOE was formed in July 1940 after the War Office and Churchill personally had realised that the British Intelligence Services needed to be modernised. It was under the authority of the Ministry of Economic Warfare and its purpose was to co-ordinate all subversive activity (propaganda and sabotage) against the axis in occupied Europe. Although in theory the objective of the SOE in Greece was

military, in reality, it played an extremely important political role. The SOE did not just contribute to the active resistance against the occupation forces, but also intervened in the most direct way in the political antagonisms between the national resistance organisations with the purpose to safeguard the British interests in post-war Greece.

The role of the SOE in the conflict within the Greek resistance remains even today a controversial issue. Although previous works and historical research has brought out a substantial amount of documents concerning the attitude of the SOE towards EAM-ELAS and EDES (see Woodhouse, 1976, Myers, 1975, Fleisher, 1995, Mathiopoulos, 1977, Gasparinatos, 1998, Iatridis, 1981, Clogg, 1981, Hondros, 1983) SOE's attitude towards the 5/42 remains a rather enigmatic issue, while there was also a complete lack of documentary evidence to enlighten several dark aspects over the SOE-5/42 relations. However, current research over this issue managed to recover a large number of documents from the archives of the Public Records Office (PRO) in London, which will be presented for the first time in this paper. These documents include reports written by SOE officers concerning the 5/42, correspondence between SOE staff and correspondence between SOE officers and the 5/42 or ELAS. Based on these documents, this paper will try to answer the following two questions:

- *What was the actual relationship between the 5/42 Regiment and the SOE?*
- *What was the SOE policy against the 5/42 Regiment during its conflict with ELAS?*

The purpose of the first question is to highlight the actual political relations between the 5/42 and SOE. According to EAM-ELAS veteran's claims, the 5/42 was a political instrument of the British. Obviously such serious accusations question the credibility and the esteem of the 5/42 as a national resistance organisation and that is why

these claims need to be carefully tested against the relevant documents found in the PRO files. The purpose of the second question is to investigate the reasons why the SOE chose not to intervene and prevent the last 5/42-ELAS conflict. A number of 5/42 and EAM-ELAS veterans accuse the British that they intentionally abandoned the 5/42 to its conflict with ELAS and they have developed their own different conspiracy theories. According to the 5/42 veterans' theory that unfriendly attitude on the behalf of the British was due to a Communist conspiracy plotted by SOE Communist officers and Soviet agents. On the other hand, according to the theory supported by EAM-ELAS veterans, the British intentionally abandoned the 5/42 and caused the tragedy, because that would benefit their political objective which was to blacken ELAS' record with a fratricide. The PRO documents depict quite clearly the attitude that the British maintained towards the regiment during its last days and give definite answers to these conspiracy theories.

The British Policy towards occupied Greece

The British policy in Greece had two objectives. The short-term objective was purely military and it had to do with the success of the war effort against the Germans. The purpose was to maintain a strong and active resistance movement in Greece that would immobilise as many Germans troops as possible. The long-term objective was purely political and it had to do with the protection of the British interests in Greece. The purpose was to establish a friendly post-war regime that would underpin the British imperial position in one of the most strategic areas of the Mediterranean.

It was proved impossible for the British to achieve both objectives efficiently. The British tried to reconcile the irreconcilable and unavoidably they followed a dual policy full of contradictions. The achievement of the military objective presupposed the full British military support to the Greek national resistance movement and especially EAM-ELAS. Although EAM-ELAS was by far the most effective resistance force, it still was the greatest jeopardy for the achievement of the British political objectives in post-war Greece. On the other hand, the achievement of the political objective presupposed the full British political support to the exiled King, EAM-ELAS' worst enemy. Although King George could not contribute anything to the war effort, he and his government were guarantees for the protection of the British interests in post-war Greece. The British did not chose sides, instead they allied with anyone that could offer anything for the achievement of both their short-term military and their long-term political objectives. Among others, they allied with the 5/42 with the hope that the regiment could become an effective resistance force but at the same time an effective political and military counter-weight against EAM-ELAS.

Based on the mountainous region of Fokida in Central Greece, the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones was formed in the Spring of 1943 after the joint efforts of Colonel Dimitrios Psarros and a number of low rank local officers. Colonel Psarros along with ex-Minister Georgios Kartalis also founded the political resistance organisation EKKA (National and Social Liberation) which became the regiment's political branch. Although EKKA-5/42 maintained a friendly attitude towards EAM-ELAS and despite the fact that the official line of the 5/42 regiment was the conduct of a resistance struggle disengaged from political objectives ELAS disbanded the regiment twice in May and in June 1943. The

circumstances under which these two disbandments were decided by ELAS officers were mysterious and eventually both disbandments were disapproved of by the official EAM-ELAS. The 5/42 was reformed and EAM-ELAS officials guaranteed smooth relationships and co-operation between the two organisations. However, after these two successive conflicts, anti EAM-ELAS sentiments had increased among the 5/42 guerrillas and officers. This hostility against EAM-ELAS was also reinforced after Captain Thymios Dedousis, a fanatic anti-Communist officer, joined the regiment.

During the ELAS-EDES war in Epirus, EKKA adopted an explicit attitude in favour of ELAS. This attitude on EKKA's behalf caused serious agitation among the 5/42 officers and Captain Dedousis on behalf of the majority of the regiment's officers officially denounced EKKA. Captain Dedousis and his fraction defied Colonel Psarros' command over the regiment and became more and more provocative against EAM-ELAS. After an incident between Dedousis' company and some ELAS guerrillas, an open conflict broke out between the 5/42 and ELAS. Eventually, on 17 April 1944 large ELAS forces disbanded the 5/42 for the third and last time. After a fierce and bloody battle the 5/42 regiment collapsed. Although Colonel Psarros along with tens of 5/42 officers and antartes surrendered to ELAS, they were murdered under mysterious circumstances.

British Allies or British Henchmen?

ELAS guerrillas used to sarcastically call the 5/42 regiment “the golden resistance” due to the generosity of the British funding towards the regiment.¹ That characterisation was rather justified since the 5/42 was a national resistance organisation whose resources and maintenance were entirely dependent on the British aid. The regiment had no alternative sources to sustain and arm itself and almost all of its weapons, equipment and ammunition, as well as the funds used for the purchase of food provisions, came exclusively from British airdrops.²

The complete dependency of the 5/42 upon the generous British aid has caused serious controversy concerning the actual relationship between the 5/42 and the British. EAM-ELAS veterans and sympathisers have launched a series of allegations against Psarros and the regiment. One of the most serious ones is that Psarros was an agent of the British secret services and that he was working for the protection of the British interests in Greece. According to that allegation, Psarros was recruited in the British secret services through his brother in law Major Tsigantes, and his task was to undermine the unity of the national resistance movement.³ Obviously, this serious allegation undermines Psarros’ integrity as a Greek officer and questions his capacity as a national resistance leader.

¹ Giangis, interview 17 August 2000, Rodakis, interview 21 April 2000, Koutroukis, interview 22 April 2000, Bekios, interview 8 May 2000

² Two balance sheets including the overall amounts of gold sovereigns that the 5/42 received in total from the British were found in the PRO files. These balance sheets clearly indicate that the regiment’s funding by the British was certainly generous (PRO HS 5/575).

³ See Rodakis, interview 21 April 2000, Koutroukis, interview 22 April 2000, Bekios, interview 8 May 2000, K. Angelidis, interview 7 August 2000, V. Angelidis, interview 7 August 2000

Documents found in the PRO give insight about the actual relationship between Psarros and the British and depict the British attitude over Psarros and the 5/42. The first set of documents are two reports written by two British officers, Lieutenant Colonel Dolby and Lieutenant Colonel Mulgan, an SOE LIQ (Special Operations Executive Liquidation) officer after the end of the occupation (1 February 1945). In these reports, the two officers discuss their views about a post-war claim for economic relief submitted by EKKA's central committee to the British military. One of the claims of EKKA's central committee was the award of a pension to Psarros' widow.

In his report, Colonel Dolby seems positive towards the issue of Mrs Psarros' pension and argues that:

“we should take into consideration the fact that PSAROS was working almost under our direct orders, that his widow is a well known person in Athens and her sister Mrs TSIGANTES, whose husband was killed by the ITALIANS whilst leader of our THURGOLAND Mission, received a pension of £1,050” (PRO HS 5/575).

Lieutenant Colonel Mulgan however had a different view. He argues that only SOE personnel or personnel hired by SOE agents were entitled of pensions and therefore he rejects the request:

“The question of a pension to PSAROS' widow is surely a matter for the GREEK Governor; if it is felt that he died as a friend of ENGLAND, for a present from the BRITISH Government through the embassy; but certainly not a matter for Force 133 [SOE and Middle East Headquarters]” (PRO HS 5/575).

The correspondence between the two British officers undermines ELAS veterans' argument that Psarros was an agent of the British. Nevertheless, the impression that these two reports leave is that although Psarros was not a British agent, he was almost a puppet under the direct orders of the SOE and the Middle East Headquarters and that the 5/42 was an artificial organisation created and sponsored by the British. That colonial attitude

towards the 5/42 generates some very important issues over the regiment's degree of dependence towards the British both in military, but more importantly, in political terms.

Militarily, just the fact that the 5/42 was funded and armed exclusively by the British proves that the regiment's military dependence upon the British was almost entire. In any case though, the whole resistance movement was in close military co-operation with the British and all national resistance organisations –ELAS included- were to some degree dependent on them. The 5/42 veterans not only denied that dependence, but throughout their memoirs and testimonies, they stress with pride that they were loyal to the orders of the Middle East Headquarters. Nevertheless, although the military subordination of a resistance organisation to the British allies was considered permissible, on the grounds that it benefited the allied war effort, political subordination was a totally different and by far a more controversial issue since that would imply the interference of a foreign power to domestic affairs. Many radical EAM-ELAS veterans seem convinced that this was exactly the case with the 5/42. They argue that 5/42 and EKKA were under the political orders of the British and that both the regiment as well as its political branch were nothing more than a mere army of praetorians and mercenaries funded and maintained with the sole purpose to sabotage EAM-ELAS and serve the British interests in Greece.⁴

Documents found in the PRO files challenge that view. A “most secret report of sub-committee on resistance organisations in Greece” dated 17 October 1943 gives a brief summary of EKKA's political manifesto and on Psarros' activities towards the formation of the 5/42. According to that report:

⁴ Bekios, interview 8 May 2000, Rodakis, interview 21 April 2000, V. Angelidis, interview 7 August 2000, K. Angelidis, interview 7 August 2000

“To sum up: Politically the organisation does not carry great weight” (PRO HS 5/625).

In another most secret report dated 5 December 1943, the secret services in Cairo seem ill informed and confused about EKKA’s political plans. That report was misinformed about serious political developments within EKKA-5/42, while it indicated that the British had a rather limited appreciation and interest over the political potential of EKKA-5/42 and that there was some concern over the possibility of a future closer co-operation between EKKA and EAM-ELAS.⁵ Another report about the political crisis in Greece written by the Commander of the British Military Mission in Greece Major Woodhouse himself indicates that the British were in serious doubt over the political credibility of EKKA and Psarros personally:

“He is a good soldier, but an inconsiderable diplomat. He is likely to become in the future more and more a tool of EAM-ELAS, especially if they win the present conflict” (PRO HS 5/270).

This doubtfulness over the political credibility of EKKA and Psarros personally probably led the British to a more cautious and reserved attitude towards EKKA-5/42. Another PRO document proves beyond any doubt that the SOE refused to provide EKKA-5/42 the necessary political and military assistance so that the 5/42’s manpower could reach 3,000 guerrillas and become a large enduring and viable military force that could protect itself effectively from ELAS’ aggression.⁶

The PRO documents indicate that although the SOE equipped and funded the 5/42 generously, they were reluctant to provide to EKKA-5/42 their full support. They chose to maintain EKKA-5/42 as their allies, but they refused to give them the means for real military and political might. That was done for two main reasons. The first is that the

⁵ PRO HS 5/236

British regarded Zervas and EDES a much safer alternative than Psarros and EKKA-5/42. In his memoirs Zervas admitted that he was suffering from “incurable love for England”⁷ and obviously the British appreciated that love. The British considered Zervas and EDES a much more reliable and loyal British ally and a much more effective adversary to EAM-ELAS, and they did not want to jeopardize Zervas’ unconditional alliance. The second reason is that the British were dubious over the reliability of EKKA-5/42 as effective counter-weights against EAM-ELAS. Especially after the period of the EKKA-EAM flirtation, the British felt insecure about the loyalty of Psaros and Kartalis to them. This insecurity is a serious indication that the British did not have the political control within EKKA-5/42 as EAM-ELAS veterans argue.

Conspiracy Theories.

Although the British had their doubts about EKKA-5/42, they were on the same side with the 5/42 against the Germans, as well as against EAM-ELAS. Nevertheless, many 5/42 veterans and sympathisers have expressed a series of complaints over the British attitude towards the 5/42. Most of these complaints are turned against the regiment’s British Liaison Officer (BLO), Major Geoffrey Gordon Creed or “Geoff” as he used to be called.⁸ According to their accusations, 20 years old Geoff was incompetent, lazy and totally indifferent towards the regiment. They accuse him for being

⁶ PRO HS 5/236

⁷ Zervas, 2000: 14

⁸ All British Liaison Officers were used to be called by Greeks with their first names.

a womaniser who was interested more in his Greek girlfriends rather than work for the regiment.⁹

There is also a series of much more serious allegations not just against Geoff personally, but against the overall attitude that the British Military Mission and the Middle East Headquarters maintained towards the 5/42. These allegations imply a conspiracy. They imply that the British betrayed the 5/42 and that they deliberately did not take any measures to protect the regiment from ELAS' aggression. What is most interesting about those allegations is that they come from the side of both EAM-ELAS and the 5/42.

A conspiracy theory supported by many EAM-ELAS veterans and sympathisers is based on a simple hypothesis and an equally simple assumption. The hypothesis is that the 5/42's disbandment and Psarros' murder were disastrous for EAM-ELAS and that above all others, those who were benefited by that disaster were the British. Therefore, the assumption is that the British caused or at least contributed to the 5/42's disbandment and to Psarros' murder.¹⁰

On the other hand, some 5/42 veterans and sympathisers have also developed their own conspiracy theory. The explanation that they give is that although the Middle East Headquarters and the British Military Mission in Greece had the political will to support the 5/42 and to protect it from ELAS' aggression; a communist conspiracy

⁹ Moreover, the regiment's veterans were also disappointed about Geoff's post war behaviour. According to a rumour, after the war, Geoff became a mercenary in central Africa and his tracks were lost. However, in 1978 or 1979, the 5/42's veterans association managed to locate Geoff in America where he had settled and they invited him to attend the annual memorial ceremony for Psarros and the 5/42 men. Geoff's answer was that he would attend only if air tickets, accommodation and expenses were covered by the 5/42 veterans association and that was considered as an insult from the 5/42 veterans behalf. (All these accusations in Kaimaras, interview 18 December 1999, Karaliotis, interview 4 May 2000, Kouvelis, interview 18 April 2000, Protopapas, interview 6 May 2000, G. Karagianis, 12 May 2000).

¹⁰ Bekios, :405, Skaltsas, 1984: 131, Richter, 1975, vol.2:121.

sabotaged their efforts. Those who support that view claim that many communists had managed to infiltrate the Middle East Headquarters, the Intelligence Service and the British Military Mission in Greece. Some of these men were simply members of the British Communist party, or mere Leftist sympathisers, while others were genuine Soviet agents. However, either because they were ordered by the Soviet secret services or due to solidarity towards their Greek fellow communists, all of them tried to sabotage the official British policy of support towards the republican resistance organisations and they supported ELAS instead.¹¹

Conspiracy theories flourish when events cannot be explained by evidence and in the case of the British attitude towards the 5/42, especially during its last dramatic days, the lack of evidence was literally total. According to EDES' sub-commander Pyromaglou:

“Unfortunately there is a total lack of evidence concerning the issue. Only the telegrams between the two Majors, the British Military Mission in Greece and the Middle East Headquarters could enlighten us” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 328).

Obviously, for Pyromaglou and all the other national resistance veterans who have developed the above conspiracy theories, access to these documents was rather impossible. However, large quantities of the telegrams described by Pyromaglou were found in the Public Record Office. These telegrams provide staggering information about the attitude that the British maintained during the last ELAS-542 crisis. They redefine established and stereotypical views over the SOE-5/42 alliance.

¹¹ See Dedousis, 1949: 57-58, “The 5/42 Regiment”, Veteran’s association newsletter, January-March 2001, vol.9, Papathanasiou, interview 11 January 2000, Mannaos, interview 5 May 2000.

“A Foregone Conclusion” and “a Useless Trouble”.

The tension between 5/42 and ELAS started on 3 March when ELAS guerrillas surrounded the Sernikaki village and disarmed some 5/42 men. Since the Sernikaki incident a chain of violent clashes followed. Fokida was on red alert and it was rather obvious that the tension was escalating and that the 5/42 and ELAS were heading for a new conflict. However, British Liaison Officers seemed ignorant and not worried about the recent developments. Major Mulgan for example sent a telegram to Cairo according to which:

“The EKKA/ELAS trouble is apparently not serious. I expect it to blow over”
(PRO HS 5/355).

The BLO's did not realise the seriousness of the situation. They seemed convinced that it was just a minor event and they did not undertake any initiative to intervene. That indifference by the BLO's certainly contributed to the conflict's escalation since the chance for an early resolution was lost.

The first British attempt to intervene and resolve the crisis came 10 days later after the Sernikaki incident in 13 March where Major Creed called Psarros and ELAS representatives in Lidoriki for discussions. During that meeting, Psarros agreed to all of ELAS' terms (remove one of his officers Major Kapentzonis from the command of his battalion, suspend Dedousis and return the weapons that Dedousis plundered from ELAS antartes), but he refused to denounce Dedousis and surrender him to an ELAS court-martial. Creed was optimistic and believed that the solution to the crisis had been found with that meeting.¹²

¹² PRO HS 5/291

During the last days of March however, it had become obvious that the situation was getting out of hand, Psarros was desperate and he put all of his hopes for a resolution on a British intervention. In 4 and 6 April Psarros made two urgent appeals to Creed for a decisive and immediate arbitration.¹³

In 6 April, Creed gave the following answer to Psarros:

“Dear Colonel...Please be sure that I am doing the outmost possible to resolve the crisis which at this moment threatens Greece” (PRO HS 5/279).

The truth however is that Major Creed was giving Psarros nothing but lip service and false hopes. On 4 April, at the same day where he was reassuring Psarros that he was doing the outmost to prevent the conflict, Creed was transmitting to Cairo the following telegram:

“My opinion affairs have gone too far for settlement by arbitration. Awaiting further developments” (PRO HS 5/290).

Two days later in 6 April, Creed sent another telegram to Cairo:

“...Psarros beseeching intervention GHQ [ELAS] but my view that talks at this stage not much good” (PRO HS 5/291).

In addition to these telegrams to Cairo, Creed sent the following two letters to Colonel Hammond:

“As you know as well as I do, the 5/42 have never really had a hope in hell even since their first disbandment last May.....Perhaps you can enlighten me, has the EKKA great political influence in Cairo? I think it must have otherwise we should have left it fade out long ago” (PRO HS 5/279).

On 15 April, two days before the final battle Creed sent the following telegram to the Middle East Headquarters:

“An ELAS force of approximately 1,000 is closing in on the 5/42 (EKKA) Regiment positions at Klima. Final battle seems inevitable and the result a foregone

¹³ PRO HS 5/279

conclusion. I suggest we accept the new status quo this area and no more ado” (PRO HS 5/355, HS 5/289).

Major Creed’s cynicism, ironic attitude and indifference towards the regiment’s fate are impressive and rather reconfirms the 5/42 veteran’s complaints about his unfriendly attitude towards the regiment since what becomes obvious from these documents is that he had a very limited willingness to intervene and resolve the crisis. However, although the Middle East Headquarters had full knowledge over the seriousness of the situation, they did not give any feedback, orders or instructions to Creed about how to handle the situation. That indifference is certainly suspicious, but it was not unintentional.

Another document proves beyond any doubt that the Middle East Headquarters as well as the high rank SOE officers of the British Military Mission in Greece had written off the 5/42 as a lost cause at least four months before the battle in Klima. On 2 January 1944, Colonel Hammond sent to Cairo the following telegram, which is probably an answer or commentary to a report, sent to him by the Middle East Headquarters:

“On basis your reports have formed opinion EKKKA will shortly succumb to ELAS attack or persuasion and cease to exist as independent force. ELAS presumably watching us supply EKKKA without interfering because they intent these supplies eventually come into their own hands. Presume you have anticipated this and will not be taken by surprise. On the whole can see no point in trying to prevent this when time comes. Offers of moderate sympathisers may be more valuable to us inside ELAS than outside. Please keep me informed but do not involve yourselves in active measures to withstand what seems inevitable” (PRO HS 5/236).

“Give EAM-ELAS Enough Rope”.

As Major Creed mentioned in his letter to Hammond, the 5/42 “never really had a hope in hell”, and probably the British could not do much to alter the regiment’s fate.

However, the above documents prove that both the SOE consciously and intentionally did not take any measures to prevent the collapse of the 5/42 and its tragic end. Moreover they prove that the British anticipated such a development in a positive mind. That unfriendly attitude sounds awkward since although the 5/42 had a series of weaknesses, it was at the end of the day a pro-British force and an additional counter-weight against EAM-ELAS. Most of all it was an additional resistance force who was fighting the Germans side by side with the British.

What is even more awkward is the fact that the British maintained the same disinterested attitude towards the regiment even after the tragedy in Klima. They did not impose the slightest penalty to ELAS (e.g suspend air supplies) and they did not make any issue (e.g formal complaint). For the commander of the British Military Mission in Greece Woodhouse, the 5/42 case was closed. That moderate and unemotional attitude however was not due to lack of decisiveness on his behalf, and it was certainly not due to leniency towards EAM-ELAS. Another document found in the PRO files suggests that this attitude was the result of a very elaborate and sensitive policy that Woodhouse had came up with since November, December 1943. In 6 May 1944 he sent Cairo a telegram where he gave his views about a proposal that he had received from Cairo. That proposal suggested the official denunciation of EAM-ELAS by the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the withdrawal of all allied mission personnel from Greece in order to expose EAM-ELAS in the Greek public opinion and to prevent EAM-ELAS from seizing power after the departure of the Germans:¹⁴

Woodhouse had a totally different view:

¹⁴ PRO HS 5/223, HS 5/224

“Purpose of proposed plan is destroy power of EAM-ELAS. Can think of no better way to do precisely the opposite. Please see my Nov and Dec appreciation which I consider proved by events. Especially conclusion “Give EAM-ELAS a little more rope with which to pull their weight and in the end they will hang themselves”. Situation is that effective resistance to Huns ends with Allied Mission evacuation and gives EAM-ELAS post-war power for nothing whereas maintenance Allied Mission despite Present difficulties offers resistance to Huns and encourages self destruction of EAM-ELAS”. (PRO HS 5/223).

On 11 May, another British Liaison Officer (most probably Hammond) sent Cairo the following telegram with his views over the issue of the denunciation of EAM-ELAS and the evacuation of the Allied Military Mission from Greece:

“All here in fullest agreement with Chris’ views especially par 3. And fear denunciation of EAM at this stage may well do more harm than good. However, unpalatable politically they are in certain areas of definite military value. Witness five trains destroyed in recent weeks. Only hope of discrediting EAM is to give them enough rope to hang themselves” (PRO HS 5/223).

The assumption that the SOE conspired to the collapse of the 5/42 cannot be backed by the documents that this research came up with. On a purely pragmatic basis, the British cannot be blamed as accomplices to the 5/42 tragedy. They did not cause the tragedy and they did not compel ELAS to disband the 5/42 and kill Psarros. However, the PRO documents prove rather clearly that the British abandoned the 5/42 to its fate. The British saw a friendly force heading straight to annihilation and they did not lift a finger to prevent that from happening. They intentionally did nothing to avoid or at least minimise the tragedy that happened in Klima, and worse, they made a profit out of that tragedy.

To the veterans of both the 5/42 and EAM-ELAS, the British lack of solidarity to the 5/42 was a mystery. Since they had no available evidence, both sides produced their own conspiracy theories over the issue. In addition to the fact that those conspiracy theories lacked evidence, they were rather simplistic and convenient interpretations of

events. Both sides placed all responsibilities for the 5/42 tragedy on the British and conveniently forgot to make their own self-criticism about their respective responsibilities to the happening of the 5/42 tragedy.

Without even taking under consideration the fact that their own insubordination was one of the main causes of the 5/42's collapse and by stubbornly refusing even to consider the possibility that they were abandoned by their allies and Champions, the regiment's veterans found another more convenient theory. According to that theory, an evil Communist conspiracy averted the 5/42 from becoming a mighty force and the unfriendly attitude of the British was due to the dark activities of Communists and Soviet agents. However, many of the documents that this research came up with were written by people such as Chris Woodhouse or Nicholas Hammond who did their utmost to undermine EAM-ELAS and prevent the "Communist danger" from spreading to Greece. At the same time however, it was them who abandoned the regiment to its fate. The only way that the existing 5/42 veterans could come to terms with that antithesis is to try to understand that the limits of allied solidarity stop at the point where the limits of political deliberation begin.

EAM-ELAS veterans on the other hand came up with their own convenient alibi. Their cliché is that the British used the "divide and conquer" tactic in the case of the 5/42 and their own conspiracy theory is that the 5/42 tragedy was carefully planned by the British with the sole purpose to discredit EAM-ELAS. By that convenient theory, EAM-ELAS veterans washed their hands over their own responsibility to the making of the 5/42 tragedy and burdened all responsibilities to the evil British plots. However, although EAM-ELAS veterans used the "divide and conquer" theory as an excuse, they did not

really understand how offensive and derogatory that theory really was for them. By accepting that theory, they accept for themselves the role of the irresolute and willess native who was dragged by the will of the mighty colonist. Whatever the excuse or the theory, the fact remains that ELAS disbanded the 5/42 three times and murdered its leader and many of the regiment's men while in captivity. The truth is that although the British had every intention to discredit EAM-ELAS, they were not the ones who caused the 5/42 tragedy. The British just stepped out of EAM-ELAS' way and just watched them discrediting themselves. They just gave EAM-ELAS "enough rope to hang themselves".

The Weakest Link of the Greek Resistance

Compared with EAM-ELAS and EDES, the 5/42 was the weakest link of the national resistance movement and the British had very little to expect from it in achieving any of their political or military objectives. Firstly, the 5/42 failed to become a strong and combative resistance force. Due to the successive disbandments by ELAS and due to its domestic conflicts, the regiment had a rather insignificant contribution to the war effort against the Germans. On the other hand, ELAS and EDES were by far more experienced and effective guerrilla forces and they could carry out the resistance struggle by themselves. Secondly, the 5/42 never became an effective military opponent against ELAS. As Major Creed put it "they never really had a hope in Hell" since large ELAS forces surrounded the regiment and they were capable to disband the regiment at any given time. On the other hand, EDES was a by far more effective and dependable anti-

ELAS band. Thirdly, EKKA never became a reliable political force for the British. Kartalis' incoherent policies and his flirtation with EAM made the British suspicious over EKKA's trustworthiness as political allies against EAM-ELAS. On the contrary, Zervas was a loyal and reliable British ally and the British preferred to pledge all of their trust upon him.

During the last period of the occupation, the British had a rather clear picture about their position in Greece. It had become obvious that the war against Hitler was going to be victorious and that Greece was going to be free soon. The situation in Greece was becoming more and more polarised and the British were concentrating their efforts towards their post-war dominance. The gap between the opposite camps had become obvious and the British knew very well who were their enemies and who were their allies on which they could count on. As far as the 5/42 was concerned, things were not so clear. The 5/42 was certainly not the enemy, but it was not a reliable ally either. Although the British had invested in the 5/42, the regiment had become a liability rather than an asset for them.

A small footnote in the history of World War II.

The 5/42 Regiment of Evzones was one of the national resistance groups that joined the international war effort against the axis across Europe. It was a small guerrilla force with a small contribution to that war effort, nevertheless, the history of the 5/42 was in fact an episode, a mere footnote, in the history of World War II. It would obviously be very risky to draw any conclusions about World War II, the momentous and

consequential event of the 20th century, based on the sole case study of the 5/42. However, since there was some international dimension in the history of the 5/42, it would not be wrong to place the 5/42's history within the wider context of World War II and make some observations, especially about the alliances within the anti-axis coalition.

The rise of Hitler was a call for unity among all those who had an interest to resist him and his allies for their own different reasons. That call for unity had an unprecedented and phenomenal appeal across the World and it achieved to bring together the United States with the Soviet Union and Communism with Capitalism. The anti-axis camp soon became a gigantic coalition of states, ideologies, movements, social, political and national groups. All those members that formed that multicoloured and bizarre coalition had very little in common. Their coalition was not formed on the solid basis of mutuality of principles, rather on the fragile basis of mutuality of objectives, which was no other than to beat the common enemy. Most of the alliances that were formed within the anti-axis coalition were formed hastily; they were occasional and rather unemotional. The alliance between the British and the 5/42 was only one of the numerous unemotional alliances that were contracted against the axis.

As most of these alliances, the one between the 5/42 and the British proved to be short lived. The unhappy ending of that specific alliance was a rather typical example of the way that a number of alliances ended soon after World War II. As soon as the anti-axis bloc achieved its principal objective, the seams that connected all the members of that bloc broke. The common enemy did no longer exist and all the conflicts and differences between the various members of the coalition were brought back in the agenda. According to Hobsbawm:

“From the moment that Fascism was not any longer there to unite them, Capitalism and Communism were for once more ready to confront each other”. (Hobsbawm, 2002: 230)

Along with Communism and Capitalism all of the states, ideologies, movements, social, political and national groups that participated in the anti-axis coalition were ready to reclaim their interests and confront each other in the parliament, the economy and in some cases even in the battlefield.

The anti-axis coalition never became more than the sum of its members and the case of the alliance between the 5/42 and the British reconfirms that fact. On a realistic point of view, the collapse of the anti-axis coalition soon after the end of World War II, was a rational development. However, the hopes of all those who had believed that the anti-axis coalition could become more than the sum of its members and that the spirit of that coalition could continue to live on even after the wars end, were proven false. For the famous Greek writer and intellectual Nikiforos Vretakos, that failure was a direct insult in the memory of all those who sacrificed their lives in the international fight against fascism. He wrote:

World War II: 50 million dead
What is there to write?
We have abandoned our graves and we roam homeless.
While we were fighting, it did not even cross our minds that we are sacrificing ourselves just for our tombstones to serve as missile launch bases.

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Continuity and change in the minority policies of Greece and Turkey*

The present paper discusses the policies of Greece and Turkey with respect to their respective minorities, as defined in the treaty of Lausanne. Though evidently since 1923, both minorities have been repressed, their current condition presents some striking differences, as the previously numerous Greek community of Turkey has almost entirely disappeared, while the respective Muslim one in Greece has slightly increased¹, despite the fact that according to its birth rates it should be more numerous (Helsinki Watch Report 1999: 18-20, 33). The present paper argues that this is due to the fact that Turkey has consistently and systematically repressed its minority, especially during crisis-periods, when bilateral disputes provided the necessary pretext for retaliation upon the Greeks. On the other hand, Greek policy appears to be less coherent, as until 1967 there do not appear anti-minority actions of an equal extent, though there was increased prejudice and insecurity towards Muslims after the outbreak of the Cyprus controversy in the 1950s. In 1967, the ascent of the colonels into power culminated a process that viewed the minority as a destabilizing factor that could be used by Turkey in similar terms as the Turkish-Cypriots. Hence, the junta intensified the minority's repression initiating a series of anti-minority measures, but after its fall in 1974 there has been a gradual improvement, as the definite decision

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of Greece to join the EU made it politically intolerable to pursue policies that violate human rights.

An extensive variety of instruments have violated minority rights in both cases, including physical, economic, social, educational and religious repression. Existing studies have focused more on political disputes between Greece and Turkey, or have emphasized more on general aspects and the outcome of any persecution against the minorities (Bahcheli 1990; Conostas 1991; Herakleides 2001); a development that derives from the need to satisfy the rather extensive polemical bibliography (Koures 1997; Volkan/Itzkowitz 1994, Bayulken 1963), while more interesting information usually comes from researches on very particular single issues and periods, which yet are of fragmented nature (Panagiotides 1995; Soltarides 1997). Within this context, this paper will address a number of issues in attempting to assess the different practices, the intensity and the final outcome of minority repression in both countries. However, a number of variables will also be examined including the content of nationalist ideology, the different phases of its development, the main tools for the implementation of this repression and the external constraints facing the two countries in the implementation of their policies.

Ideals, Symbolisms and Myths

Greek nationalism, based on common religion, traditions, geography, culture, language and collective memories was one of the first such movements in South-Eastern Europe. What seems to have determined its course was the prosperity and social mobilization of merchants and

¹ Greeks in Turkey have dwindled from 111,000 to 2-3,000, while Thracian Muslims currently number 120-130,000

shipowners, who multiplied their contacts with Western Europe and the ideas of the French Revolution. The latter influenced many Greek intellectuals who promoted the revolutionary spirit and contributed to the outbreak of the Greek revolution (1821) that ended 4 centuries of Ottoman occupation (Gondicas/Issawi 1999; Sathas 1995; Vakalopoulos 1988). Yet, the new state comprised of geographically separated areas with regionalist tendencies, particular local traditions, social contrasts and even distinctive idioms. The authorities tried to end this fragmentation with the establishment of a very centralized administration and the application of a common language and education, which would solidify the Greek identity with a parallel subordination and loyalty of the society to the state (Kitromilides 1997: 73-84; Peckham 2001: 33). The attempt for a uniform history and national ideology stumbled upon the conflicting ideological characteristics of Byzantium, which were deeply enrooted into the hearts of the people, compared with the Classical ideals that were the intellectuals' focal point. Yet, this contradiction was compromised with the formal incorporation of the Byzantine era into the continuum of the nation's history, with the theory of Helleno-Christianism, according which the two elements complemented each other. Intellectuals like Korais, Righas and Katartzis and later Paparrigopoulos and institutions like the university and public education promoted this idea of uninterrupted continuity of the ethnē/nation during Classical Greece, Byzantium to the modern period (Peckham 2001: 144; Smith 1999: 145-146,187,203; Tatsios 1984: 10-14; Tsoukalas 1996: 299-302).

Kitromilidis identifies the army, education, judicial power and the creation of a national Church as the main factors that promoted this loyalty and uniformity. Another factor was the 'Great

Idea' that focused mainly on the social and ideological coherence of the country and supplementary on possible territorial advancements against the Ottoman Empire (Kitromilides 1997: 75-85,118; Peckham 2001: 62-86). Nevertheless, Greek beliefs were challenged by the other emerging Balkan nationalisms, as the gradual decline of Ottoman power stirred the conflict between them, while nationalist propagandas based their rights onto language, history, ethnography, geography, folk traditions and religious affiliations. As a result of this conflict Greece, alike its neighbours became increasingly sensitive over issues of territorial integrity and national sovereignty².

Hence, as Kitromilides (1997: 80-81) asserts, the Greek state, through the judiciary managed to control and condemn as 'social misconduct' acts and behaviours that did not comply with its national ideology, but tried to evade its homogenizing mechanisms. According to Pollis (1987:588), there is a philosophical tradition 'that has prevailed on the European continent, particularly Germany, which has led to a theoretical and philosophic view of human rights diametrically opposed to that stemming from natural law as understood in the Anglo-Saxon tradition...neo-Kantianism, and the theories of positivism led to a conceptualization of rights as emanating from the state'. The fact that Greece had not developed an autonomous philosophy of law, or human rights theory, and the strong Bavarian influence resulted in a tradition based on Platonism, neo-Kantianism and positivism (Pollis 1987: 588-589; 1992: 174-175). Accordingly, 'the conception of an organic entity, traditionally confined to the extended family and/or the village, has been transposed to the nation (ethnos) which is embodied in the state further reinforcing its power. Individual autonomy and dissidence are perceived as threats, to the whole'

² According to Hobsbawm, 'nationalism of the small states tolerated with equal difficulty...the existence of

(Pollis 1987: 595)³. Henceforth, although Greece has signed international conventions like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it recognizes minority status/rights only if this is particularly determined by bilateral or multilateral agreements, like the Lausanne Treaty, which refer to specific populations and guarantees. Therefore, there is a misleading perception considering the existence of a minority to be a legal issue, despite resolutions of the Permanent Court of International Justice and the CSCE that a minority's existence is a real issue and matter of personal choice (Tsitselikes/Christopoulos 1997: 419).

Early Ottoman intellectuals, such as Akchura, Tekinalp, Gokalp, and Namik Kemal inspired by the decadence of the Empire and the need to reform, elaborated on several ideologies that paved the way for Kemal's reforms. Since the Tanzimat (1839) there appeared the ideologies of Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turkism and Pan-Turanism⁴. Despite some references to the Turkish people as a distinctive nation⁵, until early 20th century the term 'Turk' could mean anyone belonging to the Muslim millet (Karpas 1982: 165) and was often used negatively, even

minorities' (1994: 188-189).

³ Supporters of Kantianism, claim that it is not the subject that is rejected, but the tendency for its absolute and unconditional moral preeminence that puts in danger the moral principles on which social solidarity and participation in a communal life are founded (Sourlas 1995: 209-230).

⁴ Ottomanism, adopting West-European ideas, advocated a policy of equal rights to all religious communities and ethnic groups in order to integrate them within the Imperial regime. Pan-Turkists rejected it because such provisions to ethnicities would curtail the rights of the Turkish population. Pan-Islamism acquired a religious anti-imperialist character as a reaction to the presence of the Great Powers over the Muslim world and focused on the common faith in order to unite the empire's subjects, though a large part of them were Christians. It was initiated by Abdulhamit II aiming to prevent the secession of the Arab provinces and control the spread of colonialism, Christianization and Pan-Slavism. His deposition in 1909 and the subsequent Arabic uprisings sealed the movement's fate. Pan-Turkism was embraced by the Young Turks, when their Ottomanism did not seem to appeal to non-Muslims. It contained extreme and racist principles and its focus included all Turkish and Turkish-speaking diasporas in the Balkans, Central Asia and the Russian Empire. It still survives in the ideology of extreme right-wing political parties like Turkey's Nationalist Action Party. Pan-Turanism (in close relation with Turanism) was used by Akchura in order to express 'Turan', as the common cradle of all Ural-Altaic and Finno-Hungarian people, envisaging their union, while Tekinalp included only Turkish people. Gokalp-probably the most influential Pan-Turkist and later Turkish nationalist-distinguished Pan-Turanism from realistic politics, due to its utopic character. For these movements see, Hostler 1957, Landau 1985, Pasmazoglou 1993: 240-262, Poulton 1999: 72-116, Zarevad 1991.

by elite Ottomans, to describe crude Anatolian villagers (Poulton 1999: 81,89; Smith 1999: 143)⁶. A more ethnocentric Turkish consciousness evolved when the Balkan states championed the freedom of their unredeemed kin living under Ottoman rule (Ahmad 1969: 154); a process culminated with the Greek-Turkish war 1919-1923. Hence, although Turkey's nation-building trail seems to share similar foundations with the Greek paradigm, a clear differentiation is that its appearance and evolution followed with substantial delay.

The personality that determined the formation of the Turkish state and defined its identity was Kemal Ataturk who favoured Gokalp's Turkism, based on the realistic need for internal reconstruction after years of fighting (Karal 1997: 17-18; Poulton 1999: 103-110). Smith (1999: 143-144) depicted Kemal's nationalism mentioning that the Young Turks' 'quest for pan-Turkic ethnic unification revealed their insecurity over an ethnic heritage which had so long been submerged in a class-bound aristocratic Ottoman *ethnie* in which lower-class "Turks" had no share. Ataturk turned his back on extra-territorial ethnic Pan-nationalism and substituted a territorial citizen-nationalism with pre-Islamic ideological memories (or myths or theories) in place of the Ottoman lateral, aristocratic *ethnie*, since only on this basis could a Western-style "nation" be evolved'. After the proclamation of the Republic on 29 October 1923 he initiated a

⁵ Namik Kemal and Ali Suavi, both Ottomanists, were among the first during 1839-1878 to use the term 'Turkish' (Poulton 1999: 77-81).

⁶ Later, for Turkish nationalism the 'Anatolian villager' acquired the character of the guardian of the pure virtues of the nation.

series of reforms that defined his idea of nationalism⁷ based on principles that were later identified as ‘Kemalism’⁸.

He believed that the Ottoman decline was largely due to foreign interventions allegedly for protecting the Christian populations, now perceived to be hostile towards his regime. Therefore, it was essential that these departed from Turkey and the massive exchange of 1923 succeeded that with minor exceptions⁹. With respect to Muslim minorities Kemal defined future policies stating that Lausanne’s provisions were ‘applicable to non-Muslims only’, as Muslims were identified with the Turkish nation (Poulton 1999: 133) in a similar way that Greece identified Orthodox with Greeks, with other religious affiliations betraying a non-Greek (Lewis B. 1965: 350-351; Pollis 1992: 178-185; 1993:339-357). State integrity was based upon political, linguistic and territorial unity, common roots, descent, history and morality. When internal political resistance or Kurdish rebellions threatened this concept, the army brutally suppressed the latter, while extraordinary judicial powers silenced all dissidents, based on laws ‘for the maintenance of order’ and special ‘independent tribunals’ applying swift justice (Lewis B. 1965: 260-261, 269-270; Poulton 1999: 127-129; Pope/Pope 1997: 248-251; Zurcher 1997: 176-182).

⁷ These included the abolition of the Sultanate-Caliphate, the closing down of religious schools, courts and sects, the application of the Swiss civil code and the Gregorian calendar and the Latin alphabet, and the abolition of fezes. See Armstrong 1932, Karancigil/Ozbudun 1997, Kinross 1964, Lewis B. 1965, Lewis G. 1965, Toynbee/Kirkwood 1926.

⁸ These are known as the ‘six pillars’ and include republicanism, nationalism, populism, etatism, secularism and revolutionarism (Karal 1997: 16-23; Pasmazoglou 1993: 268-285).

⁹ Young Turks initiated this process with the boycott of non-Muslim businesses and the widespread atrocities and violent displacement of large number of Armenians and Greeks. Christians were generally regarded as unsuitable for Turkification. As Ahmad quotes (1982: 406, 412), Greeks lived ‘organized in separate legal communities of an autonomous nature, discharged all their communal functions themselves, worshipped freely and supported their churches and schools which had kept alive through centuries the national sentiment...In this way, the Christian population did not assimilate with Moslem society and, more important, kept its national consciousness’. Also see Poulton 1999: 124-129, Zurcher 1997: 119-121.

Eventually, the authorities forbade the use of Kurdish language, names, customs and dresses¹⁰. Moreover, Kemal banished several social and cultural unions and associations and replaced them with new ones¹¹ controlled by him and his Republican Party, while he allowed, only government-controlled newspapers to be published and he purged the Istanbul University, allowing only loyal Kemalists to retain teaching posts (Zurcher 1997: 187-188).

Kemal and Kemalism became the symbols of Turkish nationalism and of Turkish unity and integrity. Therefore, his successors have considered his regime's preservation essential for the existence of the Republic. The Kemalist regime was the outcome of an alliance between civil and military bureaucratic elites, involving the Turkish merchant class, provincial notables and landowners, which displaced the respective Ottoman political and religious elites (Eisenstadt 1997:130-140; Kazancigil 1997: 44-53; Sarris: 1992). 'Young Turks and Kemalists, although very different from the traditional Ottoman bureaucrats, since they were trained in secular schools to become adepts of Western ideas and European-style patriotism, were the heirs to the old patrimonial tradition which assumed the dominance of the state over civil society and reserved the monopoly of legitimacy and authority to state elites, at the expense of social and economic elites' (Kazancigil 1997: 48). With the army imposed as the guardian of this heritage

¹⁰ According to Prime Minister Inonu 'only the Turkish nation has the rights to claim ethnic and national rights in this country', while for Tekinalp, 'New Turkey does not recognize among its citizens anything else but Turks. If today New Turkey, due to some survivals of the past, includes some hundreds of thousands citizens who have not yet adopted Turkish culture, it is certain that this will happen in a matter of a few decades'. Similarly Lausanne's 'special provisions for the protection of minorities, do not solve, but rather make things worse' (Poulton 1999: 157-161).

¹¹ Characteristically, Kemal ordered the creation of the Turkish Linguistic and Historical Societies that would promote his personally adopted doctrines of the 'Turkish Historical Thesis', arguing that the Turkish nation was the cradle and transmitter of civilization, and the 'Sun-Language Theory' that followed the same argument for the Turkish language. See Kinross 1964: 465-472, Millas 2001: 59-64, Poulton 1999: 134-148.

and of the state's preeminence and importance, Kemal's successors have shown little tolerance towards any kind of minority or political opposition that could threaten the regime.

Minority 'accounts'

In 1930, when the final accounts deriving from the 1923 exchange of populations were settled¹², the two countries appeared to bury their age-long hatred with a series of initiatives and agreements that rendered them into a coherent stabilizing factor in the Balkans. Yet, this rapprochement was artificial, as it was politically inspired and promoted, and strong prejudices, based on recent memories, still remained. With World War II approaching, political cooperation further deepened and both countries have been since under common defense aegis, while the Soviet threat and their inclusion into NATO, resulted in a golden period for minority affairs. Therefore, it was very difficult for any official endorsement of anti-minority attitudes to be manifested and initiated. A window of opportunity was presented during subsequent periods of deterioration of bilateral relations that constituted a pretext for retaliation upon the minorities.

This use of crisis periods is particularly evident in Turkish minority policy, which presents stronger elements of continuity than the Greek one. The exclusive character of Turkish national identity has affected all aspects of public life and most minorities through legislation or other administrative acts. Significantly, during the war, when both countries were officially allies, Turkey applied the capital tax (*varlik vergisi*), allegedly to support its war-suffering economy and to fight black marketing and profiteering. The tax would be imposed once on fortunes and

¹² For details of this exchange see Eddy 1931; Ladas 1932; Pentzopoulos 1962.

exceptional profits. Yet in effect it was inspired by racist perceptions, as debtors were divided into ‘Muslims’ and ‘non-Muslims’ and the specially formed committees imposed arbitrarily estimated taxes, which were dictated by governmental sources. These amounts were much higher for non-Muslims¹³ and even higher from the debtors’ fortunes. The tax was a short-term success but a long-term failure, as it destabilized the economy and damaged Turkey’s international profile. Greeks, who constituted 0,55% of the total population, were assessed at 20% of the total tax and lost much confidence towards the administration’s disposition towards them.

Despite cordial relations after 1945, Cyprus appeared as a catalyst in the 1950s and especially in 1955 when riots broke out in Istanbul, while tripartite talks were held in London on the island’s fate. Widespread pillaging and destruction of Greek properties was carried by semi-official elements, like the Kibris Turktur association and student and labour unions. The government was in close contact and cooperation with Kibris Turktur¹⁴, while the 1960 trials of the Menderes government verified the suspicions that the riots were well-planned and carried out under the auspices of the authorities. These riots were a physical expression of anti-minority feelings, which in combination with some initial expulsions, caused the first wave of emigration of Istanbul Greeks, despite efforts by the Greek consular authorities to discourage them from selling their properties and going to Greece¹⁵. A similar pretext reappeared in 1963-64, when inter-communal fighting in Cyprus resulted in severe repression, particularly evident in education¹⁶. The intensification of measures curtailing economic, educational and religious minority activities

¹³ Only in particular cases, Muslims had to pay high taxes.

¹⁴ This is well verified by British sources like FO/371/117711/RG10344/50, 22/9/55; FO/371/117657, 15/9/55.

¹⁵ FO/371/130225/RK1781/4, 11/1/57.

¹⁶ Indicatively, encyclicals 3385 and 8459 forbade the use of Greek language, books or any other material in Greek inside minority schools, and the celebration of Christian anniversaries and morning prayers.

and a parallel policy of mass expulsions forced more than 30,000 Greeks to leave Turkey¹⁷. When bilateral relations seemed to improve such provisions were ‘frozen’, but never repealed so as to be reactivated when new disputes arose as in 1967 and 1974, when bilateral differences reached their climax with the Turkish invasion in Cyprus and entered into a new period of protracted conflict with the appearance of a wide range of issues as disputes. Although, by that time, the remaining Greeks were around 10,000 and did not constitute any potential security concern, Turkish policy remained strictly exclusive keeping all previous measures in place. Their effectiveness in eliminating the minority is the main reason why since 1974 there have been minor new legislative initiatives with respect to minority affairs. Depending on bilateral relations, problems occur with respect to the administration of minority schools, the provision of schoolbooks and the appointment of Greek teachers, or with expropriations of communal property (Helsinki Watch Report 1992: 16-17). Yet, while the minority itself lost its political ‘exchangeability’, there remained the Ecumenical Patriarchate with a high ‘hostage’ value. Its religious importance for Greece made it quite vulnerable in the eyes of the authorities, which often cause difficulties in the Patriarch’s freedom of movement and initiatives, especially if they relate to his international role/appeal and ecumenical character¹⁸.

On the other hand, Greek minority policy presents several inconsistencies and is rather fragmented. Although Greek nationalism has been exclusive too, until the early 1960s the Muslim minority did not seem to have major problems in the conduct of its affairs. The authorities seemed to respect the ‘letter’ of Lausanne and avoided acts that could create

¹⁷ In 1964, Turkey denounced the 1930 Convention of Establishment that previously allowed Greek nationals, established in Istanbul to carry on their businesses.

complaints. Indeed, the minority did not face physical or other pressure as a result of the misfortunes of the Greeks in Turkey in 1942-44 and especially in 1955 when urgent measures were taken to prevent eventual retaliations. Yet, prejudices existed and the Muslim population was left rather isolated and segregated, with poor efforts to improve its living standard, mainly from an educational and economic perspective, creating a widening gap with the Christian majority. This fact, often giving the impression of a lack of minority policy at all, put the Muslims into a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis their prospects for greater social mobilization, integration and progress.

Since the early 1960s the authorities began viewing the minority with greater suspicion. The gradual infiltration of pro-Kemalist secular/nationalist elements within the largely traditional and religious minority¹⁹ and indications revealing its greater politicization and fears for its use by Turkey in order to raise demands similar to the Turkish-Cypriots made the administration perceive the Muslims as a potential threat for the country's territorial integrity and minority affairs as an issue of national security. The first instances of the formation of this policy appeared in 1959²⁰ and were further developed during 1963-64, when Greece threatened to use its Muslims as a political tool in order to stop the persecutions of its kin in Turkey. The deterioration of bilateral relations over Cyprus in combination with the 1967 coup in Greece, inaugurated a period of persistent and systematic policies with the application of laws and

¹⁸ Indicatively on the Greek minority see Alexandris 1992; Christides 2000; Helsinki Watch Report 1992; Greek Parliament 1999; Okte 1987.

¹⁹ In 1964, The Muslim Teachers' Association of Thrace sent a memorandum to the Greek authorities revealing the internal struggle within the minority and the pressures exerted by Turkey since 1959 favouring the creation and prevalence of a Turkish Teachers' Union, secretly subsidized by the Turkish Consulate, which would promote Kemalist/nationalist ideas. (Panagiotides 1996: 54-60).

²⁰ This is revealed by the minutes of a meeting of all competent authorities found in Karamanlis Archives/9A/002408, 1959.

measures that violated minority rights guaranteed in Lausanne. While the junta's nationalist rhetoric was exclusive to non-Orthodox Greeks and therefore intervened to internal affairs of all minority communities, in this case its aim appears to have been the Muslims' gradual elimination through measures of administrative harassment, including difficulties in obtaining driving licenses, loans, or buying land, while boards of Muslim charitable/religious foundations were arbitrarily dismissed and replaced by people attached to the regime.

The restoration of democracy and Karamanlis's determination for Greece to join the EU adopting and abiding by its norms, including the existence of good human rights record was a factor that aimed to bring a gradual end to the institutionalization of the previous anti-minority practices. However, the 1974 Cyprus events and the subsequent Greek-Turkish conflict, and often-aggressive official Turkish statements that alarmed the Greek authorities, prevented several practices and prejudices from disappearing, especially where sympathizers of the previous regime still remained in local authorities. However, Greece's deeper integration into the EU and the parallel acceptance of the jurisdiction of its institutions caused increased embarrassment when cases of any harassment against the minority internationalized, through either the protests of international organizations or the condemnation of the European Court. This increasing ability of Turkey and minority elements to internationalize the always-popular issue of minority rights that damaged the country's prestige and European character convinced the government that it should finally solve the problem. Indeed, in 1991, in a period of unrest within the minority, Prime Minister Mitsotakis declared his determination to secure legal equality and equal civil rights to all inhabitants, implicitly recognizing the existence of repressive measures. This declaration of a new state policy inaugurated this current period when many past problems have

been solved or are being improved. Despite the abolition of ‘administrative harassment’, the minority remains poor and still faces integration problems. It is indicative that there are no specific statistics for the minority, as the last census to ask questions on language and religion was in 1951. Nevertheless, past restrictions regarding loans, driving licenses and purchase of property have disappeared, while extensive research and initiatives have been taken in previously neglected areas like education, where new schoolbooks and pedagogic methods are promoting a more intercultural education. Muslims have now more opportunities to study in Greek universities and to work in the public sector, and although their numbers are still low, they are definitely higher than before. The above remarks and the significantly reduced complaints on behalf of the Muslims (Department of State 2001), show that the new policy inaugurated by Mitsotakis and further advocated by Foreign Minister Georgios Papandreou seems to gradually produce positive results regarding the improvement of the minority’s living standards²¹.

Comparative nationalisms

Having previously considered the development of nationalism and its exclusive nature in Greece and Turkey, the present paper argues that the different outcomes with respect to minority policies can be explained with reference to the differences that these movements presented. The main issue is the substantial delay of Turkish nationalism compared to the Greek one. It must be remembered that the Lausanne Treaty was created in order to determine a viable modus vivendi between the two countries, resolving sources of conflict, including the minority issue. Therefore, although both countries appeared to be at the same position vis-à-vis their minorities, Greece

²¹ Indicatively for the Muslim minority see Andreadis 1980; Asimakopoulou/Christidou-Lionaraki 2002; Bahcheli

after a century of struggling for its ‘Great Idea’, managed to acquire a high degree of ethnic homogeneity. On the contrary, post-Lausanne Turkey was still multi-ethnic and it was since then that its exclusive nationalism started developing and being applied. As a recent movement that had to defend itself against external enemies and internal opposition, it was more aggressive and absolute both at its content and application. Neglected or suppressed identity issues tend to cause greater concern and instability. Indicatively, the Turkish Government proceeded with a compromise that again like the emergence of its nationalism followed a century after the Greek paradigm. While Kemalism fundamentally imposed secularism, people remained strongly attached to Islam, which increased its importance in sociopolitical affairs, and eventually several restrictions were repealed. Faced with the increasing tide of left-wing and extreme right-wing ideologies during the 1970s, the 1980 regime decided to promote Islam as an ideological alternative that could attract people and inspire respect towards Turkish society and traditions (Poulton 1999: 257; Zurcher 1997: 203). This Turkish-Islamic synthesis, a parallel to Helleno-Christianism, had a strong appeal to many military leaders who decided to allow a ‘state-friendly’ version of Islam to reinstate its position into history and tradition, becoming an integral part of the society, including primary and secondary education²².

However, the above compromise, should not conceal the fact that the social ban on religion was an action contrary to the feelings of a large part of the society. Modern Turkey is more or less the result of one, doubtless charismatic, person: Ataturk. He produced what Zurcher (1997: 197) called a ‘revolution by degree’. When the first reforms were thus imposed, often contrary to the population’s will and common practice, they set a paradigm to follow. These reforms were

1990; Oran 1986; Helsinki Watch Report 1999.

formed and imposed by intellectuals-‘courtiers’ and by institutions that were under Kemal’s guidance and control²³. The same process has been henceforth controlled by the military, which has been expressing its adherence to Kemalist doctrines and practices. Voices challenging this establishment are silenced, prosecuted or banned. As the journalist Sahin Alpay has said, a Kemalist in the 1990s ‘cannot accept rational criticism’ (Pope/Pope 1997:67). Similarly, for Pasmazoglou (1993: 298), the Constitution and legislation are mere ‘instruments for use and abuse according to the interests of the government group’. Law and the judiciary have a patronizing and protective function similar to the case of Greece in the 1950s and 1960s, with the difference that in Turkey justice has been inspired by a military ‘shadow government’ and its nationalist interests, and is therefore more persistent and less flexible. Hence, in official rhetoric ‘the concept of “law” appears mainly against any attempt by individuals, associations, trade unions and other social agents to express themselves differently’. In other words, ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ are usually regarded as obstacles to the military’s power over minorities, religious sects and heresies, political movements, unions and parties and various social groups²⁴. The army has particularly underlined its political role with its interventions in 1960, 1971, 1980, and in 1997 with its ‘soft coup’²⁵, all justified on the need to protect Kemal’s heritage, which was betrayed or threatened by political parties or social conditions (Pasmazoglou 1993: 332-335). In order to restore order thousands of political opponents and activists were imprisoned, while

²² Turkish Constitution, Article 24.

²³ Characteristically Kinross (1964: 468) referred to ‘the limited company of his own entourage-the yes-men who were his slaves, the so-called intellectuals who none the less heeded no one but him’. Also according to Millas (2001: 62-63) ‘in the case of the “Turkish Thesis” the whole effort was run by Mustafa Kemal and some historians or “historians” of his immediate environment, such as his adopted daughter Afet Inan’.

²⁴ ‘The concepts of authority of the state and the Turkish nation operate against the development of a pluralist culture and contrary to the idea of a social welfare state’. Pasmazoglou 1993: 298-299.

²⁵ In this case, the military threatened to intervene unless Erbakan resigned, which he did on 20 June 1997. His pro-Islamic Welfare Party, which had remained in power since July 1996 was declared illegal and was closed down and Erbakan was banned from politics.

universities and even the army were purged of pro-Islamic and left-wing elements²⁶. A decisive step took place with the 1980 coup and the Constitution that the military imposed tightening its control over political affairs. Its provisions curtailed-in practice suppressed-the autonomy, self-administration and freedom of universities²⁷, the press²⁸ and the judiciary²⁹, while it institutionalized its political presence with the National Security Council, which acquired extensive powers³⁰. Moreover, the military has a very intertwined web through which it can control the press and other aspects of the society and prevent social and political developments³¹. It is no coincidence that since the foundation of the Republic, Ozal was the first President not to come from the military.

²⁶ Indeed, in the 1960 coup, under Turkes 235 out of 260 generals and 5000 other officers were retired, while 147 academics were sacked. According to the army, 'the coup occurred in order to prevent the outbreak of civil war.... The army belongs to the nation and does not side in favour or against any party but it serves the people and the Constitution' (Poulton 1999: 176). A year after the 1980 coup, some 122,600 people had been arrested, including trade unionists, politicians, academics, teachers, journalists and lawyers. Hale 1993. Pope/Pope 1997: 152-153. Poulton 1999: 175-178, 232-235. Zurcher 1997: 245, 254-256, 271-277, 294.

²⁷ According to Article 130, 'University rectors shall be appointed by the President of the Republic, and faculty deans by the Higher Education Council'. Article 131 regulates that 'the Higher Education Council is composed of members appointed by the President of the Republic from among the candidates who are nominated by the Council of Ministers, the Chief of the General Staff and the universities'.

²⁸ Article 28 makes it clear that 'publication shall not be made in any language prohibited by law. [...] Anyone who writes or prints any news or articles which threaten the internal or external security of the State or the indivisible integrity of the State... shall be held responsible under the law relevant to these offences'.

²⁹ Most judges of the highest courts are appointed by the President of the Republic (Articles 138-160). Pasmazoglou 1993: 306.

³⁰ Article 118 provides that 'the National Security Council shall submit to the Council of Ministers its views on taking decisions and ensuring necessary coordination with regard to the formulation, establishment, and implementation of the national security policy of the State. The Council of Ministers shall give priority consideration to the decisions of the National Security Council considering the measures that it deems necessary for the preservation of the existence and independence of the State, the integrity and indivisibility of the country and the peace and security of society'.

³¹ The military usually intervenes-often taking advantage of the newspapers' public debts-to prevent negative comments, or to defame personalities believed to 'threaten' the regime. To Pontiki, 9/11/2000. Also, the military has its own bank, the OYAK-BANK (Mutual Aid Army Organization-Ordu Yardimlasma Kurumu) with 257 branches and has evolved into a big holding company with whole or partial ownership of at least 30 companies, including food industries, automobile industries, constructor firms, stock-exchange brokers, insurance companies etc. To Pontiki, 18/7/2002.

The above observations again present striking differences in the way Greek nationalism was applied and developed. The latter was the result of a debating process between often-conflicting sides: intellectuals from all discourses, political movements, parties or ideologies were factors that formed the character of modern Greek identity. All developments and practices were open to public criticism. Even when the newly formed state made efforts for a uniform Greek culture, through the work of a coherent group of institutions and scholars, debates emerged and to an extent still do. Even political divisions often had their roots on intellectual clashes, such as the coexistence of Classical-Hellenic spirit with Byzantine-Orthodox tradition, or the conflict over the linguistic issue between use of a more classic form of Greek (καθαρεύουσα) or the modern one used by the people (δημοτική). In any case, with the exception of periods of military rule, intellectuals were free to express, develop and spread their ideas. Despite the fact that there is a set of basic national ideas to be respected and protected, there has been no 'deep state' to directly control the press, the judiciary or the academics and the ideas they represented. Even the military that has acted as a unifying force, was not a unitary political factor, as with the exception of 1967-1974, all its several other interventions were more related with micro-politics where different fructions supported different political parties. Thus, Greek nationalism evolved within a more multi-polar and colourful environment which, even if showed its disapproval, at least did not suppress the emergence of challenging ideas. As the history and social anthropology of the nation are part of this nationalist debate, there have also appeared arguments that have favoured a more humanistic approach towards minorities and have been critical towards excluding governmental practices.

A third major contrast that restrained the repression of Greece's Muslims is its deeper incorporation into EU institutions, its commitment to respect and apply the *acquis communautaire*, liberalizing its institutions, and the subsequent harm to its international standing when it failed to do so. Besides, Greece realized that it is one of the most homogeneous European countries and that anti-minority measures were politically damaging, or even ineffective. This by no means implies the existence of an ideal situation, but still it marks clear signs of a long-term change heralded as official policy that gradually overcomes prejudices and local disfunctions. The minority issue remains a matter of politics, affected by bilateral relations and most often is seen through a national security perspective. Nevertheless, the government's decision for a policy of approach and bilateral coordination, and the subsequent relaxation over minority rights signify a big step forward.

Considering the military's influence over political affairs in Turkey it is no surprise to see clashes with political elites that favour the country's accession into the EU. As this process includes liberalization over a wide range of issues including bilateral relations with neighbours and improvement of human/minority rights, the inflexibility and persistence of the military to its Kemalist roots becomes more outspoken. Responding to contrary political initiatives and rhetoric, generals have warned that implementation of EU liberal policies may well threaten Turkey's integrity³². Similar rigid attitudes, reminiscent of outdated territorial imperialism, have appeared over political prospects in Cyprus and the two Iraqi wars. In the first case, the military has retained its armed grip on the island since 1974, despite international condemnation, while recently, contrary to the will of Turkish-Cypriots, it has poisoned all efforts for a peaceful

settlement proposed by the UN in late 2002 and early 2003. With respect to Iraq, fears for the indivisible integrity of Turkey have forced it to express its willingness for revised borders that would prevent the creation of an independent Kurdish State and might cede new areas to Turkey (Pope/Pope 1997: 226-244, The Guardian 22/3/03, The Independent 22/3/03, The Times 22/3/03). The road to Europe that Greece managed to follow and cured many of its past sins, but is still sought by Turkey, may be the one indicated by Mazower (2001:382) when he says that 'here lies the great change to the nation-state since World War II. Cooperation replaced antagonism. [...] Europe has entered into a new age where war, empire and territory appear to be less important than ever before for the progress of the nation'. The above makes it clear that it is not enough for a nation-state to change its regime; it is more essential to change its attitude and character.

Future Challenges

The 2002 elections, where the Islamic Party of Tayyip Erdogan gained by an impressive 34,17%³³, which constitutes an unprecedented defeat of Kemalism, revealed the deep crisis within Turkish politics, but also an identity crisis of the society as a whole. A course of defeat that maybe started 20 years ago with the social restitution of Islam³⁴. According to Smith (1999:206), nation-building 'involves ceaseless re-interpretations, rediscoveries and reconstructions; each generation must re-fashion national institutions and stratification systems

³² Express, 12/1/2001, 24/3/2002, 4/8/2002, To Pontiki, 8/8/2002. Recently, the military prepared the 'report on privatizations', stating which domains cannot become private for strategic reasons. To Pontiki, 9/11/2000.

³³ Yet, Ertogan managed to resume his duties only in early 2003 as he had been condemned for pro-Islamic sentiments and actions and was deprived of his political rights. To Pontiki, 7/11/2002.

³⁴ In 1994 the Turkish journalist Mehmet Altan wrote that, 'Kemalism is dead, but nobody knows how to dispose of the corpse'. Pope/Pope 1997: 68.

in the light of the myths, memories, values and symbols of the “past”, which can best minister to the needs and aspirations of its dominant social groups and institutions. Hence the activity of rediscovery and re-interpretation is never complete and never simple; it is the product of dialogues between the major social groups and institutions within the boundaries of the “nation”, and it answers to their perceived ideals and interests’. Eventually, in the same way that its nationalism evolved earlier than the Turkish one, Greece managed to move quicker and more productively within the above process that subsequently benefited its minority. However, with this process it rediscovered that there are ‘new’ communities claiming minority status and that the latter is not necessarily a legal issue. Regarding its initially cautious and even negative response, it is obvious that its future challenge will be the conduct of a social dialogue for the smooth incorporation of multiculturalism as a mainstream aspect of Greek society.

On the other hand, Turkey’s dilemmas are imminent and crucial, and will determine its future structure as a nation-state, within or outside the EU. The response to recent developments including Cyprus’s EU accession, political reforms vis-à-vis the EU and the reshape of regional geopolitics, with the reemergence of the Kurdish issue, will determine its future. The exiled Turkish-Kurdish scholar Kendal Nezan has referred to Europe’s relations with Iraqi Kurds in the 1920s saying that ‘Great Powers continued to foster the myth that the civilized West might help the Kurds; what is really meant, of course, was that the Western powers would be able to use their influence on Kurdish leaders as a bargaining counter in an eventual negotiation [with the Turks]’ (Pope/Pope 1997: 279). This remark becomes particularly significant nowadays, as the Turkish society will have to take its challenges and risks over its minorities and mainly its Kurds,

when eventually this fundamental issue will rise if Turkey manages to reach its final stage of negotiations for joining the EU.

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The 1924 Plebiscite for Democracy

For the Symposium I suggest a paper that will present the plebiscite for democracy that took place in April 1924 in Greece, based on unpublished material that have been found in Public Record Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in France. The title of the paper will be “The plebiscite of 1924” and it will focus on questions about the meaning of the specific plebiscite and the way it was made. Until today, the impression is that the specific plebiscite expressed the true feelings of the Greek people about Monarchy and led to the establishment of Democracy. Through this paper, the mentioned view will be disputed. The purpose is to examine the reasons why the people voted for Democracy and to make an analysis of the plebiscite based on figures found in primary sources.

The first part of the paper will present the political situation of Greece following the elections of 1923, when the issue of the regime arose, until April 1924 when the plebiscite took place. The above presentation seeks to make an introduction to the general context of the Greek political scene of the period, in order to facilitate the understanding of the analysis of the plebiscite. Hence, the second part of the paper will focus on the analysis of the plebiscite, presenting firstly the figures found. The inquiring of the reasons why people voted for democracy as well as the means that were used by the government in order to assure the positive vote for democracy will follow. Finally, based on the previous analysis, an attempt will be made to explain the significance of this plebiscite for the political scene of that time.

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Title

“The Special Operations Executive in Greece 1941-1944:

The case of the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones”

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The aim of this paper is to make a contribution to the wider debate relating to the British intervention in occupied Greece 1941-1944 by highlighting the policy of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) towards the third largest national resistance organisation, the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones.

Since the early months of the occupation three main resistance organisations appeared in Greece. The largest resistance organisation nation-wide was EAM (National Liberation Front) and its guerrilla branch ELAS (Greek People's Liberation Army), controlled by the Greek Communist Party. The second largest resistance organisation was EDES (National Democratic Greek League), a republican, right wing group. The third one, also of a republican political orientation, was the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones. All national resistance organisations brought back to the surface a number of political issues that had equally to do with pre-war unresolved discords, as well as with post-war political issues. Along with the struggle against the invader, the Greek national resistance organisations made their own different proposals over the fate of post-war Greece. Eventually, these disagreements, reinforced by personal ambitions of the leaders of the resistance proved more powerful than the common hate against the invaders. The result was a civil conflict between EAM-ELAS and all republican resistance organisations.

The British and especially the Special Operations Executive (SOE) had an active role within that civil conflict. The SOE was formed in July 1940 after the War Office and Churchill personally had realised that the British Intelligence Services needed to be modernised. It was under the authority of the Ministry of Economic Warfare and its purpose was to co-ordinate all subversive activity (propaganda and sabotage) against the axis in occupied Europe. Although in theory the objective of the SOE in Greece was

military, in reality, it played an extremely important political role. The SOE did not just contribute to the active resistance against the occupation forces, but also intervened in the most direct way in the political antagonisms between the national resistance organisations with the purpose to safeguard the British interests in post-war Greece.

The role of the SOE in the conflict within the Greek resistance remains even today a controversial issue. Although previous works and historical research has brought out a substantial amount of documents concerning the attitude of the SOE towards EAM-ELAS and EDES (see Woodhouse, 1976, Myers, 1975, Fleisher, 1995, Mathiopoulos, 1977, Gasparinatos, 1998, Iatridis, 1981, Clogg, 1981, Hondros, 1983) SOE's attitude towards the 5/42 remains a rather enigmatic issue, while there was also a complete lack of documentary evidence to enlighten several dark aspects over the SOE-5/42 relations. However, current research over this issue managed to recover a large number of documents from the archives of the Public Records Office (PRO) in London, which will be presented for the first time in this paper. These documents include reports written by SOE officers concerning the 5/42, correspondence between SOE staff and correspondence between SOE officers and the 5/42 or ELAS. Based on these documents, this paper will try to answer the following two questions:

- *What was the actual relationship between the 5/42 Regiment and the SOE?*
- *What was the SOE policy against the 5/42 Regiment during its conflict with ELAS?*

The purpose of the first question is to highlight the actual political relations between the 5/42 and SOE. According to EAM-ELAS veteran's claims, the 5/42 was a political instrument of the British. Obviously such serious accusations question the credibility and the esteem of the 5/42 as a national resistance organisation and that is why

these claims need to be carefully tested against the relevant documents found in the PRO files. The purpose of the second question is to investigate the reasons why the SOE chose not to intervene and prevent the last 5/42-ELAS conflict. A number of 5/42 and EAM-ELAS veterans accuse the British that they intentionally abandoned the 5/42 to its conflict with ELAS and they have developed their own different conspiracy theories. According to the 5/42 veterans' theory that unfriendly attitude on the behalf of the British was due to a Communist conspiracy plotted by SOE Communist officers and Soviet agents. On the other hand, according to the theory supported by EAM-ELAS veterans, the British intentionally abandoned the 5/42 and caused the tragedy, because that would benefit their political objective which was to blacken ELAS' record with a fratricide. The PRO documents depict quite clearly the attitude that the British maintained towards the regiment during its last days and give definite answers to these conspiracy theories.

The British Policy towards occupied Greece

The British policy in Greece had two objectives. The short-term objective was purely military and it had to do with the success of the war effort against the Germans. The purpose was to maintain a strong and active resistance movement in Greece that would immobilise as many Germans troops as possible. The long-term objective was purely political and it had to do with the protection of the British interests in Greece. The purpose was to establish a friendly post-war regime that would underpin the British imperial position in one of the most strategic areas of the Mediterranean.

It was proved impossible for the British to achieve both objectives efficiently. The British tried to reconcile the irreconcilable and unavoidably they followed a dual policy full of contradictions. The achievement of the military objective presupposed the full British military support to the Greek national resistance movement and especially EAM-ELAS. Although EAM-ELAS was by far the most effective resistance force, it still was the greatest jeopardy for the achievement of the British political objectives in post-war Greece. On the other hand, the achievement of the political objective presupposed the full British political support to the exiled King, EAM-ELAS' worst enemy. Although King George could not contribute anything to the war effort, he and his government were guarantees for the protection of the British interests in post-war Greece. The British did not chose sides, instead they allied with anyone that could offer anything for the achievement of both their short-term military and their long-term political objectives. Among others, they allied with the 5/42 with the hope that the regiment could become an effective resistance force but at the same time an effective political and military counter-weight against EAM-ELAS.

Based on the mountainous region of Fokida in Central Greece, the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones was formed in the Spring of 1943 after the joint efforts of Colonel Dimitrios Psarros and a number of low rank local officers. Colonel Psarros along with ex-Minister Georgios Kartalis also founded the political resistance organisation EKKA (National and Social Liberation) which became the regiment's political branch. Although EKKA-5/42 maintained a friendly attitude towards EAM-ELAS and despite the fact that the official line of the 5/42 regiment was the conduct of a resistance struggle disengaged from political objectives ELAS disbanded the regiment twice in May and in June 1943. The

circumstances under which these two disbandments were decided by ELAS officers were mysterious and eventually both disbandments were disapproved of by the official EAM-ELAS. The 5/42 was reformed and EAM-ELAS officials guaranteed smooth relationships and co-operation between the two organisations. However, after these two successive conflicts, anti EAM-ELAS sentiments had increased among the 5/42 guerrillas and officers. This hostility against EAM-ELAS was also reinforced after Captain Thymios Dedousis, a fanatic anti-Communist officer, joined the regiment.

During the ELAS-EDES war in Epirus, EKKA adopted an explicit attitude in favour of ELAS. This attitude on EKKA's behalf caused serious agitation among the 5/42 officers and Captain Dedousis on behalf of the majority of the regiment's officers officially denounced EKKA. Captain Dedousis and his fraction defied Colonel Psarros' command over the regiment and became more and more provocative against EAM-ELAS. After an incident between Dedousis' company and some ELAS guerrillas, an open conflict broke out between the 5/42 and ELAS. Eventually, on 17 April 1944 large ELAS forces disbanded the 5/42 for the third and last time. After a fierce and bloody battle the 5/42 regiment collapsed. Although Colonel Psarros along with tens of 5/42 officers and antartes surrendered to ELAS, they were murdered under mysterious circumstances.

British Allies or British Henchmen?

ELAS guerrillas used to sarcastically call the 5/42 regiment “the golden resistance” due to the generosity of the British funding towards the regiment.¹ That characterisation was rather justified since the 5/42 was a national resistance organisation whose resources and maintenance were entirely dependent on the British aid. The regiment had no alternative sources to sustain and arm itself and almost all of its weapons, equipment and ammunition, as well as the funds used for the purchase of food provisions, came exclusively from British airdrops.²

The complete dependency of the 5/42 upon the generous British aid has caused serious controversy concerning the actual relationship between the 5/42 and the British. EAM-ELAS veterans and sympathisers have launched a series of allegations against Psarros and the regiment. One of the most serious ones is that Psarros was an agent of the British secret services and that he was working for the protection of the British interests in Greece. According to that allegation, Psarros was recruited in the British secret services through his brother in law Major Tsigantes, and his task was to undermine the unity of the national resistance movement.³ Obviously, this serious allegation undermines Psarros’ integrity as a Greek officer and questions his capacity as a national resistance leader.

¹ Giangis, interview 17 August 2000, Rodakis, interview 21 April 2000, Koutroukis, interview 22 April 2000, Bekios, interview 8 May 2000

² Two balance sheets including the overall amounts of gold sovereigns that the 5/42 received in total from the British were found in the PRO files. These balance sheets clearly indicate that the regiment’s funding by the British was certainly generous (PRO HS 5/575).

³ See Rodakis, interview 21 April 2000, Koutroukis, interview 22 April 2000, Bekios, interview 8 May 2000, K. Angelidis, interview 7 August 2000, V. Angelidis, interview 7 August 2000

Documents found in the PRO give insight about the actual relationship between Psarros and the British and depict the British attitude over Psarros and the 5/42. The first set of documents are two reports written by two British officers, Lieutenant Colonel Dolby and Lieutenant Colonel Mulgan, an SOE LIQ (Special Operations Executive Liquidation) officer after the end of the occupation (1 February 1945). In these reports, the two officers discuss their views about a post-war claim for economic relief submitted by EKKA's central committee to the British military. One of the claims of EKKA's central committee was the award of a pension to Psarros' widow.

In his report, Colonel Dolby seems positive towards the issue of Mrs Psarros' pension and argues that:

“we should take into consideration the fact that PSAROS was working almost under our direct orders, that his widow is a well known person in Athens and her sister Mrs TSIGANTES, whose husband was killed by the ITALIANS whilst leader of our THURGOLAND Mission, received a pension of £1,050” (PRO HS 5/575).

Lieutenant Colonel Mulgan however had a different view. He argues that only SOE personnel or personnel hired by SOE agents were entitled of pensions and therefore he rejects the request:

“The question of a pension to PSAROS' widow is surely a matter for the GREEK Governor; if it is felt that he died as a friend of ENGLAND, for a present from the BRITISH Government through the embassy; but certainly not a matter for Force 133 [SOE and Middle East Headquarters]” (PRO HS 5/575).

The correspondence between the two British officers undermines ELAS veterans' argument that Psarros was an agent of the British. Nevertheless, the impression that these two reports leave is that although Psarros was not a British agent, he was almost a puppet under the direct orders of the SOE and the Middle East Headquarters and that the 5/42 was an artificial organisation created and sponsored by the British. That colonial attitude

towards the 5/42 generates some very important issues over the regiment's degree of dependence towards the British both in military, but more importantly, in political terms.

Militarily, just the fact that the 5/42 was funded and armed exclusively by the British proves that the regiment's military dependence upon the British was almost entire. In any case though, the whole resistance movement was in close military co-operation with the British and all national resistance organisations –ELAS included- were to some degree dependent on them. The 5/42 veterans not only denied that dependence, but throughout their memoirs and testimonies, they stress with pride that they were loyal to the orders of the Middle East Headquarters. Nevertheless, although the military subordination of a resistance organisation to the British allies was considered permissible, on the grounds that it benefited the allied war effort, political subordination was a totally different and by far a more controversial issue since that would imply the interference of a foreign power to domestic affairs. Many radical EAM-ELAS veterans seem convinced that this was exactly the case with the 5/42. They argue that 5/42 and EKKA were under the political orders of the British and that both the regiment as well as its political branch were nothing more than a mere army of praetorians and mercenaries funded and maintained with the sole purpose to sabotage EAM-ELAS and serve the British interests in Greece.⁴

Documents found in the PRO files challenge that view. A “most secret report of sub-committee on resistance organisations in Greece” dated 17 October 1943 gives a brief summary of EKKA's political manifesto and on Psarros' activities towards the formation of the 5/42. According to that report:

⁴ Bekios, interview 8 May 2000, Rodakis, interview 21 April 2000, V. Angelidis, interview 7 August 2000, K. Angelidis, interview 7 August 2000

“To sum up: Politically the organisation does not carry great weight” (PRO HS 5/625).

In another most secret report dated 5 December 1943, the secret services in Cairo seem ill informed and confused about EKKA’s political plans. That report was misinformed about serious political developments within EKKA-5/42, while it indicated that the British had a rather limited appreciation and interest over the political potential of EKKA-5/42 and that there was some concern over the possibility of a future closer co-operation between EKKA and EAM-ELAS.⁵ Another report about the political crisis in Greece written by the Commander of the British Military Mission in Greece Major Woodhouse himself indicates that the British were in serious doubt over the political credibility of EKKA and Psarros personally:

“He is a good soldier, but an inconsiderable diplomat. He is likely to become in the future more and more a tool of EAM-ELAS, especially if they win the present conflict” (PRO HS 5/270).

This doubtfulness over the political credibility of EKKA and Psarros personally probably led the British to a more cautious and reserved attitude towards EKKA-5/42. Another PRO document proves beyond any doubt that the SOE refused to provide EKKA-5/42 the necessary political and military assistance so that the 5/42’s manpower could reach 3,000 guerrillas and become a large enduring and viable military force that could protect itself effectively from ELAS’ aggression.⁶

The PRO documents indicate that although the SOE equipped and funded the 5/42 generously, they were reluctant to provide to EKKA-5/42 their full support. They chose to maintain EKKA-5/42 as their allies, but they refused to give them the means for real military and political might. That was done for two main reasons. The first is that the

⁵ PRO HS 5/236

British regarded Zervas and EDES a much safer alternative than Psarros and EKKA-5/42. In his memoirs Zervas admitted that he was suffering from “incurable love for England”⁷ and obviously the British appreciated that love. The British considered Zervas and EDES a much more reliable and loyal British ally and a much more effective adversary to EAM-ELAS, and they did not want to jeopardize Zervas’ unconditional alliance. The second reason is that the British were dubious over the reliability of EKKA-5/42 as effective counter-weights against EAM-ELAS. Especially after the period of the EKKA-EAM flirtation, the British felt insecure about the loyalty of Psaros and Kartalis to them. This insecurity is a serious indication that the British did not have the political control within EKKA-5/42 as EAM-ELAS veterans argue.

Conspiracy Theories.

Although the British had their doubts about EKKA-5/42, they were on the same side with the 5/42 against the Germans, as well as against EAM-ELAS. Nevertheless, many 5/42 veterans and sympathisers have expressed a series of complaints over the British attitude towards the 5/42. Most of these complaints are turned against the regiment’s British Liaison Officer (BLO), Major Geoffrey Gordon Creed or “Geoff” as he used to be called.⁸ According to their accusations, 20 years old Geoff was incompetent, lazy and totally indifferent towards the regiment. They accuse him for being

⁶ PRO HS 5/236

⁷ Zervas, 2000: 14

⁸ All British Liaison Officers were used to be called by Greeks with their first names.

a womaniser who was interested more in his Greek girlfriends rather than work for the regiment.⁹

There is also a series of much more serious allegations not just against Geoff personally, but against the overall attitude that the British Military Mission and the Middle East Headquarters maintained towards the 5/42. These allegations imply a conspiracy. They imply that the British betrayed the 5/42 and that they deliberately did not take any measures to protect the regiment from ELAS' aggression. What is most interesting about those allegations is that they come from the side of both EAM-ELAS and the 5/42.

A conspiracy theory supported by many EAM-ELAS veterans and sympathisers is based on a simple hypothesis and an equally simple assumption. The hypothesis is that the 5/42's disbandment and Psarros' murder were disastrous for EAM-ELAS and that above all others, those who were benefited by that disaster were the British. Therefore, the assumption is that the British caused or at least contributed to the 5/42's disbandment and to Psarros' murder.¹⁰

On the other hand, some 5/42 veterans and sympathisers have also developed their own conspiracy theory. The explanation that they give is that although the Middle East Headquarters and the British Military Mission in Greece had the political will to support the 5/42 and to protect it from ELAS' aggression; a communist conspiracy

⁹ Moreover, the regiment's veterans were also disappointed about Geoff's post war behaviour. According to a rumour, after the war, Geoff became a mercenary in central Africa and his tracks were lost. However, in 1978 or 1979, the 5/42's veterans association managed to locate Geoff in America where he had settled and they invited him to attend the annual memorial ceremony for Psarros and the 5/42 men. Geoff's answer was that he would attend only if air tickets, accommodation and expenses were covered by the 5/42 veterans association and that was considered as an insult from the 5/42 veterans behalf. (All these accusations in Kaimaras, interview 18 December 1999, Karaliotis, interview 4 May 2000, Kouvelis, interview 18 April 2000, Protopapas, interview 6 May 2000, G. Karagianis, 12 May 2000).

¹⁰ Bekios, :405, Skaltsas, 1984: 131, Richter, 1975, vol.2:121.

sabotaged their efforts. Those who support that view claim that many communists had managed to infiltrate the Middle East Headquarters, the Intelligence Service and the British Military Mission in Greece. Some of these men were simply members of the British Communist party, or mere Leftist sympathisers, while others were genuine Soviet agents. However, either because they were ordered by the Soviet secret services or due to solidarity towards their Greek fellow communists, all of them tried to sabotage the official British policy of support towards the republican resistance organisations and they supported ELAS instead.¹¹

Conspiracy theories flourish when events cannot be explained by evidence and in the case of the British attitude towards the 5/42, especially during its last dramatic days, the lack of evidence was literally total. According to EDES' sub-commander Pyromaglou:

“Unfortunately there is a total lack of evidence concerning the issue. Only the telegrams between the two Majors, the British Military Mission in Greece and the Middle East Headquarters could enlighten us” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 328).

Obviously, for Pyromaglou and all the other national resistance veterans who have developed the above conspiracy theories, access to these documents was rather impossible. However, large quantities of the telegrams described by Pyromaglou were found in the Public Record Office. These telegrams provide staggering information about the attitude that the British maintained during the last ELAS-542 crisis. They redefine established and stereotypical views over the SOE-5/42 alliance.

¹¹ See Dedousis, 1949: 57-58, “The 5/42 Regiment”, Veteran’s association newsletter, January-March 2001, vol.9, Papathanasiou, interview 11 January 2000, Mannaos, interview 5 May 2000.

“A Foregone Conclusion” and “a Useless Trouble”.

The tension between 5/42 and ELAS started on 3 March when ELAS guerrillas surrounded the Sernikaki village and disarmed some 5/42 men. Since the Sernikaki incident a chain of violent clashes followed. Fokida was on red alert and it was rather obvious that the tension was escalating and that the 5/42 and ELAS were heading for a new conflict. However, British Liaison Officers seemed ignorant and not worried about the recent developments. Major Mulgan for example sent a telegram to Cairo according to which:

“The EKKA/ELAS trouble is apparently not serious. I expect it to blow over”
(PRO HS 5/355).

The BLO's did not realise the seriousness of the situation. They seemed convinced that it was just a minor event and they did not undertake any initiative to intervene. That indifference by the BLO's certainly contributed to the conflict's escalation since the chance for an early resolution was lost.

The first British attempt to intervene and resolve the crisis came 10 days later after the Sernikaki incident in 13 March where Major Creed called Psarros and ELAS representatives in Lidoriki for discussions. During that meeting, Psarros agreed to all of ELAS' terms (remove one of his officers Major Kapentzonis from the command of his battalion, suspend Dedousis and return the weapons that Dedousis plundered from ELAS antartes), but he refused to denounce Dedousis and surrender him to an ELAS court-martial. Creed was optimistic and believed that the solution to the crisis had been found with that meeting.¹²

¹² PRO HS 5/291

During the last days of March however, it had become obvious that the situation was getting out of hand, Psarros was desperate and he put all of his hopes for a resolution on a British intervention. In 4 and 6 April Psarros made two urgent appeals to Creed for a decisive and immediate arbitration.¹³

In 6 April, Creed gave the following answer to Psarros:

“Dear Colonel...Please be sure that I am doing the outmost possible to resolve the crisis which at this moment threatens Greece” (PRO HS 5/279).

The truth however is that Major Creed was giving Psarros nothing but lip service and false hopes. On 4 April, at the same day where he was reassuring Psarros that he was doing the outmost to prevent the conflict, Creed was transmitting to Cairo the following telegram:

“My opinion affairs have gone too far for settlement by arbitration. Awaiting further developments” (PRO HS 5/290).

Two days later in 6 April, Creed sent another telegram to Cairo:

“...Psarros beseeching intervention GHQ [ELAS] but my view that talks at this stage not much good” (PRO HS 5/291).

In addition to these telegrams to Cairo, Creed sent the following two letters to Colonel Hammond:

“As you know as well as I do, the 5/42 have never really had a hope in hell even since their first disbandment last May.....Perhaps you can enlighten me, has the EKKA great political influence in Cairo? I think it must have otherwise we should have left it fade out long ago” (PRO HS 5/279).

On 15 April, two days before the final battle Creed sent the following telegram to the Middle East Headquarters:

“An ELAS force of approximately 1,000 is closing in on the 5/42 (EKKA) Regiment positions at Klima. Final battle seems inevitable and the result a foregone

¹³ PRO HS 5/279

conclusion. I suggest we accept the new status quo this area and no more ado” (PRO HS 5/355, HS 5/289).

Major Creed’s cynicism, ironic attitude and indifference towards the regiment’s fate are impressive and rather reconfirms the 5/42 veteran’s complaints about his unfriendly attitude towards the regiment since what becomes obvious from these documents is that he had a very limited willingness to intervene and resolve the crisis. However, although the Middle East Headquarters had full knowledge over the seriousness of the situation, they did not give any feedback, orders or instructions to Creed about how to handle the situation. That indifference is certainly suspicious, but it was not unintentional.

Another document proves beyond any doubt that the Middle East Headquarters as well as the high rank SOE officers of the British Military Mission in Greece had written off the 5/42 as a lost cause at least four months before the battle in Klima. On 2 January 1944, Colonel Hammond sent to Cairo the following telegram, which is probably an answer or commentary to a report, sent to him by the Middle East Headquarters:

“On basis your reports have formed opinion EKKKA will shortly succumb to ELAS attack or persuasion and cease to exist as independent force. ELAS presumably watching us supply EKKKA without interfering because they intent these supplies eventually come into their own hands. Presume you have anticipated this and will not be taken by surprise. On the whole can see no point in trying to prevent this when time comes. Offers of moderate sympathisers may be more valuable to us inside ELAS than outside. Please keep me informed but do not involve yourselves in active measures to withstand what seems inevitable” (PRO HS 5/236).

“Give EAM-ELAS Enough Rope”.

As Major Creed mentioned in his letter to Hammond, the 5/42 “never really had a hope in hell”, and probably the British could not do much to alter the regiment’s fate.

However, the above documents prove that both the SOE consciously and intentionally did not take any measures to prevent the collapse of the 5/42 and its tragic end. Moreover they prove that the British anticipated such a development in a positive mind. That unfriendly attitude sounds awkward since although the 5/42 had a series of weaknesses, it was at the end of the day a pro-British force and an additional counter-weight against EAM-ELAS. Most of all it was an additional resistance force who was fighting the Germans side by side with the British.

What is even more awkward is the fact that the British maintained the same disinterested attitude towards the regiment even after the tragedy in Klima. They did not impose the slightest penalty to ELAS (e.g suspend air supplies) and they did not make any issue (e.g formal complaint). For the commander of the British Military Mission in Greece Woodhouse, the 5/42 case was closed. That moderate and unemotional attitude however was not due to lack of decisiveness on his behalf, and it was certainly not due to leniency towards EAM-ELAS. Another document found in the PRO files suggests that this attitude was the result of a very elaborate and sensitive policy that Woodhouse had came up with since November, December 1943. In 6 May 1944 he sent Cairo a telegram where he gave his views about a proposal that he had received from Cairo. That proposal suggested the official denunciation of EAM-ELAS by the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the withdrawal of all allied mission personnel from Greece in order to expose EAM-ELAS in the Greek public opinion and to prevent EAM-ELAS from seizing power after the departure of the Germans:¹⁴

Woodhouse had a totally different view:

¹⁴ PRO HS 5/223, HS 5/224

“Purpose of proposed plan is destroy power of EAM-ELAS. Can think of no better way to do precisely the opposite. Please see my Nov and Dec appreciation which I consider proved by events. Especially conclusion “Give EAM-ELAS a little more rope with which to pull their weight and in the end they will hang themselves”. Situation is that effective resistance to Huns ends with Allied Mission evacuation and gives EAM-ELAS post-war power for nothing whereas maintenance Allied Mission despite Present difficulties offers resistance to Huns and encourages self destruction of EAM-ELAS”. (PRO HS 5/223).

On 11 May, another British Liaison Officer (most probably Hammond) sent Cairo the following telegram with his views over the issue of the denunciation of EAM-ELAS and the evacuation of the Allied Military Mission from Greece:

“All here in fullest agreement with Chris’ views especially par 3. And fear denunciation of EAM at this stage may well do more harm than good. However, unpalatable politically they are in certain areas of definite military value. Witness five trains destroyed in recent weeks. Only hope of discrediting EAM is to give them enough rope to hang themselves” (PRO HS 5/223).

The assumption that the SOE conspired to the collapse of the 5/42 cannot be backed by the documents that this research came up with. On a purely pragmatic basis, the British cannot be blamed as accomplices to the 5/42 tragedy. They did not cause the tragedy and they did not compel ELAS to disband the 5/42 and kill Psarros. However, the PRO documents prove rather clearly that the British abandoned the 5/42 to its fate. The British saw a friendly force heading straight to annihilation and they did not lift a finger to prevent that from happening. They intentionally did nothing to avoid or at least minimise the tragedy that happened in Klima, and worse, they made a profit out of that tragedy.

To the veterans of both the 5/42 and EAM-ELAS, the British lack of solidarity to the 5/42 was a mystery. Since they had no available evidence, both sides produced their own conspiracy theories over the issue. In addition to the fact that those conspiracy theories lacked evidence, they were rather simplistic and convenient interpretations of

events. Both sides placed all responsibilities for the 5/42 tragedy on the British and conveniently forgot to make their own self-criticism about their respective responsibilities to the happening of the 5/42 tragedy.

Without even taking under consideration the fact that their own insubordination was one of the main causes of the 5/42's collapse and by stubbornly refusing even to consider the possibility that they were abandoned by their allies and Champions, the regiment's veterans found another more convenient theory. According to that theory, an evil Communist conspiracy averted the 5/42 from becoming a mighty force and the unfriendly attitude of the British was due to the dark activities of Communists and Soviet agents. However, many of the documents that this research came up with were written by people such as Chris Woodhouse or Nicholas Hammond who did their utmost to undermine EAM-ELAS and prevent the "Communist danger" from spreading to Greece. At the same time however, it was them who abandoned the regiment to its fate. The only way that the existing 5/42 veterans could come to terms with that antithesis is to try to understand that the limits of allied solidarity stop at the point where the limits of political deliberation begin.

EAM-ELAS veterans on the other hand came up with their own convenient alibi. Their cliché is that the British used the "divide and conquer" tactic in the case of the 5/42 and their own conspiracy theory is that the 5/42 tragedy was carefully planned by the British with the sole purpose to discredit EAM-ELAS. By that convenient theory, EAM-ELAS veterans washed their hands over their own responsibility to the making of the 5/42 tragedy and burdened all responsibilities to the evil British plots. However, although EAM-ELAS veterans used the "divide and conquer" theory as an excuse, they did not

really understand how offensive and derogatory that theory really was for them. By accepting that theory, they accept for themselves the role of the irresolute and willess native who was dragged by the will of the mighty colonist. Whatever the excuse or the theory, the fact remains that ELAS disbanded the 5/42 three times and murdered its leader and many of the regiment's men while in captivity. The truth is that although the British had every intention to discredit EAM-ELAS, they were not the ones who caused the 5/42 tragedy. The British just stepped out of EAM-ELAS' way and just watched them discrediting themselves. They just gave EAM-ELAS "enough rope to hang themselves".

The Weakest Link of the Greek Resistance

Compared with EAM-ELAS and EDES, the 5/42 was the weakest link of the national resistance movement and the British had very little to expect from it in achieving any of their political or military objectives. Firstly, the 5/42 failed to become a strong and combative resistance force. Due to the successive disbandments by ELAS and due to its domestic conflicts, the regiment had a rather insignificant contribution to the war effort against the Germans. On the other hand, ELAS and EDES were by far more experienced and effective guerrilla forces and they could carry out the resistance struggle by themselves. Secondly, the 5/42 never became an effective military opponent against ELAS. As Major Creed put it "they never really had a hope in Hell" since large ELAS forces surrounded the regiment and they were capable to disband the regiment at any given time. On the other hand, EDES was a by far more effective and dependable anti-

ELAS band. Thirdly, EKKA never became a reliable political force for the British. Kartalis' incoherent policies and his flirtation with EAM made the British suspicious over EKKA's trustworthiness as political allies against EAM-ELAS. On the contrary, Zervas was a loyal and reliable British ally and the British preferred to pledge all of their trust upon him.

During the last period of the occupation, the British had a rather clear picture about their position in Greece. It had become obvious that the war against Hitler was going to be victorious and that Greece was going to be free soon. The situation in Greece was becoming more and more polarised and the British were concentrating their efforts towards their post-war dominance. The gap between the opposite camps had become obvious and the British knew very well who were their enemies and who were their allies on which they could count on. As far as the 5/42 was concerned, things were not so clear. The 5/42 was certainly not the enemy, but it was not a reliable ally either. Although the British had invested in the 5/42, the regiment had become a liability rather than an asset for them.

A small footnote in the history of World War II.

The 5/42 Regiment of Evzones was one of the national resistance groups that joined the international war effort against the axis across Europe. It was a small guerrilla force with a small contribution to that war effort, nevertheless, the history of the 5/42 was in fact an episode, a mere footnote, in the history of World War II. It would obviously be very risky to draw any conclusions about World War II, the momentous and

consequential event of the 20th century, based on the sole case study of the 5/42. However, since there was some international dimension in the history of the 5/42, it would not be wrong to place the 5/42's history within the wider context of World War II and make some observations, especially about the alliances within the anti-axis coalition.

The rise of Hitler was a call for unity among all those who had an interest to resist him and his allies for their own different reasons. That call for unity had an unprecedented and phenomenal appeal across the World and it achieved to bring together the United States with the Soviet Union and Communism with Capitalism. The anti-axis camp soon became a gigantic coalition of states, ideologies, movements, social, political and national groups. All those members that formed that multicoloured and bizarre coalition had very little in common. Their coalition was not formed on the solid basis of mutuality of principles, rather on the fragile basis of mutuality of objectives, which was no other than to beat the common enemy. Most of the alliances that were formed within the anti-axis coalition were formed hastily; they were occasional and rather unemotional. The alliance between the British and the 5/42 was only one of the numerous unemotional alliances that were contracted against the axis.

As most of these alliances, the one between the 5/42 and the British proved to be short lived. The unhappy ending of that specific alliance was a rather typical example of the way that a number of alliances ended soon after World War II. As soon as the anti-axis bloc achieved its principal objective, the seams that connected all the members of that bloc broke. The common enemy did no longer exist and all the conflicts and differences between the various members of the coalition were brought back in the agenda. According to Hobsbawm:

“From the moment that Fascism was not any longer there to unite them, Capitalism and Communism were for once more ready to confront each other”. (Hobsbawm, 2002: 230)

Along with Communism and Capitalism all of the states, ideologies, movements, social, political and national groups that participated in the anti-axis coalition were ready to reclaim their interests and confront each other in the parliament, the economy and in some cases even in the battlefield.

The anti-axis coalition never became more than the sum of its members and the case of the alliance between the 5/42 and the British reconfirms that fact. On a realistic point of view, the collapse of the anti-axis coalition soon after the end of World War II, was a rational development. However, the hopes of all those who had believed that the anti-axis coalition could become more than the sum of its members and that the spirit of that coalition could continue to live on even after the wars end, were proven false. For the famous Greek writer and intellectual Nikiforos Vretakos, that failure was a direct insult in the memory of all those who sacrificed their lives in the international fight against fascism. He wrote:

World War II: 50 million dead
What is there to write?
We have abandoned our graves and we roam homeless.
While we were fighting, it did not even cross our minds that we are sacrificing ourselves just for our tombstones to serve as missile launch bases.

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Continuity and change in the minority policies of Greece and Turkey*

The present paper discusses the policies of Greece and Turkey with respect to their respective minorities, as defined in the treaty of Lausanne. Though evidently since 1923, both minorities have been repressed, their current condition presents some striking differences, as the previously numerous Greek community of Turkey has almost entirely disappeared, while the respective Muslim one in Greece has slightly increased¹, despite the fact that according to its birth rates it should be more numerous (Helsinki Watch Report 1999: 18-20, 33). The present paper argues that this is due to the fact that Turkey has consistently and systematically repressed its minority, especially during crisis-periods, when bilateral disputes provided the necessary pretext for retaliation upon the Greeks. On the other hand, Greek policy appears to be less coherent, as until 1967 there do not appear anti-minority actions of an equal extent, though there was increased prejudice and insecurity towards Muslims after the outbreak of the Cyprus controversy in the 1950s. In 1967, the ascent of the colonels into power culminated a process that viewed the minority as a destabilizing factor that could be used by Turkey in similar terms as the Turkish-Cypriots. Hence, the junta intensified the minority's repression initiating a series of anti-minority measures, but after its fall in 1974 there has been a gradual improvement, as the definite decision

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of Greece to join the EU made it politically intolerable to pursue policies that violate human rights.

An extensive variety of instruments have violated minority rights in both cases, including physical, economic, social, educational and religious repression. Existing studies have focused more on political disputes between Greece and Turkey, or have emphasized more on general aspects and the outcome of any persecution against the minorities (Bahcheli 1990; Conostas 1991; Herakleides 2001); a development that derives from the need to satisfy the rather extensive polemical bibliography (Koures 1997; Volkan/Itzkowitz 1994, Bayulken 1963), while more interesting information usually comes from researches on very particular single issues and periods, which yet are of fragmented nature (Panagiotides 1995; Soltarides 1997). Within this context, this paper will address a number of issues in attempting to assess the different practices, the intensity and the final outcome of minority repression in both countries. However, a number of variables will also be examined including the content of nationalist ideology, the different phases of its development, the main tools for the implementation of this repression and the external constraints facing the two countries in the implementation of their policies.

Ideals, Symbolisms and Myths

Greek nationalism, based on common religion, traditions, geography, culture, language and collective memories was one of the first such movements in South-Eastern Europe. What seems to have determined its course was the prosperity and social mobilization of merchants and

¹ Greeks in Turkey have dwindled from 111,000 to 2-3,000, while Thracian Muslims currently number 120-130,000

shipowners, who multiplied their contacts with Western Europe and the ideas of the French Revolution. The latter influenced many Greek intellectuals who promoted the revolutionary spirit and contributed to the outbreak of the Greek revolution (1821) that ended 4 centuries of Ottoman occupation (Gondicas/Issawi 1999; Sathas 1995; Vakalopoulos 1988). Yet, the new state comprised of geographically separated areas with regionalist tendencies, particular local traditions, social contrasts and even distinctive idioms. The authorities tried to end this fragmentation with the establishment of a very centralized administration and the application of a common language and education, which would solidify the Greek identity with a parallel subordination and loyalty of the society to the state (Kitromilides 1997: 73-84; Peckham 2001: 33). The attempt for a uniform history and national ideology stumbled upon the conflicting ideological characteristics of Byzantium, which were deeply enrooted into the hearts of the people, compared with the Classical ideals that were the intellectuals' focal point. Yet, this contradiction was compromised with the formal incorporation of the Byzantine era into the continuum of the nation's history, with the theory of Helleno-Christianism, according which the two elements complemented each other. Intellectuals like Korais, Righas and Katartzis and later Paparrigopoulos and institutions like the university and public education promoted this idea of uninterrupted continuity of the ethnē/nation during Classical Greece, Byzantium to the modern period (Peckham 2001: 144; Smith 1999: 145-146,187,203; Tatsios 1984: 10-14; Tsoukalas 1996: 299-302).

Kitromilidis identifies the army, education, judicial power and the creation of a national Church as the main factors that promoted this loyalty and uniformity. Another factor was the 'Great

Idea' that focused mainly on the social and ideological coherence of the country and supplementary on possible territorial advancements against the Ottoman Empire (Kitromilides 1997: 75-85,118; Peckham 2001: 62-86). Nevertheless, Greek beliefs were challenged by the other emerging Balkan nationalisms, as the gradual decline of Ottoman power stirred the conflict between them, while nationalist propagandas based their rights onto language, history, ethnography, geography, folk traditions and religious affiliations. As a result of this conflict Greece, alike its neighbours became increasingly sensitive over issues of territorial integrity and national sovereignty².

Hence, as Kitromilides (1997: 80-81) asserts, the Greek state, through the judiciary managed to control and condemn as 'social misconduct' acts and behaviours that did not comply with its national ideology, but tried to evade its homogenizing mechanisms. According to Pollis (1987:588), there is a philosophical tradition 'that has prevailed on the European continent, particularly Germany, which has led to a theoretical and philosophic view of human rights diametrically opposed to that stemming from natural law as understood in the Anglo-Saxon tradition...neo-Kantianism, and the theories of positivism led to a conceptualization of rights as emanating from the state'. The fact that Greece had not developed an autonomous philosophy of law, or human rights theory, and the strong Bavarian influence resulted in a tradition based on Platonism, neo-Kantianism and positivism (Pollis 1987: 588-589; 1992: 174-175). Accordingly, 'the conception of an organic entity, traditionally confined to the extended family and/or the village, has been transposed to the nation (ethnos) which is embodied in the state further reinforcing its power. Individual autonomy and dissidence are perceived as threats, to the whole'

² According to Hobsbawm, 'nationalism of the small states tolerated with equal difficulty...the existence of

(Pollis 1987: 595)³. Henceforth, although Greece has signed international conventions like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it recognizes minority status/rights only if this is particularly determined by bilateral or multilateral agreements, like the Lausanne Treaty, which refer to specific populations and guarantees. Therefore, there is a misleading perception considering the existence of a minority to be a legal issue, despite resolutions of the Permanent Court of International Justice and the CSCE that a minority's existence is a real issue and matter of personal choice (Tsitselikes/Christopoulos 1997: 419).

Early Ottoman intellectuals, such as Akchura, Tekinalp, Gokalp, and Namik Kemal inspired by the decadence of the Empire and the need to reform, elaborated on several ideologies that paved the way for Kemal's reforms. Since the Tanzimat (1839) there appeared the ideologies of Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turkism and Pan-Turanism⁴. Despite some references to the Turkish people as a distinctive nation⁵, until early 20th century the term 'Turk' could mean anyone belonging to the Muslim millet (Karpas 1982: 165) and was often used negatively, even

minorities' (1994: 188-189).

³ Supporters of Kantianism, claim that it is not the subject that is rejected, but the tendency for its absolute and unconditional moral preeminence that puts in danger the moral principles on which social solidarity and participation in a communal life are founded (Sourlas 1995: 209-230).

⁴ Ottomanism, adopting West-European ideas, advocated a policy of equal rights to all religious communities and ethnic groups in order to integrate them within the Imperial regime. Pan-Turkists rejected it because such provisions to ethnicities would curtail the rights of the Turkish population. Pan-Islamism acquired a religious anti-imperialist character as a reaction to the presence of the Great Powers over the Muslim world and focused on the common faith in order to unite the empire's subjects, though a large part of them were Christians. It was initiated by Abdulhamit II aiming to prevent the secession of the Arab provinces and control the spread of colonialism, Christianization and Pan-Slavism. His deposition in 1909 and the subsequent Arabic uprisings sealed the movement's fate. Pan-Turkism was embraced by the Young Turks, when their Ottomanism did not seem to appeal to non-Muslims. It contained extreme and racist principles and its focus included all Turkish and Turkish-speaking diasporas in the Balkans, Central Asia and the Russian Empire. It still survives in the ideology of extreme right-wing political parties like Turkey's Nationalist Action Party. Pan-Turanism (in close relation with Turanism) was used by Akchura in order to express 'Turan', as the common cradle of all Ural-Altaic and Finno-Hungarian people, envisaging their union, while Tekinalp included only Turkish people. Gokalp-probably the most influential Pan-Turkist and later Turkish nationalist-distinguished Pan-Turanism from realistic politics, due to its utopic character. For these movements see, Hostler 1957, Landau 1985, Pasmazoglou 1993: 240-262, Poulton 1999: 72-116, Zarevad 1991.

by elite Ottomans, to describe crude Anatolian villagers (Poulton 1999: 81,89; Smith 1999: 143)⁶. A more ethnocentric Turkish consciousness evolved when the Balkan states championed the freedom of their unredeemed kin living under Ottoman rule (Ahmad 1969: 154); a process culminated with the Greek-Turkish war 1919-1923. Hence, although Turkey's nation-building trail seems to share similar foundations with the Greek paradigm, a clear differentiation is that its appearance and evolution followed with substantial delay.

The personality that determined the formation of the Turkish state and defined its identity was Kemal Ataturk who favoured Gokalp's Turkism, based on the realistic need for internal reconstruction after years of fighting (Karal 1997: 17-18; Poulton 1999: 103-110). Smith (1999: 143-144) depicted Kemal's nationalism mentioning that the Young Turks' 'quest for pan-Turkic ethnic unification revealed their insecurity over an ethnic heritage which had so long been submerged in a class-bound aristocratic Ottoman *ethnie* in which lower-class "Turks" had no share. Ataturk turned his back on extra-territorial ethnic Pan-nationalism and substituted a territorial citizen-nationalism with pre-Islamic ideological memories (or myths or theories) in place of the Ottoman lateral, aristocratic *ethnie*, since only on this basis could a Western-style "nation" be evolved'. After the proclamation of the Republic on 29 October 1923 he initiated a

⁵ Namik Kemal and Ali Suavi, both Ottomanists, were among the first during 1839-1878 to use the term 'Turkish' (Poulton 1999: 77-81).

⁶ Later, for Turkish nationalism the 'Anatolian villager' acquired the character of the guardian of the pure virtues of the nation.

series of reforms that defined his idea of nationalism⁷ based on principles that were later identified as ‘Kemalism’⁸.

He believed that the Ottoman decline was largely due to foreign interventions allegedly for protecting the Christian populations, now perceived to be hostile towards his regime. Therefore, it was essential that these departed from Turkey and the massive exchange of 1923 succeeded that with minor exceptions⁹. With respect to Muslim minorities Kemal defined future policies stating that Lausanne’s provisions were ‘applicable to non-Muslims only’, as Muslims were identified with the Turkish nation (Poulton 1999: 133) in a similar way that Greece identified Orthodox with Greeks, with other religious affiliations betraying a non-Greek (Lewis B. 1965: 350-351; Pollis 1992: 178-185; 1993:339-357). State integrity was based upon political, linguistic and territorial unity, common roots, descent, history and morality. When internal political resistance or Kurdish rebellions threatened this concept, the army brutally suppressed the latter, while extraordinary judicial powers silenced all dissidents, based on laws ‘for the maintenance of order’ and special ‘independent tribunals’ applying swift justice (Lewis B. 1965: 260-261, 269-270; Poulton 1999: 127-129; Pope/Pope 1997: 248-251; Zurcher 1997: 176-182).

⁷ These included the abolition of the Sultanate-Caliphate, the closing down of religious schools, courts and sects, the application of the Swiss civil code and the Gregorian calendar and the Latin alphabet, and the abolition of fezes. See Armstrong 1932, Karancigil/Ozbudun 1997, Kinross 1964, Lewis B. 1965, Lewis G. 1965, Toynbee/Kirkwood 1926.

⁸ These are known as the ‘six pillars’ and include republicanism, nationalism, populism, etatism, secularism and revolutionarism (Karal 1997: 16-23; Pasmazoglou 1993: 268-285).

⁹ Young Turks initiated this process with the boycott of non-Muslim businesses and the widespread atrocities and violent displacement of large number of Armenians and Greeks. Christians were generally regarded as unsuitable for Turkification. As Ahmad quotes (1982: 406, 412), Greeks lived ‘organized in separate legal communities of an autonomous nature, discharged all their communal functions themselves, worshipped freely and supported their churches and schools which had kept alive through centuries the national sentiment...In this way, the Christian population did not assimilate with Moslem society and, more important, kept its national consciousness’. Also see Poulton 1999: 124-129, Zurcher 1997: 119-121.

Eventually, the authorities forbade the use of Kurdish language, names, customs and dresses¹⁰. Moreover, Kemal banished several social and cultural unions and associations and replaced them with new ones¹¹ controlled by him and his Republican Party, while he allowed, only government-controlled newspapers to be published and he purged the Istanbul University, allowing only loyal Kemalists to retain teaching posts (Zurcher 1997: 187-188).

Kemal and Kemalism became the symbols of Turkish nationalism and of Turkish unity and integrity. Therefore, his successors have considered his regime's preservation essential for the existence of the Republic. The Kemalist regime was the outcome of an alliance between civil and military bureaucratic elites, involving the Turkish merchant class, provincial notables and landowners, which displaced the respective Ottoman political and religious elites (Eisenstadt 1997:130-140; Kazancigil 1997: 44-53; Sarris: 1992). 'Young Turks and Kemalists, although very different from the traditional Ottoman bureaucrats, since they were trained in secular schools to become adepts of Western ideas and European-style patriotism, were the heirs to the old patrimonial tradition which assumed the dominance of the state over civil society and reserved the monopoly of legitimacy and authority to state elites, at the expense of social and economic elites' (Kazancigil 1997: 48). With the army imposed as the guardian of this heritage

¹⁰ According to Prime Minister Inonu 'only the Turkish nation has the rights to claim ethnic and national rights in this country', while for Tekinalp, 'New Turkey does not recognize among its citizens anything else but Turks. If today New Turkey, due to some survivals of the past, includes some hundreds of thousands citizens who have not yet adopted Turkish culture, it is certain that this will happen in a matter of a few decades'. Similarly Lausanne's 'special provisions for the protection of minorities, do not solve, but rather make things worse' (Poulton 1999: 157-161).

¹¹ Characteristically, Kemal ordered the creation of the Turkish Linguistic and Historical Societies that would promote his personally adopted doctrines of the 'Turkish Historical Thesis', arguing that the Turkish nation was the cradle and transmitter of civilization, and the 'Sun-Language Theory' that followed the same argument for the Turkish language. See Kinross 1964: 465-472, Millas 2001: 59-64, Poulton 1999: 134-148.

and of the state's preeminence and importance, Kemal's successors have shown little tolerance towards any kind of minority or political opposition that could threaten the regime.

Minority 'accounts'

In 1930, when the final accounts deriving from the 1923 exchange of populations were settled¹², the two countries appeared to bury their age-long hatred with a series of initiatives and agreements that rendered them into a coherent stabilizing factor in the Balkans. Yet, this rapprochement was artificial, as it was politically inspired and promoted, and strong prejudices, based on recent memories, still remained. With World War II approaching, political cooperation further deepened and both countries have been since under common defense aegis, while the Soviet threat and their inclusion into NATO, resulted in a golden period for minority affairs. Therefore, it was very difficult for any official endorsement of anti-minority attitudes to be manifested and initiated. A window of opportunity was presented during subsequent periods of deterioration of bilateral relations that constituted a pretext for retaliation upon the minorities.

This use of crisis periods is particularly evident in Turkish minority policy, which presents stronger elements of continuity than the Greek one. The exclusive character of Turkish national identity has affected all aspects of public life and most minorities through legislation or other administrative acts. Significantly, during the war, when both countries were officially allies, Turkey applied the capital tax (*varlik vergisi*), allegedly to support its war-suffering economy and to fight black marketing and profiteering. The tax would be imposed once on fortunes and

¹² For details of this exchange see Eddy 1931; Ladas 1932; Pentzopoulos 1962.

exceptional profits. Yet in effect it was inspired by racist perceptions, as debtors were divided into ‘Muslims’ and ‘non-Muslims’ and the specially formed committees imposed arbitrarily estimated taxes, which were dictated by governmental sources. These amounts were much higher for non-Muslims¹³ and even higher from the debtors’ fortunes. The tax was a short-term success but a long-term failure, as it destabilized the economy and damaged Turkey’s international profile. Greeks, who constituted 0,55% of the total population, were assessed at 20% of the total tax and lost much confidence towards the administration’s disposition towards them.

Despite cordial relations after 1945, Cyprus appeared as a catalyst in the 1950s and especially in 1955 when riots broke out in Istanbul, while tripartite talks were held in London on the island’s fate. Widespread pillaging and destruction of Greek properties was carried by semi-official elements, like the Kibris Turktur association and student and labour unions. The government was in close contact and cooperation with Kibris Turktur¹⁴, while the 1960 trials of the Menderes government verified the suspicions that the riots were well-planned and carried out under the auspices of the authorities. These riots were a physical expression of anti-minority feelings, which in combination with some initial expulsions, caused the first wave of emigration of Istanbul Greeks, despite efforts by the Greek consular authorities to discourage them from selling their properties and going to Greece¹⁵. A similar pretext reappeared in 1963-64, when inter-communal fighting in Cyprus resulted in severe repression, particularly evident in education¹⁶. The intensification of measures curtailing economic, educational and religious minority activities

¹³ Only in particular cases, Muslims had to pay high taxes.

¹⁴ This is well verified by British sources like FO/371/117711/RG10344/50, 22/9/55; FO/371/117657, 15/9/55.

¹⁵ FO/371/130225/RK1781/4, 11/1/57.

¹⁶ Indicatively, encyclicals 3385 and 8459 forbade the use of Greek language, books or any other material in Greek inside minority schools, and the celebration of Christian anniversaries and morning prayers.

and a parallel policy of mass expulsions forced more than 30,000 Greeks to leave Turkey¹⁷. When bilateral relations seemed to improve such provisions were ‘frozen’, but never repealed so as to be reactivated when new disputes arose as in 1967 and 1974, when bilateral differences reached their climax with the Turkish invasion in Cyprus and entered into a new period of protracted conflict with the appearance of a wide range of issues as disputes. Although, by that time, the remaining Greeks were around 10,000 and did not constitute any potential security concern, Turkish policy remained strictly exclusive keeping all previous measures in place. Their effectiveness in eliminating the minority is the main reason why since 1974 there have been minor new legislative initiatives with respect to minority affairs. Depending on bilateral relations, problems occur with respect to the administration of minority schools, the provision of schoolbooks and the appointment of Greek teachers, or with expropriations of communal property (Helsinki Watch Report 1992: 16-17). Yet, while the minority itself lost its political ‘exchangeability’, there remained the Ecumenical Patriarchate with a high ‘hostage’ value. Its religious importance for Greece made it quite vulnerable in the eyes of the authorities, which often cause difficulties in the Patriarch’s freedom of movement and initiatives, especially if they relate to his international role/appeal and ecumenical character¹⁸.

On the other hand, Greek minority policy presents several inconsistencies and is rather fragmented. Although Greek nationalism has been exclusive too, until the early 1960s the Muslim minority did not seem to have major problems in the conduct of its affairs. The authorities seemed to respect the ‘letter’ of Lausanne and avoided acts that could create

¹⁷ In 1964, Turkey denounced the 1930 Convention of Establishment that previously allowed Greek nationals, established in Istanbul to carry on their businesses.

complaints. Indeed, the minority did not face physical or other pressure as a result of the misfortunes of the Greeks in Turkey in 1942-44 and especially in 1955 when urgent measures were taken to prevent eventual retaliations. Yet, prejudices existed and the Muslim population was left rather isolated and segregated, with poor efforts to improve its living standard, mainly from an educational and economic perspective, creating a widening gap with the Christian majority. This fact, often giving the impression of a lack of minority policy at all, put the Muslims into a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis their prospects for greater social mobilization, integration and progress.

Since the early 1960s the authorities began viewing the minority with greater suspicion. The gradual infiltration of pro-Kemalist secular/nationalist elements within the largely traditional and religious minority¹⁹ and indications revealing its greater politicization and fears for its use by Turkey in order to raise demands similar to the Turkish-Cypriots made the administration perceive the Muslims as a potential threat for the country's territorial integrity and minority affairs as an issue of national security. The first instances of the formation of this policy appeared in 1959²⁰ and were further developed during 1963-64, when Greece threatened to use its Muslims as a political tool in order to stop the persecutions of its kin in Turkey. The deterioration of bilateral relations over Cyprus in combination with the 1967 coup in Greece, inaugurated a period of persistent and systematic policies with the application of laws and

¹⁸ Indicatively on the Greek minority see Alexandris 1992; Christides 2000; Helsinki Watch Report 1992; Greek Parliament 1999; Okte 1987.

¹⁹ In 1964, The Muslim Teachers' Association of Thrace sent a memorandum to the Greek authorities revealing the internal struggle within the minority and the pressures exerted by Turkey since 1959 favouring the creation and prevalence of a Turkish Teachers' Union, secretly subsidized by the Turkish Consulate, which would promote Kemalist/nationalist ideas. (Panagiotides 1996: 54-60).

²⁰ This is revealed by the minutes of a meeting of all competent authorities found in Karamanlis Archives/9A/002408, 1959.

measures that violated minority rights guaranteed in Lausanne. While the junta's nationalist rhetoric was exclusive to non-Orthodox Greeks and therefore intervened to internal affairs of all minority communities, in this case its aim appears to have been the Muslims' gradual elimination through measures of administrative harassment, including difficulties in obtaining driving licenses, loans, or buying land, while boards of Muslim charitable/religious foundations were arbitrarily dismissed and replaced by people attached to the regime.

The restoration of democracy and Karamanlis's determination for Greece to join the EU adopting and abiding by its norms, including the existence of good human rights record was a factor that aimed to bring a gradual end to the institutionalization of the previous anti-minority practices. However, the 1974 Cyprus events and the subsequent Greek-Turkish conflict, and often-aggressive official Turkish statements that alarmed the Greek authorities, prevented several practices and prejudices from disappearing, especially where sympathizers of the previous regime still remained in local authorities. However, Greece's deeper integration into the EU and the parallel acceptance of the jurisdiction of its institutions caused increased embarrassment when cases of any harassment against the minority internationalized, through either the protests of international organizations or the condemnation of the European Court. This increasing ability of Turkey and minority elements to internationalize the always-popular issue of minority rights that damaged the country's prestige and European character convinced the government that it should finally solve the problem. Indeed, in 1991, in a period of unrest within the minority, Prime Minister Mitsotakis declared his determination to secure legal equality and equal civil rights to all inhabitants, implicitly recognizing the existence of repressive measures. This declaration of a new state policy inaugurated this current period when many past problems have

been solved or are being improved. Despite the abolition of ‘administrative harassment’, the minority remains poor and still faces integration problems. It is indicative that there are no specific statistics for the minority, as the last census to ask questions on language and religion was in 1951. Nevertheless, past restrictions regarding loans, driving licenses and purchase of property have disappeared, while extensive research and initiatives have been taken in previously neglected areas like education, where new schoolbooks and pedagogic methods are promoting a more intercultural education. Muslims have now more opportunities to study in Greek universities and to work in the public sector, and although their numbers are still low, they are definitely higher than before. The above remarks and the significantly reduced complaints on behalf of the Muslims (Department of State 2001), show that the new policy inaugurated by Mitsotakis and further advocated by Foreign Minister Georgios Papandreou seems to gradually produce positive results regarding the improvement of the minority’s living standards²¹.

Comparative nationalisms

Having previously considered the development of nationalism and its exclusive nature in Greece and Turkey, the present paper argues that the different outcomes with respect to minority policies can be explained with reference to the differences that these movements presented. The main issue is the substantial delay of Turkish nationalism compared to the Greek one. It must be remembered that the Lausanne Treaty was created in order to determine a viable modus vivendi between the two countries, resolving sources of conflict, including the minority issue. Therefore, although both countries appeared to be at the same position vis-à-vis their minorities, Greece

²¹ Indicatively for the Muslim minority see Andreadis 1980; Asimakopoulou/Christidou-Lionaraki 2002; Bahcheli

after a century of struggling for its 'Great Idea', managed to acquire a high degree of ethnic homogeneity. On the contrary, post-Lausanne Turkey was still multi-ethnic and it was since then that its exclusive nationalism started developing and being applied. As a recent movement that had to defend itself against external enemies and internal opposition, it was more aggressive and absolute both at its content and application. Neglected or suppressed identity issues tend to cause greater concern and instability. Indicatively, the Turkish Government proceeded with a compromise that again like the emergence of its nationalism followed a century after the Greek paradigm. While Kemalism fundamentally imposed secularism, people remained strongly attached to Islam, which increased its importance in sociopolitical affairs, and eventually several restrictions were repealed. Faced with the increasing tide of left-wing and extreme right-wing ideologies during the 1970s, the 1980 regime decided to promote Islam as an ideological alternative that could attract people and inspire respect towards Turkish society and traditions (Poulton 1999: 257; Zurcher 1997: 203). This Turkish-Islamic synthesis, a parallel to Helleno-Christianism, had a strong appeal to many military leaders who decided to allow a 'state-friendly' version of Islam to reinstate its position into history and tradition, becoming an integral part of the society, including primary and secondary education²².

However, the above compromise, should not conceal the fact that the social ban on religion was an action contrary to the feelings of a large part of the society. Modern Turkey is more or less the result of one, doubtless charismatic, person: Ataturk. He produced what Zurcher (1997: 197) called a 'revolution by degree'. When the first reforms were thus imposed, often contrary to the population's will and common practice, they set a paradigm to follow. These reforms were

1990; Oran 1986; Helsinki Watch Report 1999.

formed and imposed by intellectuals-‘courtiers’ and by institutions that were under Kemal’s guidance and control²³. The same process has been henceforth controlled by the military, which has been expressing its adherence to Kemalist doctrines and practices. Voices challenging this establishment are silenced, prosecuted or banned. As the journalist Sahin Alpay has said, a Kemalist in the 1990s ‘cannot accept rational criticism’ (Pope/Pope 1997:67). Similarly, for Pasmazoglou (1993: 298), the Constitution and legislation are mere ‘instruments for use and abuse according to the interests of the government group’. Law and the judiciary have a patronizing and protective function similar to the case of Greece in the 1950s and 1960s, with the difference that in Turkey justice has been inspired by a military ‘shadow government’ and its nationalist interests, and is therefore more persistent and less flexible. Hence, in official rhetoric ‘the concept of “law” appears mainly against any attempt by individuals, associations, trade unions and other social agents to express themselves differently’. In other words, ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ are usually regarded as obstacles to the military’s power over minorities, religious sects and heresies, political movements, unions and parties and various social groups²⁴. The army has particularly underlined its political role with its interventions in 1960, 1971, 1980, and in 1997 with its ‘soft coup’²⁵, all justified on the need to protect Kemal’s heritage, which was betrayed or threatened by political parties or social conditions (Pasmazoglou 1993: 332-335). In order to restore order thousands of political opponents and activists were imprisoned, while

²² Turkish Constitution, Article 24.

²³ Characteristically Kinross (1964: 468) referred to ‘the limited company of his own entourage-the yes-men who were his slaves, the so-called intellectuals who none the less heeded no one but him’. Also according to Millas (2001: 62-63) ‘in the case of the “Turkish Thesis” the whole effort was run by Mustafa Kemal and some historians or “historians” of his immediate environment, such as his adopted daughter Afet Inan’.

²⁴ ‘The concepts of authority of the state and the Turkish nation operate against the development of a pluralist culture and contrary to the idea of a social welfare state’. Pasmazoglou 1993: 298-299.

²⁵ In this case, the military threatened to intervene unless Erbakan resigned, which he did on 20 June 1997. His pro-Islamic Welfare Party, which had remained in power since July 1996 was declared illegal and was closed down and Erbakan was banned from politics.

universities and even the army were purged of pro-Islamic and left-wing elements²⁶. A decisive step took place with the 1980 coup and the Constitution that the military imposed tightening its control over political affairs. Its provisions curtailed-in practice suppressed-the autonomy, self-administration and freedom of universities²⁷, the press²⁸ and the judiciary²⁹, while it institutionalized its political presence with the National Security Council, which acquired extensive powers³⁰. Moreover, the military has a very intertwined web through which it can control the press and other aspects of the society and prevent social and political developments³¹. It is no coincidence that since the foundation of the Republic, Ozal was the first President not to come from the military.

²⁶ Indeed, in the 1960 coup, under Turkes 235 out of 260 generals and 5000 other officers were retired, while 147 academics were sacked. According to the army, 'the coup occurred in order to prevent the outbreak of civil war.... The army belongs to the nation and does not side in favour or against any party but it serves the people and the Constitution' (Poulton 1999: 176). A year after the 1980 coup, some 122,600 people had been arrested, including trade unionists, politicians, academics, teachers, journalists and lawyers. Hale 1993. Pope/Pope 1997: 152-153. Poulton 1999: 175-178, 232-235. Zurcher 1997: 245, 254-256, 271-277, 294.

²⁷ According to Article 130, 'University rectors shall be appointed by the President of the Republic, and faculty deans by the Higher Education Council'. Article 131 regulates that 'the Higher Education Council is composed of members appointed by the President of the Republic from among the candidates who are nominated by the Council of Ministers, the Chief of the General Staff and the universities'.

²⁸ Article 28 makes it clear that 'publication shall not be made in any language prohibited by law. [...] Anyone who writes or prints any news or articles which threaten the internal or external security of the State or the indivisible integrity of the State... shall be held responsible under the law relevant to these offences'.

²⁹ Most judges of the highest courts are appointed by the President of the Republic (Articles 138-160). Pasmazoglou 1993: 306.

³⁰ Article 118 provides that 'the National Security Council shall submit to the Council of Ministers its views on taking decisions and ensuring necessary coordination with regard to the formulation, establishment, and implementation of the national security policy of the State. The Council of Ministers shall give priority consideration to the decisions of the National Security Council considering the measures that it deems necessary for the preservation of the existence and independence of the State, the integrity and indivisibility of the country and the peace and security of society'.

³¹ The military usually intervenes-often taking advantage of the newspapers' public debts-to prevent negative comments, or to defame personalities believed to 'threaten' the regime. To Pontiki, 9/11/2000. Also, the military has its own bank, the OYAK-BANK (Mutual Aid Army Organization-Ordu Yardimlasma Kurumu) with 257 branches and has evolved into a big holding company with whole or partial ownership of at least 30 companies, including food industries, automobile industries, constructor firms, stock-exchange brokers, insurance companies etc. To Pontiki, 18/7/2002.

The above observations again present striking differences in the way Greek nationalism was applied and developed. The latter was the result of a debating process between often-conflicting sides: intellectuals from all discourses, political movements, parties or ideologies were factors that formed the character of modern Greek identity. All developments and practices were open to public criticism. Even when the newly formed state made efforts for a uniform Greek culture, through the work of a coherent group of institutions and scholars, debates emerged and to an extent still do. Even political divisions often had their roots on intellectual clashes, such as the coexistence of Classical-Hellenic spirit with Byzantine-Orthodox tradition, or the conflict over the linguistic issue between use of a more classic form of Greek (καθαρεύουσα) or the modern one used by the people (δημοτική). In any case, with the exception of periods of military rule, intellectuals were free to express, develop and spread their ideas. Despite the fact that there is a set of basic national ideas to be respected and protected, there has been no 'deep state' to directly control the press, the judiciary or the academics and the ideas they represented. Even the military that has acted as a unifying force, was not a unitary political factor, as with the exception of 1967-1974, all its several other interventions were more related with micro-politics where different fructions supported different political parties. Thus, Greek nationalism evolved within a more multi-polar and colourful environment which, even if showed its disapproval, at least did not suppress the emergence of challenging ideas. As the history and social anthropology of the nation are part of this nationalist debate, there have also appeared arguments that have favoured a more humanistic approach towards minorities and have been critical towards excluding governmental practices.

A third major contrast that restrained the repression of Greece's Muslims is its deeper incorporation into EU institutions, its commitment to respect and apply the *acquis communautaire*, liberalizing its institutions, and the subsequent harm to its international standing when it failed to do so. Besides, Greece realized that it is one of the most homogeneous European countries and that anti-minority measures were politically damaging, or even ineffective. This by no means implies the existence of an ideal situation, but still it marks clear signs of a long-term change heralded as official policy that gradually overcomes prejudices and local disfunctions. The minority issue remains a matter of politics, affected by bilateral relations and most often is seen through a national security perspective. Nevertheless, the government's decision for a policy of approach and bilateral coordination, and the subsequent relaxation over minority rights signify a big step forward.

Considering the military's influence over political affairs in Turkey it is no surprise to see clashes with political elites that favour the country's accession into the EU. As this process includes liberalization over a wide range of issues including bilateral relations with neighbours and improvement of human/minority rights, the inflexibility and persistence of the military to its Kemalist roots becomes more outspoken. Responding to contrary political initiatives and rhetoric, generals have warned that implementation of EU liberal policies may well threaten Turkey's integrity³². Similar rigid attitudes, reminiscent of outdated territorial imperialism, have appeared over political prospects in Cyprus and the two Iraqi wars. In the first case, the military has retained its armed grip on the island since 1974, despite international condemnation, while recently, contrary to the will of Turkish-Cypriots, it has poisoned all efforts for a peaceful

settlement proposed by the UN in late 2002 and early 2003. With respect to Iraq, fears for the indivisible integrity of Turkey have forced it to express its willingness for revised borders that would prevent the creation of an independent Kurdish State and might cede new areas to Turkey (Pope/Pope 1997: 226-244, The Guardian 22/3/03, The Independent 22/3/03, The Times 22/3/03). The road to Europe that Greece managed to follow and cured many of its past sins, but is still sought by Turkey, may be the one indicated by Mazower (2001:382) when he says that 'here lies the great change to the nation-state since World War II. Cooperation replaced antagonism. [...] Europe has entered into a new age where war, empire and territory appear to be less important than ever before for the progress of the nation'. The above makes it clear that it is not enough for a nation-state to change its regime; it is more essential to change its attitude and character.

Future Challenges

The 2002 elections, where the Islamic Party of Tayyip Erdogan gained by an impressive 34,17%³³, which constitutes an unprecedented defeat of Kemalism, revealed the deep crisis within Turkish politics, but also an identity crisis of the society as a whole. A course of defeat that maybe started 20 years ago with the social restitution of Islam³⁴. According to Smith (1999:206), nation-building 'involves ceaseless re-interpretations, rediscoveries and reconstructions; each generation must re-fashion national institutions and stratification systems

³² Express, 12/1/2001, 24/3/2002, 4/8/2002, To Pontiki, 8/8/2002. Recently, the military prepared the 'report on privatizations', stating which domains cannot become private for strategic reasons. To Pontiki, 9/11/2000.

³³ Yet, Ertogan managed to resume his duties only in early 2003 as he had been condemned for pro-Islamic sentiments and actions and was deprived of his political rights. To Pontiki, 7/11/2002.

³⁴ In 1994 the Turkish journalist Mehmet Altan wrote that, 'Kemalism is dead, but nobody knows how to dispose of the corpse'. Pope/Pope 1997: 68.

in the light of the myths, memories, values and symbols of the “past”, which can best minister to the needs and aspirations of its dominant social groups and institutions. Hence the activity of rediscovery and re-interpretation is never complete and never simple; it is the product of dialogues between the major social groups and institutions within the boundaries of the “nation”, and it answers to their perceived ideals and interests’. Eventually, in the same way that its nationalism evolved earlier than the Turkish one, Greece managed to move quicker and more productively within the above process that subsequently benefited its minority. However, with this process it rediscovered that there are ‘new’ communities claiming minority status and that the latter is not necessarily a legal issue. Regarding its initially cautious and even negative response, it is obvious that its future challenge will be the conduct of a social dialogue for the smooth incorporation of multiculturalism as a mainstream aspect of Greek society.

On the other hand, Turkey’s dilemmas are imminent and crucial, and will determine its future structure as a nation-state, within or outside the EU. The response to recent developments including Cyprus’s EU accession, political reforms vis-à-vis the EU and the reshape of regional geopolitics, with the reemergence of the Kurdish issue, will determine its future. The exiled Turkish-Kurdish scholar Kendal Nezan has referred to Europe’s relations with Iraqi Kurds in the 1920s saying that ‘Great Powers continued to foster the myth that the civilized West might help the Kurds; what is really meant, of course, was that the Western powers would be able to use their influence on Kurdish leaders as a bargaining counter in an eventual negotiation [with the Turks]’ (Pope/Pope 1997: 279). This remark becomes particularly significant nowadays, as the Turkish society will have to take its challenges and risks over its minorities and mainly its Kurds,

when eventually this fundamental issue will rise if Turkey manages to reach its final stage of negotiations for joining the EU.

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