

Research Report | 30th Annual Session

Historical Security Council

Resolving the Greek Civil War



MODEL UNITED NATIONS
THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE HAGUE

Tobi Versteeg

Forum	Historical Security Council
Issue:	Resolving the Greek Civil War
Student Officer:	Tobi Versteeg
Position:	Deputy President
Date:	December 31, 1946

Abbreviations

DSE = Democratic Army of Greece

EAM = National Liberation Front

EDES = National Republican Greek League

ELAS = Greek People's Liberation Army

KKE = Communist Party of Greece

PEEA = Political Committee of National Liberation

YVE = Defenders of Northern Greece

Introduction

The Greek Civil War is a conflict between the DSE (Democratic Army of Greece), which is against the Monarchy in Greece, and the Greek government, which is in favor of the Monarchy. The Greek Civil War began in March of 1946, after the KKE (Communist Party of Greece) boycotted a referendum which would decide whether Greece would remain a monarchy or not. The DSE is supported by the KKE and Communist neighboring countries Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria, whilst the Greek government and Monarchy is supported by the United Kingdom. The civil war resulted from a range of conflicts between Communists and the government and its patriots (anti-Communists) (Appendix I). These conflicts arose as a result of Nazi German occupation of Greece in World War II. In October of 1940, Italian forces invaded Greece. This conflict started the Greco-Italian war. Although Greek forces were initially successful in pushing back the Italian forces, Nazi Germany soon intervened. In April of 1941, the Axis forces took control over Greece. After the Axis forces (consisting



mainly of Nazi German but also Japanese and Italian forces) fled the country in late 1944, the conflicts between the Communists and the Greek government only became worse, eventually leading to the Greek civil war after a series of events.

Definition of Key Terms

Proxy war

A war fought between groups or smaller countries that each represent the interests of other larger powers and may be supported by these.

Percentages Agreement

An informal agreement between Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill in which the division of some eastern and southern European countries was determined. Countries that were divided between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union as a part of the agreement include Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Hungary. This agreement was made in Moscow, near the official end of the Second World War, which was in October 1944. In March of 1946, Winston Churchill formally announced the further division of Europe per the introduction of the iron curtain. The percentages agreement, however, remained an informal agreement.



Dekemvriana

The firefight that took place in the streets of Athens between EAM-members or -supporters supported by the KKE and the Greek government. The forces fighting for the Greek government consisted of the Greek police, British forces, and Organization X forces. Organization X is a far right-wing anti-communist group which, at one point in World War II, collaborated with the Axis Forces against the EAM. The conflict took place over the span of a month nearing the end of 1944.

Resistance movement

An organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or an occupying power and to disrupt civil order and stability.



Government of national unity

A government formed by a coalition of parties in time of national emergency.

General Overview

In 1941, Greece was invaded by Axis forces, as well as Fascist Italian and Bulgarian Forces. King George II of Greece and the Greek government fled to Egypt. In Cairo, the Greek royalists and the government were protected by Britain. However, as the Greek government was not physically situated in Athens but in Cairo at the time, there was no real way for them to directly rule over the Greek people. Nazi Germany took full control over Greece and set up a collaborationist government. Gross economic mismanagement and a lack of real legitimacy led to there being no real government to look after the Greek people. As a result, many non-violent resistance groups arose in Greece. Two main groups were the YVE (Defenders of Northern Greece), a monarchist organization, and the EAM (National Liberation Front), a Communist resistance organization created by four left-wing political parties, including the KKE (Communist Party of Greece). Upon establishment, the main goal of the EAM was to liberate Greece from foreign intervention. The EAM was created as a means through which to appeal to the people of Greece, aiming to gain the support necessary to overthrow the Axis Forces. The EAM tried to take over other resistance groups who had similar ideologies to that of the EAM, and they fought against resistance groups who differed from the EAM in terms of views and opinions.

Growing influence

As the EAM became bigger, it became more violent against the occupational forces. In February of 1942, the KKE created the ELAS (Greek People's Liberation Army), which was essentially a military wing of the EAM. The ELAS and other guerilla groups liberated the mountainous countryside, leaving only the main towns and connecting roads to the Axis forces. In 1943, ELAS acquired control over an abandoned bunch of Italian soldiers' weapons. As a result, the Western Allies began to see the increasingly influential Communist resistance group as a threat. This caused them to stop supporting ELAS and other Communist resistance groups for that matter. Instead, they started funding and supplying the EDES (National Republican Greek League), who were against the Communists, thereby indirectly supporting the Axis Powers. The EDES is the largest non-communist resistance group in Greece, created by Napoleon Zervas in September of 1941. Soon, conflict between the EDES and the EAM arose, resulting in armed conflict. After a failed ceasefire attempted by the British to temporarily stop the conflict between the EDES and the EAM, the EDES



were forced back into a small portion of Epirus, a region in Greece south of Albania, and ELAS prevailed, having the advantage in numbers and supplies.

A government of national unity

The power of Nazi Germany in Greece was on the decline, and as the EAM felt mostly responsible for liberating most of the country, the leaders of this resistance group expected to take control over Greece once the Axis forces had fled the country. The EAM established the PEEA (Political Committee of National Liberation) in early 1944. The committee aimed to rival both the Nazi Germany ran government in Athens and the exiled government in Egypt, opting for the independence of Greece as well as an intensified struggle against the Nazi occupants. Meanwhile, majority of the Greek armed forces in Egypt demanded that a new government of national unity should be established, based on PEEA values. They demanded that this government should replace the exiled government as it had no real influence on Greece anymore. Western Allies were angered by this movement, as were some troops among the Greek forces in Egypt, as they were loyal to the exiled government. In May of 1944, the Prime Minister of the exiled Greek government, Georgios Papandreou, organized a conference in Lebanon and he invited representatives of all political parties and resistance groups to this conference in order to seek an agreement about a government of national unity. Even though multiple EAM members were accused of thievery, banditry, and murder, and despite the fact that the EAM had made accusations of collaboration with the Axis Forces against all opposing resistance groups, an agreement was made (the National Contract) for a government of national unity with 24 ministers, 6 of which were EAM members.

Greek liberation from Axis forces

In late 1944, Axis forces evacuated Greece ahead of the Soviet Union warning to cut off the Nazi's supply routes and before a British invasion. Prior to the arrival of the British forces, Greek partisans had already liberated most of the country, except for Athens, which was still occupied by Axis forces. A week after the British forces liberated Athens, Georgios Papandreou arrived in Athens to form the new government of national unity which was agreed upon in the Lebanon conference. Greece was still a monarchy; however, part of the National Contract was that a referendum was to be held to decide whether the monarchy should stay or not. The referendum, held in September of 1946, resulted in the retention of the monarchy. However, the KKE believed that the referendum was rigged.

ELAS control

After Axis Forces fled Greece and before the British forces arrived, ELAS had control over the countryside and most of the cities in Greece. They did not take full control over Greece



because the KKE got orders from Moscow to avoid confrontation with the new government which was going to be instated by Georgios Papandreou in order to avoid the creation of a crisis which would jeopardize Stalin's postwar objectives. Some ELAS leaders did not agree with the idea of Moscow imposing a ceasefire to avoid tampering with the Western Allies' objectives. These leaders instead conformed to the ideas of the Communist Leader of Yugoslavia, Josip Tito. Tito lead a successful Communist takeover of Yugoslavia without much help of the Soviet Union. Although Tito is loyal to Stalin, he himself had obtained power without Soviet influence, and he believed that the same should be done by the communist Greeks.

Dekemvriana

Soon after the government in Athens was reinstated, the government in Athens planned to disarm resistance groups and replace them with a national guard. The communist ministers believed that this disarmament would leave the ELAS defenseless against its enemies and therefore created a different plan in which not only the resistance groups would be disarmed, but also the government in Athens. Athens rejected this plan which led the EAM representatives in the Athens government to resign. EAM oppositions set up right-wing militias such as Organization X with the purpose of resisting EAM until the British Forces arrived in Athens again, allowing for the British to take control over the situation. The EAM consequently announced a strike and the reorganization of the ELAS, leading to roughly 200.000 demonstrators marching for Athens. The demonstration escalated and led to a firefight between the Greek police supported by British forces as well as Nazi sympathizers and the communist demonstrators: the Dekemvriana. On Christmas day 1944, Winston Churchill arrived in Athens to attempt to end the conflict. The tide of the conflict turned with the arrival of new British forces. In January 1945, the Greek government forced the EAM to surrender. Ronald Scobie, who until recently (until April 1946) was in command of British forces, demanded the disarmament of the ELAS, promising ELAS fighters get amnesty from the fighting and that the KKE could remain a political party. Scobie agreed to a ceasefire, and ELAS forces withdrew their positions in several cities and the organization was partly disarmed.

Recent developments

In 1945, the KKE had redefined its values; its goal was now to achieve a people's democracy through peaceful means. However, early this year (1946) the KKE has again taken a more militant stance because of deteriorating relations between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union. The referendum that was promised after the Lebanon conference took place in March of this year, and the results suggested that the Greek people are in favor of the monarchy. This referendum was boycotted by the KKE. Ex-ELAS troops recently reemerged in Greece,



organizing the DSE (Dimokratikos Stratos Elladas) together with the KKE. The KKE started supporting the DSE because they saw no other way to act against the newly instated Greek government after the referendum that took place in March this year. The KKE still feels the need to act against the Greek government because it is still being influenced by a foreign nation (the UK). Furthermore, the KKE is against the monarchy because a monarchy implies that society is divided into classes, which is an anti-communist thought. The DSE, supported by Yugoslavia and Albania, is gathering supporters as we speak in hopes of achieving national independence. Two months ago (October 1946), the DSE launched a military campaign to take control over Greece, which marked the beginning of the armed conflict between the Greek government and the DSE, even though March marked the official start of the Greek civil war. As the DSE spreads more into Greece, the amount of armed conflict between the Greek government and the DSE will only continue to increase. The Greek government is currently still receiving financial support from the United Kingdom, however as the UK also suffered an economic downfall following the effects of World War II, they may not be able to support Greece in 1947.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Soviet Union

The Soviet Union, under leadership of Joseph Stalin, was involved in World War II. The Soviet Union and Western Allies both played a significant role in defeating the Axis forces. After WWII, Joseph Stalin wanted to punish Germany economically by forcing the country to pay for repairs in the Soviet Union, while the Western Allies opted for Germany's economic recovery. They opted for this because they want to stop the spread of communism in Europe, and economically unstable countries are often more susceptible to foreign influence. The Soviet Union played a large part in this spread of communism, particularly over eastern-European countries. The Soviet Union has declared that it remains neutral in the Greek civil war, however, as a part of the percentages agreement, the Soviet Union exerts control over Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria.

Yugoslavia, Albania, & Bulgaria

According to the percentages agreement, Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria are under control of the Soviet Union. After the ELAS was disbanded in 1945, several ex-ELAS troops fled to Yugoslavia, which is under leadership of Josip Tito. In 1946 these ex-ELAS troops returned to Greece, and together with the KKE created the DSE.



United Kingdom

The United Kingdom declared war on Germany in 1939, leading to the events of World War II. Eventually, British forces played a large role in defeating Nazi Germany as part of the Western Allies. The percentages agreement dictates that the United Kingdom has control over Greece. During WWII, British forces recognized the exiled Greek government in Egypt. Once Axis forces fled Greece, British forces helped secure the return of King George II to Greece. Since then, the United Kingdom has been providing Greece funding, and there are currently still British forces in Greece, however, whether the UK will be able to continue supporting Greece in the future is quite uncertain.

The Greek government

The Greek government was in exile during World War II and during that period it had little influence on what was happening in Greece. In 1944, after the Lebanon conference, a government of national unity was called upon. Furthermore, it was also decided that a referendum should be held to determine whether the monarchy should stay in Greece. That referendum was held in March of 1946, and it resulted in a victory for the royalists. With the KKE boycotting the elections and with the creation of the DSE, the Greek government has found itself in yet another conflict with communist militia aiming to overthrow the government.

The Democratic Party of Greece (DSE)

The DSE is the current communist organization aiming to overthrow the government and establish a people's democracy; one independent from foreign intervention. The organization was established by the KKE and ex-ELAS forces and is receiving support from Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria, who are thereby stimulating communist revolt in Greece.

Timeline of Events

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
MARCH 1936	Ioannis Metaxas establishes himself as the ruler of Greece
JANUARY 1941	Ioannis Metaxas dies, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) takes control over Greece
APRIL 1941	King George II of Greece and his government escape to Egypt



JUNE 1941	Nazi, Fascist Italian and Bulgarian forces fully complete the occupation of Greece
SEPTEMBER 1941	The National Liberation Front (EAM) is formed by several left-wing parties, including the KKE
APRIL 1942	The Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS) was founded by the EAM
SEPTEMBER 1944	Axis forces pull out of Greece, Britain took over the government
OCTOBER 1944	The Percentage Agreement was agreed upon (informally) by Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill
DECEMBER 1944	Conflict between British forces and EAM emerges
FEBRUARY 1945	Greek parties signed the Varkiza Agreement
MARCH 1946	Conflict between the Greek government and Communist Guerilla's resumes
OCTOBER 1946	DSE launches a military campaign to take control over Greece

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- The Treaty of Varkiza, February 12 1945
- The Lebanon Conference, May 17-20 1944

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Although the civil war emerged in 1946, which is quite recently, there have not yet been any real attempts to resolve this issue. However, there have been a few attempts to put an end to several conflicts preceding the start of the civil war (Appendix II).

Government of national unity

Firstly, the Lebanon conference temporarily resolved the conflict between communist (KKE, EAM, ELAS) and anti-communist groups/political parties (Greek government). The



conference did something unique: it brought together representatives of all political parties and resistance groups in Greece and offered them the opportunity to discuss the future of the Greek government. An agreement was eventually made between groups from both sides of the spectrum, and once the Axis forces were no longer in Greece, this government was put in place. However, the EAM-representatives in Athens resigned from the Greek government because of a disagreement about the disarmament of resistance groups which eventually led to the demonstrations and the Dekemvriana and was therefore unsuccessful.

Attempted ceasefires

Secondly, there have also been a few attempted ceasefires over the course of the past three years. For example, the ceasefire imposed by Moscow on the KKE to prevent intervention with the established government, and the attempted ceasefire by the British forces to prevent the conflict between the EDES and the ELAS, were both two attempts to put an end to the conflict between two opposing forces. Unfortunately, both ceasefires were unsuccessful in averting conflict.

Possible Solutions

Preventing displacement of civilians

The civil war does not only affect those directly involved in the war, meaning the soldiers, members of involved organizations, and politicians; it also has detrimental effects on the Greek civilians. As DSE forces have moved further away from the Yugoslavian border and more into Greece, there have been more interactions between the DSE forces and civilians. If these interactions lead to violence, it potentially results in the displacement of Greek civilians. Furthermore, Greek government soldiers move from town to town in attempt to locate any DSE partisan fighters, communist sympathizers, and collaborators, and to arrest or kill them. In the process, many innocent civilians suffer the consequences of these . Unfortunately, the number of firefights between DSE forces and the Greek government will only continue to increase in the near future, which will inevitably lead to the destruction of property of civilians, or it will even harm them.

In order to ensure the safety of countless innocent civilians, the United Nations could take certain precautions. For example, a possible solution to the problem of displacement could be to create temporary refugee camps in parts of Greece less affected by the civil war or possibly in neighboring countries who remain neutral in this conflict. This would safeguard civilians until the conflict between the DSE and the Greek government has been resolved.



Ending Greece's economic dependency

Another issue that has been affecting Greece is its economic dependency. Predominantly the United Kingdom has been supporting the country financially, especially during World War II and the events leading up to the civil war. However, as previously mentioned, the United Kingdom might no longer be able to provide this monetary and military aid heading into 1947, and therefore the Greek government must look elsewhere for this kind of support. Without it, the Greek government will most definitely collapse and be transformed into a communist state.

A temporary solution would be to request military support from other Western Allies, like for example from the United States of America. This would potentially give the Greek government the upper hand in the civil war. Although the Greek government might prevail in the conflict due to this aid, this will only add more fuel to the fire in the long term and therefore might lead to more revolt against Western influence, potentially making this issue even worse.

The key to solving this issue in the long term is to find a way to make Greece a self-sustainable nation. Foreign intervention from Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, and from the Western Allies have caused the country to essentially be run by foreign powers. Finding a way to end this foreign intervention is crucial to Greece's prosperity. Intervention from the United Nations might allow for a more peaceful, neutral, and effective way of improving the situation in Greece.

Disarming resistance groups, mainly the DSE

Resistance groups have been a large contributor to the fact that Greece is currently in a state of turmoil. Although some of these groups proved to be effective in liberating parts of Greece during Nazi occupation, they have only caused more conflict and divide between the Greek people after WWII and have attributed to the chaos in Greece. The resistance groups use violent means to achieve their political goals, and as mentioned previously these violent means can be highly detrimental to civilians.

Disbanding the resistance groups is not an easy operation and has failed many times in the past. In order to successfully disarm these groups, the countries and organizations supporting the DSE and/or other resistance organizations must be prevented from further offering aid in any form in the future. Once this has happened, resistance groups will have less supplies and therefore the threat they pose will decrease.



Advocating for dialogue between opposing parties

Although the previous solutions may be sufficient, they will be difficult to execute. Therefore, another possible solution could be to organize a conference similar to the one hosted in Lebanon in 1944. This would offer DSE representatives and Greek government representatives an opportunity to converse about what they believe would be the right way to move the country forward and to possibly come up with a solution that would serve the interest of both groups. Although this would be preferable, we must not forget that the DSE is fully against the monarchy and that Greek government is in favor of it due to the outcome of the referendum.

Bibliography

dictionary.com. "National Unity Government." Dictionary.com, Dictionary.com, OAD, www.dictionary.com/browse/national-unity-government

Antonopoulos, Paul. "Dekemvriana, One Of The Saddest Days In Greece's History." Greek City Times, 3 Dec. 2018, www.greekcitytimes.com/2018/12/03/commemorating-dekemvriana-when-first-shots-are-fired-in-athens

"Berlin Blockade." Edited by Editors History.com , History.com, A&E Television Networks, 1 June 2010, www.history.com/topics/cold-war/berlin-blockade/text=A%201948%20map%20detailing%20the,of%20Berlin%20under%20Allied%20control

Dictionary of Military and, Associated Terms. "Resistance Group." The Free Dictionary, Farlex, 2005, www.thefreedictionary.com/Resistance+group

Lengel, Edward G. "The Greek Civil War, 1944-1949: The National WWII Museum: New Orleans." The National WWII Museum | New Orleans, 22 May 2020, www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/greek-civil-war-1944-1949

Lykogiannis, Athanasios. Britain and the Greek Economic Crisis, 1944- 1947: from Liberation to the Truman Doctrine. London School of Economics and Political Science University of London, 1999.

MIA "Documents." The Greek Civil War, OAD, www.marxists.org/subject/greek-civil-war/index.htm



Nachmani, Amikam. "The Greek Civil War, 1946–1949." *Origins*, Mar. 2016, www.origins.osu.edu/milestones/march-2016-greek-civil-war-1946-1949

Staff, HistoryNet. "Greek Civil War." HistoryNet, HistoryNet, 13 Feb. 2019, www.historynet.com/greek-civil-war.htm

Wikipedia. "Greek Civil War." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 23 June 2020, www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_Civil_War

Written by GreekBoston.com in Modern Greek History. "What Was the National Liberation Front in Greece?" *ICal*, 2 May 2018, www.greekboston.com/culture/modern-history/national-liberation-front/

Banac, Ivo. "Josip Broz Tito." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 4 May 2020, www.britannica.com/biography/Josip-Broz-Tito

Danforth, Loring, and John B. Allcock. "Communism." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 19 Nov. 2019, www.britannica.com/place/Balkans/Communism

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "EAM-ELAS." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 4 Mar. 2009, www.britannica.com/topic/EAM-ELAS

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Greek Civil War." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2 Dec. 2019, www.britannica.com/event/Greek-Civil-War

Haldon, John Frederick, and Richard Ralph Mowbray Clogg. "The Metaxas Regime and World War II." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 19 Aug. 2020, www.britannica.com/place/Greece/The-Metaxas-regime-and-World-War-II

Royde-Smith, John Graham, and Thomas A. Hughes. "World War II." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 14 Aug. 2020, www.britannica.com/event/World-War-II

Stavrianos, L. S. "The Greek National Liberation Front (EAM): A Study in Resistance Organization and Administration." *The Journal of Modern History*, 1 Mar. 1970, www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/237474?journalCode=jmh

"Story Map Journal." *Arcgis.com*, www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=5b4449d00118461faf477619f8b3919e



Appendices

Appendix I

This video gives a clear overview of what events precede the beginning of the Greek civil war

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/greek-civil-war-causes-effects-and-the-cold-war.html>

Appendix II

This short documentary on YouTube summarizes the main events leading up to the beginning of the Greek civil war.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MExBH25xf5o>

