



Munich Personal RePEc Archive

The British Foreign Policy in Greece during the period 1943-1949

Vidakis, Ioannis and Karkazis, John

Constantine Porphyrogenetus International Association (C.P.),
Center of Defence, Energy and Geopolitical Research (CEDEG)

July 2011

Online at <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/94515/>
MPRA Paper No. 94515, posted 19 Jun 2019 14:18 UTC

THE BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IN GREECE DURING THE PERIOD 1943-1949^{*1a}

Authors: Ioannis Vidakis^{*1b} and John Karkazis^{*1c}
University of the Aegean, Chios, Greece

INTRODUCTION

They say that history is written by the winners. We can add that the winners are also writing the ethical codes of war and the codes of justice in international affairs. Might this be a stereotype phrase of the defeated or even of those who wish to rewrite history or does it have a dose of reality in it? In any case when someone attempts to present a new fold of history or even to enrich one already existing with new findings, great attention is required. There are many reasons to do so and not only political ones. Needless mention the political motives behind some of the attempts to alter the historical charting of facts. So the skepticism arising from relevant attempts is naturally strong. At the same time relevant thinking should be stochastic and flexible in order to be able to distinguish the circumstances under which new rudiments are presented which could be interpreted in a different way, significantly changing what was known so far. These should be based always on appropriate documentation so that their validity is ensured.

Wallace Report² belongs to the category of the historical sources that lately made quite a noise concerning its content³. Some claimed that a new registration of the historical reality is being attempted in order to blot on the efforts, actions or motives of the one or the other side during the German occupation of Greece. The relevant discussions went beyond the scientific confrontation reaching up to the point of public altercation. On the one side the supporters of the political Left point out that the essay reveals the dark role of Britain and the servility of the political Right. The other side repudiates the imputations by supporting that the leftist resistance groups have caused the civil war because of their eagerness to take over the power in the country after the departure of the Germans.

Indisputably, the role of Britain was crucial under any point of view. It couldn't be any other way since that country was the main opponent of the Germans (during the first

two years of the war) and the quarterback of the resistance in Europe. The price it paid was indeed enormous, not so much in human losses as in the loss of “geopolitical power”. The end of the Second World War (WWII) coincides with the end of the two remaining colonial empires of the planet, the loser Japan but also the winner Britain. The involvement of Britain in the internal affairs of Greece, during its occupation by the Germans and after its liberation, was significant to such a degree that determinately impinged on the molding of the political developments in Greece and generally in the Hellenism of Diaspora.

The present article aims to concisely present the British foreign policies and the policies of the two dominant political and ideological poles in Greece at that time. The Wallace Report gave the incentive for undertaking this historic journey in that turbulent period. A journey that will present, through the prism of the author’s point of view, the political situation of the country. At the same time, it will make more understandable the geopolitical dogma of Churchill’s Britain and its consequences on Greece. The basic investigatory questions which we will try to answer: why the British reinforced EAM-ELAS (the National Liberation Front) despite the fact that they were ideologically opposing it, why did London insist on the rehabilitation of the monarch despite his low popularity and finally why the British allowed Germans to remain at Crete until mid-1945.

If the authentic texts of the protagonists of History are worth to be studied, it is for the various gradations of the facts presented in them which may either reveal hidden elements or act as shades that make the understanding of them much more difficult. Relative texts may offer more interpretations or enrichment of existing ones with the introduction of “working hypotheses” or investigatory questions. After all, history is not an one-dimensional and usually partial picture that someone is taught in school or in any other organization, but a multi-factorial and complex system of human actions. The contrasts do not always appear between the extreme points of view, but in many cases coexist among many versions of “good” and “evil”. The confidential report of Wallace seems to be a significant British text regarding the resistance activities in the mountainous Greece, in the middle of WWII (1943), and its upcoming future.

WALLACE REPORT

In July 1943 major David J. Wallace was chosen by the British Foreign Office⁴ to be sent to Greece in order to report on the current situation in the so called “Free Greece”, on the resistance groups operating there and on King George II popularity. At that time the British Military Mission in Greece was staffed by, approximately, 60 officers, 40 non-commissioned officers, while it had more than 30 wireless receiving sets. Under the authority of brigadier Myers, commandant of the British Military Mission in Greece (SOE)⁵ came six different regional commandants with the rank of lieutenant colonel, while under them served several officers-liaisons, most of them with the rank of major, each one of them being responsible for the work of the liaison with the guerilla groups of his region. Under the authority of them came some officers of the special operations branch. To begin with, we have the view that specific aspects of that mission “betray” its real aims. Wallace, although major, was sent to occupied Greece to take over the

position of the political advisor of brigadier Myers. Wallace notes: "I had been chosen for this position by Foreign Office and before I depart I was briefed in London, by Foreign Office and by SOE as well. Foreign Office and SOE had agreed on the limits of my jurisdiction. On the one hand SOE would employ me and during my stay in Greece I would be member of the staff of brigadier Myers. On the other hand however, my political guidance would be exercised by his Majesty's ambassador at the Greek government, Reginald Leeper⁶. Our between telegraphs would be exchanged through the channels of SOE, but directly, with no delay and no intervention. Regarding the political issues, I would have the right to express my opinion to the ambassador without restrictions on condition that brigadier Myers would have previously seen my telegraphs. Any difference between brigadier Myers and myself, on political issues, would be solved in Cairo or in London", (Wallace, 2009, p.45, 46). What do all these mean? The explanation is rather simple. British went through plans for the future of the region and asked for objective information, in short notice, from an "external observer" and not from its military mission! That is why the above (complicated for war period) arrangements of subordination and communication of the special delegate Wallace were settled. His classified report on the "British Policy and the Resistance Movements in Greece" was written in Cairo in 1943, (summarizing his information and analysis, from the short period of his stay in Greece, from 14/07/1943 until 09/08/1943).

As he colorfully wrote in 1943, "the entire central alpine area of Greece that forms its backbone is entirely and perfectly unattached to any influence or contact with the occupation forces or the Quisling government in Athens ... You can travel from Florina till the suburbs of Athens simply with the passport of EAM⁷. Before I went there myself, I hadn't comprehend neither how extended, nor how free it is ... In Free Greece there is neither central force, nor state. The administration is exercised at a village level. It is on the one hand, a mixture of the old institution of the mayor and of the civic council and on the other hand, of the new local EAM representative and the village committee. In reality, wider contact is maintained only with the guerilla groups and this of course means, in most cases, with EAM", (Wallace, 2009, p. 49-51).

However his report basically refers not to military issues, as it would be expected in the middle of 1943, but to the evaluation of the resistance groups, of their leaders and of the Joint General Resistance Headquarters, of king's position and the views of key personalities on the issue of King himself, on monarchy and the political future of Greece. Consequently, Wallace mission was related to the military, political and economic future of Greece for which the British were preparing methodically their plans according to their strategic interests in the area. For drafting these plans (and initiatives) the British needed specialized and focused information of the type Myers could not provide. Among other aspects, the British were interested on the profiles of personalities that could (potentially) play a crucial (military or political) role in Greece after the end of war and Wallace was especially capable of providing such information. It is widely acknowledged that Wallace report influenced decisively policies and initiatives of British government regarding Greece during its civil war⁸.

Wallace report is prophetic: he foresees the final conflict between British and EAM-ELAS. Furthermore, despite the fact that he pleads his "flexible political conscience", he doesn't hesitate to call "devious" the British policy of the constant reinforcement of the (under communist control) EAM-ELAS, with the perspective of its future

eradication, with military means, when it will attempt to take over power. Wallace on one hand “refuses to believe” this “devious” policy but on the other hand he denounces it.

INVESTIGATORY QUESTIONS

At this point let us go through examining some questions, of stochastic nature and critical analysis.

Question number one: Why the British reinforced EAM-ELAS, a pro-Soviet, powerful and strong movement, against their interests?

An obvious answer would be that they reinforced it in order to battle their opponents in war, Germans, at least up to the second trimester of 1943, when their final victory was more obvious. In addition and after the successful landing operation of the Allies in Sicily, (July 1943), there was no reason, any longer, for the reinforcement of the Greek guerrilla groups in order for the Germans to be misled that the alleged landing operation would be in Greece. Since then we find it reasonable for them to start processing their future moves in the postwar diplomatic chessboard.

However, understanding the weaknesses of EAM-ELAS⁹, they knew that they will be victorious in the future against it. The main concern of the British would be to exercise the maximum possible control over the partisans in order to achieve their strategic aim of putting Greece firmly under their influence.

Question number two: Why London insisted on the rehabilitation of the monarch, when it had the briefing that he was unwelcome in Greece almost by everyone¹⁰?

Wallace records many times that nobody wished the return of the King. He comments that King is justly accused of leaving, in wartime, out of the army the most capable officers (because of their democratic inclinations) and on the other hand all the dignitaries of Quisling’s government were monarchic officers.

Despite that, Wallace worked on scenarios for the support of the exiled monarch, the most important of which was a suggestion for a blackmail of the democrats (who were at the same time anti-communists and anti-monarchic), that if they don’t support the return of the King the support of Britain will be revoked and the country will be left at the mercy of the Stalinists of EAM. The argument was persuasive since the latter had already begun persecutions by assassinating democratic officers and disarming right-wing resistance units.

More specifically, when they are asked by the Department of Military Intelligence (DMI) in Cairo on the possibility of the return of King to Greece, on one hand Myers says that if the British impose the return of the King a revolution or a civil war will break out, while Wallace, on the contrary, responds that if the King declares that he will return with the Greek army, no revolution will take place, but this event will displease the people¹¹. The British taking into consideration Wallace’s report, “pushed” for the return of the monarch to Greece.

It is certain that such an action would cause tensions and polarization in the Greek political system and it would not facilitate the accomplishment of a conciliatory solution. This leads us to the next question.

Question number three: Is this what the British precisely wish? ¹²

To answer to this question we will have to examine the long-term goals of the British diplomacy. We will next argue on a working hypothesis. Taking into account the pro-German history of the Greek monarchy, it is almost certain that for British a “straw man” type of King with weaknesses, no skills, disliked by the majority of the people and by a significant part of the political system and as a consequence depended on them will be the ideal choice. Such a King would easily support their policies or at least would not oppose them in the case that these policies were interfering with the interests of Greece.

Question number four: Why did the Germans remain in Greece (Crete) till the middle of 1945? ¹³

The Germans remained in the island of Crete for many months after their departure from mainland Greece following an understanding reached with the British aimed to keep EAM from taking over power. The government of Cairo encouraged the above plans, despite the fact that EAM had decided that its men would be incorporated into the National Civil Guard. The role of the British organizations ISDL and SOE was significant. The historical events will reach a peak during May- June 1945(!), when agents and recreants will try to take control of the liberation process of the city of Chania¹⁴.

The departure of the Germans from Crete and also from Greece was massive and unobstructed by the British forces. As it was later revealed, an Anglo-German agreement had been reached regarding the surrender, by the Germans, of Athens and Thessaloniki without fighting.

Albert Speer, minister of Hitler’s Military and Industrial Production, testifies¹⁵: “I am an auricular witness, in fall 1944, of a fact that has caused us a great impression. I specifically remember that general Jodl, commander in chief of the General (German) Staff, came one day and informed me that an agreement has been reached at a high level between England and Germany, that regarded Greece. This agreement, unprecedented till then and as far as I know unique in the whole Second World War, regarded - as Jodl told me - the evacuation of Greece from the German troops without any British annoyance (reaction). This agreement was made in Lisbon and I do not know whose initiative was, but I think that it was not done on a diplomatic level, but much higher, in order not to have breach of secrecy.

The information for this strange “gentlemen agreement” between London and Berlin caused to those who were informed on it astonishment. And, indeed, the English abided by the agreement. The German warships and cargo ships were loaded with army from the Greek islands - that were evacuated - passed, in the fall 1944, unobstructed in front of the eyes of the British and among the British submarines in the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea. The price of the agreement, in our point of you, was for the Germans to hand over Thessaloniki to the British with no battle and by this way Greece to remain in the western camp”.

WORKING HYPOTHESIS

But are things as simple as they are usually presented? The strategic plan of the British for the postwar period, would certainly include our country, which would be “assigned” to the Western Camp¹⁶. At this point we decided to introduce a working hypothesis.

Let's assume that the war in Greece ended in 1945 (and not in 1944) and Greece had the opportunity to participate, united and at the side of winners, to the meetings regarding the postwar arrangements. Then an important issue would arise in the discussions and negotiations on which Greece and Britain would have opposite interests, namely the issue of Cyprus¹⁷. At this point we stress the fact that Wallace in his report downgraded the obvious and widely acknowledged contributions of Greece in the war by carefully avoiding to refer to its victories against the Axis but focusing instead to certain negative aspects regarding the mobilization of armed forces of Greece against the Italians. He (most probably) “disclosed” in this way the British plans for Greece (to downgrade its contributions in order to weaken its position in the postwar negotiations as far as Cyprus is concerned). Already in 1941 London did not allow for the establishment of the Greek exiled government in Cyprus. The British knew that with regard to Cyprus (and their strategic interests and bases there) they wouldn't have the sympathy and understanding of liberal (and anti-colonial) America and it would be then difficult to oppose convincingly a request for the union of Cyprus with Greece¹⁸. Furthermore, the British, as early as 1943, had understood that the Allies would win the war and that the Americans would be the dominant player in the postwar geo-political game. As with Wilson in 1918 the Americans would challenge their colonial policies and the inevitable creation of an Israeli state would terminate their colonial presence in Palestine. As a consequence, when Wallace was dispatched to occupied Greece, British diplomacy had already realized the negative for her aspects of the American participation in the war and most probably was in the mid of hectic efforts to assess alternative options for which it desperately needed specialized information. The possibility of the collapse of its control on the strategic axis Egypt-India greatly enhanced the strategic importance of Cyprus. Also, knowing very well that the Greek political system had extremely limited room to manoeuvre on Cyprus issue, the only remaining option for them was to weaken as much as possible the position of Greece when the time of the decisions would come. Wallace was most probably instructed to collect intelligence on the weak and strong aspects of personalities that were expected to play a crucial role in the postwar politics and the economic and military reorganization of the country. And Wallace responded with “painting” very successful and valuable portraits. It is characteristic that Wallace was particularly attracted by the efficiency and competence of the right-wing resistance leader colonel Psarros, who was expected to play a crucial role in the re-organization of the Greek army after the war. By an interesting coincidence, Psarros was assassinated shortly after the departure of Wallace from occupied Greece.

Wallace also pointed out artfully another crucial aspect of the existing (locally) balance of power proceeding even with suggestions on how the situation could be exploited to the benefit of the British: “We will cause, in addition, an open war between the two

camps (left and right), which will be more bloody than four months ago as a result of the significant increase of the power of the two sides ...”, (Wallace, 2009, p. 139).

Based on the existing facts, a proper and feasible short-term solution would be the enfeeblement and the isolation of Greece, through the provocation of an internal dispute (even a civil warfare), taking advantage among other things of the circumstances they had helped to be created/established in the “Free” Greece. On these circumstances and on the leaderships of several resistance groups (from right to left) the British were exercising an influence or control up to a specific point knowing their weaknesses and flaws¹⁹. Most probably, the collection of intelligence on the resistance groups and their leaders was the strategic goal of the strong British military presence in occupied Greece. So, the Greeks, the great winners of the war with Italian Fascists, dealing with their internal strife, will not be able to set up a claim against the British (Cyprus), against the new Geopolitical System in the Balkans (Northern Epirus) and against their former enemies and allies afterwards (compensations-indemnifications). Consequently the civil war favored significantly the British interests in the Middle East and the Balkans and at the same time and at a very critical moment for Greece it decisively weakened (at a multitude of levels and in great length of geo-political time) both Greece and Cyprus.

We fairly consider that the crucial evolutions in Greece during 1943-49, were the result of a strategic plan on the part of British diplomacy, which was successfully implemented. The weaknesses (corruption, lack of national vision etc) of the leadership and of the important personalities of the country during that period contributed decisively to the successful implementation of this plan. The head of the American Economic Mission to Greece in 1947 Paul A. Porter reported extensively and characteristically on the complete inefficiency and corruption of the Greek political system, on the utter inefficiency of the King and on the controversial role of the British²⁰. A company of collaborators, of naïve, ambitious, arriviste, power-lovers, opportunist, greedy and wicked politicians and people of economic power, by a surprising coincidence, managed to grasp the power in the most critical moment for Greece. They were the type of people who were not capable of foiling Churchill’s plans. The patriots, the technocrats, the prudent and the honest ones were isolated and marginalized. All the above to the amazement of Paul A. Porter and of many other analysts of that period who were raising a catalytic for the British question: **What they were doing in Greece for two and a half years (until the Americans took over)?**

British government adopted almost fully the recommendations of Wallace Report²¹, except for the return of the King (an issue which was previously analyzed). Wallace’s comments on Archbishop Damaskinos heavily influenced the decision of the British to accept him as a temporary solution for the post of regency²² a decision that took into account his wide popular acceptance which was the result of his stance during the German occupation. Initially this option bumped into King George’s denial (he turned down a relevant suggestion by Emmanuel Tsouderos). Nevertheless the events of December 1944 (who might have caused them? it is almost certain that the British appropriately “handled” the situation so that gradually a controlled rupture would befall in Greece) forced King George to recede and Damaskinos took over as viceroy of Greece on 31 December 1944.

The political scenery is in turmoil and Damaskinos is trying to balance on adversary powers that fight for their predominance and to undermine him. The British government, with Churchill as prime minister, is planning its next moves, having “arranged”(fixed), with the agreement of Yalta Conference (04-11/02/1945) the geopolitical position of Greece. The handling of the issue of Greece by Churchill, by writing hastily in a scrap of paper (that was given to Stalin) the partitioning of Greece into vague zones of influences, 90% for Britain and 10% for Soviet Union, was a highly controversial event (criticized even by the Americans) raising a plethora of questions: why 90% and not 85% or 95% and why British allowed for Soviet Union to have some kind of influence in the strategic peninsula of Greece and finally why all this controversial bargaining – looking like an old type grocery list - was taking place behind the back of the Americans?. Evidently, the percentages themselves had no other meaning except to register and secure a Soviet zone of influence in Greece so as this to give a pretext to the British to proceed with their plans of initiating a civil strife in Greece. Without an adversary with a strong and somehow “legalized” international support the communist uprising would have no chance to seriously challenge the national (right-wing) army of Greece. Many analysts from Greece are accusing Britain of its dubious and cynical policies in Greece that caused a civil war with hundreds of thousands of victims and tremendous social and economic hardships. Britain, after all, was defending its interests there with the way so many other powers in so many other circumstances did in the past, the Greek Empire of medieval times included. It was the responsibility of Greeks to fight the symptoms of a long and lethal decay (corruption, extreme political inefficiency and antagonisms, easy subjection of the political system to foreign orders from whatever direction etc) and to impose a “cleaning” on their backyard.

On 15 May 1945 Damaskinos reaches Rhodes on board the warship “Averof” as the first Greek leader that visits the liberated Dodecanese. However, Damaskinos “crosses the red line” when he visits London (6 - 22 September 1945) accompanied by the director of his political office (diplomat and poet George Seferis) to have discussions with the new British government of Clement Attlee while at the same time his country is divided and at the mercy of traitors and collaborators of the Nazis who were left unpunished to form a protective barrier against the communist threat and of course against any attempt to challenge the designs of the foreign powers that offered them protection and immunity. There, with his pompous style Damaskinos files an official request for the unification of Cyprus with Greece²³, activating in this way the initiation of the British (civil strife) plans. This official request filed in London (reminding of the story of the hunter who puts his head in the lion’s mouth to file a request regarding his right to kill it) epitomized the remarkable ignorance of geo-politics by those handling national issues of the utmost importance, the lack of well-studied long term policy planning, the lack of national cohesion, the lack of professionalism etc to such a degree that is quite surprising for a country with the history of Greece. Of course, returning to Athens from his visit to London, a jubilant Viceroy with his custody of poets and foreign experts, announced to the Greek people (who suffered terribly for more than five years and desperately needed some news to invigorate their moral) that their leadership was brave enough and wise enough to challenge the mighty British lion at its home, demanding from it the satisfaction of a long standing and just request! Because in this country of proverbial inefficiency it is not the final results and consequences that matter but only the good intentions! And if at the end the outcome is negative then the easy excuse of “a Greece which is honest but very small to resist the wills of the mighty

powers” is whispered around (recall the examples of King of Greece with respect to the issue of Crete in 1908 and of the Greek leadership in 1974 with respect to the issue of Cyprus in 1974).

With his return to Greece²⁴, the Viceroy watches the governments to collapse one after the other (the creation of political instability). On 31 March 1946 parliamentary elections are carried out without the participation of K.K.E (Communist Party of Greece), a fact that contributes decisively to the worsening of the political climate in the country. The plebiscite for the regime is carried out on 1 September 1946 and is in favor of the restoration of monarchy in Greece. Damaskinos resigns from the post of viceroy (for the third and final time on 28 September 1946) and retires to his ecclesiastic duties²⁵. It is remarkable that a few months later, on 1 April 1947, the restored (but not trusted by the British) King George dies²⁶.

However, concerning the candidature for premiership of Plastiras²⁷ (suggested also by Wallace!) who was called to take over the government as a personality of wide acceptance (on 3 January 1945- after the Riots of December 1944), London failed. During his short premiership (3/1-8/4/1945) he acted in a unifying way and tried to avert the Civil war (the first to call it as such). An important fact of that period is the Treaty of Varkiza. The British finally discerned, in Plastiras’ face, an impediment to the promotion of their political designs and interests in the area and as a consequence they “facilitated” the publication of Plastiras’ older texts, in which he exposed fascist opinions which resulted to his resignation.

As a result of the strategic plans of London and the marginalization of those who tried to open the Cyprus issue, it didn’t take too long for the civil war to break out. This civil war was disastrous only for Greece since its position had been anchored in the “western geopolitical camp” with a firm and undisputable way²⁸.

At this point is worth to mention another parameter of the British policy in Greece, the pursue for an alternative option in case that the manipulated by them civil conflict in Greece would not work. This has to do with their designs to put Crete under their control (**to exploit the Crete Factor**).

This working hypothesis can offer strong explanatory argumentation on the (hidden) aims behind the (controversial) British handling of the issue of evacuation of Crete from the German troops. For the shake of the argumentation of the above hypothesis the following facts are presented:

- a. Em. Mpandouvas,(one of the important contributors to the resistance in Crete), narrated to A. Sanoudakis that he was invited by Woodhouse of SOE, to lead (Mpandouvas) a autonomist movement with the support of England. As an exchange Mpandouvas would be nominated first president of the autonomous Crete.
- b. B. D. Vlandas writes in the book: “THE BETRAYED REVOLUTION 1941-44”, “...as the German occupation in Crete was coming to an end, at the prefecture of Rethymnon an English-initiated move for the autonomy of Crete was starting to take place...”

- c. The newspaper “DEMOCRACY of Chania” published in 1946 the following text that A. Nenedakis puts out in his book “THE PRIME RESERVIST”: “In April 1943 the English officer Fielding was propagandizing in Crete its annexation to England...or placing it under its protection...in a conversation he said that if after the war the English do not keep the whole island, they will definitely keep some parts of it that will be used as bases”.
- d. From the beginning of the occupation agents of SOE or FORCE 133 were acting at military but mainly at political level in the island. Indeed, in Cairo Hughes and Fielding found the group captain Andreas Volanis and after talking to him about the annexation of Crete to England and after had informed him of the benefits that Crete would have in such a case they suggested to him to come to the island along with Giparis and Kelaidis to work on that plan.

THE GEOPOLITICAL DOCUMENTATION

The policy of Britain was aiming of course to preserve/promote its interests in the area and it was compatible with the principles of the Anglo-Saxon Geopolitical School. Nevertheless, its founder H. Mackinder had included since 1919²⁹ the so called “eastern dispute” in the wider strategic brainstorming for the competition between the Naval and Continental or Overland Powers of the planet.

In his book³⁰, he redefined in geo-political terms the “eastern dispute” as a continuous attempt of the Continental Power of Russia (Heartland) that seeks for ways of unimpeded access to the southern seas (Aegean and wider Eastern Mediterranean) and of the Western Naval Powers that want to monopolize the area. Which should be the geopolitical architecture that the West in the Eurasian area in order to avoid the threat emanating from Heartland designs? Geography reveals the necessity for the total control on the areas of three straits:

- A) The straits of Japan-Korea-Taiwan, in the East Pacific Ocean
- B) The straits of Skagerrak, in the North Atlantic Ocean
- C) The Aegean Sea and the straits of Dardanelles in the Mediterranean

Soviet Union sought after a beneficial for it resolution of the “eastern dispute” focusing instead of the free access to the Indian Ocean (which, with the “help” of the effective British diplomatic manoeuvre there, was proved economically and geo-politically extremely costly) to the unimpeded access to the sea of Northern Europe and mainly to the warm sea of the Mediterranean. H. Mackinder, fully understanding the geopolitical visions of the Soviet Union and exploiting the military history of World War II as a base for the implementation of his geopolitical ideas summarized his theories in an article titled “The Round World and the Victory of Peace” published in the American semi-official magazine “Foreign Affairs” in July 1943 (when the Nazism defeat at the Russian front was more clear). At the same time he suggested a geopolitical security structure of the postwar world suggesting the foundation of a Western Alliance that will be finally realized in the form of NATO in 1949.

In the above article Mackinder argued that “After considering all the factors, the conclusion is inevitable: If Soviet Union in this war conquers Germany, it should be ranked as the biggest Overland Power in the planet. And something [more](#); it will be the

biggest force in the most strategically powerful defensive position. Heartland is the biggest natural fort on earth. For the first time in History this fort will be manned by a guard satisfactory in quantity and quality”.

The geopolitical treatise “The Geography of Peace” of the American analyst and professor of political sciences Nicolas Spykman, published in 1944, simply confirmed Mackinder’s side concerning the evaluation of the situation from a geopolitical point of view! If we examine the world geopolitical map of the time, the Overland Power, USSR, (that coincides entirely with the Eurasian Heartland), is surrounded by a geographical ring (Rimland), that begins from the European space in the West up to the Japanese Isles to the East. Europe and Japan are the main keys of a radical solution to the “eastern dispute”, since these areas have double geopolitical value: on the one hand, they are the ends of the wider space of the Naval Power, whose center is taken up by the USA and the other hand, they are the extreme points of Rimland, which delimit the south front of the then USSR and include many countries as the states of the Middle East, India and China.

If we take a view of this global geopolitical architecture of the West from the side of USA (the protagonist, in the postwar era, of the new geopolitical reality) we easily understand that the Sea of Japan and the Mediterranean Sea are the two major gravity areas (poles) of that system of dominance. In the geopolitical map, the American continent is well orientated towards the North-South axis and **the central core of the “eastern dispute”, that is the Eastern Mediterranean, is clearly emerging as the “Eastern Pole” of the western geopolitical architecture, while the Sea of Japan emerges as the “Western pole” of it. In this context the geo-strategic value of Cyprus is of paramount importance for the West and particularly for Britain which has two military bases in the island of Aphrodite recently ‘upgraded’ to small state entities for “better geo-political protection”.**

The enormous geopolitical significance of the above two poles is shown by the two fierce civil wars erupted at these poles (Greek and Korean peninsulas) soon after the end of World War II. Both civil wars were conflicts between the Western Naval Powers and Heartland, as their competition was escalating in the frame of the newly re-defined “eastern dispute”.

A. Pearce, referring to the support that was granted to the Greek governmental army by the Anglo-Saxons (in the introduction of the 1966 edition of Mackinder’s book “Democratic ideals and Reality”) he notes the following: “In 1919 Mackinder thought that the occupation of Greece by a big power of Heartland would postulate the probable control of the World Island. According to the Yugoslav leader Milovan Djilas: (Conversations with Stalin, New York, 1962, p.181-182), Stalin moved to stop the Greek civil war because he understood that America and England would never tolerate a communist Greece in their Mediterranean “salvation board”. The case of the Korean civil war (1950-1953) was similar, when the powers of the Allies fought to stop the communist expansion from the northern territories of the Eurasian Heartland.

Consequently the British leadership with Churchill as prime minister would do anything in order Greece not to be “removed” from the Western camp, confirming the geopolitical fear of the Allies regarding the expansion of the USSR in the Mediterranean. However, in the Treaty of Yalta all the above were basically adopted by

the West. But just this wasn't enough! Greece shouldn't be, in the postwar era, capable of asserting its rights upon the trophies of the winners of the war. So the terms of this agreement were neither announced, nor published. The British prime minister planned and executed a controversial policy (which could be characterized also as vagabond if we assume – rather wrongly - that diplomatic practice and justice go together) for a nation that fought courageously and had many losses during its occupation by the Nazis. Nevertheless this policy was not outlandish for him. Indicatively, we note that as a Minister of the Navy during the First World War and loyal to the illations of geopolitics and the old diplomatic practices of his country, Churchill had chosen to enfeeble Russia, his ally in the Entente Cordiale, (by applying a superb - but cynical - diplomatic stratagem, analyzed in the previous paper of this issue), instead of allowing Tsar to fulfill the grand idea of Romanof to conquer Constantinople and the Dardanelles re-establishing in this way the Eastern Roman Empire under their rule. At this point we would like to stress the fact that 'diplomatia' (the Greek origin of the word 'diplomacy') means to employ or project two different (and as a rule contradicting to each other) eye-views for the same issue in order to deceive your enemy or competitor. Hence, by its historical definition and application diplomacy is cynical and as such it abides by the principles of justice only if the costs of their violation exceed the benefits drawn from its respect. For example, Eastern Romans (medieval Greeks, Byzantines) were masters of diplomacy and as a result were frequently accused by the Francs and the English (who at that time had not yet mastered the art of diplomacy) as cynical and vagabond in the same way that many analysts now days characterize British diplomacy. On the other hand the efforts to unmask the cynical character of diplomacy and the sources of it to the wide public will force diplomacy in the long run to respect justice more than it does today.

NOTES

[1a] <http://www.defencenter-energeo.org/>

This paper presents findings of an ongoing research project titled "British foreign policy in Greece" undertaken by CEDEG's Study Group with the participation of the following researchers: Thomas Vlachostergios and Nektarios Ginakis.

[1b] John Karkazis is Professor of Operations Research in the Department of Shipping, Trade and Transport (STT), University of the Aegean at Chios, Greece and President, Constantine Porphyrogenetus Int. Ass., Chios, Greece.

[1c] Ioannis Vidakis, is Commodore (ret) HN (supply corps), CEDEG Director and Coordinator of CEDEG's Study Group and a Ph.D. candidate, University of the Aegean at Chios, Greece.

The writers gladly invite ideas and comments in the e-mail address:

geopolitics.studies@gmail.com

[2] "British foreign policy and resistance movements in Greece. The confidential report of major David J. Wallace (1943)" (in Greek), transl. Petros Makris-Staikos (Μετάφραση: Πέτρος Μακρής-Στάικος, εκδόσεις Ωκεανίδα, 2009).

[3] Relevant articles in the Greek press: "BHMA(VIMA)" 18.10.09, "NEA" 28.11.09 and 05.12.09, "Eleftherotipia" 05.12.2009, "BHMA(VIMA)" 20.12.2009, 10.01.10, 24.01.10&31.01.10. "Rizospastis" 14.02.10

[4] Wallace was an expert on the Ancient Greek and Latin literature and a graduate of the Heathfield, Eton and Balliol College of Oxford.

[5] The **Special Operations Executive (SOE)** was a World War II British covert military actions organization. It was established by Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Minister of Economic Warfare Hugh Dalton on 22 July 1940, to conduct warfare against the Axis powers by means other than direct military engagement. Its mission was to encourage and facilitate espionage and sabotage behind enemy lines and in its early days, to serve as the core of the Auxiliary Units. It was also known as "*Churchill's Secret Army*" or "*The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare*". The organization directly employed or controlled just over 13,000 people.

[6] **Reginald Wildig Allen Leeper** (25 March 1888 – 2 February 1968) was a British civil servant and diplomat. Rex Leeper (as he was known) began his government career at the Intelligence Bureau of the Department of Information during the First World War. He became head of Britain's Political Intelligence Department when it was reformed in 1938. He was British ambassador to the Greek government from 1943 to 1946 (in exile in Cairo until October 1944).

[7]"National Liberation Front", its main driving force was according to Churchill at 90% communist.

[8] The bureau that chose Wallace for this mission and the time of his mission signal at first two things: the British were developing strategic plans for the postwar era and were particularly interested on the Greek factor.

[9] Wallace, (2009, p. 127): "The last terrifying element of the situation is that EAM has never been weaker than today. And there has never been a more favorable moment for demonstration of force against it. EAM will not dare the rupture with Great Britain, because it will be driven to devastation".

[10] "I have no doubt for the big anti-popularity of the king in the Free Greece. He is the victim of a two and a half years intensively pressing and everlasting propaganda, the biggest part of which although unfair, it is believable. Since Metaxas has passed away and consequently according to the point of view of the Greek politician the constant polemic against him is redundant, all the hatred to his dictatorship has now been transferred to the face of the king. Metaxas' dictatorship has definitely been invidious. It had the bad luck to end with a military disaster. So, the king is held responsible for both of them", (Wallace, 2009, p. 99).

[11] Wallace, (2009, p. 23). In addition, "...Mr. Kartalis (leader of EKKA) summarized to me the political views of EKKA as follows: " a. EKKA is asking for radical social reformation , b. It is opposed to the king, because it considers his presence uncompromising with the previous, while in Greece the tradition of apolitical constitutional monarchy according to the English standard, hasn't been experienced, c. It considers the communists and the Slavs as the two biggest hazards for Greece, d. EAM, with the pan-Balkan policy, makes easier the communist and Slav penetration to Greece and e. For that, in the worst case scenario EKKA will accept the king, if that will be the minimum condition for the British to protect Greece against the above prime dangers", Wallace, (2009, p. 82).

12)"**The People at the Top Can Do These Things, Which Others Can't Do**": Winston Churchill and the Greeks, 1940-45, Thanasis D. Sfikas, Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 26, No 2 (Apr., 1991), pp. 307-332. Published by: Sage Publications, Ltd.

[13] The Germans were disarmed on 23 May 1945, when the regiment of the Hampshire reached the island. The German soldiers departed from Crete by ships on 12 June with all of their personal stuff, a month after the surrender of the 3d Reich!

[14] For more details see Douka Maro, (2010). "Justice is too tough", Published by Patakis.

[15] In an interview to B. Mathiopoulos that had been published in 1976, in the newspaper “BHMA”, (the fragment is from his book: “The December of 1944”).

[16] For Greece, H. Mackinder had already written, that...”her conquest by a strong overland Power it will probably give to that power the ability to control the World Island” , from the speech of the General and Academic D. Skarvelis during the opening of the 3rd International Convention of EL.ES.ME, on 10 November 2003. The presidential delegate in Greece in 1947 American officer P. Porter writes: “Greece has for us a wider meaning than what her size and her geographical location would connote. She has a strategic position and has been the stronghold of the democratic world in the Eastern Mediterranean, thanks to her naval spirit, her historic traditions and the character of her people”.

[17] Other issues might have been the future of Northern Epirus and the war indemnifications.

[18] Prime Minister Emanuel Tsouderos had included Cyprus to a memorandum that he handed over to the President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in June 1942. Later, the vice-President of the (exiled) government Panagiotis Kanellopoulos proceeded with handing over a similar memorandum to Anthony Eden (December 1942).

[19] Wallace in several points of his report evaluates several key personalities by drawing their profiles with emphasis on their weak and strong points.

[20] “A miracle is sought for Greece. The diary of an American Delegate. Paul A. Porter”, (in Greek), BHMA Μαρτυρίες, 2010

[21] However as it is mentioned in the “Introduction of the book”- (2009, p. 23), Wallace Report is forwarded to Anthony Eden and its influence on the British policy regarding EAM-ELAS and SOE in Cairo, will be catalytic.

[22] “And it is a misfortune that in reality there was no eminent royalist that has been assigned head of the popular resistance against the Axis. Even former Archbishop Chrysanthus, a remarkable man, as I am sure, was inferior in strength compared to the current Archbishop of Athens Damaskinos, who was denied, quite unjustly as many support, the archbishop’s throne by Metaxas and the King. By the way, Damaskinos, as I comprehend, is a hero for the people of Athens and a personality of great political influence”. (Wallace, 2009, p. 102).

[23] Actually he commits a strategic error demarcating the end of his stay in the regency.

[24] After he had symbolically laid a remembrance wreath at the Arc de Triumph in Paris.

[25] He passed away in Athens in 20 May 1949 at the age of 59.

[26] And the palace, reacting to Damaskinos’ presence at the funeral, they call former Archbishop Chrysanthus to perform the ceremony.

[27] “The brigadier Myers opposed the idea of bringing back Plastiras to Greece, being afraid of the fact that his arrival will not be agreeable to EAM. If needed, he will only be able to return as head of EDES, according to the constitutional chart of it. Plastiras is the most important personality in the Greek resistance movement and as I think (upon his return to Greece), we could, possibly, be faced with a real collapse of EAM. By this way we will achieve our goal, without breaking any of our obligations, simply by introducing a new factor that is not covered by any other previous agreement. By the way, Plastiras’ biggest influence is exercised in those regions that EAM monopolizes power, namely Thessalia and Macedonia. Regarding foreign policy Plastiras had always been faithful to England and his presence will be a serious guarantee that Greece will continue to fight efficiently on our side...”. (Wallace, 2009, p. 144-5).

[28] Yalta conference, (04-11/02/1945)

[29] H. Mackinder supported these opinions mainly in his essay "Democratic Ideals and Reality" that was published in 1919, when the Treaties of peace of the World War I were signed. Before publishing these theories Mackinder analyzed them as head master of the London School of Economics during the period 1903-1908, before becoming member of the British Parliament in 1910, having full consciousness of the geopolitical situation.

[30] H. Mackinder, "Democratic Ideals and Reality. A Classic Work on Geography and World Power", Norton, 1962, New York, p. 108.

[31] Relative article "...", in the magazine "Greek Defense & Technology", issue n. X, May 2011.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

M. Howard, "The use and abuse of History", in: *The Causes of War, and Other Essays*, London, Temple Smith, 1983.

C. Gray, "In Defense of the Heartland: Sir Halford Mackinder and his Critics a Hundred Years on", in: *Contemporary Essays*, Strategic and Combat Studies Institute / British Ministry of Defence, The Occasional, nr 47, 2004.

H. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality. A Classic Work on Geography and World Power*, re-print: New York, Norton, 1962, p. 108.

H. Kissinger, «**Diplomacy**», Nea Synora - Livanis, Athens, 1995.

H. Mackinder, *The Round World and the Winning of the Peace* (Foreign Affairs, July 1943) reprinted in: *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, New York, Norton, 2nd ed., 1962, p. 264 and 267.

Zb. Brzezinski, «The Grand Chessboard, Nea Synora – Livanis, Athens, 1999.

British reports on Greece 1943-1944, John Melior Stevens, Christopher Montague Woodhouse, David John Wallace, Lars Bærentzen, Museum Tusulanum Press, 1982.