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**Politics of Forgetting: New Zealand-Greek Wartime Relationship**

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## **Abstract**

In extant New Zealand literature and national public commemoration, the New Zealand experience of wartime Greece largely focuses on the Battle of Crete in May 1941 and, to a lesser extent, on the failed earlier mainland campaign. At a politico-military level, the ill-fated Greek venture and the loss of Crete hold centre stage in the discourse. In terms of commemoration, the Battle of Crete dominates as an iconic episode in the national history of New Zealand. As far as the Greeks are concerned, New Zealand elevates and embraces Greek civilians to the point where they overshadow the Greek military.

The New Zealand drive to place the Battle of Crete as supporting its national self-imagining has been achieved, but what has been forgotten in the process? The wartime connection between the Pacific nation and Greece lasted for the remainder of the international conflict and was highly complex and sometimes violent. In occupied Greece and Crete, as well as in the Middle East, North Africa and Italy, New Zealand forces had to interact with a divided Greek nation that had been experiencing ongoing political turmoil and intermittent civil conflict. Individual New Zealanders found themselves acting as liaison officers with competing partisan groups. Greek military units with a history of mutiny and political intrigue were affiliated with the main New Zealand fighting force, the Second New Zealand Division. This complex relationship was compounded by a controversial British foreign policy towards Greece as well as by the emergence of the United Nations Organisation. There are a few published traces of these episodes and almost nothing recorded in commemoration endeavours about this wider experience. What options and constraints faced the New Zealand national leadership (military and civil) at the time? How did they navigate through such a complex relationship? What did they publicly promote, distort, conceal or secretly sacrifice during the events themselves, and what was altered in establishing an official memory? This thesis is therefore a study in the making of an official, “usable” memory that ensures a sanitised version of a publicly acknowledged “special relationship” between the Pacific and Mediterranean nations. And the axiom that the State conceals only that which is damaging to it is not the case regarding New Zealand's constructed war memory of its involvement in Greek matters.

### **Declaration by author**

This thesis is composed of my original work and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my research higher degree candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly indicated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

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### **Publications during candidature**

Brown, Martyn, "Investigating the Death of a Legend." *Journal of the Modern Greek Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand*, vol. 18 (2014) (Publication Pending).

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### **Contributions by others to the thesis**

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### **Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree**

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### **Keywords**

New Zealand, Greece, Memory Studies, Second World War, Official Histories

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

2NZDIV	<i>Second New Zealand Division</i>
2NZEF	<i>Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force</i>
C.O.R.S.O	<i>New Zealand Council of Organisations for Relief Service Overseas</i>
C.P.N.Z.	<i>Communist Party of New Zealand</i>
D.S.E.	<i>Democratic Army of Greece</i>
E.A.M.	<i>Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo or National Liberation Front</i>
E.L.A.S.	<i>Ellinikós Laikós Apeleftherotikós Stratós or National Liberation Army.</i>
E.D.E.S.	<i>Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Syndesmos or National Republican League.</i>
E.O.K.	<i>Ethniki Organosis Kriti or National Organisation of Crete.</i>
I.D.E.A.	<i>Ieros Desmos Ellinon Axiomatikon or Sacred Bond of Nationalist Officers</i>
K.K.E.	<i>Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas or Communist Party of Greece.</i>
M.I.9	<i>A British wartime escape organisation</i>
P.E.E.A.	<i>Politiki Epitropi Ethnikis Apeleftherosis or Political Committee of National Liberation</i>
R.S.A.	<i>Returned Services Association</i>
S.O.E.	<i>Special Operations Executive</i>
U.N.O.	<i>United Nations Organisation</i>
U.N.R.R.A.	<i>United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency</i>

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## SITUATING THE THESIS

This thesis examines the construction and use of an official memory of an often publicly expressed and celebrated “special relationship” between two nations, New Zealand and Greece. Its genesis is expressed as the battles on the Greek mainland and Island of Crete during early 1941.

While two countries are involved, this study is predominantly mono-directional rather than comparative and is focussed on the Pacific nation. This focus is due to limits of making a manageable examination as well as to the interest in assessing the impact of a conscious drive by New Zealand's leaders to use the memory of the war to generate a positive national imagining.<sup>1</sup> These endeavours would naturally include Greece. But in addition to Greece being a type of “other”, it was also a fragmented entity both during the war and for the remainder of the 1940s (that is, the core period this thesis is concerned with). Greece underwent major civil upheaval during the world war and afterwards, and its history is extremely complex. All this was exacerbated by foreign interventions and the predilections of major powers – the Axis and its ally, Britain.

However, the complexity of the Greek situation again leads to the emphasis that this study is, again, focussed on New Zealand i.e. there is no exhaustive research and analysis into the intra-Greek dynamics in the relationship.

New Zealand had also been involved in Greek politics. Individuals and groups of New Zealanders, by their imposed situation and/ or own choice, decided which factions to support as various groups vied to shape post-war Greece. New Zealand's nation-state leadership had done the same. During the events themselves, the degree of public awareness of these differing views and their specific contexts varied. Implicit neutrality was the stance the government wanted to present, but the reality was hardly the case. This political dimension of the relationship was within the context of the horror of war and the atrocities and the deprivations it brings.

Hence, this project looks at the New Zealand-Greek relationship in a way that interweaves this darker and contentious involvement with a New Zealand national imagining, promoted by the State, that incorporated relations with Greece as well as projecting its stature in a way that would be

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<sup>1</sup> This view follows the theoretical tradition of Benedict R Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

lauded by its own citizens. Empirical data reveals a wartime relationship that is much more extensive and complicated than that commemorated or “remembered”. Ostensibly, elite members and bureaucracies in the Dominion’s military and State machinery undertook genuine efforts to ensure an ongoing association with Greece during the Second World War and its immediate aftermath. The nation-state repeatedly welcomed a recalcitrant Greek military to join its own forces. New Zealand’s leaders were aware that their soldiers fought alongside Greek partisans in the occupied areas. The suffering of Greek civilians invoked Dominion material aid during the Occupation and afterwards. This was accompanied by relief volunteers, who travelled halfway around the world to help with rehabilitation. The Dominion also helped with the pursuit of Axis war criminals who had committed atrocities against Greek civilians. When it came to the internal political profile of liberated Greece, Wellington advocated the return of parliamentary democracy to the country following nearly 10 years of pre-war military dictatorship and totalitarian occupation.

Having said all this, members of the New Zealand leadership were often uncoordinated and contradictory in their actions. The national elite lagged behind its own citizens and former soldiers when it came to some of their Greek initiatives, or else simply refused requests for more special treatment for the Greeks. In one extreme incident, it deceived its own people over its humanitarian commitment. The fate of New Zealand soldiers enduring the violence of Greek factionalism did not bring any interest from the New Zealand leadership, even though, in some cases, they had placed their soldiers in jeopardy. Throughout all of this, there were constraints and complications imposed by war itself, Britain, the United Nations Organisation (U.N.O.) and the Dominion itself.

Silence, concealment and skewing of the realities of the relationship were the tools used by the national elite to navigate a way through the Greek-related turmoil and to create a seamless official memory. Application of certain memories was also used reflexively by key Dominion leaders during the events of the war and immediately afterward to deflect any notion that they were taking sides in Greek politics. These tactics were a precursor to a more permanent official projection. Hence, memory became a tactical tool with certain audiences (Greek, New Zealand, British, public, semi-public and closed) in particularly sensitive situations.

Championing the relationship during the events themselves did not necessarily flow into the same commitment during subsequent major memory construction. And it does not hold that the New Zealand government would only hide the ugly aspects of its actions from its own population. Omitted was some long-standing behaviour that would have readily strengthened the government's projection of a national leadership genuinely committed to a special place for Greece in the national

psyche. Conversely, there were aspects (such as clandestine work) of the wartime involvement that were bluntly ignored by the New Zealand leadership but were embraced in subsequent State memory making. Ironically, it is the state, rather than non-state publications, that has largely provided glimpses of the complex multi-threaded dynamics. So pervasive was State involvement that there is relatively little new material from non-State publications. That this extreme limitation on information occurs in a liberal democracy, rather than in a totalitarian regime, for example, is something for sociologists or social-anthropologists to investigate further. It appears to be an exception to the memory studies of other nations involved in the war, in which one can at least see changes in memory and history during subsequent decades.

The following sections expand on the introduction and provide the methodology and justification for the study.

### **Research Question**

The writer's initial observations led to the following research question -

*To what extent does the official memory created by the New Zealand national elite fully reflect or exclude the complex, often contentious and sometimes violent, interaction between the New Zealand and Greece during the Second World War and its immediate aftermath?*

At this point, it needs to be stressed that the thesis is only concerned with official memory outputs generated by the national elite. The extent to which it pervades other memory types (for example, “public” or “collective”), a much argued about area in itself,<sup>2</sup> is not included in the scope. A subsequent section on the characteristics of the “special relationship” shows commonalities across the State and the wider community, with little deviation, that suggest, as some academics have argued, that the influence of the New Zealand Nation State is indeed, widespread.<sup>3</sup>

### **Definitions**

The following definitions are used.

**Official Memory.** This is the official record generated by the national elite. Examples include the official war history project, commemorative efforts (such as certificates of appreciation to Greeks, monuments, and utilitarian commemoration through aid) and public statements. Preliminary

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<sup>2</sup> For example, an article in a recent issue of the journal *Memory Studies* described the area of memory studies thus: an ‘incoherent and dispersed field, characterized by a host of different terminologies rather than a common, generally-agreed upon conceptual foundation’. P. Vermuelen et al., “Dispersal and redemption: future dynamics of memory studies - a roundtable,” *Memory Studies*, 5, 2 (2012): 224.

<sup>3</sup> This is in contrast to the range and changing “vectors” of memory identified by studies of other nations, such as Henry Rousso, *Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991), Ch. 6.

research suggested that taking a more granular level of analysis, such as examination of text books and curricula, financial grants to documentary makers or displays at museums, was not feasible. The later methodology section provides a wider theoretical underpinning (especially “history” versus “memory”) for the above question and definitions. It also differentiates between official memory and other related types of memory.

**National Elite-** Elites may be analysed using a variety of theoretical frames (such as simple typologies) across the spectrum of society.<sup>4</sup> In their examination of official commemoration, Winter and Sivan (1999) recognise this as well as multi-tier elites within structures, but conclude with the overall comment that “the State remains relevant both as the carrier of the brunt of warfare[...] and as a major producer and choreographer of commemoration.”<sup>5</sup> While this comment adds weight to the use of a national elite construct, the complexity of multiple elites is not as applicable in the case of New Zealand. It was a smaller organism dominated by several personalities, in particular, Labour Prime Minister Peter Fraser and Lieutenant-General General Bernard Freyberg. Hence their frequent mention in this thesis is symptomatic of their dominance during the war. However, there are also government bureaucratic bodies that had a major influence on the information received by the domestic Dominion population during the conflict. They did not necessarily come under the direct control of these two personalities. The New Zealand national elite therefore comprises political, military and government decision makers (individuals such as the Prime Minister, and bureaucracies such as the National Patriotic Fund, Official War History Project of the Internal Affairs Department and other succeeding Ministerial bodies).

### **Use of War and the New Zealand National Imagining**

War and nation building has its own discourse in academic literature.<sup>6</sup> The related idea of a general history based upon the New Zealand Nation State has been recently challenged.<sup>7</sup> In this thesis, it is accepted that war is used to promote the idea of the entity called the “nation” inasmuch as the national elite thought it so. Hence, an internal government memorandum from the early 1950’s reads: “New Zealanders today are still inclined to be parochial” and stated that building of

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<sup>4</sup> “Elites,” in SAGE Publications, Inc., *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, ed. B. Badie, D Berg-Schlosser, & L Morlino (Thousand Oaks, CA:SAGE Publications, 2011), 760-5.

<sup>5</sup> J. Winter and E. Sivan, “Setting the Framework” in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 38.

<sup>6</sup> J. Hutchinson, “Warfare and the Sacralisation of Nations: The Meanings, Rituals and Politics of National Remembrance,” *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, 38,2 (2009): 401-417; Henry Reynolds, “Are nations really made in war?” in *What’s Wrong with ANZAC?*, ed. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (Sydney: University of NSW, 2010), Ch. 1.

<sup>7</sup> The dialogue is evident in these publications- *New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. Giselle Byrnes (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009); Jock Philips, “Review of the New Oxford History of New Zealand,” *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, 9 (2010): 157-162; The whole issue of New Zealand’s major academic history journal was dedicated to the discussion. See *New Zealand Journal of History*, 45, 1 (2011).

unknown warrior tombs in the Wellington war memorial “will do more than anything else to weld our people into a nation.”<sup>8</sup> The embarkation of the State’s major presence in war history began with the Second World War History Project. The previous world conflict of 1914-1918 had not attracted the same attention.<sup>9</sup> One of the co-authors of the quoted memorandum above, General Howard Kippenberger, was placed at the head of the Project. He had also served as a senior officer throughout the war in the Mediterranean. The gestation of relevant State war histories is a key element in this thesis project. As the following shows, the fifty volume-plus corpus and associated activities are major components in the State’s strategy to ensure a positive national imagining.

**Figure 1.1: Howard Kippenberger. Head of the New Zealand Official War History Project Source: Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 30-Oct-20URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/5k11/kippenberger-howard-karl>. Accessed February 27, 2014.**



### **Impact of the War History Project**

The project was considered until recently as “the largest publishing effort in New Zealand’s history”<sup>10</sup>, with more than 100 staff in early 1946.<sup>11</sup> The extensive output has been successfully migrated to the World Wide Web environment<sup>12</sup> and is made available by Victoria University of Wellington. Positive representation of New Zealanders was the norm. As a member of the official

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<sup>8</sup> Memorandum to W.A. Bodkin Minister or Internal Affairs from H.K. Kippenberger, Will Appleton and Ernest E. Muir vertical subject files. New Zealand Defence Force Library (NZDFL)

<sup>9</sup> *Great History War* [Videorecording] (Sydney: ABC, 2008) [http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/special\\_ed/20081110/war/](http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/special_ed/20081110/war/) Accessed December 10, 2013. Professor Geoffrey Sheffield believes New Zealand did not have an equivalent to the influential Australian war historian Charles Bean and that they were “One of the losers in the battle for history”.

<sup>10</sup> Ian McGibbon, “Something of Them is Here Recorded”: Official History in New Zealand,” in *Last Word: Essays on Official History in the United States and British Commonwealth*, ed. Jeffrey Grey (Westport, CT: Praeger, c2003), 53. A recent Ph. D thesis argues the output of the Waitangi Tribunal has now surpassed the project. Rachael Bell, “Memory History Nation War: Official Histories of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945” (Ph. D thesis, Massey University, 2012), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Ronald Walker, “New Zealand Second World War History Project,” *Military Affairs*, 32, 4 (1969): 175.

<sup>12</sup> They can be found at the New Zealand Electronic Text Collection is operated by Victoria University of Wellington <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/subject-000004.html> Accessed June 3 2014.

war history project later wrote, the subjects of the official histories were “fellow countrymen of a small and intimate country, and no one wished them to be criticised, even indirectly.”<sup>13</sup>

The official histories are considered a major influence in New Zealand war history by both their critics and their supporters. The former<sup>14</sup> see them as having major elements of sanitisation and mythology and retardation of further historical analysis. The latter argue that they are “a solid foundation.”<sup>15</sup> Radio talks, public requests for information from veterans and distribution of thousands of copies of the various volumes into the small island dominion and concentrated population ensured a major impact at the time of its writing.<sup>16</sup> A biographer of Kippenberger has stated, “The War Histories project was undoubtedly exceptional and extraordinary. It was a statement of claim by a small country about its role in the world, its contribution to the Allied cause in the defeat of a monstrous tyranny. As such, it fitted into, and grew out of, the many efforts of the First Labour Government to assert a national perspective and pride in country.”<sup>17</sup> The frequent face-to-face meetings between Prime Minister Fraser and Kippenberger, which bypassed Fraser’s own Minister of Internal Affairs,<sup>18</sup> indicate the solid endorsement and heavy influence of the former general – he “was given an important part in a continuing political effort.”<sup>19</sup> That he was the President of the New Zealand Returned Services Association (R.S.A.) for 7 years from 1948 adds to the weight of his authority. Kippenberger publicly sought data from the returned soldiers in way that harnessed them, now as citizens, to a nation-building effort.<sup>20</sup>

Having said the above, there needs to be some qualification. Such a pointedly nationalistic effort was not entirely shared by the incoming National Party government in 1949. Although they did not shut the project down, they reduced support.<sup>21</sup> As a result, Kippenberger threatened to resign.<sup>22</sup> The reduced support influences assessments of publications with a scope that was drastically reduced.

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<sup>13</sup> Ronald Walker, “New Zealand Second World War History Project,” 177.

<sup>14</sup> John McLeod, *Myth and Reality* (Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986), 14.; James Belich, *Paradise Reforged* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 270; Deborah Montgomerie, “Reconnaissance: Twentieth-Century New Zealand War History at Century’s Turn,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 37,1, (2003): 66.

<sup>15</sup> Ian McGibbon, “Something of Them is Here Recorded”, 53.

<sup>16</sup> This is far more pervasive activity than other official history production as illustrated by, for example, Andrew Green, *Writing the Great War: Sir James Edmonds and the Official Histories 1915-1948* (London, Portland Oregon: F. Cass, c 2003); Jeffrey Grey ed., *Last Word?*

<sup>17</sup> Denis Maclean, *Howard Kippenberger: Dauntless Spirit*. (Auckland: Random House, 2008), 296. Reviewing the book, Australian military historian Jeffrey Grey believed the same. He added a comparative rejoinder : “New Zealand’s official history was an extraordinary and enormous undertaking, both by comparison with what had been done after 1919 and in terms of other, comparable efforts within the Commonwealth.” Jeffrey Grey, “Review of Denis McLean’s *Dauntless Spirit*” *New Zealand International Review*, XXIV, 5, Sept/Oct (2009): 29. Kippenberger was paid the same salary and allowance as a High Court Judge and had a contract organized directly by the Prime Minister, Peter Fraser. Denis Maclean, *Howard Kippenberger*, 296.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Bassett, *Mother of All Departments* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1997), 133.

<sup>19</sup> Maclean, *Howard Kippenberger*, 297.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 300. For example, headlines like “Your turn now Veterans of Minqar Qaim Action” *RSA Review*, July 1, (1948).

<sup>21</sup> The new government’s cabinet “kept him at a polite distance”, Michael Bassett, *Mother of all Departments*, 135.

<sup>22</sup> Glyn Harper, *Kippenberger: an Inspired Commander* (Auckland: Harper Collins, 1997), 273.



This factor is of particular importance when discussing one particular volume relevant to this study: the one dealing with New Zealanders operating in secret organisations in occupied Greece and Crete (Chapter 4).

The practicalities of the war history enterprise involved an enormous amount of research. It started during the war itself through archival efforts.<sup>23</sup> The actual writing was very much project-based: a staff member wrote the narrative, which went through revisions driven by the General Editor, Kippenberger, who also had a major influence with the “historian” who worked on the published version. This influence becomes most evident when analysing the discussions and decisions made during the project.

### **Long-term State Influence on War Historiography**

Beyond the Official War History project, it should be emphasised that the New Zealand nation state has a continuing and influential role in what we can call “war history” as well as, unsurprisingly, official memory. This may be part of the extensive historical role of the State in the country’s development, as outlined by Bassett<sup>24</sup>. In any event, an understanding of the long-established state presence in war historiography assists an understanding of the State’s influence. One of the most prolific New Zealand war historians today is Ian McGibbon, until recently General Editor of War History with the Ministry of Culture and Heritage. The major study of New Zealand war monuments by Maclean, Philips and Willis also came out of the State (the Department of Internal Affairs).<sup>25</sup>

While the study by Maclean et. al. refers to the present, revisionist academic historian James Belich claims that the decades-earlier official history series of 48 volumes and 24 booklets dominate the country’s war history.<sup>26</sup> The co-editor of the *Journal of New Zealand History*, Deborah Montgomerie, asserts that its adherents project a sense of completeness that denies a place for other forms of history ( in her case, the social type).<sup>27</sup> In contrast, McGibbon’s defence of the official story is such that, in 2003, he would maintain, as against quoted primary material from other historians<sup>28</sup> and biographers<sup>29</sup>, that there may have been some “self censorship” even though the

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<sup>23</sup> Michael Bassett, *Mother of All Departments*, 128-135.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Bassett, *State in New Zealand 1840-1984: Socialism without Doctrines* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> Chris Maclean, Jock Philips and Debbie Willis, *Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials* (Wellington: Historical Branch GP Books, 1990).

<sup>26</sup> Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, Ch. 9.

<sup>27</sup> Deborah Montgomerie, “Reconnaissance: Twentieth Century New Zealand War History at Century Turn”: 66.

<sup>28</sup> Glyn Harper, “From Darkness to Light: Kippenberger and a Tale of Two Battles,” in *Kia Kaha : New Zealand in the Second World War*, ed. John Crawford (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2000), 131.

<sup>29</sup> Keith Ovenden, *Fighting Withdrawal: Life of Dan Davin, Writer, Soldier, Publisher* (Oxford: Oxford Uni Press, 1996), 241.

head of the project had insisted there would be “no censorship”.<sup>30</sup> He accepts as historical truth what was stated in the press by the head of the war history project himself.<sup>31</sup>

What does this past and present major State presence mean for the place of Greece in the vision that New Zealand intended to build and maintain? What did the New Zealand Nation State decide that it wanted to remember about the multidimensional dimension of its wartime interaction with Greece? The following theoretical framework will be applied to assist an examination.

## SCOPE

As discussed earlier, this is a focused mono-directional study where one national elite (that is, that of New Zealand) fashions its national imagining through “official memory” using its relationship with another nation (Greece). It excludes the war-influenced Maori – Pakeha (i.e. Anglo settlers) relationship and the specificity of the Maori-Greek/Cretan discussions<sup>32</sup>. Those are discourses warranting their own projects with distinct dynamics, actors and events more specific to it.

## Period under Examination

The timespan involved begins with 1941 and ends in 2012. While this study covers decades, its diagrammatic profile, so as to speak, is like a wave with an abrupt crest and a long slimming tail to 2012. The majority of the analysis and discussion in this thesis is concerned with the war years, the remainder of that decade, and the researching and publication of the relevant New Zealand official war histories.

The closure date is 2012, because two major related 70<sup>th</sup> commemorations took place during that and the previous year. One is the commemoration of the Battle for Crete in 2011. In New Zealand, it generated, amongst other things, much heated public indignation against the State,<sup>33</sup> specifically, anger over a lack of funding for living veterans to attend what will probably be their last “round” of ceremonies on the island.<sup>34</sup> The second commemoration also involved remembrance of New Zealanders. It was based on the Greek mainland at Gorgopotamos viaduct, several hours by car north of Athens. This was the Greek National Day of Resistance. In contrast to the Crete event in

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<sup>30</sup> McGibbon, “Something of them is Here Recorded”.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, the article appeared in the *Evening Post*, April 4, 1957.

<sup>32</sup> Monty Soutar, *Nga Tamatoa: Pprice of Citizenship C Company 28 Maori Battalion 1939-1945* (Auckland: David Bateman, 2008); Manos Nathan, prominent New Zealand ceramics artist and also a child from a Cretan mother and Maori father. He developed a form of art blending ancient Cretan/Greek culture and Maori. Nathan discusses his work during an extended interview. “Arts on Sunday: Ceramicist - Manos Nathan”, sound interview. (Wellington: Radio National) May 17, 2009),

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/artsonSunday/audio/1948528/ceramicist> Accessed July 21 2011; Also see Dale Husband, “Kiwis in Athens,” *Mana* 60,4 (2004); Patricia Grace, *Ned and Katina: a True Love Story* (North Shore: Penguin, 2009).

<sup>33</sup> Tim Donoghue, “Veterans Seek to Join Crete Celebrations,” *Dominion Post*, April 12, 2011; Kasia Jillings, “Crete Veteran Welcomes Funding,” *Waikato Independent*, July 22, 2011.

<sup>34</sup> The backlash generated a change in policy and a public apology 14.7.11 - *Question 12: Hon Rick Barker to the Minister of Defence*. [video]. <http://inthehouse.co.nz/node/9787>. Accessed March 10, 2011.

the previous year, the 70<sup>th</sup> commemoration on the mainland in 2012 passed seemingly unnoticed in New Zealand. This was despite several New Zealanders having their names read out in this annual ceremony that included volleys of army rifle salutes, a band, television cameras and a crowd of hundreds. It is an indication of differing paths of official memory and the predilections of differing states to satisfy their own needs. This difference is discussed further in the next chapter.

## **AN OVERVIEW OF THE “SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP”**

Over 60 years after the end of the Second World War, public expressions of a relationship or “special relationship” emanating from shared experience and sacrifice in war between New Zealand and Greece range across a number of places. These include country profiles published on respective government foreign ministry websites<sup>35</sup> and official commemorations.<sup>36</sup> The bond has also been mentioned in trade discussions,<sup>37</sup> twinning of cities<sup>38</sup> and whaling ecological policy.<sup>39</sup> It has generated funding support for school curriculum materials.<sup>40</sup> It is physically represented in the Greek-New Zealand memorial in Wellington, which is largely configured around the war efforts.<sup>41</sup> When a Greek Prime Minister dies, the war connection is included in condolences from Wellington.<sup>42</sup> The events of early 1941 pervade the expressions. One campaign is more remembered than any other.

### **Crete above Mainland Greece**

It is the Battle for Crete in May 1941 rather than the earlier campaign on the mainland that is celebrated. Defeat in these days even overshadows the only shared New Zealand-Greek victory of the entire war (Chapter 4). Remembrance of the Battle of Crete recently rated an official Cabinet-

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<sup>35</sup> New Zealand. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. “Country Guide – Greece,” <http://mfat.govt.nz/Countries/Europe/Greece.php>; Accessed July 6, 2014; Hellenic Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs; “Bilateral Relations – New Zealand,” <http://www.mfa.gr/en/blog/greece-bilateral-relations/new-zealand/>, Accessed July 6, 2014.

<sup>36</sup> “Clark: Luncheon for the PM of the Republic- Address at State Luncheon for Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic,” May 21 2007, <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0705/S00560.htm>, Accessed July 1 2014 ; *Unbroken Bonds a Pilgrimage to Crete 2006* [Dunedin, N.Z.] Wild Sweet Productions, (2008), DVD. At a local level and outside of official commemoration anniversaries see “Greek Village seek Kiwi soldiers,” *RSA Review* December (1992), 21; Finally, a South Island archives states “warm and close links” in the article “Kiwis among the Olympians,” *Hocken Bulletin* 47 July (2004).

<sup>37</sup> Greg Ansley, “Blood Ties with Greece Foundation for Market Expansion”, *New Zealand Herald*, May 21, 2001. An earlier example is from an official trade visit to Athens “Ties between Greece and New Zealand remain close, says International Trade Minister Lockwood Smith. Speaking at the end of an official visit to Athens from May 28-29, Dr Smith said: “I was impressed by the warmth of the Greek people towards New Zealanders. They have clearly never forgotten the contribution of Kiwi soldiers in Greece and Crete during World War Two.” Smith Reinforces NZ/Greek Ties,” <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/smith-reinforces-nz-greek-ties>, Accessed June 30, 2014.

<sup>38</sup> “Sister Cities,” <http://www.sistercities.org.nz/Edittable/sister-cities/nzsistercities.shtml>, Accessed June 15, 2014.

<sup>39</sup> “Greece backs NZ on Whaling,” <http://tvnz.co.nz/content/1133807/425825.xhtml>, Accessed June 15, 2014.

<sup>40</sup> Marina Bennett, *Shelter from the Storm: Cretan Stories War in Crete, 1941-1945* (Nelson: Nelson Provincial Museum, 2010).

<sup>41</sup> See “Greek-New Zealand Memorial in Wellington,” *New Zealand History Online*. <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/greek-new-zealand-memorial-wellington>, Accessed June 21, 2014.

<sup>42</sup> When commenting on the death of his Greek counterpart in Andreas Papandreou in 1996, New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger stated “Our friendship with Greece is a longstanding one, stemming from the shared experiences in World War II.” “Death of Former Greek Prime Minister Papandreou,” <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/death-former-greek-prime-minister-papandreou>, Accessed June 21, 2014.

endorsed 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary as well as an annual ceremony in the nation's capital. Pilgrimages that included notable individuals such as ministers and the former mayor of Wellington, Kerry Prendergast<sup>43</sup>, travelled to the island to attend that parallel commemoration. The previously mentioned curriculum material has Crete as its focus.<sup>44</sup> A splinter New Zealand veterans group of the Returned Serviceman's Association was established in 1960 with close associations with the island and its people.<sup>45</sup> The 1991 television documentary *In Rich Regard*<sup>46</sup> brought the ongoing specific Crete- New Zealand relationship into the living rooms of New Zealand. That the State sponsored an oral history on the battle of Crete rather than Greece, or Greece and Crete, in time for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is further evidence of the hierarchy of remembrance.<sup>47</sup> A journal review by the New Zealand Defence Force official historian further reinforces this: "The Battle for Crete in May 1941 has always loomed large in New Zealanders' memories of the Second World War because of the nature and intensity of the fighting on the island, the narrow margin that separated victory from defeat and the relationship that developed between our country and the people of Crete."<sup>48</sup>

Commemoration is sometimes accompanied by public argument, with pointed emotional reaction. During the 2011 Crete celebration, war veteran General Sandy Thomas laid the responsibility for the loss of Crete at the feet of his country's commanders rather than as a result of the overwhelming German air supremacy and fighting abilities of the its airborne soldiers.<sup>49</sup> Popular historian Matthew Wright publicly dismissed discussions on culpability and responded proudly with an account of revenge killing against the German forces later in the war.<sup>50</sup> Popular works with publication dates nestled around the 70<sup>th</sup> commemoration still dissect the issue of responsibility.<sup>51</sup>

The deliberate State profiling of the Crete battle has already been discussed in scholarly publications. Sir Howard Kippenberger, head of the Official War History project, placed the State-produced 1953 *Crete* as the centrepiece. Kippenberger told Dan Davin, accredited historian in a

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<sup>43</sup>See for example Wellington City Council Strategy and Policy Committee *Pilgrimage to Crete 2006 Mayor's Report*, [http://www.chania.gr/files/2/12746/mayor\\_report\\_wellington-kania\\_sister\\_cities\\_2006.pdf](http://www.chania.gr/files/2/12746/mayor_report_wellington-kania_sister_cities_2006.pdf). Accessed June 25, 2014.

<sup>44</sup> Bennett, *Shelter from the Storm*.

<sup>45</sup> Walter Gibbons, "Whakatane Crete Veterans Association," *Historical Review Bay of Plenty Journal of History* 40,1 (1992).

<sup>46</sup> *In Rich Regard*, ([New Zealand]: Wild Sweet Productions, 1991). DVD; See also "In Rich Regard" – a One Hour Documentary for Television Treatment by Peter Hawes Wild Sweet Productions June 1990 papers: Short Film Fund Film Applications /Proposals, Piers Davies Collection MA 2650 0606. New Zealand Film Archive (Wellington).

<sup>47</sup> Megan Hutching, et al., *Unique Sort of Battle: New Zealanders Remember Crete* (Auckland: HarperCollins New Zealand in association with the History Group, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2001).

<sup>48</sup> John Crawford, "Review of Unique Sort of Battle: New Zealanders Remember Crete," *New Zealand International Review*, XXVII, 4 July/August (2002): 30.

<sup>49</sup> Tim Donoghue, "Officer Breaks Rank over the Battle of Crete" Last updated May 14, 2011.

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/5003191/Officer-breaks-rank-over-the-Battle-of-Crete> , Accessed , July 4, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Matthew Wright, "Battle for Crete part of a slow-evolving Kiwi legacy" *Dominion Post*, May 24, 2011.

<sup>51</sup> David Filer, *Crete: Death from the Skies : New Zealand's Role in the Loss of Crete* (Auckland: David Bateman, 2010); Also see "Commentary on Heinz Richter, 'Operation Mercury', Invasion of Crete," *Journal of New Zealand Studies* 16 (2013), Ron Palenski, *Men of Valour: New Zealand and the Battle for Crete* (Auckland: Hodder Moa, 2013).

team-based project, the “Crete story [...] can be one of the heritages of our people.”<sup>52</sup> The effect was not lost. Decades later, cultural historian Angus Calder thought Davin had possibly depicted “a rising nation.”<sup>53</sup>

While this depiction may arguably be an example of intent and outcome, it came years after the war and in the form of a major project of deliberate construction. One does not know the extent to which the State had already gone in elevating Crete prior to 1953. As this study illustrates, during the war, Crete was not always in the forefront of State thinking and actions over greater Greece.

### **Greek/Cretan Civilians – Marginalising the Military and Partisans**

The Greek military are largely eclipsed by New Zealand emphasis on civilian counterparts in official memory.<sup>54</sup> So is the Greek armed resistance. This is despite varying degrees of involvement with New Zealand in the post-1941 period. A few published fragments of ongoing interaction between the regular armies provide glimpses of the regular forces in the Middle East during 1942<sup>55</sup> and at least up until September 1944 in Italy. The last was the shared victory of their affiliated forces at the battle of Rimini.<sup>56</sup> At one point, Freyberg had also asked Peter Fraser for something that would “safeguard me”<sup>57</sup> when the Greeks joined his command during the month prior to that battle. It is seemingly far from a healthy relationship. Politics were intruding. It was evident at other times. Writing about New Zealand and Greek soldiers serving together in the Middle East, a former senior New Zealand officer wrote in an official volume after the war: “Greeks are by nature politically minded to a degree unheard of among British communities. The Greek forces were riddled with politics, their natural tendency being reinforced by the dissensions among the politicians in exile.”<sup>58</sup> New Zealand's discomfort was eventually superseded by disengagement from the Greek soldiers just before liberation in late 1944.<sup>59</sup> That these few

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<sup>52</sup> Keith Ovenden, *Fighting Withdrawal: Life of Dan Davin, Writer Soldier, Publisher* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 241. The quote is from a letter to Davin, December 1947.

<sup>53</sup> Angus Calder, *Disasters and Heroes: on War, Memory and Representation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), 183.

<sup>54</sup> For example, in 2010 Veterans' Affairs Minister Judith Collins emphasised civilians over the military: "The local people of Crete took huge risks to provide food and aid to Kiwi troops. The actions of those brave people, and those of the soldiers defending Crete, are still remembered and appreciated by both New Zealanders and the citizens of Crete alike." <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/minister-honours-kiwis-who-fought-battle-crete>. Accessed July 2, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War 1939–45: Volume I I* (Historical Publications Branch, Wellington, 1949). Freyberg to Fraser, Telegrams 134, March 21, 1942.

<sup>56</sup> U Series 14760 “New Zealand Troops with the Greek Army” (Sound Recording) February 5 1942, New Zealand Sound Archives (Christchurch); Robin Kay and N.C. Philips, *Italy: Volume II. From Cassino to Trieste* (Wellington: Dept. of Internal Affairs Historical Publications Branch, 1967).

<sup>57</sup> *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War 1939–45: Volume II*. Freyberg to Minister of Defence, Telegram 425, August 13, 1944.

<sup>58</sup> W.G. Stevens, *Problems of 2NZEF* (Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, 1958), 135-136.

<sup>59</sup> *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War 1939–45: Volume II*, Telegrams 427-432. Also see F.L.W. Wood, *New Zealand People at War: Political and External Affairs* (Wellington: War History Branch, Dept. of Internal Affairs, 1958), 365. The Greek military and government-in-exile had been indicating to the New Zealanders they wanted them to join them on their return. The British formally asked the New Zealand to send troops to Greece when the country was liberated.

published instances were part of the official histories adds to the irony but reinforces the argument that the State has largely dominated writing about the war. When it comes to New Zealanders and partisan forces, there is a greater amount of published material. But, as shown in a later section, it has a much lower profile than the 1941 Crete/Greek episode.

What is lacking is a detailed historical examination of the relationship between the two armies during the whole of the war - in terms of New Zealand attitudes both at the time and afterwards during the construction of an official memory.

### **Suffering and War Crimes**

While the price paid by the civilians assisting New Zealand soldiers to avoid capture or to escape from the enemy is widely acknowledged in New Zealand, there are no published accounts of the New Zealand response at the end of the war to the atrocities committed by the Axis, when the perpetrators could face retribution. What is more, there are also incidents of Cretan atrocities against German soldiers during the battle for Crete. While relativities blunt any call for comparison (a genocidal regime murdering millions, while villagers attack individual German paratroopers) the practice seems almost accepted by the New Zealanders. For example, a high-profile veteran General (ret) Sandy Thomas wrote in his memoirs of the “ghastly work” made of German paratroopers who fell into the hands of Cretan women.<sup>60</sup>

So, while there is considerable public expression of the human cost for the Greek and Cretan people, there is no assessment of the New Zealand response to the general issue of war crimes trials following the end of the war. Nor is there any evaluation of New Zealand’s official reaction to Cretans whose ferocious defence of their homeland led to actions that would be condemned if they had been committed by the invader. It is another example of where rhetoric versus action needs to be examined to determine the historical reality.

### **Selective Inclusion of New Zealand Soldiers**

As introduced in the previous section, New Zealand soldiers remembered in the relationship are dominated by the regular forces (with a particular amplification of those evading capture or escaping). This is despite the New Zealand participation in forces, mostly Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.), who carried out sabotage missions; some considered the most significant in occupied Greece. For example, two New Zealand officers laid the explosive charges during the

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<sup>60</sup> W.B. Thomas, *Dare to be Free* (London: Cassell, 2005 orig. 1951), 24.

sabotage of the Gorgopotamos Viaduct, an event commemorated by Greece to this day in monuments and in the “National Day of Resistance”. Another British clandestine body with a New Zealand presence was “A Force”, a British rescue/escape organisation. In New Zealand, the only public memorials related to S.O.E. in Greece are a component of the New Zealand-Greek memorial in Wellington and an official one (part of a larger effort including all special forces) at Papakura Army camp. The New Zealand-Greek memorial element is to Dudley Perkins, who died in Crete – the centrepiece of New Zealand's official public memory. The Papakura memorial appeared in this millennium. This research project shows that the apparent minor residual memory place given to the clandestine efforts by S.O.E. belies what was originally planned decades ago. There has to be an examination of State decisions concerning the clandestine forces – both at the time and afterwards - in the national story-telling.

It is not that the size of a group solely determines remembrance. While the number of New Zealanders serving with S.O.E. in Greece may have been small <sup>61</sup> a similar-sized group has been fixed firmly in New Zealand war memory. This is the group of New Zealand soldiers escorting the King of Greece, George II, during his escape from the invading Germans on Crete. The event was first reported in the New Zealand press and newsreels at the time. <sup>62</sup> It also attracted a seven-page Appendix in the official Crete volume by Davin<sup>63</sup> and is available on the government-provided New Zealand History Online website.<sup>64</sup> Yet the king was a controversial figure with his own people – he was in exile for decades, and even after his return, a plebiscite on the retention of the monarchy was carried out in 1946. The persistent memory of his protection by the New Zealanders needs to be placed within the overall context of the politics of the period.

## Politics

The official published narrative of wartime politics and diplomacy makes scarce mention of the politics of Greece during the war and places New Zealand as a neutral in the maelstrom.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, its military were encountering Greek politics in the Middle East. Those on secondment to the clandestine organisations have left memoirs that are drenched in the volatile and

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<sup>61</sup> McGlynn lists 9. M.B McGlynn, *Special Service in Greece* (Wellington: War History Branch, 1953).

<sup>62</sup> *Return from Crete* [video recording] (Wellington: NZ National Film Unit, 1941)

[http://audiovisual.archives.govt.nz/wiki/index.php/RETURN\\_FROM\\_CRETE](http://audiovisual.archives.govt.nz/wiki/index.php/RETURN_FROM_CRETE). Accessed July 13, 2014; “King’s Gratitude” *Evening Post*, July 18, 1941.

<sup>63</sup> Dan Davin, *Crete* (Wellington: War History Branch, Dept. Internal Affairs, 1953), APPENDIX II. The appendix was written by W.E. Murphy.

<sup>64</sup> “New Zealanders Rescue King of Greece,” <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/video/new-zealanders-rescue-king-greece> Accessed July 13, 2014.

<sup>65</sup> F.L.W. Wood, *New Zealand People at War*, 365.

violent politics of the Greek resistance.<sup>66</sup> In respect of their experiences, the official history is slim and almost anaemic on the topic of politics. There are therefore indications of an extended involvement and/or attitude toward Greece throughout the war years, and subsequent State assessment for inclusion (or exclusion in this case) in the official memory begs examination.

### **Humanitarian Aid Emanating from New Zealand – Ill-Defined**

While there was undoubtedly a wider relationship that goes beyond the temporal boundaries of the celebrated 1941 battles and subsequent assistance from civilians, there is another thread that is suggested by non-State publications. This is about the enterprise of wartime humanitarian aid. The involvement of the Greek-New Zealand community in such work is also indicated by a few paragraphs in a self-published work by a member of the New Zealand-Greek community.<sup>67</sup> More oblique is the history of the New Zealand Council of Organisations for Relief Services Overseas (C.O.R.S.O.)<sup>68</sup>. The State relief effort may find its way into new books on the battle of Crete<sup>69</sup>, but the extent, nature and evolution of that contribution are not discussed anywhere in the current literature (State, academic or public).

A further ingredient in the mix is the possible impact of the political priorities of those at the point of delivery/use of aid to Greece. Non-New Zealand studies on the Greek relief operations during, and immediately after, liberation depicted schisms between the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (U.N.R.R.A.) and the British authorities.<sup>70</sup> The official history of C.O.R.S.O. limits its discussion to delivery of aid supplies at liberation while, despite mentioning the subsequent civil war, it does not illuminate its experience of that violent and divisive period.<sup>71</sup> The whole question of State humanitarian wartime aid to Greece therefore needs to be examined in terms of its extent and influence by external factors.

The above tropes are not mutually exclusive and are sometimes blended and/or applied with minor deviations. For example, Dudley Perkins, who died on Crete fighting as an S.O.E. operative, is

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<sup>66</sup>W.S. Jordan, *Truth about Greece* (Melbourne: Araluen, 1946); John Mulgan and Peter Whiteford, *Report on Experience* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2010 – original 1947); W.S. Jordan, *Conquest without Victory* (London: Hodder & Stoddard, 1969); Arthur Edmonds, *With Greek Guerillas* (Putaruru: Author, 1998).

<sup>67</sup>Zisis Bruce Blades, *Wellington's Hellenic Mile* ([New Zealand]: Author), 2005. Ch. 5.

<sup>68</sup>R. Thurlow Thomson, *New Zealand in Relief: Story of C.O.R.S.O.* (Wellington: New Zealand Council of Organisations for Relief Services Overseas Inc., 1965). While Chapters 1 and 2 deal with legislative impacts on C.O.R.S.O. and the C.O.R.S.O. contribution to Greece, there was no contextualizing using the drivers of this thesis study.

<sup>69</sup>David Filer. *Interview Radio New Zealand Sunday Morning*, November 21, 2010.

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/sunday/audio/2435024/david-filer> , Accessed July 13, 2014.

<sup>70</sup>George Woodbridge, *U.N.R.R.A., History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration: Vol. 2* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950) 99; Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the U.N.R.R.A. Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2008), 126-134; Florence Tsilaga, “UNRRA Mission to Greece : the Politics of International Relief, October 1944 - June 1947” (Ph. D Thesis, Kings College London, 2007).

<sup>71</sup>R. Thurlow Thompson, *New Zealand in Relief*.



remembered in the Greek-New Zealand memorial, and it has been announced that a motion picture is being made about him.<sup>72</sup> In the non-State literature Damer and Frazer's 2006 monograph is concerned with civilian aid provided to New Zealanders and Australians evading capture on Crete (but not on the mainland).<sup>73</sup>

## **ORIGINALITY – PREVIOUS THESIS AND EXTANT LITERATURE**

This study's originality is ensured by non-duplication of the author's Master of Arts (Research) thesis<sup>74</sup>, gaps in extant literature and awareness of other researchers' agendas. This current thesis effort differs from the previous M.A. thesis, in that the latter looked at the period 1941-1945 and specifically at the New Zealand civil-military relations and the area of Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.). It used primary sources for one chapter which was concerned with one of the New Zealanders involved, John Mulgan, his brief contact with the Wellington administration and subsequent investigation of his death. This new effort encompasses the national elite and agencies (beyond Freyberg and Fraser), a period much greater, and the discovery and public presentation of New Zealand involvement in clandestine work in both occupied and liberated Greece, and focusses more on the making of official memory and its omissions.

### **Academic Literature**

In terms of the New Zealand- Greek relationship, the academic offerings are very limited. Maria Hill's *Diggers and Greeks: the Australian Campaigns in Greece and Crete*<sup>75</sup> was, as the title suggests, primarily focused on Australia-Greece relationship and is based upon her Ph. D thesis for the University of New South Wales. Its scope is limited to the battles of 1941 and, as per the title, with ownership of the campaigns attributed to the Australians as against Allied or Commonwealth troops, it well might attract criticism of Australian chauvinism. The Australian ownership is reflected in the minor level of New Zealand-related content (New Zealand does not even rate an entry in the index). The other monograph that utilises a scholarly approach is Damer and Frazer's *On the Run: Anzac Escape and Evasion in Enemy-occupied Crete*.<sup>76</sup> The authors, are a sociologist and a social anthropologist (the latter retired).<sup>77</sup> Frazer is continuing his work about S.O.E. Axis

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<sup>72</sup> Kevin Childs, "Lion of Crete's Story to be shot in Alexandra," *New Zealand Herald*, September 8, 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Sean Damer and Ian Frazer, *On the Run: Anzac Escape and Evasion in Enemy-occupied Crete* (Auckland: Penguin, 2006).

<sup>74</sup> Martyn Brown, "How Consistent were the Policies and Actions of the New Zealand Government and Military toward Greek Policy 1941-1945" (M.A. thesis, University of Sydney, 2010).

<sup>75</sup> Maria Hill, *Diggers and Greeks: the Australian Campaigns in Greece* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010).

<sup>76</sup> Damer and Frazer, *On the Run*.

<sup>77</sup> It does not depict a universal harmonious relationship between Cretans and Commonwealth soldiers evading or escaping. Rather, it makes the point that assistance was often automatically expected by the evaders, expands the relationship to include resistance political dynamics and the pragmatics of Cretans avoiding possible execution for offering help but also staving off starvation as they share their food with commonwealth soldiers in hiding.

evaders on Crete, with an examination of the last lift from the island and the ensuing complications and controversy.<sup>78</sup> It is partly a thread of the forgotten history but is still focussed on Crete.

My own paper on John Mulgan brings into consideration<sup>79</sup>, albeit in very limited fashion, popular New Zealand protests against British actions in newly liberated Greece. It is very much a treatment through a diplomatic history lens. In this project, some aspects – especially the popular protests – are amplified. Any aspect which sees the non-state actors speaking of a relationship and the response of the national elite are evaluated.

In terms of New Zealand official commemoration of war, the offering has been mixed between academic and government. Matthew Henry's 2006 paper on ANZAC Day and New Zealand national identity goes only up until 1939 and is concerned with government using commemoration to fashion a form of present citizen behaviour.<sup>80</sup> Unlike Henry's efforts, *Sorrow and the Pride* (Maclean, Phillips and Willis, 1990) does touch upon the New Zealand-Greek relationship. In this non-academic study of New Zealand war commemoration and memorialisation, Maclean, Phillips and Willis include a chapter on the New Zealand-Greek community's protest at the erection of the Ataturk Memorial at Tarakena Bay, Wellington.<sup>81</sup> It is not concerned, however, with the Second World War.

Finally, there are several attacks on official histories generated in New Zealand. The most recent is on the government-sponsored oral war history by Hall (2008). She attributes the war history drive by the Helen Clark government during this millennium (some of which included Greece and Crete) to counter criticisms about its reduction in defence spending and argues that the techniques undertaken have made for "unprecedented spectacle and photo opportunities".<sup>82</sup> Oral history can be used for "political ends",<sup>83</sup> more specifically, "to better fit our nationalistic mythology".<sup>84</sup> She focuses on the Vietnamese conflict. A wider critique of the State and also of some academic scholars is made by Montgomerie (2003).<sup>85</sup> Dealing with the whole gamut of the country's war historiography, amongst other things, she quotes various present authors and their utilisation of war

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<sup>78</sup> Personal discussion, May, 2012, Wellington, New Zealand.

<sup>79</sup> Martyn Brown, "Political Context of John Mulgan's Greek Wartime Life and Death," *Journal of New Zealand Studies* 10, (2011).

<sup>80</sup> Matthew Henry, "Making New Zealanders through Commemoration: Assembling Anzac Day in Auckland, 1916–1939," *New Zealand Geographer* 62, 1, (2006).

<sup>81</sup> Chris Maclean, Jock Phillips and Debbie Willis, *Sorrow and the Pride; New Zealand War Memorials*.

<sup>82</sup> Claire Hall, "Silence to Celebrity: Oral History and the Political and Public Recognition of War Veterans in Aotearoa New Zealand," *Oral History in New Zealand*, 20, (2008): 16. For an overview of the re-emergence of major government promotion of war remembrance under Helen Clark see Graham Hucker, "A Determination to Remember: Helen Clark and New Zealand's Military Heritage," *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 40, no. 2 (2010).

<sup>83</sup> Hall, "Silence to Celebrity: Oral History and the Political and Public Recognition of War Veterans in Aotearoa New Zealand," 14.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>85</sup> Deborah Montgomerie, "Reconnaissance: Twentieth Century New Zealand War History at Century Turn," *New Zealand Journal of History* 3, 1 (2003).

for nationalism. Their utterances, she finds, are never argued through by the authors. Speaking of State efforts, she discusses the official Battle of Crete oral history project and the lack of historiographical technique.<sup>86</sup> More dated is McLeod's (1986) *Myth and Reality*<sup>87</sup>. An output from his Masters Degree thesis, it questions the martial spirit and subsequent mythology of the New Zealand military during the Second World War. He deals with Crete and Greece but not with the Greek-New Zealand relationship. Bell's 2012 Ph. D thesis<sup>88</sup>, from Massey University, deals with several official history volumes but does not concern itself with the Greek relationship.

As the above shows, the academic publishing record on the New Zealand – Greek relationship is very sparse in terms of history and works on official public memory. Popular histories and memoirs have followed suit with the same emphasis. They are cited in the later sections and chapters.

### **Forthcoming Planned Research**

The only active academic researchers involved in the Greek- New Zealand relationship are Ian Frazer and Sean Damer. Their study of New Zealand and Australian soldiers evading capture is currently being researched for a second edition.<sup>89</sup>

### **State Breadcrumbs amongst the General Output**

As indicated earlier, ironically, State-generated publications (as opposed to academic publications) from the late 1940s onwards show that there was ongoing military and political interaction during the entire war. These indications are sparse and are not, except for the area of secret intelligence and sabotage work, accompanied by any non-State publications.<sup>90</sup> The State's path in generating these texts will be examined at length in Chapters 3 to 6.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 70-71.

<sup>87</sup> John McLeod, *Myth & Reality: New Zealand Soldier in World War II* (Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986).

<sup>88</sup> Rachael Bell, "Memory History Nation War: Official Histories of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945" (Ph. D Thesis, Massey University, 2012). Bell selected four official volumes. The emphasis is on analysing four individual volumes. The thematic lenses are different for each. One is simply "history" as it was written by a peacetime historian, another is concerned with "conduct of war", lessons and criticism of strategy and commanders in national history". Individual, collective and national memory types forms another. Davin's *Crete*. forms one chapter and is of the "nation" lens. It focuses on the loss of the battle and various interpretations and their permeation into non-state histories. There is no emphasis on Greeks or Greece.

<sup>89</sup> Personal conversation, April, 2014.

<sup>90</sup> These include the previously mentioned memoirs of Edmonds and Jordan. Recent popular histories include Mathew Wright, *Behind Enemy Lines: Kiwi Freedom Fighters in WWII* (Auckland, N.Z.: Random House New Zealand, 2010). Wright discusses not only Greece but other occupied countries in which New Zealanders found themselves with resistance groups. McDonald focuses on the exploits of Don Stott, one of the more controversial personalities in Greece but has a wider scope than Greece. Gabrielle McDonald, *New Zealand's Secret Heroes: Don Stott and the "Z" Special Unit* (Auckland N.Z.: Reed, 1991). Stott and Crete-based Dudley Perkins are also discussed in Glyn Harper and Colin Richardson, *In the Face of the Enemy: the Complete History of the Victoria Cross and New Zealand* (Auckland: Harper Collins, 2006).

## METHODOLOGY

As stated in the introductory section, this is a mono-directional perspective – that is, only *New Zealand* and not a comparative study. As the sub-title the “politics of forgetting” and previous sections suggest, at one level, this works as a project in the area of memory studies. The topic wording is generated by Renan’s oft-cited argument that a nation often “forgets” as much as it remembers in order to enable national cohesion.<sup>91</sup> It is what the scholar Olick termed something of an “epochal generalization” in the “memory-nation connection”.<sup>92</sup> It examines the wartime relationships between the two countries and focuses on the actions of the New Zealand national elite. The ability of such groups “to shape political outcomes by influencing the way in which the past is perceived and interpreted is a well-known characteristic of public life.”<sup>93</sup>

This study also examines the response of the New Zealand national elite to other elites, especially the Greek and British governments and civil groups (such as the Returned Services Association, and U.N.O.) in this fashioning. Commensurate is an elimination of memory patterns belonging to those groups, as detailed below.

### Exclusions

Largely omitted from this study are the internal deliberations and respective memories (published or otherwise), of societal groups concerning collective memory much in the tradition of Halbwachs.<sup>94</sup> These might be community type (for example, peace, religious and the New Zealand Greek community), veterans’ associations, and various levels of non-central government civic and foreign aid bodies. An exhaustive study of the wider community is not possible within the limits of time and textual space available. Also the previously mentioned continued work of Frazer and Damer may impact on any thesis investigation.<sup>95</sup> Examining the historical record of the national elite and its State agencies does provide the opportunity to determine its response to such groups. These groups are therefore only considered when they interact with the Nation State – that is, the latter is the pivot around which the former are considered. Using this approach means that, again, the State is the focus of the study. The exception to this constraint is the presence of the Greek-New Zealand community. State responses to its presence and their initiatives attract more analysis. This offers

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<sup>91</sup> Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation?” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 11. “Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation”.

<sup>92</sup> Jeffrey Olick, *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 4.

<sup>93</sup> John Coakley, “Mobilizing the Past: National Images of History,” in *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 10, 4, (2004): 531.

<sup>94</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992).

<sup>95</sup> This is Dr Ian Frazer who co-authored *Anzacs on the Run*. I appreciate Dr Frazer’s communications with me and his sharing of Research Statement. E-mail communication September 6, 2011.

additional insight into how the state's proclaimed bonding with a people extends into a diasporic presence.

More straightforward is the degree of inclusion of cultural artefacts. The lack of a large New Zealand popular culture industry leads to a dearth of these to examine. Hence, the rigorous examination of (non-existent) novels, plays, and monument designs is absent. However, what little there exists is mentioned in the context of their challenge to official memory. This is especially so during the late 1940s, with the Greek civil war raging. Given the above, it is considered that an examination of official memory in the New Zealand context is more appropriate than consideration of any wider memory type.

### **Characteristics of Official Memory versus History**

The discussion so far has used terms such as State "memory" and what the State calls "history" interchangeably. This will continue, but a refinement will now be introduced. This is informed by a model based upon Wertsch's and Roediger's (2008) work,<sup>96</sup> and is presented in Table 1.1. It is another effort to calibrate the thesis within the ill-defined area of memory studies. It is evident that the State's efforts were intended to be consistent with the attributes in the left-hand column but also utilised some attributes from "analytical history". Examples are provided in the following chapters. Where applicable are also where the state used other the practices from the historian's toolkit. Typically this is interpretation of historical facts and triangulating testimony with archives. This observation gained through researching this project correlates with academic commentators who do not always see the characteristics of memory and history as being mutually exclusive. For example, a theme of commemoration has been recognised in the official New Zealand war histories by both the editor of the *New Zealand Journal of History*, Montgomerie,<sup>97</sup> and unsurprisingly, perhaps, the long-serving General Editor- War History, Ministry of Culture and Heritage, McGibbon<sup>98</sup>. Naturally, this writer's own endeavours seek to utilise the framework of analytical history (Table 1).

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<sup>96</sup> James V. Wertsch and Henry L Roediger, "Collective Memory: Concepts and Theoretical Approaches," *Memory* 16,3, (2008). 321. The model is an attempt to conceptually bring together a wide diverse number of definitions from memory studies. It lies in contrast to others. For example, Roussou, op. cit.

<sup>97</sup> Deborah Montgomerie, "Reconnaissance: Twentieth Century New Zealand War History at Century Turn".

<sup>98</sup> Ian McGibbon, "Something of Them is Here Recorded."

Table 1.1 Official Memory versus Analytical History - Based upon Wertsch and Roediger (2008)<sup>99</sup>

<i>Official Memory</i>	<i>Analytical History</i>
Involves an identity project	Aspires to arrive at an objective account of the past, regardless of consequences for identity
Impatient with ambiguity	Recognises complexity and ambiguity
Ignores counter-evidence in order to preserve established narratives	May revise existing narratives in light of new evidence (from archives etc.)
Relies on implicit theories , schemas and scripts that simplify the past and ignore substantiated findings that do not fit the narrative	Is generally constrained by archival materials (as against pure testimony or other sources such as newspapers)
Conservative and resistant to change.	Can change in response to new information.

### **Knowing and Forgetting**

What a national elite strives for is an unproblematic past so as to ensure stability and its own legitimacy to govern. However powerful the State elite may be, though, it is not omniscient. It is subject to power relations as well as taking advantage of them. Accompanying power is access to information. The New Zealand national elite relied on various sources during the war for what it “knew”. Externally, the sources were nearly entirely the British government or the general press. “Internally”, its sources included distant Dominion military and diplomats as well as the NZEF official war correspondents and radio broadcast unit. When it came to writing the official histories, some of those same limitations applied, some not so much, For example, individual soldiers came forward with recollections that sometimes shocked those who were given the task of shaping the official memory. These subtle differences become very apparent in later chapters.

<sup>99</sup> James V. Wertsch and Henry L. Roediger, "Collective Memory: Conceptual Foundations and Theoretical Approaches."

## MOTIVATION AND CONTRIBUTION

At the most basic level, there is a missing narrative of the apparent multiple threads between two countries during the war years. This study will illuminate not just their particular interaction but also the greater discussion of Anglo-Greek relations and internal Dominion dynamics.

Secondly, what makes the Greek-New Zealand connection more pronounced and engaging for exploration is its overwhelming celebration in memory, with hardly any accompanying historical or cultural angst. The exceptions are memoirs of clandestine service personnel (described in Chapters 4 and 6) and Hensley's (2009) work, *Beyond the Battlefield- New Zealand and its Allies 1939-45*.<sup>100</sup> The treatment is in contrast to the Pacific island nation's ANZAC tradition or mythology, there has been much heated dialogue over the New Zealand-Australian wartime experiences.<sup>101</sup>

Besides the missing narratives, which might have been beneficial to both New Zealand and Anglo-Greek historiography, there is the area of memory studies. An analysis of the memory treatment of an ally in war, seemingly valuing some of its members over others, and with largely no previous large-scale connection, may illuminate pathways for further research and/or validation of previous outputs in the field. There is also the state's interaction with diasporic groups relating to that ally. In the case of New Zealand it is the New Zealand Greeks. Their profile and level of impact during the war years is described later.

## SOURCES

This section complements the bibliography and is intended to alert the reader to some of the limitations of available primary and secondary sources and consequently research findings.

### New Zealand Government Records

New Zealand depositories provided the bulk of the primary material (others included United Kingdom, Australia, Greece and the USA). However, there are some peculiarities of the wartime/

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<sup>100</sup> Gerald Hensley, *Beyond the Battlefield- New Zealand and its Allies 1939-45* (Auckland: Viking, 2009). While the author states the Greeks "fought bravely" against the Italians, the whole debacle of the 1941 Commonwealth adventure is due to "the eccentric dispositions of the Greek Commander-in-Chief", 116.

<sup>101</sup> Kathryn Hunter writes of a New Zealand memorial in Canberra depicting a "seemingly unproblematic ANZAC relationship" Kathryn Hunter, "States of mind: remembering the Australian-New Zealand relationship," *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, 36, (2002), <http://www.awm.gov.au/journal/j36/nzmemorial.asp> Accessed July 13, 2014. This observation of constructed memory contrasts with the literature. "As is often the case with Australian writers on such matters, the NZ in ANZAC tends to be overlooked Ian McGibbon, "Oxford Companion to Military History [Review]," *New Zealand International Review*, XXVII, 2, (2002): 31. See also John Crawford, "Forgotten ANZACS: Campaign in Greece [Review]," *New Zealand Journal of History*, 42,2, (2008):227; In the lead-up to the centenary of the outbreak of World War One Glyn Harper made the same point about that conflict. "Professor aims to Keep War Record Straight," *Manawatu Standard*, March 1, 2012. Professor Fred Wood, who wrote an official War History Volume on external affairs, felt Paul Hasluck's volume on Australia in World War Two could have been improved. He placed it in national context: "A New Zealander, however, might be permitted a mild complaint. Rich as is his documentation, it is a pity that he did not glance at New Zealand materials." F.L.W. Wood "Review of Australia in the War of 1939-1945: Government and the People 1942-1945,"n *New Zealand Journal of History* 7, 2 October (1973): 197.

early post-war administration that impede scholarly research. Robust record keeping was lacking in certain critical political areas<sup>102</sup>, the most important of which are Cabinet meetings.<sup>103</sup> Such a situation leads one toward more focus on manuscript collections. Equally lacking are some parliamentary-related speeches. The New Zealand Parliamentary Library Service asserts that “many sessions during the war were reported neither in Hansard nor in any newspaper, for security reasons.”<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, the war history project saw very thorough planning, policy formulation, and record keeping and classification of armed forces records.<sup>105</sup>

## **Army**

New Zealand Defence Force Personnel Archives has a relatively open policy on its personnel records.<sup>106</sup> However, New Zealanders relevant to this study were also on secondment to British forces. The situation with service personnel in the United Kingdom is not as liberal as New Zealand, and policy is inconsistent. The Special Operations Executive personnel files are available, but not those of the regular armed forces. Hence, access to the New Zealand officers who were on secondment to British aid organisations or Army intelligence is not permitted. To an extent, the gap is addressed through locating living relatives of these personnel or by them providing access to private diaries and other material.

## **Ash Wednesday in Cairo and Impact for Historical Research**

Military security of another sort has placed a challenge in the way of research. As Rommel thrust into Egypt in mid-1942, British authorities in Cairo destroyed many of their records during “Ash Wednesday”.<sup>107</sup> The research problem is understandable, as the Greek and the New Zealand forces were under overall British direction during the Second World War. A consequence for this project is that certain material pertinent to the New Zealand training of Greeks and possible joint soldiering is likely to be missing.

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<sup>102</sup> For example, Wellington contacted its Liaison officer in London, Cecil Day, for “important documents” that were not in its files. The details were known but the actual material was absent. They pertained to the decision to declare war and the consideration of Dominion independence. McIntosh to Day, January 18, 1945. McIntosh Papers Personal correspondence to Cecil Day. Ms-papers-6759-270 Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL). Again, five years later, telegrams had “disappeared” and this time it was suggested the British authorities could be asked to provide copies IA 1 3392/181/53/5 Pt 1 (ANZ) War History- Publishing and Printing of official histories- Documents, Volumes 1-3 . Perm Head Prime Minister’s Office to Editor in Chief, New Zealand War Histories, August 24, 1950.

<sup>103</sup> Memorandum for Prime Minister *Cabinet- Review of Procedure* September 1949 p. 3 MS-Papers-6759-050 Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs (A15) Alister McIntosh Papers (ATL). . As the Secretary to Cabinet wrote to the incoming National Party Prime Minister in September 1949, “At the moment there is no minute of Cabinet discussion; the decision is only noted. In other Commonwealth countries a procedure has been developed whereby brief minutes are taken.”

<sup>104</sup> Email Parliamentary Library Service, February 7, 2013.

<sup>105</sup> WAI 1 360 DA488/1- DA488/2, Archives New Zealand (ANZ), War Archives Memoranda, progress reports etc. (ANZ). These files show the rigorous approach taken.

<sup>106</sup> Proof of death allows access (without any vetting) to all record content (including medical) of New Zealand service personnel serving during the war.

<sup>107</sup> It is a situation that is at least as frustrating to modern Greek military historians. Meeting with Lieutenant Colonel Dimitrios Katsikostas, Historian – Middle East, Hellenic Army General Staff Army History Directorate, Athens, November, 2012.



### **Deliberate Post War Destruction**

Destruction by the British Foreign Office also impinges on consideration of the New Zealand-Greek connection. The loss of the records of the Allied Screen Commission, a body operating in post-war Greece and led for a time by a New Zealander with connections to the Wellington government, affects efforts to illuminate this area of recognition of Greek assistance to Commonwealth soldiers. As a former British colleague in the Commission wrote, "the inexorable Foreign Office procedure for weeding old records had consigned them all to the shredder."<sup>108</sup> Similarly, a scholarly article has identified poor record keeping by S.O.E. and widespread destruction of files.<sup>109</sup>

### **Mitigation**

Conducting interviews is one way of countering these gaps, as was applying a particularly wide search of archives and manuscript collections – New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, Greece and the United States. These are listed in the bibliography. A research visit to US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) archives and the John Poulos papers manuscript depository was aimed at trying to alleviate the loss of British records. The former had records cited in various studies on Allied - Greek wartime politics. The latter was a Greek-American journalist well-known at the time. Although research was hampered by the US government closure of October 2012, some additional material was retrieved.

### **Language**

While this is a New Zealand-focused study, as indicated above, Greek archives were consulted. So were Greek secondary sources. The latter were selected according to critical gaps. Hence, the published memoirs of several key Greek officers<sup>110</sup> were examined. Some primary data contained English-language material, others not. Secondary sources were all in Greek. Identification in both archives and secondary sources using the surnames of New Zealand figures (such as Freyberg, Aked etc.) was used, as well as generic terms such as "New Zealand" in Greek. English translations were provided by Dr Anna Efstathiadou, a teacher at UQ Institute of Modern languages and Mr Nikolas Pissis, a lecturer at the Freie Universität of Berlin.

### **Newspapers**

The ongoing digitisation and free on-line public access to New Zealand's newspapers by the National Library of New Zealand enabled easy access to three national and local newspapers

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<sup>108</sup> Michael Ward, *Greek Assignments: S.O.E. 1943-1948 UNSCOB* (Athens: Lycabettus ; London : Zeno Booksellers, 1992), 257.

<sup>109</sup> Duncan Stuart, "Of Historical Interest Only: Origins and Vicissitudes of the S.O.E. Archive," in *Special Operations Executive: a New Instrument of War*, ed. Mark Seaman (London: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>110</sup> For example, commander of the Greek Brigade in Italy during late 1944, Thrasyvoulos Tsakalotos.

covering the war years, that is, up until the end of 1945.<sup>111</sup> In-house developed library indexes and vertical files were used to search other newspapers (*New Zealand Herald*, *Dominion*, and *The Press*) past this date.

### **Site Visits**

On-site observations were made of the 2011 Battle of Crete commemoration in Wellington, as well as the Greek-New Zealand memorial there. The Gorgopotamos Commemoration in November 2012 was observed. Field inspections were made of the Crete battlefield where the New Zealanders operated. It was not possible to be at the Crete-based commemoration of the battle.

### **Meetings with Historians**

Historians such as Richard Clogg (U.K.), Heinz Richter (Germany), Thanasis Sfikas (Greece), John Crawford (New Zealand) and Andre Gerolymatos (Canada) met with me. These meetings were in addition to further interactions through conferences and seminars in New Zealand, Australia and (via video) Poland.

### **Interviews**

Interviews with relatives of persons mentioned in this thesis are listed in Appendix Two.

## **THESIS STRUCTURE**

The chapters are listed below.

1. *Introduction* – This provides the thesis setting, justification, methodology and challenges to the proposed research. The importance of the Second World War history and nation building to the New Zealand nation's elite is further placed in context. Public expressions of a positive special relationship are placed in contrast to published traces of a contentious and darker wartime connection. The thesis argues that the elite of a nation seek to legitimise their leadership in official memory and must have made decisions about Greek related connections so as to achieve this end.
2. *Historical Context* – Commonalities, differences and changes between the two countries are examined so as to contextualise touch points during the war and afterwards. This informs the reader of the driving forces and constraints (especially British-imposed or accepted) that New

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<sup>111</sup> The service is *Papers Past* and is provided by the National Library of New Zealand, <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast> Accessed July 13, 2014.

Zealand decision-makers faced in their actions over Greece. Areas covered include socio-economic, political, military and officially produced State memories.

3. *Giving Meaning to the Disasters of 1941* – Here, the thesis examines the early wartime connections showing there were earlier encounters than the main memory strut of the campaigns of early 1941. These involved State and non-State actors who would influence the wartime connectivity and exceptionalism towards Greece. While I examine the State's decisions over what to project at the time and afterwards about the arenas in Greece and Crete it fought in, I assert that one individual New Zealand figure emerged who championed the ensuing development of real connectivity across both military and civilian domains. Other Dominion State actors had policies that impeded special treatment of the Greeks during the war. This is an early indication of one thread of my argument, that while on the one hand Greece was a nation fraught with extreme dissension, New Zealand was not a homogeneous entity either when it came to dealing with Greek matters.
4. *Martial Efforts after Crete: Marginalisation and Amplification* – New Zealand enthusiasm, cynicism and a lack of co-ordination in soldiering with the regular Greek army in the post-Crete era form part of this chapter. Added to this are individual New Zealanders, willing or otherwise, to fight alongside Greek and Cretan partisans. Here I further pursue the theme of the elite champion but introduce an additional observation. This is the use of several memory struts emanating from experiences of 1941 to deflect attention from New Zealand involvement, real or perceived, in the publicly known explosive Greek political scene. This occurred both during the events themselves and during subsequent memory making years.
5. *Humanitarianism and Retribution* – Again, the same single personality is seen to effect a major change in State exceptionalism towards Greece, this time, in terms of humanitarian aid to a population suffering under occupation. That change and later post-war efforts, linked to utilitarian commemoration, demonstrate another theme of the relationship - the divergence between the citizenry, soldiers and veterans and the national elite over Greek issues. Also included is a dissection of efforts and policies to materially compensate Greeks and Cretans who had assisted New Zealand soldiers. New Zealand involvement in seeing the enemy face charges of war crimes against Greeks and Cretans is also dealt with.

6. *Taking Sides* – Although the impact of politics is touched upon in several of the previous chapter narratives, here I condense and augment them. Specifically, where, when and in what context New Zealanders – members of the leadership, citizens, soldiers, political activists or novel writers – chose which Greeks they would support in the political crises that dominated the post-1941 decade. The disagreements demonstrate once again that one could not treat New Zealand as a single unified whole. The elite were out of step with sections of its citizenry and military forces. Also, within the leadership there was no unity. The contradictions abound both during the events themselves and what the state could have projected to enhance its image.
  
7. *Conclusion* – Here I summarise observations but with qualifications and suggest further areas of study.

In summation, New Zealand celebrates a special bond with Greece, a bond formed during the Second World War. That conflict and the bond were later used as a vehicle in a significant fashioning of an official memory conducive to a national imagining. It was a usable past based on heroic New Zealand military feats in a Mediterranean landscape rich with historical and mythological associations. Arguably, it was a Kiwi Iliad, in which, predominantly, Greek citizens figured as helpers or fellow combatants in one early struggle. But the Mediterranean country experienced massive dislocation and fracturing from enemy occupation and from internal Greek and Anglo-Greek dynamics. What options and constraints faced the New Zealand national leadership (military and civil) at the time? How did they navigate through such a world? Later, what decisions were made in the official war history project and commemorative deliberations to promote a positive New Zealand national narrative? This is what the following chapters explore.

## CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This chapter expands upon initial observations made in the *Introduction*. It contextualizes the touchpoints between the two nations and supports the succeeding chapters. Hence, what would initially appear to be a wide and varied miscellany is actually a further reinforcement that there were multi-threaded links between New Zealand and Greeks during the war. The approach also emphasizes that fact that the Dominion and its ally were not in splendid isolation, as possibly intimated by the phrase “special relationship”. There were external bodies and forces acting upon them, before, during and after the Second World War. That world-wide conflagration was subsequently replaced by another confrontation, the Cold War and, depending on the interpretation, the Greek Civil War. How they influenced New Zealand in its actual and remembered relationship with Greece needs to be examined.

The coverage in this chapter is slanted more toward the war years and immediate aftermath. That is, it follows the previously stated period of focus. The amount of attention given Greece is greater. This is due to New Zealand having already been discussed in the *Introduction*. Also, between the two, Greece changed the most during the war and succeeding years. This alteration attracts more explanatory text. As its basic framework, the following emphasizes commonalities, differences and changes.

### WARS

While the world war is identified as the nexus of Greco-New Zealand dynamic, there was another conflict both countries were involved with: the Greek Civil War. New Zealand’s world war ran for six years - September 1939 to the signing of the surrender document of Japan in the same month, 1945. As Chapter 6 will show, the end date is significant in terms of delineating one thread of the official memory. What constituted Greece’s period in the Second World War is just as easily defined – from the Italian invasion in October 1940 to 1945. The Greek Civil War is a different proposition. The Greek Right see it as starting in 1943 while the Left see it three years later in 1946 and lasting until 1949.<sup>1</sup> The Left see the pre-1946 struggle as being against Axis collaborators. The Right view the Left-controlled wartime resistance was primarily seeking to implement a Communist coup d’état. Some Dominion officers came to their own conclusions about agendas of the internal Greek forces during the Occupation at least. These will be discussed in Chapter 6.

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<sup>1</sup> Bisser Petrov, “Problem of Collaboration in Post-War Greece 1944-46,” *Etudes Balkaniques* 3 (2005), 16.

The view of the right has both the civil and world wars running concurrently. The allocation of the term Civil War “Round” (described later) by historians also makes the definition more challenging. Regardless of the interpretations, the almost continual conflict during the decade in Greece led to the 1940s (invasion, occupation and civil war) being a particularly dire period. This has attracted special assessment from scholars of modern Greece: “The decade of the 1940s was the darkest in Greece’s independent history.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, “The worst aspect of the 1940s, however, was the fact that it polarized Greek society for decades, for nearly every individual had been traumatized by political violence.”<sup>3</sup> New Zealand began a direct involvement in the turgid civil conflicts during the world war. It was still associated with them up until virtually the climax of the civil war in 1949. It has never promoted its role in any public forum associated with history or memory. Nor has any writer examined the area.

The latest development in the Greek academic discourse about the Greek Civil war sees one side arguing that large structures such as government and Communism in historical discourses are irrelevant.<sup>4</sup> Local village dynamics and feuding, take centre-place. This particular interpretation finds some resonance in the case of the Dominion recognition of civilian assistance. A pale version of community rivalries was used as an excuse to blunt intended Dominion recognition of individual Greeks (Chapter 5).

### **Defining the Greek Civil War**

For the purposes of this thesis, the Greek Civil War is considered to have begun in October 1943 with the outbreak of fighting between left- and right-wing partisan groups on the mainland. This is the so-called “First Round”. The second round consists of fighting in Athens during December 1944 i.e. the *Dekemvriana*.<sup>5</sup> This round saw the British openly joining one side (its long-sponsored Greek government-in-exile and right wing partisans). Both rounds were reported in the New Zealand press and diplomatic channels from London. There were also New Zealanders involved in the fighting. The final round lasts from 1946 until 1949. One might call it the civil war “proper”. It was fought by government troops, still with British and then American support, against the communist Democratic Army of Greece (D.S.E.). “Communist” was often concatenated with “bandits” by supporters of the right-wing government. It was also used in letters to the New Zealand government

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Clogg, *Concise History of Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 142.

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Doumanis, *History of Greece* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 205.

<sup>4</sup> The most prominent advocate is Stathis Kalyvas of Yale University. For a critique of his work see Thanasis D. Sfikas and Anna Mahera, “Does the Iliad Need an Agamemnon? History Politics and the Greek 1940s,” *Historiein* 11 (2011).

<sup>5</sup> For example, the subtitle in Iatrides’ work: John O. Iatrides, *Revolt in Athens: Greek Communist “Second Round” 1944-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); Also the more recent Andre Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror : the Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* (New York: Basic , 2004).

from local community leaders in Greece during the post-war period seeking aid. Chapters 4 to 6 explore the involvement of New Zealand against this backdrop.

## **GREEKS IN THE PACIFIC AND MEDITERRANEAN**

The Greeks based on the mainland and Crete on the other side of the world are the ones emphasised in official memory, but there had been Greeks living in New Zealand since the 1860s.<sup>6</sup> They were small in number during the war. The estimated size of the community was “about 600” in early 1939, with a Greek school in Wellington teaching Greek language history and religion to 40 children. There was no community newspaper.<sup>7</sup> Most members of the New Zealand Greek community lived in Wellington, which made them physically close to the seat of government and administration. Many ran food service establishments, such as cafes. Today the numbers are in the low thousands. Their post-war immigration profile challenges the notion of a special bond (Chapters 3, 5 and 6).

In terms of community representation, the Greeks had a non-Greek as Honorary Consul General. When he was appointed on 5 March 1938, Thomas Youd Seddon was employed in a civil service capacity. He was also the son of a former New Zealand Prime Minister.<sup>8</sup> The previous incumbent had been his brother-in-law, another non-Greek. Seddon stayed in his position for a little over 20 years. He was firmly entrenched in the establishment. While there were Greeks serving in other related roles, Seddon was the main conduit to the Wellington government. It appears to be very much a state sponsored arrangement. Despite this, the New Zealand Greeks in some instances (Chapter 5) would break with preferred State inclinations over post-war aid support.

### **Egyptian Greeks**

The Greek diaspora also included Greeks living in Egypt. The degree to which they interacted with New Zealanders will be discussed in Chapter 4.

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<sup>6</sup> Zisis Bruce Blades, *Wellington's Hellenic Mile* ([New Zealand]: Author, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> MS-papers 1619-180 Correspondence and papers re T.E.Y. Seddon's service as Vice-Consul and Consul of Greece: 1937-1965 Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington (ATL), Seddon to Simopoulos February 22, 1939. Estimates of the size of this community (there were no state calculations of the annual population statistics) are drawn from official correspondence emanating from their own representatives.

<sup>8</sup> Seddon's background is set out in various correspondence in this file.

## LAND

When New Zealand soldiers first experienced Greece in early 1941, they noticed how, topographically, there was some similarity with their homeland.<sup>9</sup> There was also an emphasis on an agricultural economy, just like home. It was conducive to establishing an initial affinity. In contrast were primitive Greek farming methods and the dominant social organisation. Villages and small towns, rather than larger urban centres and provincial centres, were the main geo-spatial social unit New Zealand soldiers encountered. After the war, the Wellington administration interacted intermittently for years with the same type of body (Chapter 5). But this was within a much more mixed milieu of emotions (including anger and frustration) than the sympathy and friendliness their soldiers often expressed about their 1941 introduction. The villages, often in remote areas, appear in a fabric of soon-to-arrive wartime terror, armed resistance and refuge for New Zealanders. They are often the precise focal point of attention in remembrance and celebration. New Zealand groups after the war sometimes “adopted” villages so as to offer aid.

Besides hospitality, warm and almost universal welcome, the abject poverty, and lack of social and economic development of the Greeks was clearly evident and something recorded by individual soldiers or those writing about it.<sup>10</sup> It was an inherent socio-economic problem. As one United Nations relief authority wrote after the war, “In the best of circumstances, conditions on Greece are not good”<sup>11</sup> with only 20% of the land being suitable for cultivation.<sup>12</sup> Greece needed to import foodstuffs so as not to starve.<sup>13</sup> This was a major contributing factor in the famine that engulfed the country from late 1941. That situation was publicly known in New Zealand, where State and wider community concerns and actions are discussed (Chapter 5). Furthermore, Greece could not even pay for its pre-war food imports.

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<sup>9</sup> For example, Angus Campbell Burgess, “Farming in Greece,” *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture* 70,1 (1945): 3; Peter Cox et. al., *Good Luck to all the Lads : Wartime Story of Brian Cox, 1939-43* (Christchurch: J.J. Angerstein & Associates, 2008) 101; Fred Cleland Fleming, Marie I. Farquhar, *Dear Cousin, - Cheerio, Fred : Censored Letters* (Wellington: Marie I. Cleland, 1971), 1a.

<sup>10</sup> Some examples follow. Piraeus was “desolate and poverty-stricken”. Winston Sargent, *Palms Bend Down* (Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1945) 94; “The people here are much poorer than on the Athens side of Olympus” Edward Arnott Anderson, *Life's Roundabout* (Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs 1974), 142; “If New Zealanders thought they had seen poverty at home during the Depression of the thirties, they were to see real poverty in Egypt and later in Greece. Now they were to see it at close quarters in Crete” Walter Gibbons, “Whakatane Crete Veterans Association,” *Historical Review Bay of Plenty Journal of History* 40,1 (1992): 31.

<sup>11</sup> George Woodbridge, *UNRRA History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Vol II* (New York: Columbia University, 1950), 94.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Violetta Hionidou, “Famine in Occupied Greece: Causes and Consequences,” in *Bearing gifts to Greeks: Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s*, ed. Richard Clogg (Oxford: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).17.



Poverty continued after the wars into the 1950s.<sup>14</sup> It improved in subsequent decades through diversification – especially tourism. Greek and Cretan poverty were evident to New Zealanders from the outset. But the poverty was aggravated by the war – due to Axis Occupation policies – and also because of Britain, as the following shows.

## WAR AND ECONOMY

For the Greeks, the war and occupation were catastrophic. The Axis, led by Germany, basically plundered the country.<sup>15</sup> Financing the German North African campaign further heightened the demands placed upon the Greek economy. It was a continuation of disaster.<sup>16</sup> War with Italy, Germany and Bulgaria and the horror of occupation and civil strife led to 8% of the population dying between 1941 and when the Germans departed in 1944.<sup>17</sup> Added to this was the initial British food blockade imposed on the enemy and the occupied countries. Greece, being a net importer, was especially vulnerable to these war restrictions, which contributed toward its starvation. It was a controversial policy,<sup>18</sup> but not for New Zealand, given its attitude (Chapter 5). At the 1946 Paris Peace Conference on Reparations, the estimated destruction in the country was put at US\$8500 million<sup>19</sup>. The ensuing fighting from 1946 further exacerbated the situation.

In contrast to Greece, New Zealand was never invaded, nor did it suffer real shortages of food that led to famine. Its economic wealth grew from the war. The Dominion's "Official overseas debt was virtually eliminated during the Second World War".<sup>20</sup> The end of hostilities saw the beginning of the "long boom" until the 1980s. Assimilating returning soldiers were assisted "in large part to full employment in the economy as a whole."<sup>21</sup> It also shifted from predominantly British markets to others (including Greek). This brought with it increased direct contact and representation with other countries – including Greece. This involved both commerce and commemoration Chapters 3 and 4 will illustrate.

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<sup>14</sup> It was observed by visiting New Zealanders, as a late 1950 story in the *RSA Review* shows: "I saw many signs of poverty in Canea." Also "many widows" and "old men begging in the street were not uncommon". "Fallen Kiwi's mother tells of poverty among Crete islanders," *RSA Review Official RSA Journal* XXVI, 12, (November 1950): 1

<sup>15</sup> Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: Experience of Occupation 1941-44* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> Hein A. M. Klemann et al., *Occupied Economies: an Economic History of Nazi-occupied Europe, 1939-1945* (London: Berg, 2012), 103. However, the author makes the point that the claim by Gunther Altenburg, Nazi Plenipotentiary in Greece, that 114% of national income went into financing the North African campaigns was an exaggeration, 219.

<sup>17</sup> John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos M. Veremis, *Greece: Modern Sequel from 1821 to the Present* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 295.

<sup>18</sup> Joan Beaumont, "Starving for Democracy: Britain's Blockade of and Relief for Occupied Europe 1939-1945," *War & Society* 8, 2 (1990); Richard Clogg, ed., *Bearing gifts to Greeks Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s*, (Oxford: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>19</sup> Flora Tsilaga, "U.N.R.R.A.'s Relief Efforts to late 1944 Greece: Political Impartiality versus Military Exigencies," in *Bearing Gifts to Greeks: Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s*, 194.

<sup>20</sup> Geoff Bertram, "New Zealand Economy 1900-2000," in *New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. Giselle Byrnes (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009), 551.

<sup>21</sup> David Green and John Singleton, *New Zealand's Audit Office 1840-2008* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2009), 79.

Following world war hostilities, the Dominion could afford to send funds and foodstuffs to other countries. But it still directed most to Britain: “The London Bound parcels dwarfed the flow to European refugees, who were in more need.”<sup>22</sup> Some were bound also for Greece. This effort had boundaries imposed by the New Zealand State. It contrasts with other determined aid efforts. They will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## SEA

The Pacific nation’s economy, however, was at risk during certain critical periods in the world war. It had to do with the sea and its markets. Greece would also become a destination for wartime New Zealand aid. Again, it was subject to both long-established relationships, as well as the demands of waging war (Chapters 3 and 5).

The Dominion had no major merchant marine and so was reliant during the 1939-1945 war on the resources and directives of Britain. It was also a major wartime threat to be reliant on sea lanes with an enemy presence.<sup>23</sup> Priorities, levels of acquiescence and exigencies of world war, to varying degrees, affected a thread of the wartime connection and would test how New Zealand would act within the emerging special relationship.

In contrast to its domestic economic production, Greece had one of the largest merchant fleets in the world.<sup>24</sup> Although it lost a sizeable proportion (72%), levies on its income helped sustain the Greek government in exile during the war years,<sup>25</sup> as did loans from Britain. The strength of the Greek merchant fleet, and the reliance upon it by its government, lies in contrast to the rebelliousness of the Royal Hellenic Navy, described later. In one instance, Wellington involved itself in the fate of Greek sailors condemned to death for mutiny. Its sympathetic attitude, again, has never been expressed in public. It is an example from a number of related issues between the two countries to do with the mass politicisation of the Greek armed forces. However, localised interactions in the countryside between soldiers and Greeks/Cretans remained the mainstay instead of any sympathy toward aspirations of the ordinary soldiers and sailors.

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<sup>22</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: a History of New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland: Penguin, 2001), 296.

<sup>23</sup> Malcolm MacKinnon, “Equality of Sacrifice: Anglo-New Zealand Relations and the War Economy 1939-45,” *Journal of Commonwealth and Imperial History* 12,3 (1984): 58-59.

<sup>24</sup> Gelina Harlaftis, *History of Greek-Owned Shipping* (London: Routledge, 1996), Ch 8. Based upon Gross tonnage It ranked 9<sup>th</sup> at the outbreak of the war.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

## POLITICISATION AND POTENCY OF THE MILITARY

### Greece

The massive turmoil in the Greek wartime armed forces has been the subject of much scholarly examination.<sup>26</sup> It has a history of thousands of soldiers and sailors engaging in widespread political agitation (involving thousands) during the war, as well as the machinations of the officer corps. This occurred outside of Greece, predominantly in the Middle East, and also later in Italy. New Zealanders were with them in both places but they are not mentioned in the literature.

The period following the final evacuation from Crete was one of military ineffectiveness (the navy improved), with much internal squabbling in the free Greek armed forces. Politically, the popular left faction steadily grew in numbers and influence. This even extended to bringing about changes in the émigré government. In contrast, later efforts saw them starved into submission and subdued by force. This all goes to stress that, in many instances, to be in close contact with Greeks meant to be in close geographic and/or temporal proximity to simmering politics. One influential New Zealand actor was oblivious to this danger until late in the war. This was Bernard Freyberg. His behaviour will be a major component in Chapters 3, 4 and 6.

Before the war, the Greek officer corps sought patronage with various political groupings (Royalist, Venizelist, and so on.). Those circumstances, and the extent to which they were known at the time, form part of the next two chapters. But the war was a catalyst that saw the right-wing officers ascend partly via their own power-broking to the point where they erased the non-right from military politics.<sup>27</sup> By 1949, for example, former army commander, Field Marshall Papagos, whom the New Zealanders interacted with through some of their secondary official military history research and a commemorative visit to Greece, could dictate military matters during the Greek Civil War “without recourse to political machinery”.<sup>28</sup> His administration installed officers from the influential semi-secret right-wing I.D.E.A. (Sacred Bond of Nationalist Officers).<sup>29</sup> I.D.E.A. was a major force, not just then but throughout post-war Greece. Its origins were during 1944, and

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<sup>26</sup> For example, Hagen Fleischer, “Anomalies in the Greek Middle East Forces 1941-1944,” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 5, 3, (1978); David Syrett, “British and the Greek Naval Incident in Chatham, 1944,” *Journal of Hellenic Diaspora*, 15, 1-2, (1988); Thanos Veremis and Andre Gerolymatos, “Military as a Sociopolitical Force in Greece 1940-1949,” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 17, 1 (1991); Thanos Veremis, *Military in Greek Politics: From Independence to Democracy* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1997); Evangelos Spyropoulos, *Greek military (1909-1941) and the Greek mutinies in the Middle East (1941-1944)*, (Boulder/New York: 1999); Mark C Jones, “Misunderstood and Forgotten: The Greek Naval Mutiny of April 1944,” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 20,2,(2002); Andre Gerolymatos, “Road to Authoritarianism: Greek Army in Politics 1935-1949,” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, 35, 1 (2009).

<sup>27</sup> For an overview see Andre Gerolymatos, “Road to Authoritarianism: Greek Army in Politics 1935-1949”.

<sup>28</sup> Nicos C. Alivizatos, “Greek army in the late 1940s: Towards an Institutional Autonomy,” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 5, 3, (1978) 42.

<sup>29</sup> Gerolymatos, “Road to Authoritarianism: Greek Army in Politics 1935-1949”.

founding figures served in the free Greek armed forces. It was a time when the New Zealand and Greeks armies were affiliated in Italy.

### **New Zealand**

In contrast to the Greeks, New Zealand's military were relatively stable.<sup>30</sup> There was a much smaller grassroots episode during the Dekemvriana, which was related to Greek matters. Publicly reported at the time, it was not later included in any published official history. This is symptomatic of the Dominion's treatment of contentious matters involving the Greeks. It will be dealt with in Chapter 6.

The commander of the New Zealanders in the Mediterranean throughout the war was General Bernard Freyberg. He never plotted to usurp government control, as the Greek senior officers and men did, but his commitment to ostensibly agreed policy with Wellington over Greece is open to criticism.

**Figure 2.1: Freyberg (Right) and one of his officers on Crete (Source: Alexander Turnbull Library C-006353-1/2)**



The same could be said of Prime Minister Peter Fraser. Neither was totally honest with the other. They were, in fact, often uncoordinated when it came to the military and political aspects of relating to Greece throughout the war. It is an example of contradiction within the leadership that counters the simplistic memory of the wartime Greco-New Zealand connection.

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<sup>30</sup> New Zealand popular soldier dissent was largely limited to the “furlough resisters” i.e. soldiers refusing to return to duty in the Mediterranean after extended leave in New Zealand. It was a subject the state was comfortable in relating in its official history. F.L.W. Wood, *Political and External Affairs* (Wellington: War History Branch, 1958), 254, 259-60, 267-9.

**Figure 2.2: New Zealand Wartime Prime Minister Peter Fraser (Source: Alexander Turnbull Library)**



New Zealand's senior officers maintained an influence after the war in the production of the official war histories. Veterans were employed as narrators, historians, editors and researchers. Commanders were invariably privy to drafts of the campaign histories, and their comments were sought out, which shows they had a different type of influence than the Greek form. Besides the obvious criticism that they would sanitise their own involvement, it could be said they were actively taking part in imagined nation building. This was their particular influence, whereas the Greek variety concerned actual power relations during events themselves.

Following the German victory in early 1941, several Greek army Brigades were formed in Egypt by the Greek government in exile and their British sponsors. These units were comprised of men who had fled occupied territories and diasporic Greeks of the Middle East. The main force in the New Zealand armed forces was the 2NZEF (Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force). Its fighting component was the 2NZDIV (Second New Zealand Division). These were the regular formations that interacted with the Greeks intermittently from early 1941 until late 1945. That it carried its own extensive training arm, extending courses to members of non-New Zealand armies, is of significance to the New Zealand-Greek armies' connectivity. Their shared victory at Rimini, Italy, is celebrated by Greeks, in contrast to the New Zealand-focused emphasis on the defeat on Crete. The Greek nation's leadership at the time required Rimini, as did Churchill. The context and Dominion involvement will form part of Chapter 4.

## Clandestine and Partisan Warfare

Besides the regular armed forces, there were Greeks and New Zealanders operating together in clandestine and partisan warfare (Chapter 4). New Zealanders served with at least two secret British organisations. One was Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.). It has been the subject of considerable analysis and argument – both in the scholarly output, and in memoirs and the public press.<sup>31</sup> That its commander, decorated for his early military success there, was subsequently removed for criticising British Foreign policy – particularly support for the Greek King - shows the acute convergence of politics and military matters in wartime Greece.<sup>32</sup> It is the same monarch whom New Zealand troops had escorted off Crete - celebrated then and still so today. The other organisation was “A Force”, a part of M.I.9, the British escape route organisation. It has received far less treatment in the publication record. But, like S.O.E., it was aware of the changing nature of politics inside Greece.<sup>33</sup> The various resistance groups had their competing post-war aims.

Greece became a world of occupation and terror. Amongst this, acronyms appeared that would engage New Zealanders, their national leaders and historians. While the pre-war opposition to the monarchy came from Republicans – especially the Venizelist variety- the newly emerged and largest of the armed resistance groups had a Left/Republican profile. This was E.A.M. (Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo) or National Liberation Front and its military wing E.L.A.S. (Ellinikós Laikós Apeleftherotikós Stratós) or National Liberation Army. EMA/ELAS was influenced, or controlled, depending on your point of view, by the Greek Communist Party of Greece- Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas (K.K.E.).

E.A.M/E.L.A.S. had, as its main adversary within the mainland armed resistance E.D.E.S. (Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Syndesmos, the National Republican League). E.D.E.S. was a personality-dominated group. Its leader, Napoleon Zervas, switched his organisation’s political aims (from Republicanism to supporting the monarchy) and thereby gained support from Britain and the Greek government- in- exile. His opportunism encompassed collaboration with the occupying Nazis at one point.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Mark Seaman, ed., *Special Operations Executive: A New Instrument of War* (London: Routledge, 2006), 1.

<sup>32</sup> This was Brigadier Eddie Myers. For his own account see E. C. W. Myers, *Greek Entanglement* (Gloucester: Sutton, 1985). Mazower has documented the tortuous path of imposed censorship that Myers followed to publish his book. Mark Mazower, “The Cold War and the Appropriation of Memory: Greece After Liberation,” *East European Politics and Societies* 9, 2, (1995): 281-282.

<sup>33</sup> Its commander “Simonds was naturally aware well aware already of the intense politicisation of every aspect of Greek resistance, as indeed of most of Greek life.” M.R.D. Foot, J. M Langley, *MI9 : Escape and Evasion 1939-1945* (London: Biteback, 2011), 223.

<sup>34</sup> Heinz Richter, “Lanz Zervas and the British Liaison Officers,” *South Slav Journal* 12, 1-2, (1989).

Ordinary New Zealanders learnt of these groups, and others, through reading newspapers at a distance and also by direct experience. Cretan-based groups received much less exposure, and they never openly rebelled to the extent of the mainland counterpart. It was something reported on favourably during the time of liberation by New Zealanders. E.L.A.S. was operating there, just like on the mainland. There was no E.D.E.S., but there was E.O.K. (National Organisation of Crete). They both shared a British-supported line. Political leaders in Wellington also received diplomatic updates about Greek affairs from London. They, too, included information about the politics of the armed forces but also the changing profile of Greek authority and the question of legitimacy. In contrast to their New Zealand public expressions at the time and subsequent official published memory, the Dominion's leadership entered this discourse. It was one involving numerous actors, including sections of New Zealand society and returned soldiers (Chapter 6).

## GOVERNMENTS

### Multiple Greek Governments

During the war years there were, at one time, three competing administrations, each claiming its own legitimacy to govern Greece. The Greek government-in-exile was recognised by the Allies. Initially still carrying vestiges of the pre-war Metaxist dictatorship (in the form of legislation and personalities), it changed its profile to some extent through including more democratic elements.<sup>35</sup> But the monarch King George II remained. His positive place in New Zealand memory has been resilient, but challenges to him, and the institution of the monarchy in general, were numerous during the war. Especially odious to his enemies was his support for the establishment of the pre-war dictatorship of General Ioannis Metaxas. To some individual New Zealanders, this was also odious.

Inside Greece, there were successive collaborationist administrations. The first was headed by General Georgios Tsolakoglou, who was a senior general fighting at the front when the New Zealanders arrived in 1941. This regime, like its successors and the paramilitary force of Security Battalions raised in 1943 by the third collaborationist administration,<sup>36</sup> received a New Zealand treatment that challenged a view of them as easily definable as the "enemy".

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<sup>35</sup> Richard Clogg, *Anglo-Greek attitudes: Studies in History*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), Ch. 7.

<sup>36</sup> Andre Gerolymatos, "Security Battalions and the Civil War," *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 12, 3 (1985); John Hondros, "Too Weighty a Weapon: Britain and the Greek Security Battalions 1943-1944," *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 15, 1-2, (1988).

Besides the collaborationist Athens government, another type appeared in the mountains of the occupied mainland in early 1944. Its appearance and policies were reported in the New Zealand press. This was the P.E.E.A. (Political Committee of National Liberation or Politiki Epitepti Ethnikis Apeleftherosis). It was established by E.A.M. in March 1944. P.E.E.A. was superseded by a National government established just a few months later. This government was led by George Papandreou, who formed a government of national unity, including members of E.A.M. It was this government that returned to Greece in late October 1944, at the time of liberation. Papandreou was one of several Greek political personalities Peter Fraser met. Those encounters during the war and immediately afterward showed an attitude more involved and engaged with Greek politics than the little that was generated by the State in its writing of diplomatic history.

Following the trauma of the previously mentioned Dekemvriana the most significant political event following liberation was the elections of March 1946 and plebiscite in September that year. The former was “a critical turning-point for they represented the last chance of a peaceful evolution from the nightmare of occupation and civil strife.”<sup>37</sup> The Left boycotted the election, and the accuracy of the electoral registers was suspect. New Zealand had its own opinion on these matters (Chapter 6).

### **New Zealand’s Labour Government**

The government that led New Zealand in the Second World War, and thereby involved itself with Greek matters, and then, subsequently, the official war history project was a Labour one. It came to power in November 1935. For most of that time, Peter Fraser was Prime Minister. It lost office to the National Party in late 1949. In its 14 years in office, Labour had only two Prime Ministers. The first died in office in 1940. The stability of the New Zealand political situation lies in stark contrast to the instability of the Greek situation, which was observed from afar by Wellington. Wellington, with a perspective and passion vastly different from that held in 1941, contributed its views and a possible degree of on-site participation in post-war Greek political events (Chapter 6). It was another thread of the connection but, again, has never been explored.

Just like the armed resistance during the occupation, civil war in Greece from 1946, i.e. the Third Round, generated another challenge to the Greek government in the form of armed Communist partisans and also another government in the mountains. The war ended in the same year as the

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<sup>37</sup> Richard Clogg, *Concise History of Greece*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 137.



Fraser/Labour government lost office to the Conservative Holland government. In both the final phases of the war and the Labour administration's term, historical instance of déjàvu and catastrophe would alarm the leadership of the Pacific nation. It would take place in a new context of international power relations and diplomacy. But their deliberations appear in stark contrast to the Greek venture of early 1941. This will be discussed in Chapter 6.

## **AMONGST GREAT POWERS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

Britain had a major influence on both Greece and New Zealand before and immediately after the war. It had direct financial investment in the former and long-held strategic interests in both.<sup>38</sup>

Through the war years, it was the British coalition government under Churchill that led Britain. From July 1945, a few months before the Crete commemoration, Labour assumed power under Clement Attlee. Labourite New Zealand thought their British political equivalent might adopt a new approach to Greece. They were mistaken. Scholars have concluded that there was no change in the interventionist stance from Britain. The Mediterranean land was considered critical to British interests.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, in early 1946, the idea was even raised of having the Mediterranean country become a dominion of the British Commonwealth.<sup>40</sup>

The British linkages eventually weakened after the end of the Second World War. Britain's admission to the EEC meant New Zealand looked elsewhere for trade markets. It found some in Greece. This interlaced with commemoration as did the Greek military dictatorship junta (Chapter 3).

### **Percentages Agreement**

In late 1944, an event took place in Moscow that added another dimension of controversy over Greece. This was the so-called "Percentages Agreement" brokered between Churchill and Stalin. The notion of European zones which major powers would control was common in the New Zealand press at the time<sup>41</sup> but only in terms of the land of the defeated major enemy, Germany. However, the Moscow Agreement involved minor allies as well as former enemies. This single act has been considered by some as symbolic of major power cynicism and a watershed in the fate of Greece. It

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<sup>38</sup> It was the German invader, however, who was the major Greek trading partner, even selling arms to the Mediterranean land in late 1936. Nikos Papanastasiou, "Greek-German Relations in the 1930s," *Thetis*, 18, (2011), 218.

<sup>39</sup> Thanasis D. Sfikas; *British Labour Government and the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949: Imperialism of Non-intervention*, (Keele: Ryburn, 1994); John Sakkas, *Britain and the Greek Civil War 1944-1949: British Imperialism Public Opinion and the Coming of the Cold War* (Mainz: Rutzen, 2013).

<sup>40</sup> Sakkas, *Britain and the Greek Civil War*, 4.

<sup>41</sup> "European Zones," *Auckland Star*, December 20, 1944. "Planning World Peace," *New Zealand Herald*, December 14, 1944.

even led to one historian, critical of the role of Greek communists in the resistance, to show some rare sympathy towards them: “The hopes, ambitions, sacrifices, and pain inflicted by the Greek communists on their compatriots were consigned to a scrap of paper in which the British Prime Minister had sealed the fate of the Balkans until almost the end of the twentieth century.”<sup>42</sup> While other historians<sup>43</sup> have questioned the real impact of the Moscow exchange on subsequent major power agreements over Greece, it still reflects the overriding thrust of large power negotiations - the Greek government was not directly involved. The outcome of the Moscow meeting was known confidentially at the time to New Zealand and members of the Commonwealth (Chapter 6). It was communicated by the British authorities as an agreed upon and abiding stark division i.e. reflecting Churchill’s version.

### **The New International Organisation**

In addition to the major powers, New Zealand had an interest and commitment to the United Nations Organisation (U.N.O.). The extent of its willingness to embrace this new organisation at the cost of the long-existing Commonwealth structure is open to debate, as one academic has argued<sup>44</sup>. However, the U.N.O, in terms of this project, offered a different venue for New Zealand to engage with Greece. It was external to years of direct British-controlled diplomatic channels. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (U.N.R.R.A.) was also one of the humanitarian agencies New Zealanders would find themselves interacting with. One of its first tasks was to assist Greece after liberation. The U.N.R.R.A. history there is one of controversy, especially concerning its relations with the British military.<sup>45</sup> The U.N.O. also figured in New Zealand post-war attitudes toward Greece. It provided a venue both for engaging with Greek politicians and also a diplomatic framework that conceivably might prove dangerous to the Pacific Dominion.

All the above political and diplomatic post-war developments took place while New Zealand was in the gestation of its official histories.

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<sup>42</sup> Andre Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis Black Terror*, 127.

<sup>43</sup> For example, see Plokhyy, Serhii. *Yalta: Price of Freedom*. London: Penguin, 2011. The author argues on page 147 that “Despite Churchill’s later statement to the contrary, there was no immediate deal on percentages.” They consider outcomes of the following Yalta conference to be a more valid representative. This is especially so with the involvement of Roosevelt – who was not at Moscow.

<sup>44</sup> Malcolm Mackinnon, *Independence and Foreign Policy - New Zealand in the World since 1935* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, c1993), Ch. 4.

<sup>45</sup> See for example, Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the U.N.R.R.A. years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Flora Tsilaga, “U.N.R.R.A.’s Relief Efforts in late 1944 Greece: Political Impartiality versus Military Exigencies,” in *Bearing gifts to Greeks: Humanitarian aid to Greece in the 1940s*. See also Tsilaga’s Ph. D. thesis “U.N.R.R.A. mission to Greece : Politics of international relief, October 1944 - June 1947” (Ph D Thesis, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Kings College London, 2007).

## COLD WAR AND OFFICIAL MEMORY

In 1948, a pamphlet titled *Why I Fight Communism*<sup>46</sup> appeared in New Zealand. Carrying a foreword by Peter Fraser, it was purportedly authored by one of his Ministers, Bob Semple.<sup>47</sup> It attacked communist party presence in the country's trade union movement, a long-standing battle in itself. It also incorporated the 1941 Crete campaign. Demonstrating the drive to make the battle a key underpinning of the nation, the booklet reinterpreted the New Zealand Communist Party's (N.Z.C.P.) stance on British imperialism as an insult. The Party had once stated: "There shall be no more Cretes."<sup>48</sup> The government's anxiety and bellicose attitude over the communist threat was shared by Howard Kippenberger, head of its official history project.<sup>49</sup> These official attitudes were in place when New Zealand was researching and developing its history of its soldiers' wartime interactions with the leftist E.A.M./E.L.A.S. partisans (Chapter 4). The same chapter shows the involvement of the communist party in actively supporting some Greeks over others.

### Greece

The situation in Greece was far more bitter and lethal than in the far away Pacific nation. The communist threat was seen as emanating from just across the borders with Yugoslavia and Bulgaria as much as internally. Open warfare (including napalm) was conducted against the communist rebel army. Political prisoners ran into the thousands, and internal exile was reintroduced. One can again use this to show the contrast between the Greek situation and some of its more extraordinary use in New Zealand memory. In September/October 1945, Freyberg initiated the first commemoration of the Crete Battle. His commitment was such that he transported a 100-strong contingent of his command from Italy and North Africa to attend. Less than two months later, the Greek political turmoil was again evident: "At least half of the 18,639 persons [i.e. approx. 9,300] held in prisons in early November 1945 were imprisoned for political reasons."<sup>50</sup> The numbers thereafter varied according to the internal situation but skyrocketed again under the Colonels' Dictatorship. As Chapter 3 shows, a New Zealand contingent was on Crete again then. Their speeches were utilized by the accepted, comfortable and official war memory.

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<sup>46</sup> Robert Semple, *Why I fight Communism* (Wellington: Author, 1948). Fraser wrote: 'Mr Semple does not attack any nation or people. He attacks the Communist doctrines and disciples.' I hope the pamphlet will have the wide circulation it so thoroughly deserves.'

<sup>47</sup> One official source argues the authorship was not guaranteed. Len Richardson, 'Semple, Robert', from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 30-Oct-2012  
[URL: http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s11/semple-robert](http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s11/semple-robert) Accessed March 10, 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Robert Semple, *Why I fight Communism*, 15. The quote emanates from the Party's *People Voice*, June 27, 1941. In keeping with a public stance on Greece at the time, the government-generated booklet completely omitted the controversial December 1944 fighting in Athens but focused on the "bloodshed" in Poland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Robert Semple, *Why I fight Communism*, 32.

<sup>49</sup> IA 77/ 1/ 6 Communist Party November 1948- December 1950 (ANZ). Kippenberger to Sullivan May 31, 1949. "The Communist Party in New Zealand is very much more dangerous than the public realise and it is doing its best to infiltrate into key positions everywhere, unless it is vigorously combated. Very surprising things might happen here within a few years."

<sup>50</sup> Polymeris Voglis, *Becoming a Subject : Political Prisoners in the Greek Civil War* (New York: Berghahn, 2002), 163.

## DIFFERING TRAJECTORIES OF OFFICIAL REMEMBERING

Construction of respective Greek and New Zealand State official memories and the type and level of challenge to them again stresses the differences between the two countries and consequently, adds to the motivation to research New Zealand's response to Greek turbulence.

While New Zealand implemented a massive official war memory programme, Greek governments applied a severe imposition of silence during the early post-war years.<sup>51</sup> The role of the leftist resistance force E.A.M./E.L.A.S. was ignored.<sup>52</sup> Data gathering and organisation of archives may have been the mainstay of the New Zealand endeavour, but the opposite was true for Greece. Wholesale controversial destruction of files was carried out. This continued even during the 1980s by Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, head of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (P.A.S.O.K.), who sought reconciliation, not without critical academic commentary, between the divisions of post-war Greece.<sup>53</sup> But divisions are still evident, as the following section shows. This was reflected in the media coverage of respective veterans.

### Into the New Millennium

While in 2011 the New Zealand media ran stories about the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle for Crete and the previously mentioned lack of funding for the veterans to attend commemorative events on the island, the *New Zealand Herald* website carried a British video news item<sup>54</sup> about another veteran of the war. Manolis Glezos was one of two young students who removed the German Swastika flying above the Acropolis on 30 May 1941 (as the defeated New Zealand and Commonwealth troops on Crete were being evacuated). Now a major figure in the anti-austerity protests and well known long-standing social activist,<sup>55</sup> Glezos spoke on camera about the current crisis and invoked the memory of the Greek resistance to Axis occupation and the still-unpaid German reparations. According to the television item, he had been arrested multiple times during the occupation as well as being sentenced to death during the Greek Civil War and 'dictatorship' (possibly the military junta dictatorship of 1967 - 1974). This single Greek is accompanied in his anguish by an organization that had a major role in the two wars – world and civil.

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<sup>51</sup> Mark Mazower, "Cold War and the Appropriation of Memory: Greece After Liberation," *East European Politics and Societies* 9, 2, (1995).

<sup>52</sup> Hagen Fleischer, "Authoritarian Rule in Greece and its Heritage," in *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes in Europe*, ed. Jerzy W. Borejsza (New York: Berghahn, 2006).

<sup>53</sup> David Close "Road to Reconciliation?: Greek Civil War and the Politics of Memory in the 1980s," in *Greek Civil War: Essays on a Conflict of Exceptionalism and Silences*, ed. Philip Carabott and Thanasis D. Sfikas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 273-5.

<sup>54</sup> "Greek Freedom Fighter in Action Once More" June 22, 2011.

[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/video.cfm?c\\_id=2&gal\\_cid=2&gallery\\_id=119654](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/video.cfm?c_id=2&gal_cid=2&gallery_id=119654) Accessed March 10, 2013.

<sup>55</sup> George Gilson, "Germans lived because Greeks died," *Athens News*, March 13, 2011.

The Greek communists are still active following Glasnost and the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. They have a large headquarters in northern Athens and a much smaller one in Chania, Crete.<sup>56</sup> Their view on the State-inspired commemorative efforts is illuminating: “The KKE does not participate in the “official” celebration of the government that because it falsifies and distorts both the history and the content of the national resistance.”<sup>57</sup>

Recognised academic authorities on Greek war and post-war history have also entered the public arena during the recent Greek economic crisis.<sup>58</sup> The experiences and memories expressed in the media indicate that the socio-political turbulence and violence that engulfed Greek society from the defeat of early 1941 until long after the end of the war still resonates in some Greek quarters. It contrasts with the dominant New Zealand official memory of Greece. The most prominent public expression in that memory will be discussed in the following chapter,

This chapter has shown two vastly different countries thrown together in world-wide and civil conflict. Exigencies of war, power politics, self-imposed constraints, long-standing priorities and divisions of different sections of New Zealand society would influence behaviour at the time towards the Greeks. The Dominion’s state had need for an officially endorsed memory that would ameliorate the tragic losses of early 1941 and salve the fractious New Zealand divisions over Greek politics. It had to achieve these outcomes as well as elevate New Zealand national imagining to confirm its legitimacy to govern. The tactics it used are now explored as is the multiple links between New Zealand and Greece.

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<sup>56</sup> On-site visits by Martyn Brown to Athens and Chania, Crete. November, 2012.

<sup>57</sup> International Relations Section, KKE, email August 17, 2011.

<sup>58</sup> Damian Uladh, “Battle for Memory,” *Athens News*, November 14, 2010. The newspaper interviewed Hagen Fleischer on the issue of memory in Greece. Besides, talking of the historical context, he also its use in current difficult relations with Germany. Both the German and Greek press attracted criticism over stereotyping and hyperbole. See also Richard Clogg, “In Athens,” *London Review of Books*, 34, 13 (2012): 28.

## **CHAPTER THREE: GIVING MEANING TO THE DISASTERS OF 1941**

As illustrated in the previous chapters, the battles of early 1941 are prominent in New Zealand memory (official and otherwise) and continue to generate a discourse that shows no sign of abating. It was during these events that an individual State champion of bonding with the Greeks emerged. During the Second World War and its immediate aftermath, Lieutenant-General Bernard Cyril Freyberg had a major influence on establishing State-based linkages to Greece and the moulding of a particular form of public recognition of that country. His wartime reach extended beyond the Mediterranean into the Pacific country, and it did not just involve military matters but also a concern relating to Greek civilians. In one way, his own personality would provide a frame of thinking that avoided recognising the political turmoil that he was aware of in the Greek camp. In this, he was adding to the dominant sanitised official memory.

Freyberg held sway with Peter Fraser over Greek matters. But this was, arguably, to the point of recklessness. By this, I mean not the 1941 events but in 1944. However, in that latter year of liberation and increasing Greek-related turmoil, both would subtly use the memory of those earlier 1941 events to navigate a path to avoid any charge of taking sides in Greek politics. But the two would also differ in some ways, and exchange of information was not always forthcoming. It was all part of a sometimes slightly opaque or cryptic formulation of the intricacies of the connectivity, as against the singular view so evident in present memory.

There would be other New Zealand State and non-State actors who would shape the association with Greece. They were already active in the period immediately before the fighting of 1941. Unlike Fraser and Freyberg, who would change to a certain extent, these would remain steadfastly rooted in a particular attitude. These other parties are not dealt with in any great deal in the literature. The nature of one would preclude it from both contributing to New Zealand exceptionalism toward the Greeks; indeed, it worked against it. Another community-based one would be more successful initially, despite State-imposed limitations.

The decision to go to Greece, and the ensuing catastrophes of that year, would see, at the time, an avoidance of the nature of the political system there. The leadership of the subsequent major official memory exercise would go to considerable lengths to overshadow all other considerations about the decision by stressing one empirical record and the demand to adhere to a set historiographical methodology. It was an example where the tenets of historiography were put to use in creating a

comfortable memory. Thus, the stark division between the two, as indicated in a previous chapter, does not entirely hold true for all situations. It is another form of complexity in considering history and memory. Other episodes, especially concerning Crete, would see other tactics used.

## **IGNORING FIRST CONTACTS**

While 1941 would become the officially declared year of the genesis of the relationship, there had been earlier efforts. They were not about fighting.

### **Aid from New Zealand to Greece in 1940**

As against the forthcoming large-scale and direct commonwealth military involvement in 1941, 1940 was a year of aid - financial and clothing. . These were efforts following the Italian invasion of October 1940. New Zealand endeavours had a mixed level of success. Failure lay on the side of the national elite and State bureaucracy as opposed to the Greek New Zealanders, who had also made a contribution. The causes of failure were being part of a large and distant British-dominated military machine and a lack of control in managing overseas wartime transportation. These constraints would be prevalent during the rest of the war. One can also see in these early examples certain State behaviours that would remain constant during the war and others that would not. One constant was having a single military entity in the Mediterranean, as the following shows.

### **An Army belonging to the Nation**

On 25 November 1940, the country's newspapers carried a story from the United Press Association that "mixed units of British, Australian and New Zealand troops have gone to Greece" and that some had been carried shoulder -high through the streets by the Greeks.<sup>1</sup> There was a denial by the government: "It can be authoritatively stated that there is no truth in the London report that New Zealand troops have been sent to Greece".<sup>2</sup> A few weeks later the Prime Minister announced that the troops, albeit small in number, were indeed already there.<sup>3</sup>

In its official history the state included the incident.<sup>4</sup> Avoiding piecemeal deployment of its army was a theme in official memory. It emphasised the national profile. However, a later chapters show how this was not inclusive of all New Zealand soldiers. At home in the Pacific, there was another strategy employed during the war. This was nation-building Dominion domestic aid structures and policies.

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<sup>1</sup> "Official Denial NZ Troops in Greece," *Evening Post*, November 25, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "NZ Troops in Greece Special Men in Greece," *Evening Post*, December 9, 1940.

<sup>4</sup> W.G. McClymont, *To Greece* (Wellington: War History Branch, 1959), 91-2.

As the following illustrates it also impacted on the Greek connection, as did London directives and the diasporic Greek New Zealanders.

### **British Drive and New Zealand Responses**

Initiatives to connect with Greece through aid, like the military, still came from London, but in 1940 there was non- State Dominion interest in doing the same. The former was unquestioningly accepted, the latter subjected to severe restrictions. The constraints were argued by the State on financial grounds, but as the following sections and chapters show, they would remain more for a sense of national cohesion amongst citizens. It was a domestic manifestation paralleling the unified New Zealand army overseas in the Mediterranean.

First, the London-initiated request. Britain wanted the Commonwealth Dominions to “contribute to Greece’s war effort” and asked that New Zealand should consider sending warm clothing, blankets and sheets for use in Greek military hospitals.<sup>5</sup> The Dominion was still following at this stage. That is, it was not initiating any special efforts for Greece.

Pragmatics and policy then came into play in Wellington concerning domestic needs and existing overseas commitments. Bureaucrats thought the “New Zealand civilian market is bare”<sup>6</sup> of blankets. The needs of its own military and promised shipments to India also had to be considered.<sup>7</sup> The condition of second- hand items, lack of uniformity and delay in gathering them meant they were precluded.<sup>8</sup> In the end, stores were found in the Army pool. However, availability meant one thing, payment was another.

The source for funding was the National Patriotic Fund, a bureaucratic entity, relevant throughout subsequent parts of this study.

### **National Patriotic Fund- Ensuring the Idea of the Nation at Home**

The Fund was a quasi-government body with a central board paid by public funds but with voluntary provincial committees. It aimed at providing community-level support for the war effort.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> IA 1 3105 172/206 Pt 1(ANZ), Patriotic Funds Assistance for Greece. New Zealand High Commissioner London to Prime Minister, November 27,1940.

<sup>6</sup> Secretary of Supply to Minister, November 29, 1940, in *ibid*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>8</sup> Heenan to Fraser, December10, 1940, in *ibid*.

<sup>9</sup>This included collecting monies, printed guidance for civilians on how to send parcels overseas, establishment of recreational clubs for servicemen to prize money for the war history eyewitness accounts competitions held in the Middle East during the conflict itself.



Donations of money came from various organisations<sup>10</sup> and individuals.<sup>11</sup> The Fund held policies that would concentrate home-based war funding through a funnel clearly defined as belonging to the nation. It would, with one future brief deviation, marginalise diasporic-based fund drives. It was an internal driver of the notion of “the nation”. The Fund’s activity or non-activity over Greece, especially from late 1942 onward, is where it began to conflict with the general New Zealand population.

Despite some internal dissent, officials of the National Patriotic Fund agreed to provide the finance for purchase of aid goods. In the end the government paid to ship the consignment for the Greek army. The 10,000 army blankets, an equal number of pairs of socks and 2,000 pullovers never made it to the Greek soldiers. For some reason, the journey stalled in Sydney. When they eventually made it to the Middle East, they were lost amongst the stockpile of goods held there in British Army warehouses. Nearly a year after they left, and 5 months after the Germans had conquered Greece and Crete, some reached the Greek Red Cross. The *Dominion* newspaper called the whole saga a “muddle over blankets”.<sup>12</sup>

In its first inter-nation interaction (albeit via Britain) the New Zealand state had been unsuccessful and embarrassed.

### **Greek New Zealand Community Success**

In contrast to the Nation State, the New Zealand Greeks had succeeded in sending NZ£2,418 (approximately 24% of the value of the government shipment) to the government of Metaxas. However, the funds were collected only from its own community members. This was due to policy emanating from Walter Nash, the Minister of Finance. He argued that the war-time situation made conservation of sterling reserves paramount. A larger funding drive, as requested by the Greeks of the country, was denied. Apparently the same argument was made to a similar request from the Dutch living in the country.<sup>13</sup> While these were the bare financial arguments, the Patriotic Fund had an influence. With its one nation/one people- funding mentality, ethnic groups could only collect from their own community. That is, there would be no broader funding drives. The Fund collected and spent money under the mantle of *New Zealand*. Again, it was a way of building positive national imagining but a long time before the major official war history enterprise. The episode

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<sup>10</sup> “Patriotic Funds,” *New Zealand Herald*, January 16, 1941. For example, in this piece one could read about, the Public Service, New Zealand Rugby Football Union, Church of England Military Affairs Committee.

<sup>11</sup> “National Patriotic Fund Board,” *Bay of Plenty Beacon*, 26 July, 1940. A “Miss E.F. Gilbert.” As well as the Massey Agricultural College Students Association, a staff collection at Modern Plastics (NZ) Ltd, Niue Island school boys.

<sup>12</sup> IA 13105 172 206 Pt 1 Patriotic Funds for Greece. (ANZ). A copy of the article is held on a government file.

<sup>13</sup> EA1 3105/172/206 (ANZ) Patriotic Funds Assistance for Greece. Extract from Minutes National Patriotic Fund Board November 19, 1940.

also shows the New Zealand government placing limits on itself and its own citizens in providing economic aid to the Greek nation. But it was not negative exceptionalism; it applied the rule to all ethnic communities.

Besides these early efforts, a discussion of the extent of public and government knowledge about the pre-war and early wartime Greek administration (as against a Greek nation or “people”, that is, the stuff of public recognition of the bond) further illuminates the dynamics of the time and subsequent kinetics of the relationship.

### **Public Descriptions of the Greek Regime**

Dominion newspapers had been providing accounts of the Metaxas regime since the General’s ascendancy to his dictatorial role in August 1936. Within several days of assuming power, he had carried out “ruthless action against labour organisations” that had involved mass arrests and “maltreatment”.<sup>14</sup> The new ideological direction of the country was made evident within a month. Metaxas was shaping a society “along the lines of Italy and Germany”, and a return to parliamentary democracy was not being considered.<sup>15</sup> The excuse of a communist plot was the justification.<sup>16</sup> By early 1938, “a new period of severity which is without pity” had been reported. This centred on the banishment from Athens of opposition parliamentarians.<sup>17</sup> Later in the same year, a revolt broke out in the republican stronghold of Crete.<sup>18</sup> The role of the Greek monarch, George II of the Hellenes, in establishing the military regime was also noted – “the miniature dictator” had ascended through King George II’s approval.<sup>19</sup> In these stories, one can already see an historical context that New Zealand would have to eventually contend with in its own national story-telling.

### **Of the Confidential Variety**

In Commonwealth diplomatic communications, the unsavoury aspects of the regime were also raised, but not by New Zealand. It was also symptomatic of the nearly exclusively one way traffic about Greece – it flowed from London (nearly always the same communication sent to all the Dominions at the same time). In early 1940, while it seemed Greece might ally with Britain (and in turn the Commonwealth) against the Axis, a British diplomatic circular received in Wellington asked, “Can a regime admittedly so unpopular (as a result of its despotic and arbitrary treatment of

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<sup>14</sup> “Anti-Labour Action,” *Evening Post*, August 8, 1936.

<sup>15</sup> “On Fascist Lines,” *Evening Post*, September 2, 1936.

<sup>16</sup> “Dictatorship to Avert Red Revolt,” *Auckland Star*, August 6, 1936.

<sup>17</sup> “All Banished,” *Evening Post*, January 29, 1938.

<sup>18</sup> “Outbreak of Revolt on Island of Crete,” *Auckland Star* July 30, 1938; “Revolt in Crete,” *Evening Post*, July 30, 1938.

<sup>19</sup> “In the Public Eye,” *Evening Post* August 29, 1936.

its opponents and critics) be trusted to lead the nation into war?”<sup>20</sup> The analysis concluded it was best to continue support, and indeed strengthening of the regime. It argued, “We had better shut our eyes to the disagreeable elements of the regime”.<sup>21</sup> This included a very active secret police headed by Konstantinos Maniatakis, whom the British ambassador called the “Himmler” of Greece”.<sup>22</sup> Also, implying the history of military involvement in Greek politics, the British military attaché was looking at fidelity: “no evidence that the army is not loyal”. In the light of possible military action with the enemy, a broadening of the government was advisable as against any “violent change”.<sup>23</sup>

While there was an optimistic picture of the regime as a new ally, New Zealand’s own London-based representative, Cecil Day, also argued there would be “business as usual” following the death of the Greek dictator Metaxas in early 1941.<sup>24</sup> The New Zealand government’s silence over the Metaxist dictatorship would naturally assist forming a palatable public “relationship” – one free of criticising the Greek internal situation but despising the foreign Axis invader.

There is no evidence that the New Zealand government carried out any internal discussion about the Metaxas regime - including its foreign policy (especially in response to Italian expansionism). Indeed, even when Italy invaded Greece in October 1940, the archives show communication was all one way from London authorities to Wellington. At the time, and subsequently, in official New Zealand histories, the Italian invasion of Greece rates very brief mention. The emphasis is all on the venture and battles in early 1941.

### **Nature of the Greek Regime Reaches into Wellington City**

While Greece, the new ally, was on the other side of the world and there had been negligible direct contact from the Wellington government, the new alignment generated a minor domestic incident that reflected the strife of the Greek divisions. In February 1941, the month prior to the embarkation of the New Zealand and other Commonwealth troops to the Greek mainland, the Wellington police had been told by “a reliable person” that a certain Greek “who spends most of his time at the Greek

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<sup>20</sup> EA1 201/2/82 pt. 2 b (ANZ) Department of External Affairs United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. *Balkan States* February 26, 1940, 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 3-4.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> AAEG 950 132e 345/4/1 1b Country Series – Greece (ANZ). Extract from Cecil Day’s Notes, January 30, 1941. His replacement was a minister in the regime and “in that capacity he has been the leading force in organising the social reforms introduced by the dictatorship of his Chief.”

Club” in Wellington is “definitely anti-British”<sup>25</sup>. It went on to say that “grave concern” had been expressed by other New Zealand Greeks about his behaviour.

Subsequent investigations showed a virulently anti-Metaxist individual. The dictator had “split the Greek people”, and the interviewee and like-minded Greeks had suffered “great hardship”.<sup>26</sup> Hence, being anti-Metaxist was synonymous as being “anti-British” by some. The State response reflected the demands of wartime allegiances. The person was interviewed by police and subjected to onward monitoring. A later chapter shows how this isolated case was eclipsed by mass public protest about Greek affairs from New Zealanders without Greek ethnic attachment. It was an indication of both a celebrated bond and politics being on the public agenda. The latter marred projection of the former.

## **GIVING MEANING TO A DISASTER**

From the above, if one were looking to, one could dent the New Zealand national stature by arguing that going to Greece involved aiding an authoritarian regime that was being threatened by others of a similar persuasion (namely, Italy and Germany). The New Zealand leadership salvaged the association with the Greek regime by emphasising its moral involvement in a world-wide battle against totalitarianism.

### **1941 – National Greek Sovereignty as Against a Form of Society**

Less than six weeks after the allied defeat and evacuation of Crete, Peter Fraser addressed the National Union of Railwaymen’s Conference in Swansea, Wales. As reported in the New Zealand press, Fraser told the audience “that Australia and Greece fought in Greece and Crete to retain the structure of social democracy.”<sup>27</sup> The story subsequently states he was referring to the Pacific Dominion, rather than the Mediterranean land. While the old left-wing campaigner and former radical may have been playing to the crowd, his avoidance about Greece is symptomatic of an emphasis on considering the Mediterranean country only in terms of its sovereign borders with a menacing and eventually invading Axis. The October 1940 Italian invasion led Fraser to send Metaxas a message: “The Government and people of New Zealand extend cordial good wishes to the Government and people on the struggle into which Greece has now been forced by unprovoked, ruthless aggression.”<sup>28</sup> That fight was “to defend and restore international order and justice.”<sup>29</sup> The

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<sup>25</sup> New Zealand Secret Intelligence Service, Wellington (NZSIS). File released to the author September 2011. Surveillance files on individual members [names with-held] Greek New Zealand Community (1940 -1943) Memorandum February 20, 1941.

<sup>26</sup> Report February 21, 1941. Name of individual withheld by the Privacy Act 1993 and Official Information Act 1982.

<sup>27</sup> “Mr Fraser’s Tour,” *Auckland Star*, July 17, 1941.

<sup>28</sup> “Message from New Zealand to Greece and Belgium,” *Auckland Star*, November 6, 1940.

story appeared in the press. New Zealanders were being told national sovereignty overrode other considerations of the socio-political makeup of Greece. Ancient Greek contributions to democracy were alluded to as well.<sup>30</sup> The attitude would eventually change in the years ahead, and, ironically, Fraser wanted intervention to ensure Greek society would change to one with genuine free elections. But from late 1940, it was a new ally at a critical time in the war. Avoiding mention of the Greek regime was part of justifying the disasters of 1941.

### **Making the Greek State Palatable through Official Memory**

While the New Zealand State ameliorated its association with an undemocratic Greek regime through silence and a narrow definition of “freedom”, the contents of a telegram constituted another strategy during the Official War History and commemoration enterprise. Before then, there was also an arm of the State which during the war itself showed New Zealand’s commitment to using the war for national imagining.

### **Early Endeavours**

The first official monographs for popular consumption that underpinned the argument to go to Greece appeared during the war itself. These are much less cited than the post-war writing endeavours and were a series of “interim histories”<sup>31</sup> first published in 1943 by the New Zealand Army Board and “written for a New Zealand public”.<sup>32</sup> The items themselves are of interest for several reasons. First, they are an early indication of a State institution’s treatment of the 1941 venture and battles. Second, they promised a future major history (again, proof of the national commitment). Third, and perhaps surprisingly, they show some acknowledgement of principles of empirically-based historiography – but the interpretation was, naturally, supportive of the State.

The histories on Greece and Crete both appeared in 1943. Freyberg himself introduced the latter and was quoted over the limitations of the work. He noted, “At this stage it is not possible to write an official history since many documents and much data cannot be used by the historian until after the war.”<sup>33</sup> It is recognition of the availability of records or archives in the vein of “history”. This is an early example of how the State can, on one level, be obsessive about using stored records to write its history, but on another it will shape it into one uniform simple message or “memory”. For now, it still pursued the acceptable New Zealand involvement as an idealistic and morally justified

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> “Our Fight New Zealanders in War,” *New Zealand Herald*, April 23, 1941. “Greece, with her great traditions, had taken a stand and had won the admiration of every freedom-loving person in the world.”

<sup>31</sup> The phrase is in the Foreword of New Zealand. Army Board, *Campaign in Greece: New Zealand Division in Action* (Wellington: Author, 1943).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, Foreword.

<sup>33</sup> New Zealand. Army Board, *Battle for Crete: New Zealand Division in Action* (Wellington: Author, 1943), Foreword.

episode: "Never could people have called for help with greater need or greater justice."<sup>34</sup> The New Zealanders were going not as part of the Commonwealth but with a distinctly separate identity: "That the New Zealand Division was an important part of this army should be a source of pride to the people of a young democratic nation, whose sons were thus granted the honour of fighting for Greece alongside the people and in the land which first made the cause of free men the finest cause in life."<sup>35</sup> Explicit is the thought of an imagined New Zealand with integrity – its unified martial arm committed to defending an ally from invasion. Implicit is the national sovereignty perspective of Greece again, as was a reference to freedom. These ideas were reinforced by the official war history project after the war.

### **The "Moral Cause"**

In 1949, before the directly relevant Greece and Crete campaign histories and the equally extensive volume on external affairs were produced, the State-sponsored war history project published the banally titled *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War 1939-45 Volume I*.<sup>36</sup> Review copies and a letter from Kippenberger were sent to major newspapers, journals and broadcasters. Amongst other things, he pointed out what he believed to be a "remarkable message" from Peter Fraser to Churchill and the latter's response. The two were "perhaps among the most notable documents in New Zealand's history."<sup>37</sup> The cablegrams in question showed Fraser's willingness to proceed in the Greek venture, despite the increasing risks. The political leader argued that New Zealand "cannot contemplate the possibility of abandoning the Greeks to their fate, especially after the heroic resistance with which they have met the Italian invader. To do so would be to destroy the moral basis of our cause and invite results greater in their potential damage to us than any failure of the contemplated operation."<sup>38</sup> Churchill responded with a typically embellished communication; one that both belied his adherence to British preferences as well as his sense of history: "We are deeply moved by your reply which, whatever may be the fortunes of war, will shine in the history of New Zealand and be admired by future generations of free men in every quarter of the globe."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Campaign in Greece : New Zealand Division in Action*, 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War 1939-45: Volume I*, (Wellington: War History Branch, 1949).

<sup>37</sup> IA 1 3392 181/53/5 Pt 1 (ANZ) War History-Printing and Publishing of Official Histories –Documents Vol 1-3, (ANZ). Kippenberger to editors of Christchurch *Star Sun*, *Southern Cross*, *Christchurch Press*, *Evening Post*, *Listener*, *Otago Daily Times*, *Evening Star (Dunedin)*, *Southland Times*, *New Zealand Herald*, *R.S.A. Review*, *Auckland Star*, *Weekly News*, *Timaru Herald*, *Freelance*, *Freedom*, Supervisor of Talks, N.B.S. Wellington, Supervisor, Programme Organisation, Commercial Division, New Zealand Broadcasting, Wellington.

<sup>38</sup> *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War 1939-45 Volume I*, Telegram 353.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, Telegrams 354.

These telegrams were later used by Professor Fred Wood, the author of the official *External Affairs*, published in 1958<sup>40</sup>. As an academic, his approach in analysing the decision to go to Greece was in a manner closely aligned with analytical history. He told the reader about “facts”, documents and the actors who used them, understanding motivation (“non-military and “political”), complexity and stated that his assessment was based “on existing evidence”<sup>41</sup> In other words, the written history may change with newly available data. There were also various contributing factors that point to complexity: Despite expressing much that fits with analytical history, projecting a singular moral underpinning still dominated: “The emphasis on moral issues was characteristic of New Zealand policy.”<sup>42</sup> This again ensures a positive national imagining.<sup>43</sup>

### **Ensuring One Simple Memory**

That the official Wood interpretation stressing idealism about Greece was the one to be followed was made quite clear to the writer of the 1959 official volume on the Greek mainland campaign, *To Greece*. This was W.G. McClymont.<sup>44</sup> Kippenberger sent him a draft of the relevant chapter by Wood. He added instructions: "I enclose a copy of Fred Wood's Chapter XIV dealing mostly with the "preliminaries to Greece". I am satisfied that he has the story as nearly correctly as we can expect to get it. I do not remember exactly what you said on this subject, but after reading this you may feel that some alterations are called for. We don't want to give two versions, or interpretations."<sup>45</sup> That the editor saw a variety of interpretations (a characteristic of historiography), but at the same time wanted conformity, shows both an understanding of the historical method but at the same time a drive toward one “story” that was acceptable. Theoretically, it is another example of where the demarcation between history and memory (in this case, almost commemorating a morally based fatal decision) are blurred to an extent, as per the previously mentioned observation by Montgomerie in Chapter 1. But the intent was evident, data would be used selectively to set a simple message that was acceptable, and one the citizens of the nation would be proud of.

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<sup>40</sup> F.L.W. Wood, *Political and External Affairs* (Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, 1958), 185. Wood looked at several factors in sending the troops to Greece – including the political one of keeping Greece in the war but the moral stance was paramount.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 184-5.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 185-6.

<sup>43</sup> However, this acceptance of the general idealistic drive has been challenged by one recent academic study. Fifty-one years after Wood, Watson and Crawford argue the Dominion had a stronger acceptance of appeasement than Chamberlain. J. Crawford and J. Watson, “Most Appeasing Line’: New Zealand and Nazi Germany, 1935-40,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 38,1 (2010).

<sup>44</sup> W.G. McClymont, *To Greece*.

<sup>45</sup> WAI 3 3 16b (ANZ) Campaign in Greece 1941, correspondence files W.G. McClymont's correspondence while writing a history of the campaign in Greece. Kippenberger to McClymont August 23, 1956 (ANZ).

### **Academic Endorsement and Internal Scepticism**

When McClymont's volume on Greece came out in 1959, Wood and other professors were listed as an Editorial Advisory Panel.<sup>46</sup> Academic endorsement would make acceptance of this history more widespread in the general community and student cohorts. The telegram that anchored New Zealand's moral stance was quoted in full and described as a "memorable statement".<sup>47</sup> McClymont was personally cynical about the published stance he had taken. During the writing of the work, he wrote semi-privately to a colleague: "Public opinion in wartime is very important - and the protection of the noble Greeks had not to be neglected. I quite agree when you say of my earlier reference: 'Very nice proper and moral- but bloody rot.'"<sup>48</sup> The published study still included the moral justification. And, just as Kippenberger continually sought to legitimize the mainland venture with New Zealanders years after the event, McClymont pointed out, again to the same colleague, a more self-serving reason: "my newspaper friends tell me that morale and public opinion during wartime are of incredible importance. The general public or rather nations in wartime could do and think some very queer things. So if we made some appearance of assisting Greece, all would be well."<sup>49</sup>

Consciously, then, there were efforts to steer a suitable path within what was being publicly presented as "history", despite some of the historians being sceptical of what the received version would be. Internal resistance was overcome.

### **ON THE GROUND**

While the above discussion focussed on political rhetoric and the subsequent histories of the prelude to the Greek campaign, the soldiers being transported to the Balkan Peninsula from North Africa faced a dubious venture,<sup>50</sup> cruel realities of war and their first encounter with the Greek people. Blindness to the regime replaced the earlier newspaper reporting when their commander addressed them. Freyberg looked to historic ancient Greece to help frame the Greek expedition for his troops and was published in the press<sup>51</sup> as well as some of the State histories.<sup>52</sup> He told his men that Greece

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<sup>46</sup> Besides Professor F.L. Wood Victoria University of Wellington, they included Professor N.C. Phillips, University of Canterbury and Professor J. Rutherford, University of Auckland. McClymont, *To Greece*, 539.

<sup>47</sup> W.G. McClymont, *To Greece*, 113.

<sup>48</sup> WAI13 1 15 (ANZ) Campaign in Greece 1941 correspondence files. Correspondence of WG McClymont .McClymont to Wards undated

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, He also pointed out the Germans would have taken advantage of the Commonwealth not going to the aid of the Greeks.

<sup>50</sup> WAI13 3 3 16b Campaign in Greece 1941(ANZ), Correspondence files W.G. McClymont's correspondence while writing a history of the campaign in Greece. Ian Wards who wrote the narrative of the Greek volume told McClymont that "I have a feeling that surviving NZ soldiers will be grateful for a clear account of what was for them a somewhat baffling experience." Wards to McClymont, April 21, 1954.

<sup>51</sup> "Full Confidence Dominion Troops," *Evening Post*, April 10, 1941.

<sup>52</sup> New Zealand. Army Board *Campaign in Greece : the New Zealand Division in Action*, 8; *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War, 1939-45: Volume I*, Item 341; McClymont mentions it in passing, McClymont, *To Greece*, 119; Wood does not include it.



was “the birthplace of culture and learning.”<sup>53</sup> Although he would remain quiet for the remainder of the war about the regime, ordinary soldiers would not. They saw it at first hand as well as the poverty and the Greek predilection for politics that would affect interaction with New Zealanders.

### Ordinary Soldiers

One soldier wrote after the war, “Jack the farmer had ‘the whole situation sized up. All the people’, he told me, ‘are fair dinkum Communists, real Reds. The village and its land all belong to the whole gang. The Lord Mayor allots the work to each man. Everything produced is shared up equally amongst the people, and right there in the village they make 95% per cent of everything they require’.”<sup>54</sup> Later, on a more sophisticated level, John Mulgan, using his experience in Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.), made some similar observations. In his posthumously published *Report on Experience*, he noted “there is a good deal of co-operative law and custom already in the villages.”<sup>55</sup> Economic exchange was often via barter<sup>56</sup> rather than currency exchange. Besides this social cohesion, there was the pervasive interest in politics. Mulgan, coming across a slogan-chanting boy, wrote “As with most Greeks, politics was to be his alphabet.”<sup>57</sup> Decades after, in the documentary *In Rich Regard*, a New Zealand veteran spoke about the incessant political discussion in Cretan cafes.<sup>58</sup> Individual New Zealanders in various roles would be experiencing these social organisations and politics. To many, Greek society brought survival. For others, acute political conflict caused their death. Regardless of politics, the suffering and dire situation of these villages would become a major focal point of New Zealand public concern during the war and for years afterwards.

The pre-occupation with the economic situation was also apparent to everyday soldiers.<sup>59</sup> The poverty seeped into the Greek military as well. The average New Zealand soldier, it was noted, received approximately 70 times the pay of his Greek counterpart.<sup>60</sup> The extensive use of livestock, instead of mechanisation, by the farmers was also evident in the land armed forces.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> “Full Confidence Dominion Troops,” *Evening Post*, April 10, 1941.

<sup>54</sup> C.M. Wheeler, *Kalimera Kiwi: to Olympus with the New Zealand Engineers* (Wheeler Reed, 1946), 84.

<sup>55</sup> John Mulgan, *Report on Experience* (Frontline/VUW, Wellington, 2010), 167.

<sup>56</sup> Fred Cleland Fleming, Marie I. Farquhar, *Dear Cousin, - Cheerio, Fred”: Censored Letters* (Wellington: Cleland, 1971), 3a.

<sup>57</sup> Mulgan, *Report on Experience*, 138.

<sup>58</sup> *In Rich Regard*, (Videorecording) ([New Zealand], Wild Sweet Productions, 1991).

<sup>59</sup> A soldier recalled the effect of him paying a woman for something in a 100 drachmae note: “I do believe she thought it a fortune, as she started at us, then at the crumpled note she held in her hand, and started at us in amazement.” Francis Jackson and Peter McIntyre, *Passage to Tobruk: Diary of a Kiwi in the Middle East* (Wellington: Reed, 1943), 37; The dietary intake of protein was limited. Meat was eaten once per week. Arthur Stanley Helm, *Fights and Furloughs in the Middle East : a story of Soldiering and Travel in Libya, Egypt, Palestine, Greece, Crete, Trans-Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Iran* (Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1944), 107.

<sup>60</sup> Helm, *Fights and Furloughs*, 120.

<sup>61</sup> EA 1 87/19/3 Pt 1 (ANZ) NZ Forces - Campaigns and Actions - Secret and confidential reports on the Greece and Crete campaigns by the GOC [General Officer Commanding] 2nd NZEF [New Zealand Expeditionary Force] (ANZ) Bernard Freyberg, *New Zealand Division in Greece*, 7. Freyberg in his official August 1941 report on the Greek venture stated that “I saw for the first time the Greek

Naturally, pre-war poverty of Greece was not a concern of New Zealand except where it affected military matters. During the enemy occupation, the State would initially also stay aloof from the plight of the Greek civilians but then change. That discussion will form a major part of Chapter 5.

### **Encounters with the Greek Authoritarian Regime**

Some soldiers had passing encounters with vestiges of the authoritarian Metaxist regime. One Greek soldier related to a New Zealander how his advancement had been retarded by his being “a socialist”.<sup>62</sup> There were also several innocuous encounters with the Metaxist youth<sup>63</sup>, their Nazi-like salute being the only disturbing part for one New Zealand soldier.<sup>64</sup> Everyday New Zealand soldiers therefore seem to have had little direct contact with vestiges of the still largely functioning authoritarian regime.

Similarly, by virtue of their place in the chain of command during the mainland campaign, Freyberg and his senior officers were not privy to the senior meetings between the British and Greek leadership, where the dynamics of the authoritarian regime mixed with long-standing tensions within Greek society. One key example follows. The other raises the issue of collaboration. Their treatment by New Zealand State authorities in writing its history show strategies of selectivity, but in the case of the latter also an unwillingness to engage in any substantial way with that whole area.

### **Meeting at Tatoï Palace and Saving the Commonwealth Troops**

A critical meeting at the Royal Greek Palace occurred on 19 April when it was obvious the invading Germans would be victorious. The post-war memoirs of British General Wilson<sup>65</sup> include an account of the meeting, cited in *To Greece* by McClymont. With a rapidly crumbling military situation, George II offered the post of premier<sup>66</sup> to Venizelist Republican General Mazarakis.<sup>67</sup> He refused. The reason given in the official volume was via a quote from Wilson’s book:

“Mazarakis decided that ‘he had been called in too late to retrieve the situation and that evacuation

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Army on the move... I was astonished to see that their front line transport was composed entirely of ox wagons and pack animals which of course could only travel a very limited distance in a day at a very slow speed – actually at a slower pace than troops could march.”

<sup>62</sup> Helm, *Fights and Furlough*, 116.

<sup>63</sup> W.B. Thomas, *Dare to be Free* (London: Cassell, 2005), 133; Wheeler, *Kalimera Kiwi*, 67.

<sup>64</sup> Wheeler, *Kalimera Kiwi*, 67.

<sup>65</sup> Henry Maitland Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas* (London, Hutchison, 1948). The Australian official history also includes the incident. Gavin Long, *Greece Crete Syria* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1953), 132.

<sup>66</sup> After the death of Metaxas, Alexandros Koryziz assumed the role. He committed suicide on April 18, 1941 during the German onslaught.

<sup>67</sup> McClymont, *To Greece*, 365. McClymont alludes to the fate of the Republicans, through the persona of Mazarakis. He “had taken little part in public life after the dictatorship of Metaxas had been established in 1935.”

was the best solution.<sup>68</sup> In reality, the New Zealand volume ignores a more complex recollection, again, unsavoury for those not willing to take account of the Greek political dynamics. For in his book Wilson argued the Venizelists would only agree if the dreaded head of the secret police, Maniatakis was stood down. Wilson and his British entourage vetoed the move.<sup>69</sup> The political colouring had bluntly been avoided in the official volume. It was in the vein of non-comment. The filtering out of Greek politics even went as far as the issue of collaboration.

### **Question of Collaboration - 1941 and the Epirus Army**

As Chapter 2 discussed, Greek historiography has, as one point of contention, the definition of collaboration. Chronologically, the earliest and well-known case is the illegal surrender made by one senior general during the German offensive. Astonishingly, when mentioned in the Army Board-generated 1943 history, the latter receives implicit acceptance at a time when the acuteness of war and losses to New Zealand demanded otherwise. Hence, the illegal removal of the Greek commander of the Epirus Army by future collaborationist Prime Minister Georgios Tsolakoglou is described as being “without reference” to the overall Greek commander, Papagos. The perpetrator of the illegal act was justified in his actions: “he had no choice but to capitulate”.<sup>70</sup> Already by early May 1941, there was a New Zealand press report about Tsolakoglou as heading the first collaborationist government.<sup>71</sup> That a fellow traveler of the enemy should receive such treatment seems incredible, especially given that the struggle was still underway. Later, McClymont used the stronger term “deposed” in the major official history.<sup>72</sup> Both avoid the evolution of the Greek general into a collaborationist Premier during the occupation. The treatment lies in contrast to the denunciation of him in the memoirs of Field Marshall Papagos, the Greek Army’s Commander-in-Chief against the Italians and also the Germans. The War Project had a copy of the book,<sup>73</sup> but the publicly known stain of collaboration had been ameliorated.

The Greek military leader and future Prime Minister’s inclusion of the internal Greek dynamics might reflect his own preoccupation, but it was a blatant omission of a key factor in the New Zealand presentation of the exit from Greece. From the examples above, there was a tendency in

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 65. He cites Wilson, 95.

<sup>69</sup> Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas*, 95. Because it “affected security” and “in view of the impending evacuation we were unable to agree to any step which would tend to loosen the control exercised by the police in Athens.”

<sup>70</sup> New Zealand. Army Board, *Campaign in Greece: the New Zealand Division in Action*, 41.

<sup>71</sup> “Six Greek Generals Dismissed,” *Evening Post*, May 7, 1941; See also “Read ‘Caesar’,” *Auckland Star*, June 28, 1941.

Tsolakoglou is not specifically named but his title “Premier” is. He is named in “Quislings,” *Auckland Star*, November 20, 1941.

<sup>72</sup> McClymont, *To Greece*, 366.

<sup>73</sup> WAI 1 355 DA448.21/4 (ANZ) Miscellaneous Reports and Articles, MS Scripts, *Papagos Report*. The Field Marshall’s postwar account was translated into English by a Wellington-based Greek for the history project. The published work is Alexander Papagos *Battle of Greece* (Athens: The J. M. Scazakis “Alpha” Editions, 1949). On page 383 of Wellington’s copy Papagos argued the Epirus commander “mutinied” and, in collusion with local church representatives and other army officers, made an armistice with the Germans despite being directed by him and the Greek king to fight on. Also the illegal surrender had been preceded by a week-long stream of communications from the Epirus command that “hostilities should cease as soon as possible.” Ibid., 382.

state exercises about the 1941 venture for Greek politics to be subject to wholesale removal or at least dilution in New Zealand official history/memory. This ensured a straight-forward and patriotically appealing account of honourable military actions without complication.

### **CENTREPIECE OF CRETE –CLOSER TO GREEKS THAN ON THE MAINLAND**

Besides being the historian for the mainland Greek volume, McClymont wrote the original narrative of the Battle for Crete. He has been overshadowed in the revision by Walter Murphy, future associate professor in political studies at Victoria University of Wellington<sup>74</sup>, by input from general editor Howard Kippenberger, and by the final efforts of historian Dan Davin.

Besides suggesting some variables that might contribute toward elevation of Crete above the mainland, the following section introduces some of the further attitudes of key actors that would influence the strength and nature of wartime connections with Greece. It also challenges the Greek soldier/civilian and war crimes/suffering tropes introduced as well as the image of pristine New Zealand “leadership” of the Greek forces. It is a specifically targeted analysis rather than a comprehensive examination.

#### **Concentration and Forced Focus – Time and Space**

For the New Zealanders, the battle was condensed into the west of the island. The intensity of the fighting took place in just 12 days. Crete was in fact the largest concentrated mass interaction between New Zealanders and Greeks during the war or after. The New Zealanders were also working more closely with their Greek military counterparts than in the earlier mainland venture. The relative small size of units on Crete as against the much larger formations on the mainland might make for the possibility of stronger direct contact and resulting adhesion.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, they were amongst a civilian population whose home was in small towns and villages that formed part of the battlefield rather than a line of fortifications away from populated areas. On the most basic level of social interaction, therefore, one might say Crete offered a more conducive environment for New Zealand soldiers to mix with Cretan civilians and Cretan/Greek soldiers than had the mainland.

There were other factors that would naturally lead to a perception of exceptionality of Crete for the New Zealanders. It was a unique type of battle (mostly airborne). It was also fought under New Zealand military leadership – at several levels. It was also, for the Pacific Dominion, the first major,

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<sup>74</sup> W.E. Murphy was a lecturer in political science since 1962. In 1969 he reached associate professorship. Email communication from Special Collections Librarian Victoria University of Wellington, March 21, 2013.

<sup>75</sup> The physical surroundings were a different matter as discussed in the previous chapter.

but not the greatest,<sup>76</sup> New Zealand bloodletting of the war. Sacrifice was therefore not a sole key determinant in elevating Crete. It was a combination of the previous factors. The Cretans' own long history of resisting invaders would also contribute to a fight that lay in contrast to the earlier mainland battle where little actual fighting had taken place.

Leadership, given by Britain and endorsed by the Greek government, would bring with it exposure to Greek political dynamics, questionable treatment of Greek soldiers as well as the grey area of the brutality of both the allies and the invader.

### **Assuming Leadership**

Freyberg's assumption of overall command of the island's defence, the establishment of martial law as well as the placement, to an extent, of New Zealand training/command roles with Greek army units, was something which naturally lends itself to a supportive national stature (if one takes away the obvious outcome of the battle - failure). It was also something of a precedent for military interaction during the later years of the war. It also brought him and some of his officers and men into direct contact with senior Greek personages.

Freyberg met an increasingly explosive internal political situation on Crete with his personality-driven tactic of avoidance. It perfectly matched the official diplomatic silence of the New Zealand government at the time. He was also assisted by conscious Greek decisions to avoid disrupting his chain of command when the new Prime Minister Emmanuel Tsouderos defended his new placement of Republican elements in the Greek camp.<sup>77</sup> Crete would require other silences – not just over politics - when it came to ensuring a New Zealand official memory of integrity when dealing with Greek matters.

### **Setting Patterns of Behaviour at the Time**

In the immediate aftermath of the loss of Crete, one New Zealand officer made a provocative statement in his official report about the Greek government during its time on the island. He argued one of the reasons there had been less Fifth Column activity on the island than the mainland was

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<sup>76</sup> For example, a recent study states "If the casualty rate for the Crete campaign had stunned families in New Zealand, the lists for the Libyan campaign would make them realise such losses were par for the course in war". Monty Soutar, *Nga Tamatoa: price of citizenship C Company 28 (Maori Battalion 1939-1945)* (Auckland: David Bateman 2008), 240. Following that the battles of El Alamein would see casualties that were multiples of the Crete Campaign.

<sup>77</sup> K 51 Tsouderos papers General Archives of Greece, Athens (GAK) On May 11 whilst at Chania, Tsouderos wrote to an unnamed British minister: "I must explain that I do not mean the military organs in respect of which the Commander in Chief General Freyberg has free authority."

“The gradual elimination of doubtful elements in the Government.”<sup>78</sup> One was undoubtedly, as the Greek diplomat, poet and 1963 Nobel Laureate, George Seferis observed at the time: “the hated chief of police, Maniadakis,” who now “went everywhere with an armed escort.”<sup>79</sup> Another was Diacos, who the British consul in Canea reported to London, had “arrived in Crete a broken and terrified man, constantly imploring me to assist his departure. He was afraid of being shot and went under an assumed name.”<sup>80</sup> At least one New Zealand officer encountered Venizelist Republican revolutionary civilians in his sector.<sup>81</sup> The commander of the Cretan Division arrived in the area without his troops and was shot by a local amidst much vocal demonstration. This all points to an underlying layer of discontent amongst the Cretans.<sup>82</sup>

This type of disquieting information was not included in the regular traffic from London to Wellington, nor from Freyberg (whether or not he did know is another matter) to the government. The opening comment on this section came from Bell, an Intelligence Officer with the New Zealand Division. While officers in the New Zealand Division had met King George II, cabinet ministers and army officers at the Piccadilly Restaurant several weeks before the attack,<sup>83</sup> it might be said that intelligence officers attached to senior staffs might be more inclined, and have the opportunity, to observe diplomatic workings and tensions. That would certainly be the case with other New Zealand intelligence officers on Freyberg’s staff in the post-Crete period. These attitudes are discussed in later chapters. The General’s stance was a different matter.

### **Freyberg and the Greek King**

The General stayed quiet about the unappealing aspects of the Greek monarchy and government. The extent of Freyberg’s direct involvement with the political drivers through the tense pre-invasion military situation is not ascertainable, given the records available. He was officially open to the British about his own limitations about high diplomacy.<sup>84</sup> He was equally expressive in his official

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<sup>78</sup> WAI 2/85 (ANZ). (Various reports of events in Crete, May 1941 (Covering Headquarters New Zealand Division, 10 Infantry Brigade, Suda Bay Operations, 6th Greek Battalion Greek Army, Medical Services, 1st Battalion Welsh Regiment, 14 Infantry Brigade, S&T [Supply and Transport?] Services, notes on campaign Intelligence *Notes on Invasion of Crete*, n.d. The author appears to have been Bell, the New Zealand Divisional intelligence officer who had accompanied Freyberg when the latter assumed overall command of the island.

<sup>79</sup> Roderick Beaton, *George Seferis: Waiting for the Angel: a Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 196.

<sup>80</sup> FO 371/33197 (TNA). Report on Leading Personalities in Greece. Handwritten note by Meade 16/iii

<sup>81</sup> WAI 491.22/7 (ANZ) G. Bedding, *Reorganisation and training of 1 Greek Regiment for use in Crete Campaign*.

<sup>82</sup> FO 371/33197 (TNA). The women were predominant in the Home Office report.

<sup>83</sup> WAI 1 1627 DA 21.1 /1/17 Pt 3. (ANZ). Headquarters 2 New Zealand Division, General Staff War Diary 1-31 May, 1941. New Zealand Division *Report on Operations in Crete 24 April-31 May 1941*, 225.

<sup>84</sup> WAI 8 Box 2 13. Crete – King of Greece March – May 1941 (ANZ). When he was dealing with the single act of timing of the king’s departure he told the Middle East Command that: “I am not competent to judge either political or diplomatic aspect of case. CREFORCE to MIDEAST May 12, 1941. One week later, and the day before the attack, the General again stood back from the politics telling British General Heywood that “the question is a purely diplomatic question” and not to pursue it with Senior British Commander Wavell any more. WAI 1 DA 441.2/10 (ANZ) General Officer Commanding’s Diary (ANZ) Diary May 19, 1941.

report to the New Zealand government: “I am no judge of diplomacy or of political questions, especially “Haute Politique.”<sup>85</sup>

To his own troops, he showed how extreme and potentially embarrassing this political naiveté could be. Shortly after Crete, he told an audience of non-Commissioned Officers in Egypt that the Greek Gendarmerie was “a type of modified Gestapo.”<sup>86</sup> One might be inclined to consider he was being critical of the Greek leadership - likening the Greek police with the feared enforcement arm of the enemy – but other behaviour and statements strongly suggest otherwise.

The General personally defended the Greek monarch, who had endorsed the dictatorship of Metaxas, and his Prime Minister very strenuously in his official Crete report. “I want to make it quite clear that neither the King nor the Cabinet wanted to leave Crete”. Later, “I may claim to be a judge of men in the raw and after twenty days’ close and intimate collaboration in difficult and dangerous times, I pay my homage to the gallant way both the King and the Greek Prime Minister faced up to all the many difficulties and dangers that beset them.”<sup>87</sup> Finally, he paid “tribute” to them and the Greek commander “for their unfailing help in times which must have been tragic and difficult.”<sup>88</sup> In Freyberg’s attitude toward the King and Tsouderos, the New Zealand-Greek bonding seemingly had another thread to strengthen it. Historians have not been as kind as Freyberg concerning the King’s and his political leader’s personal bravery<sup>89</sup>. At its most basic then, the General was supporting Greeks. That is, he was contributing toward establishing a New Zealand-Greek connection. He would keep on doing so during the forthcoming years.

### **Indication of a Longer and Personal Relationship**

While in the government arena Freyberg had promoted the king and his premier, he also apparently developed an ongoing personal relationship with King George.<sup>90</sup> This friendship may have influenced the General’s subsequent actions over the Royal Greek Army in the Middle East, as

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<sup>85</sup> EA1/625 87/19/3 Pt 1 (ANZ) NZ Forces - Campaigns and Actions - Secret and confidential reports on the Greece and Crete campaigns by the GOC [General Officer Commanding] 2nd NZEF [New Zealand Expeditionary Force] BC Freyberg *Report on the Battle for Crete*, 22.

<sup>86</sup> WAI 2 85 Reel 2 (ANZ). Various reports of events in Crete, May 1941 (Covering Headquarters New Zealand Division, 10 Infantry Brigade, Suda Bay Operations, 6th Greek Battalion Greek Army, Medical Services, 1st Battalion Welsh Regiment, 14 Infantry Brigade, S&T [Supply and Transport?] Services, notes on campaign. Address to NCOs at Helouwan Camp by Major General B.C. Freyberg V.C.

<sup>87</sup> EA1/625 87/19/3 pt 1 (ANZ) NZ Forces - Campaigns and Actions - Secret and confidential reports on the Greece and Crete campaigns by the GOC [General Officer Commanding] 2nd NZEF [New Zealand Expeditionary Force] BC Freyberg *Report on the Battle for Crete*, 22.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>89</sup> Procopis Papastratis, *British Policy towards Greece during the Second World War 1941-1944* (London: Cambridge University Press 1984), 4.

<sup>90</sup> MS-papers-1619-145 (ATL). Seddon Family papers- Personal Correspondence-Lord and Lady Freyberg. Freyberg to Seddon, 19 April, 1947. Years after Crete he told T.E.Y. Seddon, the honorary consular representative of the New Zealand Greeks, that: “I was rather close to him as a friend [King George]. In Crete we saw a lot of one another.”

discussed in the next chapter. This relationship is not explored in any of the biographies,<sup>91</sup> and the General himself never publicly spoke of it. One may take Freyberg's key words of friendship towards Crete and that the King "loved the New Zealanders"<sup>92</sup> as support for the New Zealand Greek connection.

That George II managed to be elevated into a key component in New Zealand memory is an example of both the longevity of certain events (a characteristic of "memory" as per the theoretical model used in this study), an elevation that, as previously discussed, lies in contrast to a sizable section of Greek society who questioned his remaining as monarch.

### **King George II in the New Zealand Official Memory**

As the following section and subsequent chapters show, over the forthcoming years in the public domain the Dominion state apparatus embraced, ignored and then re-embraced its involvement with the Greek king and the royal family. The recurring theme was that the nexus was the Battle of Crete, and more specifically, the escape across the mountains. It was a reference point that satisfied the need to elevate the status of the nation state i.e. rescuing European royalty. At the same, while there were anti-Royalist feelings, they were hidden from the New Zealand public.

Freyberg's attitude could only make more palatable for some the elevation of the King's escape, aided by New Zealanders, from the invading Germans. One week after the surrender on Crete, the Public Relations Unit of the NZEF reported to John Paul, the government's Director of Publicity in Wellington, that "This story covering a European Royal House, naturally has strong European appeal, and I felt that it was accordingly worth a sound interview to amplify its scope."<sup>93</sup> The result was a newsreel (not shot by New Zealand) combined with a filmed sound interview (conducted by New Zealand) with the New Zealand officer who had led the New Zealand bodyguard. The escape went on to become part of the 1953 official war history volume.<sup>94</sup> It is still a mainstay in official and wider memory. New Zealanders, from being members of a small dominion on the other side of the world, had become bodyguards to a monarchy escaping from the common enemy. The use of this in raising New Zealand national status was evident. The King was now joined to the common New Zealand soldier. It was adding to the notion of a bond across social divisions.

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<sup>91</sup> For example, there is the biography written by his son, Paul, who first had access to his private papers. Paul Freyberg, *Bernard Freyberg VC* (London/Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991); Also *W.G. Stevens, Freyberg VC: the Man* (London: 1965). A letter to the current Lord Freyberg on the subject did not elicit a response. Also, research in archives of New Zealand, Greece and the United Kingdom has not brought forth any empirical support for Freyberg's assertion of a relationship.

<sup>92</sup> MS-papers-1619-145 (ATL) Seddon Family papers- Personal Correspondence-Lord and Lady Freyberg. Freyberg to Seddon, 19 April, 1947.

<sup>93</sup> AAPG 6025 Box 4 m Job 100 (ANZ) [CJ Morton Film Production Papers] Overseas Unit – Return from Crete etc. (4<sup>th</sup> Consignment), Cinema Unit to J.T. Paul June 8, 1941

<sup>94</sup> Davin, *Crete*, 474. Appendix II was dedicated to the escape.



These sentiments may be in tandem with the New Zealand military leader's attitude, but they would not be with its political leader's. It is also an example of how the State can construct a memory around an individual while, at the same time, a key elite member is dismissive of the same and eventually makes him a target for removal from power (as shown in later chapters). In 1941, Peter Fraser masked his dislike with silence.

### **Peter Fraser's Encounter with George II –Not a Celebration of the Bond**

On the same New Zealand newsreel as the royal escape story was Fraser's meeting of the troops in Egypt and a sombre address about the recent battle and losses. The Labour Prime Minister had met the Greek monarch, albeit fleetingly. He was apparently not sufficiently enamoured of the king as to publicize this encounter. The encounter between the two was not planned nor sought after. Far less amenable for official memory-making than the dangers and suffering on Crete was his losing his room at the British embassy in Cairo to the monarch who had escaped the Germans with the aid of some New Zealand soldiers. Physical endurance by the Royal party over the Cretan White Mountains and risk-sharing between the escapers did not extend into formal diplomatic protocol between senior members of State.

In response to a phone call from George II, on May 29, while the battle on Crete was still taking place and after the king had escaped, the British Minister to Egypt, Lord Killearn, was told the monarch "proposed himself and some of his family to come up and stay".<sup>95</sup> Killearn had a shortage of accommodation, and as Fraser, who had been in Egypt for several days, "had the only big room with a bath room which I felt I could give to a Crowned Head", he was asked to vacate it.<sup>96</sup> The Prime Minister did so with good cheer and moved out to a hotel, accordingly. Following the defeat on Crete, Fraser, Freyberg and George II also attended a "big lunch" on June 4 at Killearn's official residence. These Cairo-based encounters were never publicised then or afterwards. Fraser's message to Wellington concerning the King's rescue was relayed to the reading population via the acting Prime Minister, Walter Nash. He said he had received thanks from one of the Greek Ministers who had "called on him" during his Cairo stay.<sup>97</sup> The silence over King George would eventually change to confidential condemnation, but that was years away, with the monarch's position becoming ever more precarious with his own people. The fact remains that the national leader, even one as forthright and domineering as Peter Fraser, condemned a personage in contrast

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<sup>95</sup> Sir Miles Lampson 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Lord Killearn Collection, St Anthony's College Oxford Middle East Centre Archive, Oxford. Diary Entry May 29, 1941, June 4 1941.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid

<sup>97</sup> "Deep Appreciation," *Auckland Star*, May 27, 1941.

to his publicity machine and then history project. It is also another example where the New Zealand State again appeared to its citizenry to hold no opinion on Greek politics. The ability to simultaneously hold two contradictory attitudes is also apparent regarding the King in official memory. The State-produced *Crete* by Davin stated that “danger to the Government was feared”.<sup>98</sup> This was not from the external enemy but from the Cretans – the particular Greeks uppermost with New Zealanders. The tensions were inescapable, but the emphasis comes (an entire appendix as against fleeting references) down on the side of excitement and the New Zealand role in saving a monarch.

The archives trail demonstrates that while key members of the leadership differed over their attitudes about the King, the manifestation of a state-endorsed memory was paramount with any reservations hidden. In the years to come there would be much internal Dominion angst about the king from Fraser but it was never made public. The need for the association with a monarch, linked with his subjects, in a desperate battle against an invader, remained dominant thrust.

That the escape of the king stays resilient as a positive event in the memory of Crete conforms to the characteristic of the model used in this project – that is, “conservative and resistant to change”. Deliberate silences and a social psychological trait are evident within the State in dealing with the elite of Greece. They were characteristics evident elsewhere in dealing with other situations, as was the General’s enthusiasm. At the risk of seeming piecemeal, examples are given in the following passages concerning Crete. However, extensively analysing the battle and treatment in the official history project is self-defeating. It re-emphasises the place of that struggle while sacrificing discussion of the wider connectivity.

## **TWO ARMIES - THE HURDLES OF FRICTION AND LIAISON**

The 1943 interim history of Crete stated that “great progress”<sup>99</sup> was made by New Zealand training of the Greek soldiers on the island prior to the German invasion. This was part of the leadership role also emphasised by Davin’s official war history volume published in the following decade, “The Greeks were eager for their troops to come under British command, which would arm and feed them.”<sup>100</sup> A broad brush-stroke was applied to the Greek soldiers: “most part untrained, ill-

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<sup>98</sup> Dan Davin, *Crete Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-45* (Wellington, N.Z.: War History Branch, Dept. of Internal Affairs, 1953), 35.

<sup>99</sup> New Zealand Army Board, *Battle for Crete-New Zealand Division in Action*, 11.

<sup>100</sup> Davin, *Crete*, 40.

equipped, and unorganised.”<sup>101</sup> Freyberg had to “drain off from his own inadequate forces officers and N.C.O.’s”<sup>102</sup> to remedy the situation. It all looks like the Dominion was a saviour for the Greeks. But the relationship was not so clear-cut at the time, and challenges to imposed New Zealand authority were evident. The practicalities of two culturally different bodies of fighting men also brought with it difficulties that would be felt for years to come. When it did come to writing the history of the Greeks fighting on Crete (both soldiers and Cretan civilians), they were often portrayed as brave and inflicting casualties but also suffering many because of inexperience - despite their having officers. But when a similar-spirited New Zealand event takes place at the much remembered counter-attack at Galatas, it is applauded. Many war cries and traditional hakas paint a stirring moment. Added to this was the ubiquitous bayonet.<sup>103</sup> Countering this view is the consideration that, as one post-war veteran and peace activist observed, a clamorous barrage of war chants told the enemy that an attack was imminent and from what direction.<sup>104</sup> Bayonets cannot counter automatic weapons. Wild abandon in Greeks/Cretans is dangerous; in New Zealanders at a critical moment, it is to be applauded.

### **Question of New Zealand Control of the Greek Military**

While Freyberg seemed intent on preserving Greek authority in some military matters,<sup>105</sup> there was also a 36-member New Zealand liaison staff<sup>106</sup> team attached to four Greek battalions on Crete. It was the beginning of one strand of a relationship that would last intermittently up until the time of Greek liberation. On Crete it was a subtle form of leadership acquisition, but it did not go unchallenged.

Post-war New Zealand interviews with veterans from these teams and several wartime reports threw up situations that made the allied melding of forces confounding to the celebrated view. The extent of the challenge varied – from frustration to potentially serious damage. To Major Wooller with the second Greek regiment, the Greek officer commanding the unit he was with “appeared to resent our presence”.<sup>107</sup> Both officers escalated the issue, with the result that a Greek stayed as commander, with Wooller as second-in-charge. There was also friction in other Greek units the New Zealanders were with. At Kastelli in the West, there was “serious trouble” on several occasions with the Greek

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., *Crete*, 313-315

<sup>104</sup> Peter Winter, *They were Expendable* (Tauranga: Moana Press, 1989).

<sup>105</sup> WAI 8 Box 13 T (ANZ). Greek Army. His proposal to King George stipulated that for disciplinary matters the Greeks would answer to their own army headquarters. Similarly “That in all questions of procedure and detail of drill and training etc., the practices of the Greek Army should be followed, as far as possible.”

<sup>106</sup> Davin, *Crete*, Appendix IV.

<sup>107</sup> WAI 1 159 DA 55/10/10 (ANZ)2 NZEF – 22 NZ Battalion Report on 2 Greek Regiment in Crete - H G Wooller. (ANZ) H.G. Wooller Report on 2<sup>nd</sup> Greek Regiment (*Mournies-Perivolia*)

officers (according to the senior New Zealand officer there, Geoff Bedding, due to poor New Zealand diplomacy).<sup>108</sup> The 8<sup>th</sup> battalion in the South was a particularly sensitive issue that is discussed separately.

When battle did ensue, even non-verbal signals did not guarantee required responses. When a signal was given to the 6<sup>th</sup> Greek battalion to advance – “waved in British army style for the Greeks to follow”- the New Zealander had gone 50 yards before realising the Greeks had not understood and had not moved at all.<sup>109</sup> These are early indications of an ongoing impediment to martial melding - language.

### **Freyberg Champions Everyday Greek Soldiers**

While his officers later recalled such difficulties years later, just as he supported the Greek King and leadership of the administration, after the battle Freyberg pursued promoting the Greek rank and file. In an August 10, 1941 memo headed “Greek Gallantry in Crete” he attached two reports from his New Zealand commanders who had Greek army units attached to them<sup>110</sup>.

One of the reports concerned the formation led by Howard Kippenberger<sup>111</sup>, future editor of the war history project. While he wrote that the Greek soldiers who fought in his vicinity “always advanced cheerfully”,<sup>112</sup> he was at a loss over the fate of the distant 8<sup>th</sup> Greek Battalion and its training team, led by Clifford Wilson. Although some of the Greeks reached another unit, “no word was ever received and nothing is known of the fate of Major Wilson and his NZ NCOs.”<sup>113</sup> He shared this in the press five months after Crete.<sup>114</sup>

The fate of the 8<sup>th</sup> Greek Battalion confronted New Zealand years after the war. Recollections would not gel with the New Zealand image. It was much more provocative than a failure in application of military leadership (the basis for much of the debate over the loss of Crete). It was directly relevant to the New Zealand-Greek connection at its most basic level – soldiers fighting side-by-side.

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<sup>108</sup> WAI DA 491.22/7 (ANZ) G. Bedding, *Reorganisation and training of 1 Greek Regiment for use in Crete Campaign*.

<sup>109</sup> WAI 1 161 DA 56/10/3 (ANZ). Capt. H.M. Smith *6 Greek Bn on Crete*.

<sup>110</sup> WAI 2 85 Reel 1 (ANZ) Various reports of events in Crete, May 1941 (Covering Headquarters New Zealand Division, 10 Infantry Brigade, Suda Bay Operations, 6th Greek Battalion Greek Army, Medical Services, 1st Battalion Welsh Regiment, 14 Infantry Brigade, S&T [Supply and Transport?] Services, notes on campaign. Memorandum to unknown addressee, August 10, 1941.

<sup>111</sup> *Report on the Operations of the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade at Galatos 20-25 May 1941*, 17 June 1941.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>114</sup> “Gallant Officer,” *New Zealand Herald*, November 13, 1941. Kippenberger wrote Clifford’s widow with news of the fate of the Major. His letter was quoted from in the press as was another from Dr. R. Kirk. The former wrote: “His headquarters were surrounded, but the fight went on, the Greeks were inspired by Cliff.” The doctor maintained after Wilson had been killed his New Zealanders had surrounded and the Germans gave him “a separate grave” because he “had led them so well.”

### **Question of Failed New Zealand Leadership and the Greek 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

The New Zealand officer leading the team attached to the 8<sup>th</sup> battalion was Clifford Wilson. He was an experienced soldier, having been a member of the territorials since the early 1930s and was part of the mainland Greek venture before going missing on Crete. In the ensuing years, he was awarded the Greek Military Cross, like a number of his fellow officers<sup>115</sup> attached to Greek units, and was mentioned in dispatches. By October 1941, he was classified as dead.<sup>116</sup> His grave was eventually found and his remains eventually re-interred at the Suda Bay Commonwealth War Cemetery.<sup>117</sup>

Similarly to the 1941 newspaper story, Kippenberger's 1949 war memoirs mentioned Wilson: "No news ever came back from Cliff, and long afterwards we learned that he had been killed. He is still remembered with warm affection, and in him the Division lost an officer of great promise."<sup>118</sup>

Kippenberger thought Wilson's position was precarious on Crete: "Cliff thought his Greek officers useless and he felt very lonely. He would be cut off by any landing, and I could only try to encourage him, and tell him in the worst case to fall back into the hills and try to work round to rejoin us via Suda Bay. I did not tell him that I had argued elsewhere that 8 Greek Battalion was only a circle on the map—8G—and that it was murder to leave such troops in such a position, and had been told that, in war murder sometimes has to be done."<sup>119</sup> Just who had said this is not stated – but the overall role of the New Zealand Division in that part of the island would point to the New Zealand command.

A year before Kippenberger's post-war memoir was published, the official war history researchers interviewed at least three (Brown, Davison and MacNab)<sup>120</sup> of the surviving training team.

However, given the detail of testimony, Davison seems to have been the only one with the team throughout the whole attack and up until they surrendered the day after the German paratroopers arrived. The New Zealanders had separated themselves from the Greeks, gone to a predetermined rendezvous point (a pumping station), and surrendered the next day. Their degree of actual fighting and fidelity to the young mostly untrained Greek soldiers was at the heart of a pointed internal disagreement when it came to writing the official history. Walter Murphy concluded: "They [New

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<sup>115</sup> Capt. Clifford Wilson, 7265, New Zealand Defence Force Personnel Archives, Trentham, New Zealand (NZDF). A list of 6 officers is listed on Wilson's file. *Extract from 2 NZEF Orders List No 43 of Appointments, Promotions etc.* In fact many Greek decorations were conferred on New Zealanders. They included Freyberg, officers and the escort platoon for the Greek king.

<sup>116</sup> Wogan to Army Headquarters, 22 October, 1941.

<sup>117</sup> Moor to Griggs, September 13, 1949.

<sup>118</sup> Howard Kippenberger, *Infantry Brigadier* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), 57.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>120</sup> WAI 1 148 DA 48/10/15 (ANZ). *With Greek Regiment near Reservoir Crete [Lt K. Brown]*; WAI 1 148 DA 48/10/16 (ANZ) *Davison, R.A. Account of activities while attached to 8 Greek Battalion during Crete Campaign*; WAI 1 139 DA 37/10/8 (ANZ). *Action at Aghya Reservoir Area Crete by 8 Greek Bn 20-21 May 1941 Interview with Capt. D.G. McNab*; In the published volume MacNab is not mentioned. Another report by an L.V. Smith is cited.

Zealanders] did no fighting, and Major Wilson was shot in the back after venturing out of the door of the pumping station on 21 May and firing about three shots – Major-General K’s [Kippenberger] story, is, I fear, wide of the mark.”<sup>121</sup> Kippenberger’s response was a curt “Don’t agree.”<sup>122</sup>

Accentuating the tension about the episode was the fact that Wilson had intended to leave the Greeks and move only the New Zealanders to Commonwealth lines i.e. a variant of Kippenberger’s directive.<sup>123</sup> Kippenberger’s response to Davin and Murphy was “Wilson’s decision was unknown to me until now, and I would not have approved. He only told me that his Greek colonel was useless and I told him to deal with him as requisite, but I see that he fought.”<sup>124</sup> It was a criticism and yet a qualified acceptance. Putting aside the dependence purely upon testimony<sup>125</sup> - a practice widespread in the Crete volume as stressed by Bell<sup>126</sup> - the reaction of the project staff showed a similar mixture of assessment but the overriding judgement of Kippenberger in at least one of the aspects. It does not take much imagination to see how even this one, that is, a planned strategy, could make the New Zealanders seem they were deserting the mostly untrained Greeks.

Having said the above, there was the risk of relying on interviews years after the event. Although Brown provided a sketch map and the most extensive interview, he showed one of the flaws in testimony – he called the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the 6<sup>th</sup> throughout his rendition (his interviewer picked this up)<sup>127</sup>. For his part, Davison could not be certain about who exactly comprised the New Zealand detachment during a critical time.<sup>128</sup> But at the same time, Kippenberger had accepted from testimony the accuracy of the order to leave without the Greeks.

When the official *Crete* volume appeared, it read “Wilson had decided beforehand that when battle began it would be best for the New Zealanders to concentrate separately; for there was reason to fear that otherwise the Greeks would disregard their own officers and, as the New Zealanders knew no Greek, the system of command would be dislocated.”<sup>129</sup> At the envisaged rendezvous point of

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<sup>121</sup> WAI 1 1615 DA 401.22/1 New Zealand War Histories, Campaign Narrative – 2 NZ Division, Vo. 5., Pt 2. (ANZ) Note on p. 551.

<sup>122</sup> Pencil notation on same page.

<sup>123</sup> WAI 1 1615 DA 401.22/1 Pt 1 (ANZ). New Zealand War Histories Campaign Narrative – 2 NZ Division Vol 5 Crete Campaign Part 1 25 April to 19 May 1941. Kippenberger’s directive is included here.

<sup>124</sup> MS-Papers-5079-664 (ATL) Davin, Daniel Marcus Literary papers Draft History of the Crete Campaign – Comments by Sir Howard Kippenberger, 212.

<sup>125</sup> Alistair Thomson, “Anzac Stories: Using Personal Testimony in War History,” *War & Society* 25,2 (2006):3. Such an approach omits “Conventional methodological skills-background research to situate an account in its historical and social context; triangulation with other evidence; checking for consistency – are readily applied to personal testimony.

<sup>126</sup> Rachael Bell, “Memory History Nation War: Official Histories of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945” (Ph. D Thesis, Massey University, 2012).

<sup>127</sup> WAI 1 148 DA 48/10/15 (ANZ). *With Greek Regiment near Reservoir Crete [Lt K. Brown]* [2] This is noted at the beginning of the transcript by the interviewer.

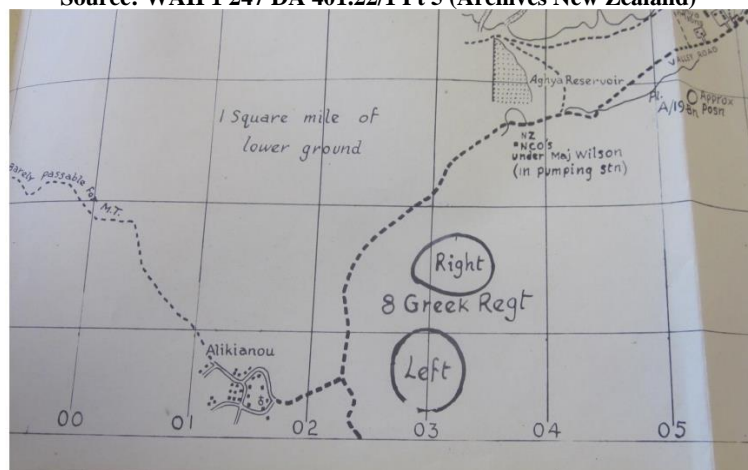
<sup>128</sup> WAI 1 148 DA 48/10/16 (ANZ) Davison, R.A. *Account of activities while attached to 8 Greek Battalion during Crete Campaign* [2].

<sup>129</sup> Davin, *Crete*, 153.

the pumping station, there were also two to three days of water and rations for the New Zealanders.<sup>130</sup> That again is mentioned in the officially endorsed version. Accounts concurred that Wilson had decided the New Zealanders would leave the Greeks when the expected German assault began.<sup>131</sup> Both also stated language difficulties as one of the reasons.<sup>132</sup> Davison added a darker reasoning. The ordinary Greek soldiers were wary of their own leaders “all officers over the rank of lieutenant were 5<sup>th</sup> Columnists.”<sup>133</sup>

Now, the official account subtly deviates from the testimony. Those who were in the pumping station were “surrounded” and “forced to spend the day and night there.”<sup>134</sup> They were “unable to rejoin the Greeks or take any important part in the fighting.”<sup>135</sup> That the only available testimony (Davison)<sup>136</sup> indicated the group was hiding *inside* the enclosed and roofed station is not stated. It seems more of a hiding place than a point from which they would fight. It was thought a German mortar was operating from the roof at one point. They had been lying in silence and in the dark. It “was a nerve-wracking situation”.<sup>137</sup> When they finally emerged the next day, Wilson had been killed, charging enemy soldiers.

**Figure 3.1 Draft Map showing separate position of New Zealanders. The map is the same as the one in the Crete volume. Source: WAI 1 247 DA 401.22/1 Pt 5 (Archives New Zealand)**



While the 8th Battalion episode could provide grist for critics of New Zealand integrity, it also threw up the question of them carrying out war crimes. Davison raised the issue with his war history project interviewer. He maintained that some of his surviving command told their German captors that the New Zealanders had been “told not to take prisoners”.<sup>138</sup> Davison obviously survived the

<sup>130</sup> WAI 1 148 DA 48/10/Brown, *With Greek Regiment near Reservoir Crete*, [1].

<sup>131</sup> *With Greek Regiment near Reservoir Crete [Lt K. Brown]* [1]; Davison, R.A. *Account of activities while attached to 8 Greek Battalion during Crete Campaign* [1]

<sup>132</sup> Davison, R.A. *Account of activities while attached to 8 Greek Battalion during Crete Campaign.*, [1];

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.* [1]

<sup>134</sup> Davin, *Crete*, 154.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>136</sup> MacNab talks seemingly of being not at the pumping station but at the reservoir itself. WAI 1 139 DA 37/10/8 (ANZ). *Action at Aghya Reservoir Area Crete by 8 Greek Bn 20-21 May 419 Interview with Capt. D.G. MacNab*

<sup>137</sup> Davison, *Account of activities while attached to 8 Greek Battalion during Crete Campaign.*[2].

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

ensuing German inquiry. This was one instance, amongst others, where New Zealand training teams and New Zealanders in general were accused of war crimes by the enemy. An examination shows the Greek-New Zealand connection dented and also obliquely, a reinforcement of Freyberg's reticent behaviour over certain Greek matters.

### **German Accusations of War Crimes at Kastelli and Elsewhere**

Given the general genocidal nature of the Nazi regime, questioning the crimes of their opponents and victims against them is not something that comes easily.<sup>139</sup> On Crete, there would also be atrocities committed against Germans by Cretan/Greeks. One major one at Kastelli in Western Crete was related after the war by the New Zealand Liaison officer there, Bedding.<sup>140</sup> A newspaper interview decades after the events provided further clarification that tested the notion of having New Zealanders and Greeks morally separated from the German enemy. Again, it is testimony, but there is collaborative data from a German study.

An extended period of Cretan violence against German prisoners of war happened at Kastelli. On the first day of the battle, civilians began attacking captured Germans. The latter were encircled by a protective line of New Zealanders. One of them was bayoneted above the eye by a Greek. The Germans were eventually taken away to a jail "with orders that the NZ personnel guard the gaol and let no Greeks near."<sup>141</sup> Two days later, Bedding thought the local populace "had calmed down so that I considered it safe to hand over guard duties to Greek soldiers and police though I visited 3 times daily."<sup>142</sup> Later, Bedding, like the Cretans at Kastelli, was accused by the victorious Germans of crimes of war. The German wounded had all disappeared, having been taken by the Greeks. Furthermore, he was subjected to "some anxious moments" before his former German prisoners spoke up for him. He was also subsequently charged by the Germans with "mutilating the dead". In a later account run by a local paper, Bedding related how the Cretans had been executed and he survived thanks to the testimony of the Germans he protected.<sup>143</sup> In relating the events at Kastelli, the question of mutilation had been ignored. It is an area that has attracted some attention from a German scholar.

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<sup>139</sup> Mazower, besides writing extensively on the horror of occupation under the genocidal Nazi regime, has identified some possible resentment amongst ordinary soldiers who carried out atrocities. Mark Mazower, "Military Violence and the National Socialist Consensus: Wehrmacht in Greece 1941-1944", in *War of Extermination: German Military in World War II 1941-1944*, ed. Hannes Heer & Klaus Naumann (New York: Berghahn, 2000), Ch. 7. Though the study is based upon post war testimony, Mazower found archival evidence in a war record by a member of the military clergy attached to a German military unit which had committed a major war crime in a reprisal in 1943.

<sup>140</sup> WAI 1 DA 481.22/7 (ANZ). G. Bedding, "Reorganisation and training of 1 Greek Regiment for use in Crete Campaign".

<sup>141</sup> Ibid

<sup>142</sup> Ibid

<sup>143</sup> John Thomson, "Incident at Kastelli," *Wairarapa Times* [1991] a copy is held in Ms-Papers-7947-10(ATL). Also see "Kiwi Cheats Death," *Auckland Star*, May 7, 1991.



A 2011 study by historian Marlen Xylander used German medical records to ascertain the extent of atrocities committed against members of the German armed forces during the Crete invasion.<sup>144</sup> She found a high incidence at Kastelli (40 cases) but could not state there had been a concerted regular occurrence across the island (only 3 or 4 cases at Rethimnon). But there nevertheless was supporting evidence of the mutilations.

As suggested by the opening sentences in this section, one can disregard a minor incident perpetrated by a victim of invasion. However, that a New Zealander survived thanks to the testimony of a German, while Greeks were executed, is a small blurring of the distinction between invader and defender. It is alien to the framework of the celebrated New Zealand-Greek bond. In Davin's *Crete*, Bedding's report is cited<sup>145</sup> but the ferocity of the Greeks watered down. Hence, the locals had "an angry bearing",<sup>146</sup> acquitted themselves bravely with "fierce and fiercely resented [by the enemy] guerrilla warfare".<sup>147</sup> The New Zealand response to German war crimes against Greeks/Cretans is dealt with in a later chapter. In the case of Kastelli, one New Zealand operational command would not tolerate the Greek variety. It was a different attitude to that of those at the top.

### **New Zealand Military Leadership and War Crimes against the Invader**

The acuteness of Freyberg's silence on Greek politics (thereby contributing to an unproblematic Greek connection) seems extreme when compared to another episode he wrote about. This concerned New Zealand war crimes against German prisoners of war. It comes with the qualification that the General just lost a battle and suffered a huge dent to his reputation (including possibly being sacked by Fraser) but he had reports about Germans using civilians and his own soldiers as human shields during the battle.<sup>148</sup>

In the month following Crete, Germany claimed war crimes had been committed against their troops on Crete. British army authorities wanted "evidence in refutation"<sup>149</sup> That is, they were not concerned whether or not it was true. Freyberg sought reports from two of his senior officers. The first was Edward Puttick, who commanded the 2NZDIV whilst Freyberg was away in charge of the overall defence and who would later become chief of the Army General staff in Wellington. The

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<sup>144</sup> Marlen Xylander, "Kreta im Zweiten Weltkrieg- Die Deutsche Besatzung von 1941-1945," *Thetis* Band 18 (2011).

<sup>145</sup> Davin, *Crete*, 289.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>148</sup> Such incidents are mentioned in various documents in WAI 2/85 (ANZ). (Various reports of events in Crete, May 1941 Covering Headquarters New Zealand Division, 10 Infantry Brigade, Suda Bay Operations, 6th Greek Battalion Greek Army, Medical Services, 1st Battalion Welsh Regiment, 14 Infantry Brigade, S&T [Supply and Transport?]). They occurred in both the New Zealand and Australian sectors. The Greek army at Iraklion threatened to shoot German prisoners of war when they learnt the Germans were driving "Cretan men and women" in front of their advancing troops. The use of New Zealand human screens would cause a public controversy in New Zealand early 1946. See AD1 1407/339/2/71 (ANZ) Casualties-War Crimes- Trial of K Student.

<sup>149</sup> WAI 2 85 Reel 2 (ANZ). Shearer to Freyberg, June 25, 1941

other was Brigadier James Hargest. In his official response Puttick was dismissive of the accusations, as he was of those aimed at the invading Germans<sup>150</sup>

Freyberg's stance was made clear when he passed on Puttick's formal report to Hargest: "Please read through this letter and see what Puttick has said. I do not see any reason to minimise the fierceness of the fighting between ourselves and the parachutists. We have no regrets. The Germans apparently got more than they expected."<sup>151</sup> It was a comment one could easily take as a line to be followed. Hargest responded "There are NO [his emphasis] records of the men in this brigade or under my command having treated German prisoners with other than reasonable care."<sup>152</sup>

In addition to the above official paper trail, the episode also included a deft exercise in organisational communication as well as Orwellian double-think. For Freyberg also had a handwritten note which Puttick had added to the officially typewritten report. There, he added that there was a "story" that "German prisoners working at Suda Bay were all killed when our troops withdrew". He had checked with the officer there, and the charges had been "without foundation".<sup>153</sup> Also Lieutenant "Sandy" Thomas had told his commander that he had killed a German prisoner with his rifle butt when he intended just to stun him.<sup>154</sup> A few days later, another handwritten note arrived for Freyberg from Puttick. This one was more definite about New Zealand war crimes. It revolved around the use of explosive bullets by the Germans. The damaging effects of this ammunition had been observed: "Someone has told me that the Germans dashed for cover frantically when we fired upon them with their own M.G.s [machine guns], because, apparently, of this ammunition."<sup>155</sup> Puttick, one of New Zealand's most senior officers, then suggested: "This seems to me, a rather serious matter, justifying our shooting out-of-hand any German found with explosive bullets for any weapons used against personnel."<sup>156</sup> There is no recorded response from Freyberg, but the suggested course of action hardly follows the rules of war. Given Freyberg's expressed views, it is doubtful if he would have objected. The cited documents clarify accusations and counterarguments that have ensued in academic publishing up until this day.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Puttick to Freyberg, June 27, 1941. "I suggest that in the German forces – as in our own – the most extraordinary tales arise which on investigation prove to be exaggerated or entirely without foundation. They originate apparently through vanity, genuine mistakes, or as an excuse for failure.

<sup>151</sup> Freyberg to Hargest, June 27, 1941

<sup>152</sup> Hargest to Freyberg July 6, 1941.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. Note

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. Thomas related the story in his war memoirs. W.B. Thomas, *Dare to Be Free*, 17-18. Thomas notes he was under fire some of the time.

<sup>155</sup> Puttick to Freyberg, July 2, 1941.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> David Filer, "Commentary on Heinz Richter 'Operation Mercury', Invasion of Crete," *Journal of New Zealand Studies* 16 (2013), 160. An isolated case was also raised in 2006. Glynn Harper, a New Zealand professor of war studies, argued Victoria Cross winner Alfred Hulme acted outside the rules of war when he single-handedly killed German on Crete. He was wearing a German smock. Harper, Glynn, and Colin Richardson, *In the Face of the Enemy: The Complete History of the Victoria Cross and New Zealand*

In the case of Kastelli, memory makers found a situation where New Zealanders had been bonded with Germans through the recognition of the rules of war. They were in opposition to the Cretans. Such an episode had to be shrouded. The Freyberg-related episode (seemingly never known to Kippenberger's project) showed the General's willingness to put in writing that he condoned the breaking of international law. This lies in contrast to his silence of Greek related politics which was seemingly more sensitive to him. His reticence would contribute towards the gradual construction of the celebrated New Zealand-Greek edifice.

## **SPREADING THE OFFICIAL WORD-AUDIENCES**

As shown above, public expressions at the time and the officially endorsed Greek and Crete history wove a pattern supportive of a national imagining. A simple observation also demonstrates how sometimes Greece and Greeks were considered as prepared ingredients to a successful national story rather than a partner in history making. Inside New Zealand, in keeping with the distribution of news stories to the country's media, thousands of copies of each official volume above were distributed internally in the country. They also went to overseas institutions and persons, but none to Greece. Some recipients also had both tangential involvement or had direct participation.<sup>158</sup> Unlike direct participant countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom, Greece was not included in the exchange of draft official histories for comment or argument. As such, they were not a party to heated arguments and imposed censorship with others that ensued.<sup>159</sup> The above might be explained by New Zealand's frustration at the lack of any official Greek records.<sup>160</sup> Their absence in the distribution of a permanent published memory remains is an example of New Zealand negative exceptionalism toward Greece but one that does not fit within the type of special celebratory relationship New Zealand had formed. Similarly, although Freyberg was very vocal in his comments and even dismay at some of the content of the draft histories, he never promoted the Greek army as he did during the war itself. It is another contradiction in the memory of the relevant

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(Auckland N.Z.: HarperCollins NZ, 2006). See some of the resulting press coverage in Anthony Hubbard, "War Hero under Fire," *Sunday Star Times*, April 9, 2006.

<sup>158</sup> IA1 3392 181/53/5 Pt 1 (ANZ). War History- Printing and publishing of official histories - Documents Volumes 1-3. The *Official Documents* for example, included such destinations as Director, Musée de la Grande Guerre, France, the Australian War Memorial, Army Duntroon Military College, UK War Ministry as well as various staff colleges, museums, ministries and overseas embassies. McClymont's *To Greece* went to similar destinations such as Royal Aeronautical Society London and the War Office. Individuals included Churchill, Eden, MacMillan and Menzies, US President, the Prime Ministers of Ceylon, Pakistan, India, South Africa and Canada. IA1 3392 181/53/14 (ANZ). War History - Printing and Publishing of official histories - Greece (WG McClymont).

<sup>159</sup> See for example, Rachael Elizabeth Bell, "Memory History Nation War: Official Histories of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945" 34-5. To take one example from the archives, on May 31, 1950 Kippenberger wrote Scoullar who was working on the history of the Battle of Egypt "That in the interests of Commonwealth Relations they cannot go to South Africa in their present form, which was your own opinion." Correspondence of Major General H Kippenberger 1947 – 1955 WAI 11/2 (ANZ) Correspondence of Maj General H. Kippenberger.

<sup>160</sup> WAI 1 360 DA 488/1- DA488/2 (ANZ). War Archives Memoranda, progress reports etc. *Official History of New Zealand in the war of 1939-45 Progress Report no 2*, January 9 1946, x-xi. "It was not possible to obtain material of any importance from the Greek Military Command as the official papers of the 1940/41 campaign were either lost at sea or burnt in Crete."

events. He and the Dominion's leadership preferred widespread exposure to the Greek population. One can use the 1945 commemoration on Crete as a way of introducing this strategy as well as an indication of a more complex interaction during the war years. The specifics are dealt with in subsequent chapters.

### **FIRST COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY- INDICATIVE OF AN ACCEPTABLE MEMORY CONSTELLATION**

In September/October 1945, it was Bernard Freyberg, unsurprisingly, who initiated what was the post-war official commemoration of the Greek and Crete campaigns.<sup>161</sup> Indeed, it seems, he was the catalyst for the whole episode, more so than the British or Cretan/Greeks. Approximately 100 of his command converged on the island from Italy, London and North Africa. It was a major effort that seemingly demonstrated his passion for Crete, the prominent component of official memory. But this is deceptive. Although he tried to have a ceremony on both the mainland and the island, only one eventuated. This was seemingly so because of a slow response from the British embassy in Athens.<sup>162</sup> The Dominion's public were never told this in his press releases for Greece and New Zealand.<sup>163</sup> Crete was elevated. An included message from Fraser raised several other pervasive struts of the relationship evident in later commemoration. A particular humanist thread was evident: "We are deeply conscious of New Zealand's debt to the Greek nation for their gallantry and self-sacrifice in sheltering many of our men."<sup>164</sup> The press releases to the Greeks were, in a way, a direct way to individual Greeks and villages. New Zealand plans for the distribution of thousands of certificates of appreciation, with the same wording, to them in the forthcoming year, was also in the same vein. Similar sentiments were stencilled on humanitarian food supplies sent to newly liberated Greece in the previous year. These are discussed further in Chapter 5.

To the Greek elite on Crete, he had a different message. He spoke of an ongoing involvement with the Greek army from Crete onwards. It was something "we were very proud to maintain."<sup>165</sup> It stretched through the Middle East to Italy. The reasons given were not Hellenic martial prowess but "because of our very great admiration for the Greek people and of our very great gratitude for their

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<sup>161</sup> DO 35 1208, (TNA), Visit of 2nd N.Z.E.F. in Italy to Greece and Crete 1945 to place wreaths on graves, New Zealand Govt to Dominions Office, September 14, 1945; WAI 8 Box 8 85 (ANZ), Special Files Memorial Services Crete Sangro Cassino Alamein Sept-Nov 1945.

<sup>162</sup> DO 35 1208, (TNA), Visit of 2nd N.Z.E.F. in Italy to Greece and Crete 1945 to place wreaths on graves. Handwritten note on coversheet October 1, 1945.

<sup>163</sup> A press release was written by Freyberg and approved by the New Zealand government. WAI 8 Box 8 85 (ANZ) Relevant stories were carried in the Dominion's newspapers. See "Crete Pilgrimage," *Evening Post*, October 3, 1945; "Moving Scene," *Auckland Star* October 3, 1945.

<sup>164</sup> WAI 8 Box 8 85 (ANZ) Special Files Memorial Services Crete Sangro Cassino Alamein Sept-Nov 1945. GOC's Address- Crete memorial Service Fraser's message "Defenders of Crete," *Evening Post*, October 5, 1945.

<sup>165</sup> WAI 8 Box 8 85 (ANZ), Special Files Memorial Services Crete Sangro Cassino Alamein Sept-Nov 1945. GOC's Reply to Toast Proposed by Rear Admiral Alexandris Official Dinner Khania 30 September 1945.

kindness to us in Greece and Crete.”<sup>166</sup> This was again an early shadowing of the Greek army by their civilian counterparts. Freyberg was accurate in his speech when he related the joint force in Italy during 1944, but he was extreme in his deception when he claimed the Greek Army had fought in “many of the desert battles under the command of the New Zealand Division.”<sup>167</sup> There were no battles in the desert campaigns, only frustration, despite the General’s and Greek officers’ attitudes. All the interaction was played out against growing and ever more public tensions and conflict involving Greek politics. These will be dealt with in subsequent chapters. But by following here the post-1945 timeline of the New Zealand involvement commemorative events involving Crete/Greece, one can see how some of the unresolved Greek civil issues continued to influence New Zealand’s official memory enterprise as well as predilections of the State in the way it would mould the memory.

**Figure 3.2 Lieutenant General Bernard Freyberg, Commander of the New Zealand Army in the Mediterranean throughout the war, speaking at 1945 Crete Commemoration. (Source: National Army Museum New Zealand. DA 9990)**



### **LONGER VIEW OF COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS– STATE RESONANCES AND SILENCES**

Assessing the longer view of joint commemoration, a form of official memory, sees the New Zealand side both holding onto key facets of its memory of the relationship and marginalising other episodes emphasised by the Greek nation state when they did not calibrate with the national imagining of the Pacific country. It also shows the limits of New Zealand exceptionalism toward Greece by its absence from initiating ongoing shared commemoration. Reading the following, one would also be forgiven in thinking the New Zealand nation state had not changed its reticence about

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

Greek politics. This is far from what happened after 1941. It will be explored in Chapter 6. What is consistent is the focusing on one battle in 1941.

After Freyberg's efforts the next two major commemorative events were initiated from Greece and/or the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. New Zealand preferred to expend its energies internally on the war history project i.e. its own population. This is most evident when a constructed New Zealand memory artefact in Crete would finally appear 70 years after the battle.

### **1952 Athens Event**

Just over half a decade following the Freyberg-inspired Crete event, Field Marshall Papagos, now Greek Prime Minister, invited representatives from the New Zealand, Australia and the U.K. to attend a commemorative event in Athens.<sup>168</sup> Probably because he was still Governor-General in New Zealand, the Foreign Office vetoed Freyberg's attendance at this major commemoration.<sup>169</sup> Attending for New Zealand were Kippenberger and Charles Upham, a veteran of Greece and Crete and decorated war hero.

There was much socialising on the mainland and Crete as well as visits to sites where the Dominion's army had fought or travelled through.<sup>170</sup> Kippenberger spoke of the "moral" motivation for New Zealand committing troops to Greece in early 1941 when he took the podium at the main ceremony.<sup>171</sup> He quoted Fraser's telegram he placed so much emphasis on with the Dominion's press. But there was also evidence of ongoing tensions in post- Civil War Greece. His official report, considered for public release, fleetingly mentioned an armed guard being in the hall at the Athens Hotel. At a private presentation to members of the Ministry for External Affairs in Wellington,<sup>172</sup> he was much more expansive on the underlying unease. It was, however, mixed with experiences and complimentary comments from Royalty that he would utilise to make more elevate the New Zealand profile in the Greek wartime experience.

Kippenberger related how soldiers and plainclothes policemen kept the crowd "at grenade-throwing distance" while the royal party (with George's death Paul as king and Frederika as Queen) left by

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<sup>168</sup> FO 371/101836&101837(TNA). Unveiling by King Paul of the Commonwealth War Memorial in Athens; report of the ceremony and programme of events for the week 1952. This was the Commonwealth War Memorial, a structure paid for by public subscription by Greeks. See also EA1 620/ 87/14/4/33 Pt 1a (ANZ) New Zealand High Commissioner London to Minister of External Affairs, February 15, 1952.

<sup>169</sup> FO 371/101836&101837(TNA). Internal Minute Murray. February 20, 1952. An internal minute looking at the representation considered various generals to attend –e.g. Wilson and Freyberg but "clearly the latter cannot".

<sup>170</sup> EA 1 620/ 87/14/4/ 33/ 1 a (ANZ) *Report of the New Zealand Representatives at the Unveiling in Athens of a memorial to Soldiers Sailors and Airmen of the British Commonwealth Killed in Greece 1941-1945.*

<sup>171</sup> The actual speech can be listened to *Athens War Memorial ANZAC Day* (Sound Recording),(Radio New Zealand Sound Archive).

<sup>172</sup> Macintosh to Kippenberger, May 13, 1952. Head of external Affairs Alister McIntosh asked him to "give a talk to some of the senior members of staff, on the journey and any impressions you have obtained as to conditions in Greece and thereabouts."

car “with no more protection than a couple of outriders and an armoured car behind, with a couple of military police in the back, followed by about a company of infantry.”<sup>173</sup> Having said this, he thought the royal couple were “both extremely attractive” and came from “the remarkable Glucksberg family”.<sup>174</sup> In Kippenberger’s view, the New Zealanders were “the most popular of the visitors.”<sup>175</sup> The Athens experience was a microcosm of a mixed relationship: New Zealand embracing Greece, savouring its standing while at the same time moving through subtly politically charged atmosphere (topics of conversations in Athens and questions from the Wellington official presentation audience included the American presence in Greece and also thousands of children “kidnapped” by Communists there) . It was an unusual blending of attraction yet alertness to violence. Such a combination is not unusual, as following chapters demonstrate.

### **1961 Athens Revisited**

The charged atmosphere Kippenberger found was not repeated in the next major commemoration in 1961,<sup>176</sup> but there was still a residue of turbulent Greek politics. One found it in headstones.<sup>177</sup> Arthur Hubbard is buried in the Phaleron War Cemetery where the ceremony took place. He was killed in October 1943 by left-wing Greek partisans during the first round of the civil war. That event and the lack of New Zealand official interest in it then and after, is dealt with in later chapters. At the ceremony, dominant official memory, again expressed by a message from the New Zealand Prime Minister, was read out by Freyberg. It included the common threads of 1941, “warm associations and friendly ties”<sup>178</sup> and the “magnificent assistance to those of our servicemen left behind during that period.”<sup>179</sup> A pattern of memory was again evident.

### **More Direct Diplomacy and Remembering**

In the decades following the Athens ceremony, there was eventually no need to utilise commemorative representatives like Kippenberger for political intelligence. New Zealand established its own diplomatic presence in Greece- first with a consulate in 1964 and then elevation to an embassy in 1979. Growing trade between the two countries was the justification.<sup>180</sup> By

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<sup>173</sup>Notes of a confidential talk by Major-General Sir Howard Kippenberger to Heads of the Department of external Affairs on his Impressions gained during a trip to Greece for the unveiling of the Greek Memorial to Commonwealth Troops who Lost their lives in the Second World War, May 30, 1952.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid

<sup>175</sup> Ibid

<sup>176</sup> IA 1 W2578/47/32/3/185 (ANZ). War Graves Phaleron Greece . *Order of Ceremony of the Unveiling of the Athens Memorial to Soldiers of the Armies of the Commonwealth*, The Commonwealth War Graves Commission built the Athens Memorial “to commemorate soldiers of the Armies of the Commonwealth who fell in the defence of Greece and Crete in 1941 and in later operations in Greece...”

<sup>177</sup> Site visit by Martyn Brown, November 2012.

<sup>178</sup> IA 1 W2578/47/32/3/185 (ANZ). War Graves Phaleron Greece. Minister of External Affairs Wellington to High Commissioner for New Zealand, London, May 2, 1961.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> ABHS 22128 W5533 52 CBA 38/27/1 Pt 1.(ANZ). West Europe-Greece-General. Wellington to Canberra, 21 June 1985.

1967/68, commerce was favourable to New Zealand.<sup>181</sup> It was part of a new configuration between the two countries. But internally, the genesis of the wartime bonding and the special relationship permeated communication amongst the New Zealanders.<sup>182</sup> A mercenary bent was sometimes added: “Underlying our relationship at every level has been the memory of the wartime association. We can still make use of this for the foreseeable future, and each succeeding generation of Greeks loves to live on the triumphs of the past.”<sup>183</sup>

Certain commemorative events reported during this New Zealand presence are described below. They have been included so as to emphasise the ability of New Zealand to accommodate Greek politics and also maintain its prioritised official memories.

### **Politics and Greek Sovereignty**

The elimination of Greek politics was most evident during the Colonels’ Junta. In 1970, one of the senior members of the Greek dictatorship, who was also a Cretan, spoke at the Battle’s anniversary. The New Zealand representative from Athens reported this and his own attendance at a locally-run ceremony at the village of Galatas (epicentre of New Zealand remembrance). The latter event was not intended to “disseminate government propaganda” and was “impressive and moving”.<sup>184</sup> Projecting the State’s seminal work on its wartime national imagining was still evident - he quoted Davin’s *Crete*. This was in contrast to the Junta spokesman, who had the “style same as ‘revolutionary leaders’ and the message, no matter what the occasion, is seldom varied”.<sup>185</sup> The grating aspect of the dictatorship - 1,700 political prisoners on the islands with more on the mainland, intellectuals on trial for sedition<sup>186</sup> - was reported on, but there was New Zealand comfort at continued commercial stability with Greece.<sup>187</sup> It was an echo of the earlier 1940/1941 attitudes that Greece was a sovereign State, but now combined with both remembrance and also a real commercial connection.

The decision to go to Greece also resonated with the diplomatic staff. Hence, melodramatically, in 1981, the embassy spoke of its diplomatic representation at the Crete anniversary thus: “It is

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<sup>181</sup> ABHS W4627 950 Box 1325 40/21/1 part 1 (ANZ) New Zealand Affairs: Economic Relations-Greece-General. One quote reads “best customer in the region” *Extract from Annual Report from Athens Greece 1/4/69*

<sup>182</sup> ABHS W5242 950 Box 62 87/14/4/33 1B (ANZ). War Affairs: New Zealand Forces- Casualties—War Graves – Greek Agreement. Consul General to Sect Dept Industries & Commerce Wellington *Battle of Crete Anniversary 1972* May 31, 1972, for example, spoke of “Warmth” between the two countries.

<sup>183</sup> ABHS 22128 W5533 52 CBA 38/27/1 Pt 13 (ANZ) Ambassador Cotton to Minister of External Affairs, 3 February 1984.

<sup>184</sup> ABHS W5242 950 Box 62 87 14 4 33 1B NZ Consulate General Athens to Sect Foreign Affairs NZ June 26, 1970.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> ABHS W4627 950 Box 1325 40/21/1 part 1 (ANZ) *New Zealand Consulate General Annual Report for the year ended March 31, 1970.*

<sup>187</sup> *Notes on Greece prepared for the export guarantee office 10/6/67.* The junta had provided “relative political stability” in the country. This and their outlook “suggests that no obstacles need to be expected” to continuation and expansion of trade with them. The balance of trade was “heavily weighted in New Zealand’s favour.”



absolutely certain that our decision to send men to Greece was as correct in 1981 as it was in 1941.”<sup>188</sup> They were also only too well aware of the long-term tension in the country, the dictatorship being a symptom rather than the exception. As late as April 1989, Ambassador Woods wrote that he was stationed where there was “some homogeneity” in a “complex country” that had been “suffering deep internal divisions which could still erupt into renewed instability.”<sup>189</sup>

Part of the then current situation was the direction of Andreas Papandreou, leader of the socialist P.A.S.O.K. In terms of official remembering, the Gorgopotamos commemoration – part of the National Day of Resistance - he established was, in contrast with Cretan anniversaries or the relationship overall, noted by Athens-based New Zealand staff in a measured and clinical way at the 1982 occasion: “our nationals had participated in the original action” and that the staff had laid wreaths.<sup>190</sup> The New Zealand attendance seems to have been a perfunctory action. The size of the general attendance also suggests a lack of consideration of the event’s importance: “a surprisingly large crowd estimated at 10,000”.<sup>191</sup> It was also “boycotted by the main opposition party” and by former members of the British-preferred right wing resistance group E.D.E.S. The different emphasis placed by the two nations on Gorgopotamos, however, highlights that different drivers and needs caused un-correlated war commemoration.

### **Resurrection of the Battle for Crete Commemoration in the World’s Eye**

New Zealand’s lukewarm reception at Gorgopotamos was in contrast to another which was to be raised to new heights by a Cretan. This concerned Crete. While Freyberg had initiated and driven the 1945 commemoration, and the battle for Crete was the centrepiece of the following official war history project, it was the Cretan/Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis who resurrected it to the international stage in 1991. Mitsotakis’ planned scope of events for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was so expansive that the New Zealand representative at the planning meeting expressed misgivings that the whole project “will run out of control” unless “nailed” and “scaled down”.<sup>192</sup> Indeed, it did in some ways. Over twenty years later, his planned commemorative centre occupying 10 acres and seating capacity for 700 persons<sup>193</sup> lies unfinished at its Galatas site.<sup>194</sup> The contrast between that and the New Zealand one at the same village is not just that the latter is complete but that it

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<sup>188</sup> ABFK W55548 7607 Box 8 11095 Pt 1 (ANZ) General Administration: Organisation and Management Ceremonial and Celebrations and Reunions – Representative at Overseas Celebrations – Greece/Crete 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. *Invasion of Crete 1981 1981 –Report from NZ Ambassador*, July 24 1981.

<sup>189</sup> ABHS 22128 W5533 52 CBA 38/27/1 Pt 1 (ANZ) *Some Impressions of Greece ER Woods Ambassador*, April 11, 1989.

<sup>190</sup> ABHS 7148 W5503 274 LONB 69 38 Pt 4 (ANZ) International Affairs-Greece. Ambassador to Minister External Affairs 22 December 1982

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> ABFK W55548 7607 Box 8 11095 Pt 1 (ANZ) New Zealand Embassy Athens To Secretary of Defence, August 23, 1990.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Site Visit by Martyn Brown, November 2012

illustrates a long-established strategy of New Zealand when it comes to official memory and Greece/Crete. A simple plaque under a Pohutukawa tree at Galatas inaugurated by Prime Minister Clark at the beginning of the new millennium, lies in contrast to the much greater investment in official New Zealand *internal* societal war remembering at the time. An oral history, school essay competition and publicity were reminiscent of the early efforts decades before by the official war history project. It can be said that both the official war history project and Clark primarily directed their efforts inward, that is, towards their own citizens<sup>195</sup> rather than investing in a constructed memory in Crete or Greece. This even extended to the State also never materially contributing to commemorating the anniversary of the final “lift” from the island of its soldiers evading capture. That was left to veterans’ families, individuals and Cretan local governments.<sup>196</sup> At home in the Pacific, the relationship was also not commemorated in an angst-free environment of mutual respect.

### **New Zealand-Greek Memorial, Wellington**

In 1991, during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battles of Crete, a press release stated that a new project that “was the brain child of Mr Arthur Helm of the first Echelon Association”<sup>197</sup> had started. This was the building of a monument (the original plans were much more expansive) celebrating the Greek-New Zealand connection. Funds for the venture were to be provided by the New Zealand and Greek governments, veterans groups, the Greek community and Wellington City Council. Despite the State involvement it was the links between common peoples (that is, not the nation) that were stressed, as well as the post-war period. It was “was not about the battles in 1941 but the relationships that were established between New Zealanders and the people of Greece, and particularly Crete, following the battles.”<sup>198</sup> Having said that, even the most cursory inspection of the memorial finds that it remembers the battles and the New Zealand S.O.E. presence on Crete and not ensuing interactions (especially the victory at Rimini). As a gauge of the New Zealand elite’s interest, there is its financial commitment, but the project really pivoted around the local Wellington authority. The placement of the memorial was especially fought over. Greek community preference lost out.<sup>199</sup> Just as the Greek New Zealanders had been marginalised in the wartime fund raising, so had they in the official nation-state memory endeavours. It is another limit of the relationship.

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<sup>195</sup> Graham Hucker, “Determination to Remember: Helen Clark and New Zealand’s Military Heritage,” *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 40,2 (2010). The author links Clark’s personal drive to the resurgence in attendance numbers at ANZAC Day.

<sup>196</sup> Speech by Dr Ian Frazer, Secretary of the Tripiti Commemoration Group, at Tripiti on 7 May 2013. Frazer has detailed at length to me, the limitations of the interest of the New Zealand state about this.

<sup>197</sup> Greek NZ War Memorial 1999/44:12:7 Wellington Council Archives (WCC) Press Release *Greek New Zealand Memorial on Track Again*

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Greek NZ War Memorial 1999/44:12:7 Wellington Council Archives (WCC).

In chapter summary, while the dominant events of early 1941 were catastrophes, encounters with Greeks were subject to a memory filtration. The appeal to idealism in assisting the victim “Greece” and the use of silence assuaged assisting an authoritarian regime. Losing Crete was countered by heroism and New Zealand leadership. Dispensing with the question of losing the battle, the multiple levels of that New Zealand assumption of authority brought with it painful testimony of accusation of desertion and also humane treatment of New Zealanders at the expense of the Kastelli civilians. A pristine New Zealand-Greek connection was not the case. Subtle editorial work and and/or decisions about validity were applied in the official memory of the battle. This has to be weighed against the lack of empirical data as against testimony. In another example of utilisation of memory, the Greeks never had the opportunity to comment or respond on the New Zealand story. The longer view of commemoration described above, together with the background provided in the introduction, show how the endorsed memory seeped even into internal diplomatic exchanges. At the same time, the nation state put limits on what it would support. A joint memorial in Wellington and commemorating Tripiti did not attract the same national imagining efforts as did other efforts. But it would also simultaneously claim a special relationship to a nation governed by values in conflict with its own. In the following chapters, this becomes more apparent as do the complexity and contradictions in the inter-nation connection.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: MARTIAL EFFORTS AFTER CRETE - MARGINALISATION AND AMPLIFICATION**

Simplicity is part of memory, as is the identity-related treatment. Even in their confidential communications decades after, New Zealand diplomats incorporated the official narrative and undervalue the Greek celebration of the resistance. That war in occupied Greece is dealt with in this chapter, as is ongoing linkage between the respective armies of the two nations.

In the Hellenic War Museum, Athens, there is a note written by Bernard Freyberg to the staff of a Greek military hospital which was based in Italy during late 1944. It ends with the following: “We in the New Zealand Division have the greatest respect and affection for your country and everything Greek.”<sup>1</sup> These words were characteristic of Freyberg’s attitude over the three plus years he and his command had been intermittently soldiering with the Greeks i.e. regular military connection did not end with Crete. Furthermore, he had also nearly always matched supportive rhetoric with action during that period, seemingly faltering only when the political situation was out of his control. Freyberg’s outlook was in contrast to that of some of his own New Zealand officers, who were still showing cynicism about the royal family and mixed feelings about being in the front line with Greek soldiers. Also, in Italy, the General’s unqualified acceptance of the Greek soldiers combined with his lack of political skill to arguably attract criticism of near-recklessness. It certainly showed non-adherence to agreed Dominion policy, which had belatedly appeared during the year of liberation, 1944. On the broader front, in 1943 the General’s influence also instigated changed government commitment to sending humanitarian relief to the Greeks suffering under the Occupation. That will be dealt with in the next chapter. Freyberg was the catalyst for the real strands of the connection to Greece during these years. Yet he was silent about another strand, the British-run clandestine organisations. Contradictions permeate these two military strands. This was shown both in the behaviour of the main individual and state actors at the time and during the subsequent formation of the official written history.

During the war years, these military connections had varying degrees of visibility to both the New Zealand leadership and the general public. Ironically, after the war, the state would pursue the more controversial one of clandestine warfare (even known in the country’s press) as it strove to fashion

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<sup>1</sup> Handwritten Note from Lt. General B.C. Freyberg GOC 2NZEF 1944. Photographic Collection, Ministry of Defence War Museum, Athens.

its memory, such was the pull of celebrating military successes involving individual New Zealanders in that secret arena. It overshadowed both the contentious politics and also non-interest of Freyberg and Wellington in the fate of their soldiers in those covert roles. But interest was one thing, level of actual output another. Like the Greek commemorative ceremonies revolving around the resistance, and discussed in the previous chapter, the official published history gave marginal presence to the work carried out by secret agencies. What attention it gave the interworking of the two armies was negligible and also sometimes critical in nature.

## **NEW ZEALAND AND GREEK REGULAR ARMIES**

The regular armies of both New Zealand and Greece were, to varying degrees, intertwined in the Middle East and Italy after Crete, from 1941 to 1944. The reasons for this are not always clear. As the following shows, certain players from each country did work towards achieving a continuation of soldiering together after the mainland and Crete. There was, however, ambiguity on the New Zealand side as far as New Zealand attitudes to Greece were concerned.

### **In the Middle East 1942-1943**

During February of 1942, New Zealanders read, and heard, of a continuation, and an enhancement, of their country's link to the Greek army. In Egypt, the Anglo- ANZAC –Hellenic Association had been established “with the object of fostering and developing friendships formed during the Greek campaign”.<sup>2</sup> Dan Davin, serving with the 2NZDIV, also noted in his diary for 5 June 1942 that he “will probably go to the Anglo-Greek ANZAC party tonight.”<sup>3</sup> He added wryly “will not enjoy” but did not elaborate.<sup>4</sup> It was still operating in February 1943, but the organisation remains obscure.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, there are fragments, published and otherwise, of encounters with the wider Greek diaspora community. Davin made a diary entry about a “Greek Club”,<sup>6</sup> while in the following year John Mulgan, a New Zealander then serving in the British Army, wrote to his wife from Cairo that in the evenings he was regularly drinking wine in a “Greek café”<sup>7</sup> and that “All the cafes are Greek here.”<sup>8</sup> A British Pathé newsreel (whether or not it was shown in New Zealand is unknown) shows

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<sup>2</sup> “Memories of Greece,” *Auckland Star*, February 4, 1942. The Association had an elitist character. It was only open to officers who had taken part in the Greek campaigns “as well as civilians of these countries” [i.e. Australia, Greece and New Zealand].

<sup>3</sup> MS-Papers 5079-160 Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL) Daniel Marcus Davin Literary Papers Diary Entry June 5, 1942.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> WAI 8/13 V Archives New Zealand (ANZ) Miscellaneous Personal Correspondence. Prince Peter to Freyberg, February 8, 1943. Despite onsite searches and enquiries to archives of the countries concerned, only a brief note in Freyberg's papers has offered up any additional evidence, and this was simply a change in New Zealand representation.

<sup>6</sup> Ms-Papers-5079-157 (ATL) Daniel Marcus Davin Literary papers Diary entry August 5, 1942.

<sup>7</sup> John Mulgan and Peter Whiteford, *A Good Mail: Letters of John Mulgan* (Wellington, N.Z.: Victoria University Press, 2011), John Mulgan to Gabrielle Mulgan September 1, 1943.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

glimpses of the signature “lemon squeezer” hats of the New Zealand army amongst the crowd at a Greek National Day ceremony and parade in the Middle East<sup>9</sup>. In one photograph (Figure 4.1), Freyberg appears at the same event with Greek dignitaries, including the clergy. The General’s personal life was also apparently enhanced by local diasporic Greeks. Mary Kapetanaki, a housekeeping supervisor at the Beau Rivage Hotel, Alexandra, told her family that she taught Bernard Freyberg how to knit during his stays there. The association also included him carrying out some match-making between her and one Greek officer who was attached to his division.<sup>10</sup> Against these specks of a greater social involvement, there is a more discernible military relationship.

**Figure 4.1: Freyberg and Greeks at the Greek National Day March 1942. (Source: National Army Museum, New Zealand, DA1719)**



### **Training Again**

In February 1942, a 30 minute radio broadcast informed the New Zealand public about the role its soldiers now had with the free Greek army stationed in Palestine.<sup>11</sup> It contained emotionally charged utterances, such as the genesis of an “undying friendship between our two peoples” and “greatest harmony prevails in this pleasantly situated camp amongst green fields familiar to Greek and New Zealander alike.”<sup>12</sup> It is the language and public expression that comfortably pervades current-day commemorations of the New Zealand-Greek relationship. It was still a sparse projection (there are very few press articles on the subject) of a continuation of something that was important

<sup>9</sup> “King George of Greece in Egypt 1942” [Videorecording] British Pathe 1942. <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/king-george-of-greece-in-egypt-1942>

<sup>10</sup> Interview AAA1. January 8, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> U series 14760 *New Zealand Troops with the Greek Army* [Sound Recording] 5 February 1942. Radio New Zealand Sound Archives, Christchurch (RNZSA).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Similarly, a short newspaper piece published nearly a year later about one of the New Zealand trainers speaks of the “great mutual admiration” that resulted from the battles in Greece and Crete in the 1941. “Greek Gunners trained by NZ Sergeants,” *Auckland Star*, February 22, 1943

at one level – New Zealanders and Greeks were together. It would also seem rhetoric about Greece now automatically included expressions about “a bond”.

Yet it would be nearly two and a half years following the broadcasts before the New Zealand public would hear of a combined force of their countrymen and Greeks fighting closely together in a shared victory. It would take place in autumn-swept northern Italy rather than sandy deserts. The reasons for this are discussed in the following sections. Firstly, however, the mechanics of the 1942 situation are now described. With a dearth of archival sources, the previously mentioned broadcast is relied upon to sketch much of the early situation following Crete. At least one memorandum shows that, by the beginning of July, 1941 – just over a month since Crete, Freyberg had agreed to supply three training teams, each composed of six New Zealanders.<sup>13</sup> Apparently, some would be interpreters. It also seems in the following month some Greek officers were going to be attached to a New Zealand unit.<sup>14</sup>

### **Specific Organisation of the 1942 Arrangement**

A Major Samson related how a New Zealand Training Team (N.Z.T.T.) had been established to assist the Greeks.<sup>15</sup> There were apparently 60 – 70 personnel on attachment altogether. The Dominion’s team was part of the British Military Mission’s 210 British Liaison Unit (210BLU). While the N.Z.T.T. would eventually fade out during the Middle East venture, the 210BLU would not. It holds a particular significance later in Italy. There, it would have a New Zealander in a senior and critical role.

The new chain of command and structure showed the New Zealanders with a less prominent part vis-à-vis the Greeks than they had on Crete, namely because New Zealand was once more subsumed to an extent under direct British command. According to Samson, Freyberg recently expanded the contingent.<sup>16</sup> After the war, the relevant official war history volume reinforced the previous encounter. It saw it as a natural continuation of an arrangement (or bond) established on Crete: “As a result of the operations in Greece and Crete, there was formed a strong link between the Greek and New Zealand forces, so that it was understandable after the campaigns were over that the GOC [Freyberg] should offer to provide the training staff for such Greek forces as remained in the Middle East.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> WAI 1 DA 21.1/9/G21/6 (ANZ) 2NZE - Headquarters NZ Division (G Branch) - Attachments - Training of Free French Forces - Personnel for BMM [?] (Greek Brigade). General Headquarters Middle East, to Headquarters 2 NZEF, July 4, 1941.

<sup>14</sup> Main HQ 13 Corps to 30 Division and 2 New Zealand Division, August 24, 1942.

<sup>15</sup> U Series 14760 (RSANZ). *New Zealand Troops with the Greek Army* [Sound Recording], February 5, 1942.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, He added three officers and 20 other ranks.

<sup>17</sup> W.G. Stevens, *Problems of the 2NZE* (Wellington: Reed, 1958), 135.

N.Z.T.T. was one of several arms that would constitute the training link with the Greeks. It was placed inside Greek army establishments. The other would shortly be the New Zealand School of Instruction, based at the huge New Zealand camp at Maadi, on the outskirts of Cairo.<sup>18</sup> The final component was Bernard Freyberg, still seemingly interested in pursuing the New Zealand-Greek link but within British-set limits. However, he held the senior supervisory role when it came to training the Greeks.

### **Expansion, Leadership and Undue New Zealand Optimism**

The expansion of training undoubtedly stemmed from a British initiative, the Anglo-Greek Military Agreement, signed on 9 March 1942, which established the military basis upon which the British and Greek governments and their armed forces would cooperate during the war. Again, the Dominion was subject to British inclinations and it was following rather than initiating a strengthening of the connection.

Freyberg was very positive about the potential of the Greeks. He jotted in one of his own files: “Material good”<sup>19</sup> and wrote to one of his senior officers on 6 April 1942: “I am certain that from what everybody tells me the younger Greek officers and men are excellent material.”<sup>20</sup> In this view, he was joined by Brigadier Steve Weir.<sup>21</sup> In a private letter home, the artillery commander wrote “I found my Greek gunners very apt students indeed and the best of folk to work with. I admired their spirit and got to like them immensely.”<sup>22</sup>

Freyberg, however, was sceptical of the abilities of the senior Greek commanders, as were their own government<sup>23</sup> and the British military hierarchy.<sup>24</sup> If they proved “not up to the mark”<sup>25</sup> then the Greek King and Greek commander in chief would be approached. The General was also confident that his new broom would do the job: “I had a further talk with the King, and I am certain that the policy as outlined, if pushed with the energy I hope it will, will be much more successful than the

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<sup>18</sup> Alex Hedley and Megan Hutching, *Fernleaf Cairo: New Zealanders at Maadi Camp* (Auckland: Harper Collins, 2009). Maadi was “New Zealand” territory with pie and ice cream factories, two YMCAs and an amphitheatre. It was the conduit through which members of the New Zealand armed forces were processed on their way to war in the Mediterranean throughout the war.

<sup>19</sup> WAI 8 T Part 2 (ANZ). Royal Greek Army.

<sup>20</sup> Freyberg to Comd. NZ Maadi camp (Probably Stevens), April 6, 1942.

<sup>21</sup> Weir had a long career in the military and later an advisory role with the New Zealand government. J. A. B. Crawford, “Weir, Stephen Cyril Ettrick” – Biography, from the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 1-Sep-10 URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/5w17/1> Accessed July 21, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> MS-Papers-9271 (ATL) Weir, Gerald Hill Papers-Letters from C E Weir 1944-1946, 1942. C.E. Weir to G.H. Weir 14 November 1942.

<sup>23</sup> Evangelos Spyropoulos, *Greek Military and the Greek Mutinies in the Middle East*, (Boulder/New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

<sup>24</sup> Hagen Fleischer, “Anomalies in the Greek Middle East Forces 1941-1944” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 5,3 (1978): 9-10.

<sup>25</sup> WAI 8 T Part 2 (ANZ) Royal Greek Army. Freyberg to Stevens (probably), April 6, 1942.



one in operation before we came into the picture.”<sup>26</sup> The Dominion’s military commander was undertaking a quasi-leadership role, with the Mediterranean country as the junior partner.

Figure 4.2: New Zealand instructor and Greek pupil. (Source: Alexander Turnbull Library DA: 01714-F).



### **Freyberg and the Royal Family**

There was also the ongoing relationship Freyberg had with Greek Royalty. It projected a continuation of the Crete scenario, one component of which - the escape - was then and subsequently fixed in long-term commemoration. None of the public criticism or challenges (from armed anti-Axis Greek resistance or the general idea of a plebiscite) from Greeks themselves about the monarch had emerged by this time. From the earlier quote by Freyberg, it is obvious he also saw George II and his administration as having more influence than they actually did. The General was probably still in a Crete frame of mind, where he had been on sovereign Greek soil and where there was still some semblance of stronger Greek independence than now in 1942. This goes against the view held by scholars of Anglo-Greek relations who saw a much diminished Greece.<sup>27</sup> That the General had met the King in Palestine during early 1942 and not shared some of his discussion with

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Clogg states that “The Greek government-in-exile, then, was a classic example of a “penetrated political system””. Richard Clogg, *Anglo-Greek Attitudes: Studies in History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 148.

the representative British diplomatic representatives<sup>28</sup> adds to the argument that, at least at this stage, he saw a special relationship between him and the Greek Royalty.

### **Expectations of Great Things**

To the New Zealand government, Freyberg presented a scenario reinforcing the future of the relationship and but with Dominion seniority: the Greeks “will then come under our operational command.”<sup>29</sup> However, just less than two months after that communication was sent, and during a visit by the Greek King to inspect the Greek troops on 13 May, the British seemingly quashed the General’s ambitions. New Zealanders were not present but “The C-in-C [Auchinleck] made it clear that he had no intention of incorporating the Greek troops in the N.Z. Division to whom they had been affiliated for training purpose only, and the Greek Brigade Group was formed as a self-contained Independent Group in order that they could retain its identity.”<sup>30</sup> The British intention for non-integration of the New Zealand and Greek forces is further demonstrated by a directive given to Freyberg, nearly a month after the Wellington telegram. It concerned possible operations in then-neutral Turkey.<sup>31</sup> So, while the New Zealand army was pursuing an exceptional relationship with the Greeks, they were denied it by British predilections.

The Turkish scenario (Operations Sprawl and later Octagon) never eventuated. Instead, Rommel’s offensive of 6 May and his subsequent threatening advance into Egypt caused the New Zealanders to rush into operations in that seminal struggle. The Greeks remained in Syria. The common enemy, in the form of Erwin Rommel, was therefore another hindrance to any joint arrangement. But there was interest from New Zealand in pursuing an ongoing relationship with it as a leader of the two. It was both an intertwining of a bond and elevation in real terms of New Zealand national presence.

### **Level of New Zealand Investment**

While planned joint unit-level exercises in Syria never eventuated, teaching Greeks through the New Zealand School of Instruction continued. The school, which started training them in March

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<sup>28</sup> WO 32/17213 (TNA) Morale of Greek Forces in the Middle East. The official British report reads thus “...the King and Ministers had a meeting here yesterday with General Freyberg and discussed certain requirements (unspecified) with General Freyberg and hope these will be duly adjusted”. High Commissioner to Secretary of State for the Colonies, April 5, 1942.

<sup>29</sup> *Documents Relating to New Zealand’s Participation in the Second World War 1939—45: Volume II*, (Wellington, N.Z.: War History Branch, Dept. of Internal Affairs, 1949). Freyberg to Minister of Defence, Telegram 134, 21 March, 1942. Published telegram matches the original.

<sup>30</sup> K51 Tsouderos Papers General State Archives Athens (GAK), *Report No 3 on the Royal Greek Army in the Middle East for the month of May 1942*. A copy is also on WO32/17213 (TNA) Morale of Greek Forces in the Middle East.

<sup>31</sup> WAI 8 Box 3/23 (ANZ). Libyan Campaign – Prospective Operations from Syria, February-June 1942. Mid-East to NZ Division, April 15, 1942. The British Middle East Forces High command told him that they intended an Indian brigade, rather than the Greeks, to join any prospective excursion into Turkey (whether or not British forces would enter Turkey to counter a German threat if Stalingrad fell).

1942, devotes an entire chapter in its unpublished history describing the Greek training. Its prominence is not matched by attendees from other armies – another indication perhaps of a special place for the Greeks.<sup>32</sup> The issue of language led to the courses being doubled in length and training material, standing orders and so on being translated. There was also an increase in the instructional staffing level at the School<sup>33</sup> When the training was completed nearly 10 months after it started, 1,124 students had attended some 68 courses. If one adds to this other Greeks who were sent to New Zealand units for training, then the total is nearly 2,000. It is indicative of the nature of desert warfare that courses related to transport collectively comprised a major proportion of course attendances.<sup>34</sup> The numbers and the emphasis on transport show its importance in desert warfare. An ongoing lack of it dogged the continuing relationship between the two armies, as shown in the next section.

To a degree, a reconstituted N.Z.T.T. continued with the Greeks, apparently up until the New Zealanders shifted operations from North Africa to the Italian theatre in September 1943. In appreciation of their efforts, Panayotis Kanellopoulos, the new Greek Deputy Prime Minister and War Minister since May, thanked the New Zealand trainers. His words stressed an ongoing relationship: "With the hope that this will add still more to the profound understanding and sincere friendship between New Zealanders and the Greeks not only during this war but for many years to come after victory."<sup>35</sup> Like the broadcast from Palestine seven months previously, they were the emotive stuff of public bonding. As the following shows, it never matched the reality of the Middle East period – either for the ill-fated Kanellopoulos or any significant joint force.

## **UNCONSUMMATED ENTERPRISE**

Despite all the enthusiasm and the training delivered, the Greeks and New Zealanders never fought together in the North African campaign. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Major General Bill Stevens (effectively in charge of all the 2NZEF administration) commented on the New Zealand involvement in the training in a post-war official publication: "Never was a well-meant offer more regretted."<sup>36</sup> Upon reading this, one might think Stevens was referring to some of the practical language challenges that were encountered. Indeed, in contrast to the optimism of the radio and Freyberg, in May/June, the official war correspondent had written a less positive assessment of the training programme. It was carried in several newspapers. The lack of a common language was

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<sup>32</sup> WAI 1 DA 164/15/1 (ANZ) GP Scott, *NZ School of Instruction - 2 NZEF Middle East Force*. The courses included, but were not limited to, chemical warfare, weapons training, intelligence and transportation and maintenance.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> WAI DA 164/1/22 NZEF School of Instruction War Diary September, 1942. Kanellopoulos to King, September 8 1942

<sup>36</sup> W.G. Stevens, *Problems of 2 NZEF*, 135.

a major issue: “It takes time and unlimited patience to give a lecture”.<sup>37</sup> When verbal instructions are replaced by the printed variety, “ludicrous complications” arise.<sup>38</sup> Part of the latter problem was the multiple languages used by the Greeks (many of the new recruits came from the various Greek communities in the Middle East). The other was undoubtedly a residue of the poverty of mainland Greece. In April 1943, the British Council reported that, while the majority of the 13,000 Greek forces were “Greek Greeks”, two-thirds of them were illiterate in their own language.<sup>39</sup>

But Stevens was concerned solely with the political dimension: “Greeks are by nature politically minded to a degree unheard of among British communities”, and “the patience of the training team was strained almost to breaking point, for it was difficult to get any continuity, beginning with the Greek commander, who seemed to change every full moon.”<sup>40</sup> This represents the only published reference to the political dimension that the New Zealanders began to encounter in the Middle East. Stevens’ feeling was so intense that he refused to reconsider any softening of them during the writing process of the official history: “My remarks are strong, but I think justified.”<sup>41</sup>

This assessment, however, is an over-inflation of New Zealand’s exposure to the then-changing politics inside the Greek military. Also lacking is the obvious commitment by the Greek commander at least to join the New Zealanders in the front line and, paradoxically, Freyberg’s new found, but passing, ambiguity. Nevertheless, the Greeks had been criticised, and at a socio-cultural level, rather than criticism being levelled at any organisational or leadership target. Kippenberger’s attempt to subdue Stevens was unsuccessful during the gestation of the official volume. As for Freyberg, Stevens had visited him and also given him a draft of the monograph. The General, champion of the Greeks, “passed so much without comment.”<sup>42</sup> This is one of the contradictions between actual behaviour and later State history/official memory. As shown already in this thesis, and as will be discussed in the next chapters, Freyberg invested much during the war to promote the Greeks. But he never followed through with any of the same passion or interest when it came to writing the New Zealand histories and their part in them.

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<sup>37</sup> “Good Instructors,” *New Zealand Herald*, May 29, 1942; Also see “Training Schools,” *Ellesmere Guardian*, June 2, 1942.

<sup>38</sup> *Ellesmere Guardian*, June 2, 1942.

<sup>39</sup> CAB 104 255 (TNA) Allied Liaison in the Middle East Misc. Reports. British Council Educational Cultural and Welfare Section of the Dependent Allies in Persia/Iraq and Middle East Commands 11 April 1943.

<sup>40</sup> Stevens, Problems of the 2NZEF, 135-136.

<sup>41</sup> IA1 3391 181/52 Pt 2. (ANZ) War History – Narrative & Lessons Administration (New Zealand Expeditionary Force) – Stevens. Stevens to Kippenberger, May 14, 1956, 4.

<sup>42</sup> IA1 3392 181/53/12 (ANZ). War History- Printing and Publishing of Official Histories – NZEF- Major General W.G. Stevens. Stevens to Kippenberger, March 12, 1956.

### **Battle for Egypt – a Chance for a Joint Force in Action**

Greek requests to join the New Zealanders following their departure from Syria need to be placed in context of the acute situation facing the Allies from Mid-June in Egypt. The enemy's rapid advance had brought them into Egypt and threatened Alexandria. Freyberg himself was severely wounded in the neck on 27 June. He entered hospital and convalescence. He was out of an operational role from the end of June until at least the end of August. As such, he was out of direct operational contact with the Greeks. It would not be the first time his injuries would do this. The difference was that the second time elicits more evidence of his support for the Greek army. Now, he became temporarily equivocal – both from his sick bed and immediately afterwards.

Besides the battle seriously damaging him physically, loss of men in Freyberg's command was extreme in the least.<sup>43</sup> Despite such catastrophic losses, the Greeks were not in Freyberg's consideration for bolstering his depleted force. Ironically, this was at a time when the training regime continued at Maadi and the N.Z.T.T. remained with the Greek units. A lot of Dominion effort was going into preparing the Greeks for battle, but with no apparent future with its forces. Their non-inclusion was evident in New Zealand's discussion with the British army at the time.<sup>44</sup> Also, the New Zealanders shifted from planned exercises with the Greeks in Syria to those with non-Greek formations in preparation for the second battle of El Alamein. For example, on September 26 they engaged in a mock attack in readiness for the change from a defensive to offensive scenario with the Axis forces.<sup>45</sup>

While this dire situation did not generate any New Zealand approach to have the Greeks with them, it would be the opposite at a later time and in a different theatre on the other side of the Mediterranean. North Africa is therefore another contradiction in the connection – one that is explored below.

### **Greek Frustration and New Zealand Ambiguity**

The non-consideration of the Greeks went hand in hand with their own efforts to be included with the New Zealanders. They saw the impediment as being lack of equipment, not attitude. The First Greek Brigade was one of two formed and was the most mature organisationally. As early as 15 June, days after the sudden dash of 2NZDIV from Syria to Egypt had begun, Colonel Pausanias

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<sup>43</sup> WAI 8 Box 14 AA 1942 Miscellaneous (ANZ). Freyberg to Barraclough, October 4, 1942. He wrote to the commander of the Pacific-based New Zealand force that "Things were very difficult here during the last battle. We have had between 6000 and 7000 casualties, 239 of them were officers. It has been murderous for senior officers[...] The prestige of the Division stands very high but we cannot go on taking the heavy casualties that have been without feeling the effect."

<sup>44</sup> See for example, WAI 8 Box 4 25a (ANZ) Libyan Campaign Light Foot Supercharge Sept-Nov 1942. Memorandum to Command 30 Corps and also circulated to New Zealand Brigadiers October 27, 1942

<sup>45</sup> WAI 8 Box 21 25 Part1-2 (ANZ). Libyan Campaign Light Foot Supercharge Sept-Nov 1942. For example, the Greeks never figured in preparations such as a "Full-scale divisional rehearsal"

Katsotas, commander of the First Brigade, asked the NZ Headquarters to let Freyberg know that “the Ist Greek Brigade asks to follow the New Zealand Division in order to take part with them in whatever action they may be involved.”<sup>46</sup> Freyberg was duly informed, but he was still recuperating from his wound. He replied on 9 July, essentially offering no definite plan or guidance but simply placating the Greek – “your role is an important one”- but the current stage of the battle made it impossible for the two units to operate together.<sup>47</sup> Undeterred, the Brigade commander once again tried on 17 September, saying that they now had artillery but were “still deficient in vehicles”. Knowing a new offensive was coming and that “mobile operations” were a key component, Freyberg was asked for his help so as to satisfy the “desire of the Brigade and of myself to fight by the New Zealanders under your command.”<sup>48</sup> The General directed his staff to provide a polite response but made no commitment. Deception was applied: “You can depend on me to do all I can do”.<sup>49</sup> On the Katsotas note, he wrote “No Further Action” to his staff<sup>50</sup>.

This exchange is in contrast to the genuine interest and support that had been expressed publicly and privately by Freyberg (and indeed, it would continue). For example, when the Greeks did come to the front, they relieved the New Zealanders in the front line. The British on the spot noted the General said he wanted to fight with the Greeks.<sup>51</sup> A few days after being relieved, he told one of his brigadiers that “I am glad we were there just long enough to see the latter [i.e. Greek Brigade] go in.”<sup>52</sup> When he was wounded, he seemed genuinely touched that, whilst in hospital he had “a large quota ”of Greek army visitors who were “most attentive and bring me great bouquets of flowers.”<sup>53</sup> It all points to an interest in the Greeks but a lack of accompanying action at that time. Months before, there had been previous efforts by New Zealand<sup>54</sup> and the Greek Brigade commander<sup>55</sup> to get the Greeks equipped. Like the sought-after affiliation, it was another indication of a willingness for New Zealand and Greece to be together, but was again thwarted by circumstances beyond the main actors’ control.<sup>56</sup> Trucks were evidently out of the question. If they could not be allocated the

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<sup>46</sup> WAI 8/19/PPP Part 2 (ANZ). Personal Papers. Katsotas to Head Quarters New Zealand Division, June 15, 1942.

<sup>47</sup> WAI 8/19/PPP Part 3 (ANZ). Personal Papers. Freyberg to Katsotas July 9, 1942.

<sup>48</sup> WAI 8 T part II (ANZ). Royal Greek Army. Katsotas to Freyberg, September 17, 1942.

<sup>49</sup> Freyberg to Katsotas, September 21, 1942.

<sup>50</sup> Handwritten notation on Katsotas letter to Freyberg September 17, 1942.

<sup>51</sup> WO 178/42 (TNA) 210 BLU War Diary. September 10, 1942 . before this final letter, the 210 BLU war diary noted.

<sup>52</sup> WAI 8 V (ANZ). Freyberg to Inglis, September 14, 1942.

<sup>53</sup> WAI 8 PPP Part 3 (ANZ). Personal Papers. Freyberg to unknown addressee, July 11, 1942 (ANZ).

<sup>54</sup> WAI 8/13 V (ANZ). Miscellaneous Personal Correspondence. Freyberg to Harding, March 21, 1942. On the same day Freyberg cabled Fraser he informed a senior British general that he was attending the Greek National Day celebrations to make an assessment of the Greeks and that after that he wanted to “round the table” meeting with British staff to work through the equipment requirements.

<sup>55</sup> Tsouderos 51 (GAK). *Report No. 3 on the Royal Greek Army in the Middle East for the Month of May 1942* Point 3. Katsotas did virtually the same thing with the commander of the British 9<sup>th</sup> Army (Syria was part of his geographic area of responsibility).

<sup>56</sup> WO 201/134 (TNA). Raising and Training of Greek Units in the Middle East Nov. 1940- Feb 1943. Notes on Equipment of Greek Forces by CLIO, 25 July, 1942. Despite such efforts there was little headway. For example, on 25 July, a British discussion took place where the possibility of providing pack animal transport was still being raised. It looked like the decision makers were going around in circles.

equipment, then it had to be borrowed. Hence, as early as June, lack of radio equipment could be solved if the New Zealanders could provide it.<sup>57</sup> Even when the Greeks had finally made it to the front line in Egypt they had, as one British officer later related, “come to ask for the loan of our anti-tank guns”.<sup>58</sup> These examples with the First Brigade were part of a wider picture with the Greeks. Even as late as July, the N.Z.T.T. was having difficulties with equipment resourcing of its training task with the Second Greek Brigade.<sup>59</sup> It could be reasonably argued that the size of the problem or reluctance to equip the Greeks dampened any New Zealand thought of helping. This is reinforced in the last letter from Katsotas. In it he related how he made equipment deficiencies known to the 8<sup>th</sup> Army and also to the British Corps he was then attached to. As these were commands senior to Freyberg, it would seem reasonable to assume he would not interfere with their decisions.

The expanse of the ongoing operations in the desert also made a difference to any ongoing persuasive arguments. By 16 October, with his Division ever more distant from the training grounds where his instructors were working with the Greeks, Freyberg successfully asked to relinquish his overseer role but allowed the involvement of his men to continue.<sup>60</sup> Against all of this was the forced prolonged absence resulting from Freyberg’s wound. All these contributing factors would explain Freyberg’s reticence. But he would continue his interest in working with the Greeks, as illustrated in later sections.

### **Greeks fight without New Zealanders**

The Greeks did fight in the second battle of El Alamein. In contrast to earlier British suggestions, they were part of another larger unit, the British 50<sup>th</sup> Division. They undertook patrols in strength and in a very complimentary view of their exploits, the British division reported that they had advanced “over 110 miles” in 5 days.<sup>61</sup> It was the stuff of national pride, with the Battle being remembered in public at such venues as the Athens War Museum<sup>62</sup> and the Historical Museum of Crete in Iraklion.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Organisation 1 Greek Brigade Group, 5 June, 1942.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Ward, *Greek Assignments: S.O.E. 1943-1948 U.N.S.C.O.* (London: Zeno, 1992), 8.

<sup>59</sup> WO 178/43 (TNA) 210/2 Greek Brigade War Diary. Report by GSO. II 210 BMM Greek Second Brigade for the month ending 31 July, 1942.

<sup>60</sup> WO 201/134 (TNA) GHQ MEF to 2NZDIV 6 November, 1942.

<sup>61</sup> WO 201/ 552 (TNA) First Greek Brigade Report on Operations. *Brief Account of Operations of 1 Greek Brigade whilst under Command 50 Division.* [n.d.].

<sup>62</sup> Site Visit by Martyn Brown, November 2012.

<sup>63</sup> Site Visit by Martyn Brown November 2012.

### **New Zealand and Greece - Largely Without the Direct Complication of Politics**

The times in the Middle East and North Africa did not throw up any political challenges to the New Zealand-Greek military connection. While he was not officially privy to the deliberations between the senior British military, Foreign Office and Greek decision makers about revitalising Greek military forces (and the exits of senior Greek commanders), Freyberg had some idea of the wider context that had led to it. Although not on the distribution list for a 29 January 1942 communication from Auchinleck, in charge of Middle East Forces, to the War Office in London, he had his own copy, with the handwritten annotation “For General Bernard Freyberg (For Personal Use only)”.<sup>64</sup> Changes to the senior levels of the Greek military in the Middle East were “recommended by me [Auchinleck] in the interests of military efficiency but there are also political and security reasons”.<sup>65</sup> These were being communicated separately to London. The opening paragraph of the communication suggests one of the contributing factors –“dissension in and unfitness for war of Greek forces”.<sup>66</sup>

Incompetence of some senior officers was also interlaced with competing ideologically driven officer factions within the Greek forces. It was a shadowy interplay involving the monarch, his government, their British sponsors and the officer corps. The Greek officer Freyberg would have the most to do with, Katsotas, was thought to be “independent politically” by the British.<sup>67</sup> The results from these assessments were never seemingly passed on to the New Zealanders by them. It was a way of insulating the Dominion from what they were dealing with. It was a practice that would continue in Italy. The British veil fitted in North Africa, complementing Freyberg’s attitude toward politics.

Against this official silence was the growing power of the leftist Antifascist Military Organisation (A.S.O.) in the Greek forces. It began to openly challenge the Greek government-in-exile’s authority. It contributed toward the dismissal of Minister Kanellopoulos, an energetic liberal-minded reformer and the same figure who had sent thank-you letters to the School of Instruction for its efforts with the Greek soldiers. The leftist organisation then went on to meet with senior British military and demanded purges of the rightists in the army.<sup>68</sup> They were successful.<sup>69</sup> That the

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<sup>64</sup> WAI 8 Part 2 T Freyberg Papers (ANZ) Trooper to Mideast January 29, 1942. The War Office copy can be found at in WO 193 48 (TNA).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> WO 32/17213 (TNA) Morale of Greek Forces in the Middle East. C-in-C War Office to War Office, February 12, 1942.

“Personality notes” of individual senior Greek officers in the Middle East contained assessments such as “Royalist”, “neutral politics”, “Venizelist” and “pro-British”.

<sup>68</sup> Thanos Veremis & Andre Gerolymatos, “Military as a Sociopolitical Force in Greece, 1940-1949,” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 17 1, (1999): 107-8; Evangelos Spyropoulos *Greek Military and the Greek Mutinies in the Middle East*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 225-227.

<sup>69</sup> Hagen Fleischer, “Anomalies in the Greek Middle East Forces 1941-1944,” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* Vol 5, 3, (1978):18.



minister, who had been responsible for getting the First Greek Brigade to El Alamein, was nearly “lynched” by the aggravated soldiers (egged on by rumours that he was bringing Metaxist security chief Maniadakis back into the scene) shows how wildly the political fortunes could swing with the Greeks as well as the ever-present vehemence of feeling about Metaxists. While there is no evidence of the British sharing any of this with Freyberg, one of his senior officers was aware of some of the inner workings. This was Dan Davin, the future author of the official Crete volume. He never discussed it in the New Zealand forces. The context will be discussed in Chapter 6.

In reality, New Zealand had not experienced any of these early Greek convulsions. From the time of the radio broadcast the previous February there had now been two changes of command (Katsotas went as a result of the events of early 1943 because he had vacillated in his political commitment) in First Brigade and the newly formed Second had just lost its commander as well. The main New Zealand force was many miles away in Tunisia from the Syria-based Greeks who were engaging in protest. Maadi was also distant, and its training of the Greeks there had also just about ended. The only unit that was within the geographic ambit of the Greeks during the troubles was seemingly the N.Z.T.T. But, from Greek history scholarship endeavours, one can see there is at least some indication that the events of early 1943 did not impact training activities, speaking in the widest terms, completely.<sup>70</sup> The one post-war official New Zealand publication, i.e. Stevens, mentioned earlier in the chapter, that touches upon the whole training scenario, does not add anything further. But as discussed later in this chapter, he spoke in general terms about the Greeks, their political inclination and frustrations of New Zealand trainers. His intolerance lies in contrast to Freyberg’s ongoing affinity for the Greeks (despite the General’s equivocal behaviour).

### **Middle East Thread Dissolves**

Regardless of the March upheaval, the Greek impetus to join the New Zealanders seemingly petered out long before then. The surviving document trail accessed by this project cannot illuminate what has to date frustrated earlier published efforts. Historians are left grasping to explain the non-continuation of the First Greek Brigade, with or without the New Zealanders, in the pursuit of Rommel.<sup>71</sup> The only contributory factor this study has found is the eventual polite non-action by the New Zealand commander. For its part, despite the non-appearance of any meaningful joint Greco-New Zealand force, the British had discovered benefit in having the Greeks and New Zealanders together. Just days after the 2NZDIV began its move from North Africa to Italy in late 1943, Major

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<sup>70</sup> Evangelos Spyropoulos, *Greek Military and the Greek Mutinies in the Middle East*, 219. When the commander of the British 9<sup>th</sup> Army visited the camps of the recalcitrant Greeks he found they “dutifully continued their training”.

<sup>71</sup> For example, in Hagen Fleischer, “Anomalies in the Greek Middle East Forces 1941-1944,”<sup>12</sup> “the halt was “for reasons not entirely specified”. Also Evangelos Spyropoulos, *Greek Military and the Greek Mutinies in the Middle East*, 172 “Only vague reasons have been offered for the withdrawal of the brigade.”

General Beaumont Nesbitt, the Chief Liaison Officer, noted that “the New Zealanders are popular with the Greeks, and they have already worked successfully together” [sic].<sup>72</sup> What exactly defines “success” seems dubious. But the British attitude would continue in the New Year, as would Freyberg’s receptiveness. This, despite what was a very limited interaction between the two probably best illustrated in a non-archival way by the lack of any mention of the Greek Brigade in the memoirs of ordinary soldiers.<sup>73</sup>

## VIEW FROM THE WELLINGTON GOVERNMENT

On 8 March 1943, Wellington learnt of the mass-based political left in the Greek armed forces and how they had made their first open challenge to the Greco-British decision-making in the Middle-East: “Serious political disturbances have broken out in two brigades of the Greek army stationed in Syria.”<sup>74</sup> Although it also mentioned mass resignations of rightist officers, it was the actions and demands of the left that comprised most of the communication. In this short communication, the New Zealand administration learnt about the “underground agitation” of the left against “reputedly Fascist Greek elements in authority”.<sup>75</sup> Also that “soldiers committees” that were “consisting of N.C.O.s and junior officers” had usurped the military chain of command. The demands of the soldiers were primarily around pursuing the war effort more vigorously. To that end, they wanted a new government formed, removal of officers who displayed lack of interest to fight and “expressed themselves in favour of dictatorship or said that German discipline was best for the Greek Army.”<sup>76</sup>

Changes demanded by the mutineers were implemented but, as communicated by London, the core of Anglo-Greek policy remained unchanged.<sup>77</sup> But the idea of a plebiscite was also raised.<sup>78</sup> The monarch who the New Zealanders had a part in rescuing in Crete held a steadily deteriorating hold on his future in Greece. Opposition was emanating from Greeks fighting and suffering under the enemy Axis. For example, by September 1943, the New Zealand press reported that a plebiscite was

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<sup>72</sup> WO 201/1767 (TNA) Greek Political Situation: Greek Army July-December 1943.

<sup>73</sup> For example, Sargent was in Syria and describes fortification construction there but no Greeks. Winston Sargent, *Palms Bend Down* (Christchurch: Caxton, 1945); Also C.M. Wheeler, *Kalimera Kiwi: to Olympus with the New Zealand Engineers* (Wellington: Reed, 1946); also James Burrows, *Pathway Among Men* (Christchurch: Whitcombe, 1974).

<sup>74</sup> AAEG 950 132e 345/4/1 1b (ANZ) Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Prime Minister Wellington 8 March 1943.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> AAEG 950 132e 345/4/1 1b (ANZ) Greece political affairs 1940-1943 Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Prime Minister Wellington, March 25, 1943. A revamped government was one thing but on March 26 Wellington was told London provided “Full support to the King and present Greek Government “and “maintenance and strengthening of the King’s personal authority [with] the Greek armed forces”.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, “Approval of recent declarations by the King and Prime Minister to the effect that the Government are not exercising dictatorial authority and intend to leave it to Greek people to determine their future political conditions” and there was “Encouragement to efforts to broaden the basis of the present Government”.

demanding by resistance leaders. The possibility of civil war was also raised.<sup>79</sup> Greek matters were becoming complicated, but the Wellington administration remained silent over developments.

That Wellington was reliant on London, and the press, for its diplomatic information was not entirely due to just a pre-determined Commonwealth constraint. In the immediate aftermath of Crete, the Greek government had requested, via Britain, the establishment of a diplomatic mission in New Zealand. Fraser, showing how he was not matching Freyberg's enthusiasm in the Mediterranean, thought the notion "completely out of proportion".<sup>80</sup> Although the New Zealand response included provision for possible further discussion, London erased that part when it passed on the message to the Greeks.<sup>81</sup> It was another incident of British preferences having an effect; and also one that highlighted the differing attitudes within the New Zealand elite, namely, the General versus the Prime Minister. It was another dimension of complexity that would continue but never be discussed in any literature.

The Middle East and North African interlude has attracted negligible official public expression, at the time or after, in New Zealand. Freyberg's passion for soldiering with the Greeks would continue during the war but would never reappear in the process of writing subsequent histories. In this, he was following the same pattern over Crete. Brief paragraphs in correspondence between Kippenberger and Stevens during the 1950s are the limits of State interest about the Greeks. Some of this could be attributed to the lack of actual fighting involving the two. The elevation of the New Zealanders to train (to "show" the Greeks how it is done) was never applied to any national imagining. By itself, it was not enough. Blood and combat were required. Similarly, New Zealand participation in El Alamein and the defeat of Rommel is far more conducive to use in national imagining than frustrations and false starts with the Greeks. Yet if the disasters of 1941 could be incorporated, it could be argued the training commitment and, to a degree, Freyberg's attitude, could be included as well. At the heart of the omission was that, in the martial arena, Crete was going to be paramount in remembrance.

The New Zealand leadership was uncoordinated when it came to the Greeks and New Zealand troops soldiering together. Only the previously quoted telegram from Freyberg to Fraser exists. This is despite Fraser being informed of the explosions in the Greek camp. Freyberg was given his head. It could be reasonably argued that the critical events at the time – threats from Rommel and the rapid Japanese expansion in the Pacific - made for a lack of any discussion between the leadership

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<sup>79</sup> "King of Greece," *Auckland Star*, September 24, 1943; "Partisan Thrust", *New Zealand Herald*, September 30, 1943.

<sup>80</sup> EA1 58/345/1/Pt 1a (ANZ). Fraser to Nash, July 2, 1941.

<sup>81</sup> DO 35/664/15 295758 (TNA) Dunbar to Wiseman, November 13, 1941; Wiseman to Dunbar, November 18, 1941.

at the time. That would change in Italy. Ostensibly, co-ordination should have been better there. It was, but only to a limited degree. And the Greek army was just as politicised as it was in the Middle East. It just took a different form.

## **ITALY –DANGER AND SHARED VICTORY**

“Princes now are like tonsils, even if they are any good, not much use.”<sup>82</sup> So jotted Dan Davin in his diary on the 13 February, 1944 in southern Italy, where the New Zealanders had been since late in the previous year. Left behind in the Middle East were the Greek military forces. Davin, the major New Zealand literary figure and future acclaimed historian of the official monograph on the Battle for Crete, was serving as an intelligence officer with the 2NZDIV when he wrote those words. The member of royalty he was referring to was Prince Peter of the Hellenes, one of the Royal party that had escaped capture on Crete thanks in part to New Zealand soldiers. The Prince was paying an official visit to the Division in his role of Greek Liaison Officer to the British Army. According to Davin, the cynicism was apparently shared with one of his New Zealand colleagues, Paddy Costello, who, thinking of the fact that the Great powers had imposed a monarchy on Greece, commented “Speaks quite good for a German.”<sup>83</sup> Davin’s diary does not offer any reasoning for his and Costello’s poor assessment of Peter’s effectiveness. But the Greek Prince had been under a cloud early in the previous year. British authorities found him a “disturbing element in the Middle East”.<sup>84</sup> The Americans (the Prince was also a Liaison officer with them as well as the British) believed that he was going to be “relieved of duties” because of “Greek political indiscretions”.<sup>85</sup> He never was. The Foreign Office could not separate his personality traits from any political intrigue, but they were happy about the possibility he might relocate to a part of the world other than the Middle East.<sup>86</sup> To the Americans, his cousin King George II argued it was Irene, Peter’s mistress, who was the main culprit with her “disloyal activities.”<sup>87</sup> According to the monarch, these included being “an accomplished blackmailer” and also “a threat to himself”.<sup>88</sup> The Royal family’s behaviour, like the growing demand for a plebiscite, would never adversely affect George II’s place in New Zealand’s Crete story. It was a resilience of memory.

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<sup>82</sup> MS-Papers-5079-161 (ATL) Davin, Daniel Marcus Papers, Diary. The typed transcript of the diary has the incorrect year – 1943. That the encounter took place in Italy is evident by the mention of Cassino on the same page. Freyberg’s GOC Diary records the visit but has the correct year.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. Entry February 4, 1944.

<sup>84</sup> FO 371/37221 (TNA). Prince Peter of Greece. Code 19 File 405. Cover note, January 1, 1943.

<sup>85</sup> Records of the Office of Strategic Services Record Group 226 1940-1947 Box 7 National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). “For Duke” From “162”, April 2, 1943.

<sup>86</sup> FO 371/37221 (TNA). Internal Minutes, [n.d.] January, 1943; 7 January, 1943.

<sup>87</sup> Records of the Office of Strategic Services Record Group 226 1940-1947 Box 7 (NARA). To Duke from “162”, April 19, 1943.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

### **Helping Pave the Way to Italy**

Regardless of whether he knew of any veil of suspicion about the Prince, and scepticism of other officers at his own headquarters, Bernard Freyberg interacted at length with the Prince during the visit. In his own way, he was still pursuing the idea of a special relationship. His semi-official *GOC Diary* was not so forthcoming in detail about his doings with the Greek royals. It notes that, from 27 January to 20 February, the Prince intermittently visited the New Zealanders in Italy. Given his senior military liaison role with the British, this was not unusual. The *Diary* noted he was there on “attachment” and how, on the day the Prince left, he “seemed to have enjoyed his visit”. The entry continued: “He wants to bring over the Greek Brigade” and was off to talk about it to General Maitland Wilson.<sup>89</sup> This was essentially the same military unit (i.e. the First), that had received the New Zealand training two years previously in the Middle East.

The Greek record of the meeting (one and a half pages long) reveals a much more extensive discussion than Freyberg’s diary suggests. According to it, on 2 February, Freyberg raised the notion that the Greek Brigade join the New Zealanders “as he was informed, the brigade was about to be deployed to the Italian front”.<sup>90</sup> The Prince then visited Field Marshall Harold Alexander, who, hearing of Freyberg’s offer, said “he was very pleased from the request of Major General Freyberg, which he completely approved, adding that this would facilitate greatly the proper use of the Greek forces”. Freyberg was then informed of the successful visit. It would seem that, to give the proposition the best chance of success, he then asked Peter to raise it with Field Marshall Wilson, Supreme Commander Mediterranean. The Prince did just that, six days after leaving Freyberg’s command. Like Alexander, Wilson was supportive. Apparently, the Prince’s arguments about the strong bond between Greece and New Zealand helped to overturn a previous plan to place the Greeks with the Free French forces and keep them far from the front. Freyberg had planned that the Greeks would join the New Zealand brigade commanded by Howard Kippenberger.<sup>91</sup>

It is very clear from the Greek account that Freyberg was more than an observer, as indicated in his note taking. At its most basic, he was “helping” the Greeks and at the same time still being an active agent in pursuing the New Zealand-Greek relationship. Having said that, it is an episode which he seemingly did not relate to his fellow officers nor to Wellington. Nor did he promote it publicly, then or after - even in the official history. It is a subtle omission at the time, possibly because of the deteriorating Greek scene and a reluctance to be seen helping émigré Greek authorities, especially royalty. The first Civil War round had also started several months previously, in October, and the

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<sup>89</sup> WAI 8/6/ 46 Part IV (ANZ) GOC Diary. Entry for 20 February, 1944.

<sup>90</sup> Emmanouel I Tsouderos, *Historiko Archeio 1941-1944*: Vol 4 (Athena: Phytrakēs, 1990), 1130-1131.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* Spelt as “Kippenbeyer” in the Greek document.

King's future was now uncertain. In his own way, the General was projecting neutrality – essential in creating an unproblematic connection *at the time*. The same would follow from other New Zealand actors in public, both during the events themselves and in published histories.

Freyberg's offer seemed to have overcome the British generals' initial reluctance to have the Greeks in Italy. The British had even considered sending the Greeks to Britain<sup>92</sup>, and Alexander did not want any more “foreign armies at the front”<sup>93</sup> in Italy. This was in conflict with Churchill's persistent drive to have them there.<sup>94</sup> While the British were having some internal disagreements, both Alexander and Churchill had a frame of thinking that recognised the political benefits to the Greek administration of having troops fighting. For now, Alexander noted that “national prestige” would also drive the use of the Greeks in the Italian theatre, and undoubtedly into the front line.<sup>95</sup> Later events and interventions would show just that. It brought anger from the protective Freyberg.

### **Three Months in Late 1944 – New Zealanders and Greeks Soldier Together**

It took six months for the discussions of February between Freyberg and Prince Peter to come to fruition. The Greek and New Zealand armies were finally affiliated in Italy in August. It had also been two years since the General and the then Greek field commander had pursued such an outcome in North Africa. The Greek formations, with the Third Greek Brigade as its core, arrived on August 11 and stayed until 7 November, when they left for liberated Greece. During the months in Italy, except for a temporary change in operational command under the Canadians, it trained with and fought alongside the 2NZDIV. When the two armies finally went into battle together, it was without Freyberg. He had been badly injured in an aircraft crash and was hospitalised. What happened with the Greeks while he was absent caused him some dismay.

In August, Freyberg and his officers provided a luncheon event for the newly arrived Greeks<sup>96</sup> and the same 210 Liaison unit that had been with them for the past several years, from at least the days of the desert war. According to a British officer, “They [New Zealanders] also have many mutual interests with the Greeks, and all are getting on very well.*[sic]*”<sup>97</sup> In addition to the earlier comments by senior British generals, some bond was now being recognised by more junior ones-

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<sup>92</sup> WO 201/1767 (TNA) Greek Political Situation: Greek Army July-December 1943. Scobie to Chief Liaison Officer October 15, 1943.

<sup>93</sup> WO 214/44 (TNA). Greece: Communications with PM and CIGS: miscellaneous correspondence. Hand-written notation on memorandum requesting Greek Brigade be sent to Italy. December 17, 1943.

<sup>94</sup> WO 214/44 (TNA) See for Example, Churchill to Eisenhower and Wilson, repeated Alexander, December 29, 1943. “Political Grounds” was the reasoning used by the Prime Minister.

<sup>95</sup> WO 214/44 (TNA). Greece: Communications with PM and CIGS: miscellaneous correspondence. Alexander wrote that the Greeks would be sent to the front “for political purposes” See handwritten notation mentioned previously. December 17, 1943.

<sup>96</sup> WO 204/5584 (TNA) Greece: Liaison visits and reports .210 BLU Report [n.d.] 1944.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

the same officer hoped the Greeks would not leave the New Zealanders.<sup>98</sup> What makes the ongoing willingness to be with the Greeks more pointed was that the Greek army had very publicly engaged in widespread mutiny between the February visit and its arrival in Italy. The First (the unit most prominent in the Egyptian episode) and Second Brigades had been disbanded, their soldiers put through a political sieve, and a new Third (or Mountain) Brigade formed. British directions to Freyberg following this explosion led to an adjustment in his attitude.

### **A New Pattern Emerges**

The post-war memoirs<sup>99</sup> of the Greek commander, and subsequent civil war senior government military figure, Thrasuboulos Tsakalotos, noted some details of Freyberg's welcome to the Greeks. The General's speech to the assembled troops placed them in a secondary position as against their civilian Greek compatriots. He told the Greek soldiers that his command "had agreed to have their unit with them because of the assistance Greek civilians had provided to New Zealand soldiers when Greece and Crete had been overrun by the Axis enemy."<sup>100</sup> The long-evident desire of Freyberg for his command to be with the Greek military was dispensed with by him at this first public encounter for years between the two armies. It was a remarkable turnaround, unless one was aware of the immediately preceding events, and also Freyberg's personality. It is evident that the General did not want his acquiescence to serve with Greeks to be perceived as any public endorsement of their latest political colouring. A later instance of this would occur in the first public commemorative events in Crete. It will be discussed in Chapter 6.

### **Appearance of the Limits to the Military Relationship**

A change in the General can also be found in a small number of telegrams to the New Zealand government in early August. They were published in 1951 as part of the official volumes of documents mentioned earlier. The exchanges seemingly have never attracted any extended narrative or internal discussion. This in itself shows where and how New Zealand was seen in this aspect of the relationship. They present a New Zealand interested in Greeks, but in a politically neutral frame. They also show an instance of independent thinking by New Zealand and suggest it was wary of a recurrence of punitive measures previously applied by the British and Greek émigré government. Thus, despite the acute situation, the New Zealanders were not prepared to discount the Greeks as "troublemakers". It was a sympathetic episode. Again, it shows Freyberg's hand.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., "I am sure that none other will take so much interest as the New Zealanders are doing now"

<sup>99</sup> Thrasuboulos Tsakalotos, *40 Χρόνια Στρατιωτής Της Ελλάδος. Πως ΈΚερδισαμε Τους ΆΓωνας Μας 1940-1949*. (Athens 1960).

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 503-504.

Figure 4.3 Freyberg greets the Third Greek Brigade in Italy (Source: Alexander Turnbull Library DA-06565)



Here is the initial telegram:

*I have been asked by the Commander-in-Chief, at the request of the Greek Government, if we would be prepared to take the Greek Brigade under our wing. The purpose would be first to direct their training and make them battle-worthy, and later, I understand, the intention is that they should fight under our command. I have told the Commander-in-Chief that the matter would have to be referred to the New Zealand War Cabinet.*

*As you will realise, having the Greeks with us would have certain advantages. It would mean an extra infantry brigade and consequent spreading of casualties. I also believe it would be a great help to the Greeks, who have always shown a desire to serve with the New Zealand Division.*

*Could you advise whether the proposal meets with the approval of War Cabinet.<sup>101</sup>*

The same characteristics of training and affiliation are present as they were in previous encounters. New Zealand would also have a leadership role. It was the raw material for a complementary New

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<sup>101</sup> *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War 1939—45: Volume II*, (Wellington, N.Z.: War History Branch, Dept. of Internal Affairs, 1949). Telegram 423 Freyberg to Minister of Defence, August 8, 1944.



Zealand imagining. As, in one way, was the subsequent telegram five days later (it was published in the same volume). Freyberg wanted the following dictated message sent from Wellington so as to “safeguard” him in case of “political difficulty”:

*War Cabinet agree provisionally that you should help train the Greek Brigade and also take them under your command, but in view of the history of this force in the last twelve months with political difficulties and the military mutiny, you are to keep us informed of the situation, and if there is any recurrence of political difficulty you are to report it here and act on our instructions. Will you convey our good wishes to the Commander-in-Chief with this message.*<sup>102</sup>

The government concurred. There had been a distinct change in the factors considered in the proposition - no politics in the first, but saturated with it in the second. The abrupt change is explained by a visit Freyberg received after the first communication had been sent. That is one aspect, but New Zealand was also seemingly willing to take an independent line if there was trouble. It was never utilised in the imagining process.

### **Blunt British Instructions and a Change in Attitude**

British Brigadier Hennessy, of the Allied Liaison Section, Middle East Forces, visited Freyberg on 9 August.<sup>103</sup> It was after the latter had sent the first telegram. He also provided a written directive concerning the Greeks. It contained a “warning” to expect future difficulties with the Greek government in exile and its general staff over a British refusal to their request to send a Greek headquarters to Italy with the Brigade. He added: “any efforts by Greek Politicians to visit Greek units should be most strenuously resisted since it only upsets them, and serves no useful purpose”. George II may be permitted to visit them, but only for “the purpose of presenting colours.” Even this would be “the subject of a high level decision in due course”.<sup>104</sup> Any semblance of Greek royalty having influence with the powerful must have now evaporated in Freyberg’s mind. Finally, the unsavoury possibilities of serving with the Greeks unfolded before him. Hence, the second telegram with “provisional” acceptance of the Greeks as well as the caveat that he would be acting on directions from Wellington rather than London if political difficulties occurred. For the General,

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., Telegram 425

<sup>103</sup> WAI 8/6/46 (ANZ). GOC Diary August 9, 1944.

<sup>104</sup> WAI 8/8/76, (ANZ). Special Files - 3 Greek Mountain Brigade. Extract from Notes on the Royal Greek Army issued by Allied Liaison Section, Middle East Forces – Dated 10th August 1944. This document is taken from a longer internal British version. *See* WO 204/5584 (TNA) *Notes on the Royal Greek Army*. In keeping with standard practice the personality notes on individual Greek officers were not included in the version given Freyberg. In fact the politicians did subsequently visit the Greeks but late in their Italian deployment.

there were clearly identified risks. But it had taken blunt formal British orders to finally make him realise there were dangers in soldiering with Greeks. What is more, the anticipated military benefits must have diminished considerably when the visiting liaison officer passed on the news that the Third Brigade had only “existed in its present form for a few weeks and cannot, therefore, be compared to a formation which has been together as a whole for several months.”<sup>105</sup> The ranks of the infantry even included “a certain percentage” of former gunners who were included “on their reputation of reliability rather than on their military qualifications.”<sup>106</sup>

Freyberg may have been embarrassed by what had happened on this occasion – Hennessy arrived later than expected to meet with the General at his Italian Headquarters to give the briefing. Italy also showed there was still a degree of un-coordination in the New Zealand camp. Although well aware of developments in Anglo-Greek camp, Fraser had simply taken the initial request from Freyberg to have the Greeks on face value, without placing it in the overall context of developments. New Zealand’s willingness to assert itself over a Greek-related matter in Italy never received any official narrative treatment. An obvious contribution to positive national imagining was not pursued. There were other Greek-related ones, as will be shown in Chapter 6.

## **WELLINGTON GOVERNMENT AND THE RECALCITRANT GREEKS**

The recent history of the Greek armed forces was well known in New Zealand. Greek-related diplomatic traffic and the press ensured that. The left-wing soldier organization ASO had grown in strength since early 1943. It liaised with other semi-secret organisations in the Greek armed forces, especially in the navy, and advocated a departure from the monarcho-government in exile. In March/April 1944, what began as a protest grew into a widespread mutiny throughout the Mediterranean to Britain itself. New Zealand was told of the convulsions that engulfed the Greek émigré government during this period as well as of the mutiny.<sup>107</sup> In early April, there appeared in the resistance-controlled Greek mainland a “political committee in the Greek mountains”<sup>108</sup> This was in fact the Political Committee of National Liberation (Politiki Epitropi Ethikis Apeleftherosis or P.E.E.A.). This was a united front organ established by EAM/ELAS. It had, London argued to Wellington, been “subverting Greek armed forces in [the] Middle East”.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> AAEG 950 140g 345/4/1/pt. 2 Political Affairs Greece 1944-1945; DO35/1547 (TNA) Correspondence with Dominion Governments, including correspondence between Field Marshal Smuts, Prime Minister of South Africa, and Mr Winston Churchill, on formation of new Greek government.

<sup>108</sup> AAEG 950 140g 345/4/1/pt. 2 Political Affairs Greece 1944-1945. Secretary State for Dominion Affairs to Wellington, April 6, 1944. (ANZ)

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

The crisis was at first restricted to the political arena. Prime Minister Emmanuel Tsouderos, who had been part of the party escorted to safety by New Zealand troops on Crete, fell first and was quickly followed by Sofoklis Venizelos. He, in turn, lasted a matter of days and was replaced by George Papandreou, who had come out of occupied Athens. Although he had some credibility through staying on following the Axis victory, he received British support to cement his hold. Fraser was privy to some of the British intrigue in stabilizing the Greek émigré government by protecting the latest Greek Prime Minister. The New Zealand Prime Minister was told by London authorities, “arrests were carried out with the knowledge of Papandreou, but this fact is not to be disclosed, as it is most undesirable that the latter should be associated in any way with the arrests.”<sup>110</sup>

By April 24, London had told Wellington the Greek government-in-exile had lent their support to using force to quell the mutiny.<sup>111</sup> The key army unit involved was the First Greek Brigade, which New Zealand had trained years before. It was described as being “under [the] control of [an] extremely fanatical minority of about thirty per cent and position in fleet is probably similar.”<sup>112</sup> By 27 April, London stated the situation had been “happily terminated with a minimum of bloodshed”.<sup>113</sup> The tactics that had been employed were then outlined. The Greek Brigade had been subjected to a “blockade of the camp... no food or water being allowed to pass in”.<sup>114</sup> Similar measures had been used with the Navy. In the end, though, it was armed force which terminated the dissent. Loyal sailors under Greek command assaulted one of the ships. There were twenty casualties. One British officer was killed while his unit carried out a preliminary operation against the First Greek Brigade camp.

### **New Zealand Assumes a Stance of Sorts**

The mutineers were defeated, and the question of punishment arose. It was over this that Prime Minister Peter Fraser would break the largely one-way telegraphic traffic from London about Greece. It came down to either commuting death sentences to prison terms or carrying out executions of ringleaders.<sup>115</sup> Fraser stated; “With opportunities I had of meeting Greek Prime Minister and other leaders in recent weeks, I would like to offer as my personal opinion the belief that the first alternative appears to be the proper course and indeed represents the best hope of

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<sup>110</sup> Secretary of State from Dominion Affairs to Minister of External Affairs Wellington, May 17, 1944, in *ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Secretary Dominion Affairs to Minister External Affairs, April 24, 1944, in *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Secretary Dominion Affairs to Minister External Affairs, April 14, 1944, in *ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Secretary Dominion Affairs to Minister External Affairs, April 27, 1944, in *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> Secretary Dominion Affairs to Minister External Affairs, July 21, 1944, in *ibid.*

solidifying the Greek people.”<sup>116</sup> This meeting occurred when Fraser was touring the Middle East. Also a part of the extended trip was the Prime Minister’s meeting in London during May. Implicitly, Fraser was dismissive of the Greek monarchy in his telegram to the British. “Other leaders” meant the Greek Royals. Not allocating a name reflects Fraser’s pointed disdain for the monarchy. In contrast, the Dominion’s press presented to the New Zealand public a series of meetings between Fraser, the royals and George Papandreou.<sup>117</sup> The relationship between the two countries was stressed by Fraser: “Mr Fraser spoke of the strong bonds of comradeship and mutual affection linking Greece and New Zealand”.<sup>118</sup> Greek divisions were now seeping into the arena: “he urged her people to preserve unity within their borders and to concentrate all their energy on driving out the Germans.”<sup>119</sup> Subtly, Fraser had also set a boundary of New Zealand connection – while Papandreou had spoken of the “throbbing hearts”<sup>120</sup> of his countrymen awaiting the return of New Zealand soldiers as liberators, Fraser was silent on the matter. New Zealand had changed an earlier public stance about returning since, as will be described in the next chapter. That Fraser was going against the wishes of Papandreou, who wanted the executions to take place, indicates he was not adverse to ignoring even the Greek political leadership, as well as being disdainful of the monarchy. Other than this implicit attitude, there is no evidence of any internal Dominion discussion about the new government or any of its political personalities. That would come in the new year.

Fraser never shared his mutineer telegram with Freyberg – it was sent just a month before the Italian exchange. This is a symptom of the lack of coherence within the national elite that would become more evident through the critical year of 1944. Different leaders with varying attitudes would be saying one thing to each other and then doing another. Yet, on another level, they would be voicing some common messages publicly. They were making an acceptable publicly depicted relationship at the time that relied on specific previous events, simplified and palatable. It was the sort of stuff official memory is made of. Freyberg had already instituted using Greek civilian aid to deflect any charge that New Zealand was taking sides. Fraser was stressing the need for Greeks to stay unified, although he himself was driving toward eliminating the monarchy, a development which the following chapters will explore.

### **New Zealand Public and Growing Exposure to Greek Divisions**

Reporting of the April unrest was not confined to New Zealand official circles. At the beginning of April, ordinary New Zealanders read of the catalyst for the Greek armed forces protest. This was

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<sup>116</sup> Fraser to Secretary Dominion Affairs, July 22, 1944, in *ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> “Visit to Rome: Mr Fraser’s Tour,” *Evening Post*, June 10, 1944; “Mr Fraser’s Tour,” *New Zealand Herald*, June 10, 1944.

<sup>118</sup> “Mr Fraser’s Tour,” *New Zealand Herald*, June 10, 1944.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

the appearance in occupied Greece of "a provisional government"<sup>121</sup> within the area controlled by E.A.M./ELAS. Although not named as such, this was the PEEA introduced earlier.

By late April, New Zealanders were opening their newspapers to find stories of Greek sailors and soldiers who had been engaged in mutinous action during the preceding weeks. A common theme was the demand that a new government of unity be established.<sup>122</sup> The army component of the disturbance was also reported. Again, it was the First Greek Brigade, the unit immersed in training with the New Zealand division in the previous years, that was named.<sup>123</sup>

In the aftermath, the intended fate of the mutineers was also reported. In June "Three members of the crew of a Greek destroyer" were given the death penalty.<sup>124</sup> Seven others got hard labour. By mid-August, 12 members of the navy had received the same sentence.<sup>125</sup> While the ringleaders had their sentences commuted, the remainder were held in "concentration camps".<sup>126</sup> None of these stories seemingly elicited comment such as letters to the editor or to the government. Fraser's stance on the death penalty was never revealed publicly. Outwardly in New Zealand society there was seemingly total official disengagement with Greek affairs. This deceptive public image was persistently repeated during the events taking place and also in official memory. The reality was far different and much more provocative than the desired depiction of an uncomplicated relationship. Fraser would be taking an ever assertive stance against British policies, and ironically, his soldiers were involved in the volatile and violent resistance politics in occupied Greece. Shortly members of his regular army would also be entering an explosive episode in Greek politics. Italy also brought with it cause for a martial celebration. Its reception and subsequent treatment shows that national image-building vies with expressions of a special relationship.

## **BATTLE OF RIMINI – SHARED VICTORY**

"An historic occasion"<sup>127</sup> was how a radio broadcast described the joint New Zealand-Greek force that had taken the Eastern sea town of Rimini. It was "a reminder of the heroic days of gallant action in Greece and Crete".<sup>128</sup> Tellingly, it was the New Zealand "battle" at Thermopylae – not any

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<sup>121</sup> "Greek Unity," *Auckland Star*, April 6, 1944; See "Liberation of Greece," *Evening Post*, April 5, 1944; "Facts now Given," *Auckland Star*, May 29, 1944.

<sup>122</sup> "Mutinous Greeks: Crews of Three Warships," *Evening Post*, April 24, 1944; "Greek Warships Disobey Orders," *Auckland Star*, April 24, 1944; "Greek Mutinies," *New Zealand Herald*, April 26, 1944.

<sup>123</sup> "Greek Soldiers Middle East Mutiny," *Evening Post* April 26, 1944; Also see "Facts Now Given," *Auckland Star*, May 29, 1944.

<sup>124</sup> "Mutiny Sequel," *Auckland Star*, June 28, 1944.

<sup>125</sup> "Sentences in Greek Navy," *Evening Post*, August 14, 1944.

<sup>126</sup> "Mutiny of Greeks," *Evening Post*, November 16, 1944.

<sup>127</sup> *Action Dispatches* 21 A [Sound Recording] U3354 (SANZ). The *Evening Post* quoted a news agency report: "New Zealand tanks and guns renewed their old fighting partnership with the Greeks in the capture of Rimini." "NZ Division," *Evening Post*, September 30, 1944.

<sup>128</sup> *Action Dispatches* 21 A

Cretan battle – that was also named in the broadcast. Crete was put aside and the mainland stressed in this episode. It was a sign that the island was still to be fully elevated. That the BBC claimed the Greeks had entered Rimini first (also reported in a different story)<sup>129</sup> would rankle the New Zealand official memory exercise in the future.

For the new Greek Premier, George Papandreou, the victory was also to be celebrated. Leaflets were dropped on Greece announcing it. The import was not the same as the victory over the enemy, and it did not mention New Zealand. His priority was to unify the Greeks under his leadership. Papandreou stated “Out of the ruins of the mutiny of April last, our Mountain Brigade rose. And the day before yesterday they presented us with the great glory of Rimini, which renewed the Albanian Epos, and once again provoked universal admiration for the Greek name.”<sup>130</sup> The Greek premier was seeking his own national imagining. It is an example of where two nations can take the same event and mould it to their respective needs.

### **Decision to Use the Greeks**

Victory may not have been a given at the outset of the battle for Rimini, but the Greek participation was, despite (ironically) Freyberg’s views on the matter. Initially, the New Zealanders stayed in reserve of the major offensive that saw the Greeks enter the front line. The Greeks were pulled away from them and assigned to the Canadians, who would be in the early fighting. The separation order came from Oliver Leese, the commander of the British 8<sup>th</sup> Army, who wanted the Greeks “to gain battle experience.”<sup>131</sup> The early use of the Greeks is clearly dictated by the political needs of MANNA, Churchill’s plan for a rapid entry into Greece and installation of the preferred Papandreou government.<sup>132</sup> General Wilson had told him that he wanted them to be “blooded” first and that “If they do well I anticipate that it would be wise and practicable to pull them out and send them to Greece.”<sup>133</sup> That is, following the mutiny, there was a need to gain military credibility to strengthen the claim of the returning and British-supported Papandreou government that, just like the left-dominated armed resistance, they had been fighting Germans.

The Brigade went through its first action and suffered heavy casualties. A New Zealand liaison officer with the Greeks, Ted Aked, called in New Zealand support. The Greeks continued with the New Zealanders in their victory against the Germans at Rimini. According to the subsequent

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<sup>129</sup> “Rimini Victory,” *Auckland Star*, September 23, 1944. In contrast another story gave New Zealand first entry “First into Rimini,” *New Zealand Herald*, September 25, 1944.

<sup>130</sup> WO 204/6485 (TNA). Allied Greek language Papers. Translation of leaflet GK/236 Message from Government September 28, 1944.

<sup>131</sup> G.W.L Nicholson, *Canadians in Italy 1943-1945* (Ottawa: Ministry of National Defence, 1956), 538.

<sup>132</sup> CHAR 20/171/46, Churchill Papers, Churchill College, Cambridge (CP) Churchill to Wilson, September 5, 1944.

<sup>133</sup> CHAR 20/171/54, (CP). Wilson to Churchill, September 7, 1944,

Official New Zealand history, on 21 September, the mayor of the town presented a surrender document written in English, Greek and Italian.<sup>134</sup> Also that: “The Greeks were jubilant and signalled their success by hoisting flags at various points in the city.”<sup>135</sup> A recently victorious Greek army was much more attractive than a mutinous one. Churchill told Wilson that “On political grounds there seem to be great advantages in having a contingent of Greek troops” for MANNA.<sup>136</sup>

### **New Zealand Response to Use of Greeks**

The Greeks going into battle threw up a mix of emotions in the New Zealand Division but, again, resurrected Freyberg’s unflinching attachment to the Greeks and protectiveness. The General thought the use of the Greeks premature, and it was something he would later privately criticize to a British general: “I had no intention of allowing them to be used offensively until they had had some further training.”<sup>137</sup> Obviously, he was not within the British arena of political trust and only saw poor military management, not political desirability. Whether Freyberg could, or would, have influenced things is also a moot point. He was still recovering from air-crash injuries when the Greeks went into battle. His views did not match those of his temporary replacement, Steven Weir. When the Greeks pointed out that they were told they could “expect to be in reserve for 10 days” and that their soldiers were on leave or visiting hospitals, Weir did not deviate from his plan to use them in a post-Rimini fight. He told them they were “essential” to the operation.<sup>138</sup>

After the war, the researchers working on the official volume on the Italian Campaign contacted Ted Aked about the Greeks and the battle. Aked had been appointed to the 210BLU, and thereby the Greeks. He told them “I was given my orders personally by Col Bill Thornton... and General Weir, acting Div commander, to make them fight but save them casualties.”<sup>139</sup> To reinforce the latter: “General Weir had instructed me to contact him if in my opinion the Greeks were being put into shows without sufficient support.”<sup>140</sup> It was a diverse mixture of concern combined with forcing them into action – a twist external to “safe” remembering by eliminating politics.

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<sup>134</sup> Robin Kay and N.C. Phillips, *Italy. Volume II: From Cassino to Trieste* (Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, 1967), Ch. v; For a more detailed account see Jim Henderson, *22 Battalion* (Wellington: War History Branch, 1958), 341-347.

<sup>135</sup> Sinclair, Don, and New Zealand. Dept. of Internal Affairs. War History Branch, *19 Battalion and Armoured Regiment* (Wellington: War History Branch, Dept. of Internal Affairs, 1954), 453

<sup>136</sup> CHAR 20/172, (CP). Churchill to Wilson, September 29, 1944.

<sup>137</sup> WAI 8 76, (ANZ). Special Files - 3 Greek Mountain Brigade Freyberg to Beaumont Nesbitt, October 28, 1944.

<sup>138</sup> WAI 8/6/55-56 (ANZ) Historical operations. Entry for September 26, 1944

<sup>139</sup> WAI 1 220 DA 362/10/1 (ANZ). 2NZE - 3 Greek Mountain Brigade - Operations of - to Rimini - E W Aked - File of Correspondence - Brigade Operations Summary 1944. Aked to Protheroe, July 28, 1950.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid

### **Writing about Rimini**

The question of who exactly could claim first entry into Rimini was a question pursued by the post-war-researchers. It was relevant to building a martial profile commensurate with a proud nation. One commentator was not convinced. Aked had an ongoing involvement with the Greek Brigade when it returned to Athens. He wrote “If it is the intention of the W.H. [War History] Branch to incorporate the return of the unit to Greece and its part in the fighting there, then it will be quite a job”.<sup>141</sup> The official response was “it has been decided to cover only the activities of the Brigade during the period it was under New Zealand command.”<sup>142</sup>

It is quite understandable that the official war history project would not pursue the Third Brigade and Aked’s subsequent experiences in Athens. After all, there were no Germans there when the Brigade arrived. Aked would end up fighting alongside the Brigade against E.L.A.S. partisans. That will be discussed in a later chapter. But this development is indicative of the complexity of the relationship between Greece and New Zealand as against the distilled military connection and political neutrality being projected in semi-public and public by Freyberg and Fraser.

The actual official history narrative of the time the Greeks and New Zealanders were together made fleeting references to the mutinous precursor<sup>143</sup> to the former’s arrival. Their hard fighting was also included.<sup>144</sup> Freyberg’s annoyance at the Greeks being sent into battle appeared in the form of a citation. It quoted his letter of complaint to Nesbitt, the British general.<sup>145</sup> That same letter introduces Bernard Freyberg crossing the line between unqualified acceptance of the Greek soldiers and support of their use as in the military-political struggle that was about to erupt in newly liberated Athens. The context of this is set out below. There was no internal discussion amongst the official historians other than the limitation indicated to Aked. Examining the archival record shows the relationship between New Zealand and Greece was becoming ever more complex.

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<sup>141</sup> Aked to Protheroe, August 10, 1950.

<sup>142</sup> Protheroe to Aked November 3, 1950 .

<sup>143</sup> Robin Kay and N.C. Phillips, *Italy. Volume II: Italy Vol II*, 215-1216.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 220-226.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, Footnote on page 220.



Figure 4.4: Greek and New Zealand soldiers mix at Rimini 1944 (Source: Alexander Turnbull Library DA-06690-F)



### **NEW ZEALAND AVOIDS RETURNING TO GREECE**

In addition to the immediate issues of battle in Italy, Weir, Freyberg's temporary replacement, noted a greater strategic development hinted at by the Greeks. On 30 September, senior Greek officers had engaged in "Much talk on return to Greece – present Greek Brigade to be under NZ Div and march past King George Hotel Athens."<sup>146</sup> The Greeks clearly wanted the association to continue upon their return to a land where a probable clash of both Greeks and British forces was all too evident. New Zealand differed on the matter. The willingness to return, described in the next chapter and linked to Dominion humanitarian exceptionalism toward Greece, had evaporated as the Greek political situation became more volatile and indeed had exploded in open mutiny. The Greeks in Italy may have been soldiering with New Zealanders, but the idea of returning with them to Greece was only supported by the British.

### **Towards Liberation – British Intentions and the Special Relationship**

Besides the Greeks, the British were looking for other troops to support MANNA, their planned return. General Maitland Wilson drafted a request to Freyberg for a contingent of up to 300 New Zealand troops to join the British upon their return. The small number was not a limiting factor: "I consider the popularity of New Zealand forces with [the] Greek civil population would have [an] advantageous political effect out of proportion to the numbers sent."<sup>147</sup> It was again obvious that the British had recognised something of a special link and were incorporating it into their strategic Anglo-Greek planning. When the cable was eventually communicated in late September, it was

<sup>146</sup> WAI 8/6/55 (ANZ) Historical Operations. Entry for September 30, 1944.

<sup>147</sup> WO204/1338 (TNA). New Zealand Allied Forces: Policy. Draft Cable Wilson to Freyberg no date,

lacking the political point.<sup>148</sup> Wilson had refrained from sharing with Freyberg the motivation for the request. Again, Britain had not confided in the Dominion how New Zealand figured in British secretive interactions with Greece.<sup>149</sup>

In terms of the Wilson request, Freyberg told his Prime Minister that “As you know, there are several factions in Greece, with all of which we are on friendly terms, and if we were to involve ourselves at this stage in support of one or other of the parties we might prejudice our very friendly relations with the rest of the Greek people.”<sup>150</sup> Fraser introduced the spectre of armed intervention. There was “the possibility of strife breaking out between various Greek factions, which might involve our interference.”<sup>151</sup> Freyberg suggested, and the New Zealand War Cabinet subsequently concurred, that they decline the offer, using not the political reason but the manpower constraint; specifically, that New Zealand did not have the troops to spare. He also told Fraser that there were “very few” of the original Greek campaign veterans available.<sup>152</sup> In this, he was using the latter as a very specific manifestation of remembering the past – living veterans. Again, as with the speech to the Greeks in the Italian fields, memory (in this case the living variety) had been utilised to avoid charges of political involvement. The British offer was declined. From the wording in the cablegrams, it is obvious that the General and the politician had discussed the Greek situation during Fraser’s visit to Italy earlier in the year. Not only was New Zealand now feeling the gravitational pull of the Greek political scene through the fear of mutiny, it now had the possibility of engaging with the left-wing partisans as well.

Indeed, the New Zealanders had had earlier indications of the growing probability that they would be asked to make a contribution to a Greek venture. Four weeks before the Wilson request was received and three weeks before he had initially directed his own staff to analyse a possible contingent from New Zealand,<sup>153</sup> Freyberg alerted Wellington to the possibility. On 21 August, he cabled that he had had an informal discussion with Harold Alexander on 6 August and that “it had been suggested the NZ Division might be sent to garrison Greece for a short time and then go home.” He recommended to Fraser, “As there are many sides to the Greek question I feel careful consideration should be given before this proposal is agreed to” and that he wanted to know if “you

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<sup>148</sup> *Documents relating to New Zealand’s participation in the Second World War 1939-1945: Volume II*, Telegram 427. September 24, 1944. I have assumed Freyberg conveyed the exact wording of the Wilson request. To date the originals of the Wilson-Freyberg communication has not been found. See also Footnote on 400.

<sup>149</sup> PREM 3/210 (TNA). War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee Future Operations – Discussions in Rome August 21, 1944. point 3. For example, Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, suggested: “The necessity of sending troops in to take the German surrender would provide a better cloak to cover our action.”

<sup>150</sup> *Documents Relating to New Zealand’s Participation in the Second World War 1939-1945 Volume II*, Telegram 429, September 27, 1944.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, Prime Minister Fraser to General Freyberg, Telegram 428, September 26, 1944.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, Freyberg to Fraser, Telegram 429, September 27, 1944,

<sup>153</sup> WO 204/1338 (TNA). Provision of New Zealand Detachment for the Occupation of Greece,

wish me to keep you in touch unofficially with these embryo plans and if you wish me to give you my personal views on definite proposals if and when they are made.”<sup>154</sup> Fraser responded, welcoming his future input and any updates.<sup>155</sup> By the end of the month, in a wider discussion, Fraser also told Freyberg that his Division would not be providing garrison troops “anywhere after the armistice”, but they still wanted to be kept informed of any plans placed before the General.<sup>156</sup> Such a general policy may have been decided, but it was Greece that had prompted Freyberg to contact Wellington. Austria had also been suggested by Alexander in their early August encounter; Greece was where the perceived danger lay.

There would appear to be no single incident that caused Freyberg to raise Alexander’s proposal 15 days after the event.<sup>157</sup> Freyberg told Wellington about the informal approach by Alexander. It is possible that Freyberg, now having the Greeks under his command and being in the senior military command structure, realized the time of liberation was drawing closer.

#### **New Zealand sends a Military Adviser to Greece**

When Freyberg learnt the Greek Brigade was returning home, he approached the British with the notion that Aked remain with the unit. He did this indirectly and verbally through the junior officer. Beaumont Nesbitt, of the Liaison Section at Allied Forces Headquarters, met with Aked on 21 October. This was a month after the Freyberg-Fraser exchanges about avoiding returning to Greece. According to the Briton, despite the New Zealand policy, Aked “tells me that you wish him to remain with the Brigade for a further period - at least that you are prepared to let him remain until their future is more certain.”<sup>158</sup> Beaumont Nesbitt’s plan was to send Aked to Greece for “two to three weeks at the outside.”<sup>159</sup> In effect, Aked stayed with the Brigade for months, including right through the street fighting of the Dekemvriana that would erupt in Athens within weeks. In this action, Freyberg was still pursuing his passion for all things Greek. This was despite the shakeup the British directive about the Greek Brigade had caused him and his agreement with Fraser about staying away from Greece.

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<sup>154</sup> *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War 1939—45: Volume II*, Freyberg to the Minister of Defence, August 21, 1944, Telegram 387.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, Fraser to Freyberg, August 25, 1944, Telegram 388.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, Fraser to Freyberg, 28 August 1944, Telegram 389.

<sup>157</sup> Piers Dixon, *Double Diploma- the Life of Sir Pierson Dixon Don and Diplomat* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), Ch. 6. The main political player in the Greek planning, Churchill, was in Italy and also visited Freyberg and his officers whilst there. He never went near the Greeks. The visit fell amongst the MANNNA planning meetings but only after Freyberg told Wellington about the informal approach by Alexander.

<sup>158</sup> WAI 8/ Box 8 /76 (ANZ). Special Files – 3 Greek Mountain Brigade. Beaumont Nesbitt to Freyberg, October 21, 1944.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*

Freyberg argued the continuation was necessary to the British because “Aked has really been Chief of Staff to Tsakalotos, and as such has saved them hundreds of casualties”<sup>160</sup> The General never shared his actions concerning Aked with the Wellington authorities. With Freyberg’s step, a fissure had appeared in the New Zealand leadership over Greece. The Greek Brigade boarded ship for liberated Greece on 6 November. The New Zealand army stayed in Italy.

As indicated earlier, Ted Aked was in the December fighting. Before that erupted, he was involved with one of the seminal moments in Greek political history – the emergence of a new form of the far right in the Greek officer corps. It is an incident, the import of which was unknown at the time. Aked seemingly kept it from the New Zealand establishment.

### **NEW ZEALAND INVOLVEMENT IN FURTHER GREEK MILITARY INTRIGUE**

While the Greeks were fighting alongside the New Zealanders at Rimini, elsewhere the British were contemplating the future use, and fidelity, of the two armies when Greece was liberated. The case of New Zealand has been discussed above; the following primarily focuses on the Greek Brigade during the same period.

Even after Rimini, communications between Churchill, Wilson and Alexander show a continued hesitancy about the loyalty of the Brigade to their sponsored Greek government.<sup>161</sup> But at a conference on 2 October, Alexander told Wilson the Brigade’s loyalty was “satisfactory”.<sup>162</sup> In their caution, the British obviously shared Freyberg’s earlier assessment to Wellington that political turmoil was still a possibility.

### **New Threat from the Far Right**

The renewed confidence was short-lived. Before the end of October, the 210 BLU reported that officers from the brigade had been meeting with “friends and political associates” posted at the Greek Mediterranean Base and Training Centre (G.M.B.&T.C.) in Italy and were openly criticising the Papandreou government, especially its inclusion of E.A.M. representatives in its administration. Furthermore, “plans for the overthrow of the present Greek Government have been openly discussed – the intention being to set up some form of Government excluding all parties save that of the extreme Right.”<sup>163</sup> Wilson also let Churchill know that, by 4 November, the Brigade’s reliability

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<sup>160</sup> Freyberg to Beaumont Nesbitt, October 28, 1944. In Freyberg’s estimation, the British officers attached to the 210BLU were not competent enough in military leadership.

<sup>161</sup> CHAR 20/172, (CP). Churchill to Wilson, September 27, 1944. In this communication the “fidelity of the Greeks” was raised; WO 214/44, (TNA). Greece: Communications with PM and CIGS: miscellaneous correspondence Wilson to Alexander, September 28, 1944.

<sup>162</sup> WO 214/44, (TNA). Notes on Conference held in A.A.I. HQ, October 2, 1944.

<sup>163</sup> WO 170/3812, (TNA) War Diary. 210 BMM attached 3 Greek Brigade Base Training Centre September – December 1944. Political Activities Greek Medn Base & Trg Centre R.G.A., October 28, 1944 . Whether he was genuine (showing a number of

had diminished to that of being “generally trustworthy” and that General Ronald Scobie, then implementing MANNA in newly liberated Greece, together with the “Greek Government [would screen] untrustworthy individuals as necessary on arrival in Greece.”<sup>164</sup>

Scobie also sent two officers from Greece to investigate the conspiracy in Italy. One was Ted Aked, Freyberg’s appointee. He was accompanied by Colonel Laios of the Free Greek Army<sup>165</sup>. In this episode, the New Zealander had a lesser role than Laios. In Italy, interrogations were conducted and declarations were made by the visitors about the stability of the Papandreou government, the irrelevance of E.A.M., E.D.E.S. “or political groups of that nature” in administering the country and that unity was necessary for the benefit of Greece. The result was that “any hopes of effective action by Greek Officers on reaching Greece [had] been completely dispelled” and the officers “look very chastened and are at least beginning to realize that there is no room at present in Greece for political nonsense”.<sup>166</sup>

#### **A New Zealander and the Genesis of I.D.E.A.**

The right-wing coup attempt against Papandreou did not materialize; but Laios and Aked had unwittingly witnessed a moment in the gestation of the extreme Greek right-wing army group I.D.E.A. (Ieros Desmos Ellinon Axiomatikon). This was one point in a major historical development that no individual party involved at the time could have realised.

I.D.E.A. would evolve into a force that would affect Greek politics and society for decades after the war.<sup>167</sup> In Italy, as part of the Aked-Laios investigation, the British reported that Major Karayannis of the Greek Brigade was “probably the leader of [the] present conspiracies” and was removed from the Greek camp.<sup>168</sup> Karayannis would indeed eventually write about his experiences in I.D.E.A., and his memoirs would provide historians with some material for their studies of the society.<sup>169</sup> An examination of the work shows no mention of the New Zealanders. Aked tried to meet Freyberg

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undercurrents were at play) or simply using a ruse, the GMB&TC’s Greek commanding officer also requested an extraordinary amount of ammunition (1 million rounds) to fight EAM and protect the Greek government.

<sup>164</sup> CHAR 20/174, (CP). Wilson to Churchill, November 6, 1944.

<sup>165</sup> WO 170/3812,(TNA). Appendix A to letter of 7.11.44 Political Activities Greek Medn Base & Trg Centre, RGA,

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> During its gestation I.D.E.A. spanned groups situated in Italy, Greece and the Middle East. Spyropoulos explicitly states that it was in Italy that planning for the notion of I.D.E.A. first took place. *Greek Military (1909-1941) and the Greek Mutinies in the Middle East (1941-1944)*, 400; Gerolymatos writes that it was during autumn of 1944 that the sect was established. This would match the events involving Aked. Andre Gerolymatos, “Security Battalions and the Civil War,” *Journal of Hellenic Diaspora* 12, 3, (1985): 26. The later analysis by Veremis & Gerolymatos, identifies some discrepancy in the actual date i.e. 25 October, 1944 or later in January in Athens. Thanos Veremis & André Gerolymatos, “Military as a Sociopolitical Force in Greece,” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 17, 1 (1999), Footnote, 125. See also André Gerolymatos, “Road to Authoritarianism: Greek Army in Politics 1935-1949,”

<sup>168</sup> WO 170/3812 (TNA). Political Activities Greek Medn Base & Trg Centre R.G.A 28 Oct 1944 Appendix A.,

<sup>169</sup> Authors who cite the memoirs of Karayannis include Nicos Mouzelis, “Capitalism and Dictatorship in Post-war Greece,” *New Left Review* 1/96 (March-April 1976); Spyropoulos, *Greek military and the Greek Mutinies in the Middle East*; Veremis & Gerolymatos, “Military as a Sociopolitical Force in Greece”.

during his inspection with Laios, but the latter was in Cairo at the time.<sup>170</sup> He did, however, send a number of letters from Athens. None of them ever mentioned the Italian episode.

## WRITING IT UP

The above shows that, after Crete, there was continuity of soldiering between the New Zealand and Greek armies. The training was continued and, one could say, remained in place right up until Italy (the Greek Brigade went into a New Zealand-managed field exercise there). There was never any common fighting in North Africa, and later, the time together was relatively brief when compared to the length of the whole war. It was filled with anxiety about Greek politics, contradictory actions at pushing them into battle and at the same time seemingly a pastoral care role. Constant throughout was Freyberg's unwavering support of the Greeks. Years of inaction did not influence him, and he was not backward in denigrating other countries' armies.<sup>171</sup> He also showed them a degree of protection not always present in his dealings with his own men.<sup>172</sup> The period of mid to late 1944 was one where New Zealand was facing the difficult realities of the increasingly intense dynamics of the Greek situation. Liberation was coming and also, as the leadership realised, confrontation. Seemingly, they steered a path that avoided their involvement but at the same time saw them being receptive for caring for Greeks (of one type) and at one level.

Public expressions of celebration about the Rimini victory (the only shared one during the whole war) never matched the same level of passion that the Battle of Crete did. Also, Dominion independent decision-making if the Greeks revolted could easily have been adapted into a positive national imagining. It also accommodated a sense of responsibility toward the inter-nation connection. Freyberg's passion for the Greeks in Italy would also never flow into the writing of the official war histories – there are no comments from him about them. But at the time, he, and Fraser, had shown common disinterest in another area of the Greek struggle against the invader that involved New Zealanders – the armed resistance. In this thread of the New Zealand-Greek connection, individual New Zealanders were immersed in contentious politics.

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<sup>170</sup> WAI 8 Box 8/ 76 (ANZ). Special File – Third Greek Brigade. Aked to Freyberg, November 16, 1944.

<sup>171</sup> "I have never felt that the Italians amounted to anything and I have always thought that they were never intended for war." entry WAI 8/6/48 (ANZ) GOC Diary Misc. Collected Jottings. September, 24 1940. He was grossly mistaken about a second country "I have always thought there were two nations that I would not like fighting, Russia and Italy, in neither case are they a serious proposition."

<sup>172</sup> A soldier remembered seeing a postcard in North Africa of Freyberg depicted as a butcher hanging "plucked dead kiwis", Jim Henderson, *Soldier Country* (Wellington: Millwood Press, 1978), 112. The nickname was also mentioned in derogatory fashion in the documentary series *Freyberg V.C.*, New Zealand Film Archive (Wellington). For a fictional account on how he tested his officers' physical bravery See Dan Davin, "General and the Nightingale" in *Salamander and the fire: Collected War Stories* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986).

1944 was a year of considerable Dominion deliberation and action over Greece. As Chapter 6 will show, there was more to come even after that. Yet there was no official pursuit of projecting any imagining using the above incidents by the nation state – either during the events themselves or afterwards in published histories. The telegrams between Freyberg and Fraser were included,<sup>173</sup> but there is no connecting narrative. One is left with a vague incident from the early 1944 Commonwealth Prime Minister’s conference in London and brief references in the political affairs volume by Wood<sup>174</sup>. The Balkans was a “seething mass of factions”,<sup>175</sup> and investing in Allied landings there was a waste of energy. Avoiding sending troops to Greece was “unwillingness to take sides on Greek politics”.<sup>176</sup> The reality was different, as shown above and in the next chapter.

## **BRINGING INTO FILTERED LIGHT THE OUT-OF-SIGHT – CLANDESTINE SERVICES**

Ironically, when it came to the direct, significant and extended New Zealand involvement in the contentious Greek politics in occupied Greece, the official war history project showed no hesitation in entering the arena. There were two organisations concerned. One was the Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.). It was involved with sabotage and interaction with various armed partisan groups and other resistance cells. The other was “A Force”, a part of M.I. 9, and a provider of escape routes in occupied territory.

### **Which New Zealanders?**

One published comment<sup>177</sup> by a New Zealand officer who served with S.O.E. in Greece suggests that Freyberg had at least some high-level awareness of the involvement of his New Zealanders in clandestine organisations. However, official New Zealand personnel records from the day record them being on, for example, “special service”, “seconded”<sup>178</sup> or “special duty”<sup>179</sup> and little else except for promotions and decorations. There is not even any notation that informs one of the exact recruitment process. By the record and attitude of the New Zealand leadership, they simply evaporated from their view. It was a different matter when it came to writing the official history – then they were embraced. It is another form of contradiction made by the State. But this one showed its extreme adaptability in utilising facts in positive national projection.

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<sup>173</sup> As already cited from *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War 1939—45: Volume II*.

<sup>174</sup> F.L.W. Wood, *Political and External Affairs* (Wellington: War History Branch, Dept. of Internal Affairs, 1958).

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

<sup>177</sup> William Jordan, *Conquest without Victory* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1969), 139. Written as if the author was with Freyberg, the authenticity of the claim is questionable.

<sup>178</sup> PF 2124 New Zealand Defence Force Personnel Archives, Trentham (NZDF). Sergeant Donald George MacNab

<sup>179</sup> PF 20475 (NZDF). For example Lieutenant Wilfred Arthur Hubbard.

The work being carried out by New Zealanders in clandestine operations was not probed by the country's authorities during the occupation and immediately after liberation, even when, as in the case of Arthur Hubbard in mainland Greece and Dudley Perkins in Crete, it had cost them their lives. The different perpetrators of their deaths (Greek communists and Axis enemy respectively) reflect the multiple tensions faced by British Liaison Officers (B.L.O.s) working in occupied Greece. New Zealanders were in this role for years. Hubbard was designated as a "New Zealand officer" in an October 1943 telegram that was sent to Wellington government about his shooting by E.L.A.S., the left-wing partisan group.<sup>180</sup> The death occurred during the first round of the civil war. The British initially told the Dominion that they were pursuing the death penalty for those responsible.<sup>181</sup> Although Hubbard was again not named, another communication sent directly to Wellington one day later again made it clear it was a New Zealand officer who had been killed.<sup>182</sup> While Wellington showed no interest in pursuing the details of the death, it was a major issue with the British (including Churchill and Anthony Eden)<sup>183</sup> and Greek governments.<sup>184</sup> A joint British – Greek Court of Enquiry decided it was an accident. For another individual New Zealander, it would become something of an act of public remembrance. In post-war years, he would pursue, in contrast to his own country's silence, commemoration of the death of Hubbard. This was Bill Jordan, another New Zealander serving with S.O.E. in Greece. His public actions will be discussed in a later chapter. To the New Zealand public in the same month of Hubbard's death, it was an "Allied Officer"<sup>185</sup> and a "New Zealander"<sup>186</sup> who was killed at the time.

Perkins perished in a German ambush on Crete. Tragic though it maybe would appear, it raised no discussion inside the New Zealand military-government apparatus at the time. Both British and New Zealand archival records show no politically framed consideration of his death.<sup>187</sup> The only thought of it being so came from conjecture by a post-war New Zealand biographer.<sup>188</sup> Written in 1987, without the aid of S.O.E. archives, the biography suggested that local E.L.A.S. was the culprit.

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<sup>180</sup> AAEG 950 177a 345/4/8 Pt 1. (ANZ). Countries-Greece. Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Minister of External Affairs, October 18, 1943.

<sup>181</sup> DO 35/1545 (TNA). Correspondence with Dominion Governments, including message from Field Marshal Smuts, Prime Minister of South Africa to Mr Winston Churchill on policy towards the King of Greece Secretary State Dominion Affairs to Dominions, October 18, 1943.

<sup>182</sup> AAEG 950 177a 345/4/8 Pt1. (ANZ). Countries – Greece. Dominion Office to Peter Fraser October 19, 1943.

<sup>183</sup> HS 9/755/6 Wilfred Arthur Hubbard - born 15.09.1914, died 13.10.1943; PREM 3/211/8 (TNA). Use of Greek Brigade in Italy, and civil war.

<sup>184</sup> Emmanouel I. Tsouderos, *Historiko archeio 1941-1944*, (Athens: Phyttrakēs, 1990).

<sup>185</sup> "Civil War Possibility," *Evening Post*, October 28, 1943.

<sup>186</sup> "Greek Guerrillas," *New Zealand Herald*, October 28, 1943.

<sup>187</sup> None of the Crete-related S.O.E. files consulted in this project indicated any thought of ELAS involvement. Perkins's personnel file included HS 9/1170/2 Dudley Churchill Perkins born 23.02.1915 (TNA) and Staff Sergeant Dudley Churchill Perkins PF 1772(NZDF).

<sup>188</sup> Murray Elliot, *Vasili :Lion of Crete* (Auckland: Centure Hutchinson), 1987.



In contrast to the silence from the senior State actors, the official New Zealand war correspondent, when he visited Crete immediately following liberation, wrote an extensive and celebratory piece on the dead Perkins. It appeared in the New Zealand press in late 1944. The Cretans had christened him “Kapitan Vassilli”, and the whole treatment is one of heroism and one of the “legends of modern Crete.”<sup>189</sup> Post-1941, Crete was obviously not in the vista of officialdom in its official memory. This is in contrast to the battle of 1941. So while the New Zealand State apparatus initially had practically no data on the activities and whereabouts of its soldiers serving with S.O.E. in Greece, the press had been reporting their activities and experiences after liberation.

### **Official Post-War Story**

Neither the fate of Hubbard nor that of Perkins received any exposure when it came to the official history project’s work on the Greek scene. It was published in 1953 and written by M.B. McGlynn. The title was taken from the administrative tag in personnel records previously mentioned; *Special Service in Greece*.<sup>190</sup> In fact, Perkins is not mentioned at all, while Hubbard receives a brief entry (noting his death at the hands of E.L.A.S.). As well as himself, there are five others listed, not mentioned in the text proper itself. They include all the members of “A” Force, as well as John Mulgan. Mulgan came from a high-profile family of journalists and authors. He was also someone the New Zealand government went to in early 1945 to obtain political intelligence on the Greek situation.<sup>191</sup> Whether or not Kippenberger or any of his staff knew that, the sabotage exploits of the future iconic Mulgan were not included. When a draft copy of the monograph was sent to his father, it included a covering note which in part read “You’ll realise the booklet is merely a condensed summary of many experiences and that valuable work such as that accomplished by your son’s party gains only a reference in the Appendix because of the emphasis on other operational areas.”<sup>192</sup> The booklet was 32 pages long. Physical size was deceptive of the original planned scope and efforts initially envisaged.

### **Planned versus Actual**

The McGlynn study focused on two sabotage operations involving a significant New Zealand presence. The first was at Gorgopotamos Viaduct, “Operation Harling” in November, 1942. Two New Zealand army engineers set the explosives at the base of the structure while the rest of the British small S.O.E. force and partisans fought the Italian garrison. The other was the destruction of

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<sup>189</sup> “Hero of Crete: fantastic Figure,” *Auckland Star*, December 14, 1944.

<sup>190</sup> M.B. McGlynn, *Special Service in Greece, New Zealand in the Second World War Official History* (Wellington, N.Z.: War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1953).

<sup>191</sup> Martyn Brown, “Political Context of John Mulgan’s Greek Wartime Life and Death,” *Journal of New Zealand Studies* 10 (2011).

<sup>192</sup> IA 1 3386/181/25/27 Part 1 (ANZ). War History-Popular History-Special Services in Greece. Pascoe to Alan Mulgan, October 29, 1952

the Asopos viaduct in June 1943. This involved a small force of S.O.E .operatives; the most notable being Don Stott. The two operations were, as Christopher Woodhouse wrote, “the two most important operations undertaken during the first year of guerrilla activity.”<sup>193</sup> The third and last exploit was named “Stott and Morton” and was concerned with a controversial encounter in occupied Athens between New Zealanders and collaborators and the occupying Germans over an enemy-initiated separate peace. The incident also enabled intelligence gathering by the New Zealanders.

The limited focus of the published study was also something communicated to Arthur Edmonds, one of the saboteurs at Gorgopotamos sabotage operation in November 1942. This was one of the operations dealt with in the McGlynn booklet. Edmonds had been corresponding with Kippenberger since early 1950 about possibly publishing his memoirs as part of the war history project.<sup>194</sup> His writing, as well as written material by Tom Barnes, another of the New Zealand force at Gorgopotamos, were being considered. Kippenberger had been supportive and replied to Edmonds thus: “The services of New Zealand officers with the Greek Guerillas are of course part of the history of our war experience, but not within the restricted limits of my instructions, being essentially individual stories.”<sup>195</sup> But the point about the New Zealanders in the secret forces not working as a team or group with a distinct New Zealand identity ran against any sense of building a war history through major building blocks of units. In the end, the possibility of a separate publication of the Edmonds memoirs was not possible. Kippenberger again: “I have not been able to get Cabinet consent”.<sup>196</sup> This was the National government that replaced Labour in 1949. As identified in Chapter 1, its enthusiasm for war memory/history was less than that of the former government.

Arthur Edmonds’ work was, however, seemingly the foundation of the final study. The year following the drawing of the curtain on a separate publication, McGlynn sent a draft copy to a relevant party, saying he had depended “for most of my information” on the Edmonds manuscript.”<sup>197</sup> This gets a mention in the work itself, as does the other material used – secondary, primary and testimonial. Just as with Crete, the project research threw up some disturbing questions for the nation’s official war memory exercise. Complicating matters was the elevation of the first two New Zealanders with S.O.E. in Greece to senior liaison positions with different

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<sup>193</sup> Christopher Woodhouse, *Apple of Discord*, (Reston, Virginia: 1985 [1948]), 141.

<sup>194</sup> IA1 3386 /181/25/27 Part 1 (ANZ). War History-Popular History-Special Services in Greece Edmonds to Kippenberger, May 26, 1950.

<sup>195</sup> Kippenberger to Edmonds, June 8, 1950.

<sup>196</sup> Kippenberger to Edmonds October 16, 1951.

<sup>197</sup> McGlynn to Dr Keith Simcock, September 9, 1952.

resistance groups during the occupation. At the most basic level, they could be considered as contributing toward an elevation of New Zealand in any memory project, but at the same time, some of their views were drenched in the heated Greek political scene.

### Sources of Data

When Arthur Edmonds raised the possibility of publishing his manuscript, he mentioned the issue of secrecy, and also implicitly the awkward reality that he and his colleagues had actually been separated from New Zealand accountability. He had given an “undertaking” to the British War Office not to publish anything without their prior approval.<sup>198</sup> This is undoubtedly the Official Secrets Act. This very limitation had impacted on the memoirs of Eddie Myers, the first commander of the British S.O.E. in Greece.<sup>199</sup> Even this was two years after the New Zealand *On Special Service* appeared. In contrast, Chris Woodhouse, his deputy, produced the *Apple of Discord* with the support of the Foreign Office, and it became “an authoritative analysis of wartime British policy.”<sup>200</sup> The Woodhouse work is cited in the New Zealand study.

Besides this, there were numerous other secondary publications and, unexpectedly in light of the issue of security, there are the internal S.O.E. reports of Tom Barnes. Barnes had died before the McGlynn work came out but had given his reports to Kippenberger. They comprised 55 typewritten pages in total.<sup>201</sup> The editor had told Edmonds he might be able to publish both the reports and Edmonds’ manuscript.<sup>202</sup> It is an astonishing intention, given some of the contents of the report.

### Controversial New Zealanders

Like official British policy and also many of the S.O.E. liaison officers, Barnes was anti-E.L.A.S.<sup>203</sup> and pro-E.D.E.S.. He was also an admirer of its partisan leader, Zervas. He was in favour of continuing the first round of the civil war when an end to hostilities was imminent: “In order to stop the civil war, we unfortunately put Zervas in [a] disadvantageous position several times, by ordering him not to counter-attack when it was militarily imperative he should do so. I still feel this was a mistake (Even more so now).”<sup>204</sup> His dislike of the left even led him into supporting the para-

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<sup>198</sup> Edmonds to Kippenberger, July 3, 1950

<sup>199</sup> Mark Mazower, “Cold War and the Appropriation of Memory: Greece After Liberation” *East European Politics and Societies* 9,2 (1995): 281-2. Myers was outspoken in Greece, specifically on British policy - that is why he was removed and his memoirs censored. Only an “expurgated” form first appeared in 1955. The actual book is E.C.W. Myers, *Greek Entanglement* (Gloucester: Sutton, 1985).

<sup>200</sup> Mazower, “Cold War and the Appropriation of Memory: Greece After Liberation”, 282.

<sup>201</sup> WAI 1 DA 491.2/12 (ANZ). C.E. Barnes, *Report on Observations in Greece from July 1943 to April 1944 by Lt Col C.E. Barnes*, 2 NZEF

<sup>202</sup> IA1/3386/181/25/27 Pt. 1 (ANZ). Kippenberger to Edmonds, June 26, 1950

<sup>203</sup> WAI 1 DA 491.2/12 A (ANZ). *Report on Observations in Greece from July 1943 to April 1944 by Lt Col C.E. Barnes*, 2 NZEF. For example on page 4 “sadistic crimes and mutilations were revolting”.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

military units created by the Quisling government. The collaborationist Security battalions “[...]are hiding arms so that when they are disarmed by the Germans they will be organised and can re-arm. I feel certain they will be whole-heartedly on the side of any Allied Invasion Force.” He then recommended “...although they are admittedly doing the work of the Germans, I think we should avoid publicly denouncing them in such terms that the way to a later reconciliation is irrevocably closed.”<sup>205</sup>

Similarly, one of the New Zealanders interviewed for the post-war project stated that the proposition of making a separate peace with the Germans over Greece was a sound one. This was part of the treatment of Don Stott’s meeting with, as the relevant section in the official volume stated, “Colonel Loss, chief of the Gestapo in South-East Europe”<sup>206</sup> concerning “a local peace proposal for Greece.”<sup>207</sup> The idea never went anywhere, but Charles Mutch, an S.O.E. colleague of Stott’s, argued, “If Britain had accepted the German proposal it could have averted the civil war in Greece, saved thousands and thousands of Greeks being killed and their country being wrecked by years of strife and hatred, and the cost was a possible disagreement with Russia which we have had ever seen since so the cost boiled down to nothing.”<sup>208</sup> The final published official New Zealand history includes the Stott episode. It mentions Mutch in terms of his personal recollection of Stott’s Athens events (and even that was seemingly gained in the third person). Testimony was indeed heavily relied upon in the official work on the New Zealanders and their special service. But there were few other sources to triangulate with.

With such events and views held, it is not surprisingly that McGlynn wrote in an official letter, “I have kept away from the confusing tangle of Greek politics and confined myself to two outstanding operations.”<sup>209</sup> These were the sabotage operations at Gorgopotamos and Asopos viaducts. Political factions such as E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S. are mentioned, as is civil war. But the focus is on the partisans, and any internal Greek divisions are solely dealt with by their actions and not by wider political actors (especially British).

Having said that, as introduced earlier, the combined sabotage-related and peace deal episode in Athens was also included: “I have also described very briefly the peace proposal incident in which again Don was the prime mover [*sic*].”<sup>210</sup> It was one that was not purely politics but had the

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<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>206</sup> McGlynn, *On Special Service*, 30.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>208</sup> IA1/3386/181/25/27 Pt. 1 (ANZ). War History-Popular History-Special Services in Greece Edmonds to Kippenberger Mutch to McGlynn, September 14, 1952 .

<sup>209</sup> McGlynn to Dr Keith Simcock, September 9, 1952.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

characteristics of a motion picture – Stott had walked around enemy-controlled Athens in full British uniform and had gathered military intelligence as well. As an aside, the New Zealand study quoted Woodhouse in a way that inadvertently highlights the dubious political credentials of Field Marshall Papagos, host of the Athens event Kippenberger and Upham attended and also author of the volume consulted by researchers writing *To Greece*. Woodhouse stated he was from the “extreme right”<sup>211</sup> and a member of the Greek/German clique Stott met in Athens. It was an implicit reminder of the political legacy. The New Zealand State applied another Greek figure of authority to salve the inflammations of Greek related politics. It was perhaps inescapable to include such a high profile incident such as Stott’s activities.

### **Applying Greek Endorsement of a Sort**

As mentioned in a previous chapter, Kippenberger’s Athens report alluded to the complimentary comments from Greek royalty about New Zealand soldiers. He included this in his Editor’s Note at the front of the McGlynn study: “The Greek people think your soldiers were all gentlemen. They were brave and kind.”<sup>212</sup> Putting aside the slight variant (only “gentlemen” was included in the first report, but the overall positive royal attitude was the same), Kippenberger had apparently extended the Queen’s original assessment. As originally reported to Wellington, it was the battles of 1941 that she was alluding to. Kippenberger expanded this to include not only the “New Zealand Division, which fought with high credit in the brief campaign of 1941”<sup>213</sup> but also those who were evading or managed to escape. Finally, he also included “the volunteers who returned to Greece on desperately hazardous ‘Special Service’. It is a great satisfaction to put on record the services of some of these brave soldiers.”<sup>214</sup> Hence, the distinct S.O.E. and highly charged political roles and, in Hubbard’s case, deadly posting, was diluted by this introduction. It concluded with one of the emerging and unproblematic memory struts: “New Zealand should be grateful to the Greek people who helped and sheltered her men regardless of the deadly penalties they risked.”<sup>215</sup> Besides playing down the political dimension, the introduction and the volume itself was deceptive about the New Zealand presence in British clandestine operations. Not all were volunteers, and one instance of service had been forgotten.

### **Serving in Greece – Question of Choice**

While Hubbard remained an unknown to the New Zealand public, Stott had made the news in early 1942. This involved his escape with a fellow New Zealander and their evading recapture thanks to

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<sup>211</sup> Quoted by McGlynn, *On Special Service*, 31.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

the assistance given by Greeks over subsequent months.<sup>216</sup> Stott's comments about the Greek suffering and starving while at the same time they risked all for him and his associate hold some of the facets of the publicly expressed relationship. He stated "These people are suffering untold tortures and privation" and that "Now that I am safe, I think of my many good friends in Greece, and hope they survive to see the British reoccupy their country."<sup>217</sup>

**Figure 4.5 Don Stott (far right) and other New Zealanders evading capture in mainland Greece June 1941. (Source: 'National Army Museum, New Zealand DA 1149)**



He pursued his desire by joining S.O.E. As his recorded wartime conversations stressed, "My whole ambition was to get back to Greece and help the people who had helped me."<sup>218</sup> His affection for the "Greek people", however, had led him into a new dynamic where there were various groups of Greeks exhibiting various degrees of animosity between each other and the B.L.O.s amongst them. Correspondingly, he found suspicion from the Greek communists he first met - "absolutely hostile".<sup>219</sup> He, like the other BLOs, was now not so much a New Zealander amongst Greeks as a representative of British policy and inclination. However, he did not discard Greek communists to the dustbin of the unworthy. When he first arrived, he thought, "the further away we got from headquarters, the better the Communists got".<sup>220</sup> But the over-riding affection was still there. "It was lovely to get among the Greek people whom I knew and loved."<sup>221</sup> The controversial Stott again shows a mixture of emotions about the New Zealand bond to the Greeks – sentiment and appreciation with simultaneous political consideration.

Stott's expressions of affection for the Greeks are matched by a fellow countryman, John Mulgan. His posthumously published *Report on Experience* is a long-standing public testament to it. Perhaps

<sup>216</sup> "Daring Escape," *Evening Post*, January 5, 1942. The story was repeated in "Daring Escape," *New Zealand Herald*, January 5, 1942.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> Stott Narrative Woodhouse Papers 2/7 Liddell Hart Military Archives, Kings College London (LHMA), 2.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

more poignant are words from his suicide note: “I remember with pride that I managed to be in friendship with a lot of different and differing Greeks.”<sup>222</sup> While critical of the Greek communists he, like Stott, but with much more deliberation, was receptive to there being a broader variance in the Greek “communist monolith”. He wrote, in a private letter, of British reluctance to see “good people in these left movements”.<sup>223</sup> Again, it is a combination of respect and affection for Greeks, but with a cutting political intrusion.

Besides sometimes offering, in their private recordings, a more heterogeneous assessment of the composition of the armed resistance, some New Zealanders showed a dislike for their politically charged work. At one point, Barnes told S.O.E. Cairo that he was “fed up”, and they could “replace me as I came here for operations and not as a political monger”.<sup>224</sup> Even Stott, who attained historical notoriety through his political actions, believed when he arrived that he would be engaged solely in sabotage. He was soon set straight: “We allot an area to an officer and he is called a Liaison Officer, a member of the British Mission to Greece, and then he sees to any sabotage in any area. Politically, militarily and financially responsible in that particular [area].”<sup>225</sup> At one point, he was acting as an adjudicator in one of the local village elections.<sup>226</sup>

Two of the New Zealanders who served in the celebrated Gorgopotamos operation stayed on in Greece for the remainder of the occupation. These were Barnes and Edmonds. The former’s bitterness was evident in his official reports. He had preferred to return to his unit as promised, as did others.<sup>227</sup> Edmonds was the exception, staying out of personal loyalty to his commander Eddie Myers, although he would later relate his feelings as being “indescribable”.<sup>228</sup> Greeks serving in occupied Greece with S.O.E. were therefore a mixture of volunteers and press-ganged individuals.

### **Absence of Crete**

Whilst researching the work on the clandestine services, McGlynn told a correspondent that, in terms of Perkins, he was finding “very little on his life with the andartes [Greek partisans]”.<sup>229</sup> Indeed his personnel files with both the New Zealand army<sup>230</sup> and Special Operations Executive<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> FO 841/524 (TNA). Consular Court Cases. This file holds the letters found at the scene of his death.

<sup>223</sup> Quoted in Martyn Brown, “Political Context of John Mulgan’s Wartime Life”: 104.

<sup>224</sup> Barnes Diary September 30, 1944. Benaki Historical Archive, Athens.

<sup>225</sup> Woodhouse Papers 2/7 (LHMA). Stott Narrative, 13.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31

<sup>227</sup> WAI 1 DA 491.2/12 (ANZ). C.E. Barnes, *Final Report on Activities and Observations in Greece Period 1 October 1942 – 27 February 1945*, 4.

<sup>228</sup> AAA2 Immediate Family member of Major Arthur Edmonds Special Operations Executive. Interview and Response to Questions concerning Col Edmonds, December 21, 2013.

<sup>229</sup> IA 1 3393/181/58 Pt 2 (ANZ). War History-Escapes- Greec and Crete. McGlynn to Moir, October 17, 1951

<sup>230</sup> PF 1772 (NZDF) Staff Sergeant Dudley Churchill Perkins.

<sup>231</sup> HS 9/1170/2 (TNA) Dudley Churchill Perkins born 23.02.1915.

are very sparse. There was not much to add from memoirs or interviews, as Perkins was operating as the only New Zealander with S.O.E. on Crete. Noted British S.O.E. operative Stanley Moss did not even name him in his 1950 memoirs but noted a “New Zealander” had been killed by the enemy.<sup>232</sup> Similarly, although it was published nearly 40 years after the McGlynn study, the official British S.O.E. report on Crete includes only brief references. Some are complimentary about his leadership.<sup>233</sup>

When Perkins’ adventures were mentioned, it was in an appendix in the Davin work on Crete.<sup>234</sup> The Davin and McGlynn works appeared in the same year. Including Perkins in *Crete* may have been a result of simple convenience, but the end result was to align him with the memory centre-piece.

New Zealand S.O.E. involvement on Crete was minimal. In the narrow terms of military achievement, efforts of the mainland totally overshadowed those on the island. Perkins’ time on Crete is obviously more conducive to any uncomplicated New Zealand-Greek scenario. He had fought in the 1941 island battle. His sole biographer noted “Cretans were *his* people”.<sup>235</sup> His death might be one of the drivers for his inclusion on the Greek New Zealand memorial in Wellington – not a State-driven venture, but evidence that Crete had permeated the wider community, an indication of the greater sociological aspect of the memory of the war. His demise is part of the sometimes involuntary and more volatile and complex environment on the mainland. Indeed, the official New Zealand volume that included Perkins does not include any mention of the various political factions operating there. There was an E.L.A.S. group on Crete as well as the larger nationalist E.O.K. (National Organisation of Crete), but open civil war never erupted on Crete. To what extent Perkins had involvement in Cretan politics is only speculative. Stripping Crete of politics was, of course, in tune with presenting that place as devoid of intra-Greek conflict. Perkins’ absence from the official record may be explained by lack of data, but his exile to a footnote is an inexplicable contradiction.

### **Missing “A” Force**

In The National Archives, London, an internal newsletter of a British-run clandestine organization states that a force member called Redpath, who recently shifted assigned, “is sadly missed as there

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<sup>232</sup> W. Stanley Moss, *Ill met by Moonlight* (London: Harrap, 1950), 158.

<sup>233</sup> N. A. Kokonas, *Cretan Resistance 1941-1945* (Rethymnon: author, Crete: 1992), 63, 74, 79.

<sup>234</sup> Davin, *Crete, Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-45*. (Wellington, N.Z.: War History Branch, Dept. of Internal Affairs, 1953), 494-8.

<sup>235</sup> Murray Elliot, *Vasili: the lion of Crete*, 117.



is a saying in the office that ‘ask Redpath he knows the answer’ and he always does.”<sup>236</sup> The same high regard was evident in a 1945 reference by his British commander to the New Zealand army, but that “The greater part of Redpath’s activities since September 1941, must of necessity remain unstated, in the interests of security, but some aspects may be stated.”<sup>237</sup> Secrecy was again impeding the writing of the official memory.

Jack Redpath was a New Zealander whose experience as a successful escaper, like other New Zealanders, qualified him to work with A Force of M.I.9. Such an appraisal as the opening paragraph would, naturally, have attracted attention and endorsement if harvested by New Zealand State researchers. But they were not available (except for citations for decorations). As a post-war letter from one of the researchers to Redpath stated about the “hush-hush” aspect, “During the war and also immediately after it, those things were very secret.” When the issue of security arose, “we generally leave it to the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief [Kippenberger] to give an opinion on the matter.”<sup>238</sup>

There were no seemingly no memoirs or other published material to remedy the dearth of material. British authorities were not approached. It was testimony,<sup>239</sup> and often citations, that was relied upon. A major academic monograph study on M.I.9.<sup>240</sup> appeared in 1979, over 25 years after the official New Zealand publication on Special Service appeared. Therefore, there was no equivalent to the Woodhouse one for S.O.E.. A new edition of M.I.9. work was published in 2011. The index still does not mention any of the New Zealanders who were involved. It was not that the wide New Zealand history project information gathering had not touched A Force while it was operating. But this was about New Zealand escapees, and not those who actually worked for the organisation: “Sgt. E.V.W. Wilson, 2 NZEF is temporarily in the office as official historian for the New Zealand Army Service Corps [... ]He is collecting data from our files regarding New Zealand personnel who escaped from enemy-occupied territory”<sup>241</sup>

Within the limits of this project, it has not been possible to define the exploits of the New Zealanders with “A” Force as it has been with S.O.E. One, Don MacNab, who was in the Wilson

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<sup>236</sup> WO 208/3417 (TNA) Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence, and Directorate of Military Intelligence; Ministry of Defence, Defence Intelligence Staff: Files. Prisoners of war section. Weekly news letters and summaries: A Force and IS9 Middle East. *Weekly Newsletter No 3* (Period covering 19 August – 25 August Inclusive) 1944.

<sup>237</sup> PF 30836 John Alexander Redpath (NZDF) Memorandum to New Zealand Liaison Officer c/- GHQ, ME from Lt Col A.C. Simonds April 7, 1945 .

<sup>238</sup> IA 1 3393/181/58 Pt 2 (ANZ). War History – Escapes- Greece and Crete. McGlynn to Redpath, February 18, 1952,

<sup>239</sup> IA 1 8333/181/58 Pt 3(ANZ) For example, a summary of Force A was generated from an interview of Hooper

<sup>240</sup> M.R.D. Foot and J.M. Langley, *MI9 Escape and Evasion 1939-1945* (London: Biteback, 2011)

<sup>241</sup> Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence, and Directorate of Military Intelligence; Ministry of Defence, Defence Intelligence Staff: Files. Prisoners of War Section. Weekly news letters and summaries: A Force and IS9 Middle East. *Weekly News Bulletin No 9* (Period 1 October – 7 October 1944)

party attached to the 8<sup>th</sup> Greek Battalion before joining the Force, is noted as undertaking screening duties ensuring no enemy agents infiltrated the organization.<sup>242</sup> A Jack Stuart is also listed, and his fate at the hands of his Italian captors is dealt with in the next chapter, under war crimes.

Efforts were made by the New Zealand official history project to alleviate the scarcity of material to generate a narrative of this lesser-known secret organization. Kippenberger was to find and interview a number of individuals (nearly all Greek) during his previously mentioned Athens visit. Redpath provided the names. McGlynn told him: "I prepared the list of names you gave me and added the brief background details. The list is now in the General's private papers, and he will have it when he moves around Athens. On the General's return it will be interesting to find out if he met the people in the list."<sup>243</sup> The planned meeting(s) seemingly never took place. There is no mention of them in the report and presentation made by Kippenberger upon his return. Enquiries to his family, although met with polite response, have not illuminated the incident.

Kippenberger's researchers did at least generate a brief summary description: "The soldiers who volunteered to go back to Greece and Crete to help the men still hiding there came under the control of a Branch of British Military Intelligence (M.I.9.) and were given the designation of "A" Force."<sup>244</sup> A Force still faced political issues. Demands from the émigré Greek government that Greek personnel in occupied Greece were required in the Middle East were met by subtle resistance from E.A.M./E.L.A.S. They were, as one of the unavailable British reports of the time stated, "non persona grata". Lack of support from the left resistance meant they had to be sent a longer, and presumably more dangerous, route because of "interference"<sup>245</sup> from E.A.M. MacNab was at least sympathetic to E.A.M./E.L.A.S. and did not dismiss them out of hand. In 1966 radio interview, he stated that the December 1944 fighting in Athens had disturbed him because "I had friends on both sides."<sup>246</sup> But it is still a brief piece of testimony in a historical situation still to be explored. MacNab's colleagues Redpath and Craig are mentioned in the next section. This was not in regard to any combative record but in terms of New Zealand's humanitarian aid to Greeks.

## **Distribution**

When the Special Service booklet was distributed, it was not sent to any Greek national or body.<sup>247</sup> Overseas recipients included well-known military leaders such as Freyberg and Montgomery and

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<sup>242</sup> IA 1 8333/181/58 Pt 4 (ANZ). War History- Escapes Greece and Crete.

<sup>243</sup> IA 3393/181/58 Pt 2 (ANZ). War History-Escapes-General. McGlynn to Redpath, April 18, 1952

<sup>244</sup> IA1 8333/181/58 Pt. 3 (ANZ). Summary of interview with Hooper .

<sup>245</sup> Summary 1 July- 30 November 1944 (TNA)

<sup>246</sup> Interview with Don MacNab [Sound Recording], National Radio 1966, System ID 2388809 (RNZSA).

<sup>247</sup> IA 1 3386 / 181/25/27 Pt. 2 (ANZ)War History-Popular History- Special Services in Greece.

the American Mark Clark, as well as Royal Air Force Marshall Tedder. Overseas institutions included museums and government-based publications units, as well as British defence departments. Inside the country, they went to family members as well as distribution of hundreds of copies into organisations such as the New Zealand Education Department (750.)<sup>248</sup> The publication went out with a major editorial fault. A photograph of the communist Ares was incorrectly captioned as being that of his enemy, Napoleon Zervas.<sup>249</sup>

That Greeks were not included in the distribution is, as seen in previous chapters, not unusual. The sensitive nature of clandestine work is not apparently an intervening factor. But again, the New Zealand State, through its non-interest in sharing their wartime story with the Greeks, was showing it was not committed to sharing its martial official memory. It was a limitation to the relationship and, again, adds to the complexity of the interconnection, this time, its memory.

### **LONGER VIEW**

Following the official war history effort, there appeared to be no major specific New Zealand effort in officially remembering the clandestine activities of its soldiers in Greece. Besides the annual Greek-run Resistance Day commemoration at Gorgopotamos, the Special Forces Club in London contributed toward a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sabotage mission. This was focussed at the Stromni cave, where the Gorgopotamos S.O.E. sabotage team first took refuge.<sup>250</sup> Arthur Edmonds, the only surviving New Zealand member, attended. The occasion was in 1992. Much later, as guest of honour, he was at the 2004 opening of the Special Operations Executive memorial at Papakura camp in the North Island of New Zealand.<sup>251</sup>

There is still no official regular commemoration in New Zealand as there is for Crete, or any oblique mention of Gorgopotamos or Rimini. While places like the Greek War Museum carry major displays of the Resistance, Rimini and North Africa<sup>252</sup>, the New Zealand Army Museum stresses Crete. There is no separate display for the others just mentioned.

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., Edmonds pointed this out in one of his letters to the war project.

<sup>250</sup> Woodhouse Papers 6/1 (LHMA).

<sup>251</sup> Email communication NZDF Library Wellington, February 20, 2014.

<sup>252</sup> Site Visit by Martyn Brown, November 2012.

Figure 4.6 Shield of the Descendent Unit of the Third Greek Brigade. Rimini appears at the bottom. Source: [www.army.gr](http://www.army.gr) Accessed September, 1944.



Each nation has stressed its own battles. The shared victory at Rimini has not led to a sense of lasting official memory, even though at the time the press gave it considerable importance. North Africa is another matter. It was essentially a non-event in terms of a *fighting* New Zealand-Greek force. Celebrating New Zealand involvement in the armed resistance has also not enjoyed much of a half-life. In addition, there can be seen to be contradictions at multiple levels. Freyberg's passion during the actual events never transferred to post-war official history discussions. His and Fraser's avoidance of New Zealanders fighting with the resistance was followed by intense interest by the State's war history project, who were animated about telling their story. The end product was much smaller than intended and also stripped of politics. There was also a mixture of emotions towards the Greeks. In the regular army, they ranged between the extreme of Freyberg to a degree of cynicism or a mixture of concern and tolerance for non-fighting. In a different way, the attitudes of New Zealanders serving with S.O.E. at least show a more piercing standpoint. This will be further explored in Chapter 6.

There are other aspects to the New Zealand-Greek relationship that attracted considerable effort and, in one case, publicity during the war. They include humanitarian aid and the question of Axis war crimes against Greeks. They never transferred into the State's concerted memory project and are discussed next.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: HUMANITARIANISM AND RETRIBUTION**

One trope of the New Zealand official memory concerns the suffering of the Greek and Cretan people during the war. Starvation and reprisals for assisting Allied soldiers are mainstays in New Zealand appreciating the inter-nation connection. There is ample evidence that much official emotion, both in public and privately, went into recognising the cost to the civilian population during the war years and immediately afterward.

However, the State's various symbolic and utilitarian commemorative plans had mixed results. As well as this, there were differences between it, New Zealand aid advocacy groups and wider community (including Greek-New Zealanders). At one point, the New Zealand population were subject to state misrepresentation of State contributions toward the Greeks. Early State enthusiasm has also not been followed by a more permanent official memory such as that for the 1941 battles, clandestine work and the Rimini victory. One cannot find any narrative in the official war history that concerns itself with this humanitarian strand. In the same way, pursuit of war criminals is also absent. This was despite some genuine Dominion effort to see the enemy held accountable for the fate of Greeks and Cretans. An analysis of aid and legal justice provides a complex and sometimes contradictory history of the relationship, as the following illustrates.

### **Aid During the Axis Occupation**

As shown in Chapter 3, wartime aid to Greece began with the nation state and Greek New Zealand community contributions in 1940. The amount, the nature, and the intended recipients changed during the war. Initiators widened to include more actors, such as the London-based Greek émigré government headed by Tsouderos and the wider diasporic population based in Australasia. The level of integration displayed by the Dominion state apparatus during this phase is reminiscent of its much-examined and criticised decision-making over the Greek campaign – lack of consistent coordination. Several things make the context different. Firstly, there is the extended timeframe over which these developments took place (conducive to more thorough State analysis and consequently decision making). Secondly, the number of New Zealand “owned” sensory points (mostly military) which could pass on relevant information from the Mediterranean and elsewhere in the Allied machinery had increased. Thus, the Dominion's improved position should have enabled it to more readily express in a real way the growing expressions of admiration for the Greek people.

While the Wellington government read diplomatic communiques about the increasingly volatile political agitation amongst the free Greek forces, the internal situation of occupied Greece was also changing, in terms of both everyday life expectancy and the politics of the resistance forces. However, the New Zealand State entered the arena of humanitarian relief to Greece before it did the political (overtly, anyway, through decisions and statements).

### **New Zealand Relief and Greek Famine**

By early 1942, there had been no direct State aid sent to the Greeks since late 1940. What reached them from the State got there by being remainders of failed previous shipments, held in the Middle East and passed on to the Hellenic Red Cross Cairo.<sup>1</sup>

But following the defeats of early 1941, famine had quickly emerged in Greece. The New Zealand press had carried stories about the starving Greeks from late in the same year. The previously mentioned radio broadcasts from the Middle East in early 1942 also mentioned it. On 27 October, 1941, the *Evening Post* pre-empted the massive deaths to come through the approaching winter. A visiting Turkish merchant captain who had recently been in Athens stated, “The people there live a spectral, hungry existence. The food situation was desperate.”<sup>2</sup> By late November, skeletal men fought for scraps with dogs.<sup>3</sup> In January 1942, two thousand Athenians had perished in a single day.<sup>4</sup> One month later, 40,000 deaths in 4 months for the whole of Greece were reported.<sup>5</sup> Often, the occupying enemy were depicted as causing/exploiting the situation<sup>6</sup>. A British food blockade of Europe was in force. Its effect on the Greeks was noted<sup>7</sup> in the press, but there was no interest by Wellington in questioning its use. This was in contrast with other Allied governments of the day, who had been growing in their criticism over the strategy.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> IA 1 3105 172 206 Pt 1, Archives New Zealand (ANZ). Patriotic Funds Assistance for Greece.

<sup>2</sup> “Athens a Dead City,” *Evening Post*, October 27, 1941.

<sup>3</sup> “Famine in Greece,” *Evening Post*, November 24, 1941.

<sup>4</sup> “Starvation in Greece,” *Evening Post*, January 29, 1942.

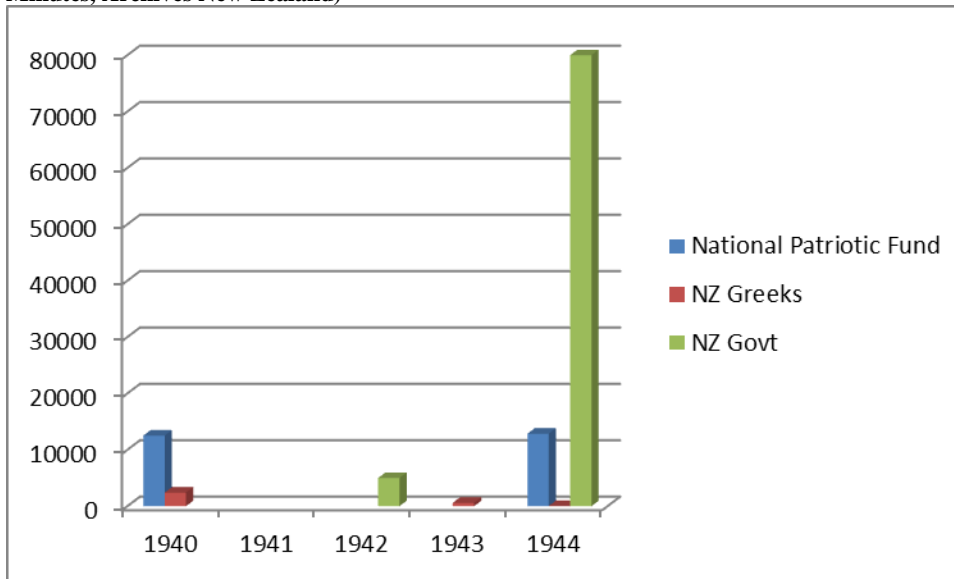
<sup>5</sup> “Greek Tragedy,” *New Zealand Herald*, February 17, 1942.

<sup>6</sup> “Looting of Greece,” *Evening Post*, January 10, 1942; “Exports Despite Famine,” *Evening Post*, January 22, 1942.

<sup>7</sup> “Blockade of Europe,” *Evening Post*, August 6, 1941.

<sup>8</sup> Joan Beaumont, “Starving for Democracy: Britain’s Blockade of and Relief for Occupied Europe 1939-1945,” *War & Society* 8, 2, (1990); Richard Clogg, ed., *Bearing Gifts to Greeks: Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2008).

**Figure 5.1 Non-UNRRA Funds (£NZ) Allocated to Aid Greece 1940-1944. The amounts were these sent through or to institutions as against community and individual parcels sent. (Source: AAYO W3120 National Patriotic Fund Board Minutes, Archives New Zealand)**



### Commencement of New Zealand State Funded Famine Relief to Greece

In March 1942, the New Zealand government committed NZ£5,000<sup>9</sup> for relief to Greece. It was the first time the nation state had entered into directly providing aid from its own central funds, as against the Greek community or the wider New Zealand Patriotic Fund base. However, the shipment was a result of Greek initiative – both at home and overseas. The timing of the announcement matches the Greek National Day. The deliberations over the proposal inside the government apparatus had been short and the challenges to implementation noted.

On 19 February, the Wellington administration told their London-based High Commissioner, Jordan, of an approach from Seddon, Greek Consul General in New Zealand, about the possibility of the government “offering relief to the people of Greece” but that “apparently there is no prospect of arranging shipping”. Wellington wanted enquiries to be made to the London-based Greek government in exile about a strategy to get the shipment through.<sup>10</sup> In response, Jordan had to set out the details of the situation with the British food blockade of Europe. This had been “relaxed only to the extent of allowing cereal shipments”<sup>11</sup>. These had been arranged by the Greek government in exile or International Red Cross with the approval of the Germans and Italians. Although goods could be purchased in neutral countries, he suggested a straight financial contribution. This is, in fact, what happened.

<sup>9</sup> “Greek Gratitude,” *Evening Post*, March 27, 1942.

<sup>10</sup> EA 1 209 / 58/345/1 1a (ANZ) External Relations - Greece - General 1940 - 1949 (ANZ). New Zealand High Commissioner, London to Prime Minister, Wellington, March 3, 1942.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

## **New Zealand Exceptionalism towards Greeks**

One can make several observations concerning this episode. First, as already indicated, the Fraser administration was not motivated to start the relief process. According to Seddon's records, the sum of money that left for the London-based Greek government was one of a two-part request for assistance that emanated from the local Greeks and the Archbishop of Australasia, the Most Reverend Timotheos Evangelinides.<sup>12</sup> The original request included money and meat product. The latter was never sent. Secondly, the focus was on suffering Greeks. At that stage, there was no moral obligation expressed for assistance to New Zealanders evading capture that would eventually be part of the Greek-New Zealand formula. Lastly, Fraser seemed unfamiliar with the whole issue of the food embargo and its ramifications, only asking about the pragmatics of available shipping. New Zealand had shown no interest in raising the embargo. It finally began to be phased out in February 1942.

While the government had made its first aid donation for Greece, it would be more than two years before the next one was shipped. Furthermore, Greece did not attract any exceptional treatment in the government's relief activities in 1942. For example, in a public announcement a month before the Greek shipment announcement, it promised the same amount of money to the Chinese Red Cross.<sup>13</sup> The low ranking of Greece continued, as reflected in the early 1943 figures for the National Patriotic Fund's efforts (Table 5.1). It was number four on the list of destinations of aid. It followed Britain, Russia and Poland. In fact, the Fund had not sent anything new since the late 1940 shipment. There was therefore no exceptionalism shown toward Greece by New Zealand up until and including 1942.

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<sup>12</sup> Ms-Papers-1619-180 Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL). Correspondence and papers re T. E. Y. Seddon's service as Vice-Consul and Consul of Greece: 1937-1965. This is indicated in the document *Summary of the Work Accomplished by the Greeks of New Zealand to Relieve the Distress in their Homeland during the Struggle and Afterwards. (1940-1946)*. The money amount and date of announcement matches but the mentioned tinned meat is not recorded anywhere else.

<sup>13</sup> "£5,000 for Chinese Red Cross," *Evening Post*, February 9, 1942.



**Table 5.1: Published Destination of New Zealand National Patriotic Fund Aid to Allied Nations [Reported *Auckland Star* April 3, 1943].**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Amount (NZ£)</b>
Britain (London Distress)	206,834
Russia	28,750
Poland	20,377
<i>Greece</i>	<i>10,500*</i>
Malta	7,000
France	6,726
Belgium	2,500
Norway	622
<b>Total:</b>	<b>283,309</b>

\*The figure for Greece does not include the NZ£2,000 received by the Greek Red Cross, sent by the Dominion Red Cross, but from monies donated by the Fund.

### **New Zealand Greeks**

While the government had made its first step and the Fund remained fixed in its lack of special consideration of Greece, New Zealand Greeks recommenced their efforts. Again, the National Patriotic Fund was the conduit through which they channelled their donation. The New Zealand Greeks had also been sending their own individual parcels, but in October 1942, Seddon was discussing with Hayden a NZ£500 donation from the New Zealand Greeks directly to Greece to aid civilians. He was turned down because “neither the British government nor the New Zealand Government will agree to money being forwarded to countries occupied by the enemy”.<sup>14</sup> The alternatives were sending goods themselves or directing the money to a body (such as the International Red Cross) which would do the purchasing for the New Zealanders and ensure the supplies were sent.

Unfortunately, what happened was something similar to the blanket/woollen goods scenario of 1940/41. Seddon told Hayden at the National Patriotic Fund that the Greeks now wanted to send goods rather than money,<sup>15</sup> that is, they were falling in with the Fund. The Dominion’s Red Cross in turn told Hayden they could deliver via the various overseas Red Cross organisations. For some reason, that line of action was dropped. The government’s War Purposes Committee would ship the dried milk to the New Zealand High Commissioner in London, who would then organise forward delivery. After the arrangements were made, the Commissioner reported that the goods were shipped from the UK to Canada, there to be loaded onto one of the regular relief ships that travelled

<sup>14</sup> IA 1 3105 172 206 Pt 1 (ANZ) Patriotic Funds-Assistance for Greece. Hayden to Seddon, October 2, 1942.

<sup>15</sup> Hayden to Joint Secretary, Joint Council of the Order of St. John & N.Z. Red Cross Society, November 10, 1942.

to occupied Greece. The New Zealand Greeks' donation had in effect travelled half way around the world to the UK then twice across the Atlantic before reaching Greece through the Mediterranean. The doubling back had contributed to a process that led to the shipment taking 12 months<sup>16</sup> from proposal to actual delivery. It also involved the pragmatics of additional costs. It is no wonder that the London-based New Zealand authorities told Hayden that "complications might be avoided if shipment were made direct to Canada in the first place."<sup>17</sup> While the food blockade had been largely lifted, any items sent directly to Greece had to be cleared by Britain. This did not stop the sending of a second, smaller shipment from the New Zealand Greek community. Again, there were difficulties, with the Minister of Internal Affairs telling the High Commissioner that "the Greek committee responsible for the gift... would prefer despatch of milk powder if possible via Canada otherwise leave it in your hands to distribute as you think advisable."<sup>18</sup>

In 1942 then, the initiatives of the State itself, and in conjunction with the New Zealand Greek community, show a revitalisation of aid from the Dominion to Greece. Unlike the earlier efforts which went to the Greek military or government for pursuit of the war, these were directed primarily, but not entirely, into humanitarian aid for Greek civilians - a case of comforts for Greek troops in the Middle East arrived at about the same time Seddon raised the much larger milk shipment.<sup>19</sup> Good intentions, however, have to be balanced against the repeated failure to find an efficient and diplomatically acceptable (British-approved) avenue through which relief from the Dominion could reach the intended recipients.

In the new year of 1943, the nature of State-sponsored aid to Greece would change. A public commitment would see the beginning of a practical contribution that sought to overcome the failures and complications of the previous years. The period of arrangement would be drawn out and continue into 1944, possibly because of the major Allies' priorities but also with caveats initially placed on it by the Dominion's national political leadership itself. In the immediate period, the greater community sought to engender a wider commitment.

### **Idea of a New Zealand Food Ship**

At a State luncheon for General Bernard Freyberg in late June 1943, Fraser announced a special food ship for Greece. On this occasion, the General was quiet about the Greeks, preferring to talk

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<sup>16</sup> Letter from Greek Red Cross to Official Secretary Dominion of New Zealand Naval Affairs Office, April 6, 1944.

<sup>17</sup> Skinner to Hayden, 22 September, 1943.

<sup>18</sup> Parry to Jordan, January 19, 1944.

<sup>19</sup> *Extract from Report of Overseas Commissioner No. 47*, October 7, 1943.

about his own soldiers. His admiration and idea that there was a bond between his men and the Greek people would, however, be quoted in the press.<sup>20</sup> He repeated it in the New Zealand parliament. Freyberg, on a whirlwind tour, spoke not of the Greek army but of civilians who assisted New Zealand soldiers: “A word about those who were left behind. To them, the people of Greece and Crete gave food and shelter and were assisted to escape back to Africa in boats. In defeat, they never complained that we were leaving them to their fate but always with magnificent hope and faith were thinking of the day when we would return.”<sup>21</sup>

At the luncheon, Fraser more than compensated for the military leader, but it was evident that Freyberg, and his officers, had been the catalyst despite earlier press front page entreaties to recognise the Greeks.<sup>22</sup> Fraser said: “The General can testify that Greece and Crete and the people of Greece and Crete have been enthroned in the hearts of our soldiers.”<sup>23</sup> He also alluded to returning soldiers and to recollections gleaned from them: “discussing with some of our soldiers or officers”<sup>24</sup> It was these exchanges that had led the Prime Minister to make a “special mention” of Greece at the luncheon as well as to raise the notion that it would be “a splendid thing” that the “first ship” to enter liberated Greece would be a “New Zealand ship with New Zealand food to help the people”.<sup>25</sup> It was a public commitment that would be pivotal to official recognition of the special place of the Greeks for decades to come. The intended shipment was in addition to the mandatory contribution to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (U.N.R.R.A.). It was a “gift” in that sense, but it initially came with a caveat. The ship would only go when Greece was liberated. This would be another 16 months but Fraser may have been thinking that the Balkans, rather than Italy would be the scene of the next Allied offensive during 1943.

The idea of the food ship plan was also publicly expressed in the USA to the American Greeks by the NZEF official war correspondent, Robin Miller. On 15 August, he told the Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Constantine and Helen in Washington of Fraser’s commitment of a ship “laden with New Zealand milk and flour and meat.”<sup>26</sup> He also touched upon something which was being expressed in the country’s diplomatic service but which would in the next year prove to be a highly

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<sup>20</sup> “The great bond which the men of the Second NZEF felt to exist between them and the people of Greece was emphasised by Lieutenant-General Bernard Freyberg.” “Greek People Food ship proposal,” *Auckland Star*, June 28, 1943.

<sup>21</sup> WAI 8 44 & 45 *GOC Diary*. (ANZ)

<sup>22</sup> On 29 March 1943 the *Auckland Star* spoke of “the kindness and spirit of a gallant people” and “succour they gave to the soldiers who were “left behind”. The way to repay the debt was by “food” via relief. “New Zealand and Greece,” *Auckland Star*, March 29, 1943.

<sup>23</sup> State Luncheon for Bernard Freyberg 1943 [Sound Recording]. New Zealand Sound Archives, Christchurch (NZSA)

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>26</sup> WAI I DA 404 I3 (ANZ) 2NZEF - Talk by NZ War Correspondent to Greeks at Greek Orthodox Church of Sainte Constantine and Helen in Washington - Robin Miller

dubious proposition. This is the possibility that the New Zealand army would return to liberate Greece: “It is the fondest hope of all of us that General Freyberg and his New Zealand Division will be chosen for the task of driving the enemy from Greek borders and setting Hellas free.”<sup>27</sup> The same sentiment was reported that same month by the New Zealand Commissioner in London - “I learn from several sources that it is the keen desire of our General and members of the New Zealand Forces to return to the country to free its people”.<sup>28</sup> But this was before the outbreak of civil war in Greece in October 1943. The face of Greece was changing and, as shown in the previous chapter, so did New Zealand attitudes towards military commitments to being part of the re-entry.

### **Wider Community Support**

The national leadership’s emotional expression and exceptional treatment of Greece did not extend to the National Patriotic Fund, which still stood by its policy of not allowing any country-specific funding drives. However, unlike earlier years, it was now being approached by New Zealanders who had other ideas.

In early December 1942, months after the first government-sponsored aid, and before the food ship commitment, the Fund had been contacted by the Dominion Federation of New Zealand Women’s Institutes about a remit from its Waimate sub-federation. The women wanted to establish a “freewill thank offering fund to provide extra comforts for the women of Crete and Greece.”<sup>29</sup> The response was simply a reiteration of the standing policy of not appealing for specific purposes.<sup>30</sup> However, the possibility of liberation now entered the frame of the Fund with the suggestion that there would be “big duties” (as indicated in the above letter of response) to perform to those countries that had been occupied by the enemy. But again, Greece attracted no special mention. The same behaviour of declining approaches from various community groups, even the New Plymouth Mayor, to have Greek-specific appeals continued into the New Year.<sup>31</sup> Placing constraints on any Greek-related relief was also followed by one of the most vocal and high-profile figures – Freyberg. In the Middle East, one of his officers had suggested “a fund be inaugurated in order to assist refugee Greek children”.<sup>32</sup> The General was agreeable “in principle”, but the current time was inappropriate, and it

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> EA2 107/103/3/6 Part 1 (ANZ) Relief and Rehabilitation – Disasters and Relief – Greece and Crete. Jordan to Fraser, August 27, 1943.

<sup>29</sup> IA 1 3105 172 206 Pt 1 (ANZ) Patriotic Funds-Assistance for Greece. Secretary, Dominion Federation of Women’s Institutes to Secretary, National Patriotic Fund, December 8, 1942.

<sup>30</sup> Hayden to Secretary, Dominion Federation of Women’s Institutes to Secretary, National Patriotic Fund, December 22, 1942.

<sup>31</sup> Gilmour to Hayden, April 9, 1943. “Greek Relief Fund” was mentioned in the letter although Mayor Gilmour was unsure if it existed.

<sup>32</sup> Hayden to Gilmour, April 15, 1943. Hayden told the mayor the intended fund raising concert for relief to Greece could go ahead but that the collected monies should be placed into the Fund’s “all purposes appeal”. Gilmour, however, told the community member,

could be reconsidered at a later date.<sup>33</sup> It would seem that the General was not as unquestioningly committed as other actions, which involved the Greek military, indicated.

### **Path of the Food Ship Enterprise**

Fraser's decision to send the food after liberation attracted some public criticism from the parliamentary opposition. In a debate, they had argued the shipment should be sent earlier, citing the example of Canada "which was sending 15,000 tons of wheat monthly to famine-stricken Greece."<sup>34</sup> But the government seemingly stayed firm for the moment.

With an allied landing not in the Balkans (including Greece) but in Sicily and then Italy, Peter Fraser had to postpone delivering his publicly promised food ship. More to the point, the previous reporting of Allied and neutral relief being sent, combined with an unfulfilled New Zealand promise, made for a potentially embarrassing public situation. Criticisms of waiting until liberation were coming home to roost. As the *Auckland Star* reported, "Since the end of August 1942 relief work has proceeded without intermission on an increasing scale, despite serious difficulties."<sup>35</sup> Prime Minister Fraser now did two things. First, he softened his previous stance on not sending the ship until after liberation. Second, he differentiated Crete from Greece in internal Commonwealth communications.

### **Exploring a Shipment during the Occupation**

In a telegram on 11 March 1944, Fraser told his High Commissioner in London to raise with the British the possibility of contributing to the flow of supplies that was already finding its way from North America to occupied Greece.<sup>36</sup> This undoubtedly referred to the protected supply routes that had been operating for years. Fraser still linked this humanitarian act with the previously mentioned symbolic element: "We had cherished the hope that it might have been possible to send a vessel from New Zealand which would have been amongst the first to enter a Greek port with relief supplies."<sup>37</sup> But he admitted this might be "impractical".<sup>38</sup> Apparently, the Prime Minister thought that the thousands of tons that had been arriving already from other countries would not detract

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who had already carried out the concert appeal, that she still might contact the Fund to try and get the funds paid toward powdered milk to Greece. He told Hayden he would be complying with the Fund's policies over general fund raising in the future.

<sup>33</sup> Report from Overseas Commissioner No. 33, December 3, 1942.

<sup>34</sup> "Food for Greece," *Auckland Star*, June 26, 1943.

<sup>35</sup> "Relief for Greece," *Auckland Star*, March 18, 1944. Also see "Supplies to Greece," *Evening Post*, January 4, 1944; "Food for Greece," *Auckland Star*, February 11, 1944 and "Food for Greeks," *Evening Post*, March 18, 1944.

<sup>36</sup> EA2 107/103/3/6 Part 1 (ANZ) Relief and rehabilitation - Disasters and relief - Greece and Crete. External to High Commissioner London, March 11, 1944

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

from the significance of his own country's contribution. To him it was still suggestive of a special place for Greece in the New Zealand mind. A London meeting, where the Dominion was represented by diplomat Richard Campbell produced no outcome. Various options were considered with the British Ministries of Food and War Transport – via Turkey or through Canada. In the end, it did not meet with success.<sup>39</sup> No shipment would be sent prior to liberation. British preferences overrode New Zealand aspirations in this instance.

Publicly, Fraser also still pursued his idea of the New Zealand ship being the first one in liberated Greece.<sup>40</sup> He also began to incorporate more of the central pillar of the celebrated Greco-New Zealand relationship— Crete. While he had mentioned both the island and mainland in his 1943 parliamentary speech, he now expanded on it internally. In his 11 March cablegram to Jordan, he had spoken of the “assistance afforded by the people of Greece *and Crete* [my emphasis] to the men of our forces during the time the Division was engaged there.”<sup>41</sup> He publicly projected the same a few months later. In a radio broadcast from London, where he was attending a Commonwealth conference, he spoke about the food ship being first and also that it was the third anniversary of the battle for Crete.<sup>42</sup> Within the limits of newspaper coverage indicated in the introductory chapter, this is the first anniversary mentioned by Fraser in the press. Recognition of the protection of New Zealand soldiers by Greek/Cretan civilians and the sending of food aid was now linked to Crete. While it was a stance by no means totally exclusive of the mainland, it did reflect a lack of other possibly acceptable adhesive Greek surfaces that New Zealand could attach to. The military venture in the Middle East had come to nothing, and since October there had been civil strife in the mainland between the ideologically opposed partisan groups. Just why Crete began to appear in public and private expressions may be conjectured with some very tentative suggestions. Mainland Greece was embroiled in inner Greek turmoil; Crete was not. With a defensive war now superseded by an offensive one, discussion about what was essentially a loss was more acceptable than before the change.

### **Willing Hands but Into Civil Strife**

Inside the relief machinery that would first enter liberated Greece were several New Zealand officers. Brigadier Tom King was on secondment to the British 9<sup>th</sup> Army in the Middle East when

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<sup>39</sup> *New Zealand Supplies to Greece*. June 9, 1944. New Zealand wanted asked if the goods could join the flow coming out of Canada. The British response was that it should come out of Turkey but that was “difficult.”

<sup>40</sup> “Food for Greece- New Zealand may send first Shipload,” *Dominion* May 27, 1944.

<sup>41</sup> EA2 107 103 3 6 Part 1 (ANZ) Relief and rehabilitation - Disasters and relief - Greece and Crete. External to High Commissioner London, March 11, 1944.

<sup>42</sup> “Gesture to Greece,” *Evening Post*, May 27, 1944. See also “Help for Greece New Zealand Offer,” *Auckland Star*, May 27, 1944.

he was asked to take up a post with British Military Liaison (M.L.).<sup>43</sup> He was in charge of the Supplies and Relief Branch. But M.L. would also have a major role in British plans to ensure E.A.M./E.L.A.S. was frustrated in its ambitions to have a place in governing post-war Greece. It does not appear that King was aware of this.

M.L. had a dominant role in the Greek relief operation, even elevated above the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (U.N.R.R.A.). The international organization was to act as an agency for M.L. during the initial liberation period.<sup>44</sup> In January 1944, King told Freyberg that he had managed to have another New Zealander, a transport/logistics expert, Ken Crarer, brought back from New Zealand, “to take part in such a wonderful work.”<sup>45</sup> For himself, King believed he was a New Zealand “representative” and that “I can assure you [Freyberg] that I am fully conscious of my responsibility to New Zealand as well as the Greek people, and it will not be for want of zeal and enthusiasm if my part of the show doesn’t function efficiently.”<sup>46</sup> King was passionate about Greece.

The New Zealand-Greek nexus was obvious in early and ongoing communications between King and the nation’s leaders and as well as through his later comments in the New Zealand press. He also pointed out that the senior British general in charge of the relief operations had recognized the benefits of having someone from the Dominion in his command. “General Hughes was most anxious to have a number of New Zealanders with him, knowing our particular affection for Greece, and how highly the Greeks regard New Zealanders.”<sup>47</sup> It was further British validation that there was some sort of bonding between New Zealanders and Greeks. King’s emotional commitment was further evidence of expressions of a bond. It would be tested in the months to come. It would remain steadfast, but he would be selective as to which Greeks should be given New Zealand endorsement. His predilections did not match all of his countrymen’s, as shown in the next chapter.

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<sup>43</sup> Originally ML but changed to Allied Military Liaison (AML) when the United States joined. The latter subsequently withdrew which, in turn, led to the organisation reverting to its original name.

<sup>44</sup> By the end of the year, relations deteriorated between ML and the UNRRA to the point where the latter pulled its staff out of Greece. This is placed in context in the next chapter.

<sup>45</sup> EA2 107 103 3 6 Part 1 (ANZ). Relief and rehabilitation - Disasters and relief - Greece and Crete. King to Freyberg, January 21, 1944.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

## Further Permeation into New Zealand Thinking by the Greek Political Scene

King noted what had become obvious in public awareness as well as confidential planning: “There is one other very, very big snag, and that is the political situation.”<sup>48</sup> That the armed resistance was a factor to be considered in the establishment of post-liberation governing bodies was accepted by King.<sup>49</sup> He saw the then inter-partisan fighting between E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S. as “a form of civil war”.<sup>50</sup>

Besides the various resistance groups, the Greek émigré government was mentioned. In a footnote to a statement that M.L. was keeping them fully informed, King noted “We have not, however, gone into detailed planning with them as we do NOT [his emphasis] want to be compromised should some other government be in power.”<sup>51</sup> This was written to Freyberg just days before the General was assisting a senior representative of that same monarcho- government through a path of British army bureaucracy to get the Greek army to Italy. Conflicting behaviours amongst the New Zealanders were again appearing. The degree of difference was influenced by the relative positions in the Greco-British and Dominion matrix and individual inclinations. King was reflecting the wider practices of the British machinery. Freyberg was the same; in that he made a request to *British* authorities: he could not just let Aked accompany the Greeks on his own authority. However, his efforts were questionable, given the agreement he had with Fraser.

The month after King’s letter went to Freyberg and just prior to the massive Greek military political mutinies in early 1944, Fraser was publicly joining Greeks in the celebration of their National Independence Day. The factional fighting in the mainland was put aside. He sent a message to Emmanuel Tsouderos, the Greek Prime Minister, who had been part of the party escorted off Crete. The text, reproduced in the *Evening Post*, included phrases such as the “suffering of the people of Greece” and how the people of New Zealand “watched with sorrow the suffering” and with “deepest admiration their refusal to submit”.<sup>52</sup> Again, the promised food ship was mentioned “as a practical expression to our sympathy.”<sup>53</sup> Fraser kept his efforts for a pre-liberation delivery secret. In response, the political leader received messages from Garland<sup>54</sup>, member of the local Greek community, as well as Tsouderos.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., As the partisans were still fighting, the Brigadier thought “the only people we can negotiate with is the Hellenic government.” That there may be multiple administrations overseeing different parts of the country was raised.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> “Mr Fraser’s Message,” *Evening Post*, March 25, 1944.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> “Greek People’s Thanks,” *Evening Post*, March 27, 1944.

<sup>55</sup> “Greek Government’s Thanks,” *Evening Post*, March 28, 1944.



## King and Crarer amongst the Britons

As suggested by an earlier quote to Freyberg, the New Zealanders in the British M.L. apparatus had a degree of direct communication with their own government. This was unlike their countrymen serving with clandestine organisations. Letters to Freyberg were kept confidential, but the correspondence with Fraser was transparent to the British.<sup>56</sup> British authorities were given copies or, more correctly, they were official communications through their communication channels. In one respect, King showed a degree of candour in his correspondence about Greek politics with Freyberg and Fraser. It would intensify. He would also show an intense emotionalism about Greece, but the pragmatics of the shipment preoccupied him in the earlier period of his office.

## Pragmatics of the Relief Ship

The “when” of the food ship delivery had been dictated by the British authorities; the “what” and “when” now had to be addressed. King initially told Wellington that, ideally, the promised shipment should be entirely composed of the equivalent of 45,000 metric tons of liquid milk. In this, he had considered the needs of the Greeks as well what New Zealand produced.<sup>57</sup> If such a shipment was not possible, then “blankets or warm underclothing”<sup>58</sup> should be sent.

When the shipment left in October, the profile of the cargo was considerably different. Commercial constraints were accepted by the Wellington administration from the outset as a memorandum to the Director of Export Marketing from the Secretary of the War Cabinet indicated “without thereby reducing the quantity of foodstuffs available for export to the United Kingdom”.<sup>59</sup> It was a restriction communicated to and appreciated to a degree by the British Ministry of Food in London.<sup>60</sup> Fraser told King of this, as well as the need to maintain supplying the “Allied Forces in the Pacific.”<sup>61</sup>

On October 22, the New Zealand food shipment left for the Middle East on the *Tekoa*. From there it would be forwarded on to Greece. It was a shipment of “1,080 tons gross”.<sup>62</sup> This tonnage differs from other figures for the same consignment but, given the technical discussions, it is highly likely

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<sup>56</sup> WO 204 9179, The National Archives (TNA), Gifts of food from New Zealand Government July 1944 –July 1945.

<sup>57</sup> EA2 107 103 3 6 Pt 1 (ANZ). Relief and rehabilitation - Disasters and relief - Greece and Crete. King to Fraser, July 31, 1944.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Secretary War Cabinet to Director Export Marketing, August 15, 1944.

<sup>60</sup> Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Minister External Affairs, September 20, 1944. The communication noted that the shipment had included items “in very short supply” in Britain but that the Greek shipment did not “prejudice” “other commitments”.

<sup>61</sup> WO 204/9179 (TNA). Gifts of food from New Zealand Government July 1944 –July 1945. Fraser to King, October 17, 1944.

<sup>62</sup> EA2 107 103 3 6 Part 1 (ANZ). Relief and Rehabilitation - Disasters and Relief - Greece and Crete. External to Fernleaf, October 26, 1944. The actual weight differs in several instances. It would seem the technical measurements being applied by the various parties differed (as shown by the remaining archives).

the differences are due to the measurement methods. The cargo comprised milk (condensed and powder), canned vegetables, meat, honey, chocolate, oatmeal and clothing. The ship left four days before the government had approval from the Combined Civil Affairs Committee (C.C.A.C.), a governing body associated with the Allied relief effort. When the response arrived, it was in the affirmative. The shipment would be acceptable and would *not* be deducted from the mandatory U.N.R.R.A. contribution by member nations.<sup>63</sup> As intended, it was indeed a “gift” in that sense. The foodstuffs were worth NZ£80,000.

## Shipping

Assembling the shipment was one thing; getting it to Greece was another. It had been decided to ship the goods to the Middle East. Stockpiled there, they would be forwarded on to liberated Greece. Originally, the ship *Dunnottar Castle* had been tasked with carrying the supplies from New Zealand, but on 18 September, just a month before the liberation of Greece began, the London-based New Zealand High Commissioner told Wellington that the British Ministry of War Transport had notified him “all space not required for Middle East is being filled with cargo [for] United Kingdom.”<sup>64</sup> It looked as though the promised food shipment was in jeopardy. Fraser escalated the matter with London. He wanted the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to take a direct “personal” interest in the matter and to discuss it with Lord Leathers, Minister of War Transport, and Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden. The response was conciliatory, and alternative shipping was made available.<sup>65</sup> In a way, the loss of the *Dunnottar Castle* in the New Zealand relief exercise was fortuitous. Unhygienic conditions on the latter vessel led to a massive protest by 2,300 New Zealand troops, who marched on parliament in Wellington.<sup>66</sup>

After accepting that it could not send a shipment before liberation, New Zealand had obviously driven its special Greek relief contribution forcefully through 1944. It shows a level of commitment to the relationship.

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<sup>63</sup> New Zealand Minister, Washington to Minister of External Affairs, September 17, 1944.

<sup>64</sup> High Commissioner for New Zealand, London to Minister of External Affairs, September 18, 1944.

<sup>65</sup> Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Minister for external Affairs, September 20 & 23, 1944.

<sup>66</sup> One soldier would later recall: “In protest, they broke through the wharf gates, and led by sailors with a piper playing, marched to Parliament to tell Prime Minister Peter Fraser about it.” Jim Henderson, *Soldier Country* (Wellington: Millwood Press, 1978), 14. Fraser contacted London and gave them the number of soldiers involved. He, and the Minister for Defence, personally inspected the ship and found “insanitary conditions and bed bugs”. WO 106/3496 (TNA), New Zealand Troops in Italy. New Zealand government to Dominions Office, November 15, 1944.

## Ensuring Positive New Zealand National Imagining

Wellington naturally wanted the Greek recipients to know that the special aid gift came from New Zealand. In a March 1944 communication to London, Fraser said as much.<sup>67</sup> At home, some basic steps were undertaken that would reinforce this. Time constraints and danger of labelling perishables for the journey led to the decision, made in consultation with a representative of the Greek community, to stencil the crates (rather than individual packets) with the message “A gift from the people of New Zealand to the people of Greece. With gratitude.”<sup>68</sup> It was a long way from the original discussion that, at one point, included finding a way to erase “United States Army ration” on tins of biscuits for the intended gift.<sup>69</sup>

A variant of the official message was repeated in a government newsreel of the ship’s departure.<sup>70</sup> The imagery and commentary focused on the calamities of 1941. The link was between two peoples, but it was soldiers who were highlighted through their loading of crates in a warehouse. The same was true for the ship’s captain and other dignitaries. The waterside workers were “invisible”- seen but not given recognition. New Zealand had fulfilled its commitment.

Figure 5.2 Screen shot from the government newsreel about the Food Ship (Source: Archives New Zealand)



Some of the crates intended for Greece were labelled differently. They simply said 'Πατριωτικός Σύνδεσμος Ελληνίδων Νέας Ζηλανδίας' i.e. Patriotic Association of Greek Women of New Zealand. The containers contained woollen garments. Greeks living in the Dominion had been subsumed within the people of New Zealand in the film exercise.

<sup>67</sup> EA2 107 103 3 6 Part 1 (ANZ). Relief and rehabilitation - Disasters and Relief - Greece and Crete. Minister of External Affairs to New Zealand High Commissioner London, March 11, 1944.

<sup>68</sup> Meeting Minutes, September 15, 1944.

<sup>69</sup> Memorandum for Rt Hon. Prime Minister, August 28, 1944.

<sup>70</sup> *Weekly Review No.166 Relief - Food Ship for Greece*, Wellington: New Zealand National Film Unit, 1944, (Videorecording), [http://www.ecastv.co.nz/program\\_detail.php?program\\_id=955&channel\\_id=60&group\\_id=60](http://www.ecastv.co.nz/program_detail.php?program_id=955&channel_id=60&group_id=60) Accessed July 21, 2014.

## **Delivery Sites for the Special Food Ship – Following the Earlier Path of the New Zealand Army**

As shown earlier, Fraser had begun to differentiate Crete from “Greece”. But he left the distribution up to King.<sup>71</sup> The goods would go to Iraklion (Crete), Piraeus (port of Athens) and Salonika in the North East. But the intended breakdown of amounts does not show a slant towards the island that would become a focus of the New Zealand war memory. It seems that the ports selected were in areas where, or near where, New Zealand troops had soldiered in the campaigns of 1941 - nothing to the Western part of the country. That Crete did not attract any elevation shows the way of thinking at the time. That same logic would cause disagreements amongst New Zealanders in forthcoming years.

**Table 5.2: Intended Distribution ports of New Zealand Food Shipment Source: WO 204/9179 (TNA)**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Amount (Tons)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Piraeus (Athens)</b>	653.45	75.54%
<b>Salonika (Northern mainland)</b>	153.4	17.73%
<b>Iraklion (Crete)</b>	58.2	6.73%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>865.05</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **In Relation to Contributions from other Countries**

As indicated earlier, Fraser had wanted to expedite his own Greek shipment. In this, he wanted to join in with other countries. One was Canada, whose army had never set foot in Greece but which had an involvement with the Greeks at the September Battle of Rimini. In, April 1944, the Fraser administration had been given some background and statistics from the Canadian representative in Wellington. Relief had been flowing from Canada to occupied Greece since the summer of 1942.<sup>72</sup> A monthly contribution of 15,000 tons of wheat had begun at that time. It was “a gift from Canada to the people of Greece.”<sup>73</sup> This had been recently expanded to include other items, such as fish, soup and canned milk. The monthly total was now 31,200 tons. New Zealand pales into comparison with its one-off shipment. Comparison may be difficult given the respective sizes of economy and individual circumstances. However, one thing about this shipment is that it shows the priority and preferred mechanisms for New Zealand relief. It was a gift, in that it had not come out of the

<sup>71</sup> WO 204/9179 (TNA). Gifts of food from New Zealand Government July 1944 –July 1945. Fraser to King, October 17, 1944.

<sup>72</sup> EA2 107 103 3 6 Part 1 (ANZ). Relief and rehabilitation - Disasters and relief - Greece and Crete. Copy of Press Telegram from Department of External Affairs Ottawa to High Commissioner Wellington, April 6, 1944. Received by Wellington government, April 12, 1944.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid

U.N.R.R.A. contribution voted in by the government that year. That organ and the special shipment would be the chief mainstays in the State's arguments about its contribution toward Greece. That stance would be the response to local Greeks and communities from whom it would soon be receiving requests for aid. It was a limitation set by the administration itself with the reasoning that its U.N.R.R.A. contribution was "for Greece" as well. But the United Nations' welfare agency involvement in Greece was a result of the major powers' decisions and historical circumstances. It cannot be taken as proof of New Zealand exceptionalism towards Greece. Similarly, its special shipment lies in contrast to the record of other allies, who had been sending aid for years. Furthermore, it would not be long before the State would employ a subtle deception to strengthen its positive public profile regarding special Greek efforts towards Greek civilians. It was a mixed bag of behaviours, more in the line of complexity of history than the simple message of official memory.

### **Actual Distribution of the Food Ship Gift**

After so much public expression and real effort, the planned distribution points of the New Zealand foodstuffs may have never eventuated. It would have been an outcome of the December 1944 fighting. A published news report of 3 January 1945, mentioning King and Crarer, from the 2NZEF Official War Correspondent, described how the outbreak of fighting in Athens in December 1944 delayed offloading of the special food shipment.<sup>74</sup> It also led to British intervention with the New Zealand gift. By the beginning of January, internal British documents show a shift, with a new emphasis on the capital, Athens: "the Capital district has suffered."<sup>75</sup> Two weeks after the British note, King reassured Fraser that "I have arranged for the New Zealand gift foodstuffs to be called forward" to the original three ports listed earlier.<sup>76</sup> He also said that Crarer would report on the distribution.<sup>77</sup> There the archives trail ends. Efforts to locate family members of Crarer and King have not been successful. King left Greece, also leaving a new and "most attractive" position. He turned it down because of "my desire to be of service to the Greek people."<sup>78</sup> After he left his position and returned to New Zealand, he continued to argue for more New Zealand aid for the Greeks.<sup>79</sup> Besides the foodstuffs shipment, he also made a personal request to Fraser for clothing and footwear to be sent to the Greeks. This was done through using surplus army clothing as well as

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<sup>74</sup> "Great Tragedy Hungry Greeks Food Distribution Impeded," *Evening Post*, January 3, 1945.

<sup>75</sup> WO 204/9179 (TNA). Gifts of food from New Zealand Government July 1944 –July 1945. Internal memorandum, January 2, 1945.

<sup>76</sup> EA 2 1947/41a 103/3/6 Pt 2 (ANZ). Relief and Rehabilitation-Disasters and Relief-Greece and Crete. King to Fraser, January 15, 1945.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> EA1 688/90/9/2 (ANZ). Allied Nations Co-operation - Polish Children's Camp in NZ - Greece - Recognition of assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders. Minister of External Affairs to Freyberg, May 20, 1945.

from community clothing drives overseen by C.O.R.S.O. (Council of Organisations for Relief Services Overseas) – an organisation to be discussed later. It was paid for by the Dominion's U.N.R.R.A. contribution.<sup>80</sup> It was evidence of further interest in Greece, but one with a clear limit in terms of funding: it was not originally intended as a gift.

### **Non-State Support for New Zealand Relief – People and their Pockets**

The special food ship, United Nations commitments and an external comparison with other countries highlight the strategy, limitations and difficulty in determining degrees of New Zealand exceptionalism towards Greece. Internally focused State efforts show similar difficulties. They still did not entirely accommodate the direction the community as a whole was moving in. The National Patriotic Fund temporarily adjusted its policy of non-country specific fund raising by conducting a United Nations Week. The drive took place in mid-June 1944 and drew coverage in the national press.<sup>81</sup> The end result clearly showed that aid to Greece was considered of more importance than aid to other countries. It attracted £12,867 out of £37,750 donated for specific countries.<sup>82</sup> The next highest were Poland (£7,888) and Yugoslavia (£4,036).<sup>83</sup> The monies collected would not form part of the liberation ship gift. They were used to subsequently purchase New Zealand woollen goods.<sup>84</sup> The outstanding amount of £1,473 was handed over by the Patriotic Fund to the Greek New Zealand community in June/July 1946.<sup>85</sup>

The decision to send goods from New Zealand rather than via any other external body is an indication of the growing assertiveness of the New Zealand Greeks. The Greek ambassador to Britain recommended that any funds collected in New Zealand be sent to the Aid to Greece Fund with a British chairperson.<sup>86</sup> The Greeks in New Zealand differed. The funds were used to purchase New Zealand goods, which were then shipped to Greece.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> EA 2 238/103/3 6 Pt 2 (ANZ). Relief and Rehabilitation – Disasters and Relief – Greece and Crete. Extract from General Summary 287, December 1, 1944; New Zealand High Commissioner, Canberra to Minister External Affairs, January 4, 1945. Records on this file show Wellington was very frustrated in navigating a path through the UNRRA and Greek ML quagmire.

<sup>81</sup> "Allied Nations Week's Special Appeal," *Evening Post*, June 8, 1944.

<sup>82</sup> "Allied Nations – Result of Special Appeal," *Evening Post*, November 2, 1944.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, I have used only whole pounds. The final figures were arrived at by taking both the country specific donations and adding an amount from the non-specified monies given. The formula was approved 4 months after the fund raising. *National patriotic Fund Board Minutes*, October 18, 1944 AAYO W3120 Box 6 Pt 2. (ANZ) National Patriotic Fund Board Minutes.

<sup>84</sup> IA 1 3105/172/206 Pt 2 (ANZ). Patriotic Funds Assistance for Greece. *Schedule 187*, December 4, 1945

<sup>85</sup> Gibson to Seddon, June 28, 1946; Janis to Secretary National Patriotic Fund Board, July 10, 1946

<sup>86</sup> IA 1 3105/172/206 Pt 1 (ANZ), Patriotic Funds Assistance for Greece. Gibson to Seddon, August 13, 1945 (ANZ).

<sup>87</sup> Seddon to Hayden, October 24, 1945.

The Fund still placed restrictions on its funding. In terms of foodstuffs, it would not release POW parcels for distribution to Greeks. The request came from Hayden, one of its senior officers who was on tour in the area. The Fund voted that the 60,000 parcels go to Britain instead.<sup>88</sup>

### **Allied Screening Commission**

At the end of December 1945, the New Zealand public read about a “military commission” that had been “set up in Greece to reward Greeks” who had helped evaders and POW escapers following the 1941 battles. The appreciation to the Greeks was evident: “Many soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand Expeditionary Force owed their lives to the Greek and Cretan civilians who fed and sheltered them and assisted in their final escape, often at considerable risk to themselves.”<sup>89</sup> That the body, the Allied Screening Commission, was commanded by a New Zealander, Major W. Lang, with apparently others of his countrymen involved, was an arrangement that reinforced a connection.

The piece included content from an “official release” for the press. Rewards given included money, free transport, employment, and appropriation of German collaborators’ property.<sup>90</sup> Veterans were encouraged to send details of their experiences with civilians to the Commission via the Army Headquarters, Wellington. There had already been instances of individual soldiers sending money, but the Commission “was in a position to give a comparatively generous recompense to helpers and also has much better facilities for tracing citizens in the upset conditions in the country.”<sup>91</sup> Lang confidentially told Freyberg’s headquarters that he had learnt of the interactions between Greeks and New Zealand soldiers through “Telegraphic Intercepts and Censorship Reports”.<sup>92</sup> To readers, it seemed that this was a positive supportive exercise that reinforced the idea of one nation appreciating and thanking another. The confidential background to the piece, however, throws up challenges to this image.

The newspaper story lacks information on the source of the funds for recompense. They are British. The original press release included the origin: “from funds provided by the United Kingdom Government “. That fact was removed (see scan of actual edit below) from the official release

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<sup>88</sup> EA1 688/90/9/2 Pt 1 (ANZ). HQ Maadi Camp to Army HQ Wellington, August 4, 1945, Copy of NPFB Meeting minutes, August 8, 1945. See also HQ 2 NZEF to Army Headquarters, December 31, 1945.

<sup>89</sup> “Reward to Greeks,” *Evening Post*, December 27, 1945. The role of New Zealand soldiers was again emphasised in the press two months later by Defence Minister Fred Jones “Greek Claims,” *Evening Post*, February 26, 1946. [Copies on file]

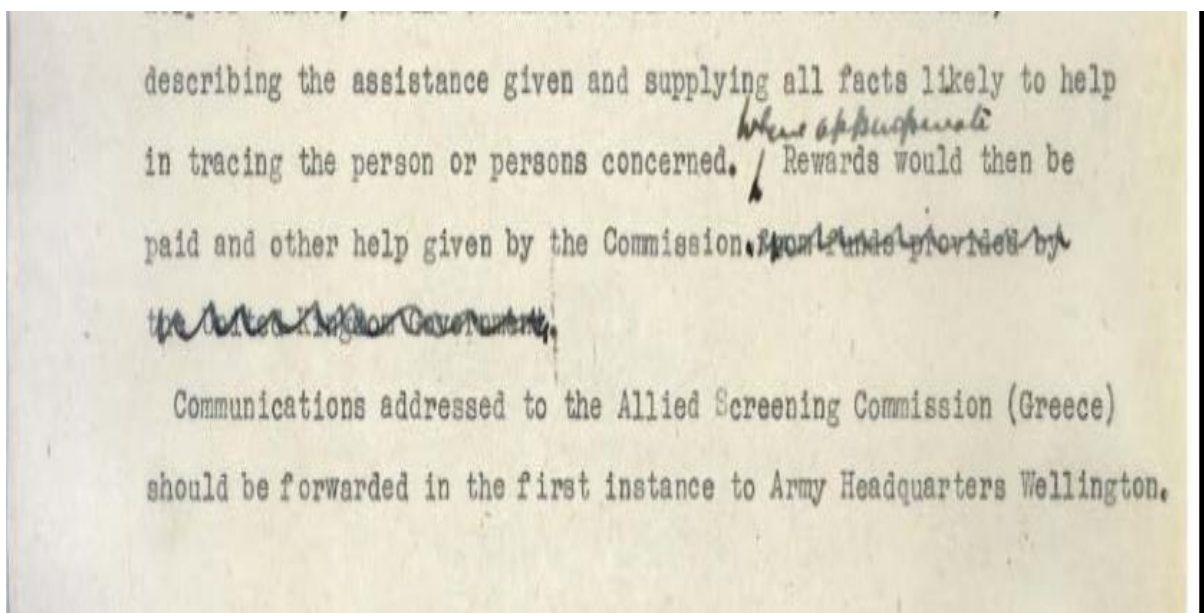
<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> EA1 688 90/9/2 Pt 1 (ANZ), Allied Nations- Polish Children’s Camp in New Zealand – Greece- Recognition of Assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders. Lang to HQ 2NZEF, November 1, 1945.

referred to.<sup>93</sup> There was none from New Zealand. The omission ensures the government could not be criticised. Lang was a strong proponent of government funds rather than veterans assisting the Greeks: “I feel that it is unfair to allow our men to make contributions out of their personal savings while in ignorance of the fact that official action is being taken.”<sup>94</sup> The problem was that there had been no publicity about the Commission. It was an interesting observation, on one hand seeing a State responsibility, but totally out of step with what would develop in the years ahead as non- State bodies and community groups embraced supporting the Greeks.

Figure 5. 3 Edited press release on compensation to Greeks. (Source: EA1 688/ 90/9/2 Pt 1. Archives New Zealand).



Having New Zealanders in key roles in a body like the Screening Commission was not without its challenges. They came from other New Zealanders, namely, Redpath and Craig of “A Force”, M.I.9. This was the force that would be researched by the official war history project but never discussed in the official published form. Craig was in New Zealand, and Redpath was scheduled to return from Greece.

Craig attended a meeting (probably in May 1945) with Perry, Minister for Internal Affairs, Hayden, of the National Patriotic Fund, and Seddon, the Honorary Consul. Some of the matters were further discussed the next day with Tom King (another back from Greece) and another civil servant.<sup>95</sup> Craig told the others that “many New Zealand personnel”, including himself, “would do everything

<sup>93</sup> Draft Press Statement, December 24, 1945.

<sup>94</sup> Memorandum: Allied Screening Commission (Greece) to HQ 2NZEF, November 1, 1945.

<sup>95</sup> Shanahan to Nash, May 17, 1945.



they could” to compensate them for the cost of their providing assistance.<sup>96</sup> Besides talking of those left behind in 1941 avoiding capture, he alluded to those in the clandestine forces: “These Greek families had given assistance to New Zealand paratroopers and others.”<sup>97</sup> Besides his own commitment, what drove Craig was the fact that there was no scheme at that point. The Dominion government had obtained advice from its London-based staff that Britain initially did not intend to make any payments to the Greeks—it was “no less than their duty”.<sup>98</sup> The policy changed and, as already noted, British funds underwrote the payments. However, the discussion in Wellington in May revolved around the possibilities of providing more aid and the avenues open to it, such as U.N.R.R.A. and the use of surplus prisoner of war parcels. It was a genuine discussion in addition to the special food ship. As such, Greece was, again, an exception for New Zealand.

The Wellington administration went to Freyberg about the matter. He advised that he had “this matter in hand” and that he was working with “British forces” over compensating the Greeks.<sup>99</sup> It was obvious that the whole funding mechanism was still in an embryonic stage. That did not stop members of A Force from pursuing the matter. Redpath, still in Greece, challenged the appointment of Lang and his staff. A letter to Wellington from Waite, a member of the National Patriotic Fund visiting Greece, stated that during his visit he had met Redpath. The latter “stated that the whole of the Screening Commission personnel were men who had no previous experience in Greece.”<sup>100</sup> While defending Lang, the New Zealanders agreed to Redpath’s request that he be allowed to stay in Greece to assist the Greeks. Another New Zealand soldier had voiced his desire to assist the Greeks, and the New Zealand State had engaged in discussion about possible ways to recompense the Greeks. This was superseded by the new British policies.

## Politics

The observations of the individuals consulted above were not isolated in the various aid links to Greece. Before Lang and his Screening team dealt with each case, each went through an initial selection process. A post-war internal British exchange illustrates the process. In an effort to counter post-war criticism that nothing had been done for individual Greeks, a senior BBC representative asked the British Foreign Office about the matter.<sup>101</sup> The latter wrote saying “preliminary sorting and classifying” of claims was carried out by the British Embassy in Athens.

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<sup>96</sup> *Relief-Greece*, May 12, 1945.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> Freyberg to Acting Prime Minister, May 30, 1945.

<sup>100</sup> Waite to Perry, August 7, 1945.

<sup>101</sup> FO 371/112902 (TNA), Question of compensation to Greeks who had suffered from being British agents during the Second World War, 1954.

Furthermore, “Great pains were taken at that time to see that these cases were properly and fairly dealt with.”<sup>102</sup> While the intention of the Commission was to approve claims from Greeks who had specifically assisted Allied soldiers, it would seem reasonable to assume that, given the Greek policies of the Foreign Office and the open fighting of Dekemvriana, the Embassy would not be inclined to pass on any case that was obviously involving a left-winger .

One of the issues that had been part of that early New Zealand deliberation had been that to reward specific Greeks would lead to charges of discrimination as against a general compensation (as in the food ship). Another concern, not discussed at these meetings but certainly obliquely highlighted later when British payments were mentioned,<sup>103</sup> was setting the amount of recompense. The issue is exemplified in the case of one Greek who formed part of a high-profile New Zealander’s literary work, the matter is a collision between this author’s estimation based on humanity and another’s less supportive stance. Both were New Zealanders.

### **What is Suffering Worth?**

The posthumous 1947 monograph *Report on Experience* by John Mulgan (an S.O.E. officer in Greece mentioned in a previous chapter) confronts the question of suffering and compensation amongst the suffering of war. Mulgan’s much discussed place in the formation of New Zealand national identity<sup>104</sup> subtly adds to the link between the Pacific nation and the Greeks.

His 1947 work describes at length one such victim of the war, Janni Fafoutis.<sup>105</sup> Mulgan dedicates nine pages to Fafoutis. It is a moving tribute to an elderly man who had endured the war and been tortured by the enemy occupiers. The New Zealander encountered the Greek when the former was administering compensation payments to civilians who had aided members of British clandestine forces during the occupation. Mulgan told his commanding officer, Dolbey, that he had “considerable affection” for the old Greek.<sup>106</sup> He implicitly said the same to his wife in a letter, quoting his own *Report on Experience* manuscript and also called Fafoutis, “my friend”.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Cox to Hood November 19, 1954.

<sup>103</sup> EA1 688 90/9/2 Pt 1 (ANZ). Allied Nations- Polish Children’s Camp in New Zealand – Greece- Recognition of Assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders. At least the previously mentioned Waite gave some examples in an approving tone.

<sup>104</sup> See for example, Stuart Murray, “Oxford Man: John Mulgan and National Discourse”, *Span*, 39 (October 1994); Vincent O’Sullivan, *Long Journey to the Border: A Life of John Mulgan*. 2nd ed. (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2011).

<sup>105</sup> Noted by Whiteford, who edited the latest edition of *Report on Experience*. John Mulgan and Peter Whiteford, *Report on Experience* (London Wellington, N.Z. Annapolis, Md: Frontline Books; Victoria University Press; Naval Institute Press, 2010), 177. Whiteford relies on Sullivan’s biography of Mulgan. Vincent O’Sullivan, *Long Journey to the Border*, 334.

<sup>106</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Count Julian A Dolbey Dobrski Papers, 3/4, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, Kings College, London (LHC). Mulgan to Dolbey, March 28, 1945

<sup>107</sup> John Mulgan to Gabrielle Mulgan, April 17, 1945. Quoted in Peter Whiteford, *A Good Read: Letters of John Mulgan* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2011).

When Fafoutis made contact with Lang of the Screening Commission and New Zealand Prime Minister Peter Fraser, it was a different matter. In August 1945, Fafoutis wrote to Peter Fraser and the Australian Prime Minister, amongst others, asking for financial assistance.<sup>108</sup> His injuries, which he outlined in detail, still required treatment. The matter ended on 24 April 1946, when Fraser wrote to the Greek saying his matter had been investigated by the Screening Commission and he had received “appropriate recompense”.<sup>109</sup> Lang, as he told Wellington, had cast aspersions over the Greek’s character. He had been “seen recently in various Athens taverns”<sup>110</sup> and that he had “lost” 250 sovereigns during his war service. The Greek had also had his mail intercepted, and so it was known that he had been contacting other people. Lang recommended that no further funding be forthcoming. Indeed, he referred to the previously mentioned press release “to prevent our demobilized soldiers from being imposed upon by people like Fafoutis.”<sup>111</sup>

Fafoutis had received some payment. Reports emanating from the Commission often spoke of what it thought to be false claims. A later New Zealand-generated report noted “Experience showed that about half the claims were false or greatly exaggerated.”<sup>112</sup> The Commission closed down in December 1946. Requests from Greeks and Cretans continued over the forthcoming decades, as shown later. Just like compensation, issuing of certificates of appreciation was problematic. However, in this case it combined with high profile and very public expressions to create a dilemma for succeeding New Zealand governments.

### **Certificates of Appreciation**

Issuing certificates of appreciation to civilians who had assisted Allied soldiers was a common practice at the end of the war.<sup>113</sup> In terms of the New Zealand ones Freyberg and his officers again initiated recognition of the Greeks. In late 1944 the General informed the Wellington administration of his intention to award “illuminated letters of thanks”<sup>114</sup> to individual Greeks who had assisted New Zealanders. His enthusiasm was tempered by Deputy Prime Minister Nash, who wrote to

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<sup>108</sup> EA1 688/90/9/2 Part 1 (ANZ). Allied Nations- Polish Children’s Camp in New Zealand – Greece- Recognition of Assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders. Fafoutis to Fraser, August 2, 1945.

<sup>109</sup> Fraser to Fafoutis, April 24, 1946.

<sup>110</sup> Allied Screen Commission (Greece) to HQ 2 NZEF, December 10, 1945. The report was forwarded to External Affairs, Wellington.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid

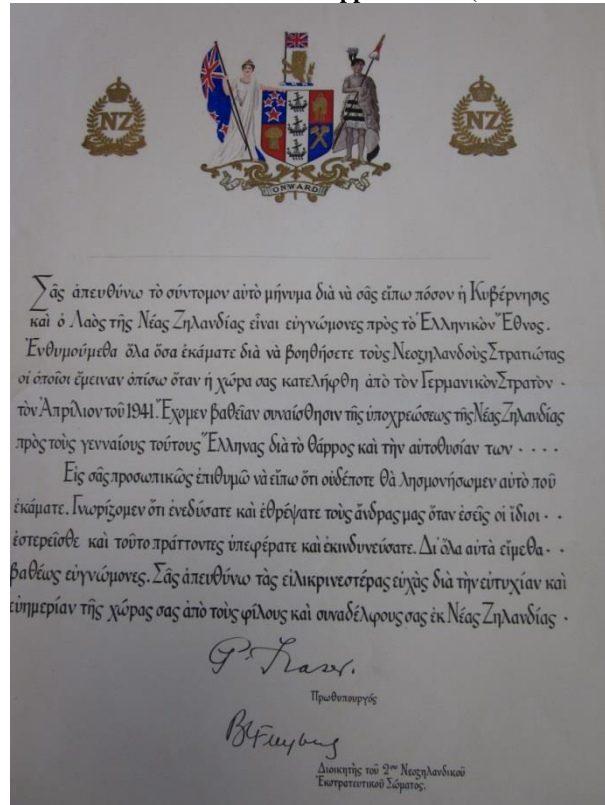
<sup>112</sup> EA1 688/90/9/2 Part 1 (ANZ). Allied Nations- Polish Children’s Camp in New Zealand – Greece- Recognition of Assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders.

<sup>113</sup> See for example WO 208/3420 (TNA). Blank copies Alanbrooke certificates; WO 208/3421 (TNA); Blank Tedder Certificates; and FO 170/1175 (TNA) Claims and awards: Allied Screening Commission, Alexander Certificates.

<sup>114</sup> EA 1 688/90/9/2 Pt 1 (ANZ). Allied Nations- Polish Children’s Camp in New Zealand – Greece- Recognition of Assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders. External to Freyberg, May 31, 1945. The possibility was raised just before the liberation. Freyberg to Fraser, October 9, 1944.

Fraser in late June 1945 about the evolving proposal. Fraser was at the United Nations conference in San Francisco. Nash mentioned the General's acceptance of an "oblique hint" that Fraser might be a more appropriate person to sign.<sup>115</sup> In the end, the signatures of both the General and the Prime Minister would go on the certificates.<sup>116</sup> On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1945, just before the first Crete commemoration, Fraser thanked Freyberg for an update on the certificates for "Greek Friends".<sup>117</sup>

**Figure 5.4 One of the Distributed Certificates of Appreciation. (Source: Archives New Zealand)**



The wording on the certificates, as was to be expected, was emotionally charged. In a 22 June 1945 telegram to Wellington, Freyberg provided draft wording. It also formed part of a 1954 government review of the whole Greek assistance issue.<sup>118</sup> Then the effect of the certificates and public messages had become alarming. The wording was slightly altered grammatically for the final version read at the September/October Crete service by Freyberg. It read:

*"I am sending this short message to remind you that the government and people of New Zealand remember with gratitude all that the Greek people have done to help those New Zealand soldiers who were left behind when*

<sup>115</sup> Nash to Fraser, June 26, 1945.

<sup>116</sup> Nash to Freyberg, July 13, 1945.

<sup>117</sup> Fraser to Freyberg, September 22, 1945.

<sup>118</sup> ABHS W5242 950 Box 79 90/9/2 Part 3 (ANZ). War Affairs: Allied Nations Cooperation- Greece-Recognition of assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders. *New Zealand War Memorials in Greece and Crete and Recognition of Assistance given to New Zealanders in Greece and Crete*, March 1, 1954.

*your country was overrun by the German army in April 1941. We are deeply conscious of New Zealand's debt to the Greek nation for their gallantry and self sacrifice in sheltering many of our men. We realise that the help which you gave was given at the risk of your own lives, and the New Zealand government has asked me to send you this message. We shall never forget all you personally and those associated with you have done for our men during the whole of this war from 1941 to 1945 both in Greece and Crete. We realize that you have fed and clothed our men when you were in want yourselves and that in doing so you suffered hardship and ran great personal risk. We send our sincerest wishes for the happiness and prosperity of your country from your affectionate and devoted friends and comrades in New Zealand".<sup>119</sup>*

The actual certificates distributed were missing several key components of the approved version. The words “forget you personally” and the subsequent years, 1941 to 1945, were absent (Figure 5.4), and that this was the version issued is confirmed by a post-war letter from Crete officials and Greek archives.<sup>120</sup> 1941 had once more been elevated above the other years and Freyberg once more showed he was the Greeks’ champion.

### **To Communities, not Individuals**

The omission of the first component can be explained by issues with identifying intended recipients. In late June 1946, Brigadier Park, the New Zealand senior military liaison officer to the War Office, based in the U.K., told Wellington that difficulties earlier foreseen by New Zealand servicemen on the Allied Screening Commission were now being vindicated by more recent experiences. Now, according to the Allied Screening Commission, that “Due [to the] difficulty of helpers being able [to] differentiate between Kiwis, British and Cypriots and consequent jealousy of New Zealand Commendation Certificates issued to helpers who did not assist Kiwis or overlooking those who did and for whom we possess no details[...] strongly urge Certificates be issued on [a] community basis.”<sup>121</sup> In this proposal there was the “assumption” that where the Commission had paid helpers,

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, also EA1 688/90/9/2 Pt 1 (ANZ). Allied Nations- Polish Children's Camp in New Zealand – Greece- Recognition of Assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders. Freyberg to Fraser, June 22, 1945.

<sup>120</sup> AD 1 1473 380/2/11 (ANZ), War Memorials-War Memorials-Greece and Crete. The letter was from the Galatas, Crete, community, May 25, 1948. The years were missing but the text they provided cut down. The Tsouderos Papers in the General State Archives, Athens (GAK) also has a copy of the certificate. It confirms the date was only 1941.

<sup>121</sup> EA1 688 90/9/2 Pt 1 (ANZ). Allied Nations Cooperation-Polish Children's Camp in NZ-Greece-Recognition of Assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders. Park to Secretary External Affairs, Wellington, June 22, 1946.

“in each such village a Kiwi was helped.”<sup>122</sup> It ended with “N.Z. reps here agree.”<sup>123</sup> Park supported it. Subsequently, Freyberg, now Governor General, and Prime Minister Peter Fraser agreed.<sup>124</sup> The omission of the post-1941 years is not explained by available records. However, the effect is to strengthen the emphasis on 1941 that is so evident in the New Zealand memory.

The first of the certificates was issued by the Allied Screening Commission in August 1946. It was a far cry from the original plan of the New Zealand leadership. Indeed, just four months previously, they had allocated funds to more than double the number of blank certificates issued. The new amount was now 5,000.<sup>125</sup> The best intentions of the leadership had been thwarted by various factors beyond their control. The consequences were two-fold. Firstly, as an internal New Zealand government document observed in late 1950: “In fact, the certificates were sent to every village where payment had been made for help given to British forces. New Zealanders may quite well not have been helped by a particular village.”<sup>126</sup> A Screening Commission report given to the New Zealand army authorities and government, for example, related how in Megara “many false claims are lodged”.<sup>127</sup> Twenty-five percent had been rejected, with a “further 45% having to be drastically cut.”<sup>128</sup>

During the month following the certificate issue, in response, recipients began sending letters of thanks and, in some cases, requests for help to Wellington. This flow was undoubtedly exacerbated by the inclusion of the wider span of communities receiving the certificates. Requests for assistance were often accompanied by reference (and even sometimes photographs or full text translations) to the wording of the certificates. The response to the influx can be seen within the longer, more permanent contribution some non-government actors wanted.

While the food ship, certificates and compensation revolved around the core of army/government relations, there were other initiatives from the greater span of New Zealand society.

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid

<sup>124</sup> Minister for External Affairs to High Commissioner for New Zealand London, July 19, 1946.

<sup>125</sup> New Zealand Liaison Officer London to Army HQ Wellington, March 11, 1946

<sup>126</sup> ABHS 950 W5242 Box 79 90/9/2 Pt 3. (ANZ). Hand written notation on Memorandum Freyberg to McIntosh, August 25, 1950.

<sup>127</sup> EA1 688 90 9 2 Pt 1 (ANZ), Allied Nations Cooperation-Polish Children’s Camp in NZ-Greece-Recognition of Assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders. Allied Screening Commission-Greece Memorandum HQ 2 NZEF to Army Headquarters NZ, December 31, 1945.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

## Volunteers

On its “On this Day” web pages, the New Zealand Ministry of Culture and Heritage recognises August 16 1944 as the day the country’s foremost umbrella aid organisation C.O.R.S.O. (Council of Organisations for Relief Services Overseas) was established.<sup>129</sup> One of its first roles was possibly post-liberated Greece.<sup>130</sup> That this was just days after Freyberg and Fraser were strategising about the possible agitation in the Greek Brigade and weeks before the two leaders worked out how to avoid sending troops to Greece, demonstrates the multiple strands and sometimes conflicting agendas coming out of New Zealand.

The Wellington administration had facilitated the establishment of C.O.R.S.O.<sup>131</sup> The story of the organisation, from its conception until its volunteer team went to liberated Greece, is filled with bureaucratic competition, mainly with the National Patriotic Fund, frustration, public conflict and seeming indifference from the government over the body it had established. One parliamentarian prophetically wrote to Peter Fraser on New Year’s Eve 1944: “As C.O.R.S.O.’s operations grow, it will find itself as much in competition with Patriotic [Fund Board] as in cooperation, and this will almost inevitably lead to friction.”<sup>132</sup> Fraser’s reply was typical of the government neutralist stance. He would be “very sorry” if this did eventuate.<sup>133</sup> C.O.R.S.O.’s first major project involving Greece did not move the government or the National Patriotic Fund Board to attempt conciliation or, in terms of the national administration, arbitration. This flies in contrast to public statements from the nation’s leadership about its support for the volunteers and that Greece, the bonded ally, was the intended recipient.

## C.O.R.S.O. and Greece

As the anticipated Allied re-entry neared, the contribution of New Zealand volunteers was publicly promoted. A newspaper story quoted Carl Berendsen, the country’s delegate at a 1944 U.N.R.R.A. conference, thus: “New Zealanders hoped they would be among the first to enter Greece in relief operations, as they wished to repay the Greek people for their courage and the aid that was so

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<sup>129</sup> “CORSO formed”, URL: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/the-new-zealand-council-of-organisations-for-relief-overseas-corso-formed>. Accessed July 21, 2014.

<sup>130</sup> “Relief Abroad Help for UNRRA NZ Council Formed,” *Evening Post*, August 18, 1944. It was also reported at the time that the “Far East” was also one of the initial target locations. The New Zealand Food Ship for Greece also held a prominent part in this announcement piece.

<sup>131</sup> EA 2 135 103/9/4 Pt 1 (ANZ). Relief and Rehabilitation Voluntary Personnel for UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) Policy- New Zealand Council of Organizations for International Relief Services. For example, as a result of a meeting during the formative period, the draft constitution was altered.

<sup>132</sup> Combs to Fraser, December 31, 1944.

<sup>133</sup> Fraser to Combs, February 20, 1945.

abundantly shown when New Zealand troops fought the enemy on Grecian soil.”<sup>134</sup> Later that year, during the debate on the U.N.R.R.A. Bill in the New Zealand Parliament, Deputy Prime Minister Walter Nash added to the commitment to volunteers. Again, it was via a public statement: “The Minister of Finance (Mr. Nash) said that in due course there would be openings for volunteer personnel to be sent from New Zealand. New Zealand had a particular interest in Greece, and, by geographical position, in the Far East.”<sup>135</sup> In parliament, Nash had also alluded to Greece in the wider context of the debate over the U.N.R.R.A. After pointing to Poland and Greece, he argued: “Can anyone doubt that we have a moral responsibility?”<sup>136</sup> Also, “After all it is worth remembering that we in New Zealand have escaped the ravages of war.” He went on to emphasise the special relationship between New Zealand and Greece: “We in New Zealand would be very happy if we had a particular task given to us, and that task would be to concentrate on helping Greece; for there will be a link never to be forgotten or broken between that country and this Dominion.”<sup>137</sup>

Initially, such public expressions were matched with efforts to make a viable relationship between the National Patriotic Fund and C.O.R.S.O. The Secretary to the Cabinet sought assurances from Hayden, the Fund’s chairman that C.O.R.S.O. could act as a collecting and expending agent.<sup>138</sup> Hayden responded in the affirmative. He did expect there to be some opposition from the provincial arm of the Fund because they were “not fully informed of the position” at the forthcoming national conference, but that could be overcome.<sup>139</sup> Indeed, when C.O.R.S.O. requested NZ £500 for “publicity and incidental expenses” and NZ £10,000 to pay for “out of pocket expenses” and “to provide for dependants” of the proposed Greek Relief team, the smaller amount was approved, and the latter was made subject to further investigation.<sup>140</sup>

It was an optimistic start, but relations between C.O.R.S.O. and the Fund degenerated over forthcoming months. The conflict was reported in the press.<sup>141</sup> At one point, the Fund members demanded C.O.R.S.O. recall a booklet which, they said, misrepresented their relationship to

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<sup>134</sup> “UNRRA Relief,” *Evening Post*, September 26, 1944.

<sup>135</sup> “Greek People,” *Evening Post* November 25, 1944.

<sup>136</sup> *New Zealand Parliamentary Hansard*, United Nations Relief Administration Bill November 23, 1944, 311.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>138</sup> EA 2 135 103/9/4 Pt 1 (ANZ), Relief and Rehabilitation Voluntary Personnel for UNRRA. Shanahan to Hayden, September 28, 1944.

<sup>139</sup> Hayden to Minister External Affairs, September 29, 1944.

<sup>140</sup> AAYO W3120 Box 6 Pt 2. 1943-1948 (ANZ), National Patriotic Fund Board Minutes. Board Minutes December 13, 1945.

<sup>141</sup> “Up against a Snag,” *Evening Post*, July 28, 1945; “Money for CORSO: A Proposal Rejected,” *Evening Post*, November 22, 1945; “Emphatic Refusal,” *Auckland Star*, November 22, 1945.



them.<sup>142</sup> There was still no money forthcoming, even though it was acknowledged there was NZ £100,000 available for foreign relief.<sup>143</sup> The Fund made an approach to Walter Nash, who had made the earlier-mentioned speech in parliament, that the government grant the requested funds directly to CORSO. Nash replied, saying the government supported UNRRA as well as “a limited number of volunteers”<sup>144</sup> but “To support them from government funds would destroy entirely the voluntary nature of the contribution.”<sup>145</sup> They similarly wanted C.O.R.S.O. exempted from the existing legislation framework that limited collecting and expending agents for relief to be the sole mandate of the Fund. Again, Nash declined. The National Patriotic Fund apparatus was to be the sole agent. While all this interaction may be seen to be concerned in a general way with C.O.R.S.O.’s place in government actions and policy, that Greece was involved did not sway the administration’s position.

At the November 1945 National Patriotic Fund Conference, C.O.R.S.O. made its last representation to seek funds for its volunteers. One of the delegation commented that “the New Zealand unit should have been in Greece already, but the organisation was delayed because of lack of funds.”<sup>146</sup> Aggravating the situation was the Fund’s decision to send monies to Britain. It was, as C.O.R.S.O. argued, from “a fund given by the New Zealand people, at the expense of our own New Zealand teams, especially when they are destined for a country to whom we owe a debt of gratitude we can never repay in full, for the succour and shelter given to our men, often at the expense of life and liberty to those who gave it.”<sup>147</sup> Such an argument, again, did not change things. Their intransigence had delayed but not stopped C.O.R.S.O. Their own fund raising meant they had ignored the legal framework put in place. The disjuncture between the Fund and the Organisation continued. When CORSO sought support for sending wool to Greece in 1946, their request was declined.<sup>148</sup>

### **Final Departure and a Mixed Experience**

C.O.R.S.O. still managed to send a team to Greece. It launched its own public appeal in December 1945. To the organisation, its lateness was a public embarrassment. Vice-Chairman White told the

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<sup>142</sup> MS papers 1675 Folder 3/31 (ATL). New Zealand Relief Unit in Greece (CORSO). The incident generated press stories but there was also an exchange of correspondence (official and confidential) between CORSO and the Hawkes Bay Provincial Council.

<sup>143</sup> “Up against a Snag,” *Evening Post*, July 28, 1945.

<sup>144</sup> AAYO W3120 Box 6 Pt 2. (ANZ). National Patriotic Fund Board Minutes. Board Minutes. Letter from government spokesman quoted in minutes. Date unknown.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> IA 1 3105 172/206 Pt 1 (ANZ). Extract from NPFB Conference November 21, 1945

<sup>147</sup> MS Papers 1675 03/31 (ATL). New Zealand Relief Unit in Greece (CORSO). Draft letter to the Editor of the *Dominion* December 3, 1945.

<sup>148</sup> MS Papers 1675 02/01 (ATL). CORSO Executive Minutes, October 8, 1946.

*New Zealand Listener* that “I think I am right in saying that New Zealand is now the only principal member of the British Commonwealth not yet represented in this way in the field.”<sup>149</sup>

**Figure 5.5: C.O.R.S.O. farewell. Deputy Prime Minister Walter Nash is 3rd from left in the front row. Next to him is Dr Sylvia Chapman. Source: R Thurlow Thomson *New Zealand in Relief: Story of CORSO*, (Wellington: CORSO, 1965).**



The official farewell was 21 December 1945, over a year since liberation. Nash, Honorary Greek Consul Seddon and other officials attended. The *Evening Post* wrote that Nash stated “Among the Allied people who owed so much to the Greeks... no name stood higher in their estimation than that of the New Zealanders.”<sup>150</sup> Also that: “We must never forget what the Greeks did for our own men.”<sup>151</sup> Given the denial of funding, these public statements show a considerable gap between rhetoric and reality.

### **In Greece itself**

The delayed departure impacted on the team’s operations. They arrived in the year U.N.R.R.A. was leaving.<sup>152</sup> Approximately 6 months after they arrived 16 members of the team arrived home. A report from the leader, Dr. Sylvia Chapman, related that the team been utilised as “individuals” rather than a cohesive unit<sup>153</sup> and that there was “dissatisfaction emanating from members of the Greek Unit.”<sup>154</sup> To mitigate this situation, the Executive decided none of the group was to give statements to the press without prior approval by C.O.R.S.O.<sup>155</sup> The Greek experience was analysed

<sup>149</sup> “New Zealand Relief Teams for Greece,” *New Zealand Listener*, December 7, 1945.

<sup>150</sup> “Aid for Greece,” *Evening Post*, December 22, 1945.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> MS Papers 1675 02/01 (ATL). CORSO Executive Minutes 2 September 1946. At the beginning of September, the Wellington-based CORSO Executive first discussed its future.

<sup>153</sup> CORSO Executive Minutes October 8, 1946.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

so as to better prepare the next relief team project – China.<sup>156</sup> Chapman’s experiences, as mentioned earlier, also fed into the constructed utilitarian official memory proposal. That initiative never went anywhere, while the C.O.R.S.O. exercise was far less successful than planned. There was a distinct lack of New Zealand State commitment in both of these.

### **Volunteers and the Politics of Greece**

In contrast to food shipment, the saga of C.O.R.S.O. is almost entirely lacking any impact from the Greek political situation. Nash provides a rare public instance, while the team leader, Dr. Sylvia Chapman, included it in the constructed memory project previously mentioned. At the C.O.R.S.O. team farewell, Nash, as Acting Prime Minister, said of the Greeks: "Whatever might have been the political differences that developed later, they as a people remained a single unit in deciding that the German forces of occupation should not succeed."<sup>157</sup> Essentially, the divisions of the civil war and ongoing tensions were forgotten. Treating the Greeks as a single entity made for a simple collective; cleansing the blatant violence, ignoring the British, and leaving only “differences”, makes for a simple scenario conducive to a memory, as does the image of a Greece unified against the invader. Again, collaborators, another type of Greek, are omitted. Incorporating the vagueness through the word “later” (skating over exactly when, the mutinies, October 1943 round of the civil war, Dekemvriana, ongoing tensions, mass imprisonments) again makes for a light anaesthetic applied to New Zealand, so the discomfort of feeling Greek civil disturbances is blotted out.

Records of the experiences of the team with the political environment in Greece are extremely sparse. Chapman’s personal diary does not include any comment<sup>158</sup> but, with a constructed memory proposal discussed later, she was not backward in raising the internal Greek political issue. In contrast, there was at least one extensive narrative provided to the official war history project that depicted a marked change in attitude through direct exposure to post-war Greece.

### **One Single Volunteer and their Experience**

C.J. Leach, a former member of a New Zealand army ambulance unit, joined the British Red Cross in December 1944 and went to Greece earlier than C.O.R.S.O. His motivation was consistent with the humanitarian element of the his country’s relationship with Greece: “I was hoping to reach Greece; for the loyalty this stricken country had shown toward us during and after the evacuation of

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<sup>156</sup> CORSO Executive Minutes October 8, 1946; CORSO Executive Minutes December 5, 1946.

<sup>157</sup> “Aid for Greece,” *Evening Post*, December 22, 1945.

<sup>158</sup> MS-Papers- 9382-22 Chapman, Eichelbaum and Rosenberg families : Papers (MS-Group-0754) Diaries 1946 (ATL)

1941 had been factors in giving rise in the heart of every prisoner of war who had passed through the prison camps at Corinth, Athens, and Salonika to a deep feeling of gratitude towards the Greek people.”<sup>159</sup> Leach was told to remain in Egypt for months before “conditions became more tranquil.”<sup>160</sup>

Leach’s journeys through Greece were subject to changing conditions. He began his recollection with wartime atrocities by Bulgarian occupiers and then E.L.A.S., with its “torture and murder”.<sup>161</sup> Fears of the latter’s return were expressed by villagers, and in one town there were stories they were plotting to blow up the cathedral. The time was also punctuated with conversations with the same E.L.A.S., who were at that time still circulating openly.<sup>162</sup>

These early episodes were soon followed by realignment, through being introduced to the rightist terror, conducted with tacit British approval. Leach attended a regional gathering of the British Red Cross, which was addressed by its Assistant Commissioner for the whole of Greece. Besides affronting Dominion national identity by using “Britain” to include all the workers in the country, the Commissioner also supported British intervention “to assert British influence on the internal politics as was the part played by the British forces.”<sup>163</sup> The role was to guide the country toward democracy. Leach was scathing of this assertion. His exposure to the dubious practices of the current regime grew considerably when he was made U.N.R.R.A. Prisons Welfare Officer for the eight prisons in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace.

E.A.M./E.L.A.S. prisoners were held on “trumped up charges” if bona fide ones of violence could not be found.<sup>164</sup> Prisoners claimed clothing had been distributed according to political leanings of prisoners, and only right-wing and centre journalists could enter the prison, while the communist variety was prevented.<sup>165</sup> A collaborator female inmate had been imprisoned for 11 months there and had her child during that period.<sup>166</sup> Leach’s Greek experiences were captured by the ubiquitous War History project.

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<sup>159</sup> WAI 1 350 DA 477.21/45- DA 477.21/73 (ANZ), Greece Eyewitness Accounts- UNRRA, C.J. Leach, *Experiences with UNRRA in Greece*, 1

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., *Report on Drama Prison*, June 22 1945.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., *Report on Kavalla Prison*, August 21 1945.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., *Report on Xanthi Prison*, August 25 1945

## Orphans

Despite taking in Polish orphans, the New Zealand government formally declined to accept any Greek ones in the immediate post-war period.<sup>167</sup> It was another limitation to the aid New Zealand would show. A similar proposal had been made to Freyberg during 1942 by one of his officers. At that time, the General thought it was premature.<sup>168</sup>

The initiative for resettling children came from the Greek government. As early as October 1944, the matter was raised with Archbishop Damaskinos of Greece. The children were those whose “breadwinners” had been executed by the occupying enemy.<sup>169</sup> The proposal was linked to the interest of Commonwealth nations whose soldiers had been assisted by Greek civilians. New Zealand was specifically mentioned. Any special attention New Zealand gave Greek children was seemingly limited to specific requirements in the special food shipment. It was yet another restriction to the relationship. When the state endorsed Greek migration wave of Greeks did later eventuate, it was those refugees from behind the Iron Curtain that constituted the expansion.<sup>170</sup> Again, a limit/preference had been made by the New Zealand state.

## A More Permanent Contribution

A more permanent form of official recognition of the assistance by Greek civilians had actually been raised with the government as early as January 1945. This was part of an initiative from the New Zealand R.S.A.<sup>171</sup> Years of discussion involving the governments of Fraser and then Holland, the R.S.A., CO.R.S.O., the New Zealand Greeks and the British came to nothing. Besides the pragmatics of establishing a foreign-sited facility, other factors reflected both the limits of State willingness and also the intrusion of the Greek civil war. The nature of the non-urban Greek society had an impact. Treasury told Fraser and the army that “In general, this office feels that if any memorial is to be erected in Crete then it should be arranged on a Governmental level, and New Zealand should not deal individually with the various towns.”<sup>172</sup> The underlying logic was Deputy Prime Minister Walter Nash’s. A separate document noted: “Mr Nash felt that if we granted assistance to one community in Greece, it would be difficult to refuse the grant of assistance to

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<sup>167</sup> FO 371/55842 (TNA). Proposed emigration of Greek orphans to New Zealand 1946, Council of Foreign Ministers Results of Paris Discussions on Germany 1946 communications September 24, 30.

<sup>168</sup> Extract from Report of Overseas Commissioner, Colonel Waite, No. 33, December 3, 1942.

<sup>169</sup> HS 5/419 (TNA). Appreciation and plan for Greece; policy towards Russian mission in Greece; plans for etc. A.A. Pallis to Damaskinos, October 22, 1944.

<sup>170</sup> George Kanarakis, "Literary Expression of Hellenism in New Zealand," Paper presented at the Biennial Conference of Greek Studies Flinders University, 2001.

<sup>171</sup> ABHS W5242 950 Box 79 90/9/2 Part 3 (ANZ). New Zealand War Memorials in Greece and Crete and Recognition of Assistance given to New Zealanders in Greece and Crete.

<sup>172</sup> AD 1 1473/380/2/11 (ANZ). War memorials - War memorials, Greece and Crete. Secretary of Treasury to Permanent Head Prime Minister’s Department, November 12, 1948.

many others, who would feel, because of their association with New Zealand troops, that they should be aided in constructing a memorial.”<sup>173</sup>

A utilitarian memorial (such as a hospital or sanatorium) rather than a symbolic one was preferred. While the government had input from various parties and support from the Minister of Internal Affairs,<sup>174</sup> in October 1945 Fraser initially used Freyberg’s forthcoming appointment as Governor General to delay a decision.<sup>175</sup> The General was casting a long shadow, still.

By August 1946, the idea of a suitable memorial appeared in the press under the headline of “Bonds with Greece”.<sup>176</sup> Whether it was to be on the mainland or on the island of Crete, or both, was left open at the beginning. But in the end, Crete prevailed. Even the New Zealand Greeks who were mostly from non-Cretan backgrounds wanted Crete.<sup>177</sup>

The government asked three volunteers who had been with the C.O.R.S.O. Greek team for their opinions. One was Dr. Sylvia Chapman, the head of the team. The others were Mrs. Grieg, then with the Greek Relief Association, Athens, and Mr Burns who had been administrative head in Greece. There were various factors in consideration, and the civil war also had an influence. Chapman was sceptical about building anything: “The present is no time for New Zealand to put money into buildings and equipment which at any moment may be destroyed as a result of rebel action.”<sup>178</sup> She preferred other ways of aid. Burns said, “Crete possesses more political stability”.<sup>179</sup> Mrs Grieg stressed, “The difficulties of building operations due to the civil war, and the not unlikely possibility that a hospital, once built, may be damaged or taken over by the rebels for purposes other than medical.”<sup>180</sup> She, like Chapman, looked for other avenues to channel New Zealand goodwill, such as a programme for blind children.

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<sup>173</sup> EA1 164 29/5/4/Pt 1 (ANZ). Ceremonial Affairs-Memorials – War Memorials-Greece 1945-1950. *New Zealand War Memorials in Greece and Crete* November 14, 1948

<sup>174</sup> Memorandum Prime Minister’s Department Wellington FS:ER. August 9, 1946

<sup>175</sup> McIntosh to Minister of Internal Affairs, October 16, 1945.

<sup>176</sup> “Bonds with Greece,” *Evening Post*, August 26, 1946. Copy on file.

<sup>177</sup> Acting Permanent Head to Prime Minister, September 18, 1946.

<sup>178</sup> Chapman to New Zealand government enclosure July 26, 1948

<sup>179</sup> *Proposed Recognition of Greece* October 27, 1946

<sup>180</sup> Extract from letter from Mrs Grieg [undated]. Both the Chapman and Grieg letters came via C.O.R.S.O.

The change of government in 1949 did not bring any advancement of the utilitarian monument idea. The following year, new Prime Minister Holland commented, “We have plenty of problems already. Let sleeping dogs lie.”<sup>181</sup> This followed the Labour administration’s long-held hesitancy.

In March 1954, the government took stock of its promises and aid provided to Greece.<sup>182</sup> Over a year before, J.V. Wilson made a proposal to Cabinet Secretary Shanahan that funds be allocated for “a single symbolic act of gratitude, and explain it as such.”<sup>183</sup> The money should be to fund “schools and churches”.<sup>184</sup> The seeds for what had become an embarrassing predicament were laid by Wilson at the feet of Freyberg and Fraser. Their messages and certificates to the Greek population had not been accompanied by a practical component. Hence, he asked about the awareness of the present Prime Minister, Holland, and asked “if he has had fully brought home to him the hollowness of the then Prime Minister and the Commander in Chief.”<sup>185</sup> Wilson’s suggestion, “apparently came to nothing.”<sup>186</sup> But the requests kept coming, right up at least into the 1960s. There was a clear boundary of war-related aid, linked to official memory that the government would not cross.

### **Expressions of Political Developments by Greeks**

The New Zealand administration encountered a smattering of Greek politics through direct appeals to itself or via its own citizens. The majority of letters damned the communists. Thus, appeals from Greek and Cretan communities included statements such as, “Civil trouble caused by the Slavic and Communistic propagandas as well”.<sup>187</sup> Others included “gangsters [a synonym for the left-wing rebels] have brought to our people starvation and poverty”<sup>188</sup> and “the gangr[en]ous leprosy of servile communism”<sup>189</sup>. One, however, spoke of the “help [...] the people in my village” and “EAM” provided to ensure New Zealand soldiers were taken out of the country, while now former collaborators, “same persons as donned German uniforms”,<sup>190</sup> remained free. The same

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<sup>181</sup> EA 1 620 87/14/4/33 Pt 1a (ANZ). NZ Forces – Casualties- War Graves and Memorials - Agreement with Greece (Crete) Quoted in *New Zealand War Memorials in Greece and Crete and Recognition of Assistance given to New Zealanders in Greece and Crete*

<sup>182</sup> *New Zealand War Memorials in Greece and Crete and Recognition*

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> ABHS 950/79/90/9/2 Pt. 3 (ANZ). War Affairs: Allied Nations Cooperation-Greece- Recognition of Assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders. Wilson to Shanahan, October 8, 1952. The former did, however, note that the Dominion was providing technical assistance.

<sup>186</sup> Memorandum to Cunningham and Larkin, October 14, 1960.

<sup>187</sup> EA1 688 90/9/2 Pt 1 (ANZ). Allied Nations Cooperation Polish Children Greece 1944-1949. President Folios to Prime Minister Fraser, November 2, 1946.

<sup>188</sup> Committee of Mpouzi to Governor General Bernard Freyberg, March 15, 1949.

<sup>189</sup> EA1 688 90/9/2 Pt 2 (ANZ). Allied Nations Cooperation Polish Children Greece 1944-1949. Translation of Letter of protest to leaders, Allied Ambassadors and parliaments of the United Nations.

<sup>190</sup> Papadopoulos to Fraser, September 15, 1946.

correspondent also mentioned forced exile to the islands. These statements did not generate any great internal discussion in the New Zealand administration. However, by the Third Round of the Civil War there was a subtle concatenation by some of the earlier Axis occupiers and the rebel Greeks. When discussing the adoption of villages in 1950, Seddon had told the Dunedin mayor to "be assured of the gratitude of the Greek government, which not only in the period of the 1939-1945 war carried on the struggle for us, but is still bravely battling against the enemies of Democracy".<sup>191</sup> The civil war was also in the mind of the Prime Minister during the same episode. He thought those communities which "suffered from civil war as well as in the occupation, appear to be particularly deserving of assistance."<sup>192</sup>

At the same time, overt acts were to be avoided. A request from the "National Union of Victims of those Massacred by EAM and ELAS" to send a delegation to New Zealand and collect monies attracted the internal comment, "The risks of transferring Greek quarrels to New Zealand if this request is granted is obvious."<sup>193</sup> Overall, though, the attitude of the New Zealand government to post-war requests from the Greeks was that state assistance was to be avoided. This disengagement was not universal. The difference was when New Zealand's own former soldiers became involved, as the following chapter illustrates.

### **Mainland Greece versus Crete**

As indicated earlier, the first appearance of Crete in internal communications about aid was in early 1944. The island's allocation did not match the higher standing vis-à-vis the mainland that it would eventually gain in remembrance. Where the island fitted in wartime and post-war relief eventually became an issue in official circles.

Non-priority of Crete was in contrast to a "Mr Martin", who was based in Crete and who had undertaken a major public promotion of aid for the island. C.O.R.S.O., working with an Athens-based Save the Children co-ordinator, told Martin that "We note that Mrs Grieg [ the Athens coordinator previously mentioned] informed you that, although Crete has suffered desperately in the war, it had not been in nearly such a bad way as Macedonia and Epirus."<sup>194</sup> Martin was not the only one advocating Crete. So did Freyberg. In August 1950, during an exchange concerned with

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<sup>191</sup> G 49 17/37(ANZ). Correspondence re assistance to Villages in Greece and Crete. Seddon to Cameron, August 2, 1950.

<sup>192</sup> Permanent Secretary Prime Ministers Department to Freyberg, August 24, 1950.

<sup>193</sup> EA 2 238 103 3 6 Pt 2 (ANZ). Relief and Rehabilitation – Disasters and Relief – Greece and Crete Wilson to McIntosh and Laking, October 19, 1945.

<sup>194</sup> WAI 3/4/17 (ANZ). Campaign in Greece 1941, correspondence files Correspondence on post-war Crete and Greece by W Martin, Feb 1945 - Jan 1951, Morrison to Martin July 19, 1950.



British-initiated village adoption schemes, Seddon told the wife of the Athens-based British Ambassador that “No one is better fitted than our governor [general] to give this advice for he was, as you know, in command of our New Zealand Division in Greece and Crete and, moreover, he has a deep and abiding regard for the Greek people.”<sup>195</sup> The general in fact wanted two factors to be considered – “villages where the greatest numbers of New Zealanders were helped during the war, and according to the degree to which the local people suffered.”<sup>196</sup> He discussed the issue with the new Prime Minister, Holland. The latter agreed with Freyberg – it should be Crete.<sup>197</sup>

In the end, these particular deliberations led to two mainland villages being adopted. The ultimate decision lay with the wife of the British ambassador in Athens, who was head of the programme. Her view differed with Freyberg, as reported in the press.<sup>198</sup> The Dominion’s national leadership had not prevailed. Elsewhere, the elevation of Crete was being pursued by the Official History project. This was evident with the volume on the battle for Crete, but one cannot find it in the short monograph on escapes.<sup>199</sup> There, the weight of ambiguity was allocated to the mainland more than to Crete when it came to civilian support. This was achieved during some final editing of the text. Hence, discarded sections included “Cretans were not particularly anxious to go on hiding escaped prisoners”<sup>200</sup> and “Men returned to camp, by mutual agreement with their hosts that the danger was too great.”<sup>201</sup> At the same time Crete was elevated in the published work. Here soldiers “found that their trust was seldom misplaced”.<sup>202</sup> The mainland was subject to some qualification - “popular opinion was a little fickle” and “One escaper who spent much time with the Greeks said Greece was the land of ‘you never know’”.<sup>203</sup> Such were the subtle adjustments that, while acknowledging assistance, at the same time ensured Crete was uppermost.

## Retribution

As noted in previous chapters, New Zealand expressions of indebtedness to the Greeks for assistance to its troops were widespread. It was intensified by the consequences of such assistance – reprisals in the form of executions, destruction of villages, torture and so on. When it came to post-

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<sup>195</sup> ABHS 950 W5242 Box 79 90/9/2 Part 3 (ANZ). War Affairs: Allied Nations Cooperation-Greece- Recognition of Assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders. Seddon to Lady Norton August 2, 1950.

<sup>196</sup> G 49/17/37 (ANZ). Correspondence re assistance to Villages in Greece and Crete. McIntosh to Freyberg, September 4, 1950.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> ABHS 950 W5242 Box 79 90/9/2 Pt 3 (ANZ). War Affairs: Allied Nations Cooperation-Greece- Recognition of Assistance given by Greeks to New Zealanders. “Greek Villages adopted by New Zealanders,” Evening Post, November 15, 1950. Lady Norton thought Canea (a possibility given Freyberg’s views) was an “extremely prosperous little town”.

<sup>199</sup> Hall, D.O.W., “Escapes” in *Episodes & Studies: Vol. 2.* (Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, 1950).

<sup>200</sup> IA1 3386 181/25/14 (ANZ). War History – Popular History-Escapes, Deletion page 3.on draft.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Hall, D.O.W., “Escapes”, 14.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 14.

war crime investigations and trials, New Zealand had servicemen attached to a British War Office agency in the Middle East. It also carried out police and army actions at home to gather testimony, and it also maintained its own representatives on Allied war crimes bodies in Europe.<sup>204</sup>

The Dominion was in a situation where it was enmeshed in British and allied diplomatic-legal structures. Limits of British commitment and interest impacted on the Dominion. For example, on 12 July 1948, London told Wellington that, in terms of the British zone of occupation in Germany, “In our view, punishment of war criminals is more a matter of discouraging future generations than of meting out retribution to every guilty individual. Moreover, in view of future political developments in Germany envisaged by recent tripartite talks, we are convinced that it is now necessary to dispose of the past as soon as possible.”<sup>205</sup> New Zealand disagreed with this stance, “having doubts on the arrangements outlined in your telegram.”<sup>206</sup> London responded, saying crimes against personnel from the United Kingdom or the Dominion or those “in service of [the] Crown”<sup>207</sup> were not included in this category, but it still set boundaries regarding other countries’ claims for extraditing individuals from the British-controlled zone. These high policy decisions and British/major power apparatus also came with operational matters. They impacted on both New Zealand’s own national imagining and its relationship to Greece.

### **Jack Stuart**

In contrast to the accepted view of New Zealanders helping Greek victims lies the case of Jack Stuart who was executed by Italians in Greece.<sup>208</sup> His incarceration and treatment in the Averoff prison in Athens is an example of where machinery for war crimes investigation did not provide a committed avenue for dealing with war crimes - both those committed against its own nationals and also against Greeks - reported by New Zealand.

Before his death Stuart had been beaten and kept in a cell deliberately maintained to physically damage him. The charge was the “shooting of an Italian soldier in Athens.”<sup>209</sup> In response to the New Zealand submission about his case, the British response was that they had “a great deal of information is available in this office with regard to Averoff prison. No further assistance will be

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<sup>204</sup> AD1 1403 339/1/124 Casualties-War Crimes Commission-Instructions and Policy (ANZ). AD1 1400/339/1/66 Pt 1. C912 876, Casualties-War Crimes-Investigation (ANZ).

<sup>205</sup> EA W2620/1 106/3/20 (ANZ), Law and Justice-War Crimes-German War Crimes. Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations (CROSEC) to Minister External Affairs, Wellington, July 13, 1948.

<sup>206</sup> Minister External Affairs to CROSEC, July 22, 1948

<sup>207</sup> Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Minister for External Affairs, August 7, 1948.

<sup>208</sup> Davin, *Crete*, 517-8. The official war history mentions his fate in the Crete volume and presents him as enduring it with stoicism.

<sup>209</sup> AD1 1406 339/2/6 (ANZ). Casualties-War Crimes-Greek and Italian Carabinieri. Statement by William Ditchburn, November 16, 1946.

required.”<sup>210</sup> Nine months later, the British War Office told a London-based New Zealand representative that the cases about Averoff were “completed as far” as it was concerned.<sup>211</sup> But they went on to say that New Zealand cases would be sent to the Greek representatives on the United War Crimes Commission. It was a decision that would not give one confidence. Wellington received numerous reports produced by the Allied nations’ war crimes trials being conducted on the other side of the world. In terms of Greece, there was an entry in an 11 August 1947 table about the progress of the war crimes of individual nations.<sup>212</sup> Greece had the second-lowest number, with two cases, involving 4 defendants tried. By 11 February, having had no recent news from the British authorities except that the Greeks had advised that the Italian trials had started, Wellington sought out a further update. There the archive trail ends and the case of Stuart is seemingly lost in the post war swirl of trials and civil unrest.

### **Crimes Against Greeks**

Post-war New Zealand investigations also threw up testimony about war crimes against Greeks. Two were submitted to British authorities. The response to one reflected their position: “This is not the concern of this office.”<sup>213</sup> The British were not pursuing crimes against other nationals (or members of their Commonwealth). This was the norm in some post-war trials, the view being that crimes against nations should be pursued by their own government.

In the general scheme of things, one New Zealander had been temporarily incarcerated at the Larissa concentration camp. The site is highlighted in one academic study on Italian brutality during the occupation.<sup>214</sup> The New Zealand soldier concerned stated that there had been regular mass flogging in the camp and that “Many Greeks died of starvation in Larissa camp.”<sup>215</sup> Such experiences may have been captured after the war, but during the conflict itself, Freyberg’s staff had generated its own summary report based upon interviews with escapees from Crete. It included descriptions of ill-treatment of Cretan villagers. For example, “In some cases, whole villages have been wiped out”<sup>216</sup> and, “they rob the inhabitants of food.... murderous retaliations.”<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Military Liaison Officer to Chief of General Staff Army Headquarters Wellington, January 22, 1946.

<sup>211</sup> Military Liaison Officer to Chief of General Staff Army Headquarters Wellington, November 28, 1946.

<sup>212</sup> EA W2620/1 106/3/20 1946-1947 Pt. 4(ANZ). Law and Justice-War Crimes-German War Crimes. *United Nations War Crimes Commission Progress Report of war Crimes Trials from Data Available on August 1 1947.*

<sup>213</sup> Note on schedule in above file.

<sup>214</sup> Lidia Santarelli, “Muted Violence: Italian war crimes in Occupied Greece,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 9, 3 (2004).

<sup>215</sup> AD1 1403/339/1/124 (ANZ), Casualties- War Crimes Commission- Instructions and Policy. Note Case 2 on schedule Military Liaison Officer to Secretary of Defence Wellington, January 11, 1946.

<sup>216</sup> WAI8 Box 9 B (ANZ). Summary Information from Escaped Prisoners of War and Bell’s on Crete, Report 44

<sup>217</sup> Report 47.

Such general statements did not feed into the war crimes process. However, two specific cases that the British would not take up had already been pursued. Both involved incidents on the mainland, not Crete, the pivot of New Zealand memory.

The Dominion was so committed to pursue war crimes that it contacted army officer Sandy Thomas in Japan. Thomas never made a statement that supported his 1942 assertion after escaping from occupied Greece. A Greek mayor had told him about a reprisal and showed him where it happened. The whole episode revolved around “why he was unable to help me.”<sup>218</sup> At the time of the later approach Thomas concluded, “I only stayed in the village overnight, and as it is now nearly five years since December 1941, I regret that I have even forgotten even the rather difficult name of the mayor.”<sup>219</sup>

The second case involved the torture of a Greek youth in Averoff prison, the same place of incarceration that held Stuart. Unlike Thomas’ case, this information came from first-hand experience. A young Greek had been “tortured by Italian guards”,<sup>220</sup> and the injuries had been shown to a New Zealand soldier. This was one of the cases against Greek nationals that Britain would not pursue. It would also seem that New Zealand did not have access to provide its information to a Greek party.

One can state several observations about the New Zealand response to war crimes and Greeks. First, it was contained within machinery dominated by Britain. Second, this did not stop it from putting forward cases about Greeks. Thirdly, though, there was no specific drive in the New Zealand thinking about the need to give special place to retribution for the Greeks. Finally, Crimes committed against Cretans did not figure more highly than those carried out elsewhere. New Zealand would again make representations about crimes in Greece. This concerned a case of Greeks against Greeks. It will be discussed in the next chapter.

An analysis of New Zealand humanitarianism and retribution in the New Zealand-Greek connection shows both self-imposed limitations by New Zealand and/or constraints made by larger powers. In this, its funding policies were sometimes in conflict with the wider community and non- State

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<sup>218</sup> AD1 1406 339/2/2 (ANZ). Casualties-War Crimes-Shooting of Greeks, HQ 2NZEF War Criminals Charge No 2 Statement from Lt Col WB Thomas (Japan) September 11, 1946.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> AD1 1406 339/2/6 (ANZ). Casualties-War Crimes-Greek and Italian Carabinieri. Statement made by 2754570 B.N.M. Day D.F. 2 Bn Black Watch 9RHR) [Undated].

organisations (individuals seeking a special Greek fund and later, C.O.R.S.O.). From mid-1943, it genuinely pursued humanitarian aid for Greece but always with caveats and restrictions.

Public expressions of appreciation by the leadership in speeches and the certificates never translated into practical State effort after the food ship. Similarly, the official war histories never promoted this whole area of humanitarian aid - in contrast to 1941, clandestine work and, to a lesser degree, Rimini. Perhaps reflecting this in the longer term is a lack of this humanitarian residue in the internal New Zealand diplomatic dialogue of the period 1960-1990s that informed the discussion in Chapter 3. It was focused on the 1941 battles. Those battles were also emphasised by the edited certificates of appreciation. Widening the definition of communities that had supposedly provided assistance to New Zealanders made the whole exercise somewhat dubious.

But the archives show that, while the State had curtailed its activity, individual and veteran groups had increased and maintained their engagement. It was an indication of where the citizenry and veterans would, and could, make a difference. That was not the case with pursuing war criminals. Here, individuals were more motivated to raise the issue in public when it came to their own involvement. That is perhaps more understandable, as they as individuals had been already been involved in the Commonwealth legal mechanisms pursuing offences. Here, the Commonwealth-London link provided avenues, whereas there appeared to be no similar one for the investigations into Greek nationals. The Pacific dominion had been willing to contribute toward seeing justice done for the Greeks. In the end, its efforts were nullified by the lack of verified testimony and the British policies (reflecting a wider diplomatic understanding) over war crimes committed against non-Commonwealth nationals.

Politics seeped into the humanitarian efforts, as evidenced by letters from Greeks seeking assistance and some internal comments in Wellington. That the vast majority of the Greek comments were anti-left might be the result of the vetting process apparently instigated by the Foreign Office (and unknown to the New Zealanders). By late 1944, the political dynamic also engaged the wider New Zealand public, as the following chapter shows.

## CHAPTER SIX: TAKING SIDES

Previous chapters have introduced the complexity and contradictions associated with New Zealand interacting with Greeks (and Britain) in an increasingly politically charged atmosphere i.e. blunting the notion of a singular, simple and palatable memory of the relationship with Greece. The Dominion had various touch-points in these currents. Soldiers serving with secret British organisations were out of consideration by New Zealand authorities - even though Wellington knew at least one had been killed in the first round of the civil war. The policy of non-intervention, as evidenced by a few paragraphs in cables, was never adhered to by the national leadership, for example, Freyberg sending Aked to Greece. Fraser was sympathetic to Greek mutineers but only after years of silence, during which at one point, in 1942-1943, his army was reported as being linked to the ever politically motivated leftist soldiers. Fraser and Tom King were passionately fulfilling the food ship commitment, but the former had already discussed with Freyberg the high probability of fighting breaking out in Greece. He never did the same with King. The brigadier went on oblivious to what his New Zealand superiors thought would happen. Therefore, there was a disjuncture between the Dominion leadership and its own officers as well as an absence of strategic correlation between military and humanitarian policies: Freyberg and Fraser were allowing a ship of relief supplies to go into a probable civil war zone.

The treatment of the above in the official war history was one of silence, fleeting references with no connective narrative, or the high policy of non-involvement, which implied neutrality. Freyberg's use of the simple memory strut of civilian assistance to New Zealand troops had been applied from August 1944 to avoid accusations of New Zealand countenance of any military faction. The past would be used again, both by him at the first Crete commemoration and also by Fraser. The Prime Minister, however, used a different specific application to those same events of 1941. This occurred when different sectors of the wider New Zealand community would publicly condemn or support parties involved in the Greek scene. An eruption that started in Athens during the first week of December was the catalyst for the widespread outcry. Before that, there would be some public disclosures about the experiences of soldiers in occupied Greece that were not part of the mythos of Greek humanitarian aid to New Zealand soldiers that would form an essential strut of the New Zealand-Greek relationship. It was the S.O.E. experience of Greece. It fractured the image of the Greeks as allies against the invader and introduced a level of greyness.

Before discussing these post-liberation developments, the acuteness of the conflict between what clandestine operatives were doing in enemy-controlled Greece and their own government's actions is briefly revisited. In doing so, the severity of contradiction is reinforced.

## **GAP BETWEEN THE NEW ZEALAND LEADERSHIP AND CLANDESTINE OPERATIVES**

Peter Fraser took a step into the Greek political arena with his telegram of 22 July 1944 to London supporting clemency for the ringleaders of the Greek armed forces mutiny. This humanity did not stretch to encompass the directions given to New Zealand S.O.E. operative Tom Barnes over the same matter. Just nine days after Fraser sent his message to London, the British politico-military establishment sent Barnes a directive related to a speech by Anthony Eden in the House of Commons: "He ended by hinting broadly if unity can be thereby be achieved, concessions could be made to EAM in [the] matter of execution of mutineers."<sup>1</sup> Barnes' orders were to report back on any change in attitude by E.A.M. toward them accepting the British-sponsored Papandreou-led government. Fraser's humanitarianism (possibly coupled with sympathy toward the mutineers' aims) collides with the brutality of manipulation required of his officer.

Another instance, this one involving Bill Jordan, shows the New Zealand determination to avoid sending troops to Greece upon liberation contrasting with his own recommendation for the British variety: "If Greece has any post-war importance for us, and I suspect it has, it is essential Allied troops be employed in sufficient numbers ... It is better to bring in troops before the liberation than to bring them in afterwards."<sup>2</sup>

The divide between New Zealanders serving in occupied Greece and its government is perhaps no more obvious than in these two examples. For the New Zealand public, the activities of its soldiers working in secret operations would only start to appear in October 1944, the month of liberation. It came out as a darker story than what had been depicted in the New Zealand press during the years of occupation.

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<sup>1</sup> HS 5/224 Policy: Subversion of ELAS units etc. The National Archives, Kew (NA). To Enoch July 31, 1944. Copy sent to Hammond and Barnes.

<sup>2</sup> HS9/812/3 (TNA). Special Operations Executive: Personnel Files (PF Series). William Sydney JORDAN. *NZ Officer Major Jordan Report on Tour of Duty in Greece*, April 22, 1944.

## NEW ZEALAND PUBLIC AND REPORTING OF ANTI-AXIS GREEK ARMED RESISTANCE

A finer etching of the resistance groups and their politics gradually emerged in New Zealand newspapers during the occupation. None of the coverage appears to have come from any official New Zealand correspondents or indeed from any Dominion reporters. However, in the early years, it comprised general and sometimes fantastical reports about the armed resistance on the mainland and the island of Crete. The fighting against the occupying Axis was often presented as being a joint effort. In the beginning, this was not S.O.E. operatives and the Greek/Cretans but with Commonwealth soldiers left behind following the evacuations. For example, a “Doomed Battalion” of approximately 1,000 “British” soldiers and “the islanders are making sorties and ambushes” against the Germans in the mountains of Crete.<sup>3</sup> The following year, in another story, the number had increased to 1,500, with another 2,000 on the mainland.<sup>4</sup> The coverage veered more toward the realistic by early 1943, when it was reported that the resistance was growing and that there were various bands of Greeks operating.<sup>5</sup>

By September 1943, just before the outbreak of civil war between the competing Greek factions, the politicisation and power of the mainland armed resistance was introduced- “The Greeks in some places have even elected town councils and mayors and are living without Axis interference.”<sup>6</sup> The small towns and villages that New Zealand troops first experienced in early 1941 were undergoing a social change. The size of the resistance was also increasing. There were now 5,000 Greeks fighting (Crete is not mentioned, and the area of operations is the mainland), while another 100,000 were ready to join when the allies provided them with arms.<sup>7</sup> In the New Zealand press, then, the Greeks were presented less as victims and more as capable fighters. Their impact reached both the enemy and also the Greek government-in-exile and King George II, the monarch whom the New Zealanders had helped rescue from capture on Crete over two years before. In September 1943, it was now being argued in some quarters that a plebiscite must be held before the king returned to Greece. His responsibility for establishing the Metaxist dictatorship was referred to, as well as the possibility of future civil war.<sup>8</sup>

The strained relations were not just within the Greek quarters. Also involved were now “Allied leaders”. This was in a piece concerning the resistance leaders’ failed August 1943 visit to Cairo.

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<sup>3</sup> “Guerrillas in Crete,” *Evening Post*, August 3, 1941.

<sup>4</sup> “British fight on in Greece,” *Evening Post*, July 27, 1942.

<sup>5</sup> “Greek Gue[r]rillas,” *Auckland Star*, January 20, 1943.

<sup>6</sup> “Greek Guerrillas,” *Evening Post*, September 2, 1943.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>8</sup> “King of Greece-Opposition to Continuance of Monarchy,” *Auckland Star*, September 24, 1943.



Their efforts to obtain a more representative Greek government by including representatives from the resistance had been “rebuffed”.<sup>9</sup> Though not reported, the visit had also included Brigadier Eddie Myers, who had led the S.O.E. sabotage attack on the Gorgopotamos viaduct the previous year and worked with New Zealanders such as Barnes, Edmonds and Stott (amongst others). Myers was fired from his command because of his outspokenness and questioning of British policy in Greece.<sup>10</sup>

When fighting broke out in October 1943, both immediate and long-term issues were touched upon in the press. The two main protagonists were actually named: E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S. The former had “political objectives”, while the latter simply complied with British higher command directives – “non-political” [*sic*]. The respective territories of operations were outlined as well as names of leaders. In this case, it was Zervas (E.D.E.S.) and Sarafis (E.L.A.S.). The fighting was presented as a “clash”, with a potential for escalation to civil war.<sup>11</sup> The New Zealanders were receiving something of a basic introduction to the politics of Greek resistance.

Against the background of the breakout of political and armed conflict within the resistance forces, stories of their struggles against the Germans were still being relayed to the Pacific Dominion. In December 1943, a story was run describing how the partisans (faction was not given) had “captured 27 villages from the Germans” and also controlled the Kalamae region of the Peloponessus.<sup>12</sup> By April 1944, the month of the Greek mutiny that would generate Fraser’s telegram, the dominance of E.A.M./E.L.A.S. was made quite evident, as well as a Provisional Government established by the resistance in the mountains of occupied Greece.<sup>13</sup> By late August, when the Greek Brigade joined the 2NZDIV in Italy, a new government structure had been formed. This was the British-sponsored Papandreou administration. E.A.M./E.L.A.S. abandoned its mountain administration and, after much internal conflict,<sup>14</sup> but probably under Russian influence, had joined it.<sup>15</sup> Papandreou’s government, including E.A.M. representatives, became the British-endorsed administration in newly liberated Greece. Absent was the Greek monarch. The man whose rescue by New Zealand

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<sup>9</sup> “Greek Guerrillas” *Auckland Star*, September 29, 1943.

<sup>10</sup> For his own account see E.C.W. Myers, *Greek Entanglement* (Gloucester: Sutton, 1985). Also Richard Clogg, *Anglo-Greek Attitudes: Studies in History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 76-77.

<sup>11</sup> “Civil War Possibility,” *Evening Post*, October 28, 1943.

<sup>12</sup> “Savagery in Greece,” *Evening Post*, December 4, 1943.

<sup>13</sup> “Greek Unity,” *Auckland Star*, April 6, 1944.

<sup>14</sup> “Greek Disunity,” *Evening Post*, July 28, 1944. For an academic study see John Louis Hondros, *Occupation and Resistance- Greek Agony 1941-44* (New York, NY: Pella, 1983), 222-233.

<sup>15</sup> “Greek Unity apparently Complete,” *Evening Post*, August 21, 1944. A scholarly work is Peter J. Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism, 1944-1949* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 33.

soldiers in early 1941 did, and would continue to, feature in the memory of the Battle of Crete, was now not coming back to Greece until the people had decided whether or not they wanted him.<sup>16</sup>

The unfolding violent and politically driven situation with the resistance groups in occupied Greece drew no comment from the New Zealand government. This was right across the possible venues of discussion - internally, with the London administration, the Greeks, in parliament or in the New Zealand press.

## **LIBERATION**

Some of the New Zealanders who were in Greece at the time of liberation and the period immediately after had been there for years, either with secret British services or in hiding. Others, such as Tom King, arrived as part of the relief effort, while in November Ted Aked came with the returning Greek forces in the form of the Greek Brigade. Arthur Edmonds and Tom Barnes of S.O.E. were active, and at least one member of the elusive escape organization A Force, Don Macnab, was as well. Still others were concerned with collection and transmission to New Zealand of recent and current happenings. In liberated Greece, New Zealanders would have significant roles, but they never worked in the form of a New Zealand unit. This was in stark contrast to the 2NZDIV – the mainstay of the Dominion’s military presence during the war and also the unit uppermost in subsequent official remembering.

## **S.O.E. Officers**

While there were no German forces left on the mainland, the dynamics of the Greek political scene were still being experienced by New Zealanders. Greeks were still confronting each other, with Britain maintaining its support for one side. Long-term policy was to disarm all resistance groups so as to enable the state and its British sponsor to once more monopolise military force, E.D.E.S. partisans were permitted to retain theirs during the immediate future.<sup>17</sup> The real target was E.L.A.S.

However, the situation was still a tangle, as evidenced by the activities of the New Zealand officers serving with S.O.E. Arthur Edmonds was attached to E.L.A.S. HQ. According to General Sarafis, Edmonds was on the receiving end of complaints about territorial disputes between E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S. with accompanying collaborationist Security Battalions.<sup>18</sup> During the same period, the

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<sup>16</sup> “Vote on Return of King,” *Evening Post*, October 19, 1944; “Greek Future,” *New Zealand Herald*, October 20, 1944.

<sup>17</sup> . Thanasis D. Sfikas; *British Labour Government and the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949: Imperialism of Non-intervention*, (Keele: Ryburn, 1994), 33. The author uses Zervas’s own diary to justify the claim.

<sup>18</sup> Stefanos Sarafis, *ELAS: Greek Resistance Army* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1981), 393, 483.

senior E.L.A.S. commander was told by Edmonds of his promotion [*sic*] to Major General by the Papandreou government when it first arrived.<sup>19</sup>

New Zealanders who came after liberation were also responsible for reporting what they saw there. In the immediacy of the October liberation, it was a journalist who first saw the difference that had occurred in Greece.

### **Journalists**

With the arriving British and Greek government émigré government was official NZEF war correspondent Cedric Mentiplay.<sup>20</sup> He was seemingly the only New Zealand journalist. The New Zealand Press Association is sometimes listed as the corporate source but the specific (individual or organisation) source is not discernible. Mentiplay took a number of photographs (some apparently unpublished) and also had news stories run in the New Zealand press. In an article sent on 30 November, he related his journey along “100 miles of the route of the Allied withdrawal three years and a half ago”.<sup>21</sup> There was little physical evidence of the campaign, but along the way were “Greeks in these areas, who remember the campaign only too well, and many of whom still preserve the names and addresses of New Zealanders they helped”.<sup>22</sup> One of the underlying struts of the relationship that would be celebrated was again appearing.

Mentiplay’s surviving images show a very different Greece from that encountered by the forces in early 1941. Armed E.L.A.S. partisans (including women) were now marching through villages, not the Greek army that had been fighting first the Italians and then the Germans. Unsurprisingly, he visited places of particular relevance to the 1941 expedition. At the waterfront evacuation port of Porto Rafti, he found more evidence of the new power balance. His notation described the boats there that were part of the E.A.M./E.L.A.S. forces and stated that they “had just returned from capturing 800 Germans who were cut off near Volos.”<sup>23</sup> Alongside the change in internal socio-political profile came the jubilation of liberation.

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 414.

<sup>20</sup> IA1 3388 181/32/12 Pt 1 Archives New Zealand (ANZ). War History-Authors- Italian Campaign, N.C. Philips. He was also an unsuccessful nominee for the narrator of future official war volume of the Italian campaign that had involved the Greek Brigade and 2NZDIV. Mentiplay offered his services in early 1952.

<sup>21</sup> “Few Traces Left,” *Auckland Star*, December 6, 1944.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Notation on Photograph 11842 National Army Museum, New Zealand. Kippenberger Archive, Waiouru.

## Liberation - October 1944

During October, New Zealand newspapers carried stories about the joyous welcome given to arriving British troops and the Greek government.<sup>24</sup> This was, again, a different Greece from that of 1941. Armed partisans were reported as liberating centres such as Athens and Piraeus.<sup>25</sup>

**Figure 6.1 ELAS Female Partisans on their way to Athens. Photographed by Cedric Mentiplay November 29 1944 (Source: National Army Museum New Zealand)**



London's communication to Wellington about the arrival of the Greek government-in-exile in Athens was one in the usual tone of diplomatic reporting. On 18 October, Papandreou and his government arrived on the *Averoff* (one of the ships involved in the April mutiny). They first went to the Acropolis to raise the Greek flag, then to a religious service, and finally to a rally in Constitution Square.<sup>26</sup> Besides descriptions such as these came semi-official ones from New Zealanders.

Aked, writing from Athens, told Freyberg of the return of the Greek Brigade in positive terms: "[Colonel] Tsacolotos [*sic*] and personnel of the Brigade were obviously nervous, all wondering in what manner the people of the city would receive them. Immediately the march commenced, all doubts vanished. It was obvious that the arrival home was welcomed by the greater percentage of the people. Streets, pavements and buildings were crowded, and it was almost impossible even to hear the band."<sup>27</sup> Unsurprisingly, Tom King wrote at length, and with some emotion, of his experiences. On November 21 he wrote to both Freyberg and Fraser (he sent a copy of the Freyberg

<sup>24</sup> "Tommyes feted by delirious Greeks," *Auckland Star*, October 6, 1944; "Joy of Greeks," *New Zealand Herald*, October 7, 1944.

<sup>25</sup> "Athens & Piraeus," *Evening Post*, October 14, 1944.

<sup>26</sup> AAEG 950 W3240 140/G 345/4/1 Pt. 2 Countries -Greece-Political Affairs-General. (ANZ). Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Minister for External Affairs, October 21, 1944.

<sup>27</sup> WAI 8 Freyberg Papers File 76 (ANZ). Greek Mountain Brigade. Aked to Freyberg, November 16, 1944.

letter to the latter as well). Of the local population, he said, “I just cannot say how much they love and almost worship New Zealanders.”<sup>28</sup> He suggested to both the General and the Prime Minister that they should visit Greece. To Freyberg, he commented: “I can assure you that you will get a great reception; one that will astound you. Probably they may be a bit scared of anyone of your level otherwise you are liable to be kissed by all and sundry, male and female. You have been warned!”<sup>29</sup> He told the Prime Minister that “I do hope that some day you can pay a visit here. The warning I gave to General Freyberg about that will equally apply to you!!”<sup>30</sup> Naturally the New Zealanders were focussed on their own relations with the newly liberated Greeks but there was a general euphoria and exciting welcome for the returning British forces as a whole.

That Freyberg and Fraser were expecting armed conflict in newly liberated Greece lies in dark contrast to King’s buoyant enthusiasm. Apparently, the senior New Zealander personalities never thought to tell him about their fears. They did the same with Charles Boswell, Head of the first Dominion legation to the Soviet Union. After watching a newsreel in Moscow, Boswell noted in his diary “The pictures showed tragically what New Zealand had missed.”<sup>31</sup> He had, however, celebrated the liberation with the Greek Ambassador to the Soviets.<sup>32</sup> He did this the day he farewelled the visiting British delegation that included Churchill and Anthony Eden – the two architects of the 1941 expedition. During this visit, another initiative had been discussed. It was the controversial agreement over spheres of influence in post-war Europe. That it attracted no criticism by the New Zealanders could be taken as another instance of silence (avoiding any obtuse statement on particularly sensitive Greek matters like the question of collaboration) or as consent to Britain saving Greece from Soviet expansion.

## **PERCENTAGES AGREEMENT**

The controversial understanding reached between Churchill and Stalin at the Moscow meeting over post-war Eastern Europe came as no surprise to New Zealand. The lead-up to it was reported by London.<sup>33</sup> This occurred about the time the Greek Brigade was going into battle, a decision, like the agreement, that smacked of major power manipulation. On 18 October Boswell told Wellington the basics of the percentages agreement between Britain and the U.S.S.R: “Just met Eden - General

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<sup>28</sup> King to Freyberg, November 21, 1944.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> EA2 238 103 3 6 Pt 2 (ANZ). Relief and Rehabilitation-Disasters and Relief-Greece and Crete. King to Fraser, November 21, 1944.

<sup>31</sup> MSX-8764 Boswell, Charles Wallace Diaries etc. Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL). Diary Entry, December 7, 1944

<sup>32</sup> October 19, 1944 entry.

<sup>33</sup> AAEG 950 127a 345/4/8 Pt 1 (ANZ). Countries-Greece-Political Affairs-General. Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Minister for External Affairs, September 25, 1944. London told Wellington that the Soviets had “no objection” to British forces being sent to Greece and that they would not be sending any of their own. Furthermore “They also confirm their recognition of our special interest in Greece.”

agreement with Russia. Britain [has] free hand in Greece, Russia in Rumania; Bulgaria 50-50.”<sup>34</sup>

This was followed within a few days by the official announcement from the British.<sup>35</sup>

Further communication from London reinforced the reality of Soviet non-interest. Although they had a military mission in Greece, “there is no evidence that the Soviet Mission to ELAS are seeking to play any political role.”<sup>36</sup> Such confidential diplomatic cables were matched by a December newspaper article in the *New Zealand Herald* about “Zones of Influence” being determined by the major powers.<sup>37</sup>

The Fraser administration raised no issue with the percentages agreement. It was also silent when other information arrived via a third party from one of its officers who had been in Greece for years.

### **NEW ZEALAND PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT HEARS FROM AN S.O.E. OPERATIVE**

At home, New Zealanders who were with S.O.E. in Greece were now discussed in the press: “The veil has been lifted to reveal the extraordinary nature of the lives they have led in occupied territory.”<sup>38</sup> These were “remarkable stories”.<sup>39</sup> Names and military feats that would be taken up by the official war history were now being read about. Barnes and Edmonds at the Gorgopotamos mission, Stott and Morton with the Aesopos, Bill Jordan and his life with the Greek resistance and then fighting alongside the French Marquis.

Beside these tales of heroism came a darkening of the Greek resistance. Bill Jordan was prominent in the reporting. His stories included exposing the death of fellow New Zealander Arthur Hubbard at the hands of Greek partisans.<sup>40</sup> Jordan also related how he was facing a Greek firing squad during the same incident. Besides the press coverage, direct communication, albeit restricted, between the New Zealand S.O.E. operatives and Wellington finally happened.

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<sup>34</sup> EA1 352/63/6/2 Part 1 (ANZ). Exchange of Information and Publications with Overseas Posts-Moscow-General Reports from Minister. Extract from Bi Weekly Summary 162, October 20, 1944.

<sup>35</sup> EA1 201/2/82 Pt 2 B (ANZ). United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Minister for External Affairs, October 22, 1944. On 22 October London gave Wellington a brief summary of events at the Churchill-Stalin meeting in Moscow. The percentages agreement that would cause much discussion and controversy amongst historians was subtly referred to: “Marshall Stalin agreed with the Prime Minister at their first meeting that Greece was important to Great Britain in the same way as Roumania was for the Soviet Union.”

<sup>36</sup> AAEG 950/345/4/1 Pt 2 (ANZ). Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Minister for External Affairs, Wellington, November 23, 1944.

<sup>37</sup> “Rifts in Unity,” *New Zealand Herald*, December 20, 1944.

<sup>38</sup> “One Man’s War,” *Evening Post*, October 5, 1944.

<sup>39</sup> “N.Z. Guerrillas Activities in Greece,” *Evening Post*, November 4, 1944.

<sup>40</sup> “Amazing Exploits: Daring NZ Officer,” *Auckland Star*, October 5, 1944. Hubbard was named in “Shot by Greeks: an Officer’s Death,” *New Zealand Herald*, October 6, 1944.

## Wellington Administration

A London-based New Zealand government official sent Wellington a press clipping and S.O.E. operative Bill Jordan's endorsement of its content. The *Daily Telegraph* had written a piece on the post-occupation: "The problem is unbelievably intricate; it is every shade of dirty grey as far as the warring parties go. There is no absolute good and no absolute bad on one side or other."<sup>41</sup> Jordan exempted former collaborators from condemnation: "He says that many Greeks have joined the so-called quisling party purely for self-protection."<sup>42</sup> The threat was from the left, namely E.A.M./E.L.A.S. Against this was a less than benign assessment of the security battalions that reached Wellington. In the previous month, just prior to liberation, London passed on to Wellington an assessment that the situation in Athens had deteriorated. It was "partly [precipitated] by ELAS atrocities, responsibility for this situation must largely be placed at the door of security battalions who are now quite out of hand and are fully co-operating with German SS."<sup>43</sup> Conflicting stories were reaching the Wellington administration. It would worsen during December. Liberation would soon be overshadowed by a level of violence and worldwide public and diplomatic protests about Greek-related events.

As shown below, communications from New Zealand soldiers who had been serving in occupied Greece and/or were in newly liberated areas did not enter into any New Zealand government deliberations during a critical phase of the Greek drama. It would later in the new year. This lack of consideration prevailed despite the feelings of alarm and confusion that permeated the Wellington administration in the weeks ahead.

## DEKEMVRIANA

According to the memoirs of S.O.E. operative Arthur Edmonds, in early December, he and senior relief officer Tom King were discussing the possible use of New Zealand S.O.E. officers in post-liberation roles to help reconstruct the country. Their conversation was interrupted when "shots rang out from the police building opposite the Grande Bretagne, which was next-door to the office we were using."<sup>44</sup> What the two had heard was Greek police opening fire on an E.A.M. demonstration in Syntagma (Constitution) Square. It was an act that brought much public criticism at the time (Edmonds notes as much). The shooting resulted in casualties – both fatal and "wounding many more."<sup>45</sup> The firing continued for more than fifteen minutes. Undeterred, the crowd had eventually

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<sup>41</sup> EA1 201/2/82 Pt 2 B (ANZ). United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. "In Greece, 'Quislings' are pro-British" *Daily Express* (n.d.) attached to Miller to McIntosh, October 11, 1944.

<sup>42</sup> Miller to McIntosh, October 11, 1944.

<sup>43</sup> AAEG 950 345/4/1 Pt 2 (ANZ). Countries-Greece-Political Affairs-General. Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Minister for External Affairs, September 6, 1944.

<sup>44</sup> Arthur Edmonds, *With Greek Guerrillas* (Putaruru: Author, 1998), 245.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

re-formed and “continued on their route.”<sup>46</sup> The Syntagma Square episode is essentially a key incident in the quickly escalating violence.<sup>47</sup>

In New Zealand the press reported on Syntagma Square. The *New Zealand Herald*, for example, reported rioting after police poured “withering fire” into “unarmed demonstrators of the EAM”.<sup>48</sup> In response, E.L.A.S. began attacking police barracks in the capital, and when they were getting the upper hand, British forces joined in on the side of the Papandreou government. The city then essentially became a battlefield. The rest of the country was relatively quiet, except for the North West where E.L.A.S. had a final reckoning with E.D.E.S. partisans, the British-preferred armed resistance group. The E.D.E.S. political headquarters in Athens had, as the *Auckland Star* reported, already been the scene of “a pitched battle” between the two.<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, London did not make a blanket condemnation of E.A.M./E.L.A.S. in their official communication to Fraser. On 12 December they told him that the “majority of so-called E.L.A.S. forces operating in Athens do not belong to E.L.A.S. and are organized to fight Germans”<sup>50</sup>. Furthermore, they “may be following the lead of an extremist element in E.A.M. rather than E.A.M. as a whole.”<sup>51</sup> Within a few weeks the departure from E.A.M. of the “Socialist party at Salonica” had taken place.<sup>52</sup> This was in protest against actions in Athens by E.L.A.S. All this goes to show that E.A.M./E.L.A.S. was not a homogenous entity and could arguably dent some of the vitriolic condemnation (e.g. Jordan and Barnes) directed at them. .

### **New Zealanders in Greece during the Dekemvriana**

Several of the New Zealanders based in Athens sent communications directly, or via third parties, to the New Zealand leadership during the fighting. The former were Aked and King. The latter was Mentiplay, the army journalist. None were supportive of the left. The Wellington government and Freyberg never solicited these views nor did they respond to the highly charged letters. Neither did they communicate with each other over the events. Indeed, while the General was considered as a possible source of further information by the Wellington based diplomat, J.V. Wilson in late December, he was never approached. The reasons, and who made the decision, are not apparent. Either it was a reflection of Freyberg’s political capabilities or, as Wilson pointed out, “might not be

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>47</sup> John Iatrides, *Revolt in Athens: the Greek Communist Second Round, 1944-1945* (Princeton University Press: New York, 1972), 191-192; Lars Baerentzen, "Demonstration in Syntagma Square on Sunday 3 December 1944." *Scandinavian Studies in Modern Greek* 2 (1978): 3-52. Andre Gerylmatos, *Red Acropolis Black Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 105-6.

<sup>48</sup> “Riots in Greece,” *New Zealand Herald*, December 5, 1944.

<sup>49</sup> “Rival Parties Clash in Athens,” *Auckland Star*, December 6, 1944.

<sup>50</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 177 A 345 4 8 part 1 (ANZ). Countries-Greece-Political Affairs-Civil War-General. Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Minister for External Affairs, December 13, 1944.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Minister for External Affairs, December 18, 1944.



right” as the General was on the staff of the Briton Alexander who had overall direction of the battle.<sup>53</sup>

### ***Ted Aked***

It was during Dekemvriana, that Ted Aked assumed a unique position in New Zealand’s direct experience of the political turmoil and violence of Greek politics and British intervention. In Italy, he countered the extreme Right. In Athens, he would fight the Left. This was despite a recorded note<sup>54</sup> that Freyberg wanted him recalled from Athens when the fighting commenced. He returned to the 2NZDIV Italy in January and, as discussed later, he made his experiences and opinions public when he returned home a few months later.

While, in his November letter to Freyberg, Aked spoke enthusiastically of the reception the returning Greek Brigade received, he also mentioned the political tensions: “Several times the Local Red party attempted to create diversions, but civilians in the vicinity simply ‘howled them down.’”<sup>55</sup> He thought “The Communist party seem to be making their last throw on 18 November, the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their party.”<sup>56</sup> That prediction was overshadowed by later events.

The Athens fighting was initially only between Greeks. The British were not targeted by E.L.A.S.<sup>57</sup> However, the British eventually entered the battle with their small numbers but technological advantage when E.L.A.S. began to get the upper hand. Aked pointed out as much to Freyberg in a letter written on 12 December.<sup>58</sup> The New Zealand colonel told the General that the Greek Brigade was kept as a “last resource”. They were committed “as the situation was completely out of control.”<sup>59</sup> Aked thought the fighting was “worse in many ways” than “normal warfare”, even though the latter “at times is most confused”.<sup>60</sup> His examples reinforced his views –E.L.A.S. occupied hospitals (complete with bogus patients) and fired upon their adversaries. For his part, “We are forced to engage houses from which we are fired on, even if they contain women and children.”<sup>61</sup> It is no wonder he considered “This is to me an extremely hateful type of war.”<sup>62</sup> As shown later, Aked would eventually have the chance to voice his views in public when he returned

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<sup>53</sup> EA1 201/2/82 Pt 2 B (ANZ). United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece Memorandum Wilson to McIntosh, December 29, 1944. Wilson also suggested some of the 2NZDIV intelligence officers.

<sup>54</sup> WAI 8 File 46 (ANZ). *GOC Diary* December 7, 1944.

<sup>55</sup> WAI 8 File 76 (ANZ). Freyberg Papers. Special Files 3 Greek Mountain Brigade. Aked to Freyberg, November 16, 1944.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> In the same story on the E.D.E.S./E.L.A.S. clash in Athens, the *Auckland Star* pointed out as much. “Rival Parties Clash in Athens,” *Auckland Star*, December 6, 1944.

<sup>58</sup> WAI 8 File 76 (ANZ). Freyberg Papers. Special Files 3 Greek Mountain Brigade. Aked to Freyberg, December 12, 1944. “To English troops at first they were not openly hostile, but Greek officers and men were either assaulted or killed.” Apparently, the battle did not prevent letter writing.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

to Auckland. His participation in the fighting, however, was publicly known in New Zealand at least two days after he wrote Freyberg.

On 14 December, both the *Dominion* and the *New Zealand Herald* ran essentially the same story on Aked- “One New Zealander was actively concerned in the first pitched battles of the Greek civil war now being fought in the Athens area”. Aked was a liaison officer with the Greek Brigade which “yesterday staved off a threat to the city by eliminating large bodies of ELAS troops”. Any overt politicking by Brigade members is dismissed: “charges of political activity are quite baseless”.<sup>63</sup> The last point is debatable, as the Brigade was a key element in partisan disarmament negotiations between British/Papandreou and E.L.A.S. This was communicated to Wellington by London later the same month.<sup>64</sup> There were also press reports on the issue.<sup>65</sup> When King wrote to Fraser after the fighting had broken out he included - “the great split came over the disarmament of the Andartes, followed by the resignation of the four EAM and two KKE members [from the government].”<sup>66</sup>

By January, the battle had shifted in the British and the Greek government’s favour. Tsakalotos wrote to Freyberg on 11 January; included with the letter were notification of the military awards first recommended for the New Zealand officers after Rimini. He told the General that Aked had been “a great asset” and that “We have nearly cleared the country. Here, again, Lt Col Aked has helped us, and I offer you my thanks for this.”<sup>67</sup> Freyberg thanked the Greek Colonel for the decorations. He commented on Aked and the situation in Greece, “I was glad to hear that Aked has done so well. He, I know, will always remember with pride his association with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Greek Mountain Brigade... We have heard with great pleasure the better news from Greece and trust that a peaceful settlement is now assured.”<sup>68</sup> On the same day that Tsakalotos wrote to Freyberg, Prime Minister Peter Fraser received a summary of points from British authorities. The Greek Brigade and the Sacred Squadron were considered “politically undesirable to maintain” and that they should be “disbanded... and later used as cadres for expanding the Greek national army.”<sup>69</sup> Aked and King were both operating in a world that was subject to acute political intrusion.

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<sup>63</sup> “Mountain Brigade,” *Dominion*, December 14, 1944; “Athens Fighting,” *New Zealand Herald*, December 14, 1944.

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, EA1 201/2/82 Pt 2 b (ANZ). United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Minister for External Affairs, December 25, 1944. EAM wanted the Brigade removed from the Athens-Piraeus area and not just confined to barracks.

<sup>65</sup> See for example, “British Attitude,” *Auckland Star*, December 4, 1944; “E.L.A.S. Conditions for Truce,” *New Zealand Herald*, December 18, 1944.

<sup>66</sup> EA1 201/2/82 Pt. 2b (ANZ) United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. King to Fraser, December 12, 1944.

<sup>67</sup> WAI 8 File 76 (ANZ). Special Files 3 Greek Mountain Brigade. Tsakalotos to Freyberg, January 11, 1945.

<sup>68</sup> Freyberg to Tsakalotos, January 24, 1945.

<sup>69</sup> AAEG 950 137a 201/4/82 Pt 3 (ANZ). Countries-United Kingdom-External Relations- Greece. Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Fraser, January 11, 1945. This resulted from the latest visit to Athens by Field Marshall Harold Alexander and Harold Macmillan.

Aked was based in Athens. Tom King was also there. S.O.E. operatives Edmonds and Barnes were in the countryside. In contrast to Aked, the last point was never reported in the press nor communicated to Wellington.

### ***Tom King***

The fighting brought about a dramatic change in Tom King's attitude. On 12 December, two days before Aked wrote to Freyberg, he sent Fraser a five-page typed letter.<sup>70</sup> It provided a history of the armed resistance that included high-level characteristics such as key conferences and portfolio distribution in the Papandreou government. He supported Britain and its military representative on the scene, General Scobie. Closer to his own relief responsibilities, he accused E.A.M./E.L.A.S. of distributing food only to its supporters. Those civilians who had "befriended and sheltered British soldiers during the occupation are being treated as enemies by the communists."<sup>71</sup>

The shootings in Syntagma Square attracted his attention. Like the Edmonds memoirs, he said he had heard the shots being fired but could not say who had started it. He could not see the Square directly. He was obviously in conflict with press reports about the situation but admitted that British troops had become involved when early E.L.A.S. attacks on police barracks had resulted in "heavy casualties [of police]". In this, he was in concert with Aked's letter. Five days later, he sent another letter. While he forcefully argued "I am firmly convinced that this is a straight out "copy-book" Communist attempt at a Coup d'Etat",<sup>72</sup> he did not make a blanket condemnation of all Greeks fighting in the ranks of ELAS: "It is quite evident from the statements of ELAS p.w. [prisoners of war] that large numbers of ELAS troops have been completely misled by KKE propaganda and that the decent elements among them are horrified by what happened."<sup>73</sup>

King gathered part of his information from Tom Barnes. In his 12 December letter, he indicated as much when he passed on the latter's positive assessment of Napoleon Zervas, head of the British-preferred resistance group. King and Barnes had been socializing at least in Alexandria, Egypt and before the return to Greece: "drinking beer and swimming".<sup>74</sup> Barnes' brief respite from the politics of Greece ended when he returned to join Zervas and E.D.E.S. when they were attacked by E.L.A.S.

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<sup>70</sup> EA1 201/2/82 Pt 2 B (ANZ). United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. King to Fraser, December 12, 1944.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> King to Fraser, December 17, 1944.

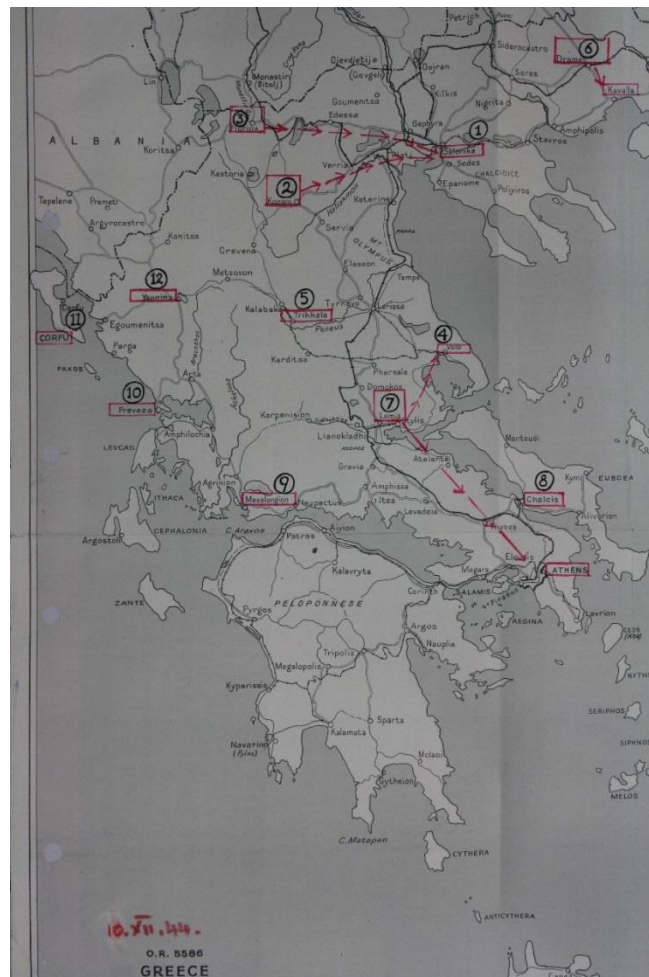
<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Barnes Diary Benaki Archives, Athens (BEN). Entry, June 2-8, 1944.

## *Barnes and Edmonds*

In Western Greece, E.L.A.S. attacked E.D.E.S. According to the official S.O.E. report by Christopher Woodhouse, whose later published account would partially inform the official New Zealand volume on S.O.E. in Greece, “Barnes and all his officers and myself accompanied his [Zervas]troops as they evacuated one line after another. We helped to delay the advance of E.L.A.S. by every means except active participation in the fighting: demolishing bridges, driving vehicles, attending to wounded and encouraging Zervas’s officers.”<sup>75</sup> The end came when E.D.E.S. was evacuated to Corfu by British ships in “a miniature Dunkirk” as described by Christopher Woodhouse, again in his official report.<sup>76</sup> Escape was planned not just for Zervas. S.O.E. operatives still in Greece were to be evacuated from E.L.A.S.-controlled areas, as one of the maps used shows.

**Figure 6.2: Escape routes of S.O.E. Personnel after fighting broke out in early December 1944. Barnes and Edmonds were still there. Source: HS 5/288 (TNA)**



The Wellington government was kept informed about E.D.E.S. via the standard diplomatic updates from London.<sup>77</sup> No New Zealanders were mentioned. In the E.L.A.S.-controlled area, Edmonds

<sup>75</sup> HS 7/154 (TNA) Allied military mission in Greece Sep 1942-Dec 1944, by Colonel C M Woodhouse D.S.O. O.B.E., 227.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> EA1 201/2/82 Pt 2 B (ANZ). United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Minister for External Affairs, December 23, 1944. London told Wellington that Zervas, of the British preferred EDES partisans, was in the North West area of the country and “that ELAS was attacking with superior forces. He stated that he might be forced to evacuate the whole area.”

was told by E.L.A.S. General Headquarters that the following directive had been given by them to its partisans and that he had to pass it on to British commanders in Athens: "British troops in Greece in ELAS areas are forbidden [to] move south and especially toward Athens, where British troops attacked our units without any provocation. Any attempts to move will be stopped by arms."<sup>78</sup> So while fighting was going on in Athens involving British and New Zealanders, the scene outside was tense, but not with the same level of violence for the New Zealanders. But the possibility was there. For example, following Edmonds' return to Lamia from Athens, he and his remaining S.O.E. colleagues acted on the possibility of being attacked by E.L.A.S.: "At our HQ we were fully alive to the delicacy of our situation and had a fire-plan for the defence of our building, as we were determined not to surrender without a fight."<sup>79</sup> The assault never came, even though E.L.A.S. was dominant in the town and communications with Athens were sporadic.

### *Mentiplay*

The dispatches from the Official War Correspondent found their way into the New Zealand press as well as to Peter Fraser's office. Like Aked, Mentiplay thought the fighting was vicious, with little differentiation between combatants and civilians. In the *Evening Post*, he wrote, "the entire population" was "under the constant threat of warfare in its cruellest form".<sup>80</sup> He placed this in contrast to Crete, which he had also visited in the previous week- "all was peaceful"<sup>81</sup> and "what demonstrations there were friendly affairs into which an Allied soldier was apt to be swept in sheer exuberance of enthusiasm."<sup>82</sup> Another strut of the relationship was thus presented affirmatively.

Mentiplay took an anti-E.L.A.S. attitude. The British-preferred E.D.E.S. partisans under Zervas were "gallant".<sup>83</sup> When the fighting died down, E.L.A.S. adversely affected the relief programme (he mentioned the food ship from New Zealand) and had used the supplies as a "political weapon".<sup>84</sup> Tsakalotos, commander of the Greek Mountain Brigade now fighting in Athens, attracted an entire article from Mentiplay about his questioning of an E.L.A.S. prisoner. The piece noted the recent association of the Greek commander with the New Zealanders in Italy. He is "well known to us for his work at Rimini and wearing alongside a Greek medallion on his right breast a New Zealand badge given him by General Freyberg."<sup>85</sup> The E.L.A.S. officer, a professional pre-war soldier, received a tirade of anger from Tsakalotos. His challenges to EAM/ELAS accusations of

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<sup>78</sup> HS 5/288(TNA). Greek Civil War. Force 133 to London, December 11, 1944.

<sup>79</sup> Edmonds, *With Greek Guerillas*, 246.

<sup>80</sup> "Perilous Hours Correspondents' Account," *Evening Post*, December 11, 1944.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> "Regency Question," *Evening Post*, December 23, 1944.

<sup>84</sup> "Great Tragedy," *Evening Post*, January 3, 1945.

<sup>85</sup> "An ELAS Officer," *Evening Post*, December 14, 1944.

collaborators reaching into all areas of the returning army/government: “Do you think me a pro-German?”<sup>86</sup> After that, Mentiplay did his own questioning. When the prisoner said the Greek Brigade and another regular Greek army unit, the Sacred Squadron, were working with the collaborationist Security Battalions, “We abandoned this line of questioning as unprofitable.”<sup>87</sup> What the journalist thought as preposterous was closer to the actual view being taken by Barnes and Jordan, the two New Zealand S.O.E. operatives. They were sympathetic to the Security Battalions as shown earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 4.

Peter Fraser was presented with several official communications from Mentiplay by J.T. Paul.<sup>88</sup> Paul was a politician and also part of the Prime Minister’s Office. During the war, he was “director of publicity and, in effect, chief censor.”<sup>89</sup> The shootings during the demonstration in Syntagma Square were marginalized in a dispatch of 9 December. Inverted commas enclosed the adjective “unarmed” to describe the crowd, while the subsequent eruption of hostilities were “the inevitable outbreak of violence” that would have happened anyway. The situation in Greece was not just a civil war with British intervention but “a test case... By what happens here the solidarity of the United Nations may stand or fall, and democracy itself may be supported or betrayed.”<sup>90</sup> Describing the situation as one threatening the new international structure was highly inflammatory – especially as the United Nations apparatus was still to be fully implemented and the New Zealand government would place a great importance on the new international organization. The anti-E.L.A.S. tone was again evident in a later communique. Families of the Mountain Brigade were mentioned as being taken hostage as part of a broader sweep.<sup>91</sup> The partisans had a “bloodlust” that had led to many atrocities. In commenting on their wartime resistance to the invader, he stated, “Far from being the voice of Greece and democracy, they were nothing but armed bands of thugs and terrorists, whose only virtue was fierce guerrilla courage.”<sup>92</sup>

The fighting continued.<sup>93</sup> Although British and Greek government forces gained the upper hand it was still a precarious place for the British leadership. External and internal sources were

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> AAEG 950 127a 345/4/8 Pt 1 (ANZ). Countries-Greece-Political Affairs- Civil War -General. Cover note, Paul to McIntosh, December 11, 1944. Paul considered them “controversial” but “helpful”.

<sup>89</sup> Erik Olssen. ‘Paul, John Thomas’, from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 7-Jan-2014

URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/3p16/paul-john-thomas> Accessed July 30, 2014.

<sup>90</sup> AAEG 950 127a 345/4/8 Pt 1 (ANZ). Countries-Greece-Political Affairs- Civil War -General. NZEF Correspondent Athens, December 9, 1944.

<sup>91</sup> December 18, 1944 Dispatch.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> “Greek Drama,” *Evening Post*, December 27, 1944. For example, a huge supply of dynamite was discovered possibly intended to assassinate Churchill who visited Athens in late December to broker a peace deal.

bombarding Fraser about Greece. But the pressure was also applied by his constituency as the following shows.

### **New Zealand Protests at Home**

Besides reporting on the continued fighting in Athens, New Zealand newspapers began carrying stories about overseas popular protests. Stories about the protests in the Dominion also appeared. On 11 December, the *New Zealand Herald* reported: “A well-attended meeting organised by the Communist Party and representatives of the Trades Council, held in Latimer Square [Christchurch] today, carried a resolution urging the Government to use its influence with the British government to cease the use of arms against the Greek people”. The resolution went on to seek an “all Greek parties” conference to establish a representative government.<sup>94</sup> The same meeting received exposure in the *Evening Post*, which also included the resolution’s allusion to the Greek-New Zealand nexus: “the thousands of New Zealanders who have given their liberty or their lives in Greece did so in the belief that they were fighting for freedom”.<sup>95</sup> The *Press* also noted that the Canterbury Builders’ and General Labourer’s Union “deplores the shooting down of unarmed demonstrators and reported presence of British tanks and troops in support of the police”.<sup>96</sup> To gain maximum effect, a press release about one Christchurch meeting was cabled by protesters for distribution to the overseas press.<sup>97</sup>

After the eruption of fighting in Athens, letters and cables of protest started arriving at government offices in Wellington. Those that are in archives<sup>98</sup> show they nearly all originated from the left - from trade unions, Labour Party branches and the New Zealand Communist Party. They condemned Britain, seeing its role as one of interference against an ally. War was being waged against the Greek people.

### **Soldiers**

Besides the Left, one protest came from within an institution, but not through it. Ironically, protests were made by members of the army – a body based on strict subservience to higher authority. A petition from soldiers at the Burnham Camp on the outskirts of Christchurch was reported in the press. The document was forwarded to Prime Minister Peter Fraser with a covering note from “H.J.

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<sup>94</sup> “Christchurch Meeting,” *New Zealand Herald*, December 11, 1944.

<sup>95</sup> “Christchurch Resolution,” *Evening Post*, December 11, 1944.

<sup>96</sup> “Situation in Greece – Protest by Canterbury Union,” *Press*, December 7, 1944.

<sup>97</sup> EA1 201/2/82 Pt. 2b (ANZ). United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. Copy of Cablegram No. 4 Dated 21/12/44. Sid Scott to General News Service.

<sup>98</sup> EA1 201/2/82 Pt. 2b (ANZ). United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece.; AAEG W3240 950 Box 137 201/4/82 Pt 3 (ANZ). Series- Countries-Greece.

Greatorex” (a communist following Soviet pacifist dictates in the early stages of the war). Greatorex’s covering note was not entirely correct: “the men of this camp” included at least one W.A.A.C. (Women's Army Auxiliary Corps).<sup>99</sup>

The petition included reference to British intervention and civilian aid. John Denvir, a New Zealand soldier who had been in Greece but had fought with Yugoslav partisans, was quoted in the petition thus: “The situation in Greece is a Greek affair, not a British affair.” The nexus of bonding is then mentioned: “It is a crime that British soldiers who have gone back to Greece should be ordered to shoot down people who have assisted New Zealanders to escape, even to starving themselves. I feel sure that every New Zealander who fought in Greece would be behind me in this statement.”<sup>100</sup> Denvir was part of a small group who had received Russian and Greek decorations at the same camp in which the petition was organised on 15 December. Photographs were included in the local press. The sight of Denvir being congratulated by a senior officer during the same time that soldier protest was brewing seems almost surreal.<sup>101</sup> A similar ceremony was occurring in the North Island’s Papakura camp.<sup>102</sup> New Zealand soldiers were receiving medals from a Government that was facing a physical threat from a force from within.

### ***Dissent within the Dissent***

Unsurprisingly, the Communist Party of New Zealand (C.P.N.Z.) was heavily involved in the protests. Prominent members of the party included Selwyn Devereaux, who sent the soldiers’ petition to Fraser, and Sid Scott, who was editor of the *People’s Voice*. The New Zealand Police Special Branch noted that the *Hands off Greece* open air protest meeting in Christchurch was chaired by Aubrey Skilton, from the Canterbury Branch of the Communist Party. Other prominent communists attending included Sydney Fournier, Harry Switella and John Locke. Copies of public announcements concerning the meeting, also included in the report, clearly showed the involvement of the Party<sup>103</sup>

There was at least one episode that shows the C.P.N.Z.’s role did not go unchallenged. This occurred at the general meeting of the Canterbury District Trades Council (affiliated with the New Zealand Federation of Labour) held in Christchurch on 19 December. An accusation that the Party

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<sup>99</sup> EA1 201/2/82 Pt 2B 22433 (ANZ) United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. Greatorex to Peter Fraser, December 13 1944.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., Pages of signed petition

<sup>101</sup> “New Zealand Soldiers Receive Greek and Russian Decorations,” *Press*, December 15, 1944.

<sup>102</sup> “Meals Presented,” *New Zealand Herald*, December 14, 1944.

<sup>103</sup> New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS). *Report of Senior-Detective Frank Sinclair No. 2322 relative to Public Protest Meeting, under the auspices of the communist party, held at Latimer Square on Sunday 10 December 1944.*



was hijacking the protest was made. The resulting motion was defeated.<sup>104</sup> Thus again, the Party's dominant position was maintained.

As can be seen by the above, there were various actors (individuals and institutions) with differing views on Greece. The simple bonding through sacrifices against the invader in 1941, again, does not hold true for the multiple connections and complexity between the two countries. Already by 1944/45, the Greek-New Zealand relationship represented a resource that could be mobilized by different political groups. Not surprisingly, the government sought ultimately to neutralize this situation.

### *Response of National Elite*

To New Zealanders, the Fraser administration used strategies of public silence and political courtesy in reaction to written communications - apart from several notable exceptions. Typically, protest communications coming to the government were met with politely worded, brief responses acknowledging receipt. Closing lines were usually non-committal in nature and were signed by a civil servant.<sup>105</sup> This differed in the responses to the C.P.N.Z. and the New Zealand Federation of Labour. Both attracted personal signatures from senior Labour government figures. Fraser told the Secretary of the "Auckland District Communist Party" that, "With much fuller knowledge of facts of situation in Greece than is revealed in the press I cannot agree that responsibility for [the] crisis rests on shoulders of [the] British government. That statement is simply not correct". He ended by stating that the obvious imbroglio in Athens was not going to be resolved soon and that Britain had a role: "There are, however, matters for serious consideration in connection with [the crisis] in Greece, including questions of future action of British forces there".<sup>106</sup> The reply to the Federation of Labour was signed by Acting Prime Minister, Walter Nash. (Fraser was away at the time). It ignored British involvement but stressed that "There is no question of New Zealand troops being engaged, and I can assure you that the Government does not fail to make known its views in such ways as may seem appropriate in the present critical stage of the war".<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> MB 13, A1hh, Box No. 3, Canterbury Trades & Labour Council, Minutes, 1942-1946, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury. Minutes of the General Meeting of the Canterbury District Trades Council 19 December 1944, Christchurch. A 'Mr. Hill' moved an amendment that: 'the Executive placed the Federation of Labour under the hegemony of the Communist party' and 'The Executive's action was disruptive to the Federation of Labour insofar as it was to the effect that it debarred delegates and Union members of other Parties of the Left and non-Party Unionists men and women from participating, thus denying them their opportunity to demonstrate their opposition to British policy in Greece'

<sup>105</sup> EA1 201/2/82 pt 2B. (ANZ). United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. Typically, "The representations contained in your letter have been duly noted for consideration."

<sup>106</sup> Ibid Fraser to Secretary Auckland District Communist Party, December 9, 1944.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid Nash to Baxter 21 December 1944

### *No Troops?*

The statement that there were no troops in Greece spread into the popular press.<sup>108</sup> As earlier sections show, the press release about New Zealand troops was incorrect. The leadership knew this to varying degrees. Although the predicaments of McNab, Barnes and Edmonds were invisible to New Zealand, those of King and Aked were not. Both wrote letters about their predicament to Freyberg or Fraser. As the following shows, the general public knew about Aked as well.

On the same day that Aked's situation was reported in the press, the "No New Zealand troops" statement was also published."<sup>109</sup> Although Aked was only one soldier, he was in a senior and critical position in the fighting. He together with the S.O.E. operatives meant there was a military presence. There would be other major disjoints between State expressions and realities over Greece in the near future. Although it was not stated at the time, it was a disclosure that partly reflected the previous discussion amongst the leadership not to send the British-requested contingent for Greece. Those telegrams were subsequently published as part of the official war history project. The public exposure, however, was the result of domestic pressures and public embarrassment relating to Commonwealth diplomatic pressure.

### *Parliament*

While the domestic response was in contrast to that coming from New Zealanders in Greece (namely, anti-E.L.A.S. statements from King and Aked), there were finer divisions at home as well. It all went to show that the idea of one singular people linked to another collapsed during the crisis. In Parliament, there was silence. It was facilitated by Fraser: He told London: "In deference to my request, proposed questions on the Greek situation in the House of Representatives were withheld". Furthermore, as he now informed London, he had stated in the House that Greece was "a side issue" which would detract from the war effort.<sup>110</sup> Both the New Zealand Government and the Opposition displayed an unwillingness to engage with each other over Greece. This is in contrast to the reported situation with Westminster.<sup>111</sup> But the Wellington administration was also engaged with the Greek situation. It did this in the realm of confidential diplomacy. It was another example where what was being presented to the New Zealand citizenry was different from the nation state's confidential endeavours.

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<sup>108</sup>See for example, "No Dominion Troops," *Auckland Star*, December 14, 1944; "Imperial Unity," *New Zealand Herald*, December 16, 1944.

<sup>109</sup> "No Dominion Troops," *Auckland Star*, December 14, 1944; "Athens Fighting," *New Zealand Herald*, December 14, 1944.

<sup>110</sup> EA1 118/201/2/82 2b (ANZ) United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. Fraser to Secretary for Dominion Affairs, December 20, 1944.

<sup>111</sup> As the *Evening Post* reported on December 8: "The British Government circulated last night a three line whip- the most urgent summons to ensure a full attendance in the House of Commons tomorrow to hear an important statement by either Mr Churchill or Mr Eden on the Greek crisis." "Urgent Summons," *Evening Post*, December 8, 1944.

### *Path to 20 December*

On 20 December, Fraser sent a telegram of protest to London about Greece. There is an indication that he had at least prepared an earlier one but it is unclear as to whether or not it was sent.<sup>112</sup> The psychological effect of the protests on the Fraser administration was telling, as shown by a semi-private letter written by Alister McIntosh, the Head of the Department of External Affairs.

McIntosh, one of the most prominent figures in the history of New Zealand international relations, told Charles Boswell in Moscow that: “There is considerable excitement here on the question of Greece. The situation is a most unfortunate one, and we appear to be well offside in the view of all radicals in all countries. Trade Union circles here have not been behind with their criticism, and we receive a number of telegrams every day or so. God knows what the outcome will be!”<sup>113</sup> It was a far cry from the words and emotions used in celebrating the New Zealand-Greek relationship.

### *Motivation for a Confidential Protest*

What motivated Fraser to make a clear break with his previously drafted language and send a more pointed communication on 20 December was Churchill’s statement in the House of Commons that the Commonwealth Dominions had been consulted over actions in Greece. It was neither a sense of unity in purpose with his constituency nor the tug of the special relationship. The New Zealand press picked up Churchill’s statement.<sup>114</sup> Churchill’s very public utterance led to Fraser drafting a telegram to the Secretary of State for Dominions which he wanted External Affairs Secretary McIntosh to ‘over-haul’. The handwritten version by Fraser, penned at the Station Hotel, was probably made as he was exiting the country during his trip to the Pacific islands.<sup>115</sup> Two days later, the telegram was sent to London. Fraser did state there was a special New Zealand-Greek relationship but did not leave Britain on the outer; he broadened it to include the latter as well. He wrote: “The special circumstance that New Zealanders fought in Greece and formed a particularly close attachment to the Greek people renders especially repugnant the adoption of forcible measures

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<sup>112</sup> EA1 201/2/82 pt. 2b (ANZ). United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. Fraser to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, December 11, 1944. An examination at The National Archives in Kew did not show this telegram had been sent, unlike the later 20 December one. On 11 December he drafted a cable to the Secretary for Dominion Affairs which began; “We are naturally much concerned at the tragic events in Greece and I felt that you should know that there is a widespread measure of sympathy in favour of those against whom coercive action has been taken”.

<sup>113</sup> MS-Papers-6759-235 (ATL), McIntosh, Alister Donald Papers, Personal Correspondence, McIntosh to Boswell. McIntosh to Boswell, December 21, 1944.

<sup>114</sup> On 16 December the *New Zealand Herald* reported that two days previously Churchill had told the House: “it is not physically possible to consult the Dominion Governments on every step which the fast-moving development of the war renders necessary.” The piece concluded with another quote from the British Prime Minister: “‘I can rightfully say’ he added, ‘that we have received from the Dominion Governments no indication that they dissent from the action we have been compelled to take.’” *Dominions Informed*, *New Zealand Herald*, December 16, 1944. Also see “No Dominions Dissent,” *Evening Post*, December 15, 1944.

<sup>115</sup> EA1 201/2/82 Pt 2b (ANZ). United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. Fraser to McIntosh, December 18, 1944.

against the population. I know that similar feelings are also entertained by the British Government and people”.<sup>116</sup>

Besides commenting about fighting in Greece, Fraser specifically highlighted the two Allies who had been invaded in the 1941 campaigns, Greece and Yugoslavia, as taking “a courageous stand for the United Nations in the face of the German and Italian armies and have suffered loss and exile accordingly”.<sup>117</sup> He appeared to skew the current situation toward the memory of 1941. In this, he was echoing Freyberg’s speech made in the Italian fields just four months before, when he spoke of the aid Greeks had given Dominion troops in the aftermath of those battles.

But Fraser differed from the thrust of the protest messages he had been receiving. Up until the time of the telegram, there had only been four organisations that had mentioned those battles, assistance to soldiers or a special friendship.<sup>118</sup> In the months ahead, there would only be one other that followed suit. That was in early January 1945 and came from the Buller Trades Council. The content of the vast majority of the telegrams shows a preoccupation with the *present*. It included British intervention against allies and often cited international agreements such as the Atlantic Charter. E.L.A.S. was sometimes specifically mentioned. On the other hand, Fraser never named E.L.A.S. in his protest. He referred to “the disarming of those who seek to impose their will by force of arms”.<sup>119</sup> The Labour leader wanted a solution via the ballot box, but he also seemingly dismissed the notion of a plebiscite, and even made an assumption that contradicted his own words about the Greek people selecting their own “kind of Government and Social System”.<sup>120</sup> This was the return of King George and the continuation of the monarchy: “but the fact is plain that the majority of the people of their countries do not want them back to reign over them.”<sup>121</sup> Fraser’s dislike of the King had come through again, to the point where he dismissed the democratic process to decide the greater issue of the monarchy. It was another instance where certain Greeks were acceptable to certain New Zealanders. However, it was not New Zealand exceptionalism about Greece – the Labour leader was condemning other European monarchies as well.

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<sup>116</sup> EA1 /201/2/82 2B (ANZ) Affairs United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece Fraser to Secretary for Dominion Affairs, December 20, 1944.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> These were the Canterbury Branch of the CPNZ, Soldiers at Burnham Camp, the Grey Lynn Labour Party Branch and the Gisborne Labour Representation Committee.

<sup>119</sup> Fraser to Secretary for Dominion Affairs, December 20, 1944.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

## **Greek New Zealanders**

There is an ample reservoir of New Zealand documentary records and newspaper articles showing the involvement of large sections of New Zealand society in protests against British actions in newly liberated Greece. To date, investigations show one brief mention of New Zealand Greek engagement in the same event. A letter to Prime Minister Peter Fraser by a non-Greek obliquely refers to the local Greeks: "Now I see the Greek section of the community here in New Zealand is out to support the people of Greece in their demand for a really representative government."<sup>122</sup> Without diasporic protest, the situation was simpler to control for the Fraser administration.

## **State Dissection of Protests**

A police exercise just after the uproar throws up evidence of further complexity in the New Zealand reaction. If the archival material concerning New Zealand protests over Greece in late 1944 made available by the present day New Zealand Security Intelligence Service is representative of the efforts of the country's services, then it belies the extent of the protest movement and the complexity of the issues. The Security Intelligence Bureau only reported on trade unions and the C.P.N.Z., not on any of the Labour Party involvement. As Peter Fraser had Ministerial responsibility for Police from 1944 until 1949, it is highly likely he had a hand in the scope of the surveillance. Furthermore, illustrating that the establishment, just like the protest movement, does not always enjoy total unity, nowhere in its 18-page analysis is Peter Fraser's government nor its public announcement about no troops for Greece dealt with, except for prominent C.P.N.Z. figure Gordon Watson's reaction to that announcement. Government leadership is limited to Churchill and national stance to Britain – not New Zealand.<sup>123</sup> Communist infiltration of the unions was a large concern for Fraser. As he was Police Minister, it might be argued he maintained fidelity with his immediate power base, but the farther the protest extended, the less concerned he was. The fact that the secretive covert service did not seem to be aligned with the New Zealand national sentiment is an indication of the multiplicity of sub-elites in the national apparatus.

As discussed later, there were elements in the December episode that could have been shaped in a positive national imagining. The actual protests were mentioned in an unpublished official war history civilian narrative on the Communist Party<sup>124</sup>. It is yet another indication of the ubiquitous research activity of the official war history project. Similar to the Police perspective, the 7 pages devoted to the protests never mentioned the Fraser government nor specifically any Labour Party

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<sup>122</sup> Boocock to Fraser, December 12, 1944

<sup>123</sup> New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS). *Communist Propaganda Regarding Greek Crisis in New Zealand Security Intelligence Bulletin No 20, March 1945.*

<sup>124</sup> WAI 21/63/c Civilian Narratives (ANZ), *New Zealand Communist Party and the War*

branches. The latter may have been considered to have been subsumed in the phrase “labour and trade movement.”<sup>125</sup> The focus was the C.P.N.Z., and trade unions, with the Burnham soldiers also making an appearance. Dismissing the uproar as simply the result of C.P.N.Z. agitation was not, however, a given. “While many of the resolutions passed by the unions registered protests in language similar to that found in Communist propaganda, it is problematical whether they were the result of Communist influence.”<sup>126</sup> Indeed, one observation might be seen to lend itself to a bonding between New Zealand and Greece that was not ideologically driven: “To few other incidents in the war did the Party react so violently.”<sup>127</sup> This unpublished account shows again how the New Zealand government’s role in Greek affairs was expunged from the record of two State actors – Police and historians. There would be other examples in the New Year.

### **New Zealand Diplomats Analyse Dekemvriana**

Fraser’s December 20 telegram included something that was apparent in the Dominion’s internal consideration of the Athens fighting. In the cable to London, Fraser had spoken over “confusion” about “the intentions of the United Kingdom Government in Greece, and the issues involved”.<sup>128</sup> Less than 10 days later, J.V. Wilson of External Affairs in Wellington penned a memorandum, the opening paragraph of which included: “it does not seem as if Greek situation as a whole is much less obscure”.<sup>129</sup> His two-page analysis tried to determine the motivation for obtuse British intervention (e.g. including the spheres of influence and “supress communism”). British ruthlessness to achieve certain outcomes was also a possible development – “She will use force not against those whom she dislikes on ideological grounds but against those who interfere with the objectives.”<sup>130</sup> Wilson’s pondering came to no real conclusion. Hence the previously mentioned possible overture to Freyberg and the avenue that was eventually taken -John Mulgan, the New Zealander serving with S.O.E. (see below).

### **AFTER DEKEMVRIANA**

New Zealand society’s engagement with Greek political affairs never reached the public level of discontent it did during December 1944. But against the deliberations of recognition of Greeks for hiding and assisting New Zealand soldiers, aid and rehabilitation, first post-war commemoration and recognition of Greek/Cretan civilian aid, the discourse about Greek politics in the Dominion continued in public and in confidential government circles.

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>128</sup> EA1 /201/2/82 2B (ANZ) United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece Fraser to Secretary for Dominion Affairs, December 20, 1944

<sup>129</sup> Memorandum, Wilson to McIntosh, December 29, 1944.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

## Government Continues to Apply Certain Memories

To the reading public in mid-January, the Fraser government projected acceptance of valid British involvement in Greek affairs and completely avoided its own and the wider New Zealand community's protests as well. During an official occasion for the visiting Greek dignitaries, Archbishop Evangelinidis from Sydney, and the Greek Consul General for Australia, Vrisakis, the Greek situation received considerable attention from Fraser. It was "the crisis their motherland had been going through".<sup>131</sup> The conflict was a Greek and British affair. The public were told Churchill and Eden had made "pledges" that elections would be carried out. Also, "they must accept the assurances that they had had repeatedly from Mr Churchill and Mr Eden as to the intention of that policy."<sup>132</sup> The Percentages Agreement was never mentioned, even as a diluted and benign form of international agreement that saw major powers avoiding immediate conflict.

What was stressed was 1941, Greek aid to New Zealand soldiers, and the New Zealand relief efforts. According to Fraser's speech, there had been no New Zealand involvement in recent Greek affairs except for relief supplies (Brigadier King was mentioned in this regard) and that "her men would never forget the kindness and hospitality they had received in Greece."<sup>133</sup> The main underlying struts of what is remembered, and celebrated, about the New Zealand-Greek relationship had once more appeared. It was, just like Freyberg's speech to the Greek soldiers in Italy five months before, in blatant contrast to the present situation. If one looked for specificities and generalities in Fraser's address, there are glaring omissions of recent events and an emphasis on those that could not draw discussion of New Zealand involvement in contentious Greek affairs.

The affiliated New Zealand and Greek armies - one of the immediate pre-Dekemvriana links to Greece - were never raised. This was despite the media treatment Rimini had received and that it was the only shared wartime victory. If Fraser had done so, he would be reminding the public of a unit that was still a point of contention in discussions about ending the fighting. Just two weeks before the Wellington event, the *Evening Post* had carried a story that the British commander in Athens, Scobie, had agreed to return the Brigade to barracks if E.A.M./E.L.A.S. agreed to terms set by him.<sup>134</sup> There was also the particular involvement of a senior New Zealand officer (Aked) as one of its key officers. New Zealand clearly had an involvement in the fighting.

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<sup>131</sup> "Greek Visitors," *Evening Post*, January 18, 1945.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> "Official Statement Report on Conference," *Evening Post*, January 3, 1945.

Besides the Brigade, there were the stories from Bill Jordan about the death of Hubbard with S.O.E. The long exposure of New Zealanders to the Greek politics of armed resistance was also avoided. Similarly avoided were the New Zealand protests. Indeed, protest telegrams about British involvement in Greek affairs were still arriving when Fraser made his speech.<sup>135</sup>

Having said the above, New Zealand government was not holding onto blind faith in British intentions. Their confidential actions showed a different attitude. It was one they did not share with their own citizens then, or after in their official memory. In the immediacy of early 1945, the Fraser administration was already taking actions that showed a genuine interest in contentious Greek matters of the present as well as comfortable memory shaping. This took place against a backdrop of wider society's ongoing concern with Greek matters.

### **Mulgan and Hubbard**

The day after Fraser spoke at the function just discussed, the Wellington diplomatic machinery sent a semi-private letter to John Mulgan<sup>136</sup>, a New Zealander serving with S.O.E. in Greece, but shortly expected to join New Zealand forces. The goal was to gain political intelligence from a source they knew and trusted. It was a distinct change showing the government shifted from passive receptor of official British communications and newspaper reports for information to a more proactive behaviour. The Mulgan approach set in train a series of incidents that led to Mulgan's father pressing Wellington to consider the possibility that assassination had occurred when his son was found dead shortly after sending the requested report to the Fraser government. Closure for the government came in September (when Freyberg was pursuing his commemorations in Greece and Crete) with a final coronial report of suicide. I have already dealt with that episode elsewhere.<sup>137</sup>

The Dominion State's interest in the British-led investigation into Mulgan's death shows another aspect of the elite and Greece –in one way, the farther a death was from its membership, the less interest it showed. Mulgan was personally known to senior members of the establishment, and his father, Alan, held a high profile position in national broadcasting. Wellington pressed the investigating British for information.

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<sup>135</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 137 201/4/82 Pt 3 (ANZ). Countries-United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. For example, Manawatu District Trades Council on January 12, 1945, and two days later, Democratic Labour Party Christchurch.

<sup>136</sup> Martyn Brown, "Political Context of John Mulgan's Greek Wartime Life and Death," *Journal of New Zealand Studies* NS 10, (2011).

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.



In contrast, the shooting of Arthur Hubbard still did not bring forth any New Zealand interest. He was a clerk from Hamilton and did not mix in higher circles. Two months after the final decision on Mulgan was communicated, the Hubbard situation received brief discussion inside senior New Zealand army command. On 6 December 1945, over two years after Hubbard was killed, Brigadier Conway, Adjutant General, wrote: “The necessity for any secrecy concerning the circumstances of Lieut. Hubbard’s death does not now exist.”<sup>138</sup> In contrast to the Mulgan situation, which showed much official New Zealand activity, Hubbard’s situation was marginalized. Conway argued the circumstances of the death had been described in “an account of it in detail, purported to have been given by Major W.S. Jordan, who was with Lieut. Hubbard at the time and, according to the Press notice, evidently gave full details to Lieut. Hubbard’s mother.”<sup>139</sup> The *New Zealand Herald* story made official communication superfluous. Hubbard’s family placed notices of remembrance in the same paper.<sup>140</sup>

The treatments of Mulgan and Hubbard may have been different in 1945 but, as illustrated in the chapter dealing with New Zealanders serving with secret organisations in Greece, they were both relegated to footnotes in the published history. Hubbard’s mother never appears to have received an official account of his death. In January 1956, she wrote to Kippenberger asking for a “short history of my late son’s services” for “purposes of a war Memorial in book form”.<sup>141</sup> In response, the Army Secretary sent a one-page summary that covered Hubbard’s service – both in Greece and before. His role in occupied Greece was slanted very much toward that of a peace facilitator. In late 1943, he was “seconded to a special mission to negotiate peace between different factions in Greece and to organise resistance there.”<sup>142</sup> The death of Hubbard was recorded as 3 October 1943, but his entry was left to a general description: “Towards the end of 1943.”<sup>143</sup> The intricacies of the resistance, understandably, had not been mentioned, but the effect of having a New Zealander as an honest broker bringing peace and fighting the invader was projected in this letter. There was nothing damaging to this representative of the nation. New Zealand non-involvement (rather than disinterest) was also implicit: “The death of your son, and the work he was carrying on, were referred to in the British House of Commons early in 1944 by Sir Winston Churchill.”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> PF 20475 Wilfred Arthur Hubbard New Zealand Defence Force Archive, Trentham (NZDFA). Conway to Director Pay Accounts & Base Records, December 6, 1945.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> “In Memoriam,” *New Zealand Herald*, October 13, 1944.

<sup>141</sup> PF 20475 Wilfred Arthur Hubbard (NZDFA). Mrs A.E. Hubbard to Director of War Histories, January 4, 1956

<sup>142</sup> Army Secretary to Mrs A.E. Hubbard, February 1, 1956.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid

Such are the variances and commonalities the State exhibited toward some of its individual soldiers caught up in the most acute episodes of wartime Greece. Another variant of the lack of consistency was demonstrated when some of the soldiers returned and spoke publicly about their experiences.

### **King and Aked – Lack of Consistency in State Control**

When King and Aked returned home, their public statements showed various degrees of State censure as well as a mixture of emotions toward Greece. There appears to be no consistent policy on what the soldiers could say. It was further evidence of the State's inability or unwillingness to adequately deal with individual soldiers who were in the quagmire of Greek-related politics. Senior British representatives asked Freyberg if King's views could be made public by them. Freyberg passed on the request to Fraser who told him King could only speak privately to representatives of New Zealand, Britain and the USA. His orders from Fraser to keep those views confidential were followed.<sup>145</sup> In public King maintained his positive emotional stance. He "was amazed at the deep affection which Greeks have for New Zealanders. Several times, to his embarrassment, he was told: "We love you New Zealanders. To us you are almost like Gods."<sup>146</sup> Civilian assistance given to his fellow countrymen, and the price they paid was also mentioned.<sup>147</sup>

In contrast, the Dominion press reported Ted Aked was "admitting freely that he is biased in his opinion – he could see no good in the ELAS movement".<sup>148</sup> The viciousness of the fighting was recalled: "I would prefer anything I have experienced in this war to that type of civil war."<sup>149</sup> Besides the earlier press comments in late 1944 by Bill Jordan, there was now Aked. Horror and condemnation of one group of Greeks came with exaltation of another.

### **Jordan versus the C.P.N.Z. - *Truth about Greece***

In early 1945, the C.P.N.Z. distributed a booklet called the *Truth about Greece*.<sup>150</sup> The following year, another appeared with the same title. It was written by Bill Jordan.<sup>151</sup> Unsurprisingly, the two publications took contradictory viewpoints. The C.P.N.Z. supported E.A.M./E.L.A.S. Jordan

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<sup>145</sup> AAEG 950 137a 201/4/82 Pt 3 (ANZ). Countries-United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. Fraser to Freyberg. January 24, 1945, Fraser to King, January 24, 1945. he could only speak privately to representatives of New Zealand, Britain and the USA.

<sup>146</sup> "Almost Like Gods," *Evening Post*, February 22, 1945

<sup>147</sup> See for example, "On Plane of Gods," *Evening Post*, May 8, 1945; "Greeks and New Zealanders," *Auckland Star*, May 8, 1945.

<sup>148</sup> "Greek Fighting- Colonel's Story," *Auckland Star*, April 23, 1945. He had seen over a thousand bodies exhumed in one location, all ELAS victims. Members of ELAS forces were forced to fight by either threats to their own lives or their relatives.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*

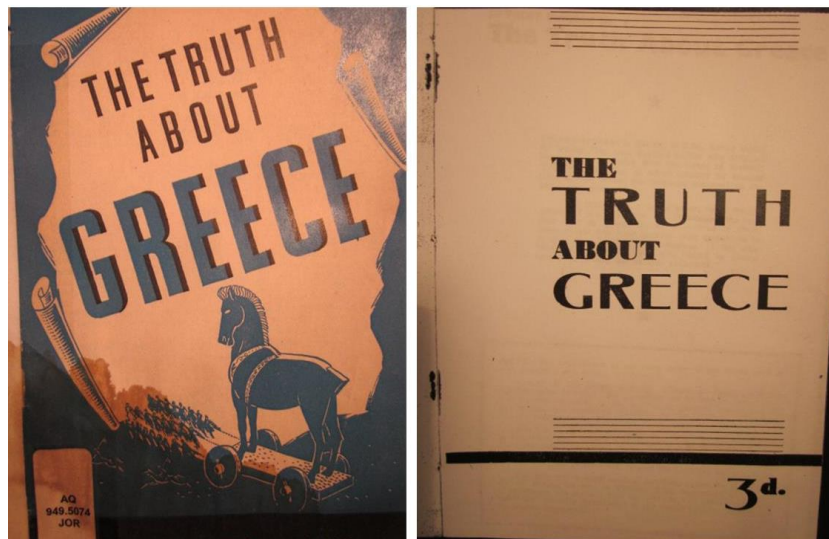
<sup>150</sup> [S.W. Stott], *Truth about Greece* (Auckland: S.W. Scott for the In Print Pub. Co.1945), Preface. It was based upon "a dispatch received from the Central News Service, London, which sent it at the special request of the Federation of Greek Maritime Unions. " The publication was part of the C.P.N.Z. 's "Hands off Greece" campaign. Scott was a long term member of the Communist Party.

<sup>151</sup> W.S. Jordan, *Truth about Greece*,(Melbourne: Araluen, 1946).

argued that E.L.A.S. had done little fighting against the invader.<sup>152</sup> Zervas had his support – “one of the greatest of the heroes”.<sup>153</sup> It was not Greeks as a people or their politicking trait that were the problem. They had been “deceived by the red swindle” to join E.A.M./E.L.A.S.<sup>154</sup> He also did not support King George II, thereby siding with the Republicans.<sup>155</sup> He had introduced a degree of complexity with this last point. Jordan dedicated the book to the state-marginalised Hubbard.<sup>156</sup>

The C.P.N.Z. also differed from Jordan in that they took a wider view. Included was the Greek Brigade. The Mountain Brigade, which was trained by and fought alongside New Zealanders at Rimini, is presented as being of the extreme right. Its commander, Tsakalotos, was willing to fight E.L.A.S. to the death and found it difficult to prevent his own troops shooting E.L.A.S. prisoners. Some New Zealand Police tried unsuccessfully to pursue prosecuting the New Zealand communists over the booklet using a technicality.<sup>157</sup>

**Figure 6.3 Two publications with the same title but vastly different views. On the left is S.O.E. operative Bill Jordan's booklet. On the right is one brought out by the New Zealand Communist Party. They appeared in consecutive years.**



Jordan continued his polemic in the years to come.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 20. - “The Greek communists must answer for the prolongation of the German occupation of Greece.”

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 31. “I myself despise the Greek King and could sympathise with the Greek Republicans.”

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. 47. The work was “written out of duty to the memory of Lieutenant Arthur Hubbard 2NZEF, who was foully murdered by Greek Communist members of EAM-ELAS”.

<sup>157</sup> *Police Special Branch Report S.45/19 29 January 1945* (NZSIS). Detective Sergeant Browne to Inspector of Detectives, January 29, 1945. File Note February 12, 1945. The police argument was restriction on use of paper had been breached.

<sup>158</sup> William Jordan, *Conquest without Victor*, (Hodder and Stoughton: London and Auckland, 1969). He was still anti-ELAS to the extreme. Of Zervas, he was supportive: “magnificent in action”, 73. He was dismissive of journalists’ accusations of Zervas’ lack of genuine interest in fighting the enemy. ELAS was dismissed but, interestingly, Jordan had seen females in “communist bands”. He had lost some of his own critical emotion about the Greek king but did mention the monarch was unpopular in many areas of Greece. 91.

From his first publication and press interviews, Jordan was obviously engaged with the politics of Greece, whilst in public, the New Zealand national leadership was silent. The forthcoming official war history project about S.O.E. stripped them out. So did another arm of the nation state. It even went so far as to blatantly erase the fact that New Zealand and Greece had fought together in 1941.

### **Army Education**

The New Zealand Army Education Welfare Service (A.E.W.S.) had by early March 1945 included Greece in the content of its regular, but restricted, *Bulletin*.<sup>159</sup> The aim of the A.E.W.S, as one scholarly article has noted, was to explore, amongst other things, "questions of social conflict and social change."<sup>160</sup> It did so, but with a limited vista when it came to Greece.

In its concluding section on the Mediterranean land, "Points for your introductory Talk and Discussion", it argues "Not many New Zealanders know much of ancient Greece and the debt we owe to that remarkable civilization, fewer still know anything about the Greek nation of today. [*sic*]"<sup>161</sup> It was a remarkable statement given at least the publicized food shipment, expressions of gratitude and at least in the New Zealand press, stories about domestic protests over British actions during the Dekemvriana. What is more, nowhere is there mention of the well-known and direct New Zealand involvement with Greece i.e. the 1941 expedition and Crete.

The above was against a detailed treatment of the immediate political situation, and its historical antecedents.<sup>162</sup> In contrast to the silence over New Zealand's role, discussion starters were provocative. They included the role of Britain (including quotes from leading British politicians from the left, as well as others supporting British actions and an allusion to the percentages agreement), and the left coup d'état versus imposition of a right-wing dictatorship arguments.<sup>163</sup> In its discussion of the last point, it argues: "Obviously, both cannot be right. Is it equally unlikely that one is right and the other wrong? Would the truth lie midway between the two?"<sup>164</sup> In contrast to the public and semi-public statements by Fraser and Freyberg, this educational exercise was not

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<sup>159</sup> "Greece," *AEWS Bulletin* March 5, (1945): 16. According to the last page the material was only intended for use by members of the armed forces. This was a generic statement not attributable to the discussion about Greece. "The matter it contains is not to be communicated either directly or indirectly, to the press."

<sup>160</sup> Chris Brickell, "Soldier to Citizen: Army Education and Postwar New Zealand Citizenship," *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society* 39, no. 3 (2010): 365.

<sup>161</sup> "Greece," *AEWS Bulletin*: 15.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-11. There were decades of intermittent dictatorship, civil war and involvement in overseas wars that stretched for decades. The involvement of the left and right military in politics, including the tensions and "revolts" in the Middle East as well as challenges to the Greek-in-exile by their own troops as well as the armed resistance. the Metaxist regime, its continued residue in the government-in-exile and even the return of George II from exile at the instigation of the military. Acronyms such as EAM, ELAS, EDES and their respective politics were raised. Also, their own internal dynamics to an extent – parties who resigned from EAM during and after Dekemvriana were named. It was not a monolithic "communist" machine.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

aimed at producing a singular and palatable view/memory about Greece. Its final emphasis on discussion and debate showed it was more supportive of the notion of history with its complexity. But it was an exercise with New Zealand omitted from the contentious area.

### **Stephen Weir - One Stage of Separation**

While the above concerns public exposure of divisions over Greece, during 1945, there was also a continued direct New Zealand involvement. Although absent from the public eye, Stephen Weir, who had temporarily commanded the New Zealand Division and Greek Brigade at Rimini, like Aked, ended up in Greece. Unlike the latter, this was not by design<sup>165</sup> but through fast demands caused by the post-Dekemvriana situation. In November 1944, he went to command 46 British Army Division<sup>166</sup> which ended up in Greece in early January. He wrote to a family member that he “arrived to take part in the latter stages of the civil war here. Didn’t do much fighting... but had one or two small battles of a particularly vicious and dirty nature.”<sup>167</sup> The New Zealander had a considerable responsibility: “I was given a sizable portion of Greece to clean up of bandits and rebels and to assist in installing the civil administration and internal security troops as well as the disarming and surrender of a few rebel divisions.”<sup>168</sup> Weir’s command encountered both new and familiar government forces. The National Guard was the new one. It, as one of Weir’s unit’s reports said, had been “carrying out searches, arresting anyone with left-wing tendencies, and generally purging the area of communist activities.”<sup>169</sup> The Greek force had a “strong pro-Royalist” bent<sup>170</sup> and had been carrying out indiscriminate arrests. The report also included the Greek Brigade, which had complained to Weir’s command that E.L.A.S. was “giving Communist salute, making rude signs, passing comments and singing songs unpopular with 3 Greek Mountain Brigade.”<sup>171</sup> Unlike Aked and the S.O.E. officers, Weir’s situation was never brought up during the war history research. If it had, the response would probably have been the same as for Aked – exclusion from the scope of published official narrative.

There is no archival evidence that Weir communicated any of his own feelings and direct involvement in the fighting to New Zealand officials or Freyberg. A search of archives in the United Kingdom did not throw up any comment from him to British authorities. It is of interest to

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<sup>165</sup> PF 30006 Brigadier Stephen Cyril Ettrick Weir (NZDF), Searches of archives in New Zealand and the UK did not reveal any ulterior motive for Weir joining the Division. His voluminous New Zealand Army personnel record illustrates a long history of secondment with British units.

<sup>166</sup> AD 12 /21 Unnumbered Files (ANZ), New Liaison Officer London to Army HQ Wellington, November 1, 1944; Army HQ Wellington to NZLO London, 3 November 3, 1944 Both Freyberg and the New Zealand Army HQ agreed.

<sup>167</sup> Ms-Papers 9271 Gerald Hill Weir Papers (ATL), Letter of April 4, 1945.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> WO 170/4351 (TNA), War Diary 46 Infantry Division Appendix A to HQ Brewforce G/1/12, February 18, 1945.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid

<sup>171</sup> War Diary, February 26, 1945.

note that Harold MacMillan, one of the key British diplomatic figures involved with Greece, met a “[Norman] Weir” whom he describes as a “bluff and efficient-looking New Zealander”<sup>172</sup> He probably meant Stephen (there was a Norman in the 2NZEF but he does not appear to have been in Greece during this period).<sup>173</sup>

## REMAINDER OF THE DECADE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE – ENGAGEMENT AND NEUTRALITY

For the remainder of the 1940s, long after the 2NZEF returned home to New Zealand, there appeared memoirs and novels of veterans that dealt with fractious Greece. In this period civil war erupted again in 1946 and ended in 1949, the same year the Dominion’s Labour government lost power after 13 years in office.

Both Dan Davin and C.W. Wheeler shared varying degrees of official endorsement for their work. The former was the credited historian of *Crete*; the latter’s memoirs had an introduction by Government Minister for Rehabilitation, C.F. Skinner. He considered the work a worthy addition to the growing corpus of veterans’ memoirs and predicted it would be received positively by those: “proud of the Second Division's achievements and appreciative of a story well told.”<sup>174</sup>

But both Davin and Wheeler wrote critically of the wartime Greek government. The former did this via his 1947 novel *For the Rest of their Lives*<sup>175</sup>. His characters allude to the affinity of King George II of Greece with Metaxists and ongoing predation on Greeks outside of Axis-occupied territories - “Don't you know? The Ministry of the Interior brought its Secret Police along when it left Greece. Now they get anyone they don't like or who doesn't like them sent off to India on one pretext or another.”<sup>176</sup> According to the private papers of Emmanuel Tsouderos, Greek Prime Minister at the time of Crete and one of the Royal escape party, that is exactly what happened.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Macmillan, Harold. *War Diaries: Politics and War in the Mediterranean, January 1943-May 1945*. (London: Macmillan, 1984), 662. The encounter was 26 January, 1945.

<sup>173</sup> NormanWilliam McDonald Weir was a senior officer in the administrative area. He eventually became Chief of the New Zealand General Staff. 'Weir, Major-General Sir William Norman McDonald, K.B.E., C.B.', from *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, edited by A. H. McLintock, originally published in 1966. *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 23-Apr-09 URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/1966/weir-major-general-sir-william-norman-mcdonald-kbe-cb>

<sup>174</sup> C.M. Wheeler, *Kalimera Kiwi : to Olympus with the New Zealand Engineers* (Wellington: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1946), Introduction.

<sup>175</sup> Dan Davin, *For the Rest of their Lives*, (London /Auckland:Michael Joseph; Blackwood & Janet Paul,1947).

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

<sup>177</sup> Tsouderos Papers K115 Greek State Archives, Athens (GAK). Greek Consul Bombay to Tsouderos, May 3, 1942 Tsouderos to Greek Consul Bombay [Undated]. In early 1942 the government ensured the return of Republican Moschovitis to India when he tried to leave. His republican activities had been apparent to the British during 1941. According to the Foreign Office, in early 1941 “all he and his associates were pressing for was a declaration in favour of constitutional government.” Meade’s Comments on Bowman’s notes FO 371/29820 (TNA) German Attack on Greece.

Wheeler focused on E.A.M./E.L.A.S: “The great majority of Greeks supported the movement, which provided one of our finest and most self-sacrificing allies.”<sup>178</sup> The Syntagma Square shooting was when a “great crowd of Greek men, women and children were slaughtered by rifles, machine-guns and mortars, pouring out death amongst them for more than an hour.”<sup>179</sup> The circumstances behind Skinner’s endorsement of this book are not known, but it again shows the open divisiveness of attitudes towards Greece in New Zealand at the time. Davin shows that an individual actor in the state apparatus (like McClymont and his dismissal of the moral cause of the Greek expedition), can have a view differing from a work carrying their name.

### **Mulgan’s Posthumous Work**

In the same year as Davin’s novel appeared, John Mulgan’s posthumous *Report on Experience*<sup>180</sup> was published. Mulgan’s work also mixes philosophy with war experience yet has been cited by academic historians.<sup>181</sup> His respect for the suffering and fidelity of the Greek people supports the dominant memory of the Greek New Zealand connection: “The real heroes of the Greek war of resistance were the common people of the hills. It was on them, with their bitter, uncomplaining endurance, that the German terror broke. They produced no traitors.”<sup>182</sup> The partisans were a different matter. Their fighting capability had seemingly evaporated. We “were puzzled and a little ashamed to find ourselves working with a resistance movement that never did any fighting. Some said angrily that all Greeks were cowards. Others, that only Greeks of one political persuasion had any military value, that the rest took arms for political power and not to fight Germans. Myself, I doubt the truth of either thesis.”<sup>183</sup> While civilian suffering was assertively stated, the value of the armed resistance was painted in tones of grey to dark dismissiveness.<sup>184</sup> The former naturally supported the memory constructs of the relationship. More thoughtful than previous New Zealand critics quoted earlier, he saw not only terror but also a fundamental absence of socio-economic planning for post-war Greece. The Party [Communist] controlled through fear: “Two men in every village who are prepared to kill can hold the village. One political adviser beside every officer

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<sup>178</sup> C.M. Wheeler, *Kalimera Kiwi*, 202.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>180</sup> John Mulgan, *Report on Experience* (Auckland: Blackwood Janet Paul 1947). He died in April 1945 leaving the manuscript. See also John Mulgan and Peter Whiteford, *Report on Experience* (London Wellington, N.Z. Annapolis, MD: Frontline Books; Victoria University Press; Naval Institute Press, 2010). This later edition has some minor adjustments to non-Greek related areas.

<sup>181</sup> Martyn Brown, “Political Context”.

<sup>182</sup> John Mulgan, *Report on Experience* (1947) 99-100.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 123. Indirectly, one of his observations matched that of Jordan and Tom King years earlier – the invader was a transient presence so in terms of fighting them: “they made it fairly clear that it was not their primary object since the Germans, they reckoned, would go anyway, while others like the English or Americans might stay”.

keeps the army in order.”<sup>185</sup> Its continually changing slogans reflected an opportunist bent: “the Communism we knew in Greece never had any real programme.”<sup>186</sup> Although in *Report on Experience* Mulgan wrote at some length about the question of communists and socialist revolution – possible, planned or hypothetical – he did not deal with the issue of collaborators.

His own return to Athens in January 1945 also led him to witness some of the government excesses, as archives now show. In late January 1945 he told his commander that the Greek Anagnostopoulos, a member of the S.O.E. Headsman mission had escaped E.L.A.S. imprisonment only to be “picked up by a roving band of E.P. [Greek Government’s Civil Guard] and shot.”<sup>187</sup> Just as Weir’s command had found, the government forces were not immune from terror-like activities.

### **Uren and Neutrality**

What one study called New Zealand’s “earliest published war novel”<sup>188</sup> appeared in 1945. This was *They will arise: an epic of Greece under the Axis*, by Martyn Uren. Uren’s book is concerned with partisan warfare in occupied Greece. Its content has been deliberately cleansed of the intricate internal Greek politics: “Nowhere in the story have I taken cognizance of the complicated political situation that has simmered in that country for many decades. That this strong feeling should have been set aside in the darker hours of Axis tyranny so as to present a strong united front to the forces of oppression, is in itself a tribute to the national spirit of Greece.”<sup>189</sup> It is both recognition of the extreme politics evident and also a denial of history. A “strong united front” did not exist – only civil war and undercurrents that would continue for years to come.<sup>190</sup> Britain is treated as an umpire with no ulterior motive. In these aspects, the novel closely resembled the line of the New Zealand Army Education Service – avoidance. But it was so obvious as to be comical. While the above shows divisions in New Zealand society, its government was united in its pursuit of certain outcomes for Greece.

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>187</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Count Julian A Dobrski Papers. Dobrski 34 Liddell Hart Military Archive (LHMCA), Mulgan to Dolbey, January 21, 1945

<sup>188</sup> Joan Stevens, *New Zealand Novel, 1860-1960* (Wellington: Reed, 1961), 79.

<sup>189</sup> Martyn Uren, *They Will arise : an Epic of Greece under the Axis* (Auckland: Collins, 1945), Foreword.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., Foreword.



## **NATION STATE – REALITY AND MEMORY BUILDING PROJECT DURING THE 1940s GREEK CRISIS**

Earlier chapters have looked at post-war commemorative efforts covering several decades. The following is concerned with the attitudes and actions of the New Zealand elite during the remainder of the 1940s. This period is when the New Zealand nation state was still led by the wartime government and the sizable project it was funding was gaining momentum. It was also the years when there were more turbulent times of civil unrest and the third round of the Civil War. That the Axis had been defeated meant that exigencies of world-wide total war had disappeared. On another level, it was compounded by Dominion membership of the United Nations while still being a member of the Commonwealth, one soon to be led by the Labour Party in Britain.

### **General Backdrop**

Press coverage and reports from London depicted the ongoing Greek trauma. On 6 December 1945, a year following the shootings in Syntagma Square, the *Evening Post* wrote of an E.A.M. delegation visiting London to make representations to “meet with officials and inform British public opinion” about the continued presence in the government forces and army of “reactionary elements” and their involvement with “monarchist terrorism”.<sup>191</sup> That regime was, on about the first anniversary of Fraser’s mutiny clemency (July 1945), still holding “3,000 to 4,000 Greek army and navy personnel in camps in the Middle East, of only which only a small proportion are mutineers.”<sup>192</sup>

While the delegation depicted E.A.M./E.L.A.S. and their associated supporters as victims, other stories tagged them as predators. The British Trade Union Congress that visited Greece had seen bodies and “heard ‘horrible stories’” about E.L.A.S. atrocities and hostage taking.<sup>193</sup> It was a mixture that was seemingly grey with no black or white division. The New Zealand government was also receiving communications from London on the Greek situation. It was part of the ongoing British presence there.

For the remainder of the decade Britain, and to a far lesser extent New Zealand, were interacting with successive domestic Greek administrations that academic historians have described as exhibiting “demoralisation of the state administration”<sup>194</sup> and “divided and paralysed”<sup>195</sup>. It is no

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<sup>191</sup> “Interpretation by EAM,” *Evening Post*, December 6, 1945.

<sup>192</sup> “Greek Unrest,” *Evening Post*, July 26, 1945.

<sup>193</sup> “ELAS Indicted,” *Auckland Star*, February 9, 1945 See also “ELAS Decried,” *Evening Post*, January 26, 1945.

<sup>194</sup> David H. Close, *Greece Since 1945: Politics Economy and Society* (Harlow: Longman, 2002), 17. Close includes all the institutional players – wartime collaboration, EAM (supposedly when it was part of government for a brief period) and successive post-liberation manifestations.

<sup>195</sup> John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos M. Veremis, *Greece: Modern Sequel*. (London: Hurst, 2002), 295.

surprise that Greece was moving along a path to open civil war. The interim period between Dekemvriana and the elections of early 1946 showed “The failure of the succession of governments in the aftermath of the December Uprising to effect even a modicum of reconciliation and their ability to control the lawlessness of the right-wing gangs roaming the countryside practically paved the way for another confrontation.”<sup>196</sup> This was the Third Round of the Civil War. It began in 1946 following the March elections.

External intervention and aid in the form of military assistance and financial/economic provisioning continued under Britain. Eventually the U.S.A. ascended to a senior dominant role. The New Zealand public learnt through the press of “plotting” by monarchists<sup>197</sup> and a “Prolonged Greek Crisis”.<sup>198</sup> A reconstituted E.A.M. was still able to have its delegates circulate and make public protests in London.<sup>199</sup> Studies on the period at the time place the planned elections and plebiscite as key mechanisms by which there might be some reconciliation. The outcome of the elections (which the Left boycotted) meant “the resulting [rightist] government could therefore maintain, with full authority, that they were Greece’s legitimate rulers.”<sup>200</sup>

The New Zealand public read of the intended elections and the ostensible aim of resolving outstanding issues e.g. a “chance to reach stability”<sup>201</sup> However the surrender of weapons by E.L.A.S. following the Varkiza Agreement of February that year meant that there had been “a subsequent right wing revolution”.<sup>202</sup> Threaded through this was the involvement of the “Big Three” (Britain, Soviet Union and the U.S.A).<sup>203</sup> They were going to “draft a new provisional map of Europe”<sup>204</sup> Greece was a country still in convulsions.

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<sup>196</sup> Andre Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror : the Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* (New York: Basic , 2004). 185

<sup>197</sup> “Greek Troubles,” *New Zealand Herald*, July 14, 1945.

<sup>198</sup> “Prolonged Greek Crisis,” *Evening Post*, October 29, 1945.

<sup>199</sup> “Greeks Dissatisfied,” *Evening Post*, August 24, 1945.

<sup>200</sup> Heinz Richer, *British Intervention in Greece* (London: Merlin, 1986), 451. Richter takes the stance that the election result implicitly lessened British influence. Conversely, Sfikas asserts the new British Labour government was deliberately striving to disengage from its then direct involvement. Thanasis D. Sfikas; *British Labour Government and the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949: Imperialism of Non-intervention*, (Keele: Ryburn, 1994), Ch 3.

<sup>201</sup> “Greek Political Tangle,” *New Zealand Herald*, August 2, 1945. The extended piece was written by Halstead who had been the official NZEF archivist. While he was anti-KKE, he was not totally anti-ELAS and EAM. The two had relied on the KKE for organisation and clandestine work and had inadvertently fallen under their control. He even said he had met an ELAS commander who had refused to take up arms against the British during the Dekemvriana. Halstead must have gleaned at least some of this from his archives visit to liberated Greece as described later in the chapter. Also see for example “Poll in Greece,” *Auckland Star*, September 20, 1945; “Purpose in Greece,” *Evening Post*, December 24, 1945.

<sup>202</sup> “Greek Political Tangle,” *New Zealand Herald*, August 2, 1945.

<sup>203</sup> The E.A.M., for example, raised the future of Greece with the three leaders “EAM Party’s Fear,” *Evening Post*, June 28, 1945. Greek territorial demands were sent to them by Papandreou’s successor, Nikolaos Plastiras. “From Potsdam,” *Auckland Star*, July 31, 1945.

<sup>204</sup> “Big Three will Re-Draft Europe,” *Auckland Star*, July 14, 1945.

## Question of Intervention

On 14 August 1945, the Blackball District Coal Miners' Union sent a letter to Peter Fraser. It read: "The late British government intervention in the political and domestic life of the Greek people was, to my Union very distasteful, and a complete refutation of all the promises made to a gallant people."<sup>205</sup> Fraser sent an extensive reply on 7 September. He informed the union that "I have already made clear to the United Kingdom my views on any intervention in the domestic affairs of the Greek people".<sup>206</sup> He placed faith in the electoral process that was in train and stated that his views were "in accord with those of the new British Government, and so I do not think it necessary to register any protest to the British government."<sup>207</sup> He did, however, say that New Zealand personnel would possibly participate in the planned Greek elections. It was, again, the month of planning for the Freyberg commemorative events, where he would speak of the political divisions of the Greek Left and Right. But during the same month, Wellington was promoting the political cause of one Greek. It was hardly the stuff of neutrality.

## John Sofianopoulos and Disillusionment

John Sofianopoulos, according to the Greek historian, Sfikas, was "An eminent liberal with leftist tendencies."<sup>208</sup> He carried none of the legacy of being associated with the pre-war Metaxas regime. The Greek gained the approval of the New Zealand delegation, including Fraser, when they met him at the San Francisco U.N.O. conference in early 1945.<sup>209</sup> On September 11, the Greek wrote to Fraser. His introduction included both reference to the inter-nation relationship and a personal one: "close ties existing between our countries and personal friendship".<sup>210</sup> Besides seeking support for post-war Greek territorial issues, the Greek argued that the "most critical political situation in Greece demands urgent formation of representative government comprising moderate elements of Left and Resistance Movements, which alone are capable of preventing serious developments in Greece and generally in the Balkans."<sup>211</sup> The Greek and his views had been reported in the New Zealand press earlier in July.<sup>212</sup> Fraser responded to him in the affirmative. The reply also held a degree of warmth that this project has not seen in his diplomatic communications: "I was very glad to hear from you and can assure you that I would be very pleased to give whatever support I can for

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<sup>205</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 137 A 201/4/82 Pt 3 (ANZ). Countries –Greece-Political Affairs-General. Secretary to Prime Minister, August 14, 1945.

<sup>206</sup> Fraser to Secretary Blackball Coal Miners' Union, September 7, 1945.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Thanasis Sfikas, *British Labour Government and the Greek Civil War*, 43.

<sup>209</sup> MS-papers – 6759-270 (ATL) McIntosh, Alister Donald Papers. Papers relating to Foreign Affairs 1947-1949; McIntosh to Day, August 11, 1945. A semi-informal letter from head of external Affairs Alistair McIntosh to London based Cecil Day, related the encounter: "he and the Prime Minister had a number of conversations and all of us liked the little man very much indeed."

<sup>210</sup> EA1 209 / 58/345/1 1a (ANZ). External Relations-Greece- General. Sofianopoulos to Fraser, September 11, 1945.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> "For Greek Unity," *Evening Post*, July 25, 1945.

the recognition to the just claims of Greece and to any measures that will promote the early establishment of a freely elected representative government in your country.”<sup>213</sup> He said the same to his High Commission in London, who passed on the communication to the British authorities.<sup>214</sup> The war experience was apparent again: “I feel that New Zealand has a special obligation arising out of the ties of the present war [the Japanese surrender had not yet been signed]” to ensure democratic elections.<sup>215</sup>

On 11 October Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, responded: “I do not place great confidence in Sofianopoulos”.<sup>216</sup> Bevin included the issue of elections with his general lack of faith in Greek politicians. Fraser politely took the Briton to task. He was suspicious of the information being sent to him: “I still have some doubts as to the information received concerning Greece. This still appears to me to be weighted in favour of the right elements and against those of the left.”<sup>217</sup> The Greek still had his approval: “The message concerning Sofianopoulos does not reassure me in this regard.”<sup>218</sup> He pointed out the contradiction in the reasoning given by Bevin in his dismissal of Sofianopoulos on the grounds of his voting pattern in international forums.<sup>219</sup> The British elimination of John Sofianopoulos from Commonwealth support over the next few months was something Fraser never forgot.<sup>220</sup> Years later, he believed the result was a polarised Greece: “Today, there is a reactionary despotic government in office in Athens operating often through gangs of cut-throats, while the alternative is a Communistic cut-throat horde ready to pounce on Greece and establish another and even more cruel and drastic dictatorship with the final crushing of any semblance of democracy.”<sup>221</sup> The same assessment was made as a result of British behaviour at the 1946 International Labour Organisation (I.L.O.) conference. Fraser told London, “It but increases the strong disappointment I feel over a number of decisions on Greek matters.”<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> September 20, 1945 Fraser to Sofianoloulos.

<sup>214</sup> Fraser to High Commission London, September 19, 1945. The day before, the Greek’s high standing in Wellington was again demonstrated. Fraser told his High Commissioner in London: “Sofianopoulos did remarkably well in San Francisco where he impressed me as being a staunch and earnest supporter of democratic freedom”

<sup>215</sup> Ibid

<sup>216</sup> Bevin to Fraser (via New Zealand High Commission), October 11, 1945.

<sup>217</sup> Fraser to Bevin, October 22, 1945.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Fraser pointed out that the incident reported was where both New Zealand had voted the same way as the Greek at the U.N.O.

<sup>220</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 318 A 345 4 8 Part 2 (ANZ). Countries Series – Greece-Political Affairs-Civil War-General. Fraser to Evatt, January 13, 1948. More than two years later he was still bitter as he told Evatt, the Australian Minister for External Affairs: “The British Government’s policy in regard to Greece has always seemed to me to be mistaken in certain respects and on a number of occasions I have expressed to the United Kingdom authorities my doubts and dislike of the reactionary nature of the regime in Greece since John Sophianopoulos was dropped at the beginning of 1946.”

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 187 A 201 4 8 Pt 4. (ANZ) Countries-United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. External to Secretary Dominion Affairs, October 15, 1946.

## 1946 Elections and the Plebiscite- A return to Democracy?

New Zealand's pursuit of democratic elections for Greece had included a tentative agreement to provide electoral observers. But on 10 January 1946, Fraser sent London the news that, as a result of the army's "accelerated repatriation programme" and "prolonged delay" in setting the election dates, no New Zealand soldiers would take part in supervising the forthcoming Greek elections.<sup>223</sup> The decision had been made in December, seemingly emanating from Freyberg's command but had not been transmitted to British authorities. Two months before, there had been a New Zealand commitment to the Greek Ambassador in London to provide personnel for the election process.<sup>224</sup> That communication had also included the caveat that suitable personnel would have to be available.

But there were still New Zealand officers and soldiers in Greece and Crete when New Zealand declared it could not provide any personnel. Communications concerning the certificates (Chapter 5), mentioned there being New Zealand members of the Allied Screening Commission who came via London months after the elections of March. There were also Searcher parties at work - groups of New Zealand army personnel trying to locate remains of missing comrades. It is a strong possibility that the elections would see violence in the streets. On the ground in Crete, New Zealand searcher parties avoided the election points: "As any kind of trouble was likely to occur, we all remained within bounds during the day."<sup>225</sup>

Fraser expressed misgivings and another publicized protest from the still-active Sofianopoulos.<sup>226</sup> In the lead-up to the voting day, London informed the Dominions of its intention to continue with a date in March 1946, "even though this might mean that EAM abstain".<sup>227</sup> Despite the Dekemvriana, a form of E.A.M. had survived and was still operating. Fraser had already been questioning the wisdom of pushing voting through when there was opposition to do so from the "left", "large elements of the Right" and "Centre".<sup>228</sup> Rightist terror campaigns would prevent any genuine expression through the ballot box. He pressed again a few days later when he did not receive an answer.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> EA1 209 58 345 1 1a (ANZ). External Relations-Greece- General. External to Acting High Commissioner London, January 10, 1946.

<sup>224</sup> AAEW W3240 950 Box 187 A 201 4 82 Pt 4 (ANZ). Countries-United Kingdom-External Relations-Greece. External to Acting High Commissioner London (for Greek Minister) October 9, 1945.

<sup>225</sup> WAI 1 213 / DA 221/10/2 (ANZ) 2NZEF - 1 NZ Searcher Party (Crete) - Activities of - J Martin 1945 - 1946.

<sup>226</sup> DO 35/1563 New Zealand Government Attitude towards Greek Elections (TNA). The British for example, had a clipping from the *Daily Worker*, March 21, 1946, on his views.

<sup>227</sup> Dominion Office to Dominions, March, 15, 1946.

<sup>228</sup> Fraser to Dominions Office, March 19, 1946.

<sup>229</sup> Fraser to Dominions Office, March 23, 1946.

Sofianopoulos was also still evident in Greek affairs, telling Fraser of the “farcical Greek elections”.<sup>230</sup> The acute political situation was punctuated by emotive expressions of the wartime connection: “[I] assure you, Greece, myself, will never forget our debt to you.”<sup>231</sup> They could be seen as reflections of the stencilled words on the 1944 New Zealand food shipment and public expressions by the New Zealand leadership. Again, New Zealand showed an interest by forwarding to London Sofianopoulos’ request with a supporting note. The elections showed Dominion interest in establishing a democratically elected Greece, but perhaps at no direct risk to its troops. It all happened under the domination of Britain over the Dominions in directing policy and action. A choice had been made in terms of the former. The latter, it thought, was inescapable. While there is no overt evidence as such, it is highly likely that without Sofianopoulos and a British labour government pursuing a particular line, Fraser was forced to discard his long championing of free elections and, elimination of the monarchy (perhaps even without the Greeks themselves having the final say via the plebiscite).

The elections took place in March 1946 without E.A.M. and the K.K.E. participating. The New Zealand press had reported on E.A.M.’s argument about “rightist terrorist organizations” during the previous month.<sup>232</sup> It was one of several demands that included purging of collaborators from armed forces and police, amnesty of “resistance fighters” and a “formation of a democratic government with large EAM representation.”<sup>233</sup> A demand that the electoral registers also be purged would resonate in Wellington in the future. The atmosphere that Fraser and Sofianopoulos were discussing was also evident in official communications. In the month prior to the elections Wellington was told by London that the port of Kalamata, where most of the New Zealand prisoners of war were taken in April 1941, had experienced some of the extreme rightist activity. Several Communists who had been in a cafe were attacked, “presumably by Right Wing elements.”<sup>234</sup> The situation worsened. The following day, 1,000 supporters of the ultra-right wing ‘X’ organisation appeared. Some armed men gained control of gendarme buildings, released their comrades, took 150 of “their political opponents”, and left.<sup>235</sup> Later, 14 of the hostages were found dead, but the rest were released.

Indeed, the right was victorious at the polls. Prior to the elections and for years afterwards, the New Zealand government was suspicious about their validity - undoubtedly fuelled in part by the plea by Sofianopoulos. Future misgivings will be discussed later. They are in the context of possibly having

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<sup>230</sup> Fraser to Secretary of State via New Zealand High Acting High Commissioner London, March 25, 1946. The quote was included.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., Again, the original communication from Sofianopoulos was included in the telegram from Fraser to London.

<sup>232</sup> “EAM and Greek Elections,” *Dominion*, February 9, 1946.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 177A 35 4 8 Pt 1 (ANZ) Greece – Political Affairs – Civil War-General. Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Minister for External Affairs, February 5, 1946.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid

to defend what they thought was an unsavoury regime with New Zealand troops. In public expressions, despite what was going on in Europe, members of the national leadership were still speaking of a bond forged in war. At an August 1946 reception provided by the Wellington Greek community, Freyberg stated: “In our long war association with the Greek army and the Greek people, there has also been a bond of affection and understanding.”<sup>236</sup> A lack of common language and great distance led him to add: “It is a touching bond - one hard to explain”.<sup>237</sup> The *Dominion* reported another reception few months later. At this one, Fraser was presented with a gift “from a group in Athens who sheltered New Zealand soldiers and helped them escape from the enemy.”<sup>238</sup> It was a hand woven carpet made by “young girls” and “worked into the design was a portrait of Mister Fraser.”<sup>239</sup> It had been brought from Greece by returning members of the Allied Screening Commission. The case of Jack Stuart (mentioned in a previous chapter), who was the Averoff prisoner who was executed by Italians, also appears. The group who had originally hidden him had sent the gift. They had also refused any compensation. Fraser’s appreciation was, naturally, placed in the context of a form of memory of the past and future. He had been told of the showering of gifts when troops arrived in 1941. This, and the risks taken protecting New Zealand soldiers, “was an imperishable story that would live in the Dominion’s history.”<sup>240</sup>

Just four days before the Freyberg-inspired commemorative episode on Crete, the *Dominion* had carried another story. It concerned the figure that had been catapulted into official memory – King George II of the Hellene - and the plebiscite. There were doubts the plebiscite would be conducted under “fairly satisfactory conditions”.<sup>241</sup> Implicitly, the new right-wing government led to its end of the political spectrum being promoted: “incidental excesses from widely tolerated Right Wing organisations”.<sup>242</sup> But this was in the densely populated areas. In the more remote parts, it was both the Left and Right “roving the mountains and using persuasion and terror.”<sup>243</sup>

## **Plebiscite**

The plebiscite concerning the monarchy also took place without New Zealand involvement. On 24 May 1946, five years after the Battle for Crete had telescoped the monarchy into New Zealand

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<sup>236</sup>“Bond of Affection between Greece and New Zealand,” *Dominion*, August 26, 1946.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> “Gift Received by Mister Fraser,” *Dominion*, December 24, 1946.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> “Intimidation of Voters on Return of Greek King thought Possible,” *Dominion*, August 22, 1946.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

consciousness and official memory, Wellington told London that there was “doubt we can supply suitable personnel and would therefore prefer that New Zealand observers should not take part.”<sup>244</sup>

London had in fact been sceptical about whether the two Pacific Dominions would be contributing anything. New Zealand and Australia were invited to contribute observers as a “tactical move”.<sup>245</sup> This was in response to Fraser’s “interest in Greek affairs, and his complaint that New Zealand was not sufficiently consulted.”<sup>246</sup> As for the Australians, it was “Dr. Evatt’s intrigue with the Greeks” (exact details not included).<sup>247</sup> It is clear that the revision of the electoral roles was just as important as the actual process of recording votes.<sup>248</sup> This had also been the case with the general election.

The question of electoral validity would be a major factor in a critical phase of New Zealand’s response to the Greek Civil War. Before then, there were several publicly known incidents that stemmed from the experience of the war, threaded into the third round of the civil war that broke out late in the same year of the elections and plebiscite.

## **ECHOES FROM THE PAST**

In 1947, the New Zealand public read about two cases that did not involve memoirs or novels but would highlight the meshing of the new Greek political circumstances with the Second World War. One was marginalized by the nation state, the other had their involvement.

### **Missing Soldiers**

While the searcher parties were seeking out remains of dead soldiers, New Zealand heard of two living ones who had been found in circumstances reflective of the current internal Greek situation. They learnt it from Colonel Alex Sheppard, an Australian member of the British Economic Mission in post-war Greece. Sheppard eventually became an outspoken critic of British policy and the Greek governments Britain supported.<sup>249</sup> In December 1947, on his way home, he announced in Auckland that there were two New Zealand soldiers fighting with the Greek Communist forces.

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<sup>244</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 187 A 201 4 82 Pt 4 (ANZ). Countries Series – United Kingdom- External Relations-Greece. External to High Commission NZ London, May 24, 1946.

<sup>245</sup> DO 35/1566 (TNA) Participation of Dominion Observers in Preparation of Electoral Registers for Plebiscite on the return of the King to Greece 1943-1946. Internal handwritten note 5? May 1946

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid

<sup>248</sup> This is evident in this file from the TNA.

<sup>249</sup> A.W. Sheppard and League for Democracy in Greece (Australia), *Inside story: Greece's struggle for Freedom* (Sydney: League for Democracy in Greece 1947); A.W. Sheppard and Democritus League (Melbourne Vic.), *An Australian officer in Greece : an Expose of How Greece Became a Police State*, (Melbourne: International Bookshop, 1947). The Australian diplomat Hugh Gilchrist wrote that Sheppard distributed clothing to the Left and intervened to prevent the execution of a young girl who was taking food to her father, an ELAS member. Hugh Gilchrist, *Australians and Greeks: Vol. 1*, (Sydney: Halstead Press, 1992), 178.



They had been left behind after the exit of 1941, married Greek women, and were now platoon leaders. Sheppard said “I have spoken to one of them”<sup>250</sup> but would not reveal their names. If the reports were true, then New Zealanders were actively engaged in fighting the government. The official response was that the men were either “missing” or eventually classified as “presumed dead”.<sup>251</sup> The State, in one regard, was still disengaging itself from Greek politics in public areas. There was no condemnation and apparently no investigation into the allegation. New Zealanders engaged in direct involvement were persona non grata. However, it was a different matter when it came to supporting New Zealand soldiers who were attempting to assist Greeks condemned by the Greek State as rebels or “bandits” as the communists were now referred to. What is more, it happened on Crete.

### **Case of Tsamandakis and Ledaki**

It is probably inevitable that there would be some Cretan/Greek civilians who had helped New Zealand soldiers evade capture and/or survive and who would be subjected to the impositions of the right wing Greek governments, this being due at least to statistical probability just as much as to any ideological leaning. In 1948, news of a lethal situation reached returned veterans, who then approached the Wellington via their local Returned Services Association branch.

The October issue of the *RSA Review* reported the fate of two Cretans (although it called them Greeks) who had assisted New Zealand soldiers during the war. The two - Mitso Ledaki and Panayioty Tsamandakis - had separately been caught up in an “anti-Communist net”.<sup>252</sup> The one-armed Ledaki was executed. Tsamandakis had his sentence reduced to imprisonment.<sup>253</sup> The two had been the subject of an appeal made by several returned veterans. Wellington responded to their request and contacted the British Foreign Office, who in turn approached the Greek authorities. The R.S.A. was very cautious when it told its readers about the plea: “Lest there should be any misunderstanding, let it be said that the Kiwis who moved the RSA to intercede on behalf of Ledaki had no desire to support communism – any more than had the association branches and headquarters which took part in the representations to the Greek Government.”<sup>254</sup> Surviving family members of both appeared in the 1991 New Zealand documentary *In Rich Regard*. None of the political aspects were mentioned.

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<sup>250</sup> “Two N.Z. men help Rebels in Greece,” *Dominion*, December 29, 1947.

<sup>251</sup> “No Live NZ Men in Greece” *Dominion*, December 30, 1947.

<sup>252</sup> “Mitso Ledaki Executed, Kiwi's Evidence Reaches Greece Too Late,” *NZRSA Review* October (1948).

<sup>253</sup> EA1 688/90/9/2 Pt 2 (ANZ) Allied Nations Cooperation Polish Children Greece Recognition by Greeks New Zealanders.

<sup>254</sup> “Mitso Ledaki Executed,” *NZRSA Review*, October (1948).

## **Greek Expedition Redux?**

The possibility that New Zealand might be asked to once again provide military assistance to ward off an argued “threat” to Greece appeared again in 1947/1948, nearly seven years after the ill-fated expedition in early 1941. The situation was more complex. It involved the United Nations, Commonwealth, a Greek government beleaguered by a communist Provisional Democratic Government of Greece, formed in the mountains, the major powers and neighbouring Balkan countries. This time, the Dominion reacted in similar and dissimilar ways to their reaction in 1941.

## **AFTER THE ELECTIONS OF 1946**

By the time of the 1946 elections, the New Zealand public had read how some member political parties of E.A.M. had left the organisation<sup>255</sup> but also how the remaining body was a participant in the Greek political whirlpool.<sup>256</sup> E.L.A.S had handed in its weapons.<sup>257</sup> The K.K.E. eventually pursued a military avenue (for self-preservation and/or revolutionary purposes). The mountains were again were a haven for guerrillas. The K.K.E. formed the Democratic Army of Greece (D.S.E.), basically now an openly communist army, but now ever increasingly referred to by London as “bandits”.<sup>258</sup> This terminology seems lacking in the internal Wellington deliberations but was used by their long-standing diplomatic officer attached to the British Cabinet, Cecil Day.<sup>259</sup> Crete, although not the scene of the intense fighting on the mainland, was still involved. In March 1948, he told Wellington that “to the great indignation of most Cretans”, the visiting son of the Republican hero Venizelos had his car “fired upon by bandits.”<sup>260</sup> The comment about the majority of the Cretans being critical of such an occurrence naturally slants toward de-politicising the island’s population and thereby makes it more palatable for remembering and connectivity.

## **New Zealand examines the Greek Players**

On Christmas Eve 1947, the D.S.E. had established its own mountain-based government. It was a second occurrence since the invasion of 1941. The first was the wartime E.A.M./E.L.A.S. “Free Greece” in the mountains. The possibility of formal recognition by foreign countries was raised, but

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<sup>255</sup> By early April 1945, the Dominion’s press was reporting that member parties of E.A.M. had left the organisation and that, as a result, it “disintegrates”. “EAM Disintegrates, *Auckland Star*, April 4, 1945.

<sup>256</sup> See for example, “E.A.M. Followers,” *Auckland Star*, December 28, 1945.

<sup>257</sup> “Good Progress Made,” *Evening Post*, March 5, 1945.

<sup>258</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 177A 35 4 8 Part 1 (ANZ). Countries-Greece-Political Affairs-Civil War-General. See for example, Secretary for Dominion Affairs to Minister for External Affairs, September 29, 1946. It included phrases such as “bandit-infested areas”, “serious proportions” of “frontier incidents, extensive banditry, local terrorism, murders and mine laying on public roads”.

<sup>259</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 318 A 345 4 8 Part 3 (ANZ). Countries-Greece-Political Affairs-Civil War-General. For example, Day to Macintosh, March 23, 1948.

<sup>260</sup> Day to Macintosh, March 30, 1948.

New Zealand had decided it would not be one of them.<sup>261</sup> Neither was it supportive of the Athens administration. An internal report describes it thus: “in its internal policy exhibited features which are entirely repugnant to our conception of democracy.”<sup>262</sup> The wartime link came into play: “New Zealand is regarded as having ties of sympathy with the Greek people in view of the common role played by both countries in the resistance to Fascism, but it is not so certain whether those ties can continue firm in the face of the more undesirable tendencies exhibited in the internal policy of the recent Greek Government.”<sup>263</sup> Those characteristics from the global struggle also included “a number of officials who collaborated with the Germans”.<sup>264</sup> Another echo from the occupation was Napoleon Zervas. According to London, he was showing a less than patriotic tendency in furthering his own private army: “Gendarmerie is being organized by General Zervas as a military force, which operates rather in competition than in co-operation with [the] Army.”<sup>265</sup>

For the New Zealanders, the 1946 elections had been dubious.<sup>266</sup> The Greek government’s claim of popular support was “not a very substantial one”.<sup>267</sup> The massive absence from the election by the Left was also a contributing factor. That there was some external involvement from neighbouring countries was also not necessarily an indication of fairness as far as the Dominion was concerned. Fraser thought turmoil “was caused as much by the internal situation as by foreign intervention.”<sup>268</sup> That external involvement was not necessarily confined to the communist variety but also their opponents: “unfortunately both parties have their outside supporters.”<sup>269</sup>

The above assessment illustrated at least that New Zealand was analyzing the Greek situation. It was a far cry from 1941 when the nations had first encountered each other. Now, the Dominion was consciously including the nature of the Greek regime in its deliberations. It was also far more sophisticated and critical (of all the parties – Greeks, major powers and Balkan neighbours) than it had been during the Dekemvriana and the subsequent immediate period.

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<sup>261</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 318 A 345 4 8 Part 2 (ANZ). Countries Series – Greece-Political Affairs-Civil War-General. Evatt to Fraser, 13 January, 1948.

<sup>262</sup> *Greece 9.1.1948* [Internal Note]

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> *Greece*, September 1, 1947.

<sup>265</sup> SECOR to Minister External Affairs, August 16, 1947.

<sup>266</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 318 A 345/4/8 Pt 2 (ANZ). Series-Countries-Greece. *Greece 9.1.1948* [Internal Note]. See also the statistical analysis performed in February 1948 i.e. almost two years after the event. Memorandum *Absentions* in *Greek Elections of March 1946*

<sup>267</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 318 B 345 4 8 Pt 3 1948 (ANZ). Series-Countries-Greece. *Greek Situation*, February 5, 1948.

<sup>268</sup> Ms-papers-6759-050 (ATL), McIntosh, Alister Donald Papers, Papers relating to Foreign Affairs 1947-1949. Minister External to New York Consul General September 29, 1947.

<sup>269</sup> External to New York Consul, October 4, 1947.

### **Amongst the Powerful and International Organisations**

The previously discussed grudging acceptance of British-led Commonwealth leadership in Greek affairs was still evident in internal deliberations. It was a continuation of a long-established predominant relationship, but now the U.N.O. also had a presence. An internal New Zealand analysis dated 5 February 1948 examined the possibility that the Greek government might invoke United Nations Article 51 and request assistance. "It is this possibility which perhaps constitutes the crucial issue in the Greek situation for the United Kingdom, and indirectly, for New Zealand."<sup>270</sup> If a request were received it would be a valid one under international law. But the implication was that New Zealand would be supporting an Athens government it deplored.

In the end, New Zealand never joined the Greek government and its supporters - Britain and the U.S.A. - in its war against the communist insurgents. It would appear that U.S. escalation of its involvement precluded Dominion participation. But the New Zealand and Greek armies would be together again in another war; this time in Korea. But they were never affiliated as they had been at their victory at Rimini. In fact, that episode was forgotten by the official history. Ian McGibbon like many before and after, took the 1941 battles as a reference point: "For this operation, it had on its left flank the Greek battalion - recalling another joint effort almost exactly ten years before when Greeks, British, New Zealanders, and Australians had stood together in Greece against invading Germans."<sup>271</sup> There was no real military affinity in the present; it was one specific memory that counted.

### **Past Associations**

Similarly while the general war situation had been referred to in internal government deliberations, New Zealand's previous involvement in the politics of Anglo-Greek relations and internal Greek politics was absent. Fraser's support for the mutineers, his protest telegram and the Wellington-initiated approach to John Mulgan in January 1945 are absent. On an internal basis, at least, there had been an absence of the long-term history of Dominion involvement. The struggle against the invader had been touched upon briefly. A stance more in tune with the major underpinnings that the State wanted to project was evident in the semi-public external diplomatic arena. At the 1946 Peace Conference in Paris, the New Zealand representative spoke implicitly of the 1941 struggles – "our men fought at the side of the Greeks in Greece" when "Germany was at the height of her

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<sup>270</sup> AAEG W3240 950 Box 318 B 345 4 8 Pt 3 1948 (ANZ), Series-Countries-Greece. *Greek Situation* 5 February 1948.

<sup>271</sup> Ian McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War Vol. 2* (Auckland Wellington, Oxford University Press in association with the Historical Branch, Dept. of Internal Affairs: 1992), 96.

power and our Allies not as numerous as they later became.”<sup>272</sup> The humanitarian theme appeared again: “When the New Zealand soldier was cut off from his comrades, he was secure among the Greek people, who tended his wounds and concealed him from the Germans, and they fed him when they themselves were in direct need. The people of New Zealand cannot forget things like this.”<sup>273</sup> Blended with such a speech were instructions given to the delegate by Wellington supporting the return of the Dodecanese to Greece, “providing that the consultation of the wishes of the population is in conformity with the result.”<sup>274</sup>

There was, again, a clear pattern where in public arenas there was an appearance of non-involvement in the factious Greek politics and a recall of the past desperate struggle and the humanity that was also part of it. But, as also illustrated, there was much New Zealand discussion about Greek politics. This went hand-in-hand with taking of positions. Through these years, the official war history project was gradually proceeding with its research and developing publications that were concerned with Greece. On-site research activities included the wearing of firearms.

### **Greek New Zealanders**

Nothing from the Greek New Zealanders during the post-war years seriously challenged the New Zealand state drive to forget the involvement of the country in the controversies over Greek politics. There was a disturbance in the their Wellington centre in October 1952 that was in part caused by a public display of Stain’s photograph alongside that of Churchill and Roosevelt. But the state’s police thought this was minor when put in overall context of different varieties of diasporic Greeks clashing through their particular cultural and social differences.<sup>275</sup> The incident also highlights another state limitation on the relationship. There was no great influx of Greek immigrants from Greece or Crete i.e. those Greeks who were celebrated in memory. Previously mentioned limits on orphans flowed into the wider immigration policies.

### **WRITING ABOUT THE PAST – OFFICIAL MEMORY**

In one way, the nation state’s history project was very conscious of conditions in Greece in 1945. New Zealand researchers met leading Greek personalities and, in one data-gathering exercise at least, they included measures to ensure their own personal safety in their activities.

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<sup>272</sup> EA1 209 58/345/1/1a (ANZ). External Relations-Greece-General. Balfour (London) to Press (Publicity London), October 11, 1946.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> MS-Papers-6759-040 (ATL), Ms-papers-6759-050 (ATL), McIntosh, Alister Donald Papers, Papers relating to Foreign Affairs *Peace Conference Instructions- New Zealand Delegation*.

<sup>275</sup> New Zealand Secret Intelligence Service (NZSIS). Report of Acting Detective J.W. McGuire, October 17, 1952; Report of A.E.V. Lane, 8 November 1952. The reports, however, noted that one long established Greek had converted from Communism to being Anti-communist.

## **Official War History Project -On Site in Greece**

That by April 1945 archivist Eric Halstead was quoted in the *Auckland Star*<sup>276</sup> as having met the Secretary General of the Greek Communist Party George Siantos and General Sarafis, military leader of E.L.A.S., shows how radically things had changed since 1941. Although best endeavours have been unable to determine exactly when Halstead met these personalities, that it was reported amongst the press stories of ongoing Greek turmoil reinforces the drive of the New Zealand officialdom to forge a memory, even if it meant physically navigating through a violent world. Indeed, the reporting of these encounters was in the same piece where Aked had relayed his experiences of brutality and condemnation of E.L.A.S. The dual New Zealand involvement in politics went hand in hand with State efforts to gather data for what was to be a de-politicised history of their involvement.

By September of that same year, the plans of an archives party, and also the official war artist, to travel through Greece and Crete included the following precautionary planning: “I have discussed the matter of political and road conditions with GS1 [British military], who report that a well-armed party of (say) five should be quite safe in the areas mentioned.”<sup>277</sup> That this was written by Lang of the Allied Screening Commission mentioned in the previous chapter on, amongst other things, compensation and certificates. As well as the situation with the archives party, it also shows some of what his own unit’s work had to contend with.

Just like Mentiplay in late 1944, the 1945 party visited 1941 evacuation sites. On 3 November, they visited Kalamata, which had been the scene of the greatest capture of New Zealand personnel. The expedition’s diary noted it was “a most successful day”.<sup>278</sup> As shown earlier, the town was temporarily besieged in the New Year by extreme right wing forces. The expedition apparently did not encounter any problems except for tyre punctures on bad roads (of which there were plenty in Greece). While this was an attempt to gather one type of grist, in New Zealand the focus was on another. That enterprise was another type of struggle.

## **Publications**

This section deals with the gestation of the official volume that was concerned with areas where the State had been pursuing some idealistic endeavours over Greece. This is *Political and External*

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<sup>276</sup> “Greek Fighting - Colonel’s Story,” *Auckland Star*, April 23, 1945.

<sup>277</sup> WAI 1 Da 1/9/Q12 16 (ANZ). 2NZEF-Archives-General 1945. Lang to HQ 2 NZEF, September 3, 1945.

<sup>278</sup> *Report and Diary of 2 NZEF Archives Party Visiting Greece Oct & Nov 1945*

*Affairs*<sup>279</sup> by Professor Fred Wood. It was published in 1958 and had a prolonged gestation. His work appeared 5 years after *Crete* and *On Special Service*, and one year before *To Greece*.

### ***Disregarding Elements Conducive to Positive Imagining***

In his introduction, Wood scoped the closing point of the study as “the end of the shooting”, that is, the signing of the documents of Japanese surrender<sup>280</sup> in September 1945. Having said that, in the case of post-war Poland at least, New Zealand attitudes are examined up until 1947.<sup>281</sup> This is in contrast to his treatment of Greece. It is clear from the previous sections that in the public arena and in government documents there was much material. The drive to foster Greek democracy after liberation would have also fit comfortably into Wood’s image of the national leader: “An appeal to moral principle never failed to move Peter Fraser.”<sup>282</sup> The main concern relating to Greece was the catastrophes of early 1941. In addition to this there are several brief comments about Fraser’s dismissal of the Balkans as a theatre of operations in 1944 and no troops for the return to Greece. New Zealand was depicted as not being involved in Greek turmoil.

Furthermore, Wood’s volume did include internal and age-old divisions that were affecting European former allies. Freyberg’s 2NZDIV was in the streets of Trieste in 1945 confronting Tito’s partisans as a result of “complex causes and character, and with highly explosive possibilities.”<sup>283</sup> Some of this argument could lend itself to the Greek situation, except for several key elements. One was that Greece had actually erupted into violence. Trieste saw New Zealanders as peace-keepers, whereas in civil-torn Greece they were participants in the fighting. The treatment shows exceptionalism toward Greece in historical treatment – but again it was of the censored variety. The restrictions and frustrations of the Wood project show that it was probably the politics that were at the heart of the restricted treatment. Official history was always subject to indirect control. In the writing of the volume on external affairs there were not so much soldiers who could be criticized for moulding their own history of individual battles they had participated in but politicians and functionaries whose world was more secretive by necessity and ongoing activities. It was something Professor Wood made note of. He also interacted with the nation state’s champion, Howard Kippenberger. The relationship was stormy, as the following shows, but settled into amiability – formal titles were eventually replaced with “Fred” and “Kip”.

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<sup>279</sup> F.L.W. Wood, *New Zealand People at War : Political and External affairs*, (Wellington: War History Branch, Dept. of Internal Affairs, 1958).

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 364.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

<sup>283</sup> *ibid.*, 364.

## *Frustration*

Both Kippenberger and Wood were frustrated with each other over the writing of the volume. What is apparent, though, in the dialogue is that the former general did not hold the same authority he had with the other narrators/authors. By December 1951, Kippenberger told Wood that he had to be “blunt” and demanded a synopsis and an estimated date for its completion.<sup>284</sup> It was two years since the General Editor and champion of the nation-building exercise had asked for the same. Wood replied he did not recall the earlier demand, provided some quantitative data (4,000 completed cards from his own research) and objected to what he saw as a demand for a premature synopsis or “window dressing”, which was “a departure from the proper course of historical research”.<sup>285</sup>

The relationship was tested again when the professor hit a raw nerve in late 1953. Wood envisaged a complex treatment that went deeper than the concept of the nation's views being solely represented by the government that had led the country, namely, Fraser's Labour Party. He wanted access to sources to discuss the National Party's wartime record.<sup>286</sup> Kippenberger declined and commented in a way that reflects upon the nature of history and historians vis-à-vis the national project: “This may not satisfy you as an historian, but it is an example of the Limitations of an Official Historian.”<sup>287</sup> Kippenberger had, as discussed in previous chapters, envisaged a grand treatment of the S.O.E., including access to Barnes' reports that contained highly explosive content and was aware of the testimony concerning the Greek 8 Battalion, but he would not condone anything that questioned the “nation” other than in terms of a degree of simplification that Wood would not entertain as a historian. In this, he veers towards the requirements of “memory” as against “history”.

Wood's extensive personal record keeping lacked Greek resources, as clearly shown by an exchange over the decision to go to Greece. Kippenberger relied on British sources, not the Greek variety. The evidence sought was about the final decision to send troops to Greece and whether the Greeks had been coerced into accepting a smaller number of Commonwealth troops than at first promised.<sup>288</sup> This might lead one to the conclusion that the German invasion and catastrophe for the Greeks and New Zealanders had been unavoidable. Such a view detracted from the “moral cause” justification made by Fraser and dealt with earlier.

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<sup>284</sup> IA 1 3388 181/32/4 (ANZ). War History-Authors- Wood. F.L.W. Kippenberger to Wood, December 6, 1951.

<sup>285</sup> Wood to Kippenberger, December 10, 1951.

<sup>286</sup> Kippenberger to Wood, October 9, 1953.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid. . Kippenberger gave him a “ruling”, and he claimed it had nothing to do with the Nationals being in power. The academic had to rely on “published sources”.

<sup>288</sup> Kippenberger to Wood, August 9, 1956.



Kippenberger circulated Wood's draft chapter to Freyberg and McClymont, who was working on the Greek campaign, and to the British Cabinet Office historical section. The British response included their view that the piece "over-emphasises the element of 'pressure' put on the Greeks."<sup>289</sup> This point is explicitly made both in the introduction and within several pages of comments from the British official historian, Playfair. As such, it clearly shows the sensitivity of the issue. But also, the exclusion of the Greeks from the deliberations over the history is characteristic of the New Zealand attitude.

Initially Wood openly vented his frustration at Kippenberger about the lack of access to primary material and about methodological issues (such as seeing what approaches other national history projects were undertaking) for his study. Such access might have expanded his perspective on Greek affairs. It is perhaps not surprising that, when the volumes of wartime documents and communications were published, he told Kippenberger: "As you know, I feel it is a goldmine of information, for which we all must be grateful to you and to the Government's decision [to publish them]".<sup>290</sup> This is given recognition in the *Bibliography* section of his finished 1958 volume. The same section brings into play the limitations placed on his work. It was "based on the confidential records of the New Zealand Government"<sup>291</sup> and, that "these records are unpublished – save for the useful but necessarily limited selection included in the war History programme – and in the foreseeable future unpublishable."<sup>292</sup> This, together with a range of issues – "current business", "affairs of other governments", changing locations of documents, and overriding confidentiality - led to a decision that flew in the face of empirically based historiographical research and publishing. "In all these circumstances, it seemed inappropriate to burden the text with the complex symbols used in departmental filing systems, or in general to give detailed references to documents which remain inaccessible."<sup>293</sup>

The secrecy of government meant that there was a much tighter control on Wood's project than on the more operational-related ones. The official attitude toward the political archives is in contrast to its attitude towards the army ones.<sup>294</sup> . But there had been a decision to release the communications related to going to Greece in 1941.

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<sup>289</sup> Butler to Kippenberger, October 2, 1956.

<sup>290</sup> F.L.W.Wood to Kippenberger, February 25, 1952.

<sup>291</sup> F.L.W.Wood, *New Zealand people at War, Bibliography New Zealand Government Records*.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> WAI 1 360 DA 488/1 DA 488/2 (ANZ). War Archives Memoranda, progress reports etc. *Official History of New Zealand in the War of 1939- War Archive Memorandum Number: The Scope of War Archives and the Duties of Archivists*. The degree of professionalism in the latter seemed to meet the highest standards, as an examination of the official archives memoranda show. After meeting "primary functions" of "Physical Defence" and "Moral Defence" of archives, "it is his duty to provide to the best of his ability for the needs of historians and other research workers."

Unlike Wood, my project has the benefit of currently available archives that show that the State had been genuinely supporting an attempt at democracy based upon the election process in post-liberation Greece. Fraser's protest telegram of 20 December 1944 and the support for Sofianopoulos' attempts could be struts for such a view. Much of the New Zealand interest in establishing democratic Greece could have been filtered and some indication, no matter how diluted, could have been published. It never was. So averse was the state in discussing any connectivity with the Greek turmoil that it sacrificed this in building its national imagining.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

New Zealand clearly had a more complex wartime interconnection with Greece than what is celebrated in official memory. The threads of regular post-Crete military interaction and diplomatic interest in a democratic Greece are at one end of a spectrum of obscurity. At the other end of the scale is the battle for Crete, its antecedent mainland expedition, and the assistance given to New Zealand soldiers and the recognition of their efforts by New Zealand. Lying between is the story of special operatives in occupied Greece albeit having a short lifespan in the State official history efforts during the 1950s and reappearance on the periphery of public celebration decades later lies in contrast to the longevity of the memory of Crete.

These general observations come with caveats, contradictions and inconsistencies. The elevation of Crete by the state was not immediate during the world war itself. When the Army Board brought out the Greek campaign interim history, it was before the Crete one. This was the reverse order of the later War History project – clearly reflecting Kippenberger's drive. His editorial decisions assisted with the elevation of New Zealand using a number of mechanisms from application of methodology to censorship. Fraser's 1943 speech mentioned both the island and the mainland in equal measure, but humanitarian aid to the former did not attract any special elevation in the food ship distribution plan as per Brigadier King's plan. The initial discussions between the R.S.A. and the Government over a permanent utilitarian form of recognition initially included both Greece and Crete. Freyberg's 1945 visit to island was originally part of a mainland/island commemoration. For the National Patriotic Fund, there was only "Greece", and no distinctly separate Cretan entity.

As the years following the war progressed, attitudes became more pronounced. Freyberg preferred Crete for any village adoption, and there were accusations that the island had missed out on relief supplies. In the minds of New Zealand's diplomatic corps, the island and 1941 permeated their language. However, the emphasis on the island in commemoration was not always the result of New Zealand, it also came from the political leadership of Greece i.e. Mitsotakis. The New Zealand state attended but its material investment in remembering was always historically directed toward its own citizens. Even entreaties from Galatas Cretan officials during the 1940s for assistance with a monument had fallen on deaf ears. Dominion reticence led to embarrassment and internal disquiet when the Greeks who had suffered real hardship sought some tangible recognition corresponding to

the deeply emotional rhetoric provided by Freyberg and Fraser. J.V. Wilson's suggestions for some calibration went nowhere. The symbolic food ship was the key pivot of material recognition and commemoration. The reality was limits on aid (amount and existing contracted supply) as well as even concealing from the New Zealand public the source of the Allied Screening Commission's funds for compensating Greeks. Similarly, lack of the National Patriotic Fund funding for the C.O.R.S.O. team was never an issue for resolution at the Government level – it was not a priority. The Fund's preference for sending surplus P.O.W. parcels to Britain instead of Greece again shows state limitations.

Dominion involvement in pursuing retribution for Greeks in post-war war crimes investigations was genuine but impacted on by international legal and Commonwealth frameworks. But the number of cases is inconsistent with the far greater number of atrocities related in interrogation reports and published memoirs. Thus, while there was pursuit of war crimes against Greeks, the New Zealand effort was not a concerted one.

New Zealand never followed up on what exactly was happening with its soldiers on secret service with British forces. Showing another contradiction, it then sought to capture their martial achievements for its official narrative. It is an example of the adaptability of the State in acquiring or reconfiguring certain episodes for the elevation of the nation – just like the disaster of Crete.

There is clearly a lack of correlation between the State elite with the wider community when it comes to some areas. In terms of humanitarian relief, individuals and groups were seeking exceptional treatment for Greece before Fraser's public announcement about the special food ship in mid-1943. The results of the 1944 United Nations Week appeal illustrated that ordinary New Zealanders had placed Greece in a special category. This was in contrast to the policies of the National Patriotic Fund, which still pursued the homogeneous concept of the "nation". By early 1945, the R.S.A. was seeking some form of utilitarian commemorative action. But it never gained any support. Most public and eruptive were the protests during the Dekemvriana. The government stayed quiet publicly and only made its official stance known when Churchill openly and erroneously stated that the Dominions were uncritical of British actions in Athens. New Zealand citizens had not shifted the government, just as its entreaties over aid had not been heard. Most pointedly, the New Zealand Greeks did not have any influence. The State gave no exceptionalism to

them over relief. Bill Jordan's individual crusade over Hubbard's death implicitly points to the lack of concern by Wellington and its army command.

One senior State actor's influence lies in contrast to this gap between the state and its citizens. . It took the figure of Freyberg rather than the general or diasporic population to shift government priorities at home over aid. Without him, there would arguably have been neither any ongoing military wartime connection nor exceptional aid effort in the form of the food ship. However, he never championed the Greek army in the official war history project. It is a clear disjoint.

Just how specific this abstinence and contradiction is to New Zealand, as against other nation's memory making, is a suitable candidate for a future project – for example, a comparative study with the Australian-Greek relationship. From the scholarly work cited in the Introduction, the accepted norms for a war memory-making of the State are applicable. A straightforward moral cause was used to justify the calamity of 1941. Positive national imagining had been achieved. Complexities such as commercial agreements and aid supplies, Commonwealth diplomacy and divisiveness amongst Greeks and also New Zealanders, had been ignored. But the extreme silence over support for establishing a genuine democracy and willingness to assertively face possible punitive British directions over recalcitrant soldiers in Italy sits outside what one would consider the established pattern of what one would expect from any state behaviour. These positive episodes were kept hidden rather than celebrated. Arguably, publicly raising New Zealand interest in the internal makeup of Greek matters would be a catalyst for a dialogue of the previous convulsive years of civil war and dissent. That was something the State would want to avoid. It would open divisions within its citizenry as well as between it and them. The strength of the New Zealand-Greek bond in the strata of ordinary people is thus recognised obliquely by the national leadership, but outside of endorsed official memory.

Taking a wider overview outside of this New Zealand case study, official memory-making of war requires moral simplicity and tales of martial prowess. Other national allies are relegated to an auxiliary role and complications of politics are omitted. This thesis shows what is left out as a result.

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Major John Alan Edward Mulgan PF 91369

Warrant Officer Louis Neill Northover PF 31763

Staff Sergeant Dudley Churchill Perkins PF 1772

Captain Donald John Stott PF 20681

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Major James William Charles Craig PF 6246

Warrant Officer II John Alexander Redpath PF 30836

***Personnel on secondment to Military Liaison (Greece)***

Brigadier Thomas Joseph King PF 6192

Lt Col Kenneth Robert Shaw Crarer PF 5927

***Officer attached to 3<sup>rd</sup> Greek Brigade Italy and Athens***

Major Edgar William Aked PF 26502

***Others***

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant John Denvir PF 8028 [Protestor against British actions in liberated Athens, December 1944]

Brigadier Alexander Smith Falconer PF 8/39 10491 [Overseas Commissioner National Patriotic Fund]

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX ONE: INTERVIEWEES

AAA1 Immediate Family Member of Housekeeping Supervisor at Beau Rivage Hotel, Alexandria.

AAA2 Immediate Family member of Major Arthur Edmonds, Special Operations Executive.

Dr Ian Frazer, co-author of *On the Run*.

Mr John Irwin, Documentary Maker. Producer of *In Rich Regard*.

Mr Keith Locke, Son of New Zealand left-wing activist and author Elsie Locke (Participant in Dekemvriana protests).

Mr. Themis Marinos, Greek member of S.O.E. and participant in Gorgopotamos Operation, 1942.

## APPENDIX TWO: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



School of History, Philosophy,  
Religion & Classics  
Head of School  
Professor Clive Moore CSI, FAHA  
CRICOS PROVIDER NUMBER 00025B

16 January 2014

### Ethical Clearance for Research Involving Human Participants

Dear Mąrtyn,

Please be advised your Application for Ethical Clearance has now been approved by the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics.  
Your Application for the web exercise was approved September 2013.

Regards

  
Associate Professor Andrew Bonnell  
Post Graduate Coordinator