

**The Rise and Fall of the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones:
A Study on National Resistance and Civil War in Greece
1941-1944**

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degree of Doctor in Philosophy**

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Abstract

This thesis addresses a neglected dimension of Greece under German and Italian occupation and on the eve of civil war. Its contribution to the historiography of the period stems from the fact that it constitutes the first academic study of the third largest resistance organisation in Greece, the 5/42 regiment of evzones. The study of this national resistance organisation can thus extend our knowledge of the Greek resistance effort, the political relations between the main resistance groups, the conditions that led to the civil war and the domestic relevance of British policies. The thesis seeks to establish the nature of the 5/42, the factors behind its rise and fall and its significance within the national resistance movement.

The research for this thesis has been based on various sources. A large number of personal interviews (forty-seven) were conducted with veterans of the 5/42 and EAM-ELAS. This was placed alongside extensive archival research and documentary analysis. Both types of sources were supplemented by secondary sources on the history of the period.

This thesis distinguishes the history of the 5/42 regiment across three levels of analysis: The micro-level analysis highlights the agents, the circumstances and the events that influenced the emergence of the 5/42 in the Fokida region. It looks at the group dynamics of the 5/42. It examines the social political and economic environment within which the 5/42 was formed, the group's structure and internal politics, the strategies and objectives of the group's leaders.

The meso-level analysis looks at the 5/42 in the context of the civil war between different resistance groups and highlights the role that the regiment played in the political antagonisms. It discusses the domestic politics of the 5/42 and the strategies that the regiment's leaders adopted against EAM-ELAS, it depicts the actual military and political causes behind the regiment's disbandment and it assesses the impact of Colonel Psarros' murder during the last months of the occupation.

The macro-level looks at the place of the 5/42 in the context of the British policies in Greece during the occupation. It focuses on the political and military relationship between the British and the 5/42 and on the attitude that the British adopted against the regiment during the last 5/42-ELAS crisis that led to the final disbandment.

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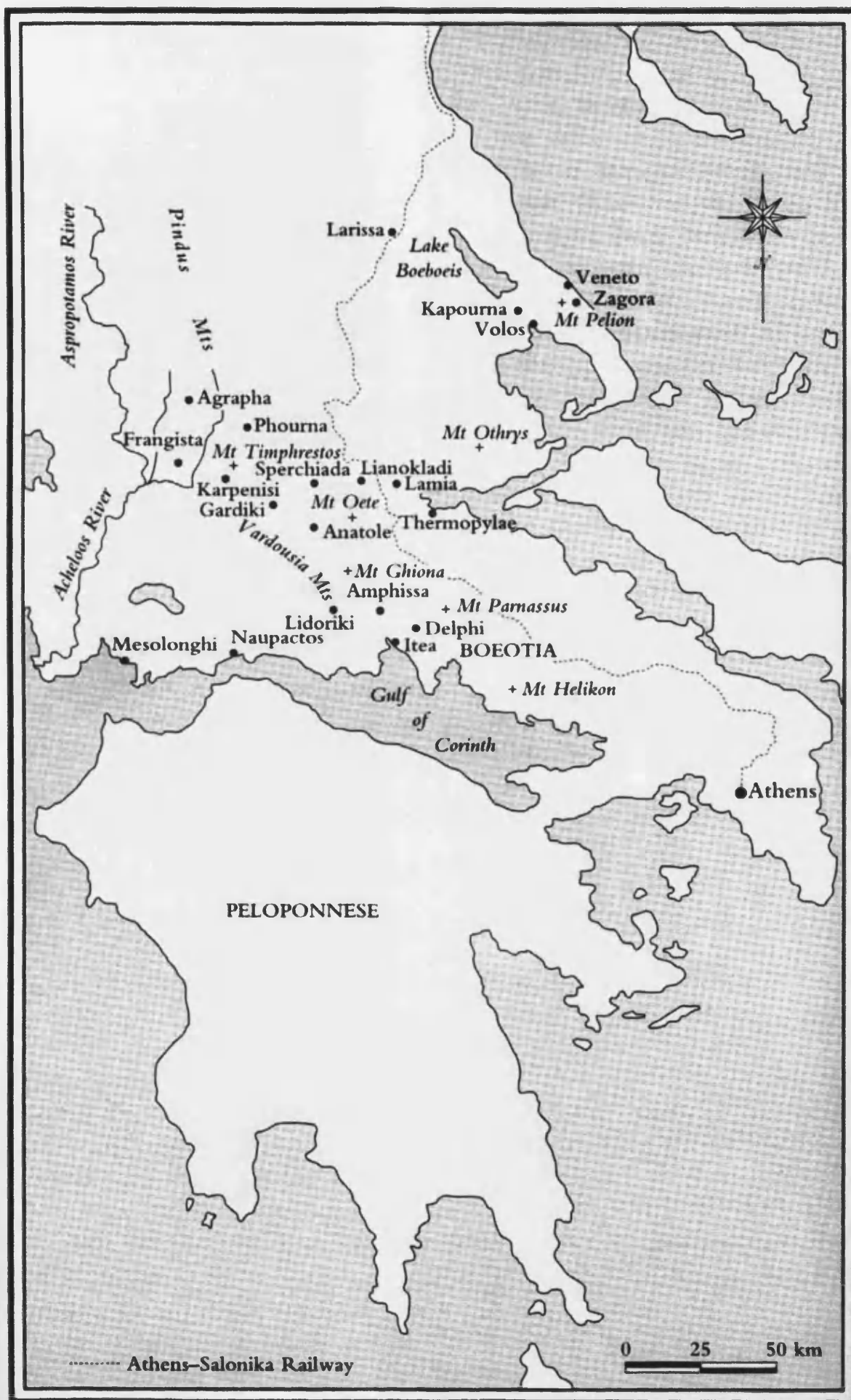
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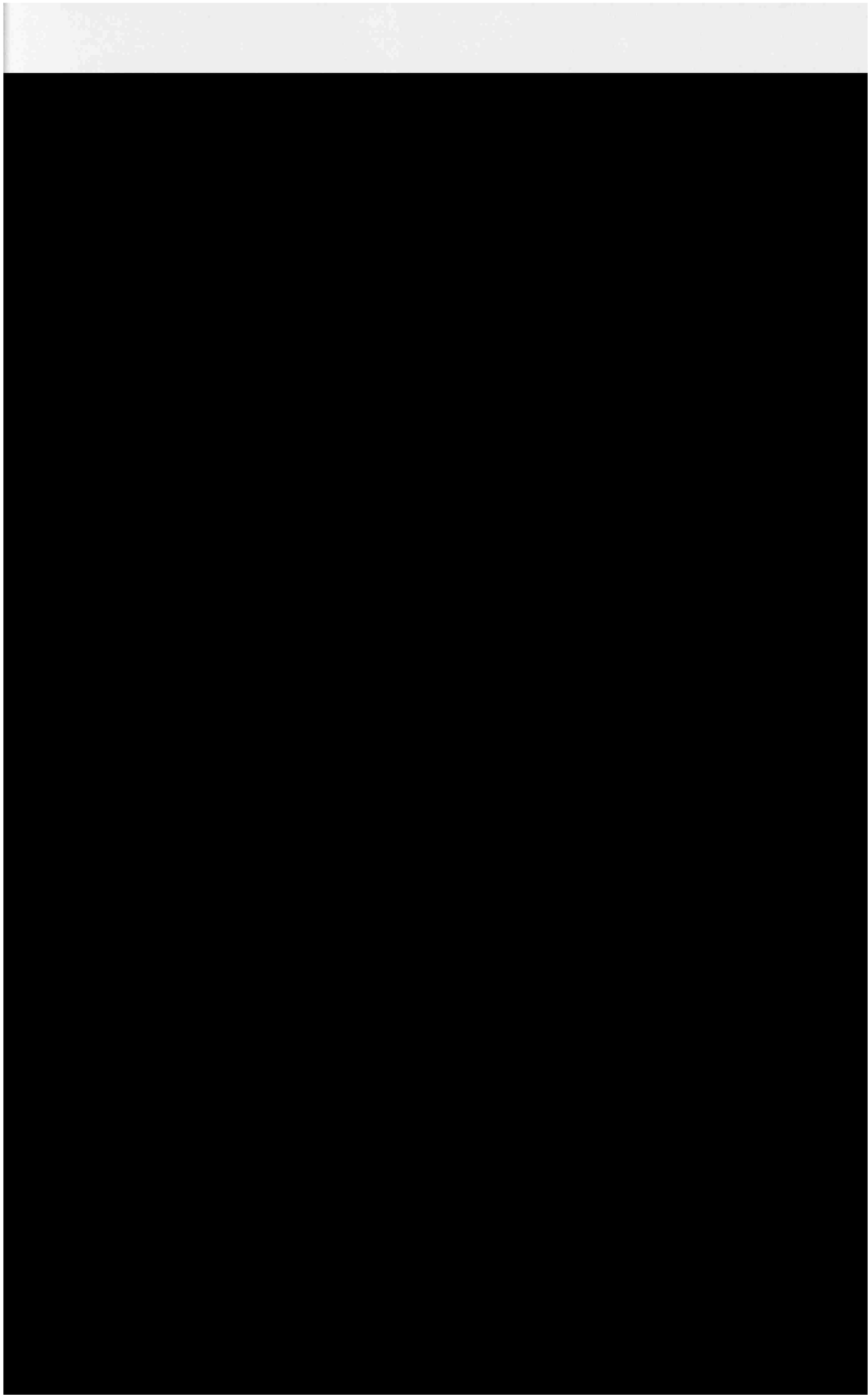
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INTRODUCTION

Historical context

The occupation period 1941-1944 is a profoundly dark era in twentieth century Greek history. Not only did the events of the occupation have a dramatic effect upon Greek contemporary politics, they also affected even the most personal aspects of the lives of millions of people who participated or just witnessed those events. Since the onset of the occupation, Greece entered a period of widespread devastation that lasted throughout the 1940s. The echo of that devastation was very loud until the collapse of the Colonels' dictatorship in 1974, while for some Greeks it remains pretty loud even today.

Before the outbreak of the war, the political life of Greece had come to a deadlock. Although all seemed quiet on the surface of the Greek political scene, the truth is that a number of serious political and class-related conflicts simmered under the surface. The Ioannis Metaxas dictatorship (1936-1941) lacked popular support and its main source of power was the oppressive police state that it had established. Political and trade unionist antagonisms had come to a halt and the constitutional issue of Greece, the struggle between democracy and monarchy, remained in fact unsolved. The farming communities, which represented the majority of the population, were living in poverty, abandoned by the central government of Athens. Eventually, in 28 October 1940 Italy

declared war against Greece. After five months of effective resistance against the Italians and the Germans on the Albanian and Macedonian fronts, the Greek army collapsed and the long night of the occupation began.

The tremendous effects of the occupation upon the Greek society and the memory of the recent war effort against the Germans and the Italians gave birth to the national resistance. The reign of oppression along with the colossal economic devastation made life in occupied Greece a nightmare. On the other hand, however, the victorious battles of the Greek army reminded everyone that the oppressors were not invulnerable. Gradually, the desire for action against the invaders was spreading fast among Greeks. Initially, the national resistance started as a spontaneous social phenomenon, as a struggle for survival, self-protection and revenge. Soon, nevertheless, national resistance was transformed into a movement with a political and organisational basis and three main resistance organisations appeared.

The largest resistance organisation nation-wide was EAM *Ethniko Apeleutherotiko Metopo* (National Liberation Front), controlled by KKE (Greek Communist Party). EAM's military branch ELAS *Ellinikos Laikos Apeleutherotikos Stratos* (Greek People's Liberation Army) soon became a powerful and effective guerrilla force. The second largest resistance organisation was EDES *Ethnikos Demokratikos Ellinikos Syndesmos* (National Democratic Greek League), of a republican, anti-communist political orientation. The third one, which is this thesis' case study, was the 5/42 regiment of evzones controlled by the liberal democratic political organisation EKKA *Ethniki Kai Koinoniki Apeleutherosi* (National and Social Liberation).

All national resistance organisations brought back to the surface a number of political issues. These issues and conflicts had much to do with unresolved pre-war discords, as well as with post-war visions. Along with the struggle against the invader, the Greek national resistance organisations made their own different proposals over the fate of post-war Greece. Eventually, the national struggle against the invaders by itself was not proven a sufficient ideal that could guarantee national unity. Disagreement over the fate of post-war Greece, reinforced by individual ambitions and self-interests of the people who led the resistance –as well as of those who followed them- proved more powerful than the common fight against the occupiers. The result was a civil conflict between EAM-ELAS and all major republican resistance organisations.

The 5/42 regiment of evzones played a major part in that civil conflict. Based on the mountainous region of Fokida in central Greece, the 5/42 regiment of evzones was formed in the spring of 1943 after the joint efforts of Colonel Dimitrios Psarros and a number of low-ranking local officers. Colonel Psarros along with ex-Minister Georgios Kartalis also founded the political resistance organisation EKKA which became the regiment's political branch. Although EKKA-5/42 maintained a friendly attitude towards EAM-ELAS and despite the fact that the official line of the 5/42 regiment was the conduct of a resistance struggle disengaged from political objectives, in May 1943 ELAS disbanded the regiment. The circumstances under which the disbandment was decided were mysterious and eventually the disbandment was disapproved of by EAM-ELAS' leadership. The 5/42 was reformed and EAM-ELAS officials guaranteed smooth relationships and co-operation between the two organisations. However, a few days later ELAS disbanded the 5/42 for the second time. Once more, there was mystery over who

decided and ordered that disbandment and once again EAM-ELAS officials disapproved of it. It was agreed that the 5/42 should reform again and new guarantees were given on EAM-ELAS' behalf about smooth relations and co-operation. After these two successive disbandments however, anti-EAM-ELAS sentiments had increased among the 5/42 guerrillas and officers. This hostility against EAM-ELAS increased further after Captain Thymios Dedousis, a fanatic anti-communist officer, joined the regiment.

During the ELAS-EDES war in Epirus (October 1943), EKKA adopted an explicit attitude in favour of ELAS. This attitude on EKKA's behalf caused serious agitation among the 5/42 officers and Captain Dedousis on behalf of the majority of the regiment's officers officially denounced EKKA. Captain Dedousis and his faction defied Colonel Psarros' command over the regiment and became more and more provocative against EAM-ELAS. After an incident between Dedousis' company and a group of ELAS guerrillas, an open conflict broke out between the 5/42 and ELAS. Eventually, on 17 April 1944 large ELAS forces disbanded the 5/42 for the third and last time. After a fierce and bloody battle the 5/42 regiment collapsed. Although Colonel Psarros along with tens of 5/42 officers and antartes surrendered to ELAS, they were murdered under mysterious circumstances.

An overview of the literature

There is a vast amount of literature referring to the occupation period and this thesis reviewed a large number of books, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, historical accounts, studies, journals, articles and conference papers. The purpose of this review was twofold: to search for additional information concerning the 5/42; and, to

develop a broader perspective on the issues and arguments of the occupation and civil war that ultimately frame the specific case study. The largest share of this literature has been produced by the political and military leaders of the national resistance organisations, but also by many veterans who participated in these events. The majority of these works are written in a polemical and highly controversial strain.

The literature produced by EAM-ELAS activists emphasises EAM's massive appeal to the Greek society and ELAS' military achievements against the invaders. On the other hand, it stresses the lack of popularity of the republican resistance organisations, their dependence on British support and their alleged ties with the occupation forces and the collaborationist government. In this context, the dominant argument throughout the literature of the left is that EAM-ELAS were the only genuine patriotic resistance organisations. Typical examples of this argumentation can be seen in the works of Glynos (Glynos, 1944), Sarafis (Sarafis, 1964), Lagdas (Lagdas, 1976), Partsalidis (Partsalidis, 1978), Hatzis (Hatzis, 1983), Kedros (Kedros, 1983), Skaltsas (Skaltsas, 1984), Moraitis, (Moraitis, 1985) (Moraitis, 1989), Avdoulos (Avdoulos, 1994), Mpekios (Mpekios, 1994), Koutroukis (Koutroukis, 1996), Hatzipanagiotou (Hatzipanagiotou, 1997) and many more. Some of the most objective and justified historical accounts within the literature of EAM-ELAS veterans comes from KKE's ex General Secretary Gregorios Farakos, (Farakos, 1996), (Farakos, 1997) (Farakos, 2000), Katsimbas (1966), Papadakis (1999) and Gregoriadis¹.

The literature produced by EAM-ELAS' rivals on the other hand, fall into three main categories. Firstly, there is the literature produced by the leaders and activists of the

¹ The date of issue of Gregoriadis' book is not mentioned anywhere in his book, but it was probably somewhere in the mid-1960's

republican national resistance organisations such as Zervas (Zervas, 2000) Pyromaglou (Pyromaglou, 1965) (Pyromaglou, 1978) (Pyromaglou, 1988), Myridakis (Myridakis, 1976), Houtas (Houtas, 1961), Papantoleon (Papantoleon, 1997), Flokas (Flokas, 1994), Ioannou (Ioannou, 2000), Papathanasiou (Papathanasiou, 1997), Gyftopoulos (Gyftopoulos, 1990). Secondly, there is the literature produced by the collaborators and the radical monarchists such as Ralis (Ralis, 1947), Logothetopoulos (Logothetopoulos, 1948), Tsolakoglou (Tsolakoglou, 1959), Staurogianopoulos, Zalokostas (Zalokostas, 1997), Papadopoulos (Papadopoulos, 2000). Thirdly, there is the literature produced by British officers, members of the British Military Mission in Greece such as Myers (Myers, 1975), Woodhouse (Woodhouse, 1976) (Woodhouse, 1976), Clive (Clive, 1985), Marinos (Marinos, 1994), Chandler (Chandler, 2000), Hammond and Hamson.² The central argument in the literature of EAM-ELAS' rivals is that EAM-ELAS monopolised the national resistance struggle in order to assume power after the end of the occupation. The literature emphasises ELAS' aggression towards competing national resistance organisations and the British; it tries to undermine the importance of ELAS' military achievements; and it stigmatises KKE's control over EAM-ELAS. The most well justified and substantial criticism of EAM-ELAS comes from Pyromaglou (Pyromaglou, 1965) (Pyromaglou, 1978) (Pyromaglou, 1988), Myers (Myers, 1975) and Woodhouse (Woodhouse, 1976) (Woodhouse, 1976) (Woodhouse, 1982) –the latter also gives a well-justified account of the British policies in Greece during the occupation.

Apart from the literature produced by the leaders and activists of the national resistance movement, there is also a number of works produced by Greek and foreign academics, scholars and researchers. Although the quantity of these studies is

² The dates of issue of Hammond's and Hamson's books are not mentioned anywhere in the Greek edition.

considerable, there is a serious disproportion between the amount of research done in each and every research field. In general terms, these studies cover a very limited and narrow field of knowledge of the occupation history. They study exhaustively some specific aspects of the history of the occupation, while they leave out many others of equal importance. Overall, current research covers two main areas: British intervention in occupied Greece and the policies of KKE.

Iatrides (Iatrides, 1972) (Iatrides, 1984) who has organised a number of conferences about Greece in the 1940s, examines British and American intervention in Greece during the occupation and until the end of the 1946-49 civil war. Papastratis (Papastratis, 1984) and Pashalidis (Pashalidis, 1995) (Pashalidis, 1997) highlight British foreign policy towards occupied Greece, while Richter (Richter, 1986) focuses on British intervention in Greece from the end of the occupation until the onset of the civil war in 1946. Clogg (Clogg, 1975) (Clogg, 1984) focuses on the role and strategy of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in occupied Greece, while Smith (Smith, 1990) focuses on the attitudes of the SOE officers towards the Greek national resistance organisations. Mathiopoulos (Mathiopoulos, 1977) highlights the German perspective on British intervention in the Greek national resistance movement based on a number of German documents. As far as KKE and its role is concerned, O'Ballance (O'Ballance, 1966), Smith (1993), Koussoulas (Koussoulas, 1973) and Vlavianos (Vlavianos, 1992) examine the strategy of KKE during and after the occupation period. All of them focus on the reasons behind KKE's rapid rise during the occupation and on the causes of its dramatic fall during the 1946-49 civil war. Finally, Eudes (Eudes, 1970) gives a very interesting account of the domestic politics of KKE and EAM-ELAS. Based on a number of

testimonies, he highlights the personal and political conflicts within KKE and EAM-ELAS from the occupation until 1949.

Apart from these two main research fields, there has been research in certain other areas as well. Mazower (Mazower, 1994) (Mazower, 2000) gives an overview of daily life under the occupation. He highlights the ways in which the occupation and resistance were experienced by the national resistance leaders and the ordinary people while he also gives a fascinating account of German perceptions of the occupation. Fleisher (Fleisher, 1979) (Fleisher, 1982) (Fleisher, 1982) (Fleisher, 1995) is also one of the few researchers who have focused on German perceptions of the occupation. Based on a large amount of primary sources, he highlights the German policies and strategies against the national resistance movement, while he has also done a considerable amount of research on the issue of collaboration. Koutsoukis (Koutsoukis, 1997) and Haritopoulos (Haritopoulos, 1997) (Haritopoulos, 2001) focus their research on ELAS' military leader Aris Velouchiotis. Finally, Zaousis (Zaousis, 1987), Gasparinatos (Gasparinatos, 1998) and Richter (Richter, 1975) have also written extensive general historical accounts covering the whole of the occupation period.

Within this extensive literature, attention to the history of the 5/42 has been very limited. The only EAM-ELAS' veterans who include some extended references about the regiment in their works are ELAS officers Foivos Gregoriadis "Vermaios"³ and Dimitris Dimitriou "Nikiforos" (Dimitriou, 1965). Both of them were Commanders of ELAS bands stationed in the same area with the 5/42 and they both played important roles in the ELAS-5/42 conflict. Their testimonies are historically valuable references to the history

³ The date of issue of Gregoriadis' book is not mentioned anywhere in his book, but it was probably somewhere in the mid-1960's

of the 5/42 not only because they give insight over a number of events, but also because they depict the attitude of EAM-ELAS towards the 5/42. Other ELAS officers with minor references to the 5/42 are Hatzis (Hatzis, 1983) and Hatzipanagiotou (Hatzipanagiotou, 1997), while Farakos (Farakos, 1996), (Farakos, 1997), (Farakos, 2000) has issued a number of important EAM-ELAS documents concerning the regiment in his books. References to the 5/42 are also very limited throughout the bibliography of EAM-ELAS' rivals. Apart from EDES' Sub-Commander Komninos Pyromaglou (Pyromaglou, 1965) who has written the biography of EKKA's leader Georgios Kartalis, only Petimezas (Petimezas, 1991) and Zalokostas (Zalokostas, 1997) give some reference to the 5/42 in their works. Attention to the history of the 5/42 and its significance within the national resistance movement is also very limited within the studies of researchers and academics. The most thorough historical account of the regiment's history comes from Gasparinatos (Gasparinatos, 1998), even though his references are based entirely on secondary sources. Moreover, Fleisher (Fleisher, 1995) discusses to some extent the policies of EKKA in the political arena of the national resistance movement, while Haritopoulos (Haritopoulos, 1997) (Haritopoulos, 2001), comments on the murder of Colonel Psarros.

The literature that refers exclusively to the history of the 5/42 regiment of evzones numbers five books, all of them written by 5/42 officers who played prominent roles within the regiment. In chronological order, the first of these books is "*Thymios Dedousis, Captain-Parliamentarian: The National Martyr and Fighter*" by Thymios Dedousis' brother Ioannis (Dedousis, 1949). This biography of Captain Thymios Dedousis is a valuable reference since it gives a full account of the actions of one of the most controversial officers within the 5/42. Although profoundly biased, what is unique

about this book is its disarming sincerity over Captain Dedousis' extremism and maliciousness against EAM-ELAS as well as against EKKA. That was not just due to the fact that the author was a fanatic royalist and anti-communist himself, but also due to the circumstances under which the book was written, since it was edited almost two years after the death of Captain Dedousis, and while the 1946-49 civil war had reached its peak.

The second book about the history of the 5/42 regiment of evzones is "*The National Resistance of the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones of Colonel Psarros 1941-1944*" by Lieutenant Georgios Kaimaras (Kaimaras, 1953).⁴ Kaimaras was one of the pioneers of the 5/42 and maintained a leading role within the regiment throughout its existence. Although Kaimaras' book is much more moderate than Dedousis' it is also rather biased. In many cases Kaimaras exaggerates over issues which have to do with his own contribution to the regiment, while in other cases he conveniently ignores to discuss several embarrassing issues. Nevertheless, Kaimaras' book is considered as the principal reference on the 5/42 because it gives a full account of events from the formation of the 5/42 until its collapse and his book is used as a reference throughout the national resistance literature.

The third book is "*National Resistance 1941-1944: Causes of the Disbandment of the 5/42 Regiment of Evzones – The Murder of Psarros*" written by Captain Athanasios Koutras (Koutras, 1981), another pioneer of the 5/42 and one of Psarros' close associates. Captain Koutras enjoys the appreciation of the 5/42 veterans and sympathisers and is also respected by many EAM-ELAS veterans. From all of the books written by 5/42 veterans,

⁴ Kaimaras' book was re-edited another three times since 1953. This thesis used the 1979 edition.

Koutras' is the most objective. The book not only describes the events in a moderate and accurate manner, but also has the objectivity to accept responsibility for many of the author's and of his comrades' mistakes.

The last two books about the 5/42 regiment are "*5/42-Psarros: The Bloody Legend*" by Sub-Lieutenant Takis Papagianopoulos (Papagianopoulos, 1981) and "*National Resistance Organisation EKKΑ*" by Major Ioannis Papathanasiou (Papathanasiou, 2000). Papagianopoulos was not one of the protagonists of the 5/42, however, he had some influence on the course of events concerning the regiment. In some cases, he includes some important information about several events, but most of what he writes in his book does not come out of his own experience and the book often adopts the views of third persons uncritically. The book also suffers from a strong anti-communist bias. On the other hand, Papathanasiou's book is far more objective, but lacking originality. His book follows almost exactly the structure of Kaimaras' book and copies large extracts from Kaimaras' as well as from other books which refer to the 5/42.

Despite their individual merit for the understanding of some aspects of the 5/42's history, none of the above references provide a full and objective account of the regiment's rise and fall. Current historiography tells us nothing about the social factors that affected the rise of the 5/42. It does not give proper attention to the significance of the 5/42 within the national resistance movement and to the role that it played in the conflict between EAM-ELAS and EDES. It does not assess the significance and the political effects of the regiment's tragic fall. Furthermore, the historiography fails to shed light on a number of mysterious aspects of the regiment's history. The causes behind the murder of Psarros remain unknown, while the British attitude towards the 5/42 still

remains inexplicable. To the present day, our knowledge of the 5/42 regiment remains rather fragmented and has never before been subjected to an independent academic study. The historiography needs to be enriched with a scholarly study about the rise and fall of the 5/42 and this thesis aims to make both a limited and a broad contribution to the academic understanding of the occupation period. The limited contribution can be made by giving a substantial account of the history of the 5/42, whereas the broad by setting the history of the 5/42 in the wider context of the national resistance movement and the civil war.

Arguments and research objectives

The ambition of the leaders of the 5/42 was to establish a “third pole” within the national resistance movement. Their ambition was to give to the 5/42 the status of a non-political national resistance organisation that served no other purpose than the resistance struggle against the invaders. Their objective was to place the 5/42 and EKKA as a breakwater in the middle of EAM-ELAS and EDES and win the support of the moderate centre. A moderate and independent third pole could have been expected to redefine the cleavage on which the civil war was based. The growth of an alternative third pole between the main adversaries EAM-ELAS and EDES could potentially smooth down the balance of power between them and contribute in decreasing the polarisation within the national resistance movement.

However, historical events went in a different direction and the 5/42 did not manage to survive within the polarised environment of the Greek resistance. The argument of this thesis is that the 5/42 had a number of vital structural deficiencies that

prevented it from becoming a viable third pole. The first of these defects was the geographic isolation of the 5/42. The regiment was formed much later than EAM-ELAS in Fokida and that had a major impact on the regiment's growth since it was always surrounded by superior hostile forces. The second was the political inefficiency of the leaders of EKKA-5/42. Kartalis and Psarros failed to develop a realistic and consistent strategy that could potentially safeguard the status of EKKA-5/42 as equal players within the political arena of the national resistance movement. The third was the lack of ideological coherence and mutuality of political objectives between the leaders of EKKA-5/42 and the regiment's fighters. Due to that alienation, the regiment was brought to a state of ideological confusion that undermined its integrity and military discipline. The fourth was the lack of external support by the British. The survival of the 5/42 was highly dependent upon British political and military support. Nevertheless, the British were not confident over the political reliability of EKKA or the military effectiveness of the 5/42 and they withdrew their support.

Furthermore, the argument of this thesis is that the emergence of the 5/42 within the political arena of the national resistance not only did not contribute in decreasing the polarisation, but instead, it contributed to the escalation of the crisis within the Greek national resistance movement. The rise of the 5/42 intensified the political antagonism between EAM-ELAS and its enemies. The regiment became the apple of discord, rather than the breakwater, between the two extremes. Both EAM-ELAS and the radical anti-EAM groups tried to undermine the regiment's independence and to pull the 5/42 towards their respective sides. The 5/42 was caught in the middle of a tug of war. It did not manage to resist the tremendous pressure from both sides and eventually it collapsed.

Moreover, the regiment's demise and the murder of Colonel Psarros fuelled the anti-communist sentiment in Greece, it contributed to the coherence of the radical anti-EAM camp and sharpened the polarisation between EAM and its enemies. The murder of Colonel Psarros was also a major issue in the Lebanon conference that was a major turning point in the future of Greece and the course of the civil conflict during and after the occupation.

The main task of this thesis is to study the reasons behind the rise and the fall of the 5/42 regiment of evzones and to assess its significance within the course of the Greek resistance movement and the outbreak of the civil war. The academic value of such an understanding is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, the study of the 5/42 illuminates some of the social context of the national resistance and the civil conflict during the occupation. The 5/42 was a national resistance organisation with an obvious local identity. The regiment's rise was dramatically influenced by the geographical, economic and political conditions of the Fokida region before and during the occupation. On many occasions, these local conditions played a more decisive role by far in the regiment's formation than other important developments on a national level. Therefore, the assessment of the impact that these local conditions had upon the rise of the 5/42 gives insight into some of the social and micro-historical aspects of the national resistance movement. In doing so, it is hoped that this study will contribute towards expanding our knowledge over the micro-social history of the resistance, an area which has systematically been neglected by current historiography and research.

Secondly, there is plenty of scope for an academically sound appreciation of the history of the 5/42 as an episode of the polarisation within the national resistance

movement. In this sense, the value of studying the history of the 5/42 is not simply confined in the narrow geographical area where the regiment grew. It also reflects some of the structural features that gave the outbreak of the civil conflict among Greek resisters an air of inevitability. The failure to establish a third pole within the Greek resistance illuminates several aspects of the political antagonism between EAM-ELAS and its opponents, while it highlights some of the reasons that created an increasingly polarised environment during the last months of the occupation.

Thirdly the study of the relations between the 5/42 and the British gives deeper insight over the British intervention in Greece during the occupation. The role of the British in the Greek national resistance remains even today one of the most controversial themes of the occupation history. Based on a number of primary sources, this thesis will try to separate the myth from reality regarding the relations between the British and the 5/42. The objective analysis of the British attitude towards the third largest resistance organisation is a valuable analytical tool for the better understanding of the British policy towards the overall Greek national resistance movement.

Structure of analysis and research questions

In its attempt to analyse the reasons behind the establishment, growth and eventual collapse of the 5/42, as well as to assess its role within the national resistance movement and the civil conflict, this thesis will study the 5/42 regiment through a three-level analysis:

The micro-level looks at the group dynamics of the 5/42. It examines the social political and economic environment within which the 5/42 was formed, the group's structure and internal politics, the strategies and objectives of the group's leaders.

The key question that the micro-level analysis aims to answer is:

- *Who were the agents, what were the circumstances and the events that influenced the emergence of the 5/42 in the Fokida region?*

The purpose of this question is to highlight all those factors that contributed towards the regiment's formation. The argument of this thesis is that these main factors were: (a) geography, (b) the pre-war economic condition of the community, (c) the community's political culture, (d) the impact that the occupation had upon the local community and (e) the initiatives taken by the pioneers of the 5/42.

This first question will be discussed in chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 1 looks at the social, economic and political conditions of the Fokida community during the pre-war decade. This is necessary since the 5/42 was a national resistance organisation closely linked to the community of Fokida. The pre-war economic and political institutions that were dominant within the community affected the formation of local resistance. The widespread poverty among the population during the pre-war decade had a serious impact on the membership of the 5/42 during the occupation, while the pre-war political culture of the community had also a major impact upon the ideological orientation of the regiment.

Chapter 2 examines the circumstances and events that led to the formation of the 5/42 regiment during the early months of the occupation. A principal factor that benefited the development of resistance activity in the Fokida region was geography since the

landscape in the area was ideal for such a purpose. Furthermore, the economic devastation along with the Italian reign of oppression caused frustration within the community and a widespread willingness to resist the occupying forces. Moreover, Chapter 2 looks at the pioneers of the 5/42 and the role they played towards the formation of the regiment. The purpose is not only to highlight their activities during the early months of the occupation, but also to discuss their personal motives and ambitions since the decisions that Colonel Psarros and the local officers took during that period had a major long term effect upon the regiment's fate.

The meso-level looks at the 5/42 in the context of the civil war between different resistance groups and highlights the role that the regiment played in the political antagonisms. It also discusses the domestic politics of the 5/42 and the strategies that the regiment's leaders adopted against EAM-ELAS. Furthermore, the meso-level analysis depicts the impact that the regiment's collapse had upon the political developments during the last months of the occupation.

The key questions that the meso-level analysis aims to answer are:

- *What were the policies that the 5/42 leaders followed in order to cope with EAM-ELAS and what was the effect of EAM-ELAS' aggression on the regiment's domestic coherence?*
- *What were the official grounds upon which EAM-ELAS disbanded the 5/42, and what were the actual military and political causes behind the regiment's disbandment?*
- *What were the motives behind the murder of the leader of the 5/42 Colonel Psarros and what were its political consequences?*

The first of these questions is addressed in Chapters 3 and 4, the second in Chapter 5, while the last one in Chapter 6.

Chapter 3 discusses the outbreak of the first two conflicts between the 5/42 and ELAS. These two conflicts increased the hostility of the 5/42 men against EAM-ELAS. Furthermore, these two incidents had a crucial impact on the decision making of the leader of the 5/42. The regiment's leaders did not follow a common policy towards EAM-ELAS and the first signs of discord started to appear amongst them. Chapter 4 discusses the events that led to the regiment's final disbandment. In its first half, it highlights the causes of the EKKA-5/42 schism that resulted in a mutiny of the 5/42 guerrillas against Psarros and EKKA. In its second half, the chapter discusses the escalation of the crisis between the 5/42 and EAM-ELAS that eventually led to the final bloody conflict.

Chapter 5 focuses on the causes behind the disbandment of the 5/42. In the first part, Chapter 5 discusses ELAS' official justification upon which the 5/42 was disbanded, while in the second part, it discusses the political and military objectives behind the disbandment.

Chapter 6 discusses the murder of Colonel Psarros. This is one of the most mysterious events of the regiment's history and this chapter attempts to highlight the motives behind the murder. Moreover, this chapter's second objective is to depict the impact of Psarros' murder to the polarisation between EAM-ELAS and its opponents.

The macro-level looks at the international dimension of the 5/42 regiment of evzones. More specifically it looks at the place of the 5/42 in the context of the British policies in Greece during the occupation.

The key question that the macro-level analysis aims to answer is:

- *What was the British policy towards the 5/42 regiment and what was the attitude that the British maintained during the last conflict between the 5/42 and ELAS?*

This question is considered in Chapter 7. In the first half, this chapter focuses on the political and military relationship between the British and the 5/42. In the second half, Chapter 7 focuses on the strategy that the British adopted against the regiment during the last 5/42-ELAS crisis that led to the final disbandment.

Sources and methodology

In pursuing the objective of answering the above questions, this thesis made an exhaustive and scholarly investigation of the available primary and secondary historical material that has been produced related to the 5/42 regiment of evzones and the occupation period. Firstly, it retrieved and used a large amount of primary documents. In using this material, the process and the circumstances under which every document came into existence was taken into consideration. The whole of this material is divided into two main categories. The first category includes all those documents that came into existence during the actual period discussed in this thesis. These documents include proclamations, reports, orders, telegrams, letters, memorandums, propaganda material, personnel files etc produced by the 5/42, EAM-ELAS and the British military services. The second category includes a number of published and unpublished documents that came into existence after the occupation period. These documents include unedited manuscript memoirs, personal reports and records, personal letters, diaries, articles from national and

local newspapers and periodicals, newsletters, obituaries, brochures produced by people who played various roles in the actual events.

The reliability, in terms of bias, varies between the documents of these two categories. In general terms, the documents of the first set are less biased since they were produced serving the functional or bureaucratic purposes of the 5/42, EAM-ELAS and the British services. On the other hand, there is more bias in the documents of the second set, since most of these documents served specific purposes on the writer's behalf and in many cases, they were produced with the purpose to affect the writing of history. Furthermore, in some cases the documentary material from both categories was substantial to provide a clear outline of events, while in some other cases it was rather fragmented and not enough to give efficient information. In any case though, these primary documents have been valuable sources for the writing of this thesis.

All of the above material was retrieved in the archives of various institutions and associations such as the Public Record Office in London, the archives of the Greek Army's History Bureau in Athens, the Benaki Museum in Athens, the Library of the University of Athens, the Archives of Contemporary Social History (ASKI) in Athens, the 5/42 veterans association in Athens, the Panhellenic association of EAM national resistance fighters (PSAEEA) in Athens, the EDES veterans association in Athens, the Amfissa Prefecture, the Public Library of Amfissa, the Fokida Studies Society in Amfissa, the Laographical Museum of Amfissa, the Galaxidians association in Pireaus, the private archives of Mr Koutsoklenis, Mr Papathanasiou, Mr Protopapas, Mr Talantis, General Kaimaras and General, Dr Mannaïos. (All of the specific references are listed in the bibliography section)

Another valuable research method used in this case study was interviewing. A total of forty-seven interviews with thirty-seven individuals were conducted in Athens and in various towns and villages in Fokida throughout the period of this research. The interviewees fall into three main groups. The first group includes individuals with leading positions in the 5/42 and EAM-ELAS who played influential roles in the events. The testimonies of these individuals were quite substantial. As far as a number of issues and events is concerned, these people have developed solidified views frequently expressed in their memoirs and autobiographies. Therefore, the main objective in interviewing these individuals was not to insist on these saturated issues, but to draw information on less scrutinised aspects concerning the history of the 5/42 and their personal experiences. The second group includes veterans and sympathisers of both the 5/42 and EAM-ELAS with less influential roles. The major difficulty in interviewing this group of people was to identify and separate primary, personal experience from collective memory. In many cases, this was achieved and the results of some of these interviews were very interesting. The testimonies of these people over their personal journeys during the occupation, provided valuable information on the 5/42's membership and structure, while they gave more insight into the basis of the 5/42-ELAS conflict. The third group includes offspring of 5/42 veterans, as well as other individuals with good knowledge of the topic. Although these people did not have direct experience with the events, their contribution to this research was very significant. They showed a great interest in this research and were keen to provide useful information and material. During all interviews notes were taken and at the end of every interview a summary of those notes was read back to the interviewees

who were then asked to sign a certification. The names of the interviewees and the dates and venues of the interviews are listed in the Bibliography at the end of the thesis.

Furthermore, throughout the research period, the author made a number of visits to the Fokida region where in addition to interviews and archival research, he attended the annual ceremonies of the 5/42 and ELAS veterans associations, visited the battlefields and most of the areas that were connected with the history of the 5/42. The purpose of these visits was the familiarisation with the region of Fokida and the landscape, and the better understanding of the local people and culture.

CHAPTER 1

Pre-war Fokida and the roots of the 5/42: Poverty and Conservatism.

One of the major objectives of this thesis is to highlight the social context of the history of the 5/42 regiment of evzones. This is essential because, although the 5/42 was the third most important resistance organisation nation-wide, it was still a resistance group with a clearly local identity. The regiment was based in the Fokida region of central Greece, it was formed and manned almost exclusively by locals and it limited its activity uniquely within that region. Fokida was the 5/42 regiment's vital space and there was a very strong link between the regiment and the local community.

The micro-level analysis focuses on the economic, social and political environment out of which the 5/42 emerged. In many aspects, the 5/42 was a product of Fokida and, therefore, it would be impossible to study the 5/42 regiment as a historical phenomenon unless great attention is given first to the community that produced it. Moreover, many of the events that occurred during the occupation in Fokida and which affected dramatically the formation and development of the 5/42 have their roots in the history of the 1930s. Therefore, the first chapter of this thesis will focus on the condition

of the local community before the outbreak of the war. The main sources that were used in this chapter are a number of local newspapers issued throughout the 1930s. These newspapers provide useful information about the region's economic and political profile.

This chapter will start with a brief account of Fokida's geography, since terrain was a major agent that contributed to the development of resistance activity in the area during the occupation. Secondly, the research will focus on the pre-war economic and social stratification of the local population. It is necessary to understand the region's economy and the economic inequalities or class divisions among the population, since the rise of the 5/42 during the occupation was influenced by the pre-war economic condition of the local community. The third and final aspect that will be studied in this chapter is the political culture and the dominant patterns of political behaviour in Fokida during the 1930s. The three main issues that will be highlighted are: electoral behaviour in the region, the ideology of the Greek right which was the dominant political force in Fokida, and the non-institutional patterns of political antagonism that were widespread during the 1930s. The purpose is to understand the community's political identity, the political attitudes and patterns of political behaviour that were dominant in the region. It is essential to understand the ways in which the people of Fokida had been politically socialised before the war since many aspects of that pre-war political culture survived the occupation and had a major influence in shaping the 5/42's political identity.

1.1. Geography

The Fokida region is a part of the Roumeli territory in central Greece. The region's capital is the city of Amfissa. Fokida is divided into two provinces: the Parnassida province in the eastern part of the region and the Dorida province in the western part. Amfissa is the capital of Parnassida, while Lidoriki is the capital of Dorida.⁵

The region's population in 1940 was 65,971 people, out of which 36,520 lived in the Parnassida province and 29,451 in the Dorida province. The largest towns of Parnassida were: Amfissa (5,466 inhabitants), Desfina (3,590), Itea (2,532) and Galaxidi (2,240). Dorida was less populated and its largest town was Lidoriki (1,611).

From the overall population of the region, 23% lived in those large towns, while the rest 77% lived in villages. There were 93 villages in the region out of which 61 were mountainous (above 500 metres) where 58% of Fokidas population lived and 32 were on hills and valleys (below 500 metres) where the rest 42% of the population lived.⁶

Fokida is one of the most mountainous regions of Greece. High mountain chains cover almost the whole of its terrain, while between those mountains there are small and narrow valleys. The biggest and highest mountains of Fokida are Ghiona (2,510 metres), Vardousia (2,350) and mount Parnassos (1,714), while the largest valley is the valley of Amfissa.⁷

⁵ See list of maps

⁶ See Ministry of National Economy, 16 October 1940 census. Statistical data are based on the same source.

⁷ For details over the role that geography and terrain played in the formation of the 5/42 see ch 2.1, p 65.

1.2. A Community sunk in Poverty: Social stratification in pre-war

Fokida.

Before the outbreak of the war, Fokida was the poorest of the seven regions of Roumeli and one of the poorest regions nation-wide (Drivas, 1980). The standards of living were far below the national average and there was widespread poverty in the community. Over half of the population was illiterate and only a small percentage of the children who went to primary school continued their studies in high school. The region's road-network was almost non-existent. According to the "*Amfissaiki*" local newspaper:

"Transportation with many towns of our region is done with primitive means. Transportation to Desfina, a town of 4.000 people, can be achieved only with the use of donkeys...during the winter, many villages are blocked for long periods" (*Amfissaiki*, 3 November 1932).

Fokida was a dry region, there was no water supply system, and people had to carry water from springs or wells for their daily needs. The condition of public hygiene throughout Fokida was terrible. There was no drainage system and the garbage collection system was poor. According to "*Fokis*", another local newspaper:

"The primitive conditions of hygiene favour the development of various pestilential diseases. Especially typhus is extremely widespread in our region" (*Fokis*, 8 September 1934).

The local health system was also poor and apart from a few private clinics, throughout the region there was no public hospital:

"On a daily basis we see the poor suffering from various diseases since there is no medical care for them. These diseases along with famine cause tuberculosis and most of these people soon die" (*Amfissaiki*, 28 September 1933).

Although the vast majority of the population lived in poverty, there were still some differentiations in their economic condition. During the pre-war period, Fokida was

an especially agricultural and stock-farming region and consequently, the ownership of agricultural land along with income were the main dimensions of inequality within the community. Although there were economic inequalities within the community, these were minor. If Fokidas' social stratification system during the 1930s was to be represented by a triangle, that triangle would have a very wide base and a very obtuse angle. In the bottom of that triangle, there was the peasantry of the mountainous areas, above them the olive-oil producers of the valleys and especially of the Amfissa olive-grove of Amfissa and on triangle's top, the tradesmen, businessmen and public servants of Amfissa and the other larger towns.

In the mountainous villages where the 58% of the overall population of Fokida lived, the vast majority of the peasantry lived in poverty and under very difficult circumstances. The main reason for that poverty was the lack of available land for cultivation. Fokida was a particularly mountainous and infertile region. Mountains covered 96.6% of its overall surface, while 1.6% were hilly areas and just 1.8% were valleys (*Fokika Gramata*, 1979). Just 13% (28,500 hectares) of its overall surface was under cultivation (Drivas, 1980) and of course most of those areas were in the valleys.⁸

According to Richter:

"In 1936, the average income of a peasant family in Greece was 21.000 Drachma per year, while the minimum necessary amount for the survival of a family was 28.000 drachma" (Richter, 1975, vol. I: 35).

⁸ The respective percentages for the whole of Greece were 68% mountains, 32% valleys while 30% of the overall Greek territory was under cultivation. (Richter, 1975, vol. I: 34). The conclusion that becomes obvious by comparing these figures is that Fokida was by far more mountainous and infertile than the rest of Greece.

Taking into consideration the fact that Fokida was one of the poorest and most infertile regions nation-wide, it would be safe to assume that the average income of a peasant family in Fokida was even less than 21.000 drachma.

Agricultural land in Greece was divided into seven categories according to the size of fields:

- a) very big (100 hectares and more)
- b) big (99-50 hectares)
- c) middle (49-20 hectares)
- d) lower-middle (19-5 hectares)
- e) small (4.9-2 hectares)
- f) very small (1.9-1 hectares)
- g) nano (less than 0.9 hectares) (Igoumenakis, 1987: 38).

According to estimates, 0.75 hectares was the minimum necessary land to cover just the survival needs for a family with 6 members (Igoumenakis, 1987: 55). Before the war, the vast majority of the peasantry in Fokida owned “nano” fields and just very few families owned some “very small” fields in the olive-grove valley of Amfissa (Koutsoklenis, interview 17 May 2000, Karavartogianos, interview 19 May 2000). Most families depended for their survival exclusively on the cultivation of these small pieces of land and in fact they struggled just to sustain themselves. The fields in the mountains were very infertile, small and scattered (due to the fact that children inherit an equal amount of the family land and thus fields were cut in very small pieces along time). In addition, the peasantry used primitive methods of cultivation and productivity was low. The biggest part of the production was to be consumed by the family that owned the land (self-consumption) and the rest was to be sold or bartered for other products. For most families in mountainous Fokida, meat was a luxury and it was consumed only at Easter, while those who ate wheaten bread throughout the year were considered as wealthy, since white

bread was in fact a status symbol in the mountainous communities of Fokida (Xiriotis, 1962).

Poverty was also widespread among the peasantry in the hilly areas and the valley of Amfissa. The economic condition and standards of living of these communities was also poor and only slightly better than that of the peasantry in the mountainous areas.

Amfissaiki wrote:

"Due to the lack of land, fields are divided in small, insufficient pieces. The income of those agricultural families is by virtue poor. Furthermore that income is undermined by various factors such as weather disasters, plants and animals diseases, trade exploitation, heavy taxation and debts, many debts, debts to usurers, debts to tradesmen, public debts, debts to the National Bank, debts to the Agricultural Bank" (*Amfissaiki*, 17 July 1936).

The olive-grove in the valley of Amfissa was one of the largest in Greece and the only product in that area was olives and olive oil.

"The life and existence of our town is unluckily dependent upon olives, our only product. I say unluckily, because experience has proved that monoculture is totally unfavourable for the producers" (*Amfissaiki*, 1 February 1933).

Due to monoculture there was no available land for the cultivation of other necessary products. That caused serious unemployment among oil producers since they worked for just four months and consumed for the rest of the year. Furthermore, the lack of alternative cultivations meant that oil-producers were forced to cover their needs in other products entirely through the market, something that seriously undermined their income.

Although oil was one of the most important products of Greek agriculture, the fact that it was an exportable -and to a certain degree a luxurious- product made it vulnerable to various international economic crises. Between 1929-1933 for example olive-oil exports dropped to one third, while there was a 22% drop in profits (Vergopoulos, 1978: 49). Apart from that, the persistence of the local oil-producers in the traditional methods

of cultivation, collection and manufacturing was unproductive and decreased the competitiveness of the Amfissa olive oil against the products of other domestic and foreign areas.⁹ Furthermore, local politicians also bare a large amount of responsibility since they did not take any measures to support the local product. *Amfissaiki* complained:

“...while in Volos, Evia and Crete, all council taxes have been abolished, in our region not only do they remain, but they have also increased dramatically” (*Amfissaiki*, 30 October 1934).

At the top of the social stratification pyramid of the local society there were the craftsmen, businessmen and public servants of Fokida. In the region there was no industry but only a number of small handicrafts occupied with the processing of olives and other agricultural products (oil and wheat mills etc) as well as the production of merchandise necessary for the farmers (barrel makers, blacksmiths, carpenters etc). Those handicrafts were small family businesses run exclusively by family members. A precise picture of the economic condition and the income of those handicrafts and businessmen was given in the “*Amfissaiki*” newspaper during March –April 1934. In those issues, lists of all craftsmen, traders and businessmen of Parnassida were published, along with their classification on the taxation scale. (Figure 1.1)¹⁰

⁹ Olive-trees are also extremely vulnerable to disease and the elements and of course the lack of fertilisers made the situation even worse.

Figure 1.1. Taxation scale of craftsmen, traders and businessmen of Parnassida

TAXATION SCALE	EARNED PROFITS (in Drs)	PAYABLE TAX (in Drs) ¹¹	NUMBER OF BUSINESSMEN (383 in total)	AS % OF TOTAL
½	20.000	300	98	25.5
1	25.000	600	155	40.5
2	30.000	900	60	16
3	35.000	1.200	34	9
4	40.000	1.600	11	3
5	45.000	2.000	4	1
6	50.000	2.400	5	1.3
7	55.000	2.900	4	1
8	60.000	3.400	3	0.8
9	65.000	4.000	0	0
10	70.000	4.600	4	1
11	75.000	5.300	0	0
12	80.000	6.000	3	0.8
13	90.000	7.500	1	0.2
14	100.000	9.000	0	0
15	110.000	10.500	0	0
16	120.000	12.000	1	0.2
//	//	//	//	//
30	300.000	39.000	//	//

*Source: "Amfissaiki", various issues March-April 1934

The nation-wide taxation scale went on until the 30th rank, but in Parnassida the wealthiest businessman reached just the 16th rank. Although the 383 businessmen listed above constituted the main nucleus of the upper class in Parnassida and they were on the top of the local social stratification pyramid, their economic condition was still poor compared to national standards. That becomes obvious if the income of those businessmen was compared with the salary of a traditionally badly paid public servant

¹⁰These businessmen, craftsmen and traders were: barrel makers, wheat and olive mills owners, shoemakers, tailors, barbers, blacksmiths, carpenters, electronic engineers, grocers, mechanics, coffee shop owners, bakers, printers, restaurateurs and fish mongers (see *Amfissaiki* March-April 1934).

such as the gendarme. During that time, the annual salary of the average gendarme was approximately 30.000 drachma.¹² That means that 82% of the supposed upper class of Parnassida (the 313 businessmen that belonged to taxation scales ½, 1 and 2) earned less than a badly paid public servant. Another 12% earned just a little bit more (the 45 businessmen that belonged to taxation scales 3 and 4), while the wealthiest businessman of the rest 6% (25 people) who were Parnassida's "bourgeoisie", was just in the middle of the nation-wide taxation scale (in the 16th place out of 30). Unfortunately, similar data concerning the economic condition in the Dorida province were not available. However, given the fact that (a) Dorida was situated in an even more mountainous terrain than Parnassida, (b) it was by far a poorer region and (c) its population was for 1/3 smaller than Parnassida, it can safely be assumed that its upper class was both smaller in numbers and less well off.

The study of social stratification in pre-war Fokida therefore reveals that the local community was economically and socially homogeneous since (a) wealth disparities amongst people within the same class were small, and (b) wealth disparities between different classes were small. That was mainly due to the fact that the main dimensions of inequality, land, capital and income were distributed without big deviations amongst the population. Highly unequal distribution of land had always been the source of polarisation and division among agricultural communities (e.g. in Thessally). In Fokida however, there was an extended homogeneity within the agricultural community both in the mountains and the valleys, since there were no big deviations in the size of land that

¹¹ These amounts do not include council taxes (10% over the tax) that every businessman had also to pay (see *Amfissaiki*, March-April 1934).

¹² See *Amfissaiki*, 4 September 1937. After graduating from the academy, the new gendarme's salary was 25.220 drachma, after three years in service it increased to 29.120 drachma and after six years it reached

each farmer owned. Despite the fact that certain cleavages of conflict (such as for example the feuds between farmers and stockbreeders, or disputes between villages about the distribution of water) remained strong, there is no evidence to suggest that such conflicts were class-related.

In addition, there was no inter-group polarisation between the farming community and the upper class of Fokida. That was mainly due to the economic proximity between these two economic groups. The income of the businessmen and traders was in most cases poor and equivalent to the income of the farmers. Furthermore, those two economic groups were not related to each other through production relations, which caused exploitation and conflict, but through market relations, which were more or less stable and demanded the consent of both parts. Two more factors contributed to the lack of class related conflicts in pre-war Fokida. The first was the total lack of heavy industry and consequently the lack of an industrial proletariat, while the second was immigration. Poverty urged many young people to leave Fokida and look for a better life either in Athens and the big cities or abroad. As Meynaud argued:

“Immigration facilitates the protection of social order and the status quo by diminishing the political pressure of the outcasts”(Meynaud, 1966: 24).¹³

33.020 drachma (These salaries do not include other small benefits such as uniform benefit, transference benefit etc).

¹³ For more details over the consequences that occupation had in the local economy and how these consequences affected the 5/42's formation see ch 2.1 p 62 and ch 2.2.i, p 68.

1.3. Political Culture and Patterns of Political Behaviour

1.3.i. Electoral Behaviour in Fokida: The Politics of Conservatism

The pre-war political situation in Fokida was characterised by a widespread conservatism in the political and electoral behaviour of the community. Throughout the 1930s, the wider anti-Venizelist, royalist, right wing faction was the dominant political force in the region.

The term “anti-Venizelist, royalist, right-wing” might sound abundant, but it is still the most accurate term to describe that specific faction. The rise and dominance of Eleftherios Venizelos in Greek politics caused an immediate and strong reaction by his opponents. Anti-Venizelist sentiments became the binding agent for a wide range of conservative groups, which rallied around Venizelos’ opposite, King Konstantinos. The outbreak of the schism between Venizelos and King Konstantinos during the First World War was therefore the landmark of the faction’s formation. According to Diamantopoulos:

“For the opponents of Venizelos, the crown was the common denominator of their peculiarities and differences, the unifying force of their faction, their true leader and their alternative proposition against Venizelos’ legend” (Diamantopoulos, 1993).

The fundamental vital ideological belief of that faction was the preservation of a political establishment that would guarantee the protection of traditions and the existing social order.

The second most important political force in Fokida during the 1930’s was the Venizelist, liberal faction. This faction rallied around Venizelos and the Liberal Party and it had the support of more progressive and liberal groups, as well as a major part of the

newly risen bourgeoisie classes. They opposed the traditional, reactionary and oligarchic establishment of the Monarchy and their objectives were the abolition of the Monarchy, or at least the submission of the monarch to the parliament and the modernisation of the economy and the state.

The study of the various electoral results in the 1930's reveals the electoral strength of both camps in pre-war Fokida.

A) 25 September 1932 National Elections

Figure 1.2. 1932 National Election Results

	PARNASSIDA		DORIDA		FOKIDA		NATION- WIDE %	DEVIATIO N %
	VOTES	% ¹⁴	VOTES	%	VOTES	%		
PEOPLE'S ¹⁵	3.363	43%	2.088	40%	5.451	41%	34%	+ 7%
LIBERAL	1.964	24%	1.650	31%	3.614	27%	33.5%	- 6.5%
PROGRESSIVE	1.779	22%	1.432	26%	3.211	24%	8%	+ 16%
LABOUR + FARMERS UNION	781	10%	154	3%	935	7%	6%	+ 1%
KKE	N/A ¹⁶	N/A	N/A	N/A	155	1%	5%	- 4%

*Sources: "Amfissaiki" 30 September 1932, Greek Editions Department

In the previous elections of 1928, the Liberal Party had won the national elections with the incredible percentage of 71.2%. In the 1932 national elections however, the electorate "punished" Venizelos. During the four years that Venizelos was in power (1928-32) there was a major financial depression in the Greek economy, caused by the international economic crisis in Europe and America. During those four years, the cost of living tripled, wages dropped by 13% and unemployment increased dramatically. That economic depression ignited many strikes and violent riots in the big cities and the Venizelist regime took a series of authoritarian measures in order to cope with the civil

¹⁴ The method of approximation has been used in the calculation of percentages.

¹⁵ The electoral results and percentages of the Anti-Venizelist, Royalist, right wing parties have been highlighted.

¹⁶ Figures not available.

discontent. In 1929 the government issued the “*Idionymo*” law against communism. The “*idionymo*” was an entirely anti-constitutional law that violated fundamental democratic liberties and gave the police extensive authorities in the pursuit of communism and the protection of the established social order.¹⁷ From 1929 to 1932 the police killed 18 people and injured another 1.335 during riots. A total of 11.400 people were arrested for political reasons 2.130 of which were jailed and 200 were exiled (Alexatos, 1997: 234). Eventually, the oppression by the Venizelist government, combined with the economic crisis, caused the collapse of the Liberal Party which lost in these elections more than the half of its voters (the Liberal Party took 71.2% in the 1928 elections and it fell to 33.5% in the 1932 elections). All the opposition parties benefited, especially the People’s Party, which won the elections with 34% (while in the 1928 elections it managed to take just 7.6%). Eventually, with the alliance of Metaxas’ royalist party that had won a mere 1.6%, the People’s Party came to power.

B) 5 March 1933 National Elections

Although after the 1932 elections the People’s Party with the support of Metaxas formed a government, they did not have the absolute majority and they ruled with the tolerance of the Liberal Party. In 1933 however, Venizelos overthrew the People’s Party’s government and he announced new national elections. Once more, the People’s Party won the elections with 38% (it increased its power by 5% from the previous elections), while the Liberal Party’s percentages remained the same (Figure 1.3).

¹⁷ For more details about the “*idionymo*”, see Mavrogordatos, 1983: 99.

Figure 1.3. 1933 National Elections Results

	PARNASSIDA		DORIDA		FOKIDA		NATION- WIDE %	DEVIATIO N %
	VOTES	%	VOTES	%	VOTES	%		
PEOPLE'S	4.023	51%	2.703	55%	6.726	53%	38%	+ 15%
LIBERAL	3.831	49%	2.198	45%	6.029	47%	33%	+ 14%
KKE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4.5%	N/A

*Sources: "*Amfissaiki*" 6 March 1933, "*Fokis*" 6 March 1933, Greek Editions Department

The victory of the People's Party was mainly due to the fact that its leader Panagis Tsaldaris officially and publicly acknowledged the legitimacy of parliamentary democracy. That was a very important decision since it meant that the People's Party was abandoning its main objective which was the re-establishment of the monarchy. By doing so Tsaldaris won the support of all those democrats who were standing between Venizelos and the People's Party. These were the people who feared that a People's Party government would result in the re-establishment of the monarchy, but who at the same time had become indignant towards Venizelos' authoritarian politics (Mavrogordatos, 1983: 41-42).

C) 9 June 1935 National Elections

During the 1933 elections and while the counting of votes had not yet been completed, a group of democratic officers under the leadership of Nikolaos Plastiras attempted a military coup the purpose of which was the prevention of the monarchy's re-establishment. Those officers feared that an eventual People's Party victory in the elections would bring the radical pro-monarchists (Metaxas and Kondylis) in leading governmental positions, something that would certainly lead to the re-establishment of the monarchy. Their coup was suppressed and finally the People's Party won the elections, while Metaxas and Kondylis became Ministers of Internal affairs and Defence

respectively. After the suppression of the movement, large-scale persecutions against democrats in the military and the public sector followed. Moreover, in 6 June 1933, there was an assassination attempt against Venizelos with the tolerance and cover-up of the police (Vlantas: 216). The danger of the re-establishment of the monarchy was then more than obvious and in order to prevent that outcome, a group of democratic officers, again under the leadership of Plastiras and with Venizelos' consent, organised a new military coup for March 1935. Due to the lack of social support however, the coup was again suppressed. The people had become suspicious and frustrated towards all those successive military coups and the associated political instability. After the suppression of the new coup, the People's Party government declared martial law and proceeded with new massive persecutions of democrats in the military and the public sector. In order to legitimise its rule however, the People's Party proclaimed new national elections for 9 June 1935. Venizelists boycotted these elections. They believed that they would not be conducted fairly since the country was still under martial law and the persecutions of the Venizelists were ongoing. Eventually the percentage of abstention from voting was just 20% and the elections turned to a competition between moderate royalists (People's Party) and the more radical ones (Metaxas). Something that was notable from these elections however, was the rise of KKE's percentage that reached 10% (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4. 1935 National Election Results

	PARNASSIDA		DORIDA		FOKIDA		NATION-WIDE %	DEVIATION %
	VOTES	%	VOTES	%	VOTES	%		
PEOPLE'S	5.617	80%	4.686	87%	10.303	83%	65%	+ 18%
ROYALISTS (METAXAS)	1.135	16%	353	6.5%	1.488	12%	15%	- 3%
KKE	109	1.5%	20	0.5%	129	1%	10%	- 9%
INVALID/BLANK	180	2.5%	322	6%	502	4%	6%	- 2%

*Sources: "*Amfissaiki*" 12 June 1935, "*Fokis*" 14 June 1935, Greek Editions Department

D) 26 January 1936 National Elections

After the 1935 national elections, the Prime Minister and leader of the People's Party, Tsaldaris was overthrown by his radical monarchist Minister of Interior Kondylis. After becoming the new Prime Minister, Kondylis concentrated his efforts on ensuring the restoration of the monarchy. He proclaimed a referendum for 3 November 1935 over the issue of the monarchy's fate. The referendum was scandalously forged since it gave a percentage of 98% in favour of the restoration of the monarchy, while the sum of the votes outnumbered by far the sum of the registered voters. Almost immediately after the referendum, King George returned in Greece and regained his throne. The King released his benefactor Kondylis of his duties and appointed Demertzis as the new Prime Minister. Demertzis' government increased the oppressive measures taken by the Kondylis regime and proclaimed national elections for 26 January 1936 the results of which were the

	PARNASSIDA		DORIDA		FOKIDA		NATION-WIDE %	DEVIATION %
	VOTES	%	VOTES	%	VOTES	%		
ROYALISTS	1.612	24%	2.655	48%	4.267	35%	20%	+ 15%
PEOPLE'S	2.499	38%	238	4%	2.737	22.5%	22%	+ 0.5%
LIBERAL	1.365	21%	1.784	32%	3.149	26%	37%	- 11%
DEM COALITION	1.127	17%	888	16%	2.015	16.5%	4%	+12.5%
KKE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6%	N/A

*Sources: "Amfissaiki" 31 January 1936, Greek Editions Department

Venizelist parties together (royalist and the People's Party), were greater than the one of the Liberal Party.¹⁸

The 1936 elections were the last free elections before the war since after 4 August 1936 the King along with Metaxas imposed a dictatorship. During the Metaxas dictatorship censorship of press was imposed, hence local newspapers cannot be considered as objective sources, which can be used in the study of the community's attitude towards the regime. Throughout the dictatorship's period, "*Fokis-Amfissaiki*" was full of propagandistic articles in favour of Metaxas and his regime (*Fokis-Amfissaiki* 5 June 1937-9 December 1940). In June 1939, Metaxas visited Amfissa and according to *Fokis-Amfissaiki* "the people of Amfissa welcomed him with magnificent enthusiasm" (*Fokis-Amfissaiki* 19 June 1939). Not many documents are available concerning the political climate in Fokida during 1936-1940, however Rekaitis (Rekaitis, 1978: 3-13), Karavartogianos (Karavartogianos, interview 19 May 2000), N. Mamareli (N.Mamareli, interview 19 May 2000) and Talamangas (Talamangas, interview 20 May 2000) argue that peace within the community was not disturbed during that period and that the majority of the local people were sympathetic to the regime.

The analysis of the electoral results in Fokida during the 1930's can produce several conclusions about the electoral behaviour as well as about the political trends that were dominant within the community.

- The anti-Venizelist, royalist, right-wing parties (People's Party and Metaxas' Party) easily came first in all the elections throughout the 1930's.
- Apart from the 1932 elections, combined percentages of all the parties that belonged to the wider anti-Venizelist, royalist, right-wing faction were larger than the

¹⁸ See Mavrogordatos, 1983: 51-54

combined percentages of all the parties that belonged to the Venizelist, liberal, democratic faction. The 1932 elections was the only time where the proportions were in favour of the anti-Venizelists (anti-Venizelists 41% -Venizelists 58%). In the 1933 elections the proportion changed in favour of the anti-Venizelists (anti-Venizelists 53% - Venizelists 47%). In 1935 anti-Venizelists won 95 % since Venizelist and democrats boycotted the elections¹⁹, while in the 1936 election the proportion was again in favour of anti-Venizelists (anti-Venizelists 57.5% - Venizelists 42.5%).

- In all national elections during the 1930's, the overall percentages of the anti-Venizelists in Fokida were by far greater than the average percentages of the anti-Venizelists nation-wide. So in 1932 the difference was +7%, in 1933 it was +15%, in 1935 also +15% (People's +18%, Metaxas -3% which equals 15%) and for 1936 it was +15.5% (People's +0.5, Royalists +15% which equals 15.5%).
- The percentages of the Communist Party (KKE) in pre-war Fokida were negligible. In 1932 KKE took just 155 votes (1%), in 1935 just 103 (1%), while in the 1933 and 1936 elections local newspapers did not even mention KKE's votes.

The study of electoral results in Fokida during the pre-war decade shows that the dominance of conservative right-wing parties in the region was overwhelming. Fokida

¹⁹ In order to find the percentage of abstention from voting the number of votes has to be subtracted from the number of the registered voters. The problem here was that although the number of votes was available, the number of the registered voters was not. Consequently the only way to get an idea about the percentage of abstention from voting in Fokida in the 1935 elections would be the comparison of the overall number of votes (participation) in those specific elections with the number of votes (participation) in the previous and next elections. These numbers were:

1932 13.366 votes
 1933 12.755 //
1935 12.412 //
 1936 12.168 //

What becomes obvious is that in the 1935 elections, the levels of participation and abstention remained at their usual levels. That means that the vast majority of Venizelists and Democrats in Fokida disobeyed Venizelos's directive for abstention from voting and eventually voted for the People's Party or Metaxas' Party (Both Parties almost doubled their votes from the previous elections and won 11.791 votes).

was a conservative, right-wing stronghold. A major reason that contributed to its conservatism was the fact that Fokida was a region with a long history and its community was attached to tradition and traditional values. According to Greek mythology, Prometheus, the creator of humankind created the first humans in Fokida. Ancient geographer and traveller Pausanias mentioned that he had seen stones in Fokida that had the odour of human flesh and it was believed that they were the remains of the material out of which Prometheus had created humans (Kolias, 1974). During the 1821 war of independence, Fokida was one of the regions that played a very important role. Many of the revolution's leaders came from that region and a number of great battles against the Turks took place there. Fokida was a part of old Greece and one of the first regions that composed the diminutive Greek kingdom of 1830. According to Meynaud:

“It would be impossible to explain the Greek electoral behaviour without taking into consideration the longevity of every region within the Greek state. The social and economic conditions of every one of those regions and the conditions under which their integration with the motherland was accomplished influenced and still influence the political beliefs of the local societies. In other words, historical experience is an important factor in the political and party orientation of every region. Anti-Venizelism and conservatism in old Greece (Roumeli and the Peloponnese) was by far greater than in the new lands (Macedonia, Thesaly, Thrace) where anti-Venizelism remained a permanent minority” (Meynaud, 1966: 45).²⁰

1.3.ii. Fokida “The Acropolis of Conservatism”: An Ideological Outlook of the Greek Right.

In order to get a more complete picture of the local community's political culture and understand the political background out of which the 5/42 regiment emerged, it is

²⁰See also Mavrogordatos, 1983: 274.

necessary to take a brief overview of the conservative political attitudes, beliefs and ideologies that were prevalent in Fokida during the 1930's.

The study of the Greek conservative ideology and of the conservative political attitudes within the Greek society during the 1930's is a quite difficult task mainly due to the conditions under which this ideology was shaped. The cohesion of the Greek right was not based upon the common economic or social interests of the groups that it represented, but rather upon a commonly shared hostility against Venizelos (Meletopoulos, 1993). That had a strong impact on the construction of the ideology of the Greek right. This ideology was not a product of long political and social procedures, but rather a product of instinctive and rapid political reactions. These rapid procedures upon which the right wing ideology was formed, caused a lack of rationalism. In other words, the ideology of the Greek right was not a system of beliefs that supported the economic and social interests of the social groups that it represented (Lipovac and Demertzis, 1998: 22). A typical example would be the peasants of Fokida during the 1930's who despite the fact that they lived in absolute poverty, they defended with great zeal the establishment, the preservation of social inequalities and the monarchy.

The motto that really captured the ideals of the right wing during the 1930's was "Motherland-Religion-Family". These three ideals together represented the attachment to tradition and the protection of the established social institutions and order. As Kanakari-Roufou suggests, that conservatism was relatively simple in spirit:

"Conservatives are those who love whatever they have got used to, who are suspicious towards anything that is new, who do not believe in free quest, but in the example of the past. Conservatives are totally comfortable in their environment and do not want to change it. They do not believe in utopia and they tremble towards the idea of change.... They believe that the social order and hierarchy that they live in is the right one simply because it has been tested" (Kanakari-Roufou, 1993).

The ideological profile of the People's Party which during inter-war Greece was the nucleus of the right wing was outlined by the party's mentor Georgios Vlachos:

"The People's Party is the party which is going to respect the law even if that is going to be against the country's interest. It is the party of law and order, of the old customs, the old methods and traditions respective of the pros and cons of all these values. The People's Party is probably not going to achieve much, but it is also not going to destroy. It is not going to practice great policies, but it is also not going to pay the price of such great policies" (*Kathimerini* 22 June 1932).

The ideological device of "Motherland-Religion-family" was quite shallow and could not easily stand on itself. It needed an ideological scapegoat in order to become more effective in unifying all conservatives. That scapegoat was none other than communism. Anti-communism along with monarchism constructed the ideology of the right wing during the 1930's. In the Fokida region of 66.000 people, KKE managed to gather just an average of 100-150 votes in every election. Although KKE's power in Fokida was obviously insignificant, the People's party "*Fokis*", in its article "Social research-Our Youth and communism" claimed that:

"Communism is spreading fast in our region and has started poisoning many youngsters in the traditionally conservative Parnassida...This article calls everybody to unite and fight effectively the spread of communist ideas in our region...it is a matter of honour that communists should not increase even by one...not even one communist must be left in Parnassida" (*Fokis* 20 May 1934).

Communism represented everything that was evil and communists were considered as:

"Lazy scum, who's only objective is to grab other people's property and abolish today's social order by destroying religion, the church, the family and impose instead, polygamy and so many other evils" (*Fokis* 23 March 1934).

According to the “intellectuals” of “*Fokis-Amfissaiki*”,²¹ it was wrong to consider communism as the ideology of the indigent working class, simply because there was no such thing as an indigenous working class.

“Let’s examine the reasons for the so called working class misfortune and poverty. For any rational and objective person it is obvious that the working class is by no means underprivileged. Those who are indigent are themselves responsible for their poverty simply because they are spending more than what they should and thus they cannot support themselves and their families” (*Fokis-Amfissaiki* 5 June 1937)

Conservatism however was not just the monopoly of the People’s Party’s supporters in Fokida during the 1930’s. On many occasions, the attitudes of the supposedly progressive and liberal Venizelists were even more conservative than the attitudes of their reactionary opponents. Although the discord among the two factions was deep, it seems that the “Holy Trinity” of Motherland, Religion and Family were common values. The Venizelist newspaper “*Amfissaiki*” protests strongly because:

“In the Amfissa high-school students gave a theatrical performance which had nothing to do with patriotism...because patriotic morale is low anything that is irrelevant with patriotism must be abolished in our schools” (*Amfissaiki* 16 March 1933).

As far as religion was concerned, the newspaper indicated that:

“While the churches are vacant from believers, coffee shops and taverns are full and that is something that leads to a complete disintegration of our religion and family values” (*Amfissaiki* 20 October 1932).

Finally, the fact that the newspaper considered “the sight of young women smoking cigarettes in front of the public as a sign of deep moral decay” (*Amfissaiki* 16 February

²¹ After the establishment of the Metaxas regime, both newspapers merged and issued the “*Fokis-Amfissaiki*”.

1934)²² is indicative about the attitudes concerning the family or the place of women in society among local Venizelists.

1.3.iii. The Unclear Rules of the Game: Antagonism, Patronage and Non-Institutional Politics.

Polarisation and the widespread use of non-institutional political patterns were the main features of political antagonism in Fokida during the 1930's. The Greek rural-agricultural class never managed to form a distinct political identity, or an independent and wide political faction that would represent and defend its own political and economic interests. Eventually, the bourgeois parties during the inter-war period managed to cover that political vacuum. Venizelist and anti-Venizelist parties managed to engage the farmers in their dispute over the constitutional issue, an issue that was in fact a purely intra-bourgeois conflict and had nothing really to do with the interests of the rural classes.

As in the whole of Greece during the 1930's, politics in Fokida were polarised around the issue of the monarchy. Although the anti-Venizelist, royalist, right-wing faction was dominant, there was a considerable number of Venizelists in the region. The degree of polarisation and discord between the two camps was clearly illustrated in the pages of Venizelist newspaper "*Amfissaiki*" and People's Party-inclined "*Fokis*"²³ The antagonism between the two papers was demagogic, while the lack of rational

²² On the other hand the newspaper of the People's party "*Fokis*" constantly misspells the word "Feminism" (e.g. *Fokis* 23 March 1934).

²³ The proportion of power between the two camps is also obvious in the size of both newspapers since Peoples party "*Fokis*" was twice the size and the number of pages than Venizelist "*Amfissaiki*".

argumentation and the ideological clarity was obvious. Rhetoric and vocabulary were pompous, while both papers were full of spelling mistakes and bad use of language. Although “*Fokis*” wrote that “The press should be above party interests and never add fuel to the fire, but should only serve social order and the prosperity of all citizens” (*Fokis* 26 August 1934), it characterised Venizelists as “indecent criminals and tyrants”, (*Fokis* 14 March 1933). A similar rhetoric was adopted by “*Amfissaiki*”. The libels from both sides often resulted in legal action and members of the two camps confronted each other in court (*Amfissaiki* 1 April 1934), while during the pre-electoral periods violent clashes among Venizelists and anti-Venizelists were quite usual (*Amfissaiki* 31 August 1933).

The second major characteristic of political antagonism in Fokida during the 1930’s was the lack of legal status in the conduct of the political game. Political antagonism was usually conducted outside a legitimate, institutional framework. The most common pattern of antagonism adopted by all parties was informal clientalism, the “*rousfeti*”. The “*rousfeti*” was based on the patron-client system. Clients gave their votes to patrons on the condition that the later would carry out certain private services or benefits for them when elected. According to *Amfissaiki*, “The laws of supply and demand is fully applicable in elections” (*Amfissaiki* 22 September 1932) and the vote, which is supposed to be an anonymous and impersonal act, was turned in to a commodity.

Poverty and informal clientalism were complementary to each other, since the larger the extent of poverty within a region, the larger the needs and the dependence of the clients on the local patrons. According to Meynaud:

“These people were so poor that in many cases a rousfeti was in fact the only way to survive. Since the vote was one of the scarce privileges society had given to them, it was quite logical for them to use it in the most profitable way” (Meynaud 1966: 43).

Fokida was one of the poorest regions nation-wide and consequently informal clientalism played a more dominant role in the local political antagonism. For many people in Fokida, political antagonism was in fact a struggle for survival since a possible failure of the patron to be elected could result in economic disaster for the voter.

For example, after the People’s Party won the 1933 elections and while only its own candidates were elected from the region, all Venizelists public servants were fired or transferred far away from Fokida in order to punish them for being Venizelists and to create new employment positions for the voters of the People’s Party. According to

Amfissaiki:

“The People’s Party regime continues its brilliant work with transfers. The customs directors of Itea and Galaxidi, the forester inspector of Galaxidi, telegraph operators Vakalis, Ypsilandis, Stefos and Rigos are transferred. Their rage is also turned against Mr Karaliotis a well respected and hardworking public servant who has a health problem and who supports a whole family by himself. Mr Karaliotis is transferred to Palamara in Trikala and by that he is doomed to economic destruction.” (Amfissaiki 28 April 1933).

The dominance of the patron-client system in political antagonism during the pre-war era resulted in a personal attachment of the clients to their patrons and vice versa. The link between the two was personal, not political. Clients kept supporting their patrons even if they swapped parties –something that was quite usual during that time- as long as they fulfilled their promises. On the other hand, when the patron did not keep their part of the deal, clients abandoned him and started looking for another patron. Informal clientalism distorted and undermined the role of political beliefs and ideologies in the political process. According to Mavrogordatos:

“Political parties in particular, regardless of labels, programs and other paraphernalia of modernity, merely consist of unstable coalitions of patrons at the head of their respective clienteles...Moreover, [voters] respond to private inducements rather than policies, issues or group identification and interests” (Mavrogordatos, 1983: 12).

Politics were fundamentally non-ideological. Political coalitions were not built upon shared beliefs and collective demands, instead the core of political coalitions was the patron and the possible benefits that the clients could get from him. That had a serious effect on the people’s understanding of politics. The institutional aspect of politics was almost eliminated, while the importance of leaders and patrons was overemphasised in people’s perceptions. Although the whole pre-war political establishment collapsed from the very first day of the occupation, that interpersonal and self-interested attitude over politics was preserved and was to become an important agent in the membership of the 5/42 regiment. Many were those who joined the regiment not due to political and ideological motives, but who were motivated by their personal needs or their interpersonal relationship with the 5/42 pioneers.²⁴

Conclusion

If it is assumed that patriotism and the urge to fight the invaders were the only agents and motives upon which the 5/42 regiment of evzones was formed, then probably it would not be necessary to include in this thesis an overview of the pre-war economic and political condition of Fokida’s community. Nevertheless, the emergence of the 5/42

²⁴ For more details, see ch 2.3.i, p 111.

like all other national resistance bands nation-wide was determined by several local peculiarities and factors which have to do less with patriotism and more with geography, economic conditions and political culture. The formation of the 5/42 and the course that it followed throughout its existence was influenced by all these local peculiarities.

The Fokida community was settled on high and impassable mountains. It was a rather classless community sunk in poverty. It was a conservative community attached to tradition, while political antagonism in it was not caused due to political or class related disputes, but due to personal conflicts and alliances. All these factors were to shape the 5/42. As will be highlighted in the following chapter, Fokida's mountainous terrain facilitated resistance activities and played a decisive role in the development of the regiment.²⁵ Furthermore, the widespread poverty during the pre-war decade was also a major agent that affected the regiment's leadership and membership. The young officers who later on became the regiment's pioneers and played leading roles were in some way products of that poverty since due to the lack of career opportunities in the region these young men pursued careers in the military.²⁶

The pre-war political culture of the local community had also a major influence in shaping the 5/42's political and ideological identity. Fokida was a community dominated by conservative, right wing ideologies and values. Although war and occupation brought the collapse of the pre-war political establishment, it did not also bring the collapse of the local pre-war political culture. Several aspects of the community's political identity and several political attitudes and ideologies that were dominant during peacetime managed to survive and remain popular during the occupation. The 5/42 was a resistance band with

²⁵ For more details see ch 2.1, p 62.

²⁶ For more details see ch 2.2.i, p 68.

a clear local identity and therefore, its political orientation was inevitably bound with the local community's pre-war political culture. Although the regiment was formed on an entirely non-political basis and although it was officially a resistance organisation that served no political objectives, the regiment's men maintained their pre-war personal political beliefs and gradually, they developed a collective political identity similar to the political ideologies that were dominant throughout the community during the pre-war decade.²⁷

²⁷ For more details see ch 2.3.iii, p 120.

CHAPTER 2

Towards the formation of the 5/42

Since the early days of the occupation, Colonel Dimitrios Psarros and a group of low-rank officers from Fokida took a series of initiatives towards the formation of a national resistance band in the Fokida area. Eventually their joint efforts resulted in the formation of the 5/42 regiment of evzones²⁸ in the spring of 1943.

The objective of the micro-level analysis in this chapter is to focus upon the leaders and members of the 5/42 regiment of evzones. This chapter will highlight the backgrounds of the 5/42 pioneers. It will discuss the motives, actions and ambitions that led the local officers, Colonel Psarros and their followers to join the resistance. This is important because the ambitions of the 5/42 pioneers and the decisions that they took during this early stage had a serious long-term effect on the regiment's growth. These decisions influenced the regiment's membership, its political and ideological identity, its strategy and in many ways sealed the regiment's fate.

The chapter will begin by providing an overview of the impact that the occupation had upon the local community and of the circumstances that motivated many local

²⁸ Before the outbreak of the war, the 5/42 regiment of evzones, or "the 5/42" as it was called by the locals, was a regular regiment of the Greek infantry based in Roumeli. For the reasons that Psarros gave his guerrilla band the same title see ch 2.3.ii, p 116.

officers to take resistance initiatives. The purpose is, firstly, to highlight the reasons that made the formation of resistance activity in the area possible and, secondly, to stress the reasons that made the local officers pioneers of such activity. The widespread frustration caused by the economic devastation, the stifling reign of the German and Italian oppression, the fact that morale was preserved on the population's behalf, and of course the mountainous terrain formed the ideal conditions for the emergence of resistance activity in the area. As far as the local officers were concerned, the severe hardships and persecutions that they faced soon after they returned to their homes from the Albanian and Macedonian fronts, combined with the sense of national duty that many of them maintained led them to take the lead in co-ordinating such activity.

Later, the chapter will focus on the 5/42's leader, Colonel Dimitrios Psarros, and his early activities towards the formation of resistance groups. Firstly, the motives that led Psarros to undertake a leading role within the resistance will be discussed, and then Psarros' activities will be presented in chronological order, starting with his premature resistance attempt in Macedonia. That aspect of Psarros' activity remains overlooked in the current literature, nevertheless the bitter lesson that Psarros learned in Macedonia had a serious impact upon the strategies that he adopted later on towards the formation of his second resistance endeavour, the 5/42 regiment. Further in this chapter, the political resistance organisation EKKA, formed by Psarros and other political officials will be highlighted. EKKA was to become the 5/42 regiment's political branch and this chapter will focus upon its political objectives and ideology. Moreover this chapter will give some explanation about the deeper reasons behind two major strategic mistakes that Psarros made during the period that he was preparing the 5/42's formation. The first was

his considerable delay in forming the regiment, while the second was his absence from the sabotage on the Gorgopotamos bridge. It is very important to understand the causes of these two mistakes because they both had tremendously negative effects on the regiment's development and expansion.

The final section of the chapter will focus upon the 5/42's men and upon the regiment's political and ideological orientation during its early life. Firstly, some of the motives that led many individuals to join the 5/42 will be highlighted. This is important in order to understand that participation in the regiment was not only due to patriotism or due to the urge to fight the invader, but it was also due to a series of personal motives that were rather irrelevant to the ideals of national resistance. Secondly, the regiment's official political and ideological line will be highlighted and this will be compared against the political attitudes that were widespread among the regiment's men. Colonel Psarros and the local officers had an equally important role in shaping and defining the regiment's political identity. Although Colonel Psarros was the one who defined the official political line of the 5/42, the local officers and their men maintained several political attitudes that were beyond the official line.

A number of personal testimonies by protagonists, as well as by less influential people have been used in this chapter. These were collected from primary unpublished sources (e.g. personal reports), interviews and the literature. Most of these sources however, have been produced not during the period that this chapter is concerned with, but subsequently. The reason for that is that during that period, the 5/42 had not yet been formed, consequently there was not any means by which to produce documents such as orders, proclamations, newspapers etc.

2.1. The Early Months of the Occupation in Fokida: Building the Pillars of National Resistance.

For the Fokida region, the “long night” of the occupation began officially with the capture of Amfissa on 29 May 1941 (Karavartogianos, 1988). Although the Germans were the first to enter the region, they handed command over to the Italian forces which were responsible for the administration of central Greece (of which Fokida was a part). Large Italian garrison headquarters were established in all major towns of the region (Amfissa, Lidoriki, Galaxidi and Itea).

Since the first day of the occupation, a series of restrictive measures were imposed. Those measures included the requisition of buildings and means of transport, the surrender of all arms -even hunting rifles and antiques, the forbidding of traffic after 18:00, the forbiddance of travelling without written permission, the blocking of radio transmitters, even the change of street names which disturbed the Italian command (*Galaxidi*, 22 April 1950). Despite all the restrictive measures however, little by little disobedience started growing and a series of resistance activities were soon manifested. Many weapons were not delivered to the Italians, but instead were hidden. People unblocked the radios and kept listening to the BBC broadcasts (Skiadas, 1999: 217), while others assisted the escape of many British soldiers who had not caught up with the retreat of the British corps and were hiding in the region (Koutsoklenis, manuscript memoirs). Nevertheless, despite the stifling reign of oppression, the first days of the occupation passed in tranquillity.

During the winter of 1941-42, “the winter of the great famine”, however, the climate started to change. During that winter approximately 100-150.000 people starved

to death nation-wide, most of them in Athens and the other big cities (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.1: 47, Magriotis, 1949: 75-80). The main reasons for this tragedy were the confiscation of production and national wealth by the occupation forces, the separation of the country in three occupation zones, the allied blockade of the sea routes, the uncontrollable rise of inflation, profiteering and the black market etc (Kazamias, 1990: 47-49). In occupied Fokida the situation was tragic and it had dramatic consequences upon the local population. Even in times of peace, the economic condition of the vast majority of the local people was very bad, but during the occupation the situation became really hopeless (Kolovos, 1995: 184). As a mountainous and infertile region, Fokida was highly dependent on imports of food from other areas. Due to the restrictive measures that the occupiers had imposed, trade and generally the circulation of goods in and out of Fokida had become very difficult. Furthermore the Italians were confiscating large quantities of food, while sometimes they literally pillaged farmers during raids. An additional plague was the bands of rustlers and bandits who made their appearance throughout the region.

The occupation was an economic blow for the whole of the local community and led all local social and economic groups in Fokida to a state of complete poverty. The pre-war social stratification system collapsed. Poverty had become universal within the community and even the minor economic inequalities that existed in the community before the war had almost vanished. Due to the uncontrollable rise of inflation, the first group that was devastated was that of the civil servants and wage earners and generally all those people who supported themselves by their wage exclusively and who had no other source of income or considerable property. By the end of the occupation the price

of food rose by 50.000%, while wages just rose by 2.000% and the average monthly wage was enough for the purchase of just 10 Kg of bread (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.1: 58). The real value of all wage earners income had come to nothing. For example the smallest bank note during the occupation was 100.000.000.000 drachma, and while the pre-war price of an egg was 3 drachma, in October 1944 it had reached 700.000.000.000 drachma (Magriotis, 1949: 61). Along with wage earners, all traders and businessmen who traded anything other than food (e.g. mechanics, printers, tailors etc) were also devastated. The only thing that these people –the local “bourgeoisie class” of the past- could do to survive was to sell their property at knockdown prices on the black market for some food. By that way many houses, large pieces of land, expensive jewellery etc changed hands for a sack of wheat or a canister of oil (A. Mamarelis interview 3 December 1999, N. Mamareli interview 19 May 2000, Stathopoulos interview 8 January 2000, I.Kokoris interview 16 August 2000).

The commodity that was the most scarce, the most necessary and the most valuable during the occupation was food. Thus farmers became the new “bourgeoisie class” of the occupation. In reality of course, the condition of the farming peasantry was very bad, but at least they had easier access to food and for them survival was easier than for the non-farmers, or for the people who lived in the cities. Before the war, the mountainous peasantry was the poorest group of the local community, while the economic condition of the peasantry in the valleys was better. During the occupation however, the condition of the peasantry in the mountainous villages was in many respects better than the one of the peasantry in the valleys. This fact played an important role in the development of the resistance movement in Fokida later on. The main reason for that

was the presence of the occupying forces in the valleys and the larger towns of Fokida. Hence, although agricultural production in the valleys was better, the Italians managed to confiscate larger quantities since they had those areas under their control. Moreover, the circulation of goods in those areas was by far more difficult due to the restrictive measures that they had imposed. In the mountainous areas however, production might not have been good, but at least those areas could not be controlled effectively by the Italians, the circulation of goods there was more effective, while the quantities of food confiscated were fewer.

In many aspects, the climate in Fokida had become fruitful for the development of national resistance nucleuses. Since the winter of 1941-42 and as the occupation progressed, the conditions were becoming increasingly harsh and survival for the locals was becoming extremely difficult. The Italians increased their aggression and adopted a more provocative attitude.

“Their daily practices included constant provocation, attacks with no reason against individuals, bullying weak and old people beating up and arresting people with no reason etc” (Kolovos, 1995: 184).

Respectively, the discontent and hate of the local population against them were growing day by day. Various minor acts of sabotage, such as the cutting of telephone wires or the destruction of bridge pillars started (Koutsoklenis, manuscript memoirs), while many individuals who were persecuted by the Italians or the gendarmery for various offences started forming small armed bands in the mountains for their self protection.

Furthermore, the landscape in Fokida was perfect for the development of guerrilla warfare. The isolated mountainous villages were ideal for the formation of resistance nucleuses. The non-existence of a road network in the region made transportation of

troops very difficult and the inaccessible high mountains of Fokida provided safety from the occupation forces. According to a Greek army's manual of guerrilla and unorthodox warfare

“Mountainous terrain, forests, the lack of road-network etc favour the development of guerrilla warfare since regular troops face great difficulties in persecuting and exterminating the enemy. In mountainous terrain, it is very easy for a small guerrilla band to occupy hills or other narrow parts and exterminate much larger forces. By that way the deficiencies of small guerrilla forces over mighty regular forces are neutralised.... Furthermore, air cover or the use of artillery in the mountains is not effective since there are many places which can remain unbattered by fire and the effectiveness of explosions is limited” (General Army Command, 1950: 3-4).

Apart from the frustration caused by the occupation and the ideal landscape, another important agent that made the development of resistance activity in Fokida attainable was the psychological preparation and readiness of the population. By virtue, the guerrilla struggle is always a struggle of a David against a Goliath. It is a kind of struggle where the psychological factor plays a by far more important role than logistics, military tactics or efficiency in arms and provisions etc. In many cases the psychological factor is the catalyst that equalises a small, unarmed guerrilla band with a large, fully armed, well-organised and trained regular army. In the case of Fokida as well as in the case of the whole of Greece during the occupation, the psychological condition that made many individuals receptive towards national resistance and urged them to undertake resistance activities was the enslaved winner's syndrome.

That syndrome was shaped under the influence of two events: the victories of the Greek army on the Albanian front, and the subsequent occupation. Victory and defeat caused mixed emotions. These contrasting emotions shaped the enslaved winners syndrome which was a mixture of bitterness, rage and pride. Bitterness came from the

final outcome of a victorious war effort. Rage came from the fact that the country was occupied not just by the Germans -who were indeed victorious in the battlefield – but also by the Italians, which the Greek army had defeated, as well as by the Bulgarians:

“The cowardly and treacherous Bulgarian hyena that did not even dare to fight us and that was hiding in the dark waiting for the German tiger to throw a bone at her” (Fleisher, 1995: 102).²⁹

Finally pride came from the fact that the Greek people lost with dignity after giving a brave fight against two mighty empires.

“It was a collapse that had a tragic magnificence. It was not a moral defeat that paralysed the will for action. Moreover it was not a submission. The peoples’ soul remained an impregnable fort and even before the wounds of Albania were healed the wild flags of national resistance were risen.” (Papandreou, 1988: 17).

The fact that Fokida was within the Italian occupation zone made the effects of the syndrome stronger. When for example the Italian headquarters issued an order forcing all pedestrians who passed outside the headquarters to salute the Italian flag, “everybody stopped passing from that road since they considered it humiliating to salute a symbol that they had humiliated so much” (Staurogianopoulos, 1974: 20, “*Galaxidi*” 22 April 1950). The enslaved winner’s syndrome is obvious in the memoirs and testimonies of all the people who manned the 5/42 later on. According to Georgios Koutsoklenis:

“The belief that we were the winners gave us courage and inspired us with that fascinating thirst for revenge” (Koutsoklenis, manuscript memoirs).

According to Ioannis Dedousis:

“For the first time in his life Thymios [his brother] was so bitter. The occupation of his country after such a great struggle in which he gave everything was a torture for him. Optimism and faith though did not abandon him and he took the decision to fight” (I. Dedousis, 1949: 11-12).

²⁹ Taken from a brochure issued by the PEAN “Panelinios Enosi Agonizomenon Neon” (Panhellenic League of Fighting Youth) resistance group In July 1943.

The syndrome helped in overcoming the fears and doubts about the prospect of national resistance. In other words it rationalised national resistance, a goal which at first sight seemed impossible to achieve.

The pillars upon which national resistance in Fokida could be formed were ready. The terrain was ideal, the people were suffering and needed to find ways to survive, the occupants were arrogant, oppression was stifling and morale had survived. What was missing –but not for very long- were the people who would take initiatives and lead.

2.2. The Pioneers of the 5/42.

2.2.i. The Local Officers.

The people who led the resistance struggle in Fokida and who became the pioneers of the 5/42 were the region's local military officers. The reasons that led these men to undertake resistance initiatives have equally to do with the officer's destiny in times of war and occupation as well as with the specific economic and political conditions that prevailed in Fokida before and during the occupation.

The local officers were too many in number. During the early days of the occupation, there were approximately 200-250 local officers scattered all around the region.³⁰ According to the 1939 army annual list, the total number of officers in service in the Greek army during that time was 4.500 men (Gerozisis, 1996, vol.2: 527). That

³⁰ The estimation about the number of the local officer is based on a) post-war written requests for the awarding of medals and national resistance pensions that many veteran officers of the 5/42 submitted to the Ministry of Defence (e.g. DIS/GES F/929), b) name catalogues of 5/42 officers taken by memoirs and books (e.g. Koutras, 1981: 63), c) interviews, (e.g. Kaimaras, 11 May 2000, Protopapas 14 January 2000)

means that almost one in every twenty officers of the Greek army came from Fokida, a quite high proportion for such a small region with a small population. The fact that Fokida had such a large number of officers was directly connected with the pre-war economic, social and political conditions that were dominant in the region. During the pre-war period, the vast majority of the local population lived in poverty.³¹ One of the very few ways for young people to escape that poverty and improve their standards of living was either to emigrate, or pursue a career in the army and the other forces (police, gendarmery, fire brigade etc).

Especially for the young men in the mountainous villages of Fokida, where the economic conditions were really bad and the chances for economic improvement within the village were negligible, a career in the army was truly a lifetime opportunity to escape not only poverty, but also agricultural hardship. Giorgos Kaimaras, one of the pioneers of the 5/42 writes:

”The hardness and the difficulties that I faced during my childhood motivated me to become the best student in my class and reinforced my dream and ambition to leave my village and one day become a distinguished officer” (Kaimaras, 1994: 13).

A career in the military offered not only occupational permanency and a stable income, but also social status “because then, the patriotic morale of the people was high, Greek youth was full of ideals and becoming an officer was something very honourable” (Kaimaras, 1994: 13). In Fokida where the non-agricultural occupations were very scarce, the officer’s status was even higher than in other more industrialised areas with a larger variety of occupations.

³¹ See ch 1.2, p 33.

However the fact that many young men in Fokida followed military careers had also to do with political causes. Due to the extended persecutions against all Venizelist officers during the 1930's, more than 4.500 officers were discharged or forced to resign.³² These persecutions created a personnel vacuum in the military and a great need for new officers to man the Greek army. Moreover, the People's Party government, the King and Metaxas wanted to have the military under their complete control and consequently, throughout the 1930's thousands of pro-royalist officers were recruited mainly through informal clientalist networks. Fokida was a conservative pro-People's Party stronghold and consequently the local People's Party informal clientalist network was favoured by that political occurrence. Many local young men managed to enter the armed forces and almost in every village throughout Fokida there was at least one or two officers. In Klima for example, a village of 205 people with 102 men (Ministry of National Economy, 1940 census), there were 6 officers (DIS/GES F/929/A/6).³³ Therefore, at the dawn of the occupation throughout the region there was a lot of "raw material", men that were capable to undertake resistance activity given time and chance.

During the occupation's early days, a sense of responsibility was developed among many young and enthusiastic officers. Many of them considered that their duty was not over after the surrender, but that they should form resistance nucleuses and continue the fight against the invaders. These officers considered themselves as the designated people for such a mission since "in times like these, the nation depends on its officers" (Kaimaras, interview, 18 December 2000). The experience of the Albanian front

³² See Gerolymatos "The role of Greek army officers in the resistance" in *Greece 1936-44 –International Historical Conference*, 1990: 290-301. That number includes the 1933 and 1935 discharged and generally all the officers that were discharged by the People's party government or the Metaxas regime throughout the 1930's.

was also a very important psychological motive that reinforced the determination and self-confidence of these officers to continue the fight against the invader and get a “rematch” (Protopapas, interview 6 May 2000). During those battles, the Greek army crushed the Italians which had the double manpower and which were by far better equipped and armed. The defeats of the Italian army made those officers to believe in themselves, abandon their hesitations and realise that the enemy was not unbeatable and that the continuing of the struggle was an attainable task that could lead to new victories.

The fact that local officers became receptive to the idea of undertaking resistance activity had also a lot to do with a series of difficulties that these men had to cope with when they returned to their homes after the collapse of the front. First of all the uncontrollable rates of inflation that daily increased made their wages literally worthless the next day they collected them (Protopapas, interview: 14 January 2000). The value of money was annihilated, people stopped using money for their purchases and trade had deteriorated to barter. Consequently, the condition of those officers, who had no other income or asset than their wage, was more than desperate. It was much worse than the condition of even the poorest peasants who had at least a small piece of land to cultivate and cover a few of their survival needs.

Their wage was useless, it had no exchange value and no one accepted to trade goods for money. Kaimaras writes:

“During the 1941-42 winter, my family suffered from lack of food, especially olive oil and my small brothers suffered from avitaminosis. I went to Amfissa to find a solution to that problem and I begged some old schoolmates of mine (Tsimbouris, Argyriou and others) to sell me a canister of olive oil. Unfortunately they refused. That was the attitude and the lack of solidarity among some people during that time” (Kaimaras, 1994: 43).

³³ DIS=“Dieuthinsi Istorias Stratou” Bureau of Army’s History. Special branch of the Greek General Army Command

Kaimaras' complaint is understandable, but what he probably had disregarded was the fact that since money had no actual value, by asking to buy a can of oil in cash, he was in fact asking to get one for free.

Furthermore, the return of those officers in their homes after the collapse of the front was a total economic disaster for them and their families. Before the war, those officers used to get transferred all the time and thus they usually lived alone, away from homes and they supported their families by sending them most of their wages.³⁴ When they returned home, they ceased being the family's providers and instead they became economic "liabilities". Their salary was worthless and thus the family budget was deprived from its major source of income. Moreover, they burdened the family budget with an extra person. Survival for themselves and their families became even more difficult than for other people and that was probably an additional reason which led these officers to the resistance since among other things the resistance struggle was also a struggle for survival.

Along with all those survival difficulties that the Fokida officers had to cope with, their condition became even more desperate after the Italians launched extended persecutions against them. As soon as the Italian forces settled in Fokida, they made lists of all the officers that came or lived in the region and monitored their activities discretely. For that purpose they had also recruited Greek collaborators, who were roaming all over the region with several pretexts (hunters, black- marketers, fugitives etc) and who were collecting information about possible cases of resistance activity among officers (Dedousis, 1949: 15, Koutras, 1981: 40-41, Kolovos, 1995: 186). When rumours about

the development of resistance groups grew, the Italians adopted more decisive tactics and started persecuting openly the local officers (DIS/F/929/A/1, DIS/F/929/A/6). They took members of the officers' families as hostages, they made a series of arrests, raids or arsons in officers' houses etc (Koutras, 1981: 40-41, Kaimaras, 1994: 44).³⁵ After those persecutions many officers became fugitives.

The earliest initiative towards the formation of national resistance bands in Fokida was taken by the artillery officer Captain Thymios Dedousis. After the collapse of the front, Dedousis returned to his village, Tritea of Parnassida, and almost immediately (August 1941) started making plans for the formation of an armed resistance band in his region. He made contacts with other veterans from Tritea and the nearby area, he hid and helped a group of stranded British soldiers to escape Greece, while in July a shepherd led him to a hideout where he discovered 52 rifles hidden by Greek soldiers during the army's retreat.³⁶ Dedousis however did not take the necessary precautions and soon his activities drew the attention of the Italians who began prosecuting him. He fled to Athens where he tried to contact other officers and political friends, but eventually in January 1942 he was arrested and imprisoned.³⁷

The most important and well organised of all the early resistance initiatives taken by local officers was that of EAS "*Ellinikos Apeleytherotikos Stratos*" (Greek Liberation Army). EAS was formed by the artillery officers Captain Athanasios Koutras and

³⁴ For example, Kaimaras' father was disabled and before the war he was the one who supported his parents and brothers. (Kaimaras, 1994: 12)

³⁵ The Italians raided Kaimaras' house and took his mother hostage in order to force him to appear every 15 days to the Italian headquarters, while later they arsoned Koutras' house as well

³⁶ See I. Dedousis, 1949: 11-15. Ioannis Dedousis was Thymios' brother and the references come from his book "Thymios Dedousis, Captain-Member of Parliament. The national martyr fighter" Athens 1949

³⁷ Dedousis stayed in prison for almost one and a half years suffering tremendous tortures. In May 1943 however he managed to escape and later on he joined the 5/42 regiment. Dedousis' later role sealed the regiment's fate (For more details about Dedousis see ch 3.3.ii, p 161).

Lieutenants Giorgos Kaimaras and Giorgos Douros in November 1941. The basis of the small group were the nearby villages of Parnassida: Penteoria, Vounichora and Agia Euthymia which were the birthplaces of the three officers respectively. All three knew each other before the war and after the collapse of the front, they decided to co-ordinate their efforts for the development of a guerrilla band “with an exclusive aim: the war against the invaders, with absolutely no other political objective” (Koutras, 1981: 3).³⁸ Soon the Italians discovered their plans and raided Koutras’ house, while later on they burned Kaimaras’ house as well. According to Kaimaras:

“From that point onwards, willing or not I had to go underground and I stopped sleeping in my house. The same happened to my colleagues Koutras and Douros with whom I was frequently in contact” (Kaimaras, 1994: 44).

In the spring of 1942, EAS formed its first armed band. The band was manned by nine ex veterans of the Albanian front from the nearby area and a local rustler. They were armed with the weapons that they kept during the Greek’s army retreat (Koutras, interview: 9 January 200, Koutroukis, interview: 22 April 2000). The band’s main duties at its early stage were the persecution of theft and rustlery and the maintaining of the local population’s morale. In December 18th 1942 EAS undertook its first battle against Italian troops in co-operation with an ELAS band. Seven guerrillas from EAS and eighteen from ELAS ambushed an Italian truck with 24 men in the Dovrouvista area. The Italians suffered 11 dead and 11 captured, who were executed the next day, while EAS suffered its first casualty, Dimitrios Bartziotas (Koutras, 1981: 38-39, DIS/GES F.929/B112-3).³⁹

³⁸ See also Kaimaras, 1979: 19).

³⁹ In addition to EAS, throughout the period between autumn 1941-spring 1943 where the 5/42 was eventually formed, a number of other local officers throughout Fokida probed the prospect of forming armed guerrilla bands in the region and started taking initiatives towards the formation of resistance

2.2.ii. Colonel Psarros.

2.2.ii.a. Low Self-esteem, High Expectations: Inside Psarros' Head.

The leader of the 5/42 regiment Colonel Dimitrios Psarros (1893-1944) was born in the Hrisso village of Parnassida. He started studying philosophy, but at the age of twenty he dropped out of his studies and volunteered in the Balkan Wars. In 1916, he graduated from the military academy and took part in the Macedonian front during the First World War, in the Ukrainian campaign (1919) –where he was wounded- and in the Asia Minor campaign (1919-1922). Throughout his career he was promoted twice for valour in the battlefield. He was an officer with a high level of theoretical education and academic qualification. He studied in the French military school, while later he became a professor in the Greek military academy. As a democratic officer, he participated in the 1935 Venizelist coup and after the coup's failure he was discharged from the army.⁴⁰ After 1935 and until the outbreak of the war, he settled in Macedonia where he was occupied with the olive oil trade (Koutras, 1981: 157, Kaimaras, 1979: 179, Papagianopoulos, 1981: 16).

In their study of the revolutionary leadership phenomenon, Rejai and Philips wrote:

“Some revolutionary leaders are driven by a compulsion to excel, to prove themselves, to overcompensate. This compulsion is most likely due to feelings of low self-esteem or inferiority complex. How this inferiority complex comes about

networks. Major Manaios, Captain Kokorelis, Major Kapentzonis and others started forming small and secret “struggle committees” in their villages and towns. These initiatives however were uncoordinated and they did not undertake combatant activity against the Italians. They were limited in collecting weapons and recruitment of members, while they joined the 5/42 much later after the regiment had already been formed. (For more details see Kaimaras, 1979: 25-7, DIS/F.929/A/1, DIS/F.929/A/6).

⁴⁰ See ch 1.3.i, p 44.

is a question that requires treatment on a case by case basis” (Rejai, and Philips, 1983: 54-55).

In Psarros’ case the emotional-psychological motives which reinforced his will to undertake a leading role in the national resistance were caused by two major traumatic experiences: his degradation in 1935 and his non-participation in the 1940-41 war. The effect of these two experiences over his self-esteem and self-perception was tremendous and devastating. Those blows resulted in an urgent psychological need to prove himself in order to restore his name and regain his dignity.

Psarros was one of the major participants in the Venizelist coup of 1935. Although his troops did not participate eventually in the coup’s clashes, after the suppression of the coup he was court-martialed and degraded along with 1.500 other officers who were also involved (Veremis, 1997: 213). After the court’s verdict was issued in 2 April 1935, the degraded officers were led to the Parapigmata square in Athens where they were publicly degraded. This was a totally humiliating procedure. In the square, large crowds of royalist mobs were gathered, and while the officer’s stripes and medals were removed from their uniforms the mobs were spitting, hitting calling them traitors, etc (*Eleutherotypia (Historica)* 2 March 2000 p22-25).

According to the military code and ethics, degradation is the ultimate humiliation. The degraded officer is considered incompetent to assimilate and adapt to *the esprit de corps* and the rest of the military ideals and virtues, something that almost equals treason against the motherland. The degradation experience, especially under those humiliating circumstances certainly was a major blow to Psarros’ self-perception and probably had overwhelming consequences on his self-esteem (Kaimaras, interview: 18 December 1999, Protopapas, interview: 6 May 2000). The declaration of the war in 1940 was

Psarros' once in a lifetime chance to prove himself by offering his services to the country during its most critical hours. Nevertheless, once more he faced disappointment since all of his three requests for returning in action, even as a simple soldier, were rejected by the Minister of Security Maniadakis (Kaimaras, interview: 18 December 1999). The fact that he was considered unworthy to participate in "Greece's finest hour" was the second and even more important traumatic experience (Kaimaras, interview: 18 December 1999, Protopapas, interview: 6 May 2000). The fact that the Greek army was giving victorious battles, while he was in stagnation was the *coup de grace* for his dignity and self-esteem.

All those successive blows to his ego probably caused him a stifling sense of unfairness and a deep urge to excel, to prove to everybody as well as himself that he did not deserve all this humiliation. National resistance was the chance that he had been waiting for in order to restore his name. Later on, while he was the commander of the 5/42, Psarros used to wear the same old army coat that he was wearing on the day of his public degradation and according to Protopapas he used to say:

"Some day, those who ripped my stripes of this very coat, they will stick them back on it" (Protopapas, interview: 6 May 2000).

With his resistance activity, he wanted to prove his devotion to the country and the officer's values. In a sense, national resistance was the "therapy" that he needed in order to wipe out his inferiority feelings and boost his self-esteem which had been so heavily damaged since 1935. His eagerness to fight the invader and dispel the ghosts that haunted him since 1935 were so great that he started his first resistance endeavour while the battle of Greece was still ongoing.

2.2.ii.b. The Bitter Macedonian Experience.

Psarros might have gone down in history as the commander of the 5/42 regiment, but in truth the 5/42 was his second resistance endeavour. His first attempt to form a resistance group was in Macedonia during the early days of the occupation. This aspect of Psarros' activity is almost totally ignored throughout the literature.⁴¹ Nevertheless, although that attempt lasted for only six months and it ended in a fiasco, there are serious indications that Psarros' Macedonian experience had a strong impact on his decision making and strategic planning which influenced the development of the 5/42 later on.

While the Greek army's retreat was not yet completed from the Albanian and Macedonian fronts, Psarros went to Amfissa. He contacted Major Konstantinos Lagouranis and his brother Sub-Lieutenant Ioannis Lagouranis in order to discuss the potential of forming immediately a guerrilla band in Fokida, manned by a platoon which managed to reach Amfissa straight from the front, fully armed and under the command of reserve Lieutenant Andreas Mitalas. However that ambitious plan failed since in the meantime, the platoon's men had defected. Then it was decided that the Lagouranis brothers would stay in the area in order to form a new band, collect and hide arms, recruit volunteers, collect information and store supplies, while Psarros and Mitalas would go to Athens and try to establish a link with the Middle East headquarters for the support of their band (Mitalas report).⁴²

Instead of following the plan however, Psarros went immediately to Macedonia and in late May 1941 he founded the *Eleutheria* (Freedom) organisation, in co-operation

⁴¹ For example Papagianopoulos (Papagianopoulos, 1981: 17) mentions Psarros' attempt in Macedonia in a single page, while Koutras (Koutras, 1981: 157) and Kaimaras (Kaimaras, 1979: 179) just mention Psarros' attempt in a single small paragraph.

with KKE's Macedonian branch and along with a number of other non-political officers and civilians. According to Papagianopoulos, Psarros' rather utopian plan was:

“To form frontward guerrilla groups in Northern Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace and the Dodecanese... with the objective to re-animate Greece's rights in those ethnologically vital areas, which due to various causes had pulled down the blue and white flag. That should be the starting point of the struggle, with unity and consistency, without political intentions. Our ideal – the nation's interests, our religion – Greece” (Papagianopoulos, 1981: 17).

Psarros had told Papagianopoulos and Kaimaras that the reasons he wanted to concentrate his resistance efforts in Macedonia first, was the fact that he preferred to offer his help where there was a bigger need (Papagianopoulos, 1981: 17, Kaimaras, interview: 18 December 2000). The occupation of southern Greece just served the strategic interests of Germany. However, the Bulgarian occupation in Macedonia aimed at the permanent detachment of territories and therefore the Bulgarian occupation policy aimed at the ethnological and cultural “purification” of the region. Moreover, Psarros belonged to a generation of officers who had deeply believed in the *Megali idea*⁴³ and the liberation of the “unredeemed lands” and maybe some traits of that irredentism and Byzantine romanticism were still alive in him (Papagianopoulos, 1981: 6, Protopapas, interview: 6 May 2000).

In the summer of 1941, *Eleutheria* issued an underground newspaper and it organised two resistance bands of 60 to 150 men each, which attempted a series of small-scale sabotages. They disarmed gendarmery men, they distributed confiscated food and supplies, while on 22 September 1941 one of the bands ambushed a German truck where two German soldiers were killed and one was injured (Fleisher, 1995, vol.1: 225). Their

⁴² Andreas Mitalas' report (date unknown) was kindly given by Mr Stamatis Papathanasiou from his personal archive.

activity however resulted in heavy counter-measures by the Germans, who executed more than 400 men and burned all the villages that were considered as guerrillas' hideouts. Psarros then tried to expand guerrilla activity in Macedonia by contacting the YVE *Yperaspistai Voreiou Elladas* (Defenders of Northern Greece) organisation founded by Macedonian officers and of a right-wing orientation.⁴⁴ His aim was to merge the two organisations for the benefit of the resistance struggle in Macedonia, but both sides showed suspicion towards one another and the attempt failed.⁴⁵

During the last days of September 1941, a revolt led by the KKE-Macedonian branch with the participation of *Eleutheria's* communist wing ignited in the region of Drama. The revolt nevertheless was uncoordinated and resulted in bloodshed. Within a few days the Bulgarian forces executed more than 3.000 people (Kedros, 1983, vol.1: 121-125, Rodakis, interview: 21 April 2000). The failure of those resistance attempts terrified the local population which in many cases were turned against the guerrillas and gave them away to the occupation forces (Fleisher, 1995. Vol.1: 225). This bloodshed, along with the stifling oppressive measures imposed by the Bulgarians made the development of a resistance movement in the area almost impossible. Moreover KKE's attempt to put *Eleutheria* under its complete control, led Psarros to his decision to abandon any plans for the formation of a resistance movement in Macedonia. In autumn 1941, disguised as a priest (Kaimaras, interview: 18 December 2000) he returned to Athens persecuted by the Germans, the Bulgarians, as well as by the Macedonian communists.

⁴³ *Megali idea* was the Greek nationalist doctrine according to which the limits of the Greek nation-state ought to include all those Balkan areas where Greek populations lived.

⁴⁴ See Papathanasiou, 1997

Unfortunately, there is little evidence concerning Psarros' resistance activity in Macedonia. Nevertheless, some conclusions can be drawn if the dates that Psarros started his initiative in Macedonia are taken into consideration. As mentioned above, Psarros formed his first resistance organisation in Macedonia during mid May 1941,⁴⁶ while the occupation of Greece was not yet complete since the battle of Crete was still ongoing.⁴⁷ On the other hand EAM was formed in 27 September 1941, while EDES in 9 September 1941. This means that Psarros' "*Eleutheria*" was formed four and a half months before EAM and four months before EDES. More impressively however, Psarros formed his first guerrilla groups in June 1941, a whole year before Aris Velouchiotis -the symbol of the Greek national resistance and an undoubtedly brave fighter- formed his own guerrilla group (June 1942). According to Haritopoulos:

"Psarros has the honour to be the first high rank officer who undertook resistance activity from the first day of the occupation" (Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2: 266).

2.2.ii.c. The Founding of EKKA.

After the failure of his premature attempt in Macedonia, Psarros tried to organise his second resistance endeavour on a more solid basis. Therefore, from the moment he arrived in Athens and for the next eighteen months, he was consumed with a long series of meetings and contacts with influential resistance officials, politicians, agents of the allied military headquarters from Cairo and many old comrades, former Venizelists, degraded in 1935.

⁴⁵ See PSEAO "Panelinia Synomospondia Ethnikon Antistasiakon Organoseon" (Panhellenic Association of National Resistance Organisations), 2001: 135-164 , Fleisher,1995: 112-149

The experience of those officers in conspiratorial and underground activity allowed them to mobilise more quickly and effectively under the occupation and therefore set their resistance networks more rapidly.⁴⁸ Thus since January 1942, a series of contacts took place among the “pavement Colonels”⁴⁹ such as Sarafis, Zervas, Spaes, Papageorgiou and Euripides Bakirtzis - a man who had a big influence on Psarros.⁵⁰ The purpose of those contacts was to come up with a general plan for the development of guerrilla struggle in various areas of Greece. Throughout those meetings, Psarros received a series of proposals for co-operation from all resistance organisations, which during that time were being formed since “his fame and qualities were well known and all newly formed organisations wanted him as their military leader” (Gyftopoulos, 1990: 67). EAM officials assigned to Major Thymios Zoulas the task to approach Psarros and convince him to join EAM.⁵¹ Psarros was positive towards the political objectives of EAM and towards the prospect of co-ordinating efforts in the future, however, he refused to join EAM (Hatzis, 1983, vol.1: 278-280). Respectively, he refused to join EDES because, just like Bakirtzis, he did not fully trust Zervas (Pyromaglou, 1965: 146).

⁴⁶ “The meeting with Psarros was held in mid May (1941)... The foundation of the patriotic group *Eleutheria* was decided, as well as the issuing of a newspaper” (Hantzis, 1983, vol.1: 110) as quoted from KKE archives F.I - Vasvanas testimonies and documents.

⁴⁷ The battle of Crete ended in the last days of May 1941.

⁴⁸ See Gerolymatos “The role of Greek army officers in the resistance” in *Greece 1936-44 –International Historical Conference*, 1990: 291

⁴⁹ Papadopoulos, interview: 10 May 2000. The “pavement Colonels” was a sarcastic characterisation given to those officers, due to the large numbers of movements and coups in which they had participated.

⁵⁰ Bakirtzis was one of the most mysterious and contradictory personalities of the occupation. He as well was a Venizelist officer degraded in 1935 and he was known as “the Red Colonel” due to his leftist political sentiments and due to a rumour that he was a volunteer in the Spanish civil war. According to Woodhouse “Bakirtzis, in the first period of the occupation was an agent of the British secret services under the code name 333 and Promitheas I” (Woodhouse, 1976: 63). By mid April 1941, a while before the completion of the occupation, the British intelligence services had provided Bakirtzis with two radio transmitters and explosives, in order to maintain contact with occupied Greece and carry out any possible sabotages. Bakirtzis though did not show the necessary urge since his ambitions were much higher, and soon he was replaced by two other navy officers Koutsogianopoulos and Bardopoulos under the code name “Promitheas II”.

⁵¹ About Major Thymios Zoulas and his role see ch 3.1.v, p 143 and ch 6.1, p 246.

Bakirtzis and Psarros directed their efforts towards the formation of a third independent political organisation of their own.

EKKA "*Ethniki Kai Koinoniki Apeleutherosi*" (National and Social Liberation) was founded in November 1942. Its founding members were Psarros, Bakirtzis and lawyers Kapsalopoulos and Katavolos, its political leader was ex Parliamentarian and Minister Georgios Kartalis. Kartalis (1908-1957) came from a wealthy family from Volos with a long political tradition. Since 1850 his family had founded and controlled the "*Kartaliko*" party, a right wing anti-Venizelist party attached to the monarchy and since then his grandfather, father, uncle and finally himself were elected members of parliament. Kartalis was the typical member of the pre-war political elite. He was brought up within a cosmopolitan environment and had a high level of academic education. In 1935, at the age of 27, he became deputy Minister of National Economy and later that year Minister of Labour. However, when the Metaxas dictatorship was established, Kartalis made an anti-monarchist turn. He became a champion of parliamentary democracy and participated in a political committee against the Metaxas regime (Pyromaglou, 1965: 32-144, Strogylis, 1997: 67).

In the early days of the occupation, Kartalis at 33 was one of the youngest resistance officials, full of political ambitions. Kartalis' attitude towards national resistance was less sentimental and romantic and more realistic and pragmatic than was Psarros'. He wrote:

"A few months after the front collapsed, I considered that it was our national duty to organise a domestic resistance movement. I was completely against the defeatist, pseudo-moderate attitude that we should remain in stagnation against the enemy in order to avoid further hardships for our nation....Greece should not back down at that phase of the world war effort. After the end of the war, Greece should not be considered as absent from a war front....The law of history reconfirms the fact that

the ones who harvest the benefits of victory are not those who just fight a war with self-sacrifice and bravery, but those who endure and continue fighting until the end” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 144).

EKKA served both resistance and political objectives, but unlike EAM and EDES it made a clear distinction between the struggle for national liberation and the political struggle. According to Kartalis:

“For EKKA, the national liberating struggle must exclusively be directed towards damaging and driving out the occupants. Until liberation comes all political and ideological beliefs must remain silent and left aside. They must return in the agenda only when the last German will have left Greek soil” (Pyromaglou, 1988: 333).

EKKA’s national liberating plan was nothing else than the conduct of armed resistance struggle. The political part of its program however -which would be applied only after liberation- included many interesting aspects.

EKKA’s ideological orientation was shaped by Kartalis himself. Its program was radically socialist, while the group’s political objective was the establishment of a “*Laokratia*” (people’s republic) which would derive and be based upon the people’s verdict and the support of the trade unions. According to the group’s manifesto, published on 17 April 1943 in the first issue of EKKA’s newspaper “*Apeleutherosi*” (Liberation):

- “1) The basic economic and technical means of production (banks, large industries, means of transport, mines, exports, imports etc) will be socialised directly.
- 2) All large properties above a certain value will be confiscated. Maximum and minimum limits of ownership and income will be imposed and no one will be allowed to exceed those limits. All debts, private and public will be abolished.
- 3) All means of production will be conveyed to the social groups that operate those means of production. These social groups will be organised in trade unions and the state will only supervise these trade unions. By that way the means of production will stop being instruments of exploitation and will be conveyed to the people that should really own them. These means of production will not be brought under the state’s control, instead they will come under society’s control. The state will just

supervise and co-ordinate the application of the production's plan." (Pyromaglou, 1965: 147-149).⁵²

EKKA's political program also included measures such as social distribution of labour, support for trade unionism, protection of religious and political liberties, education and social insurance and finally the restoration of Greece "within the borders of its ethnic unity" (Pyromaglou, 1965: 147-149).

The radicalism of EKKA's manifesto was quite impressive, but those radical socialist views certainly did not match the backgrounds of an ex monarchist Minister such as Kartalis, a moderate democratic officer such as Psarros and the "number one agent of the intelligence service in Greece" such as Bakirtzis (Woodhouse, 1976: 63, PRO HS 5/534). That radicalism was rather an intentional political manoeuvre. For the people who joined the resistance, war and occupation buried once and for all not only the Metaxas regime but also the whole pre-war decayed political establishment. The vast majority of those people believed that after the war progressive, socialist regimes would be established based upon solid and socially just foundations. The tendency for radical change in post-war Greece was a widespread social demand and the resistance organisations realised that from the very beginning. EAM had already been established in public opinion as the most radical force within the resistance movement and therefore its competitive resistance organisations launched a "radicalism competition" (Rodakis, interview, 21 April 2000) in order to gain the wider possible support among the oppressed Greeks. EDES had also made its appearance with an anti-monarchist and socialist manifesto. With that radical manifesto Kartalis and the rest of EKKA officials

⁵² Pyromaglou was a very close friend of Kartalis. In 1965 he wrote his biography "Kartalis and his era 1934-57", while later on, Pyromaglou married Kartalis' daughter.

tried to cover the lost ground and put EKKA on the map of the Greek national resistance movement.

Kartalis had high hopes and expectations about the role that EKKA would play within the national resistance movement. He wanted to place EKKA in the middle of EAM and EDES and aimed to attract the centre, the people who were standing between EAM and EDES, the people who were frustrated by the involvement of politics in the national liberation struggle. He aimed to give EKKA the prestige of a moderate political force within the resistance movement which was giving priority to national unity rather than political dominance. That mission was certainly difficult and the policies that Kartalis adopted in achieving his objective were controversial and caused lots of criticism which is going to be discussed further in the thesis.⁵³

2.2.ii.d. “The Hesitant Revolutionary”: The Reasons Behind Psarros’ Reversal

Psarros’ first resistance attempt in Macedonia was almost a suicide mission. “*Eleutheria*” was formed hastily during the occupation’s very early days, it had major shortages of arms and funds, while its infrastructure and logistics (support network, political branch, contacts with the allies etc) were almost non-existent. On the contrary, Psarros spent almost one and a half years to form the 5/42 and when the regiment was eventually formed (March 1943) its logistical support was almost perfect. The 5/42 regiment was efficient in weapons and funds, it had the support of a political branch (EKKA) as well as of the allies. The obvious contradictions in the circumstances and

⁵³ See ch 3.3.i, p 156 and ch 4.1, p 179.

preconditions under which “*Eleutheria*” on the one hand and the 5/42 on the other were formed indicate that there was a complete shift on Psarros’ strategy.

Psarros’ series of contacts and meetings with other officers and resistance officials continued throughout the first months of 1942. Those contacts and meetings aimed at the co-ordination of efforts towards the formation of a resistance movement independent from EAM. In April 1942, a meeting was held in Athens with the participation of Zervas and Pyromaglou from EDES, Psarros, Bakirtzis and Kapsalopoulos from EKKA, Koutsogianopoulos and Bardopoulos from Promitheas II and a special SOE agent (Pyromaglou, 1965: 149-152).⁵⁴ According to the plan, Greece would be divided in four areas of command, where each officer would undertake the task to organise the resistance struggle in each area. It was decided that Psarros would undertake central and eastern Roumeli, Zervas and Pyromaglou would undertake Epirus and parts of Western Roumeli, Colonel Spaes, Eastern Thessaly and Colonel Papageorgiou Western Thessaly. Any plans for the development of resistance activity in Macedonia were not included in the general plan since Psarros assured the rest that “due to the existing conditions in Macedonia, the development of a resistance movement there would be impossible at least for the near future” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 150). Bakirtzis would have the general command of the project and would establish the general headquarters in Psarros’ area. According to the plan full-scale guerrilla warfare was to begin at mid August 1942 the latest, while on 10 September all officers would meet in Psarros’ area in order to update each other and co-ordinate their further actions.

However, that promising plan resulted in complete failure. Zervas was the only one to be in the mountains of Epirus almost in time, but nevertheless the formation of his

own combatant guerrilla group was delayed. Papageorgiou devoted himself to the Athenian branch of EDES and later on became a collaborationist, while Spaes was arrested by the Italians. However, neither Psarros nor Bakirtzis followed the plan. Later on in September 1942 and while it was obvious that the plan was not going well, Pyromaglou and Bardopoulos contacted Psarros and asked for his excuse about his delay.

“After we questioned and criticised Colonel Psarros for his delay, he answered that the delay was due to Bakirtzis’s departure to the Middle East and Ioannis Tsigantes’ arrival in Greece from Egypt” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 153).

Bakirtzis believed that the Soviet Union would play a major role in the Balkans. Therefore, he believed that the Greek resistance should not only seek the support of the British, but also of the Soviet Union. For that reason, Bakirtzis decided to go to Istanbul and contact the Soviet consulate there and if possible to go to Moscow in order to examine whether the Soviets were willing to help (Gregoriadis, vol,1: 203, Fleisher, vol,1:1995: 243, Gasparinatos, vol,1: 267, Margaris: 16). Bakirtzis urged Psarros not to take any initiative as long as he was away and wait for his return from Istanbul. Psarros who was highly influenced by Bakirtzis⁵⁵ agreed with his proposal as well as his instigation not to take any action.

Instead of going to Istanbul however, Bakirtzis fled to Cairo to meet British officials in person and request to be officially awarded the general command of the resistance struggle in Greece. Nevertheless, the British did not just refuse to award him General Commander of the Greek resistance, but instead they placed him under surveillance for almost a year (*Istoria gia sas*, July 1971, vol.1:118). Bakirtzis’ isolation by the British was a very mysterious case. Two documents found in the archives of the

⁵⁴ Pyromaglou who is the only source concerning this meeting does not specify who that special agent was.

Public Records Office in London shed some light on that case, but still they do not solve the mystery completely.

According to an Intelligence Service report sent to the SOE (Special Operations Executive)⁵⁶:

“Colonel Bakirtzis is one of our oldest collaborators in Greece and did good work for us” (PRO H5 5/534).⁵⁷

Nevertheless, there were doubts about Bakirtzis’ trustworthiness and serious concern over the purpose of his mission. Another report wrote:

“ 23rd September 1942 From: D/H1 31. To: D/H1 09. The arrival of Promitheas I [Bakirtzis’ code name] at Smyrna⁵⁸ seems to raise again an important issue: namely, to what extent it is our policy to assist the Greek Communists politically, in particular by facilitating their contacts with the Russians. This is a general question, the answer to which appears to be that it is neither in our interests (nor particularly the desire of the great majority of Greeks) nor should it be SOE policy to stimulate Greek Communism or have relations with Greek Communists other than of a purely “business” [i.e. military, operational] character. In the particular case in question Promitheas I [Bakirtzis] is of the extreme left, and according to our information has been disillusioned with the British for some time.... His mission is doubtless to enlist Russian sympathy and help for the Communists in Greece. This would be contrary to our own policy, and would further complicate our basic task of achieving a fuller measure of Greek unity” (PRO H5 5/534).

However, all that suspicion about Bakirtzis’ mission and intentions were dispelled when he contacted the British secret services in Cairo:

“13th November 1942. Dear Dixon...Colonel Bakirtzis did in fact come out of Greece shortly afterwards, but did not contact the Soviet authorities; instead he came straight to our people and made very constructive suggestions as to how subversive work in Greece could be rendered more effective. We understand that the Anglo-Greek committee in Cairo is considering these suggestions. The allegations that he was disgruntled have now been definitely proven wrong. The consensus of opinion in Mid East seems to be that although Colonel Bakirtzis holds leftist views, he cannot be classified as a communist” (PRO H5 5/534).

⁵⁵ According to a rumour, Bakirtzis and Psarros were freemasons and belonged to the same lodge in Salonika . See “Euripides Bakirtzis The mysterious Colonel” in *Istoria gia sas*, July 1971, vol,1: 119

⁵⁶ For more details about the SOE and the role that it played see ch 7, p 255

⁵⁷ See footnote 62, p 95.

⁵⁸ Bakirtzis went to Cairo via Smyrna

Although British suspicion over Bakirtzis seemed to have been dispelled, he was still kept under surveillance and eventually he could not contact Psarros who was waiting for guidance and information from him.

After exhaustive research in the PRO files, no document was found to indicate the exact reasons for the British reaction against Bakirtzis. Maybe the early British fears prevailed, or maybe Bakirtzis tried eventually to contact the Soviets and thus the British arrested him in order to avoid the creation of a Greek-Soviet link. According to Gregoriadis however, Major Ioannis Tsigantes personally denounced Bakirtzis as an KKE agent to the British and proposed his arrest in order to protect his own “Midas 614” mission in occupied Greece that was sent forth during those days (Gregoriadis, vol. 1: 204).

The “Midas 614” mission with Tsigantes in charge, was organised by the “Anglo-Greek committee”, a joint effort between the British secret services in Cairo and members of the Greek government in exile. Its objectives were the carrying out of a number of sabotages, and especially the blocking of the Corinthos isthmus and to co-ordinate all scattered non-EAMic resistance organisations (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol,1: 269-73, Gregoriadis, vol,1: 204.). Tsigantes and his men landed in Greece in August 1942 and since then he started a long series of meetings and contacts with large numbers of officials. Tsigantes, who was Psarros’ brother in law and a very close friend, persuaded him to postpone his plans for the formation of a resistance group in Roumeli. He urged him to wait until the completion of his meetings, and until the maximum support by the Middle East headquarters was achieved, something that would guarantee the success of his endeavour (Zaousis, 1987, vol,2: 121). Due to Tsigantes’ long series of

meetings and “academic” plans valuable time was wasted, while there was very little progress. The “Midas 614” mission failed completely to fulfil its objectives and eventually, in 14 January 1943 Tsigantes’ hideout was killed during a shooting with an Italian patrol.

Bakirtzis and Tsigantes were two people who influenced Psarros. Their recommendations to Psarros not to undertake any resistance initiative unless they gave him the “green light” were the main reasons that he delayed the formation of the 5/42. According to several views however, Psarros’ excessive caution towards the formation of his second resistance attempt had deeper causes. According to Gasparinatos:

“Psarros perceived guerrilla warfare under a military point of view and followed orthodox military strategies and methods. He would form his group only if he had ensured enough allied supplies, for the maintenance of a large and effective combatant force” (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.1: 268).

Moreover, according to Pyromaglou:

“Another reason [apart from Bakirtzis’ and Tsigantes’ suggestions] that played a major role in Psarros’ delay was the following. Contrary to Zervas who did not have even a Swiss army knife when he started the formation of his own band in Epirus, Psarros thought that he should have everything ready before he went up the mountains. According to my opinion, that is unacceptable for a Roumelian warlord such as Psarros. Guerrilla warfare has its own distinctive principles, but Psarros was thinking in military terms. He wanted to form his band only when he was certain that British planes would make drops of arms, clothes and provisions and he wanted to apply a large scale mobilisation plan in the Parnassos area in order to ensure enough men for his force” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 157-158).

Finally Zaousis writes:

“Psarros was the typical officer. He did not want to give his band the appearance of a bearded gang, but he wanted to form and command a disciplined unit” (Zaousis, 1987, vol,1: 122).

It is true that Psarros perceived the development of the 5/42 with a military mentality. He wanted to ensure first efficiency in weapons and money, recruitment of

experienced officers, collaboration with the allies etc. Only when he would have covered all those needs satisfactory would he form the 5/42 and begin the struggle. As a high ranking officer, he gave emphasis to strategy and planing and he took into serious consideration the long-term logistical needs of a guerrilla band. He was an officer with a notable theoretical, military knowledge, he had very good military-academic qualifications⁵⁹ and probably his theoretical expertise influenced his perception of guerrilla warfare. Nevertheless, guerrilla warfare is an unorthodox kind of warfare and its principles are totally different than those of conventional warfare. The comments of Gasparinatos, Pyromaglou and Zaousis are valid. All three of them however – especially Pyromaglou – did not see the whole picture. They seem to forget Psarros' first resistance endeavour in Macedonia. They forget that Psarros went up the mountains a whole year before Zervas and Velouchiotis did⁶⁰ and they forget that when Psarros formed "*Eleutheria*" in Macedonia, the prospects of success were almost nil. The difficulties that he had to deal with in Macedonia were by far more dramatic than those faced by Zervas' "who did not even have a Swiss army knife".

In Macedonia, Psarros was daring and fearless, almost thoughtless. On the other hand, towards the development of the 5/42, he made a clear and complete reversal towards more conservative strategies. He became excessively reserved, did not leave anything to chance and did not take any risks. In his second attempt, Psarros did not want to repeat the mistakes that he made in his first. Unfortunately there is no document or testimony coming straight from Psarros that would give a specific explanation about his shift of strategy, hence the causes are open to interpretation. The most likely reason for

⁵⁹ See ch 2.2.ii.a, p 75.

⁶⁰ See ch 2.2.ii.b, p 78.

his reservation towards the formation of the 5/42 must have been the Macedonian fiasco and its impact on Psarros. That fiasco made Psarros very cautious towards the formation of his second endeavour. He would go ahead only when the circumstances and preconditions would be positive and promising, so that there would be no chance for a second failure. According to Papathanasiou:

“From his experience [in Macedonia] he drew the conclusion that without strict planning, centralised command and logistical efficiency, guerrilla warfare was doomed to fail” (Papathanasiou, 2000: 27).

The one and a half years that he wasted in Athens with his time-consuming contacts with Bakirtzis, Tsigantes and the other resistance officials had the purpose to cover those needs in the most effective way.

Moreover, the extreme counter-measures by the Germans and the Bulgarians which followed “*Eleutheria's*” activities and the Drama revolt, must certainly have contributed to Psarros’ caution towards his second resistance attempt. He did not want such a disaster to be repeated and expose the people of Fokida, his homeland, to the revenge of the occupation forces. Thus he preferred to form the 5/42 only when he was sure that the combatant ability of the regiment would be efficient not only to undertake serious action against the enemy, but also protect the local population from their revenge, and avoid the repetition of similar massacres (Protopapas, interview, 14 January 2000).

Whatever the reasons behind Psarros’ reservation towards the formation of the 5/42, the time that he wasted had a tremendous effect on the regiment’s development and fate. In September 1942 - which was the final deadline by which Psarros should be on the mountains of Fokida according to the plan- the situation in the area was still fluid. On ELAS’ behalf there was only one small band of nine guerrillas under the command of

Nikiforos and Diamandis. If Psarros had formed his band during that time, the preconditions of the 5/42's development would be totally favourable since according to an old Greek saying "whoever gets in the mosque first becomes the muezzin". Throughout the area a number of small bands of bandits were scattered. These bands had every reason to prefer to follow Psarros who was well known throughout his region, than join ELAS which was an unknown organisation manned by "communist outcasts" (Koutsoklenis, interview: 18 May 2000). The 5/42 would assimilate all those local officers, bandits and guerrillas that EAM-ELAS eventually assimilated and the Fokida region would undisputedly be considered as an area controlled by the 5/42.

In April 1943 however, when Psarros finally formed the 5/42 regiment of evzones, the situation in Fokida was entirely different. The "muezzin" was EAM-ELAS. All those scattered bands of bandits had either joined ELAS or had been dissolved by ELAS. In every village there were EAM's committees and EAM's network had become strong. The Dimitriou-Diamandis Company of ELAS in Parnassida had already reached 200 men and 300 reserves. In Dorida there were 100 guerrillas and 100 reserves, while in the neighbouring areas (Lokrida, Ftiotida, Biotia, Naupactia) there were more than 600 guerrillas and 900 reserves (Pyromaglou, 1965: 159). ELAS had already won its laurels through a number of battles and Aris Velouchiotis' fame had already reached a legendary dimension. Moreover, Psarros was absent from the most important event of the occupation, the sabotage at the Gorgopotamos bridge.

2.2.ii.e. The Gorgopotamos Sabotage: Psarros Turns his Back on his Destiny.

Towards the end of the summer of 1942, the Middle East Allied Headquarters was preparing feverishly for the El Alamein offensive which was scheduled to be launched in October. An important part for the plan's success was the cutting of Rommel's army supply lines. One of the main supply lines used by the Germans in Northern Africa was the Salonica-Pireus-Crete-Tobrouk axis. In the Roumeli area, there were three large rail-bridges: Asopos, Papadia and Gorgopotamos upon that exact axis. The destruction of any of those three bridges would interrupt the Salonica-Tobrouk supply line for many weeks and possibly months (Myers, 1955: 15).

On 4 September 1942, the British Special Operations Executive (SOE)⁶¹ in Cairo notified "Promitheas II"⁶² for its operational objectives and asked whether a sabotage in one of those bridges was possible. "Promitheas II" replied that with the support of a small-specialised British commandos force and the necessary equipment, the operation would be possible. After "Promitheas II" gave the green light, SOE's staff in Cairo started making the necessary arrangements for such an operation. That operation under the code name "Harling" resulted in the successful sabotage of the Gorgopotamos bridge on the night of 25 November 1942 conducted by British commandos and joint ELAS and EDES forces. The sabotage in Gorgopotamos was not just the most important event of the occupation in Greece, but also one of the most important acts of sabotage in occupied Europe during World War II.

⁶¹ SOE was founded in July 1940 and its purpose was the co-ordination and support of subversive anti-axis activity in occupied Europe.

⁶² Since mid-April 1941 a few days before the whole of Greece was occupied, Bakirtzis along with the British Secret Services formed the "Promitheas I" espionage and sabotage organisation ("Promitheas I" was Bakirtzis' code name). In late 1941, either because Bakirtzis did not give the necessary attention to the organisation, or because he fell into disfavour with the British, he abandoned "Promitheas I". The

Psarros and his men had a serious involvement in the preparation of the Gorgopotamos mission, but eventually they did not actually participate in the sabotage. Due to a number of misunderstandings and serious mistakes, Psarros wasted a unique chance to become probably the most important figure of the resistance movement and alter completely the course of history. Certain aspects of Psarros' non-participation in the Gorgopotamos sabotage remain mysterious even after the current research. A series of new documents and testimonies⁶³ however shed some light on the reasons why Psarros became the great absentee of the Greek resistance's finest hour.

Psarros' involvement in the Gorgopotamos case started with Tsigantes' "Midas 614" mission. In addition to its political objectives,⁶⁴ Tsigantes' mission included the conduct of a series of sabotages such as the blocking of the Korinthos canal and the destruction of various bridges. One of these targets was the Karyes bridge that was also on the Salonica-Pireus axis (Papagianopoulos, 1981: 40-41). Tsigantes assigned to one of his officers Spyros Kotsis to make an inspection of the Karyes bridge. Kotsis did his inspection and gave his report to Tsigantes and Psarros. Dimitrios Gyftopoulos, member of the "Midas 614" mission writes:

"After studying Spyros' report about the security measures in Karyes bridge, Tsigantes and Psarros came to the conclusion that it would take the same number of men to sabotage the Gorgopotamos bridge, the destruction of which would bring a by far more serious blow to the enemy and would interrupt its communications for a longer period" (Gyftopoulos, 1990: 131-132).

organisation was reformed and was named "Promitheas II" with degraded navy officers Bardopoulos and Kondogianopoulos in charge. See Fleisher, 1995, vol,1: 239, Zaousis, 1987, vol,2: 70-71

⁶³The first of these documents is a report written by Andreas Mitalas, a man who played a key role in the events of Gorgopotamos, which I was persistently looking for throughout my research. The second is the text of an interesting and revealing, speech that C.M Woodhouse gave in Athens in April 9th 1987, while the third series of documents are a number of letters among C.M Woodhouse and Mr S Papathanasiou. All documents were kindly given to me by Mr. S.Papathanasiou from his personal archives.

⁶⁴ See ch 2.2.ii.e, p 102.

Psarros and Tsigantes came to that conclusion because before Kotsis' inspection, Psarros himself had already done a series of scoutings of all bridges of the Salonica-Pireus axis that were in Roumeli. Since August 1942, Psarros had assigned to some of his men the task to watch carefully and report to him any movement in the Karyes, Asopos, Papadia and Gorgopotamos bridges. Moreover, towards the end of July Psarros disguised as a shepherd did an inspection of his own in all three of the possible targets (Mitalas, report: 11, Papagianopoulos, 1981: 41). He gathered a lot of information about the bridges, he made maps, he watched the guard posts, he studied the terrain etc and he came to the conclusion that the Gorgopotamos bridge had the best potential for a successful sabotage (Marinos, 1994: 33).⁶⁵

According to Woodhouse:

"This event is very important and rather mysterious. Those three bridges (Asopos, Papadia and Gorgopotamos) were exactly the ones that were suggested to us as possible targets during our operational briefings in Cairo four months later. However, no one mentioned anything about Psarros' ground inspection" (Woodhouse, 9 April 1987).

Psarros was the one who did the ground inspection, a crucial part in any combat operation and he was the one who designated the target of the sabotage however, he did not participate in the sabotage. In order to solve that mystery, it is necessary to study carefully a series of events that took place almost simultaneously in Athens, Cairo and the mountains of Fokida.

While the "Harling" mission was being prepared in Cairo, Psarros was in Athens consumed in a series of meetings and contacts with various resistance officials, trying to achieve the maximum support for his regiment.⁶⁶ The only time that he visited

⁶⁵ Themis Marinos was also a member of the "Harling" mission)

⁶⁶ See ch 2.2.ii.d, p 86.

Fokida was in the summer of 1942 in order to do the ground scouting of the bridges and give orders to his local liaisons. Psarros' main liaison in the Fokida region was his trustworthy Sub-Lieutenant Andreas Mitalas, who's main task was to organise and co-ordinate the resistance in Fokida on Psarros' behalf. On 30 May 1942 Psarros notified Mitalas to receive four drops of weapons and ammunition for May, June, July and August (Mitalas, report: 5-11). The first scheduled drop was scattered in Ghiona and was taken by ELAS bands. The next two were cancelled, while the last one was not dropped in the designated area that Mitalas and his men were waiting, but on another drop zone controlled by ELAS (Mitalas, report: 12). The fact that the weapons were dropped on ELAS and not Psarros' men was due to a series of misunderstandings surrounding lawyer Alexandros Seferiadis, a man with a key role in the events.

According to Woodhouse:

"Seferiadis was recruited by SOE...he was the liaison between "Promitheas II" and the guerrillas of Ghiona and a well-known member of EAM" (Woodhouse, 9 April 1987).

Both the SOE and Psarros' men however, misinterpreted Seferiadis' role. Although Psarros' men knew that Seferiadis was a member of EAM, they considered him as the "man of the Middle East Allied Headquarters and they hoped to get weapons from him"(Woodhouse, 9 April 1987). In their thinking, it was beyond reason that the allies would drop weapons to the "communists" and not to them. SOE's drops in Ghiona were arranged exclusively by Seferiadis, and SOE in Cairo was not fully aware about the identity of the groups that the weapons were intended for. According to Woodhouse:

"The receivers' identity was not yet fully clear. We knew them as "the guerrillas of Ghiona" and we understood that they were under Seferiadis' orders. In reality they were ELAS and Aris Velouchiotis" (Woodhouse, 9 April 1987).

According to Themis Marinos, another member of the “Harling” mission:

“Seferiadis’ activities played a decisive role in favour of ELAS and in restraining the formation of Psarros’ group” (Marinos, 199: 30).

Seferiadis was a member of EAM and his objective was to support ELAS’ forces and not Psarros’ men. Consequently he directed the drops to drop-fields controlled by ELAS. During that period SOE’s information and intelligence about EAM-ELAS and KKE’s role in it were limited and vague.

“According to a brief information report dated 10 May 1942, EAM was a “Popular Front”. It included communists but according to the report it was not under their control. According to the same report, EAM was formed by former Venizelists with only a minor participation of communists” (Woodhouse, 9 April 1987).

SOE was not aware that the weapons were sent to “communist” hands and moreover it did not know that in Ghiona there was a second friendlier organisation that was under formation (Woodhouse, 9 April 1987). Obviously, Seferiadis who was an EAMite did not report anything about a competing guerrilla force in the area in order to safeguard the monopoly of the British support for EAM-ELAS. That also explains Kaimaras’ question why the British preferred to help “communists and generally suspicious people rather than Greek nationalists” (Kaimaras, 1979: 34).

Psarros and Mitalas however were not completely ignorant about the drops and that is proven by the fact, that although they did not know the correct drop zones or the correct recognition signals, they still knew the dates of the drops. This can be explained by the fact that in Athens, Psarros had some connection with “Promitheas II” and probably that is where he got his information about the drops. The drop zones, the co-ordinates and the recognition signals however were arranged by Seferiadis alone and that

is why Mitalas and his men were always in the wrong drop zones and did the wrong recognition signals. For example, concerning August's drop Mitalas wrote:

"The weapons were not dropped to us but to ELAS although during the same night I was waiting east of the 2311 hill, gave the recognition signals on time and the plane flew many times in circles exactly above us at a very low altitude" (Mitalas, report: 12).

In that specific case, Seferiadis could have easily altered the co-ordinates of the drop zone and the recognition signal. Hence when the pilot saw two signals he probably double-checked and threw the canisters upon the correct signal where Seferiadis was.

In the meantime everything was ready in Cairo for the "Harling" mission. The mission's commanding officer was Colonel Eddie Myers, while second in command was Major Chris 'Monty' Woodhouse. "Promitheas II" had already sent the details of the drop zone (Prophitis Elias hill in Ghiona) and the recognition signals that should be on the ground (cross of fires). The twelve members of the mission would be divided in three different planes. It was agreed that Seferiadis would be waiting for them at the drop zone. The drop was arranged for the night of 28 to 29 September 1942. Everything was in order, but a few days before the drop something unexpected happened. The Italians arrested Seferiadis, the only person in Fokida who knew what the planes would be carrying as well as the mission's objective. The parachuters were going to be dropped in blind.

Apart from Seferiadis, Mitalas also knew that there was going to be a drop in the same night. During that time, among Psarros' men in Fokida morale was low due to the continuous unsuccessful drops. Mitalas wrote in his report:

"The disappointment of our guerrillas and followers, was so big that towards the end of September, when new drop notifications arrived from Athens,⁶⁷ none of the

⁶⁷ That drop was the "Harling" mission

officers wanted to take part in the mission of preparing the recognition signals and waiting for the planes. I was forced to personally undertake that mission as well, accompanied by 20 armed men, although I suffered from high fever due to malaria” (Mitalas, report: 12).

On the night of September 30th, Mitalas was waiting for a drop of weapons and ammunition. Neither he nor Psarros were aware that out of those planes the members of the "Harling" mission would be parachuted and certainly they did not know the mission's objective. That ignorance is also obvious in Mitalas' report where he wrote:

“...the plane's cargo was dropped at the spot where I was waiting. It was accompanied by four English officers, one of which was Major Chris Woodhouse” (Mitalas, report: 12).

Mitalas' meeting with Woodhouse was completely accidental and that is also proven by the fact that Mitalas and his men built three fires which formed a triangle, while the correct sign was fires forming a cross. Moreover, Mitalas was completely unaware about Woodhouse's mission since he thought that his purpose was to accompany the plane's cargo.⁶⁸

Consequently, the mystery covering Psarros' involvement in the Gorgopotamos operation can be divided in two major parts: a) why did Psarros not participate in the sabotage, while he had executed a very important part of the operation such as the ground scouting, and why was he not aware of the impending sabotage? And b) since, even by chance half of the “Harling” mission was received by Psarros' men, why did not he take any part in the Gorgopotamos sabotage subsequently?

⁶⁸ See Myers, 1955: 26. The plane's pilot carrying Woodhouse and his team did not see any of the correct recognition signals, therefore it was decided to drop the parachuters anywhere that there were signs of life. The second plane with Myers in charge was dropped near a shepherd's fire and the group joined Karalivanos bandit and his men (Karalivanos later on joined ELAS). The third plane did not execute the drop and it returned in Cairo.

As far as the first question is concerned, Seferiadis and the misunderstanding about his role by SOE as well as Psarros' men played a major part. Seferiadis, however, was the tip of the iceberg. First of all it must become clear that in the case of the Gorgopotamos sabotage two networks were involved. The first network was Secret Intelligence Service (SIS)-Anglo/Greek committee-Tsigantes-Psarros-Mitalas, while the second was SOE-Promitheas II-Seferiadis-EAM-ELAS local bands. Although both networks were established by British Services and apparently they served the same objectives, the two networks operated independently from each other and in many cases they competed against each other. According to Woodhouse:

“SOE was a completely different bureau than SIS. All those who consider SOE officers as agents of the SIS as well, delude themselves” (Woodhouse, 9 April 1987).

The hostility between Mitalas and Seferiadis reflected a wider and deeper antagonism between the British Secret Services. According to Themis Marinou:

“There were excessive secrecy measures between SOE and SIS and both services competed with each other” (Marinou, 1994: 36).

SOE's perspective on the war was military, while SIS' was political. That was something obvious throughout the war. In the Gorgopotamos case, SOE was exclusively interested in the destruction of the bridge. Thus, it was available to co-operate with anyone who could be useful for that task. On the other hand, SIS and the Anglo-Greek committee had long-term political plans for Greece and they were far more suspicious towards EAM-ELAS and anyone who was believed to be under its influence.

SOE and SIS might have been antagonistic towards each other, but Tsigantes and “Promitheas II” were in open conflict. Tsigantes believed that “Promitheas II” was under EAM's control and on 16 September 1942 he sent a message to Cairo demanding from

the British, to cease any co-operation with “Promitheas II” (Woodhouse, 9 April 1987).

While the “Harling” mission was being prepared, the dispute between SOE and SIS and their networks intensified. According to Woodhouse, throughout the period that the “Harling” mission was being prepared in Cairo:

“A number of complaints came from and to Athens as well as among the various bureau’s in Cairo. People who had nothing to do with “Harling” made these complaints and their purpose was to pause it.... Things became even more tense when Tsigantes went to Greece” (Woodhouse, 9 April 1987).

Both networks included ambitious people who craved for leading roles in the national resistance and were suspicious and hostile towards each other. According to Woodhouse’s comment:

“The Greeks who were in the Middle East had two things in common: limited knowledge about the situation of the resistance in occupied Greece and low appreciation for each other” (Woodhouse, 9 April 1987).

The “Harling” mission was planned by the SOE-“Promitheas II”-Seferiadis network, while Psarros and Mitalas were attached to the SIS-Tsigantes network. This explains Psarros’ and Mitalas’ ignorance about the “Harling” mission and it answers the first part of the mysteries covering Psarros’ non-participation in the sabotage.

The intrigues between the British secret services and resistance officials and a whole series of misunderstandings excluded Psarros from the planning of the Gorgopotamos sabotage. Luck however was unexpectedly kind on Psarros and sent half of the “Harling” mission into Mitalas’ hands, like “*deus ex machina*”. Nevertheless, in the history of the most important event of the occupation, Psarros remained the great absentee. In this second case, responsibility rests entirely on Psarros and his men.

When Woodhouse and his team fell in Mitalas’ hands, Mitalas was not only surprised, but also disappointed. Myers writes:

“When Woodhouse hit the ground, he met a Greek [Mitalas] who told him that he was an independent agent of ours and that he was waiting a drop of weapons and explosives from Cairo in order to block the Corinthos canal.⁶⁹ Although he [Mitalas] was disappointed by the unexpected arrival of Woodhouse and his men instead of the weapons that he was so eagerly waiting for, he generously agreed to give two of his men, Cypriots Yianis and Panagiotis to us” (Myers, 1955: 41).

Another member of the “Harling” mission, Captain Denys Hamson also confirms the fact that Mitalas was surprised by the arrival of the British that he did not know anything about their objective, but also that he was disappointed by their arrival:

“The Greeks who had lit the fires were agents who were waiting provisions...they were surprised and disappointed when they saw four parachuters...they were insignificant, the fifth wheel of the carriage” (Hamson: 33).

For Mitalas, the crucial thing was exclusively to equip his men and the unexpected arrival of Woodhouse and his team instead of the equipment that he was impatiently waiting for disappointed him (Myers, 1955: 41). Oddly, Mitalas did not say anything to Woodhouse about Psarros or about the ground scouting of Gorgopotamos that he had done a few months ago (Woodhouse, 9 April 1987, Marinos, 1994: 48). After collecting the canisters with the parachuters’ equipment and weapons, Mitalas hid Woodhouse and his men and tried to find the other members of the “Harling” mission. In the meantime Mitalas’ health deteriorated and he collapsed, that is why he handed the British over to Captain Douros, who managed to connect the two groups of parachuters. From the moment that the two groups joined each other, the British and Psarros’ men went two separate ways. At a certain point, it seems that Mitalas or Douros abandoned the British. According to Myers:

“Me and Chris [Woodhouse] were waiting for a Greek that Chris had met in Amfissa [That Greek was Mitalas since Mitalas had hid Woodhouse in Agios

⁶⁹ This is another interesting point. The blocking of the Korinthos canal was one of the main objectives of Tsigantes’ mission in Greece. The fact that Mitalas mentioned that to Woodhouse proves again Mitalas’ ignorance about the “Harling” mission.

Georgios village in Amfissa]...After four days⁷⁰ we decided that it was not wise to wait any longer for the Greek from Amfissa” (Myers, 1955: 44-45).

After that Mitalas and the British went two different ways. The British attached themselves to Karalivanos and Nikos Beis, who were the first people that the second group under Myers had, also accidentally, met after their drop.

The fact that Mitalas and Douros let the British out of their hands is completely inexplicable and probably both of them are blameworthy. First of all, it should be made clear that there was no problem in communication with the British parachuters since according to Mitalas:

“The English officers spoke Greek fluently and communication with them was easy” (Mitalas, report: 12).

About letting the British go out of his hands, Mitalas defence was:

“We would provide the British with more services if a) they had brought us weapons, b) if I had not got seriously ill, c) if the Italians had not burned the Prosilion and Karoutes villages -which were our bases- as counter measures for the assistance we gave to the British, d) if Chris (Woodhouse) was not hostile towards Captain Douros who replaced me, e) if Eddie (Myers) did not insist to connect him with Aris Velouchiotis” (Mitalas, report: 13).

None of these excuses seem well justified and strong enough to convince. As to the first excuse, Mitalas’ reasoning is rather poor. His disappointment at the fact that he did not get the weapons that he was expecting is understandable. The fact however that he did not understand the seriousness of the situation is almost incredible. He witnessed something unique, the dropping of allied officers in occupied Greece, but he failed to respond and he did not mention anything about Psarros’ ground scouting. He did not understand that something big was going to happen, and that is inexcusable for a member of a secret resistance network. The same applies for Douros as well who replaced Mitalas

⁷⁰ Georgios Koutsoklenis claims that Woodhouse and his men stayed in Amfissa for ten days.

following his illness. As far as the third excuse is concerned, the burning of Prosilion and Karoutes was a blow for the 5/42 network. It caused problems and it probably discouraged many people from assisting the British, but still that was no reason to leave them in the hands of others.

With regards to Mitalas' fourth excuse about Woodhouse's alleged hostile attitude towards Douros, it is not cross-referenced by any other source.⁷¹ Consequently only assumptions could be made at this point. According to common sense however, that excuse as well must be considered as poor. Woodhouse was an allied officer who was dropped in enemy territory completely unknown to him and with no other local link than Mitalas and Douros. It would be highly unlikely for Woodhouse to have shown hostility towards his benefactors, the men who was literally holding his life in his hands. When Myers, for example, was also dropped in blind, he showed blind trust to Karalivanos and his men who were just bandits and who "looked like savages, like ghosts who came out of a bad dream" (Hamson: 28).

Lastly, Myers' persistence in meeting Aris Velouchiotis can be explained by the fact that Myers was informed that Velouchiotis was the leader of a large band of guerrillas. Myers, however, was just looking to recruit men to take part in the operation. Indeed, when he found out that "Major" Karalivanos was not the leader of one hundred guerrillas, but a bandit with four men,⁷² he became desperate. There was no chance that he would exclude anyone from participating in the operation, but even if he was really

(Koutsoklenis manuscript memoirs and interview 17 May 200).

⁷¹ Woodhouse does not mention anything about that allegation, while due to his current state of health General Douros was not in position to give an interview.

⁷² SOE in Cairo had the false information that Karalivanos was a Greek army Major. See Woodhouse 9 April 1987, Myers, 1955: 34-35, Hamson: 11, Marinos, 1994: 37.

persistent in meeting Aris, that did not mean that Douros should let the British out of his hands. The least he could do was to get one trustworthy man of his, attached to them.

Psarros' men showed a complete lack of conception, ability and initiative. Responsibility however always rests on the leader and at this point, Psarros' share of responsibility was by far larger than that of Mitalas or Douros. Although Mitalas and Douros made a series of unforgivable mistakes, they at least notified Psarros of the arrival of the British.

“Woodhouse gave Mitalas a letter for Tsigantes. In that letter, Chris was asking Tsigantes to inform Promitheas and Cairo about the current situation since our radio was not working...Mitalas sent Woodhouse's letter to Tsigantes, but he also sent a letter of his own to Psarros through the priest of the Kirra village who was a local liaison with both Psarros and Tsigantes” (Marinos, 1994: 50).

According to Petmezas the letter's content was the following:

“3 October 1942. To Mr Psarros: I am the Sub-Commander of the British team that arrived in Greece the day before. I have not yet found the rest of my team members, I have only found the other three that were dropped with me from the same plane. Altogether we are twelve people and if you have any information about the other eight please inform me. I am staying with Sub-Lieutenant M [most probably he means Sub-Lieutenant Mitalas] in his house. I would very much like to get in contact with some senior officers especially Mr Zervas and Mr Gonatas. I will be waiting information from you about their whereabouts and about how I can contact them. I am enclosing a letter which I urge you to forward to Colonel TS [most probably he means Colonel Tsigantes]. I will be waiting for your answer. In order for you to be certain for my identity, I am telling you the password that you have sent us a week ago. The name is GEVARA –but still the cryptogram might not have been accurate” (Petimezas, 1991: 310).

According to Michalis Kasoutsas who is the son of Argyris Kasoutsas –the priest of the Kirra village- his father delivered the letters to their destination (Kasoutsas, interview 23 August 2000). Mitalas and Kaimaras also reconfirmed the fact that Psarros and Tsigantes were informed about the arrival of the British (Mitalas report, Kaimaras, interview 11 May 2000). According to Kaimaras:

“The events concerning the arrival of the British was reported by the local officer’s committee to Colonel Psarros in Athens, and we requested orders for further action. Nevertheless, no orders came from Athens and no information was given about their mission’s objective”(Kaimaras, 1979: 33).

Unfortunately even after the current research, the reasons behind Psarros’ failure or unwillingness to contact the “Harling” mission remain unknown. The fact that he was informed about the mission’s arrival is proven beyond doubt. However, Psarros did not make the least effort to contact the British mission. From the day that they arrived in Greece and for the next six months, Psarros stayed in Athens and did not visit Fokida even once. The explanation for Psarros’ unwillingness to contact the “Harling” mission can only be subjective since there is no primary source that can shed light on that mystery. Maybe Tsigantes dissuaded Psarros from participating in the Gorgopotamos sabotage, either because he estimated that the operation would result in a fiasco, or because he did not want him to get involved in an SOE operation since he was in a SIS mission himself. According to Marinos and Woodhouse, Tsigantes did not want to have any co-operation with “Promitheas” due to the SOE-SIS rivalry, or for other security reasons” (Woodhouse, 9 April 1987, Marinos, 1994: 50). Given the fact that Tsigantes was a man with great influence on Psarros and that he also was a relative and a good friend, the argument that Tsigantes dissuaded him not to get involved in the “Harling” mission can be considered as a reasonable one, but the total lack of hard evidence makes it entirely subjective and hypothetical.

Independently from these reasons, Psarros’ absence from the Gorgopotamos sabotage had a negative impact on the success of the sabotage, as well as to the 5/42’s fate. Psarros’ expertise over the Gorgopotamos bridge was not used, and thus the operation started from scratch again, causing considerable delay. Moreover Myers wasted

valuable time for the recruitment of the necessary number of men “From the other side of Greece”, (Woodhouse, Personal Letter to Mr Papathanasiou, 12 October 2000) since Velouchiotis was constantly moving from one area to another, and since Zervas was in Epirus. If Psarros had mobilised his men, “Harling” would have a considerable number of men much faster and easier. All the time that Myers and Woodhouse had to waste on the issues of operational planning and recruitment of fighters caused considerable delay. Eventually the sabotage was undertaken on the night of 25 November 1942 and although it was a serious blow against the axis, it failed to fulfil its objective, to cut Rommel’s supplies before the El Alamein battle, since the battle had already started since 23 October 1942 (Woodhouse, 9 April 1987).

In addition to the damage that Psarros caused to the mission and consequently to the war effort of the allies, he seriously damaged his personal status, as well as that of his regiment. If Psarros instead of Zervas had undertaken the operation’s command, his status as a resistance leader would have reached its zenith. He would have changed the course of events of the national resistance as well as his own fate. If the 5/42 had the laurels of Gorgopotamos, its status as a resistance group would also have been totally different. It would have been established as a major resistance organisation and not as the “supernumerary” of the resistance movement. In the Gorgopotamos case, Psarros was so ungrateful to his destiny and kicked his luck so many times that eventually luck avenged him. From this point onwards, nothing went right for Psarros and his regiment.

2.3. The formation of the 5/42.

From the early days of Spring 1943, “Urgent appeals were sent to Psarros from all the liaisons in Parnassida, asking him to come to the area and start immediately the struggle against the Germans and the Italians even with the poor means that were then available to our organisation” (Mitalas, report). Psarros at last overcame his reservations and arrived in Fokida in 25 March 1943, the national anniversary of the 1821 war of independence. Immediately, he started co-ordinating in person his officers and ordered them to gather their men. After some successful drops, the regiment’s men were armed quite efficiently, while on the night of April 15th, the British liaisons of the 5/42 with the Middle East Headquarters fell with parachutes above Ghiona. The team was under the command of Captain Geoff Gordon Creed and it included Sergeant Bill Weatherley, Sergeant Bob (surname unknown) and Greek Ioannis Symeonidis (Kaimaras, 1979: 47). During its formation, the regiment included 200 antartes.⁷³ Psarros was the commander and Lieutenant-Colonel Lagouranis was the sub-commander. The regiment’s men were divided in four companies commanded by Koutras, Kaimaras, Douros and Mitalas. On 20 April 1943 the 5/42 regiment was officially formed.

“In the Lykohoros area near Vounihora, our flag was raised and the ceremony of the regiment’s formation took place. The ceremony was attended by the British mission as well as by many of the local people. April 20th remained unforgettable for all the people who attended that moving ceremony. It is a historic date because it was the starting point of a struggle for the liberation of Greece and the protection of the Greek race” (Kaimaras, 1979: 47).

⁷³ Antartes-Greek for guerrillas (plural), Antartis-guerrilla (single).

2.3.i. Membership in the 5/42. “All for One and One for Himself”

The 5/42 was a group that was formed with a very specific objective: the national resistance against the occupation forces. Many of the regiment's antartes, however, had their own reasons and motives for joining that were quite irrelevant with the group's fundamental objective. In most cases those motives did not have anything to do with national resistance, but rather with the satisfaction of material needs, psychological motives, or even chance.

Participation in the 5/42, as in every underground resistance organisation, presupposed a strong moral and psychological motivation. According to psychiatrist Galanos:

“Joining an underground guerrilla group has a spell and a mystical attraction. It is the feeling that while before you were nobody, your life was unimportant and meaningless, now you have a mission in life, you are an active and aware human being, you create history” (Galanos, 1977: 17).

Illegality and the “outlaw culture” even in its criminal form were always combined with a sense of magnificence and power. When illegality is disinterested and illegal activity aims at the achievement of a noble cause, then the outlaw is transformed to a freedom fighter. That has a tremendous psychological effect and boosts the self-confidence, self-perception and morale of the people who join such groups. Participation in the 5/42 gave a moral status, it gave the pride of belonging to a group with a noble mission against a powerful and immoral enemy. These psychological motives were the moral pillar of the overall national resistance movement and contributed a lot to the membership of the 5/42 as well.

Machismo, the exhibition of bravery and the pursuit of adventure and action were other serious motives that led many young men to join the 5/42. Euthimios Karagiannis

for example, joined the 5/42 at the age of twenty. Before he joined the regiment he was a member of the Athenian secret royalist organisation “X”. “According to Karagiannis:

“In X they were just consumed in discussions and unrealistic plans just to justify themselves as resistance fighters. I was hungry for action though and that’s why I left Athens to join the 5/42” (Karagiannis, interview, 23 January 2000).

Many of the men who joined the regiment were aged 17 to early 20’s. Most of those youths did not participate in the war. The Greek army’s victories in Albania, the veteran’s stories of their heroic deeds, the hero’s welcome that these veterans received when they returned home, made those youths envious of the veteran’s glory. They looked forward to their chance of fighting the invader as well. The 5/42 was the chance that they had been waiting for to prove their masculinity and bravery, to prove that they were “*palikaria*”⁷⁴ (A. Mamarelis, interview 15 January 2000).

Moreover, features such as military discipline or the gun culture always had an appeal to young people. For those youths, becoming 5/42 antartes was in a certain way a “ritual” of leaving childhood and becoming men, even if the rifle was many times taller than them (A. Mamarelis, interview: 15 January 2000)! Typical was the case of Georgios Koutsoklenis who joined the 5/42 at the age of 17. Before he joined, his older brother used to bully him all the time. In his memoirs he writes:

“He thought that just because he was older than me he had every right upon me. He used to beat me, tease me all the time in front of others etc...all that harassment ended when I was actively involved in the national resistance” (Koutsoklenis, manuscript memoirs).

As 5/42 antartes those children were treated as adults, equals with other antartes much older than they were. They were considered worthy and brave and enjoyed the admiration of their friends, relatives and fellow villagers. When Koutsoklenis was in school, before

⁷⁴ Palikaria =Young brave men, lads

he joined the 5/42 he was a “loner” and did not have any friends. After joining the regiment however:

“...everything had changed. I was not any longer the scared and isolated village boy. I had made many new friends and comrades. My schoolmates saw me as an active member of the national resistance” (Koutsoklenis, interview, 17 May 2000).

That acceptance was something that young individuals needed desperately, it was rewarding and boosted self-confidence and self-respect. Koutsoklenis and many other young men satisfied those needs by joining the regiment.

Apart from those psychological needs that were satisfied through membership in the 5/42, a series of material needs were also covered. The regiment provided to its antartes food, clothes, boots – one of the most valuable commodities during the occupation- shelter for those antartes who’s houses were destroyed, while later on it offered a golden sovereign per month to every antartis (DIS F/929). For many indigenous men who suffered from starvation, all those privileges mattered. Joining the 5/42 was for many people the only alternative that they had in order to survive and support their families (A. Mamarelis, interview, 15 January 2000, Talantis, interview, 23 August 2000). The fact that for some people who joined the 5/42 their primary motivation was to cover their survival needs and secondarily to fight is rational and understandable especially if the dramatic condition of those people is taken into consideration. Still, however, even today this issue remains taboo among the regiment’s veterans. Obviously, that motive is considered self-interested and humble, something that does not match with the icon of the disinterested and altruistic national resistance fighter that most 5/42 veterans want to maintain. A resistance fighter is supposed to be someone who ignores material goods and who puts his/hers ideals before his/hers well being and personal

interest. Consequently, although it is quite certain that many of the 5/42 men joined the regiment in order to satisfy their material needs (A. Mamarelis, interview, 15 January 2000), it would be rather odd for a 5/42 officer or antartis to admit that in his memoirs or in an interview.

Although being a member of the 5/42 involved a great amount of danger, at the same time it provided security for many of its members who were already under prosecution by the occupation forces. In the mountains of Fokida there were a number of scattered small bands (e.g. of 3 or 5 people) of rustlers, bandits and generally people who were under prosecution by the Italians and the Germans for a number of reasons. The 5/42's pioneers as well as ELAS' ones were very keen to recruit those small groups because they were already armed and they could become the necessary nucleuses for the development of larger bands. When Captain Koutras, for example, started his attempt to form a resistance nucleus in his own village he first came in contact with a small band of rustlers.

“I was informed that in the nearby area there was an armed group of men from my village who were under prosecution by the Italians. I contacted the group and instructed them to avoid provoking the Italians, cease any illegal activity and become the guards of order and protectors of sheep and shepherds. Later on, I told them that they would soon have to play a major role in the national resistance for the liberation of Greece. Eventually they followed my instructions and that group of outlaws really became guards of order and a nucleus of national resistance” (Koutras, 1981: 30-31).

The two major things that these kind of outlaws achieved through their participation in the 5/42 were security and the “absolution of their sins”. They were already on the run by the occupation forces for their criminal offences. By joining the 5/42 they would be more secure. They would get weapons, food and shelter, and generally they would protect themselves more efficiently as members of an organised

resistance group than from continuing being on their own. Apart from that, they would change their identities leaving their “sinful” past behind. Yannis Avoritis was a notorious bandit leader of Roumeli whom Psarros contacted earlier in 1941 and asked him to join the 5/42. Among others, Psarros told him:

“Kapetan Yannis, today our country is enslaved. Those who are going to fight for our county’s freedom are lucky and glorious. The country is not going to forget them and when our children go to school they are going to read in their history books that Kapetan Yannis from Kyriaki raised the flag of revolution and freed Elikonas and Levadia from our enemies” (Gregoriadis: 174-175).

According to Avoritis himself, Psarros promised him many things in order to convince him to join the 5/42, but from all those promises, what excited him the most was that argument (Gregoriadis: 174-175). By joining the 5/42 all those outlaws would be transformed from bandits to resistance fighters. In that way they hoped that they would stop being considered as outcasts by their community, but also that the post-war Greek State would forgive their criminal past.

Moreover, the 5/42 became a refuge for many people who were involved in private vendettas and who had domestic enemies. For example, in Desfina there was a young man who was in love with a local girl and wanted to marry her. The girl’s parents however did not allow her to marry him. Therefore that man with the assistance of three of his closest friends kidnapped the girl. Soon a vendetta broke out and the girl’s relatives started looking for him and his friends to kill them. Major Mannaïos contacted those four men and advised them to join the 5/42 and that was how the first armed band of the 5/42 in Desfina was formed (Mannaïos, interview, 5 May 2000). For those specific men, as well as for others who had to cope with similar vendettas, joining the 5/42 provided security and their enemies would think twice before they harmed them.

Membership in both camps, 5/42 as well as in ELAS, was also motivated by reasons of revenge. Some people chose to join the one camp or the other with no other reason than just to revenge individuals with whom they had personal differences. For example in Penteoria, a young man joined the 5/42 just because his brother -with whom they were in serious conflict over property issues- had already joined ELAS (I. Kokoris, interview, 16 August 2000). In another case in Palaioxari, lawyer Andritsopoulos was the villages' 5/42 co-ordinator. Due to some pre-war property disputes, Andritsopoulos was murdered by another local named Papageorgiou. After that, Papageorgiou joined ELAS in order to protect himself, but also in order to justify his action as politically motivated (Stathopoulos, interview, 8 January 2000).

2.3.ii. Ideology and Objectives.

The 5/42 regiment titled itself exclusively as a combatant resistance force with the war against the invaders as its single objective. It lacked any ideological or political identification and it served no apparent political purpose. That was the regiment's official line and it was emphasised by Psarros in his speech to the regiment's men at the formation ceremony (Kaimaras, 1979: 47, Koutras, 1981: 52, Papathanasiou, 2000: 58).

The 5/42's non-political attitude was obvious first of all in its name. Evzones were Greek army troops dressed in the traditional Greek uniform worn by the Greek fighters during the 1821 war of independence. Before the war, the "5/42 regiment of evzones" was a special forces regiment of the Greek army stationed in Roumeli. The regiment's soldiers came exclusively from the nearby regions of Fokida, Fthiotida,

Euritania and Biotia. The 5/42 regiment had a glorious history and fame. It was commanded by Plastiras and it had fought in all Balkan wars, in the Ukrainian campaign, while it was the first Greek force which had landed in Smyrna during the Asia Minor campaign. As a Special Forces' regiment, the 5/42 was always engaged in the bloodiest and the most important battles. During the Asia Minor campaign, the Turks called it "*Seitan asker*" (Devil's soldiers), while in the Greek-Italian war, the regiment had fought in the infamous battle of the 669 hill where it lost 16 officers and 252 soldiers (DIS F/929/C). Contrary to EAM-ELAS or EDES, the regiment's name referred to a genuine combatant-military formation and it did not include the words "popular", "front", "democratic" etc that contained elements of political rhetoric. Moreover, it did not even refer to a guerrilla band, but rather to a regular military force. By giving the title "5/42 regiment of evzones" to his band, Psarros wanted not only to stress the band's non-political identity, but also he aimed to excite the local population since most men in Fokida had served their military service in that specific regiment.⁷⁵

The 5/42's total lack of political identity and its exclusive dedication in the war against the occupation forces were also obvious in the regiment's oath.

"I swear to protect the motherland, to fight the occupiers until the last drop of my blood is spilled, to consider any Greek who is fighting the enemy my brother, regardless to which organisation he belongs" (Kaimaras, 1979: 47, Koutras, 1981: 52).

ELAS' oath was rather more politicised, it had a political rhetoric and it was not just an oath of dedication to the country, but also to the organisation:

"I, son of the Greek people swear to fight with loyalty within ELAS against the enemy, for the liberation of our country and for our people's freedom, until the last drop of my blood is spilled" (Sakkas, 1998: 52).

⁷⁵ Later on ELAS and EDES adopted Psarros' idea and they also started naming their units after the names and numbers of pre-war military units.

Moreover EDES' oath was like an oath given to a pagan society:

"I swear to my honour and conscience that I will work with all my strength and by using any means for the accomplishment of EDES' objectives. That I will execute incontestably any order given by the central committee and that I will safeguard the secret of our league with sanctity, until our objectives are achieved" (*Istoriko Arheion Ethnikis Antistasis*, vol.1).

Apart from the name and oath, the most solid proof about the regiment's non-political attitude and identity was its complete independence from its political branch EKKA. EAM as well as EDES had their respective military wings, ELAS and EOEA⁷⁶, under their complete control. ELAS' and EOEA's antartes were also members of their political organisations and they were fully accountable to them. For example, in every ELAS company, there were three commanders: an officer, who was responsible for military-strategy issues; a "Kapetanios", who was responsible for the company's men; and, a political instructor who was assigned by KKE, responsible for issues of political propaganda and for imposing EAM's doctrines to the company. 5/42's case was totally different. The regiment's antartes were by no means bound to EKKA.⁷⁷ That was made clear to the 5/42 men from the first moment they decided to join the regiment. "After announcing the regiment's oath, Colonel Psarros gave a moving speech and emphasised that the regiment's exclusive objective was the country's liberation. The regiment's antartes and officers did not undertake any political, and constitutional obligation or commitment towards EKKA. That was also written in the regiment's daily report" (Kaimaras, 1979: 47).

The fact, however, that the 5/42 and EKKA remained independent from each other was not only due to Psarros' determination to keep politics away from the 5/42 but

⁷⁶ EOEA "Ethnikes Omades Ellinon Antarton" National Bands of Greek Antartes.

it was also due to more fundamental causes. Firstly, none of EKKA's officials (Kartalis, Kapsalopoulos etc) came from Fokida. They were not familiar with the area and the local people and respectively, the local people had never heard of them before (Interviews: A. Mamarelis, 16 May 2000, A. Koutsoklenis, 18 May 2000, Zacharias, 16 May 2000, A. Kokoris, 19 August 2000, Kouvelis 20 April 2000). Furthermore, throughout the period that the 5/42 was being formed, EKKA's officials remained in Athens and they did not send any liaison to Fokida to propagandise EKKA to the locals. On the other hand, EAM and EDES were formed one year before their military branches ELAS and EOEΑ respectively. EAM as well as EDES produced their guerrilla branches, kept them under their strict guidance and maintained complete control over them throughout the occupation. EKKA and the 5/42 on the contrary, were formed simultaneously and independently from each other. Throughout the period that both organisations were under formation there were no links between them and consequently they developed autonomous identities and dissimilar objectives. There were considerable differences between the pioneers who formed both organisations. High rank officials formed EKKA in Athens, while low rank local officers and peasants formed the 5/42 nucleuses in Fokida. EKKA was a resistance political organisation with radical political objectives in its manifesto, while the 5/42 was exclusively a combatant resistance group formed within a traditionally conservative community. The 5/42 was concerned exclusively with the conduct of war against the invaders, while EKKA was also highly concerned with the post-war distribution of authority and power in free Greece.

All these fundamental differences between EKKA and the 5/42 caused a series of misunderstandings and misinterpretations from the very beginning. Kartalis and the

⁷⁷ For more details on EKKA see ch 2.2.ii.c, p 81.

rest of EKKA officials without having visited Fokida even once and without having any link with the 5/42 men (apart from Psarros) had taken the loyalty of the 5/42's men for granted. On the other hand 5/42's men had a completely false and vague idea about EKKA. They perceived it as "some contacts that Psarros had in Athens with other politicians and officials" (Interviews: A Mamarelis, 16 May 2000, A. Kokoris, 19 August 2000, Protopapas, 14 January 2000, Zaharias, 16 May 2000, Kouvelis, 20 April 2000). Moreover, the 5/42 officers such as Kaimaras, who were better informed, were quite reserved and mistrustful towards EKKA.

"The secret Athenian organisation EKKA was unknown in the 5/42 area. It did not have any administrative relationship with the 5/42 antartes. It had social and political objectives and that was in contrast with the 5/42's objective which was strictly the nation's liberation" (Kaimaras, 1979: 47).

Right from the start, EKKA and the 5/42 were two organisations alien to each other and that alienation between them was soon to grow bigger.

2.3.iii. Beyond the Official Line: Ideological Taboos and Political Wishful Thinking within the 5/42.

The fact that the 5/42 regiment was officially a non-political combatant force serving no political objectives does not necessarily mean that politics and political beliefs were totally absent among the regiment's 200 antartes and officers. Studying and measuring the dominant political attitudes within the regiment's men however is a rather difficult task that cannot be based on solid evidence since these political attitudes were beyond the regiment's official line, they were personal and rather hidden.

In order to get a picture about those political attitudes, it is necessary to focus first on the political identities of the 5/42's pioneers, Koutras, Kaimaras, Douros and Mitalas, who were the ones who did the recruitment of the 200 antartes. The study of the political views shared between those four men could suggest the political attitudes and tendencies that were common among the 5/42 men during the regiment's formation.

All four of those officers entered the Military and the Police Academy⁷⁸ and started their careers during the 1930's.⁷⁹ During that decade, the Metaxas regime as well as the People's Party governments, had degraded all democratic officers from the armed forces and had managed to create an ideologically coherent and politically homogeneous military and police, loyal to the Monarchy and the pro-monarchist regimes.⁸⁰ Almost the absolute majority of the officers who were in active service during that time were royalists, or at least they were loyal to the regime. The political attitudes that prevailed among those officers were conservatism, anti-communism and a defiant attitude towards politics and politicians.

Anti-communism was common among those four officers. When for example Koutras, Kaimaras and Douros were connected with Psarros through Mitalas,

“the three officers had serious reservations about co-operating with Psarros since he had participated in the 1935 coup and since he did not take a clear stand against communism” (Mitalas, report).

For that reason, all three of them insisted to Psarros that:

“the purpose of the struggle should be solely national liberation, no political substance would be given to the struggle and that we would undertake absolutely no responsibility towards any political organisation” (Kaimaras, 1979: 19).

⁷⁸ Before the war Mitalas was a policeman

⁷⁹ Kaimaras and Douros for example studied in the Euelpidon Military Academy during 1933-37. See Kaimaras, interview 18 December 1999

⁸⁰ See ch 1.3.i, p 44 and ch 2.2.i, p 68.

In addition to being communistophobic, those officers regarded politics as something derogatory, or at least as something that was not compatible with an officer's duty. This perception was quite common among officers during the 1930's. Kaimaras' attitude towards the 1935 movement was indicative. When the Venizelist coup broke out Kaimaras was a cadet in the military academy:

"After the coup's failure, the cadets who participated in it were court-martialed and degraded. Sadly the degradation ceremony took place inside the academy and all their stripes were taken off their jackets etc. It was such a humiliating event for those men that even today, 60 years later, I still remember it vividly. It was a good lesson though: an officer should never get involved in politics and should always remain dedicated to his military duties" (Kaimaras, 1994: 16-17).

The ideological beliefs of the 5/42 pioneers were similar if not identical with the ideological beliefs of the men that they recruited. This was due to the patterns of recruitment that the 5/42 pioneers used. Koutras, Kaimaras, Douros and Mitalas did not recruit their men openly and massively e.g by issuing proclamations and calling all the people of Fokida to join the regiment. They used secret and cautious patterns of recruitment and all of the recruited men were trustworthy individuals whom they had known for years (Kaimaras, interview, 11 May 2000, Koutras, interview 9 January 2000). Each one of the four officers had undertaken the task to recruit men from his own village and three or four of the neighbouring villages. Koutras recruited his men from Penteoria (his village), Amigdalia, Panormos, Eratini, Galaxidi and Vidavi, Kaimaras from Vounichora (his village), Malandrino, Skaloula and Karoutes, Douros from Agia Euthimia (his village), Agios Georgios, Sernikaki and Tritea, while Mitalas from Segditsa (his village), Topolia and Amfissa (Koutras, 1981: 35).⁸¹ In fact, the regiment's 200 men were a group of relatives, friends, schoolmates and fellow-villagers, since the regiment's

⁸¹ See list of maps.

network of recruitment was developed according to the friendships, family bonds and individual contacts of the four officers. For example, Koutras' cousin was the 5/42 co-ordinator in Galaxidi, while his brother in law was also a 5/42 antartis, Mitalas' brother was the co-ordinator in Amfissa, Kaimaras' brother was also an antartis etc (Mitalas, report, Zacharias, interview 16 May 2000, K. Koutras, interview, 9 January 2000).

The exact political attitudes of all the 200 men recruited by Koutras, Kaimaras, Douros and Mitalas cannot actually be measured. Nevertheless, it would be safe to assume that the political beliefs of the recruited individuals were similar to the political beliefs shared by the four officers who conducted the recruitment since one of the criteria used for their recruitment was also their political "trustworthiness" (A. Mamarelis, Interview, 16 May 2000). Kaimaras writes "The men who were recruited were veterans of the Albanian and Macedonian fronts, determined and combative people and generally nationalists (*ethnikofrones*) independently of political preference, who were willing to fight for the national resistance" (Kaimaras, 1979: 17). In contrast to the terms "royalist" or "socialist", the term "*Ethnikofron*" depicted someone with no specific political preference. The term "*Ethnikofron*" nevertheless did have a strong anti-communist connotation.

According to ELAS' antartis Bekios, all those who joined the 5/42 regiment from day one were fanatic right wingers and anti-communists (Bekios, interview, 8 May 2000). On the contrary, according to Kaimaras, personal political beliefs were set aside among 5/42 men and the only thing that the regiment's antartes were concerned about was the war against the invader.⁸² Both statements are probably exaggerated and biased and probably truth lies somewhere in between. Officially, the 5/42 was a resistance band

with no political orientation, but still its officers and antartes shared conservative attitudes and ant-communist sentiments. Nevertheless, although these attitudes and sentiments were popular within the regiment's men, they remained personal and they were not manifested in any collective way. These sentiments were to become more obvious, concrete and collective within the regiment later on when EAM-ELAS became openly hostile to the 5/42.

Conclusion

This chapter covered the period from the early days of the occupation until the formation of the 5/42. It focused upon the pioneers of the 5/42, Colonel Psarros and the local officers of Fokida, as well as upon the first group of men who manned the regiment. It examined the motives that led the 5/42 leaders and their followers to undertake resistance initiatives as well as their ideological, political attitudes and beliefs. Moreover, this chapter highlighted the strategies that the 5/42 pioneers adopted towards the formation of the regiment and the part that they played in shaping its ideological and political identity.

Colonel Psarros and the local officers maintained their leading roles throughout the 5/42's life and their leadership and decision-making sealed the regiment's fate. Therefore, in order to understand and explain their actions later on in the course of events, it has been necessary to understand first what were their personal, political and

⁸² See Kaimaras, interview, 11 May 2000

ideological motives that led them to the resistance, what were their objectives and visions. Moreover, the decisions that Psarros and the local officers took and the mistakes that they made during the period that this chapter examined had a decisive effect upon the regiment's fate later on.

As will be argued in the next chapters, the 5/42 regiment remained throughout its existence a small, locally based force of limited political and military power, always vulnerable to EAM-ELAS' aggression. There were a number of other reasons that caused that vulnerability and they will be examined further in the thesis. However two of the most serious reasons were Psarros' delay in forming the 5/42 and his absence from the sabotage in the bridge of Gorgopotamos. The impact that the fiasco in Macedonia had on Psarros' strategic planning and Psarros' dependence on Bakirtzis and Tsigantes were the main causes of these two mistakes. The effects that these two mistakes had upon the regiment's fate were tremendous. Psarros and his men lost their chance to participate and even lead the most important act of sabotage in Greece and one of the most important acts of sabotage in occupied Europe. The glory and the laurels of the sabotage in Gorgopotamos were given to ELAS and EDES instead. Furthermore, Psarros' hesitation to form the 5/42 caused a serious disadvantage towards ELAS right from the beginning. When eventually the 5/42 was formed, ELAS was already strong in Fokida and had the region under its control. In a certain way, ELAS was the "host" and the 5/42 was the "guest" in the area. If the 5/42 appeared in the mountains of Fokida before ELAS, probably the regiment's fate would be totally different and the 5/42 would then be "a much harder nut for any teeth to crack" (Gregoriadis, vol.1: 23). Instead, the 5/42 became an easy prey for ELAS.

Another major disadvantage that contributed a lot to the regiment's collapse, which is going to be discussed in the next chapters, was the fact that there was no ideological and political coherence within the 5/42. The political objectives of Psarros and EKKA were very different from the ones of the local officers. The seeds of that internal disintegration existed from the first day of the regiment's formation. As mentioned before in this chapter, the 5/42 regiment was officially a resistance force with no political identity and it served no political objectives. Nevertheless, the regiment's political branch EKKA openly declared its political objectives and its radical political programme. On the other hand, the regiment's officers were rather conservative. Moreover, the regiment's antartes who were personally recruited by these officers, were personally attached to them and also shared similar political attitudes. During the formation phase, there was a peaceful co-existence between EKKA and the regiment's men. Conservative and anti-communist sentiments remained strictly personal, while on the other hand it was made clear that the regiment's men did not have to undertake any political obligation towards EKKA. This peaceful co-existence, however, was not to last for long.

CHAPTER 3

The End of Delusions: The 5/42 in the Turmoil of Resistance Politics

The meso-level analysis looks at the 5/42 in the wider context of the civil conflict within the national resistance movement. It focuses on the conflict between the 5/42 and EAM-ELAS as well as on the role that the 5/42 played in the polarised environment of the Greek resistance. Furthermore, it focuses on the different strategies of the 5/42 leaders and it also highlights the domestic political antagonisms within the regiment.

In this chapter, the meso-level analysis will focus on the period between May and October 1943. During that period, a series of important events occurred, the first of which was the outbreak of an armed conflict between the 5/42 and ELAS. Within forty days, ELAS forces disbanded the 5/42 twice (on 13 May and 23 June). Although official apologies were given in both cases by ELAS to Colonel Psarros, the circumstances under which these two disbandments were ordered were rather mysterious. Those disbandments had an overwhelming effect upon the 5/42. They increased the hostility of the regiment's officers and antartes against EAM-ELAS and they gave cause for serious political developments within the regiment. Furthermore, during the same period, two serious initiatives were taken on a national level towards the achievement of national unity and co-operation between all national resistance organisations. These were the founding of

the Joint General Antartes Headquarters and the Cairo conference between representatives of EAM, EDES, EKKA, the exiled Greek government and the British. Although both the Joint General Antartes Headquarters and the Cairo conference aimed to achieve national unity and co-operation, they both failed to achieve that goal and instead –especially the fiasco of the Cairo conference- contributed to further corrosion between EAM-ELAS and EDES. However, the participation of the 5/42 in the Joint General Antartes Headquarters and Kartalis' participation in the Cairo conference marked the entrance of EKKA and the 5/42 onto the political scene and strengthened the role of EKKA-5/42 within the national resistance movement.

During the period that this chapter discusses, important changes occurred in the 5/42's structure, membership and ideological, political identity. It was a period of transition for the 5/42 during which the regiment increased its manpower six to seven times, it developed in to a well-equipped guerrilla unit, while it launched a notable campaign against the Italian and German forces in Fokida. Furthermore, the regiment's role within the national resistance politics increased. Kartalis and Psarros became important players in the political game, the regiment acquired a political identity and factions started being formed within the 5/42.

This chapter will begin by examining the circumstances of the two disbandments of the 5/42. Next, it will focus upon the Joint General Antartes Headquarters and the Cairo conference and their impact upon national unity and upon relations between the national resistance organisations. Finally, the political dilemmas that arose within the 5/42 will be discussed, focusing upon the attitudes and policies of Kartalis and Captain

Thymios Dedousis- the new key player within the 5/42 who would become a catalyst of the regiment's fate later.

3.1. ELAS Against the 5/42: A series of Mistakes, or Premeditated Crimes?

3.1.i. The First Disbandment of the 5/42.

Three weeks after the 5/42 was officially formed and while the regiments' recruitment of antartes and the provisioning of weapons were still ongoing, rumours of an impending Italian mopping-up campaign against all antartes forces in Roumeli spread. ELAS' forces by then controlled a major part of the mountains of Parnassos and Ghiona and the Italians seemed determined to re-capture these areas and disband all antartes forces there during mid-May 1943. In view of that danger, a meeting was held between ELAS, Psarros and 5/42's British liaison Captain Creed in order to develop a defence plan. According to that plan the 5/42's mission would be to guard the Kaloskopi-Stromi road and for this reason the regiment camped in the Stromi village (Kaimaras, 1979: 50). On the other hand, ELAS' units all over Roumeli (approximately 1,800 men) gathered in the Mauroolithari village next to Stromi (Gregoriadis , vol.2: 376).

5/42's officers were worried by the fact that such large ELAS forces had camped so close to them and they had some information indicating that ELAS was going to attack the regiment (Mitalas report, 15-16, Kaimaras, 1979: 50). Psarros however assured his officers that:

“ELAS would never attack the regiment since the 5/42 was under the authority of the Middle East Headquarters and an attack would be devastating for the struggle of national liberation” (Kaimaras, 1979:51).

Nevertheless, Psarros’ officers were still suspicious and suggested to put their men on alert, or at least take some preventive measures. Psarros argued with them and ordered them “not to proceed in any action that would provoke ELAS” (Mitalas, report, 16).

During the same time in ELAS’ Headquarters in Mauroolithari Aris Velouchiotis was having lunch with the rest of ELAS’ kapetanios. Amongst them was kapetanios of the Attica-Biotia Headquarters Andreas Mountrichas “Orestis” who had just arrived in Mauroolithari. Orestis claimed that he conveyed oral orders from Giorgos Siantos, KKE’s General Secretary concerning ELAS’ policy and attitude towards the other resistance bands. According to Foivos Gregoriadis “Vermaios”, member of ELAS’ General headquarters of Roumeli, Orestis, Aris, himself and the rest of ELAS Kapetanios had the following discussion:

- “(Orestis to Aris) I heard that Psarros is in our area. You know ... 10 days ago, I was in Athens. I saw the old man [Siantos’ nickname] and he told me that from now on we will not allow any other group to be formed in the areas that we have liberated. Absolutely none. We are not going to kill ourselves just to allow others to come to the free territories and raise their own flags.
- (Aris) Wait a minute, what do you mean by absolutely none? Here we’ve got Psarros.
- (Orestis) Absolutely none means neither Psarros.
- (Aris) How! What! Really him as well?
All other present kapetanios addressed ten similar questions and Aris took Orestis and Gregoriadis in an office for a private discussion.
- (Aris) OK about the others, but for Psarros as well?
- (Orestis) And for Psarros.
- (Aris) Especially for Psarros?
- (Orestis) Yeah!!
- (Aris) Be careful about what you are saying. Are you talking about Psarros as well?
- (Orestis) Yeah I am serious and I am serious about Psarros.
- (Aris to Gregoriadis) What do you think Fotis?
- (Gregoriadis) What can I say, things are obvious.

Almost immediately after the end of that discussion, Aris came up with a surprise attack plan.

- (Aris to everybody) Listen, we are going to finish this job today. All of us kapetanios are going to Stromi to pay “a friendly visit” to Psarros and we are going to spend the night in Stromi. You Diamandis [one of ELAS’ kapetanios] will stay here with all your men. During the night you are going to surround the village... We will give Psarros an ultimatum and the disarming of his men will start immediately (Gregoriadis “Vermaios”, vol.2: 377-378).⁸³

Aris and the rest of ELAS’ kapetanios visited Psarros for dinner. Psarros was very friendly towards them and they discussed about the potential of closer co-operation between both organisations (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 380, Kaimaras, 1979:52). After the meeting Psarros ordered his men to find houses for the ELAS kapetanios to spend the night. During the night however, a large number of ELAS forces surrounded the village and at the break of dawn (14 May 1943), Aris with his kapetanios went to Psarros’ quarters, woke him up and delivered their ultimatum:

“According to our Central Committee’s orders we cannot allow the formation of any other armed group in our area. Consequently you and your men can either join ELAS, otherwise you will have to disarm and disband immediately” (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 384, Dimitriou, 1965, vol.2: 307-308).

Psarros became pale. He could not believe his ears.

“Why are you doing this...what you are doing is tragic. For god’s sake, please give me some time to inform my men, I don’t want anybody to get killed” (Dimitriou, 1965, vol.2: 308).

Psarros wanted to avoid bloodshed at any cost and so he gave the order of surrender. However, some of his men who had camped outside Stromi, were not informed about the developments inside the village and they refused to surrender their arms. Psarros ordered them to comply with ELAS’ ultimatum and so bloodshed was avoided. After they were disarmed, all 5/42 men were free to either join ELAS or return to their villages. Apart

from a couple of 5/42 men who joined ELAS the rest refused to do so and they returned to their homes. Psarros and his officers were held by ELAS for one day, but then they were also released.

3.1.ii. The Reasoning.

ELAS' argument for disbanding the 5/42 was that it could not tolerate the formation of any other antartes band in the areas that it had under its control. The validity of that argument is highly subjective and depends almost exclusively upon individual perception of the national resistance struggle. According to one point of view held by 5/42 veterans, the 5/42 regiment, like ELAS was also a resistance organisation and in simple terms, the existence of an extra resistance organisation would benefit the overall armed resistance struggle, and would cause more damage to the occupation forces (Protopapas, interview, 14 January 2000). Secondly, since the country was under occupation, everyone had the right to fight the occupants. Depriving the right of lawful defence against the invader was a direct violation of the Greek people's freedom. It was a clear manifestation of arrogance and totalitarianism, and it weakened the overall national resistance struggle. ELAS at that time was the largest combatant resistance organisation but had neither the right nor the authority to decide who was qualified and authorised to take arms against the invaders and who was not (Kaimaras, interview 18 December 1999). Lastly, ELAS' argument about areas that were under its control could also be

⁸³ The narration of the discussion comes from Gregoriadis himself. It appears to be genuine as it is also cross-referenced accurately by Dimitriou (Nikiforos) (Dimitriou, 1965, vol.2: 306) who was also present until the point where Aris, Orestis and Gregoriadis went to talk in private.

considered as groundless since in a country that was under foreign occupation, no stable fronts and permanently free areas existed (Mamarelis, interview, 15 January 1999).

On the other hand, according to the unwritten laws of guerrilla warfare, ELAS' argument was quite valid and substantial. The existence of two different and independent guerrilla armies in the same area could cause serious problems in the command of the area, in the distribution of authority and responsibilities within the area, whilst it could easily lead to tensions and violent clashes. Guerrilla armies always depended for their provisioning in food on the support of local people. Due to the dramatic shortage of food during the occupation, it would be more difficult for the local population to support two guerrilla armies instead of one. The larger the guerrilla forces became in the region, the harder it would be for the local people to meet their needs in food. According to a guerrilla warfare manual of the Greek army, the increase of guerrilla forces in a small region creates more needs in logistics' support (communications, transportation, medical support etc) and consequently makes the guerrilla forces less flexible (General Army Command, 1950: 6). From that perspective Gregoriadis' argument "Roumeli is now ours. Whoever wants to make a new guerrilla band can go to Evia, the Peloponnese or elsewhere where there are no antartes bands at all" (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 358) was valid.

ELAS' antartes hostility towards the 5/42 grew also due to the fact that the 5/42 was a "rich" guerrilla army, while ELAS was a "poor" one. The 5/42 had a small number of antartes and rather generous funding from the allied drops.⁸⁴ It had enough funds to buy the necessary provisions for its men and pay the villagers for their labour (Kaimaras, interview, 18 December 1999). On the other hand, ELAS had much more antartes to feed and its funding from the allies was very limited, thus it had to impose taxation,

requisition of food and compulsory labour. Those contrasts caused frustration among the ELAS antartes (Bekios, interview, 8 May 2000) and as kapetanios Diamantis complained

“That’s nice, they buy their food and all is well and we have to impose taxation” (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 383).

ELAS’ antartes felt mistreated towards those of the 5/42. They felt that the British were scandalously in favour of the 5/42 (Dimitriou, 1965, vol.2: 330). For the mentality of ELAS’ antartes who had fought a number of battles and many of whom had taken their weapons as trophies from the battlefield, the fact that 5/42 men were armed before they had fought any battle seemed provocative, unfair and obscene (Bekios, interview, 8 May 2000, Siderakos, interview, 18 August 2000). ELAS kapetanios Hatzipanagiotou [Thomas] complained:

“Instead of providing with weapons Velouchiotis’ men who had risked their lives in Gorgopotamos and who had helped to save so many British lives in northern Africa, they [the British] were dropping unlimited supplies and weapons to Psarros’ men who had not even fought a single battle against the enemy and had not benefited the allied effort even once...We were the ones who got killed and they were those who were getting provisions and weapons” (Hatzipanagiotou, 1997: 272).

3.1.iii. Orestis: Conspirator or Plain Deaf?

The person who played the key role in the disbandment in Stromi was the kapetanios of the Attica-Biotia Headquarters Orestis. EAM-ELAS’ official explanation and excuse was that the disbandment was an unlucky event due to a misunderstanding between Siantos and Orestis, and that Orestis alone was entirely responsible for the disbandment. According to the official explanation produced by EAM-ELAS, Siantos called Orestis for a briefing, in order to inform him about ELAS’ policy towards other

⁸⁴ See ch 7.1.i, p 268.

resistance bands. Siantos told Orestis that ELAS was not going to allow the formation of other resistance groups in the areas that it had under its control, but he did not say that the specific policy applied to the 5/42 as well. Orestis however misunderstood Siantos' words and thought that his instructions referred to all resistance bands including the 5/42. Therefore, according to EAM-ELAS' official excuse, Orestis' order to disband the 5/42 was a misunderstanding, it was his personal mistake and had nothing to do with EAM-ELAS' official friendly policy towards the 5/42 (Gregoriadis: vol.2: 381-382).

Whether Orestis was authorised directly by Siantos to order the disbandment of the 5/42, or whether he really misunderstood Siantos' instructions remains quite unclear. Orestis, however, took responsibility for the disbandment with a letter sent to KKE's Central Committee two weeks after the 5/42 disbandment.

“Comrades: A month ago I was called in Athens [by Siantos] to discuss some issues concerning ELAS' Headquarters of Attica-Biotia. During the discussions our party's policy towards all other newly formed non-EAMic resistance bands all over Roumeli was explained to me. What I understood from the discussion was that wherever we dominate, we were not to allow the formation of any non-ELASite group. Anyone who wishes to fight the occupiers can join ELAS...Having all these in mind, when I went to Ghiona -where Colonel Psarros had camped- I told Aris [Velouchiotis] what I mentioned above about non-EAMic groups. Psarros' organisation had started becoming dangerous and after what I told him, comrade Aris decided to disband Psarros' regiment. For that action I am entirely responsible...Now I submit the following question in order to get everything sorted and understand what my duty is. Should I say that I did a mistake (as I am already saying to everybody)? Because I understand that my position is very sensitive, I am asking you to tell me what I should do. I will do whatever the party tells me to and I declare myself a loyal soldier of the party” (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 381).

At first glance, it seems that with his letter Orestis was taking full responsibility for the disbandment and apparently the mystery ends there. By using a feigned sincerity however, Orestis “was beating around the bush” and did not give any answer to the crucial question, which is whether Siantos gave him a clear order to disband the 5/42, or

whether Orestis took by himself the initiative to disband the regiment. The 5/42 was not like the various small insignificant groups of bandits that ELAS had repeatedly disbanded throughout Roumeli. It was the third largest resistance organisation nation-wide, commanded by a well-known and respected officer such as Psarros and had the full support of the allies. Disbanding the 5/42 was not minor issue and the decision could not have been taken without any serious thought. How was it possible for Orestis who was a quite important ELAS official not to ask Siantos clarification over ELAS' attitude towards the 5/42 specifically? Arguably, such an important decision as to disband the 5/42 could have only been taken by Siantos himself. Unfortunately there is no document on Siantos' behalf that could shed some light in the case, but even if Siantos had ordered Orestis to disband the 5/42, such an order would have been given unofficially. It is impossible to solve the mystery completely, but the truth is that the alleged misunderstanding of Siantos' instructions cannot be considered as an adequate excuse.

Orestis confession was not sincere. First of all, a clear political opportunism and a self-interested motivation were obvious in his letter, especially at its ending, where he gives lip service to KKE's Central Committee. Moreover, in an adroit manner, Orestis tried to shift some of the responsibility on Aris and make him look like a partner in the crime –if not the one solely responsible for the disbandment- by writing that "...after what I told, comrade Aris decided to disband Psarros' regiment". Soon afterwards however, Orestis wrote the pompous "For that action (the disbandment) I am entirely responsible", but still he managed to present Aris as a perpetrator and as if Aris was the one who decided the disbandment of the 5/42. Of course, that was completely unjust for Velouchiotis, since from the moment that Orestis claimed that he had clear orders from

Siantos about the 5/42, Aris was obliged to obey. According to Aris' defender Hatzipanagiotou:

“Aris did not have any reason to think that Orestis was acting on his own. ...Aris had no doubt that the orders were genuine and that they had been issued by Siantos himself” (Hatzipanagiotou, 1997: 278).

Velouchiotis certainly had no doubt about the order's validity since in the discussion that he had with Orestis, he and the rest of the ELAS kapetanios asked repeatedly whether the 5/42 should also be disbanded.⁸⁵

Although as mentioned above, EAM-ELAS officially considered Orestis as the one who was personally responsible for the 5/42 disbandment in Stromi, no disciplinary action was taken against him and he continued being the chief kapetanios of the Attica-Biotia Headquarters. Whether that was due to excessive lenience, or whether it was a cover up will be analysed more thoroughly later on in the thesis.⁸⁶

3.1.iv. Reformation and Second Disbandment: Another Devilish Coincidence?

A few days after the 5/42 was disbanded, the leaders of ELAS' General Headquarters⁸⁷ called Psarros to a meeting in Karpenisi. In that meeting, Tzimas as well as Sarafis disapproved of the disbandment in Stromi as arbitrary, reprimanded Orestis and promised that similar events would never be repeated. Furthermore Sarafis urged Psarros to forget the incident and join ELAS.

⁸⁵ In the discussion between Aris and Orestis Aris repeated the question “and for Psarros?” many times and for each time Orestis reassured him that Siantos had ordered the disbandment of Psarros' regiment as well (see ch 3.1.i, p 130).

⁸⁶ See ch 5.2, p 230.

⁸⁷ ELAS' General Headquarters had been formed since mid May 1943 with Stefanos Sarafis as its Chief of Military, Aris Velouchiotis as the Chief kapetanios and Andreas Tzimas “Vasilis Samariniotis” as the Chief political instructor.

“Psarros answered that he preferred to remain the commander of his own independent force but he offered the co-operation of his band when necessary. As far as the possibility of a future closer co-operation between us he said that he was not authorised to decide by himself and that he should consult EKKA’s Central Committee in Athens....He reassured me that his organisation’s objectives were similar with EAM’s objectives and that he would give his best effort not only for the avoidance of conflicts, but also for the development of friendly relationships between our political as well as our military branches” (Sarafis, 1964: 120-121).

Although Psarros refused rather diplomatically to join ELAS, Tzimas and Sarafis promised him that ELAS would give him all the assistance to enable the 5/42 regiment to be reformed. More specifically ELAS promised to return the 200 weapons that it took from the 5/42 men in Stromi and to give the 5/42 a part of its own supplies in food. ELAS’ General Headquarters condemned officially ELAS’ previous attitude towards the 5/42 and the other non-EAMic resistance groups and issued the following order:

“ELAS General Headquarters, 1st bureau, 28.5.1943. ORDER. After the recent incidents between ELAS’ bands and other organisations, it is ordered: From now on, no hostile activity is going to be taken against other bands and organisations. In the event of hostile activity from other bands or organisation against our bands these activities are going to be reported straight to the General Headquarters and the local English liaisons. From now on our behaviour towards other bands and organisations is going to be determined according to the agreement that is now ongoing between the Chief of the English Military Mission in Greece Major Eddie [Myers], the Middle East Headquarters and EAM-ELAS’ Central Committee. Even if the discussions fail and even if the agreement is not going to be signed, we are still going to behave according to the agreement’s spirit. Anyone who is going to violate the agreement’s terms or who is not going to behave according the agreement’s spirit is going to be strictly punished. Aris Velouchiotis, Stephanos Sarafis, Vasilis Samariniotis” (Kedros, 1983, vol.1: 330-331).

Myers and Woodhouse had already started a series of contacts with ELAS, EDES and Psarros in order to achieve smooth relations and co-operation between all resistance organisations.⁸⁸ Since March 1943, Myers had already distributed to ELAS, EDES and Psarros a draft of “The National Bands Agreement”. Psarros was absolutely positive

towards that draft agreement and he said that he would inform EKKA's Central Committee in Athens for the official acceptance of the agreement's terms (Pyromaglou, 1965:168-169). Myers, as well as ELAS' leadership (Sarafis, Velouchiotis, Tzimas) were completely satisfied by Psarros' guarantees and ELAS' leaders assured Psarros that:

“Independently from whether or not EKKA is going to sign the National Bands Agreement, EAM-ELAS is going to assist the 5/42's reformation by all available means and would behave towards the 5/42 according to the agreement's spirit” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 169).

After those official guarantees were given on ELAS' behalf and after getting Myers' approval, Psarros went back to Fokida and started reforming the 5/42. He ordered his officers to gather their antartes to the Taratsa hill of mount Ghiona and asked the British Military mission to supply the regiment with enough weapons to arm at least 500 men. After successive drops between 5 and 20 June the regiment managed to arm 200 men (Kaimaras, 1979: 61-62, Koutras, 1981: 56). Nevertheless, ELAS' promise for the return of the 200 weapons taken from 5/42's men in Stromi was not fulfilled.

On 19 June and while the 5/42's reorganisation was still ongoing, a cryptogram was delivered in ELAS' headquarters in Mauroolithari:

“According to our position against those who have not signed the band agreement, you are allowed to disband the 5/42. Be cautious for ambushes by Italians and Psarianoi [Psarianoi=5/42 antartes]. 19 June 1943. For the general headquarters: Major Thymios Zoulas” (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 470).

Captain Foivos Gregoriadis “Fotis Vermaios”, Chief of ELAS' Headquarters in Mauroolithari who received the cryptogram was surprised, but after a brief meeting with Captain Dimitris Dimitriou “Nikiforos” and Kapetanios Thiseas, they decided to act

⁸⁸ Later on in July 1943, those contacts led to the establishment of the Joint General Antartes Headquarters” and the signing of the “National Bands Agreement” among EAM-ELAS, EDES-EOEA, EKKA-5/42 and the British military mission.

immediately. They gathered approximately 300 men⁸⁹ and marched to Taratsa where the 5/42 had camped with the pretext that they were going to attack the Italian Headquarters in Lidoriki. Psarros' men however understood that ELAS was marching against them and they prepared themselves for battle.

On the next day (23 June 1943), ELAS' forces launched their attack in Taratsa. This time, the 5/42 men were determined not to allow the Stromi fiasco to be repeated. The feeling that dominated them was rage. That second attack, almost forty days after the first disbandment in Stromi and after all those guarantees were given by ELAS, proved that "ELAS was a deceitful enemy with no honour and dignity" (Kouvelis, interview, 18 April 2000). This time they would defend their regiment's honour "Let them come and they will see what we've got for them. They will not trick us like in Stromi where we trusted their word" (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 480).

The fact that the shooting started from the 5/42 side (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 482) was indicative of the rage that 5/42 antartes felt about ELAS. The regiment's men fought hard and inflicted considerable casualties upon ELAS who suffered 7 dead, 15 wounded and more than 40 captured, while 5/42's casualties were 3 dead and 10 wounded (Koutras, 1980: 60, Dimitriou, 1965, vol.2: 338, Gregoriadis, vol.2: 487, Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.1: 367 See Pyromaglou, 1965: 171). Throughout the battle 5/42 men kept shouting threats and insults to ELAS' men "Forget about Stromi you scum, here its called Taratsa and now you'll see what Psarros means" (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 485, Dimitriou, 1965, vol.2: 336). Even Psarros, who was a well known calm and moderate person, lost his temper

⁸⁹ According to Gregoriadis the number of men was 250 (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 476), according to Dimitriou it was 300-320 (Dimitriou, 1965, vol.2: 332), Kaimaras' and Koutras' estimation of 800 men is rather excessive (Kaimaras, 1979: 64, Koutras, 1981: 57).

and when the first ELAS prisoners were presented to him, he spat at their faces, although he later released them unharmed (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 487).

The battle however, had another dimension. In many cases men from both sides showed unwillingness to kill and to risk their lives. Especially in the beginning of the battle the unwillingness of both sides to engage themselves was obvious. According to Koutras:

“The battle in the southern sector was not intensive. Many ELAS antartes surrendered themselves voluntarily although their position was not so difficult. Obviously they did not want to engage themselves in fratricide” (Koutras, 1981: 59).

That unwillingness to fight was due to the familiarity between the men of both camps. On the opposite sides of the battlefield, there were friends, fellow villagers, old schoolmates and even brothers as in the case of Dimitrios and Nikolaos Kotronis who fought with 5/42 and ELAS respectively (Kaimaras, 1979: 66).

That familiarity made the trigger harder to pull and prevented many more casualties. For example, Captain Koutras at a certain point stormed against a couple of ELAS men with his machinegun, but when he opened fire, his antartis Dimitris Polizos shouted at him to stop because he had recognised one of ELAS men who was Haralambos Giangis who came from the same village as Koutras (Koutras, 1981: 59, Giangis, interview, 17 August 2000, Giorgi, interview 17 August 2000). In another case, Kaimaras' company faced Giorgos Katsimbas' company of ELAS. The two company leaders were schoolmates and good friends. After recognising each other they agreed not to be engaged in battle. Eventually however, they were forced into battle due to the fact that some of their men opened fire (Kaimaras, 1979: 66). Similar altruistic incidents were also reported on ELAS' side. ELAS' antartis Tzivaras had 5/42's Captain Kranias in the

sight of his gun but he did not shoot him “I lifted my gun and I would have shot him, but I remembered his two children. What the hell, I said, I am not going to make them orphans” (Dimitriou, 1965, vol.2: 340).⁹⁰

The battle lasted for almost 12 hours and it ended with a Pyrrhic victory of ELAS’ forces. Eventually, the 5/42 men retreated from Taratsa and gathered in the Vounichora village. Psarros pleaded to the 5/42’s British liaison officer Creed to order new drops from the Middle East of at least 1,000 weapons within two days so that the regiment could protect itself from ELAS (Kaimaras, 1979: 67, Koutras, 1981: 69). Due to indifference –according to 5/42’ side- or due to the fact that something like that would be almost impossible to achieve in such short time, the weapons were not dropped and Psarros decided to disband the regiment.

The battle in Taratsa was a very important event that had serious consequences in the 5/42’s future. The first disbandment in Stromi was also a serious incident between ELAS and the 5/42, but at least it was a peaceful one. In Taratsa however, there was blood spilled. The suspicion and the aversion between the two organisations was transformed in to open conflict. There was nothing anymore which could convince the 5/42 antartes that their regiment and ELAS were allied organisations engaged in a common cause. After Taratsa, the terms “friendly relations with ELAS” or “National resistance free from politics” became bogus and meaningless and anti-EAM-ELAS sentiments within the regiment’s men were growing fast.

⁹⁰ During the battle, a rather symbolic event occurred. While the battle was at its peak, three German bombers flew by coincidence over the battlefield. According to Gregoriadis, “During those few moments the two opposite sides had the chance to consider how devastating was the conflict that they had been engaged into...The enemy’s appearance over the battle-field caused a brief seizure of fire. Gunshots and machine-gun bursts stopped for five minutes, enough time for everybody to think the disaster that was happening. However, the planes soon disappeared and with them so did the hesitations of the fighters and soon the battle-field was again in flames” (Gregoriadis, vol.: 490)

3.1.v. Zoulas: Conspirator or Just a Frustrated Husband?

The causes and motives of the second disbandment in Taratsa were again mysterious. Four days after the battle, Captain Gregoriadis who led the attack was called to present himself before ELAS' disciplinary board in Gardiki for his action. The disciplinary board was composed of Sarafis, Velouchiotis, members of KKE's and EAM's Central Committee Tasos Leuterias, Elias Maniatis and Orfeas Vlachopoulos and Thymios Zoulas member of the ELAS General Headquarters of Roumeli.

"All of them were upset with the 5/42's new disbandment and demanded the head of anyone who was responsible" (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 497).

Throughout the board, all of EAM-ELAS officials were offensive and angry against Gregoriadis. They told him that he attacked the 5/42 while in Athens discussions were taking place between EAM and EKKA and that his action caused disastrous damage to EAM's policy of national unity (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 499). The only one who did not say a word was Thymios Zoulas. At a certain point Gregoriadis got upset and he took out of his pocket a small paper. According to Gregoriadis, the following discussion took place between him and EAM-ELAS' officials.

- (Gregoriadis) Are you all through?
 - (Vlachopoulos) Yes we are.
 - (Gregoriadis) Comrade Leuterias, you are the Chief of the General Headquarters and you are telling me that you know nothing about the order I was given?
 - (Leuterias) Which order?
 - (Gregoriadis) This order? (And he showed everybody the order)
 - (Everybody) What are you talking about? Which order?
 - (Gregoriadis) I am impressed that you don't know it. Listen "According to our position against those who have not signed the band agreement, you are allowed to disband the 5/42. Be cautious for ambushes by Italians and Psarianoi 19-6-43. For the general headquarters: Major Thymios Zoulas".
 - (Everybody to Zoulas) What is this? Did you issue this order? Why didn't you tell us anything
- Zoulas remained silent and did not give any answer. The only thing he said in an angry tone was "Listen, all of you have your own lunacies, let me have mine. At

the end of the day, I was living with a psychopathic wife for fifteen years” (Gregoriadis, vol.: 499-501).

It is true that Zoulas’ wife suffered from mental illness due to syphilis (Mannaïos, interview, 5 May 2000), but surely his excuse was rather irrelevant. Obviously Zoulas was hiding something. In order to shed some light on the secret that Zoulas was hiding it would be helpful to understand ELAS’ hierarchy and the route that the decision to disband the 5/42 would follow under normal circumstances. Zoulas was a member of the ELAS General Headquarters of Roumeli. For any serious political issue, he was directly under the orders of Vlachopoulos and Leuterias (Papadakis, “Leuterias”, interview, 13 September 2000). Similarly, Vlachopoulos and Leuterias were under the exclusive orders of KKE’s General secretary Giorgos Siantos. Since Vlachopoulos and Leuterias did not know anything about the disbandment order (Papadakis, “Leuterias”, interview, 13 September 2000) there were only two possible scenarios: either Zoulas personally took the initiative to disband the 5/42, or Siantos gave him directly the order to do so but without informing any other EAM-ELAS official.

A definite answer cannot be given at this point for two reasons. The first reason is that –as with Orestis’ case in the first disbandment- there is no primary document to indicate that Zoulas was ordered to disband the 5/42 by Siantos, or that he was acting on his own. The second reason is that Zoulas is a person who played a key role throughout the regiment’s existence. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to draw any conclusions about him after his activities have been studied in full.⁹¹ What can be said at this point however is that Zoulas, like Orestis, did not suffer any disciplinary

⁹¹ For more details about Zoulas see ch 6.1, p 246.

consequences from ELAS and that he remained a member of the ELAS General Headquarters of Roumeli until the final disbandment of the 5/42 in April 1944.

However, in addition to Zoulas, Captain Gregoriadis as well had a major share of responsibility for the second disbandment of the 5/42. Gregoriadis admitted that he was over-zealous in his decision to attack the 5/42. Firstly, the cryptogram that he received wrote "...you are allowed to disband the 5/42" and that was not a clear military order, but a conditional directive. Furthermore, Gregoriadis was not Zoulas' subordinate. Both Zoulas and Gregoriadis were equal members of ELAS' General Headquarters of Roumeli and the fact that Gregoriadis received a directive from Zoulas did not mean that he had to obey it (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 471). Gregoriadis could have contacted the Headquarters and discussed the issue, or at least reconfirm the order. Instead, he carried the order out immediately and he marched against the 5/42. Gregoriadis admitted in his self-criticism that soon after he received the cryptogram, a young member of ELAS' youth branch, EPON *Eniaia Paneladiki Organosi Neon* (United Greek National Greek League), urged him to consult the Headquarters' Chief Political instructor Tasos Leuterias before he proceeded with his attack plan. Gregoriadis however, either due to his over-zealousness, or due to the fact that he did not get on very well with Leuterias (Papadakis, "Leuterias", interview, 13 September 2000), answered the young EPONite:

"Get lost, who do you think you are, the instructors' [Leuterias] henchman? Here we've got military orders and I am the boss. This ain't no time for politics" (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 472).

3.2. Steps Towards National Unity.

3.2.i. The Joint General Antartes Headquarters.

After the second disbandment, Psarros and some of his officers (Kaimaras, Douros and Papavasiliou) went to Aegion on the shores of the Peloponnese. In Aegion, Psarros kept receiving messages on a daily basis from the British Military Mission in Greece asking him to arrange a contact with the British and to reform his regiment under new terms and conditions. Psarros was uncompromising and refused even to discuss with the British officers. He had lost his trust in the British and he was completely disappointed with the course of events. He had started his resistance attempt with the exclusive objective of fighting the enemy and against his wishes, he was forced into a civil war. According to Pyromaglou, Psarros explained to him the reason why he took the decision to disband the regiment for good.

“Political objectives are involved in the national resistance struggle...There is no integration and unity between the resistance organisations. Due to this discord, the leader of a resistance organisation must be prepared not only for the national resistance struggle against the invader, but also for a civil war. Is it worth it to waste Greek blood? Where is all this going to end? Furthermore why does Cairo keep making promises that it is going to support the 5/42, but eventually it does nothing on time?” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 171).

After a few days, EKKKA's political leader Kartalis also arrived in Aegion and persistently tried to convince Psarros to meet the British. Eventually Psarros was convinced by Kartalis and on 29 July 1943 both men went to the Pertouli village near Trikala (Pyromaglou, 1965: 175, Kaimaras, 1979: 69). During that time in Pertouli important negotiations between EAM-ELAS, EDES and the British Military Mission were taking place. The agenda of those negotiations were the signing of the National

Bands Agreement and the formation of the Joint General Antartes Headquarters. Both the National Bands Agreements as well as the Joint General Antartes Headquarters were ideas of Major Eddie Myers and served military as well as political objectives. Their purpose was to unify all antartes bands, to determine the relationships between them so that in the future tensions and conflicts would be avoided, to co-ordinate the guerrilla warfare against the Germans, and to tackle a series of other issues concerning the administration of “mountainous free Greece”.

The main military objective was the achievement of full-scale co-operation between all resistance groups. The reason for that was that the Middle East Headquarters was preparing a military plan of the utmost importance for the allies, that involved the co-operation of the Greek antartes forces. During the spring of 1943, the allies decided to launch large-scale operations in Italy. The role of the Greek antartes forces in these operations would be of a major importance for the success of the overall plan. Their task was to carry out continuous sabotages and attacks in the period between 21 June and 14 July 1943 in order to create a diversion and mislead the Germans by giving them the impression that the new front would be opened by the landing of forces on the western coast of Greece (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.1: 472). The Middle East Headquarters formed the overall operation under the code name “Animals” and the British Military Mission in Greece was ordered to carry it out. For the success of the plan however, a centralised command under the British Military Mission and the co-ordination of all antartes groups under a Joint Headquarters was necessary.

In addition to the success of the “Animals” operation, Myers and Woodhouse were seeking to find a way to halt ELAS’ aggression towards the rest of the resistance

organisations. Through the National Bands Agreement, Myers hoped that he would increase the British influence on the Greek resistance movement, restrain ELAS and achieve peace between the various antartes forces. Hence, since March 1943 until June-July 1943 a series of discussions between EAM-ELAS, EDES and the British Military Mission concluded with the signing of the National Bands Agreement. According to the agreement, EAM-ELAS, EDES-EOEA and the 5/42 were proclaimed Advanced Allied Military Forces. Furthermore, the agreement included terms that guaranteed the freedom of forming antartes bands under the authority of the Joint Headquarters, the prevention of conflicts and brutalities between members of different bands, the division of Greece into military zones, the conditions of co-operation between the antartes groups and the respective British missions in each zone as well as the provision of supplies and weapons by the Middle East Headquarters etc.

Both EAM-ELAS and EDES-EOEA had already signed the National Bands Agreement and had already become members of the Joint General Antartes Headquarters. Due to its second disbandment however, the 5/42 did not have the chance to sign the agreement and participate in the Headquarters. Therefore, a meeting was held between Psarros, Kartalis, Myers, Aris, Sarafis, Tzimas and Colonel Rautopoulos from EDES in Pertouli. Psarros and Kartalis were straight with ELAS' leaders:

“We in EKKA intend to carry out the resistance struggle against the occupiers exclusively. We have no intention to engage in a civil war. If you in ELAS have the intention to disband us again, it would be better to tell us now with dignity. Then we are going to withdraw and abandon any attempt to form a guerrilla band in order to avoid even the slightest possibility of a civil war” (Papathanasiou, 2000: 71).

ELAS' leaders apologised once more for the previous disbandments, they guaranteed that ELAS would treat the 5/42 as a friendly force and said that the reformation of the 5/42 was a pressing need.

ELAS' answer was considered satisfactory and after that, new conditions were given to Psarros and Kartalis from Myers and ELAS' leaders in order for them to sign the National Bands Agreement and for the 5/42 to join the Joint General Antartes Headquarters. Those terms and guarantees were: a) the regiment would participate in the Joint General Headquarters, b) the reconstruction would proceed rapidly with the full support of the British Mission which was going to hasten the provision of guns and ammunition c) as a penalty, ELAS would have to transfer the weapon drops intended for it in Fokida to the 5/42, so that by late September, the 5/42 should have 1,000 well-armed men (DIS/GES F/929/B/2).⁹² d) Psarros was appointed General Commander of all antartes groups in Roumeli, e) ELAS officially apologised for the two previous disbandments and guaranteed future peaceful and productive relationship with the 5/42 (Koutras, 1981:62, DIS/GES F/929/B/25).

On 31 July 1943, EKKA-5/42 signed the National Bands Agreement and the regiment joined the Joint General Antartes Headquarters. All the terms and conditions seemed to guarantee the future of the 5/42 and it seemed the opportunity had come for the regiment to develop into a considerable combatant force. Along with the new era that the resistance movement seemed to be introduced into, the 5/42 had for the first time the chance to be established as the third pole in the Greek resistance.

3.2.ii. The Cairo Conference.

After the National Bands Agreement was signed and the Joint General Antartes Headquarters was formed, the comradeship and unity between the national resistance organisations was achieved, at least on the surface. The agreement and the Joint Headquarters however, tackled primarily military issues and were both intended to safeguard co-operation between the various resistance organisations. Nevertheless, there were a series of important political issues that remained unresolved. For that purpose, Major Myers again took the initiative to arrange a meeting between all resistance organisations for these issues to be discussed. Eventually, the meeting was held between 7 August-15 September 1943 in Cairo with the participation of delegates from EAM (Tzimas, Rousos, Tsirimokos, Despotopoulos), EDES (Pyromaglou), EKKA (Kartalis), the pre-war democratic parties, the exiled Greek government and the British Foreign Office.

The conference's key issues were: (a) the fate of the monarchy in free Greece; whether the King should return immediately after the liberation, or whether he should wait for a referendum to take place first; and (b) the formation of a provisional government immediately after the liberation. EAM, EDES and EKKA's delegates consented and seemed united on both issues. They demanded: (a) an explicit statement by the King assuring that he had no intention to return to Greece until the people's verdict was given first; and (b) the participation of representatives from the national resistance groups in a national unity government. EAM, EDES and EKKA's delegates issued a common agreement according to which:

⁹² Pyromaglou writes that the number agreed concerning the manpower of the 5/42 was 4,000 (Pyromaglou, 1965: 180-181), but the DIS/GES archives include the official document of the agreement among EKKA,

“For the sake of national unity which is the only way to safeguard our nations’ struggle and the peaceful proceeding to political normality, we believe that it is absolutely necessary that the King declares officially that he does not intend to return to Greece before the people give their verdict about the system of government that they prefer” (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.1: 496).

Irrespective of the differences in their political orientation EAM, EDES and EKKA maintained unity in their demands in Cairo and remained optimistic that they were going to achieve their goals. Eventually, they failed to achieve anything with respect to either the issue of the King or that of the provisional Government and the conference resulted in a fiasco. The main reason for their failure was the uncompromising attitude of the British on the issue of the King and the refusal of the pre-war parties to allow participation of the resistance groups in the national unity government. What had become obvious was that the British were determined to restore King George to his throne and that the King was unwilling to officially declare that he was going to return in Greece only if the people’s verdict was given.

The common declaration of EAM, EDES and EKKA disturbed Churchill who wrote to Foreign Affairs Secretary Anthony Eden:

“I am not going to submit to those bandits’ blackmail” (Apogeumatini 29 January 1976, Gasparinatos, 1988, vol.1:510).

Having the full support of the British, King George became scandalously arrogant. When he had a brief meeting with EAM’s delegates he came to meet them wearing shorts and holding a whip under his arm. When he addressed the delegates he told them

“I have heard about your games (*Kamomata*), but I want to hear them by you as well” (Hantzis, 1983, vol.2: 315-316).

The King’s appearance in front of the struggling nation’s representatives and the word “games” used to describe the bloody struggle that the national resistance was giving were

provocative to say the least. In another case, Prince Paul had an unofficial discussion with Navy officer, Commander Neofitos. Prince Paul asked Neofitos in front of a number of other officers what was his opinion about the Greek people's disposition towards the monarchy. Neofitos answered that the Greek people did not want the restoration of the monarchy. Prince Paul then stood up in anger and he shouted:

“Precisely because the Greek people do not want us, that's why the Anglo-Americans are going to get us back” (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.1: 510).

3.2.iii. The Corrosion Grows within the National Resistance Movement.

The Cairo conference had disastrous effects upon the unity of the national resistance movement and it marked a new era of polarisation, which reached its peak in October with the outbreak of the ELAS-EDES, armed conflict in Epirus. Although EAM, EDES and EKKA maintained unity over their collective demands concerning the fate of the monarchy and the provisional government, they failed to achieve anything. Taking under consideration the fact that the British were determined to restore the King to his throne by all means, EDES' and EAM reshaped their policies. The time for the liberation of Greece was near, Siantos and Zervas had to take specific decisions about the routes that they would follow. According to Kartalis:

“...now the corrosion is going to begin. National unity is now in the hands of KKE and Zervas” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 200).

Zervas read the signs and chose to adjust his policy according to the facts. He became completely attached to the British, he wiped out his strong ant-monarchist past and became a champion of the King. Zervas knew that without the British support, EDES had no chance against EAM-ELAS and he knew that he had to do anything to please the

British in order to secure their support. He was convinced that the will of the British was going to be enforced after the war and that “his [the King’s] return is certain” (Petimezas, 1991: 261). Since March 1943, Zervas had made a pro-royalist reversal in his policy that had remained secret even from his Sub-Commander Pyromaglou.

Although EDES’ new recruits kept taking the organisation’s oath that included the words: “I swear that I am going to fight with all my strength for the establishment of a non-monarchist, socialist democracy” (*Istorikon Archeion Ethnikis Antistaseos*), on 9 March 1943 Zervas sent to the King and the Middle East Headquarters a telegram that wrote:

“If the King returns after the people’s verdict, we will be the first to welcome him and we will consider the dispute over the constitutional issue as a case closed. If England for any reasons wishes the return of the King even without the people’s verdict, then we will not oppose. We are determined to co-operate with the Greek royalists to resist any attempt to establish a communist regime” (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.1: 398).

Even Woodhouse himself characterised Zervas’ lip service and double-faced attitude as either “cynical opportunism” or “blind obedience” (Woodhouse, 1976: 121).

Siantos on the other hand chose to follow a more radical and uncompromising political line towards the British, EDES and all other non-EAMic resistance organisations. He feared that the British would try to form a wide anti-EAMic block that would include all hostile forces and organisations, the security battalions included⁹³. In addition to the fiasco in Cairo, two other major developments contributed to Siantos’ increasing hostility. The first was the surrender of Italy to the allies in September 1943. During the Italian surrender, a whole Italian division in Epirus surrendered to ELAS and therefore ELAS gained full sufficiency in arms and was no longer depended on the

British for the supply of weapons. The second development was that Siantos managed to achieve full control over ELAS and KKE's Central Committee by removing Tzimas and Rousos, two of the most moderate officials of KKE who were in favour of smooth relations and co-operation with other resistance groups (Pyromaglou, 1965: 209). After having neutralised all KKE moderates, Siantos became in fact the supreme political leader of ELAS and KKE and had the power to take decisions exclusively by himself. That ended the wavering among moderates and extremists in KKE and ELAS' leadership and Siantos adopted a hard line thereafter. His line was none other than the abolition of any other resistance force before the liberation so that on the eve of liberation ELAS would be the only armed force upon Greek soil. Hence in August, 1943, even before the delegates of EAM, EDES, EKKA left for Cairo, ELAS in Peloponnese had already started disbanding small republican bands, and Siantos ordered KKE's political bureau to develop a military plan for the capture of Athens following the withdrawal of the Germans (Fleisher, 1995, vol.2: 195, Farakos, 2000, vol.1: 26).

In addition to the Cairo conference fiasco, a number of other reasons contributed to making the climate within the national resistance movement even more strained. The first reason was the withdrawal of Eddie Myers from Greece and his replacement by Chris Woodhouse in the command of the British military mission. The British ambassador in Greece, Leeper, and Churchill himself were enraged with the anti-monarchist attitude that all resistance groups showed in Cairo. Myers became the scapegoat. He was considered responsible for letting anti-monarchist sentiments grow within the Greek resistance and he was replaced by Woodhouse. Myers was an SOE man

⁹³ The security battalions were armed forces of Greek volunteers under the orders of the Germans and the Greek collaborationist government.

under the orders of the Middle East Headquarters. He was a typical officer. He gave priority first to the struggle against the Germans and then to the serving of political purposes and that is why he tried to maintain unity between the national resistance organisations. That was the purpose of the Joint General Antartes Headquarters and the National Bands Agreement of which he was the instigator. Woodhouse, on the other hand, was a man of the Foreign Office and his mission was to support EDES and protect British interests in Greece. Woodhouse's partial policy was certainly going to reinforce the crisis between EAM-ELAS and EDES as well as that between EAM-ELAS and the British even more.

The second reason that contributed to the polarisation within the Greek national resistance movement was the completion of the "Animals" operations. The objective of the "Animals" operation was achieved and the Commander of Allied Forces in the Mediterranean, General Wilson ordered all antartes bands to remain inactive, so that they could be used later on in the case of allied landing in Greece (Myers, 1975: 225-226). This inactivity also reinforced the crisis since as long as ELAS and EDES bands were engaged in joint combats and sabotages against the Germans, any possible conflicts between the two resistance organisations could be prevented. However, from the moment that ELAS and EDES bands ceased or reduced their activity against the common enemy, the outbreak of incidents between them became more possible (Gasparinatos v 1, p 482).

3.3. Political Dilemmas within the 5/42

3.3.i. Flirting with ELAS: Kartalis' Hermaphrodite Policies.

A week before Kartalis' departure to Cairo, he and Psarros had a discussion with Aris, Sarafis and Tzimas in Pertouli. ELAS' leaders made proposals for the joining of EKKA and the 5/42 in EAM-ELAS. According to the minutes of that meeting found in the archives of the General Military Command, the discussion was as follows:

“ELAS: Why don't you come and participate in EAM/ELAS since you have the same political and constitutional objectives with us?

EKKA's answer: Our participation in EAM would not be useful for either of us because: (1) Due to our political position we have more direct contacts with the English than you do; (2) Most middle class people that refuse to join EAM will be keen to join EKKA and in that way the same goal is going to be achieved; (3) There are many democratic officers who hesitate to join ELAS due to its relationship with KKE. These officers would gladly join EKKA instead...

ELAS: Your participation in ELAS would be an event of the utmost importance...It is going to give the English the impression of a powerful and integrated democratic and anti-monarchist block

EKKA's answer:...EKKA is an organisation that has not yet formed its antartes band.⁹⁴ If we join EAM, that would not create the impression that we want [of a democratic, anti-monarchist block]. Furthermore [if we continue being independent] we are going to have two voices instead of one against the British. We have got similar objectives. Consequently your interest is to push the middle class towards EKKA. We are asking you to help us since we are leading the middle class towards the same objectives” (DIS/GES F/929/B/2).

What becomes obvious from that discussion is that EAM-ELAS' officials had serious reasons for wanting EKKA-5/42 to join EAM-ELAS. On the other hand, the overall spirit of the discussion implies that although Kartalis did not want EKKA-5/42 to merge with EAM-ELAS, he found considerable similarities between EAM's and EKKA's political objectives. That sounds quite peculiar for two factions whose antartes

⁹⁴ During the time that the discussions were taking place, the 5/42 had not yet reformed.

branches had confronted each other twice on the battlefield. Obviously that flirtation between EKKA and EAM-ELAS was politically motivated.

A possible merging of EKKA with EAM would have tremendously positive effects on EAM's prestige and power. EAM's manifesto talked about a front of groups and parties:

“Any group or party which accepts the principles of this manifesto can be accepted in EAM on an equal basis...in order for any organisation to be accepted in EAM, its past and its views about the reconstruction of free and independent Greece are not taken into consideration” (*Istoriko Arheio Ethnikis Antistasis*).

Until that moment, however, only KKE and a few other small leftist parties constituted EAM. KKE's influence upon EAM was well known and it had given the impression to the public opinion that EAM was nothing more than an instrument of KKE. No other republican group had joined EAM's front and just a few republican officers and officials had joined EAM-ELAS individually. The most distinguished of them was Sarafis, but his participation in ELAS –especially under the conditions that it was made⁹⁵- failed to give the impression that EAM was a genuine and independent front free from the control of KKE and open to all political factions. The joining of EKKA -a democratic group, controlled by bourgeois politicians and distinguished officers- would give EAM the image of a genuine patriotic front, disengaged from KKE's control and open to any party, group and political ideology. Such a move would probably drive even more moderate republicans in EAM's camp, who although keen to participate in the national resistance, were hesitant towards KKE.

⁹⁵ Since October 1942, Colonel Sarafis along with Colonel Kostopoulos had formed a guerrilla band in Thessaly. The group was eventually disbanded by ELAS and Sarafis was arrested and accused for treason. After negotiating with the central committee of KKE and EAM however, Sarafis became the military commander of ELAS. That caused a negative impression in the republican camp and for many people Sarafis became the “spited Colonel” since throughout his captivity he was abused and spited at by local EAM/ELAS members

Moreover, the entry of EKKA during that time would contribute to the decline of the anti-EAM camp and would have negative effects on Zervas and EDES. The entrance of the third biggest resistance group in EAM would isolate EDES from the rest of the resistance movement. EDES, whose source of power came mostly from British support, would lose all of its popular support and would then be considered as a reactionary, monarchist group in the service of the British interests.⁹⁶ If EKKA joined EAM, the British plan to form a wide anti-EAMic front would fail and instead a wide anti-EDES front would be formed.

Kartalis, however, diplomatically rejected EAM's proposal for merging and acted to preserve EKKA's independence and autonomy. He had higher aspirations for EKKA and he believed that it was time for EKKA to drop its secondary role as a spectator. He believed that it was time for EKKA to come to the front of the national resistance political scene and become the third pole in the national resistance movement. Several developments reinforced Kartalis' confidence in EKKA's potential. During August-September 1943, the 5/42 regiment was again reformed and had reached almost 800 antartes, while many experienced officers kept joining the 5/42 regiment. During that time, there were no important problems between the 5/42 and ELAS in Fokida and the regiment gained its first resistance laurels by launching a notable campaign against the Germans and the Italians.⁹⁷ EKKA was becoming established as a major political resistance organisation. The 5/42 was participating in the Joint General Antartes Headquarters, EKKA had signed the National Bands Agreement, while Kartalis

⁹⁶ More about the impact of that issue, see ch 5.2, p 230.

⁹⁷ See ch 3.4, p 169.

participated in the Cairo conference as an equal member among EAM and EDES delegates.

While polarisation between EAM and EDES was obviously rising, Kartalis aimed at playing an arbitrator's role. Kartalis' intention was to place EKKA in the middle of EDES and EAM in order to decrease the tension between the two extremes. Such a role would not only contribute to the unity and integration of the overall national resistance movement, but would also increase EKKA's status and importance. According to Kartalis:

“On a diplomatic level, we will have to get for ourselves the role of the honest arbitrator, by representing with our small power the solution or rather the resultant of all tendencies in domestic, foreign and military politics” (Petimezas, 1991: 303).

Kartalis believed that EKKA should not shut any doors either to EAM or EDES. However, in order to achieve that, Kartalis came up with a rather opportunistic plan. In one of his letters to Psarros, Kartalis wrote:

“We've got to become the scale between ELAS and reactionary forces such as EDES. That is why we've got to have a close co-operation with KKE in terms of political orientation on the one hand, and close connections on the personal level with EDES on the other” (Petimezas, 1991: 303).

Before the delegates' departure for Cairo, Siantos had demanded in an aggressive tone the joining of EKKA in EAM. Kartalis once again diplomatically rejected his proposal and then Siantos in an angry tone said the memorable:

“Whoever is outside EAM is a Gestapo man” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 176).

Kartalis knew that Siantos would increase the pressure for the joining of EKKA in EAM and that is why he decided to follow a quite delicate policy towards both EAM and EDES.

“Towards EAM bows and friendship, but without any explicit promises. We should ask for their assistance to take the middle classes on our side, but in the eyes of the public opinion we should maintain independence from EAM” (Petimezas, 1991: 303).

On the other hand, Kartalis intended to use his personal friendship with Sub-Commander Pyromaglou⁹⁸ for strengthening his connection with EDES and for keeping EDES as an ally of EKKA.

Although Kartalis’ plan was optimistic and ambitious, it was still rather risky and he was not aware or did not take into consideration several peculiarities. As for the EKKA-EDES connection was concerned, Kartalis did not take into consideration the fact that there was deep suspicion between Zervas and Pyromaglou. Zervas had serious doubts about Pyromaglou’s loyalty and considered him more or less a traitor. In one of his letters to an associate, he wrote about Pyromaglou:

“He is not and never has been sincere. He plays a double game. He started with good intentions but soon he returned to his first love, communism. I’m keeping an eye on him and I won’t let him go anywhere again. That’s the best way to neutralise him. I will get him licking his puke” (Petimezas, 1991: 171).

Therefore, Pyromaglou who was Kartalis’ only connection with EDES was rather non-influential and non-effective. Moreover, Zervas was also suspicious towards Psarros as well, he considered him “a concealed EAMite” (Petimezas, 1991: 279) and he believed that “Psarros and EAM are collaborating” (Petimezas, 1991: 230). On the other hand, Kartalis put high stakes on ELAS’ understanding, tolerance and patience. Although ELAS in the past had proved a rather unpredictable political opponent, Kartalis placed a lot of trust on ELAS’ support and tolerance over EKKA’s hermaphrodite politics. Kartalis took a gamble that was very difficult to pay off.

⁹⁸ During the occupation Kartalis and Pyromaglou became very close friends. After the liberation, Pyromaglou married Kartalis’ daughter Emmy and in 1965 he wrote Kartalis’ biography

3.3.ii. Thymios Dedousis: The Defender of the Crown

3.3.ii.a. His early Activities

While Kartalis was developing his plans about EKKA's policy, a major development had occurred within the 5/42. Captain Thymios Dedousis, a man who was to go down in history as one of the most controversial figures within the overall national resistance movement, had joined the 5/42. For ELAS, Dedousis was later to become a traitor and an agent provocateur. On the other hand, Georgios Papandreou said about him:

“I met Captain Dedousis in jail and I got the impression that he was a Greek that came out of the 1821 art gallery” (Petimezas, 1991: 355).

Thymios Dedousis was full of contradictory features: a decisive and exhortative man, a brave officer and a passionate resistance fighter, consistent and irreconcilable towards his ideals and beliefs, but also an intriguer, a megalomaniac, pathologically dogmatic, highly tempered and a fanatic anti-communist.

Dedousis was born in the village of Tritea in Parnasida in 1910 and came from a wealthy family. In 1934 he graduated from the Euelpidon military academy and during the war he served as Commander of an anti-aircraft battery. As mentioned in chapter one, as soon as the front collapsed Dedousis returned to his village and almost immediately (summer of 1941) he mobilised in favour of the development of armed resistance bands in Parnasida. Soon however, (January 1942) he was arrested by the Italians. During his imprisonment, he suffered horrible torture. First, he was imprisoned in the Amfissa jail where he spent three months in isolation in a toilet. The Italians took his teeth and nails out with pincers, they beat him up daily and starved him for long periods in order to make

him reveal his associates, but Dedousis kept his morale and never revealed anything (Dedousis, 1949: 16-19, Koutras, 1981: 116, Koutsoklenis, manuscript memoirs)⁹⁹. In May 1942 he was court-martialed and was sentenced to just three years in prison, for an offence (resistance activity) that was usually punished by death. That was because the judges were bribed.

Although bribing the judges was something rather common for Italian court-martials, the way that Dedousis' brother claimed that the bribe money was raised is not entirely convincing.

“Even from the time that Thymios was in custody, awaiting trial, the nation's emotion and concern about him was manifested. When his colleagues in the Middle East were informed about the danger that he was under, they did a collection and raised 400 golden sovereigns that were sent to Athens, while 500 more were contributed by his relatives, industrialists Elias and Thymios Kyriakis” (Dedousis, 1949: 20).

As far as the contribution of Dedousis' relatives is concerned, his brother's testimony can be considered as sufficient and acceptable. The same, however, does not apply for the collection that Ioannis Dedousis claims that Thymios' colleagues made in the Middle East, since the evidence produced cannot be considered as adequate. Although exhaustive research was undertaken to find evidence about the claimed collection among the Greek officers of the Middle East, such a collection was never cross-referenced by any other source or testimony. Additionally, by taking into consideration the conditions that prevailed during that time in occupied Greece, as well as in the Middle East, the conclusion is that something like that would be almost impossible to have happened. It is well known that it took months for an escape to the Middle East to be organised and for a return to Greece things were much more difficult. The span of four months between

⁹⁹ Koutras claims that the signs of the tortures were obvious on Dedousis for many years

Dedousis' arrest and his trial was definitely too short for the news to be spread in Greece, then in the Middle East, then for the officers there to get mobilised and raise the considerable amount of 400 golden sovereigns, and finally for his colleagues to send the money back to Greece.

Eventually, Dedousis stayed in prison for almost a year and in May 1943 he managed to escape. He fled to Athens where he contacted the "Military Hierarchy" organisation through his personal political friends Christos Zalokostas and ex Member of Parliament Eungelos Kalantzis.

3.3.ii.b. "The Military Hierarchy". The Cuckoo of the Greek Resistance.

"The Military Hierarchy" was an organisation that throughout the occupation adopted habits that were similar to those of the the cuckoo. Field Marshal Papagos was the leader of the "Military Hierarchy" organisation of Athens and Generals Pitsicas, Papadopoulos, Dedes, Bakopoulos and Kosmas were its leading members. Although "The Military Hierarchy" manifested itself as a resistance organisation, it never took any resistance activity against the occupation forces. Its main objectives mentioned in its manifesto were: (a) to try to preserve unity among the officers' corps; (b) to protect social order and the established social structure against anyone who would challenge them; (c) To be totally obedient towards H. M. the King and his government (DIS/GES F/913/TH/246). In other words, the group's main objectives were the opposition to EAM-ELAS' plans and the restoration of monarchy in post-war Greece.

For the accomplishment of its objectives, the organisation did not have the intention of forming an armed group of its own, but rather it aimed to undertake leadership of all the resistance organisations that already existed, and put all of them under the King's orders. Indicative of the organisation's attitude and its will to manipulate and exploit the resistance movement was the following incident: After the Joint General Antartes Headquarters was formed, "The Military Hierarchy" sent to the Headquarters General Tsipouras in order to have a meeting with the other resistance leaders and the British Military Mission. Although the Joint General Antartes Headquarters did not even invite General Tsipouras, he informed the leaders of ELAS, EDES and EKKA that he accepted to undertake the leadership of all resistance organisations and become the Chief Commander of the Joint General Headquarters. That provocation infuriated all the leaders of ELAS, EDES, EKKA and especially Psarros. Eventually, the only thing that Tsipouras managed to achieve was to be arrested and imprisoned as a collaborator, since it was soon discovered that he had served as the Prefect of Attica in the early days of the occupation (Hatzis, 1983, vol.2: 49-251, Gerozisis, 1996, vol.2: 641-642, Zalokostas, 1997: 101-102).

After failing to undertake the command of the overall resistance movement in that inelegant way, "The Military Hierarchy" adopted another more silent and underground method to promote pro-royalist sentiments within all republican resistance organisations. The problem for the achievement of such a plan however, was that both EDES and EKKA manifested themselves as democratic and anti-royalist organisations. Therefore, the leadership of "The Military Hierarchy" did not choose to challenge or boycott the resistance movement as most of the royalists did, but rather it chose to penetrate in it and

manipulate it, in order to undermine quietly its democratic disposition and turn it to more pro-royalist tendencies.

“The Military Hierarchy” was in contact with almost 300 officers loyal to the King and the pre-war Metaxas regime throughout Greece (Gerozisis, 1996. Vol.2: 623). Its plan was to send small but solid groups of officers, in all republican resistance groups, in the Greek forces of the Middle East and even in the security battalions in order to create pro-royalist nucleuses under its command in all major anti-EAM armed forces. Inside those forces and especially inside the republican resistance groups those officers would slowly form pro-royalist factions. Given time, those factions would act according to the instructions of “The Military Hierarchy”. Many times, even the officers that were ordered to join EDES or the 5/42 were uneasy and unwilling to join because they considered those groups as traitorous due to their anti-royalist tendencies, but the leaders of the organisation

“...forced all those royalist officers who were distrustful towards Zervas or Psarros to join” (Zalokostas, 1997: 100).

In that safe and easy way and without having eaten “oak apples and boiled turtle”,¹⁰⁰ “The Military Hierarchy” and its officers managed to penetrate many resistance organisations, exactly like cuckoos penetrate other birds’ nests.

“The Military Hierarchy” used Thymios Dedousis to penetrate the 5/42. “The leaders of the organisation explained to Thymios what was his duty in national resistance and what was expected from people like him” (Dedousis, 1949: 33). Contrary to the majority of officers and antartes of the 5/42 who were ignorant about the role of EKKA and its relation with the 5/42, Dedousis through “The Military Hierarchy” was aware of

the political programme and the constitutional objectives of EKKA and had taken certain orders or at least guidelines about the attitude that he should maintain towards EKKA. They gave him the command of 20 officers, all of them members of “The Military Hierarchy” and sent him to join the 5/42. After a short tour around the villages of Parnasida, Dedousis formed his first band with 50 men and joined the 5/42 during its third reformation¹⁰¹ “with strong faith to the sacred liberating struggle and with strong commitment exclusively to the motherland and the King” (Dedousis, 1949: 34). From the first moment he joined the 5/42, Dedousis made himself clear about his political beliefs and showed where he stood towards EKKA. During the reformation ceremony, Major Farmakis, one of the democratic officers of the 5/42 tore the crown from his cap and threw it away in front of everyone. Dedousis protested to Psarros and asked him to clarify whether he and his men assumed any political and constitutional obligations towards EKKA. Although Psarros answered that the 5/42 men were by no means politically committed towards anyone, that incident had a certain impact on the royalist officers that had just arrived from Athens. Indeed, some of them refused to join the 5/42 and returned back.

From his first moment in the 5/42, Dedousis worked for the disengagement of the regiment from the political guardianship of EKKA and for that reason he commenced “a large campaign of national propaganda, using loyal and trustworthy people” (Dedousis, 1949: 36).

¹⁰⁰ Expression used by the early antartes in order to indicate the difficulties they had to face in the early days of the resistance

¹⁰¹ As seen before, during the first two disbands and reformations of the 5/42 Dedousis was in jail, out of which he escaped just a few days before the third reformation.

3.4. The new 5/42.

From the end of July until mid- September 1943, the regiment was reformed for the third time. For once more, Psarros ordered his officers to gather their men and start the recruitment of new volunteers. During that time there were considerable changes within the 5/42. The regiment became militarily advanced and well armed with machine-guns, mortars, explosives etc. It expanded all over Fokida, while it improved its supply networks, communications and intelligence. Many new officers (more than 70) came to join the 5/42 and the overall number of the regiment's officers reached 100-130 (Kaimaras, 1979: 71, Koutras, 1981: 63, Protopapas, interview 6 May 2000). These officers came not only from Fokida, but also from the nearby regions of Roumeli, Athens, and other parts of Greece. After the recruitment of officers and antartes was completed, the regiment's manpower reached almost 800 men.¹⁰² The 5/42's final structure (until its end) was:

Commander: Colonel Dimitrios Psarros

Sub-Commander: Lieutenant Colonel Konstantinos Lagouranis

Staff officer: Captain Athanasios Koutras

The regiment was divided in two battalions:

- Parnassida Battalion (1st Battalion)

Commander: Major Christos Fotias (initially), Major Ioannis Papathanasiou (From 7.3.1944 to 10.4.1944), Major Elias Baizanos (10.4.1944 to 17.4.1944)

1st Company (Vardousia) **Commander:** Captain Athanasios Koutras

2nd Company (Northern Parnassida) Commander: Reserve Lieutenant Captain Andreas

Mitalas

3rd Company (Southern Ghiona) Commander: Lieutenant Captain Georgios Douros

4th Company (Northern Ghiona) Commander: Lieutenant Captain Georgios Kaimaras

5th Company (Trikorfo) Commander: Captain Thymios Dedousis

Machine gun Platoon, Commander: Lieutenant Captain Konstantinos Apostolopoulos

- Dorida Battalion (2nd Battalion)

Commander: Lieutenant Colonel Euthimios Papavasiliou (initially), Major Georgios

Kapentzonis (later)

1st Company, Commander: Captain Georgios Liveris

2nd Company, Commander: Captain Anastasios Kouvelis

Independent Company, Commander: Major Georgios Kapentzonis

Machine gun Platoon, Commander: Lieutenant Captain Polikarpos Papadimitriou

- Southern Parnassos Headquarter (Fokida-Biotia border) Commander: Konstantinos

Kokorelis (Limited manpower and activity)

- Desfina and Arahova Double-Company (Fokida-Biotia Border) Commander: Major

Loukas Mannaos (Limited manpower and activity)

- Sabotage unit Commander: Major Georgios Giakoumakis

- Medical service Doctors Athanasios Pilalas, Ioannis Paulostathis, Athanasios

Tserliagos.

¹⁰² Kaimaras claimed that the regiment's manpower was 1,500-2,000 antartes, but these figures were rather excessive. (See Papathanasiou, 2000: 82, Koutras, interview, 9 January 2000, Protopapas, interview 6 May 2000).

- Apart from the above combatant units stationed in the wider Fokida area, the regiment as well as EKKA, had its own delegate in the Joint General Antartes Headquarters in Karpenisi manned by Lieutenant-Colonel Vlachos, Major Doukas, Captain Dedousis (Thymios Dedousis' relative) and Sub-Lieutenant Papagianopoulos.¹⁰³

Every Company's manpower ranged between approximately 80 to 130 regular antartes. In addition to the regular antartes, every village had its own combatant group manned by villagers who continued living in their villages and who did not follow the regiment on a permanent basis, but who had the obligation to defend their villages from German raids and support 5/42's regular bands when necessary (e.g. in cases of battles near their villages). These reserve fighters were almost 400-500 and along with the regiment's regular antartes, the 5/42's total manpower reached almost 1,200-1,300 men.

While the 5/42's third reformation was still ongoing, the regiment undertook a rather notable combatant activity against the German and Italian forces in Fokida. During September and October 1943, almost daily 5/42 bands gave a series of battles against the occupying forces. The regiment started fulfilling at last its purpose as a resistance group and gained its first resistance laurels. The most important of those battles were:

- The Arachova battle (10 September 1943). The Germans assaulted the Arachova village and a small 5/42 force (Manaios and Farmakis Company) defended the village. 5/42 casualties: one dead. German casualties: unverified (DIS/GES F/929/B/112, Koutras, 1981: 68, Kaimaras, 1979: 97).
- The Lidoriki battle (12-13 September 1943). After the surrender of Italy, almost the whole regiment (Parnassida and Dorida battalions) sieged Lidoriki, the capital city of

¹⁰³ See Kaimaras, 1979: 74-75, Koutras, 1981: 65, Papathanasiou, 2000: 80-82

Dorida in order to force the Italian guard there to surrender. The Germans however sent a big force to end the siege and force the Italians to surrender to them. Eventually the 5/42 withdrew from Lidoriki. During those battles the 5/42's casualties were six wounded. 5/42 men managed to arrest three Italians, German casualties unverified (DIS/GES F/929/B/112, DIS/GES F/929/B/4/18, Kaimaras, 1979: 86-89, Koutras, 1981: 66).

- Disarmament of the Italian guard of Itea (13 September 1943). Captain Dedousis surrounded the Italian guard of Itea and arrested most of its men (DIS/GES F/929/B/112, Dedousis, 1949: 38-39, Kaimaras, 1979: 97, Koutras, 1981: 68).
- The Skaloula battle (14 September 1943). After the Germans captured Lidoriki, they attacked the Skaloula village and started looting and burning the village's houses. 5/42 units (Mitalas, Kaimaras, Dedousis' Companies along with the Karoutes village combatant group) attacked the Germans and forced them out of the village. 5/42 casualties: one dead, four wounded. German casualties: six dead, fifteen wounded (DIS/GES F/929/B/112, Dedousis, 1949: 37, Kaimaras, 1979: 89-91, Koutras, 1981: 66).¹⁰⁴
- The Anathema battle (15 September 1943). 5/42 units of the Dorida battalion under the command of Papavasiliou ambushed a convoy of German trucks. 5/42 casualties: eight wounded. German casualties: two dead and two burned trucks (DIS/GES F/929/B/112, Kaimaras, 1979: 90-91, Koutras, 1981: 66-67).
- The Tsakorema battle (17 September 1943). That was the regiment's most important battle. 5/42 units from both the Parnassida and the Dorida battalions ambushed a large convoy of 50 German trucks, 2 tanks and a number of motorcycles that was going

from Amfissa to Lidoriki. The battle was fierce and the Germans eventually failed to reach Lidoriki. 5/42 casualties: four wounded. German casualties: unverified, but rather serious (DIS/GES F/929/B/112, Kaimaras, 91-95, Koutras, 1981: 67-68).¹⁰⁵

- The Vounichora area battles (25-30 September). After the Tsakorema battle, the Germans wanted to keep the Amfissa-Lidoriki road open. For that reason they had installed guard posts throughout the road. Kaimaras' company attacked those posts in various occasions. 5/42 casualties: one dead and five wounded. German casualties unverified DIS/GES F/929/B/112, Kaimaras, 1979: 95-96).
- The Argomira incident (26 October 1943). A small 5/42 band from Dedousis' company ambushed and destroyed a German truck. 5/42 casualties: none. German casualties five dead (DIS/GES F/929/B/112, Kaimaras, 1979: 98, Koutras, 1981:68).
- Zodochos Pigi incident (29 October 1943). A small 5/42 band from Douros' company ambushed a German truck. 5/42 casualties: none. German casualties: two wounded (DIS/GES F/929/B/112, Kaimaras, 1979: 97, Koutras, 1981:68-69).
- The battle in the 51st Km of the Gravia-Amfissa road (11 January 1944). Mitalas and Kaimaras' companies along with Vlaikos' sabotage unit were ordered to block the Gravia-Amfissa road from any German convoys. Eventually a German column of ten trucks and a tank attempted to break the 5/42 block unsuccessfully. During that battle,

¹⁰⁴ Dedousis' estimation of 140 Germans dead is totally imaginary.

¹⁰⁵ During one of my field trips in Fokida, I had the chance to visit the Tsakorema area with my uncle who had also fought there and who gave me valid and objective information about that specific battle. Although the battle did not last for 6 hours and the Germans did not have 100 dead as Kaimaras claimed (Kaimaras 91-95), my uncle assured me that the Germans had severe casualties and that the 5/42 casualties were very little. The Tsakorema area was ideal for a successful ambush since it gave the maximum cover and safety to the attacking forces, while it left the defending forces completely uncovered. Moreover, the fact that the 5/42 suffered so little casualties, while the Germans had large casualties was due to the very good planing of the overall operation that included the mining of the road, diversion, firing the convoy from both sides of the road, blocking the convoy's head and tale etc.

the 5/42 had one dead from an accidental explosion of a mine. German casualties: unverified (DIS/GES F/929/B/112, Kaimaras, 1979: 117-121, Koutras, 1981: 74-75).

- German mopping up operations (February 1944). The Germans launched a large-scale anti-guerrilla campaign in Fokida with the purpose of eliminating all antartes forces in the area and regain control over the region's road-network. Although the 5/42 and ELAS co-operated during this campaign, the Germans managed to regain control over most of the region's strategic points (The Gravia-Lidoriki-Amfissa road etc). During the campaign, five 5/42 antartes were killed and nine were captured and died in German concentration camps. German casualties: unverified but rather serious (PRO H5 5/279, DIS/GES F/929/B/112, Kaimaras, 1979: 122-127, Koutras, 1981: 77)

In addition to the regiment's development as an advanced antartes force, during that period there were serious political and ideological changes within the 5/42. Officially, nothing had changed and the regiment's men were taking the exact same oath of loyalty to the national resistance struggle and of solidarity to anyone who fights the invader that they were taking during the initial formation.¹⁰⁶ Psarros kept repeating that no one had to take any political obligation towards EKKA and that the only cause that the regiment served was national resistance (Dedousis, 1949: 34). Apparently, nothing had changed in the 5/42's official political and ideological doctrine. Kaimaras claims that politics was not an issue even during the third reformation and that everyone was dedicated exclusively to the war against the invaders (Kaimaras, interview 11 May 2000). Nevertheless, things had changed in the political attitudes of the 5/42 officers and antartes.

In an unofficial manner, politics had become a central issue amongst the 5/42 men. The regiment had already been disbanded by ELAS twice, 5/42 antartes had confronted ELAS in the battlefield and there was a number of dead from ELAS bullets. No one was convinced by the explanations that ELAS gave about the two previous disbandments (Kouvelis, interview 18 April 2000, Kokoris, interview 19 August 2000) and there was no chance that the 5/42's men trust towards ELAS would ever be restored. It had become obvious that the 5/42 and ELAS belonged to opposite camps and it was reasonable for the 5/42 antartes to consider ELAS as a hostile force. It was impossible to forget and forgive and would take "the kindness of a missionary to disregard the two disbandments and consider ELAS as fellow antartes" (Kouvelis, interview 18 April 2000). Although -as in the first and second reformations- anti-ELAS sentiments were not manifested in any collective way, certainly anti-ELAS sentiment among the regiment's men had increased during the third reformation.

The more recent ELAS-5/42 conflict had also a serious effect upon the regiment's coherence. During the first formation, the 5/42 was a totally homogenous group. During the third reformation however, this homogeneity did no longer exist and three main informal factions had started making their appearance within the regiment. The first was the EKKA-Psarros faction. That faction was composed of Psarros, a small number of high rank officers (Sub-Commander Langouranis, Majors Baizanos, Farmakis, Papathanasiou, sub-Lieutenant Mitalas) and the EKKA-5/42 delegate that was attached to the Joint General Antartes Headquarters in Karpenisi, (Majors Doukas, Vlachos, sub-Lieutenant Papagianopoulos). These officers were Psarros' chiefs of staff, the regiment's elite. They were democratic officers loyal to Psarros and connected with EKKA and

¹⁰⁶ See ch 2.3.ii, p 116.

Kartalis. Although all of them opposed EAM-ELAS, they knew that ELAS was a mighty opponent and they favoured peaceful relations and co-operation between ELAS and the 5/42 (Papadakis, interview 13 September 2000)

The second faction within the regiment was Dedousis' faction. That faction was composed of Captain Dedousis, his 20 officers who were members of "The Military Hierarchy" and the 100 antartes of Dedousis' company. That faction also included Commander of the Dorida battalion Major Kapentzonis and his 200 antartes. Anti-communist and pro-royalist sentiments within that faction were much more obvious and overwhelming and many of Dedousis' and Kapentzonis' officers and antartes wore the crown on their caps and sang royalist anthems (Koutras, 1981: 113). The Dedousis faction was hostile towards EKKA and they considered it as a concealed pro-communist organisation. Dedousis and his men were in favour of a more uncompromising line towards EAM-ELAS and believed that the regiment should not tolerate any more humiliation by ELAS.

Between these two factions there was the "silent majority" of the 5/42 officers and antartes. These men were faced with serious dilemmas. Although they were anti-communists and hated ELAS, they were aware of ELAS' power and they knew that the regiment should follow a moderate policy towards EAM-ELAS. On the other hand, although they were loyal to Psarros and considered him a man of virtue and a model officer, they were suspicious and mistrustful towards EKKA. During the reformation period everything within the regiment was still vague and these men were hesitant in joining any of the two factions. However, the new period of crisis that the 5/42 was soon

going to enter was going to put an end to their dilemmas and it would be more difficult, if not impossible, for those men to maintain their neutrality.

Conclusion

Although the 5/42 was originally formed on an exclusively military, non-political basis and although officially it was dedicated to the national resistance struggle alone, it unavoidably became involved in the turmoil of the political antagonisms within the national resistance movement. EAM-ELAS' aggressiveness was the proof that a national resistance struggle disengaged from politics was a utopia and that political manoeuvring was necessary for the regiment to survive. Furthermore, the participation of the 5/42 in the Joint General Antartes Headquarters, Kartalis' participation in the Cairo conference and the development of the 5/42 as a considerable antartes unit increased the role and magnitude of EKKA-5/42 within the national resistance movement and made EKKA-5/42 a key participant in the political antagonisms among the national resistance organisations.

However, the response towards EAM-ELAS' aggression was not uniform within EKKA-5/42. Kartalis and Dedousis had totally different views over the political line that the regiment should follow towards EAM-ELAS. Kartalis knew that the survival of EKKA and the 5/42 depended upon the good will of the mighty EAM-ELAS. Therefore, he chose to follow a friendly and diplomatic policy towards EAM-ELAS in order to achieve its tolerance and support, but at the same time to try to ensure the consensus of EDES and the British. Dedousis' policy on the other hand, was by far less delicate and

diplomatic. He was a dedicated royalist and anti-communist. His objective as well as the objective of “The Military Hierarchy” was above all the restoration of the monarchy in free Greece. There could be no peace between Dedousis and EAM-ELAS.

Apart from the different policies amongst the EKKA-5/42 leaders, the 5/42 officers and antartes were also concerned about the policy that the regiment should follow in the future. Although some of them had already decided where they stood towards EAM-ELAS and towards Psarros, Kartalis and Dedousis, the vast majority of them were in a state of mixed emotions. Given time they would also make their stand and choose camps.

The period considered here was one of transition for the 5/42. It was a period of adjustments to new important developments and of planning about the future. Too much happened in too little time and these developments caused an identity crisis for the 5/42 and affected the regiment’s coherence. Although during this period, there were no obvious signs of disunity within the regiment, or between the regiment and EKKA, the seeds of such disunity were planted. Factions were being formed; different and opposite strategies started to be processed. These factions were still vague and these policies had not yet matured, but as tension and discord within the wider resistance movement grew, lines would soon be drawn. Factions within the 5/42 would become more obvious and concrete, while the difference of opinion between Kartalis and Dedousis was to become more explicit and unbridgeable.

CHAPTER 4

Requiem for the 5/42

The meso-level analysis in this chapter will focus upon events that occurred between October 1943 and April 1944, the regiment's dramatic last six months. During that period, the domestic political antagonisms discussed in the previous chapter developed into a full rupture within the regiment. That internal crisis disintegrated the regiment's coherence and discipline and eventually contributed to its collapse.

This chapter will highlight the sequence of events that provoked the crisis within the 5/42 and the crisis between the 5/42 and ELAS, which led to the regiment's final disbandment. The purpose is to highlight the causes and effects of the internal schism and to discuss the decision making and policies of Psarros, Dedousis and the regiment's officers during this period of tension. Various documents, most of them found in the archives of Greek Army's History Bureau depict the policies and strategies that 5/42 and ELAS leaders maintained during that period of crisis. These documents show that Psarros made desperate attempts to satisfy ELAS and find a formula that would resolve the crisis. Nevertheless, Psarros' attempts proved ineffective since both Dedousis and ELAS seemed determined and eager to confront one another on the battlefield.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the events that caused a certain level of discord within the regiment, were the two successive disbandments. However, during the period that this chapter discusses the event that signalled the crisis within the 5/42 was the ELAS-EDES war in Epirus. EKKA and Kartalis personally maintained a favourable attitude towards EAM-ELAS throughout the ELAS-EDES war. Kartalis' objective was to soothe EAM-ELAS and protect the 5/42 from a possible new disbandment. However, regardless of his motives, the vast majority of the 5/42 officers and antartes considered Kartalis' attitude as treason. The rejection of EKKA was led and manipulated by Captain Dedousis who took the initiative to issue a memorandum that denounced EKKA and placed the 5/42 regiment under the direct orders of the King (February 1944). That memorandum was signed by most of the regiment's officers and in fact meant the final schism between EKKA and the 5/42.

Dedousis' memorandum along with his provocative behaviour caused not only a schism between the 5/42 and EKKA, but also a serious crisis in 5/42-ELAS relations. Soon after the proclamation was issued, minor incidents occurred between Dedousis' company and ELAS' forces in Fokida. During these incidents, an ELAS antartis was killed and that was an event that opened Pandora's box. ELAS and the 5/42 were heading for a new conflict. Although Psarros took a series of initiatives to restrain Dedousis and calm spirits down, he was powerless to impose discipline against him and Dedousis kept pushing things to the edge. On the other hand, ELAS maintained a hard line towards Psarros and rejected all of his efforts to negotiate and find a peaceful solution to the dispute. Eventually on 17 April 1944, in the Klima area, ELAS launched its final battle against the 5/42 and within a few hours the regiment collapsed. Psarros surrendered to

ELAS, but although a prisoner he was murdered along with tens of other 5/42 officers and antartes.

4.1. The Civil War within the Civil War: The EKKA-5/42 Schism

4.1.i. The EKKA-ELAS Alliance: Brothers in Arms, or for the Love of Big Brother?

Around 500 BC, Athenian politician and philosopher Solon issued a law according to which in the case of the outbreak of civil war in the city, all civilians ought to join one of the opposing camps. Those who kept a neutral attitude throughout the conflict and refused to join one of the opposing camps were punished with the penalty of the deprivation of their political rights, one of the most harsh and disgraceful punishments of ancient Athens (Manolopoulos, 1995: 61). Almost 2,500 years later, EKKA had to face a similar dilemma and the time had come when the group had to abandon its neutrality and openly support EAM-ELAS or the anti-EAMic camp.

During the first days of October 1943 and while the 5/42 was giving its first battles against the Germans and the Italians, dramatic developments occurred far from Fokida, in the mountains of Epirus. After a series of local incidents between ELAS and EDES bands, a full-scale conflict between the two resistance organisations broke out. The ELAS-EDES conflict lasted for almost four months and exceeded in violence any other conflict between Greek resistance groups which had occurred till then. The ELAS-EDES war in Epirus marked a new era of polarisation within the national resistance movement. The consequences of that polarisation had a dramatic impact upon EKKA and the 5/42.

The day, following the outbreak of the war (10th October) ELAS' delegates in the Joint General Antartes Headquarters in Karpenisi demanded from EKKA's delegates to take an immediate and explicit stand towards the ELAS-EDES conflict and issue an explicit official statement. EKKA's delegates issued a statement according to which:

“EKKA was informed today that the camouflaged reactionaries threw away their masks and openly followed the path of treason...Sadly, EDES -as EAM's committee of Roumeli denounced- betrayed the struggle, it co-operated with the Germans and turned arms against our brave brothers who defend Greece's honour. Against such an unpatriotic attitude, the EKKA headquarters of Roumeli declares that it stigmatises this treason and supports the phalanx of the struggling Greeks. Our thoughts are turned to the heroic antartes of ELAS. We raise our voice in an oath of solidarity and brotherly love to them” (DIS/GES F/929/B, Gregoriadis, vol.4: 440).

Obviously, all that praising for ELAS was intended to serve some purpose.

The editor of that proclamation was Sub-Lieutenant Papagianopoulos,¹⁰⁷ but all other EKKA officers of the Karpenisi headquarters (Vlachos, Doukas, A. Dedousis¹⁰⁸) also gave their approval. Their intention was to appease ELAS and avoid a new 5/42-ELAS conflict. According to Papagianopoulos, while he and the rest of EKKA's delegates were in Karpenisi, isolated from the 5/42 in Fokida, they feared that ELAS would launch an attack not only against EDES, but against the 5/42 as well. Given the pressure that ELAS put upon EKKA's delegates to take a clear position towards the ELAS-EDES conflict, Papagianopoulos thought that by issuing a pro-ELAS proclamation, ELAS would be satisfied, and the danger of a new 5/42 disbandment could be avoided, while on the other hand time could be won until orders arrived from Kartalis (*Istoriki Epitheorisis*, 1965, vol.8-9). After a week Kartalis along with Bakirtzis went to Karpenisi, where they met with EKKA's delegates (Vlachos and Papagianopoulos) as

¹⁰⁷ See “EKKA-Roumeli Headquarters” in *Istoriki Epitheorisis*, 1965, vol. 8-9

¹⁰⁸ Alekos Dedousis was distantly related with Captain Thymios Dedousis

well as with ELAS' officials. Not only did Kartalis approve the proclamation, but he went even further by sending a telegram to ELAS according to which:

"EKKA decided to participate in operations against EDES. Please notify me urgently in Sperchiada...Georgios Kartalis 18-10-43" (DIS/GES G.Agorou F/ST/38).

In the absence of Psarros, Kartalis and Bakirtzis decided to reinforce ELAS' forces in Epirus against EDES with a small 5/42 company of 30 men. Kartalis informed Psarros about his intention two days later with a letter. That letter is an important document since in it, Kartalis' explains to Psarros the reasons of his pro-ELAS actions:

"If you don't agree with this decision [to support ELAS with 30 men against EDES], I urge you to disapprove of me personally by saying anything you want. I am taking full responsibility...please take your decision without any reluctance and condemn me if you think that the reasons I am going to mention to you do not justify adequately such a decision and do not protect EKKA's interests.

At this point we have got to make the big decision between EAM and EDES. EAM is determined to succeed in this war against EDES...From a military point of view, Alexis [Bakirtzis] Vlachos and Doukas believe that EAM will achieve a decisive victory by exterminating EDES...Conclusions:

1) EAM is going to dominate. Our attitude in Kiseli [he means the contacts with ELAS' Headquarters]¹⁰⁹ caused us a lot of criticism by ELAS. We were accused as opportunists. In order to prove the opposite, I was forced to accept Rigas' [ELAS' officer] proposal to send a unit of 30 men as a symbolic proof that we are on their side. If we do not follow that policy, EAM –which as I foresee is going to win this war- will sweep us out like a pile of straws after the end of the hostilities with EDES, since on occasions like these, neutrality equals hostility. Now we have got many chances to survive as an independent organisation...and if we agree to join EAM we will be accepted with much more dignified terms than before. Who should we be afraid of?

Just the English...and even if we suppose that the English will refuse to help us, I think that EKKA is going to just get through a quick period of difficulties, but eventually return stronger along with EAM. Because the English need the Greek guerrilla army and as in Yugoslavia, they are going to support those, who are really powerful. At the end of the day, we had to chose among the certain and deadly hostility of EAM and the vague and weak friendship of the English. I chose to avoid the first. I hope I will be able to improve the situation with the English by letting them understand that due to their fault we have remained a small island of 400 rifles within an EAM sea,¹¹⁰ that we are in fact forced to follow

¹⁰⁹ See ch 3.3.i, p 156.

¹¹⁰ He means the negligence of the British military mission towards the provision of weapons for the 5/42.

a pro-EAM policy and that we are trying to diminish the co-operation with EAM to the minimum.

2) Let's examine the second scenario –the possibility of a settlement between EDES and EAM. In that case, the existing status quo is just going to be restored and EKKA is going to take back its place in the contemporary distribution of power, with a possible minor damage as far as the English support is concerned. This possibility is less likely to occur and the English support is not that worthy anyway, while EAM's support is valuable and that's why I believe that we can bare the possible consequences without any worry.

3) The third possibility of an EDES victory is absolutely impossible...(Petimezas, 1991: 359-361).

That was Kartalis' reasoning for his most controversial action in the history of EKKA-5/42. For a start, Kartalis was convinced that ELAS would be victorious against EDES and he adopted his policy according to that hypothesis. Without a doubt, the outbreak of the ELAS-EDES conflict along with ELAS' firm assertion towards EKKA to choose sides allowed Kartalis very limited choices and a very limited space for political manoeuvring. To maintain a completely neutral attitude towards the ELAS-EDES conflict was impossible, while to support EDES openly would probably mean suicide for EKKA and the 5/42. Kartalis had no other alternative than to follow a pro-EAM attitude. Nevertheless, Kartalis' proposal to send a 5/42 company to fight next to ELAS against EDES was rather extreme. There was a major difference between the issuing of a supportive statement towards ELAS and of becoming comrades in arms with ELAS even with a small, symbolic force (Protopapas, interview 14 January 2000).

After these developments, EKKA was entering a new era. EKKA, which aimed to be established as a neutral agent of moderate politics and stay out of the discord within the national resistance movement, became involved in the conflict afterwards. It was obvious that EKKA's neutrality and autonomy was permanently lost. Kartalis' aspiration to give EKKA the profile of the honest arbitrator or the representative of the moderate

“silent majority” had failed. From that point onwards, the big issue for EKKA would be just the survival of the organisation, even if that meant giving credit to ELAS. Obviously, the only way for EKKA to survive and to avoid the “big brother’s” menace was to get more attached to EAM-ELAS. Although Kartalis’ manoeuvres towards the ELAS EDES conflict rescued EKKA and the 5/42 on the short-run from a new disbandment, it had an impact with severe, long-term effects. Kartalis’ biggest mistake was that he did not include Captain Dedousis and the 5/42’s men in his political equations.

4.1.ii. Frustration and Conspiracy: The 5/42’s “Delicate” Mutiny.

EKKA’s controversial proclamation was printed in thousands of copies by EAM-ELAS and was distributed all around Roumeli. Soon everybody in Fokida was aware of the proclamation and EKKA’s overall attitude towards the EDES-ELAS conflict (*Istoriki Epitheorisis*, 1965: 8-9). The proclamation’s content caused major turmoil among the 5/42 officers and antartes. The 5/42 had been disbanded twice by ELAS, while EDES on the other hand was considered by 5/42 men as a friendly organisation which was facing the exact arrogance and hostility by ELAS. For the average 5/42 antartis or officer, EKKA’s proclamation and its suggestion to send a 5/42 company side by side with ELAS against EDES was a scandalously provocative treason (Protopapas, interview 14 January 2000). The 5/42 antartes and followers were oblivious to the political manoeuvring within the resistance movement. They could not understand the deeper purpose of EKKA’s proclamation and neither did they know the objectives of Kartalis’ policies (Zacharias, interview, 16 May 2000, Kouvelis, interview, 18 April 2000). They just saw

the political branch of their group betraying them and allying with their enemy against a friendly organisation.

Among 5/42's men, the hostility towards EKKA had become obvious, and that is why in late October 1943 Kartalis, Bakirtzis, Vlachos and Papagianopoulos went to Amfissa to explain to Psarros and the rest of the 5/42 officers the reasons and motives of their actions. The meeting was held within a climate of anxiety and tension. The 5/42 officers were enraged with EKKA's officials, while Dedousis joined in the meeting fully armed and accompanied by his personal escort (Koutras, 1981: 72). In his speech Kartalis highlighted the reasons that led him to issue the pro-ELAS proclamation and the purpose it served and then he repeated his proposal about the 5/42's symbolic support to ELAS with a small company (*Istoriki Epitheorisis*, 1965, vol.8-9). Psarros rejected that proposal and reassured everyone that the regiment would not place itself in the middle of the ELAS-EDES conflict, but instead would struggle for the achievement of national unity.

"Dedousis then, as if he wished for Psarros to say something else got up, pointed his machinegun and with his finger on the trigger insulted not only Kartalis, Bakirtzis and Vlachos but also Psarros as traitors of the King" (Koutras, 1981: 72).

Psarros managed to calm down Dedousis and the incident ended.

From the first moment that Dedousis joined the regiment, his attitude towards EKKA was negative. After the proclamation was issued however, Dedousis became more and more radical. According to his brother:

"[After EKKA's proclamation was issued] our company with Thymios on the lead drew the sword and entered a new phase of the national struggle: the open battle against communism" (Dedousis, 1949: 49).

Dedousis and his men launched a propaganda campaign and started touring the villages of Fokida in order to recruit more antartes. During that campaign various minor incidents

occurred (beatings, disputes etc) among Dedousis' men and members of EAM-ELAS, but while ELAS was at war with EDES, Dedousis did not draw the line. Probably he waited for the war's outcome in order to proceed with any further actions.

Eventually, the ELAS-EDES war ended in mid-February 1944 with the Myrofiloplaka agreement. The agreement's purpose was both to cease the hostilities between EDES and ELAS, and unite all resistance organisations. Kartalis was voted unanimously as chairman of the conference, while Major Doukas was appointed garrison commander and chief of the conference's security. Kartalis made a major effort for the achievement of even a minor agreement.

"All of his energy and activity was focused more towards private intermediary meetings with all delegates outside the conference's formal discussions, rather than to the task of co-ordinating the conference's discussions" (Pyromaglou, 1965: 243).

The agreement's objective was to find a formula in order to turn all resistance armies into an integrated and united national army. The conference agenda was: (a) the assignment of all resistance forces' command to a single Chief General and (b) the composition that the integrated national army would take. As far as the Chief General's issue was concerned nothing was achieved since EAM-ELAS, EDES and EKKA failed to agree to a specific person.¹¹¹ As far as the national army's issue was concerned, EAM's proposal to EKKA and EDES was the full integration of *antartes* bands of all organisations from the platoon level and upwards. EKKA and EDES refused such a suggestion since EDES and the 5/42 had their forces exclusively in the areas of Epirus and Fokida while ELAS had a strong nation-wide presence. If the forces of EDES and the 5/42 were to be integrated with the ELAS forces from the platoon level and upwards, that

would mean the full assimilation of EDES and the 5/42 by ELAS. Instead Psarros proposed the unification of all groups from the regiment level and upwards, where virtually the 5/42 would be left intact since the 5/42 was by itself a regiment and it would just form a common division along with another ELAS regiment. Kartalis went even further and proposed the unification from the battalion level and upward where the two battalions that formed the 5/42 would join two other ELAS battalions and form two common regiments, but eventually no agreement was made (Pyromaglou, 1965: 236).

In addition to military issues, the Myrofilo-Plaka agreement tackled some political issues as well. EAM proposed the formation of a provisional political committee in free Greece with the participation of EDES and EKKA until the country was liberated, and until a national unity government would be formed. EDES and EKKA refused to participate in such a provisional political committee, since according to Pyromaglou:

“In such a political committee EKKA and EDES would simply be spectators”
(Pyromaglou, 1965: 251).

Eventually, negotiations about all issues came to a deadlock and EAM-ELAS, EDES and EKKA failed to reach any agreement. One of the few things that was achieved however, was a universal agreement regarding the denunciation of the security battalions.

Throughout the period of the Myrofilo-Plaka negotiations, Kartalis made another diversion in his policy. He abandoned the pro-EAMic attitude that he had adopted throughout the ELAS-EDES conflict and instead, he tried to re-approach EDES. That reaproachment with EDES was due to the fact that Kartalis along with EDES' delegates and Woodhouse had a closer co-operation and agreement about the attitude that they

¹¹¹ EAM-ELAS suggested Generals Sarafis, Mandakas or Sarigianis, EDES suggested Generals Petsas, Soubasakos and Kotoulas, EKKA suggested Generals Othonaios, Manetas and Dromazos, while Woodhouse suggested General Bakirtzis

would maintain towards EAM-ELAS. Nevertheless, Kartalis rejected Zervas' proposal for closer co-operation between EDES and EKKA. According to Pyromaglou, Zervas promised Kartalis a starring political post after the liberation but because Kartalis was suspicious towards Zervas and believed that EDES was not going to be on top of things, or because he still wanted to protect EKKA's independence, he refused the offer by saying that "everything is premature until liberation" (Pyromaglou, 1965: 255). The main conclusion that can be drawn from Kartalis' overall attitude throughout the conference was that he did not want to get any more attached to EAM, but at the same time he wanted to maintain his distance from EDES. He still wanted to regain EKKA's independence.

While the discussions were ongoing, Psarros was informed about suspicious activities of his officers back in Fokida. Psarros left Myrofilo-Plaka hastily and returned to his regiment in order to find out exactly what was going on. Amongst the 5/42 officer, a memorandum was circulated according to which:

"The officers, deputy officers and antartes of the heroic 5/42 regiment of euzones declare to everyone that they do not intend to become instruments of political exploitation wherever that comes from. Consequently they denounce any organisation that proclaims itself as representing the 5/42 and consider the 5/42 regiment and themselves as instruments of the military liberating struggle as this is determined by the Middle East Headquarters, the King and his government. Furthermore, they ask the Middle East Headquarters, the King and his government to set the 5/42 regiment under their direct orders. Finally they denounce the so called EKKA organisation towards the objectives of which nothing connects the officers, deputy officers and antartes of the 5/42 which are militarily devoted to the Middle East Headquarters, the King and his government" (Dedousis, 1949:56-58, Koutras, 1981: 81-83).

The memorandum was issued on 28 February 1944. It was issued by Dedousis and signed by 68 of the 5/42 officers, among which were Koutras, Kaimaras, Douros, Kapentzonis et al. During that time, the regiment included 100-130 officers overall.

Consequently the 68 that signed the proclamation represented approximately half or the two thirds of the overall number of 5/42 officers. Through Kalantzis (Dedousis' liaison with "The Military Hierarchy"), the memorandum was forwarded to the King and the Middle East Headquarters. Two important features need to be stressed about that memorandum: its content and the time that it was issued.

The memorandum had a clear political message. In addition to the clear denunciation of EKKA, the memorandum was also an indirect disapproval if not denial of Psarros' command. Although the memorandum did not mention anything about Psarros personally, it was well known that Psarros was one of EKKA's leaders.¹¹² Therefore, by denouncing EKKA, the memorandum was also denouncing Psarros, at least in an indirect manner. The memorandum however went even further by setting the regiment under the King's orders. The 5/42 as indeed ELAS and EDES were officially under the military orders of the Middle East Headquarters, but certainly not the King. By setting the regiment under the orders of the King as well, the 5/42 was taking a de facto pro-royalist constitutional and political position. That was completely against the fundamental principles upon which the 5/42 was formed which were the total absence of political orientation and objectives, and the dedication to the military resistance struggle against the invaders.

In addition to the memorandum's content however, it is also very important to take under consideration the time that Dedousis chose to issue it. As mentioned above, the memorandum was issued during the Myrofilo-Plaka agreement, where important

¹¹² It is worthy to note that Kaimaras doesn't mention anything about the memorandum in his book, although he had signed it. During our interviews he tried to give minor importance to the memorandum and change the subject. On the contrary Koutras who had also signed the memorandum not only mentions it in his book but also refers to it under the heading "Defection of the 5/42 officers" (Koutras, 1981: 81-83)

discussions were taking place concerning the unity of the national resistance movement. Irrespectively of the deadlock that the discussions eventually reached, a possible achievement of those objectives (unification of resistance armies, formation of provisional political committee etc) would have been a very strong blow against the royalists and would have extremely negative consequences for the restoration of the Monarchy after the end of the war. The achievement of such an agreement would result in two possible scenarios; either in the formation of a wide and powerful democratic, anti-royalist block with the participation of the whole national resistance, or in the dominance of EAM-ELAS in the political and military scene and the submission of EDES and EKKA to EAM-ELAS. Both scenarios would bring the royalists in a disadvantageous position and would diminish the chances of the King's return.

According to his brother Ioannis, Captain Dedousis was informed about the developments of the Myrofilo-Plaka agreement by his patrons:

“Thymios was in continuous contact with head officials of the resistance and his fellow-countryman, ex Minister Kalantzis [Dedousis' liaison with “The Military Hierarchy”] and was fully aware about the surrender of the national struggle to EAM's objectives. Thymios was fully updated on details about the alliance between EKKA and ELAS. After the fiasco of the Myrofilo-Plaka negotiations, it was obvious that EKKA, the political organisation of the 5/42 had reconciled and had submitted to EAM's intentions. Thymios understood that the communist menace was growing and that there was no space for compromise and tolerance anymore” (Dedousis, 1949: 55).

“The Military Hierarchy” updated Dedousis about what was happening in Myrofilo-Plaka and the potential threat that a possible success of the negotiations would be for the Monarchy's fate in Greece. Dedousis estimated or was convinced by his patrons that EKKA's objective was to increase its influence upon the 5/42 and to force it to join

ELAS. In order to avoid such a development the 5/42 had to be disengaged from EKKA's influence and so Dedousis decided to take action by issuing the proclamation.

“Thymios was not left inactive, the first step for clearing things up was to cause a split between the real fighters [he means the 5/42 men] and EKKA. That would put an end to the undermining of the 5/42 by EKKA” (Dedousis, 1949: 55).

At this point Ioannis Dedousis more or less admitted that his brother acted as an agent provocateur and that the split between the 5/42 and EKKA was premeditated.¹¹³ From the first moment that Dedousis joined the 5/42 he manifested his anti-EKKA sentiments. EKKA stood for totally different principles and ideals to those of Dedousis and “The Military Hierarchy”. Probably a conflict between them would be inevitable, but the time that he chose to issue his proclamation and come in open rupture with EKKA suggests that it was not a spontaneous reaction by Dedousis. If, for example, he had issued a proclamation denouncing EKKA five months ago, immediately after EKKA had issued its own pro-ELAS proclamation concerning the EDES-ELAS war, then it could be argued that such an action was due to frustration or a spontaneous reaction. However, the fact that he chose to come in rupture with EKKA (a) five whole months after its pro-ELAS proclamation was issued, (b) while in Fokida the relations between 5/42 and ELAS were peaceful, (c) while the EDES-ELAS war had ended, (d) while discussions and compromises were taking place among all resistance groups for the finding of a solution

¹¹³ I. Dedousis' book that was kindly given to me by editor Mr B. Gramenos, is a very rare edition and a truly valuable historical source. The book's rhetoric and style is deeply anti-communist and in many cases its sincerity is disarming to the degree of cynicism, mainly due to the conditions and circumstances under which the book was written. The book was issued in 1949, just two years after Thymios Dedousis' death in an ambush by a communist band and while the civil war (1946-49) was at its peak. That explains why emotionalism and maliciousness over the enemy prevail throughout the book. Furthermore, during that time Ioannis Dedousis went into politics and was a candidate for the 1950 elections in the Fokida electoral district and like most right wing politicians of that time he used demagogic anti-communist rhetoric and proudly highlighted his anti-communist struggles.

and (e) while Psarros was absent from Fokida suggest that it was a carefully premeditated action.

Whatever his motives, the appeal that Dedousis' memorandum had among the 5/42 officers marked the dominance of Dedousis' faction within the regiment. The balance between Dedousis' faction, the EKKA-Psarros faction and the "silent majority" faction¹¹⁴ had been broken. EKKA was condemned by the vast majority of the 5/42 officers and men and the "silent majority" eventually got attached to Dedousis. Psarros and his loyal officers maintained their leading positions within the regiment, but they became alienated from the average 5/42 officer and antartis. Psarros was still the leader of the 5/42, he still had the respect of his men as an officer and as a man, but not as a leader, not as a safe pair of hands. The two disbandments and the humiliation that they caused, Psarros' constant appeals not to provoke ELAS and to suppress their anti-communist sentiments, his "Christian tolerance" towards ELAS (G. Koutsoklenis, interview 17 May 2000) caused a severe damage to the men's morale and trust towards his leadership. On the other hand, Dedousis was much closer to the average 5/42 man's mentality and attitude. Dedousis smashed all the taboos that haunted the 5/42 right from the start. He was a royalist and an anti-communist like them and he was not afraid to show it. He was not afraid of ELAS and that increased his personal appeal among the frustrated 5/42 men and lifted their morale. Many within the 5/42 started believing that Dedousis was the safe pair of hands that could restore the regiment's honour and lead them to victory. Soon their hopes would be proven false in a tragic way.

¹¹⁴ See ch 3.4, p 173.

4.2. Interlude: The Forty Last Days of the 5/42.

Soon after Dedousis' memorandum was published, the relationship between the 5/42 and ELAS entered a new period of polarisation. All over Fokida, a war atmosphere was prevalent and it was obvious that the outbreak of a new conflict between the two bands was just a matter of time. It did not take much time for an incident to occur. On 3 March 1944, ELAS' antartes under the command of Nikiforos surrounded the village of Sernikaki and disarmed the village's 5/42 combatant group and a small group of 5/42 antartes who were on leave. Nikoforos' antartes beat up the 5/42 men, took their guns, clothes, boots and provisions, while they kept 11 men as hostages. On the next day, ELAS' antartes under Kronos disarmed another 6 of 5/42's antartes in Eratini (Koutras, 1981: 80, Dedousis, 1949: 59, Kaimaras, 1979: 131-32, Papathanasiou, 2000: 135, PRO H5 5/291, H5 5/279, DIS/GES F/ 929/B/51). The Sernikaki incident was the spark that caused a chained reaction of violent incidents between ELAS and 5/42 antartes which eventually concluded with the regiment's final disbandment one and a half months later.

As soon as Thymios Dedousis heard the news from Sernikaki, he immediately proceeded to a series of counter-measures, either because "he thought that there was an organised general offensive against the 5/42" (PRO H5 5/291), or because he was anticipating to confront ELAS. Without even seeking permission from Psarros and even though his superior officer Major Baizanos ordered him to remain calm and not to proceed to any retaliation, Dedousis declared north Dorida as a territory under siege, he arrested 80 officials of EAM's branch in Fokida and he disarmed ELAS' reserves in the Pentagiou and Krokylion villages. During the disarmament of ELAS' reserves in

Krokylion, the village's ELAS commissar Varsos was killed (PRO H5 5/291, H5 5/292, Dedousis, 1949: 60, Kaimaras, 1979: 133, DIS F 914/Z/1B).

Varsos' murder by Dedousis' antartes ignited the final ELAS-5/42 bloody encounter. According to the 5/42 side, Varsos' murder was just an unlucky event and the whole incident occurred as a result of ELAS' provocative activities in the Sernikaki village (Koutras, interview, 9 January 2000, Kaimaras, interview, 18 December 2000). On the other hand, according to ELAS it was a murder in cold blood premeditated by Dedousis that could not be possibly left unpunished (DIS/GES F/14/Z/1b, DIS/GES F/928/Z/1). Varsos was the co-ordinator of ELAS' reserves in the Krokyleion village. He was not an important EAM-ELAS official, but his murder –accidental or not- was clearly “an event that raised hatred between the two organisations and that determined the regiment's tragic fate” (Kaimaras, 1979:133).

As in every war, what counts more is not the spark, the incident itself, but the will of both parts to engage in conflict. Hardliners from both ELAS and the 5/42 anticipated for such an incident to occur and Varsos' murder was a very convenient way to realise their plans. ELAS at last got the convincing pretext that it was so eagerly waiting for in order to launch its final large-scale assault against the regiment and it used Varsos' case in an extortionate way, as a means to cause the internal disintegration of the 5/42. ELAS' officers demanded Dedousis' head for Varsos' murder even if they knew that there was no chance that Psarros would surrender Dedousis to ELAS. They did not show any will to compromise and end the tension even though they knew that Psarros kept loosing control over his regiment. On the other hand Dedousis and his faction at last got their chance to lead the whole regiment in conflict with ELAS. After Varsos' murder, Dedousis not only

did he refuse to come to some reconciliation with Psarros or ELAS, but he became more and more provocative instead.

From that point onwards, Dedousis became a red rag for ELAS. Immediately after Varsos' murder, ELAS demanded from Psarros the release of all the hostages, the return of their weapons and the arrest of anyone who was responsible for the murder (DIS/GES F/914/Z/1B). Psarros ordered Dedousis to release the hostages and return their weapons. He ordered him to remain inactive and stop any action that could irritate ELAS and told him that from that point he would handle the crisis personally. However:

“Thymios refused to execute Psarros' order and said that he would follow the order only if the Communists let the regiment's men [from the Sernikaki incident] free and returned their weapons” (Dedousis, 1949: 60-61).

Dedousis' disobedience towards Psarros had become open. Dedousis seemed determined to proceed to open conflict with ELAS, while Psarros had lost almost completely his control over Dedousis and his company. On the other hand, ELAS had set a price on the heads of Dedousis and his close companion Major Kapentzonis and demanded from Psarros, to hand over Dedousis to them. Later on, on two occasions, (the first in Eupalion on 2 April and the second on Trizonia in 14 April 1944) ELAS' forces ambushed Dedousis and his men with a clear intention to murder him (PRO H5 5/279, PRO H5 5/291, PRO H5 5/292, PRO H5 5/279, Koutras, 1981: 93-94, Dedousis, 1949: 62-66, 70-74, Kaimaras, 1979: 135-36, DIS/GES F/929/B/10).

Throughout March 1944 Fokida was on red alert and there were almost daily, clashes between ELAS and 5/42 bands all over the region. A vicious circle of clashes, counter-measures, disarmament of antartes etc was formed, causing casualties from both sides. Throughout that period, Psarros made desperate attempts to calm spirits down and

put an end to the conflict. He tried on the one hand to appease ELAS and on the other to impose discipline upon Dedousis. While the clashes were ongoing, Psarros started a series of negotiations with ELAS and the British liaison officers. The key issue of those negotiations was Dedousis. ELAS demanded that Psarros removed him from command and surrender him to ELAS. However, that was impossible to happen due to ethical as well as practical reasons. From a military-ethical point of view something like that would be unthinkable. The surrender of an officer to the enemy in time of conflict was and still is beyond any military code of ethics of any army, guerrilla or regular. Psarros was a proud officer and there was no way that he would do something like that. During the negotiations about Dedousis' fate, Psarros in a strict manner said to ELAS' representatives:

“I am going to court-martial Captain Dedousis myself, but there is no chance that I am going to hand him over to you. I would never do such a dishonesty” (Dimitriou, 1965, vol.3: 179, Kaimaras, 1979: 134, PRO H5 5/279).

On the other hand, the surrender of Dedousis and even his removal from the command of his company was impossible to happen even if Psarros had the will to do so. According to Koutras:

“ELAS demanded from Colonel Psarros to arrest Dedousis. Now that's a utopia! Who knows if Psarros did not fear that he would be the one to be arrested from Dedousis and lose the Regiment's command. During that time, Dedousis had the power to arrest Psarros and not the opposite” (Koutras, 1981: 81).

Dedousis' company was manned by almost 150 men. His company was very well equipped and his men were devoted to him. Furthermore, another 200 men manned the Dorida Battalion, which was commanded by Dedousis' close associate Major Kapentzonis. In total, the manpower of the Dedousis-Kapentzonis faction included almost the half of the Regiment's men. If Psarros denounced or court-martialed Dedousis

and Kapentzonis, that would have definitely meant that half of the regiment would be turned against him. Moreover it would also mean that he would definitely lose the support of the other half since the vast majority of the 5/42 men were sympathetic to Dedousis and all commanders of the rest of the 5/42 companies “expressed their solidarity towards Captain Dedousis and declared that they were determined to fall to the last for the Regiment’s honour” (Kaimaras, 1979: 134). The surrender of Dedousis and even his denunciation from Psarros would mean only one thing, the dissolution of the 5/42 and the overthrow of Psarros.

The following incident is indicative of Dedousis’ disobedience towards Psarros.

According to Dedousis’ brother:

“During the last days of the 5/42’s existence, Psarros called all the officers to a meeting. He told them to have faith in his command and that they should avoid at any cost to come to open conflict with the communists because that would have disastrous effects. The officers disagreed with their commander and Thymios shouted that there was no chance that the Bulgarian’s henchmen [EAM-ELAS] would consider the motherland’s benefit. A serious quarrel between Psarros and Dedousis followed” (Dedousis, 1949: 69).

Nikiforos gave a description of that quarrel:

“Our information about that meeting was that Dedousis did not stop insulting Psarros, he was calling him incompetent, a whore and he threatened that he would bind him hands and feet. For Varsos’ murder Dedousis said that he had ordered it and that he did not have to apologise to anyone” (Dimitriou “Nikiforos”, 1965, vol.3: 180).

The Dedousis-Psarros rupture was open and it was obvious that the vast majority of the 5/42 officers were in favour of Dedousis.

“Psarros had to face a tragic situation. He had valid information that even his most loyal officers were in favour of Captain Dedousis and did not wish to compromise with ELAS....Psarros found a suspicious letter from Major Kapentzonis to Lieutenant Colonel Papavasiliou. According to that letter, those two officers, along with some others planned a mutiny. They would remove the Regiment’s command from Psarros and would appoint Papavasiliou the new commander of the 5/42. The

sad thing is that Psarros considered Papavasiliou as one of his most loyal officers” (Dimitriou “Nikiforos”, 1965, vol.3: 180).¹¹⁵

In order to find a way out of the deadlock, Psarros proposed ELAS to court-martial Dedousis in a 5/42 court with the participation of an ELAS representative and a British liaison officer. According to Psarros’ proposal he would do that only if ELAS would do the same for Nikiforos, who was responsible for the Sernikaki incident (PRO H5 5/279, PRO H5 5/291, Kaimaras, 1979: 134, Koutras, 1981: 81). Psarros’ proposal was rejected by ELAS who continued demanding the surrender of Dedousis (PRO H5 5/279), knotting in that way the rope around Psarros’ neck even tighter. Psarros probably was living the most dramatic days of his life. He was entrapped between Dedousis’ disobedience and ELAS’ unwillingness to compromise. To surrender Dedousis would mean the 5/42’s dissolution, to come in open conflict with ELAS would mean exactly the same. Psarros found no understanding from anyone, not even his close friend and comrade Euripidis Bakirtzis and his Sub-Commander Konstantinos Lagouranis who abandoned him in his hour of need.

The first who gave Psarros “the kiss of Judas” (Protopapas, interview, 6 May 2000) was in fact his close friend and associate Bakirtzis. On 10 March 1944 in Euritania the PEEA *Politiki Epitropi Ethnikis Apeleutherosis* (Political Committee of National Liberation) was formed with Bakirtzis as its first president and Siantos, Mantakas, Tsirimokos and Gavrielidis its founding members. PEEA, which was also known as the “Government of the Mountain”, was an attempt by EAM to create an official governmental body. Although PEEA was under the control of KKE’s Central Committee, KKE’s leaders wanted to give PEEA the democratic profile of a coalition that represented

¹¹⁵ As quoted from an article written by Papagianopoulos in “*Kathimerina nea*” 15-12-45

not only EAM, but also the whole democratic camp. For that reason, KKE tried desperately to include in PEEA new, “fresh” officials outside EAM or KKE. Hence as soon as Bakirtzis returned to Greece he started a series of negotiations with Siantos about his post into PEEA.¹¹⁶ On the other hand, Bakirtzis tried to convince the 5/42’s Sub-Commander Lagouranis to follow him and join EAM-ELAS. Eventually on 4 April Lagouranis left the 5/42 and joined ELAS. Lagouranis also issued a proclamation calling all antartes and officers of the 5/42 to follow his example and join ELAS:

“I took the decision to join PEEA and ELAS and I urge all of you decent EKKA followers and honest 5/42 antartes and officers to follow me” (PRO H5 5/279, DIS/GES F/914/Z/2ist).

ELAS printed the proclamation in thousands of copies and circulated it all over Fokida.¹¹⁷ Bakirtzis and Lagouranis’ defection from the 5/42 at those critical moments was a serious blow to Psarros and the 5/42’s fragile coherence and it gave strong moral support to ELAS’ overall case against the Regiment.

During the early days of April the number of violent incidents between the 5/42 and ELAS increased and large numbers of ELAS reinforcements were marching to

¹¹⁶ Bakirtzis was one of the founders of EKKA and one of Psarros’ closest associates during the first days of the occupation. From the last days of the summer of 1942 and until mid September 1943 however, Bakirtzis was in Cairo isolated from Psarros, EKKA and the 5/42 (see ch .2.ii.d, p 86). Nevertheless, as soon as he returned to Greece Bakirtzis became the Chief of the “EKKA Military Headquarters”. The “EKKA Military Headquarters” was in fact an artificial post created by Kartalis and Psarros just for Bakirtzis since he was a founding member of EKKA and ought to have a leading post within EKKA and the 5/42. Moreover due to the fact that Bakirtzis military rank was senior than Psarros’ he had to be placed at a higher post than him. Psarros agreed to that since Bakirtzis was a very dear friend of his and since nothing really changed in the hierarchy, and Psarros continued being the real commander of the 5/42. Bakirtzis never got involved with the commanding of the 5/42, but he gave Psarros and Kartalis his word of honour that he would remain in EKKA until liberation. Bakirtzis however soon started a series of contacts with Siantos, negotiating the terms of his entrance in EAM-ELAS (Pyromaglou, 1965: 217)

¹¹⁷ A few days before Lagouranis left the 5/42 and joined ELAS, his brother Ioannis Lagouranis was parachuted in Ghiona. Ioannis Langouranis was a liaison officer of the American intelligence services and his mission was to organise an information network that would keep the allies informed about enemy and resistance activity in the area. (Kaimaras, 1979: 139). In the PRO files, I discovered Ioannis Lagouranis’ file where it is written that his date of commission in the British secret services was October 1933. (PRO H5 5/405). Whether Ioannis Lagouranis and his capacity as an agent of the American and British secret

Fokida from the nearby areas of Roumeli and Thessaly. It had become obvious that ELAS was getting ready to launch its final offensive against the Regiment, hence Psarros ordered a series of preventive measures. He declared Dorida as a region under siege, he ordered the disarmament of all reserve ELAS forces in the area, he called all of the Regiment's antartes who were on leave to return to their units and he ordered all of the regiment's units to gather in the Trikorfo-Klima area. The total number of ELAS antartes, which had gathered in the Klima area, was around 1,400 men (Pyromaglou, 1965: 301). On the other hand, 5/42 sources claim that ELAS' forces were 5,000 (Kaimaras, 1979: 146) to 6,000 men (Dedousis, 1949: 81), which are certainly excessive figures. The total number of the 5/42 forces in Klima was around 400-450 men (Pyromaglou, 1965: 301, Kaimaras, 1979: 146, Dedousis, 1949: 81).

The regiment's manpower before the final conflict with ELAS had dropped to half. Many 5/42 antartes and even officers refused to follow the regiment in Klima since it was obvious that the 5/42 had no chance of surviving that conflict. Although all of Kapentzonis' men came from the Klima-Trikorfo area, less than half of them followed the rest of the 5/42 in Klima (Kaimaras, 1979: 144). According to Koutras:

“Apart from Douros' and Kaimaras' men, during those last days very few officers and antartes came to thicken the regiment, although the regiment had a desperate need for every single one of its men. For example, from all of the officers of Major Mannaïos' unit [which was manned by 120 men (DIS/GES F929/A/1)] only two officers came to Klima, Lieutenant-Captain Koutriaris Loukas and Sub-Lieutenant Papadimas Loukas without any antartes...while from Major Farmakis unit just Farmakis himself along with Sub-Lieutenant Kokorelis and ten antartes came to help” (Koutras, 1981: 86).

Although a final conflict between the 5/42 and ELAS was imminent, Psarros continued his attempt to come to some compromise with ELAS and urged the local

services influenced his brother's decision to abandon the 5/42 is something that the current research did not

British liaison officers to mediate (DIS/GES F928/E/11, PRO H5 5/279).¹¹⁸ On 9 April

Psarros received a letter from Bakirtzis calling him to join PEEA and lead his regiment to join ELAS. Psarros gave the following answer:

“[...] You know that EKKA and I personally are pioneers of national unity. [...] We are now called to negotiations in order to enter PEEA while at the same time ELAS’ units turn their arms against us and while a new bloodshed with devastating consequences is about to begin. EKKA and the Regiment are eager to contribute to national unity. Consequently we agree to participate in the necessary negotiations about entering PEEA as soon as possible, on condition that ELAS stops every hostile activity so that our decision is taken freely and not under the threat of arms since such a humiliation would be unacceptable. Please inform us about the venue and time of the negotiations, because as you understand any decision is going to be taken by the whole of our organisation and not me personally. I hope that you and the rest of PEEA will agree with my views and that you will give your best effort in order to avoid the bloodshed and achieve national unity for the nation’s interest” (Kaimaras, 1979: 142).

Although Psarros was willing to come to some agreement with PEEA and end the conflict, PEEA had already given the green light to ELAS to proceed with the disbandment. Sarafis wrote:

“PEEA could no longer tolerate all that behaviour from Psarros’ officers...Therefore, PEEA ordered ELAS’ General Headquarters to send Psarros an ultimatum asking him to apply what was agreed [Dedousis and Kapentzonis’ arrest etc]...In the case where Psarros would not accept those terms, ELAS’ General Headquarters was authorised to order the disbandment of the 5/42 unit” (Sarafis, 1964: 282).

ELAS’ ultimatum included the following terms:

“[...]”

- a) Order immediately the seizure of any illegal activity against all Greek citizens.
- b) Withdraw all restrictive measures that you have imposed in your area.
- c) Immediately release and return to us in safety all hostages.
- d) Return all arms, ammunition, provisions etc that you have seized from EAM-ELAS and other individuals.
- e) Arrest Major Kapentzonis, Captain Dedousis and any other who is involved in the murder of Varsos or other antartes and members of our organisations. The above

manage to confirm or reject.

¹¹⁸ See ch 7.3.i, p 284.

named will be judged by a court-martial in which a representative of ours is going to participate.

After you submit and execute the above terms, a joint committee along with the British liaison officer John Ponder is going to be formed in order to settle any other issues between ELAS and the 5/42-EKKA.

In the case that you do not submit to the above terms, or in the case that you delay their execution, you will bare full responsibility of the consequences towards the Greek people and PEEA” (DIS/GES F/929/B/69).

Psarros agreed to all of ELAS’ terms and sent the following answer:

“[....]

- 1) I withdrew my order about the siege condition of Dorida as well as all the other restrictive measures.
- 2) I am sending you all the hostages.
- 3) As far as the arms are concerned, I ordered the units that got them to collect them and deliver them to you.
- 4) Major Kapentzonis is under arrest and he is at the regiment’s disposal. Captain Dedousis is on a mission and he is going to return in 2 or 3 days where he is also going to be under arrest.¹¹⁹
About the 4th term of your message [the court-martial of Dedousis-Kapentzonis]
 - a) Let us know on which accusation should we court-martial Major Kapentzonis.
 - b) Name us your representative in the court-martial” (DIS/GES F/928/E/11, PRO H5 5/291).

In addition to his reply to ELAS, Psarros issued an internal order found in the archives of the Greek Army’s History Bureau according to which:

“Major Kapentzonis Georgios and Captain Dedousis Euthimios are to be held in order to be court-martialed for their actions. Psarros 14-4-44” (DIS/GES F/929).

Moreover he ordered the arrest of Bourdakos Gregorios, the 5/42 antartis who shot Varsos in the Krokilion incident (DIS/GES F/929). These documents rather prove that Psarros had the intention to court-martial Dedousis in order to satisfy ELAS’ demand. The question is whether Dedousis would consent to be court-martialed. According to Koutras:

“Psarros –always with Dedousis’ consent- assigned Major Papathanasiou the task to make the necessary arrangements for a court-martial. Papathanasiou would be

¹¹⁹ During that time Dedousis was in Galaxidi where he was gathering his antartes

the court-martial's president and Dedousis' punishment would probably be death but on reprieve" (Koutras, 1981: 91).

Obviously, the court-martial that Psarros was planning was a farce since the consent of the accused was necessary and since the decision was judged beforehand.¹²⁰ That farce nevertheless was probably the most efficient way to put an end to the Dedousis-Kapentzonis issue, to give some satisfaction to ELAS and to maintain unity within the regiment.

Although Psarros agreed to all the terms dictated in ELAS and PEEA's ultimatums, ELAS kept increasing its aggression against the 5/42. While negotiations were taking place about Dedousis' fate, ELAS forces ambushed once more Dedousis and his Company in Trizonia (Dedousis, 1949: 72-74, Kaimaras, 1979: 151-52, Koutras, 1981: 93-4). On 13 April Aris Velouchiotis arrived in the Dorida area accompanied by his personal guard of 25 men. Velouchiotis' mission was to go to the Peloponnese and organise the Pelloponesisan ELAS. However, since the 5/42-ELAS conflict was in progress and since he was the superior Kapetanios, he undertook the command of all ELAS' forces in the area. Although Psarros had agreed to the terms of the ultimatum that he had received the day before, immediately after Velouchiotis took command, he increased the pressure upon Psarros and he sent him a new ultimatum of surrender according to which:

"The ultimatum that was sent to you by ELAS' General Headquarters was very specific. Its main term was the arrest of Captain Dedousis and his reference to a court-martial. Since –regardless of the reason– the 5/42 did not fulfil that term there is no other way to avoid the bloodshed than to disband the 5/42 by yourselves and surrender your arms. In that way an end is going to be put to any causes that undermine the national unity. We guarantee the protection and freedom of all officers or antartes who have not been involved in treacherous activity, war crimes or murders of civilians. Due to the critical situation that has occurred, it is urgent to

¹²⁰ Death on reprieve was a quite usual penalty in antartes court-martials of all resistance organisations.

give us your answer immediately. In case of acceptance of our terms, your men are free to surrender to any of our units holding a white flag. Our men have been ordered to protect any of your officers and antartes who wish to surrender” (Gregoriadis, 1965, vol.5: 33-34).

Although Psarros had submitted to all of ELAS’ terms, he still received an ultimatum of surrender. It had become clear that ELAS was not willing to compromise and was determined to disband the 5/42. Psarros understood that his regiment did not have a chance against ELAS’ superior forces. In a letter dated 15 April (two days before the final battle), Psarros wrote to his officer Major Baizanos:

“[...] We have got to take into consideration that: (a) Many, if not all of the 2nd battalion’s [the battalion commanded by Kapentzonis] men are not going to fight bravely, (b) There is no chance for a victorious battle, (c) KKE will not hesitate to crush us” (DIS/GES F/929/B/85).

Psarros wanted to avoid the bloodshed at any cost and thus he decided to retreat even more towards ELAS. His answer to ELAS’ ultimatum was:

“We have received your ultimatum and upon it we comment: Captain Dedousis’ arrest and his reference to a court-martial is possible and is going to be achieved as soon as he returns from his mission. Consequently all the terms of your ultimatum have been fulfilled or are under fulfilment –taking into consideration the logical time limits that are necessary. Your ultimatum claims that you want a united national liberation army and that if we disagree to such an army, you wish our disbandment. We also have the wish for a united liberation army and we think that instead of the regiment to be disbanded, either bloody or voluntarily, it would be better for the Regiment to join the national army. For that purpose we propose

- 1) The regiment is going to be an independent unit under the authority of PEEA
 - 2) The 5/42 personnel is going to be manned by all of its existing fighters and any new antartes who wish to serve in it in the future.
 - 3) Our geographical space of action will be the provinces of Parnassida and Dorida.
 - 4) You will guarantee the safety of our personnel including those who have been accused for any offences.
 - 5) The officers and antartes who do not wish to follow the regiment [in PEEA], will deliver their weapons, return to their homes and you will guarantee their safety.
 - 6) You will proceed to no counter-measures and retaliation against our followers.
- If you agree, please inform us about who is going to be your delegates in the negotiations. We believe that in that way:
- a) National unity and the national army are protected
 - b) The bloodshed is avoided

- c) Peace is guaranteed in the Parnassida and Dorida provinces” (Gregoriadis, vol.5: 34-35).

Although that telegram was a complete surrender to ELAS’ terms, ELAS did not even reply to Psarros’ proposals. Instead, on Easter Sunday 16 April at 5:00 ELAS’ forces launched their first minor attack against the 5/42. During that battle, the 5/42 men managed to maintain their positions and pushed back the attacking forces (DIS/GES F/928/Z/1, Kaimaras, 1979: 156-160, Koutras, 1981: 94-95). On the same afternoon, after the battle was over, Psarros sent ELAS his last declaration or rather his requiem:

“ELAS’ 5th brigade has launched a series of accusations against the regiment about murders of ELAS’ antartes, pillages and crimes against civilians, about adopting a hostile attitude towards EAM-ELAS etc. All of those accusations are simply pretexts since EAM-ELAS’ utmost intention is to destroy the regiment in order to dominate and impose its own will. EAM-ELAS’ offensive against us was planned soon after the fiasco of the Myrofilo-Plaka negotiations and with all of these lies EAM-ELAS is just trying to give a moral support to its unprovoked attack against us.... The regiment’s decision to fight this defensive struggle which was compelled by EAM-ELAS is our loudest protest in the eyes of history and the Greek people for the accusations about treason and undermining the nation’s unity. For our weapon’s honour, for our regiment’s dignified past and with regret about the brotherly blood that is going to be spilled, we declare ourselves determined to fight by all means against EAM-ELAS’ attack” (Gregoriadis, vol.5: 37, Kaimaras, 1979: 160, Koutras, 1981: 97).

On the next day, 17 April, at 3:00 ELAS’ final offensive was launched against the 5/42. Dedousis’ post received the most fierce attack and after a brief but fierce battle his company retreated. After Dedousis’ retreat, the 5/42’s defensive line was broken. The regiment collapsed, within an hour, Psarros was watching the battle from a hill on his own and had lost contact with his units (Dedousis, 1949: 84). The Regiment’s men panicked and fled towards the beach. Kapentzonis and his men without even engaging themselves in the battle abandoned their positions, embarked in boats and fled to the

Peloponnese.¹²¹ The rest of the 5/42 companies were gathered in the Skala Karaiskou beach. After a brief meeting, Kaimaras, Koutras, Douros and Dedousis decided to attempt to break ELAS' encircle and flea, while Psarros told his officers that he would stay and surrender to ELAS "to save anything that can be saved" (Kaimaras, 1979: 163, Koutras, 1981: 101). Psarros probably wanted to stay in order to protect the 5/42 injured or captured from any atrocities, while many other 5/42 officers and antartes also chose to remain close to their leader (Protopapas, interview, 6 May 2000, A. Koutsoklenis, interview, 18 May 2000, Karaliotis, interview, 4 May 2000).

The first ELAS force that arrived at the Skala Karaiskou was Nikiforos' unit. Psarros surrendered to him and Nikiforos ordered four of his men to escort Psarros and some of his officers to the Agios Elias hill where Aris Velouchiotis and the rest of the ELAS officers were. Nikiforos ordered his men:

"You will not let anyone harm the prisoners. You will use your weapons if anybody tries to harm them" (Dimitriou, 1965, vol.3: 209).

En route to the Agios Elias hill, however, Psarros and his escort met ELAS' Lieutenant Colonel Thymios Zoulas accompanied by two of his antartes. After a brief quarrel, Zoulas ordered one of his men to shoot Psarros with his machine-gun. Psarros was shot in the head and the chest and dropped dead.¹²²

Along with Colonel Psarros, ELAS men murdered more than 66 of the captured officers and antartes of the 5/42 just a few hours after the battle was over (Koutras, 1981:

¹²¹ Kapentzonis' cowardliness is reconfirmed not only from ELAS' sources (Pyromaglou, 1965: 307 in an ELAS' officer report) but also from 5/42 sources (Koutras, 1981: 101, PRO H5 5/292 (In a report written by one of Dedousis' officers). Even in his own report about the battle in Klima Kapentzonis does not mention anything about his battalion's contribution.

¹²² For Psarros' murder see ch 6, p 244.

103).¹²³ Most of them suffered horrible tortures in order to reveal the hideouts where the Regiment's gold was, others were tortured due to reasons of personal revenge.¹²⁴ After the battle in Klima and until liberation, ELAS launched a reign of terror against all ex antartes and followers of the 5/42 in Fokida. The status quo in the area had changed, ELAS was completely dominant and the people who were associated in any way with the 5/42 were left unprotected against the vengeance of some of ELAS' extremists'. According to Kaimaras, the 5/42 throughout its existence suffered the following losses:

Antartes killed in battles against the invaders	27
Antartes killed by ELAS	206
Followers Killed by ELAS	70
Total	303 ¹²⁵

However, according to a list of names submitted by Koutras to the Ministry of Defence on 19 September 1966 the number of the 5/42 officers, antartes and members of the combatant groups, killed throughout the occupation was 109, while there were also 47 dead from the non-combatant people who belonged to the EKKA-5/42 support network. In total, according to Koutras' figures, which can be considered as more accurate, the number of casualties that the 5/42 suffered throughout the occupation was 156 dead

¹²³ According to other sources, the number of 5/42 men who were executed by ELAS after the battle was more the 100 men (DIS F928/E/11). Koutras however gives a detailed list of names and not an estimate and from that point of view, his numbers can be considered as more accurate.

¹²⁴ See DIS F928/E/11, Koutras, 1981: 102-104, Kaimaras, 1979: 164-168, Anonymous memoirs, Papagianopoulos, 1981: 94-104, Protopapas, interview, 6 May 2000, Raptis, interview, 23 August 2000, A Mamarelis, interviews 3 December 1999, 15 January 2000, 11 January 2001, Karaliotis, interview, 4 May 2000, A. Koutsoklenis, interview, 18 May 2000, Zacharias, interview, 19 August 2000.

¹²⁵ See "Ethnikes Epalxeis", 1999, vol.36: 58, Kaimaras, 1979: 187-208. The above figures cannot be considered as precise although they are not beyond reality. For example Kaimaras' list of casualties include ex 5/42 antartes and followers who have been killed in the 1946-49 civil war as soldiers, on the other hand the marble slab in the Klima mausoleum there is the name of Captain Kokorelis who although was seriously injured in the battle of Klima and remained disabled for the rests of his life, he died in 1982. Furthermore Kaimaras' list includes 30 names of the civilians who were executed in the Vounichora village by the Italians as retaliation for an ELAS assault against an Italian truck.

(Koutras, 1981:160-161), still a heavy price for an organisation that aimed to decrease the polarisation within the Greek national resistance movement.

Conclusion

Officially, the 5/42 was formed with the exclusive purpose to fight the invaders and keep itself out of the political antagonisms concerning the fate of post-war Greece. However, this noble vision was impossible to fulfill and the 5/42 was dragged into the turmoil of the political antagonism within the national resistance movement. Politics had a prominent role within the national resistance movement and it was almost impossible for all national resistance organisations to make a clear distinction between the national liberation struggle and the fulfilment of their political objectives. Furthermore, the difference of opinion between Kartalis and Dedousis over the attitude that the regiment should maintain towards EAM-ELAS was impossible to bridge. Eventually, due to EAM-ELAS' aggression as well as due to its own internal discord, the 5/42 collapsed.

Throughout its one year of existence (April 1943-April 1944), the 5/42 regiment of evzones was disbanded three times by ELAS, it suffered more than 150 dead and its leader Colonel Psarros was murdered in a brutal and contemptible manner. Without any doubt, the story of the 5/42 can be labelled as a tragedy, as one of the darkest stories of the occupation and the Greek national resistance movement.

Up to this point, this thesis has highlighted and discussed the events from the rise of the 5/42 up until its tragic fall in Klima. A number of issues were tackled concerning the formation of the regiment and the course that it followed throughout its existence.

However, a number of important questions still need to be raised. In the next chapters, a series of issues will be tackled concerning the causes that led to the tragedy of the 5/42 as well as over the effect that the tragedy had upon the political and military developments of the civil conflict during the occupation. The first of these questions has to do with the causes of the tragedy in Klima. ELAS maintained a totally uncompromising attitude, even though there was some chance of a peaceful resolution to the tension and even though Psarros tried to find the most dignified way to satisfy their demands. This indicates that ELAS' leaders had the clear intention to disband the 5/42 once and for all, therefore, the next chapter will discuss the political and military causes behind the final 5/42-ELAS conflict.

CHAPTER 5

The Causes Behind the Disbandment of the 5/42

The purpose of the meso-level analysis in this chapter is to discuss the causes of the disbandment of the 5/42. This chapter will highlight the official arguments that EAM-ELAS gave for the disbandment and will investigate the plausibility of those arguments. Furthermore, it will comment on the political and military causes behind the disbandment of the 5/42.

In contrast with the first two disbandments of the 5/42, there is no mystery about who gave the order for the third one. The order was officially issued by PEEA and this time there was a consensus among all EAM-ELAS leaders that the 5/42 should go once and for all. After the battle in Klima, ELAS Headquarters issued a report over the 5/42-ELAS conflict. The official explanation that ELAS gave was that the 5/42 was collaborating with the Germans, hence it had to be disbanded for the sake of the national resistance struggle. ELAS' report included a series of specific accusations against the 5/42 which supported the case of collaboration.

In its first half, this chapter will discuss these accusations with reference to a series of newly recovered documents. These accusations demand the most thorough investigation for two main reasons. The first reason is to evaluate the 5/42's consistency

towards the principles of national resistance and to conclude on whether the 5/42 betrayed or remained loyal to the struggle that it was supposed to serve. The second reason is to try to understand whether ELAS truly believed the validity of those accusations, or whether the accusations were fabricated by ELAS with the intention to create a case against the 5/42, a moral ground upon which to justify the third and final disbandment.

Although according to EAM-ELAS the *casus belli* against the 5/42 were the allegations of collaboration, this chapter in its second half will highlight the political and military causes that led EAM-ELAS to disband the regiment. EKKA-5/42 was standing in the middle of EAM-ELAS and EDES. EAM-ELAS was eager to assimilate EKKA-5/42 since this would place EAM-ELAS in an extremely advantageous political and military position against EDES. In achieving this objective, EAM-ELAS adopted an inconsistent policy towards EKKA-5/42. On the one hand they repeatedly tried to tempt and persuade Psarros and Kartalis to lead EKKA-5/42 into EAM-ELAS, while on the other ELAS had disbanded the regiment twice. Dedousis' memorandum, signed by more than the half of the regiment's officers was a clear sign that the 5/42 would never join EAM-ELAS. From that point onwards, EAM-ELAS reshaped its policies and strategies towards the 5/42. EKKA-5/42 was transformed from a potential ally into a serious enemy for EAM-ELAS. Therefore, it had to be eliminated.

5.1. The Justification: Treason.

5.1.i. Defining the Traitor.

The official argument according to which ELAS justified its final assault against the 5/42 regiment was that it had turned collaborationist. The issue of collaborationism within the 5/42 and generally within any national resistance organisation is probably the most difficult area of research of the occupation period. It is a moral issue of the utmost importance and inevitably, that moral dimension causes serious problems to objective historical research. The first problem is that accusations of collaboration with the enemy (the term “enemy” includes: Germans, Italians, Bulgarians, the security battalions and the collaborationist authorities) have reached a saturation point.

Accusations about collaboration and treason have been abused and have been used so extensively to the degree that every single resistance organisation has been accused as collaborationist by competing organisations. Consequently, the real substance and value of such a serious accusation is inevitably diminished and it is very difficult to define when an accusation is genuine or when it is a fabricated accusation that serves political objectives. Given the discord between EAM-ELAS and the republican resistance organisations, the issue of collaborationism became a useful political weapon in the hands of all opponents and was used for the moral extermination of the opposite side. Accusing the enemy of being collaborationist was probably the ultimate weapon, in certain ways much more effective than bullets, since it could cause a great deal of damage to the accused with the least cost for the accuser. All opponents understood the effectiveness of that weapon and they started launching accusations of collaboration with

the enemy against each other profusely. While tension between the opponents was escalating, the weapon of collaborationism was being used more and more thoughtlessly to the point that the terms traitor and collaborationist became “synonyms of all political opponents” (Fleisher, 1984: 91).

The second important difficulty in the study of the issue of collaboration is the fact that it is a subjective and controversial term, which depends highly on individual perception. The real meaning of collaboration with the enemy is highly influenced by one’s sensitivity over the issue. For example, during the occupation, some Greek women had love affairs with German or Italian soldiers. Dimitris Glinos -the most important EAM intellectual- wrote in his propagandist booklet “What is EAM and what does it want” about such women:

“Do not allow your women, sisters, mothers and daughters to associate with the foreigners. Condemn and disavow sexual encounters with foreigners. Stigmatise the women who give themselves to foreigners. Such women are collaborators and traitors. Use derogatory and insulting adjectives for them and let them know that after the war we are going to carve on both their cheeks a capital “T” which is going to mean “Πόρνη” (prostitute) and “Προδότριά” (traitor)” (Glinos, 1944: 60).

On the other hand, EAM’s critic Spyros Stinas had a totally different attitude towards the same issue:

“They [EAM-ELAS] killed poor women just because they washed the clothes of Italian and German soldiers. What a lethal crime, what a disgusting traitorous action! The fine brave lad who killed a mother who was washing clothes in order to get a piece of bread for her child was probably inflamed with patriotic passion...They killed women because they gave themselves to Italian or German soldiers for a piece of bread or a can of preserved food just to save themselves from hunger or just to save their children” (Stinas, 1997: 97).

As a moral issue, the meaning of collaboration with the enemy is controversial and open to different interpretations. The purpose of this chapter is not to engage in a

theoretical debate concerning the phenomenon of collaboration with the enemy, but rather to investigate any possible symptoms of collaboration between the 5/42 and the enemy. Nevertheless, it is important to define first what collaboration is. Collaboration is the consent and co-ordination of efforts between two parts for the accomplishment of a common or mutually desired objective. Therefore, any kind of joint effort between the 5/42 and the enemy turned against EAM-ELAS or any other Greek or any other foreign ally is going to be defined in this thesis as collaborationist activity. ELAS' accusations about collaboration between the 5/42 and the enemy, as well as the regiment's consistency to the ideals and objectives of the national resistance struggle are going to be evaluated exclusively according to the above definition.

5.1.ii. ELAS' Indictment.

On 2 May 1944 (fifteen days after the battle in Klima) ELAS' General Headquarters issued a single-paged report concerning the final disbandment of the 5/42 and the murder of Psarros.¹²⁶ Two weeks later, on 14 May (twenty-seven days after the battle in Klima) ELAS' General Headquarters issued a new supplementary report which according to KKE official Gregoris Farakos was "as exhaustive in arguments as possible and was processed by the Headquarters' staff" (Farakos, 1997: 288). This "improved" and "complete" ten-paged document (DIS/GES F/928/Z/1) was ELAS' official reasoning about the causes of the final disbandment. The document's major argument was that the 5/42 regiment was disbanded because it had become a dangerous collaborationist organisation:

“[...] Collaboration between the regiment’s reactionaries -who controlled the regiment- and the enemy was confirmed and proven beyond any doubt. Eventually the 5/42 reactionaries agreed with the Germans in Patras and Itea and with the security battalions to launch a joint assault against EAM-ELAS. Although ELAS tried to contain the 5/42 from its moral collapse, the joint attack of EKKA and the security battalions against ELAS was launched during 15 and 16 April (during the battle in Klima). After that assault, ELAS’ units were forced to defend themselves and counter-attacked on the night of 16-17 April and after a long battle they disbanded the 5/42 regiment. [...] Collaboration with the enemy and the enemy’s collaborators had become obvious. These are the most important actions which clearly prove that Colonel Psarros and the Dedousis-Kapentzonis faction had taken the decision to strike ELAS and which prove their collaboration with the Germans and the security battalions” (DIS/GES F/928/Z/1).

First accusation

“On 10 April Major Kapentzonis sent Captain Dedousis to Galaxidi, by boat. Dedousis contacted the Germans of the Itea garrison and asked them to attack ELAS forces in the Ghiona area in order to create a diversion. The attack was launched eventually against the Kaloskopi village on 16 April where the Germans burned the village” (DIS/GES F/928/Z/1).

The first step in order to test the validity of this accusation is to investigate the whereabouts and activities of Captain Dedousis on 10 April. Koutras writes:

“By 10 April the regiment’s companies had occupied the following positions: The regiment’s headquarters with its staff along with Kapentzonis’ battalion and the companies of Dedousis and Douros in Klima...” (Koutras, 1981: 91).

The same order of the 5/42 companies is also confirmed by Kaimaras (Kaimaras, 1979: 144), while Dedousis writes:

“Within the first 10 days of April, all of the regiment’s units gathered in Klima in order to take specific decisions” (Dedousis, 1949: 68).

Dedousis’ brother writes that Captain Dedousis visited Galaxidi not on 10 April as ELAS alleged, but four days later in order to gather his men who were on leave:

“On Good Friday 14 April, Thymios took 50 men and we all went to the beach. Then we embarked in a boat and in the early hours of Good Saturday we arrived in Galaxidi” (Dedousis, 1949: 70).

¹²⁶ See *Documenta Ethnikis Antistasis*, vol.1, 1981: 332

Kaimaras, Koutras and Ioannis Dedousis' testimonies concerning Captain Dedousis' activities during the disputable date are written in a narrative manner with the intention to describe some other irrelevant events. They are not written as defensive arguments against ELAS' accusations. They do not give specific information about Dedousis' activities during 10 April and they cannot be considered as proofs that a meeting between Dedousis and the Germans did not occur. However, although there is no solid proof to contradict that alleged meeting, there are much more solid evidence that knock down ELAS' argument concerning the supposed diversion in Kaloskopi.

In the ELAS report, the date of the German attack against Kaloskopi was intentionally falsified. The Kaloskopi village was not attacked on the 16th of April but on the 17th. Even other official ELAS documents contradict ELAS' official report. In another chronology of events issued by ELAS' General Headquarters, the date mentioned about the assault was the 17th and the 18th of April which is the correct date (*Documenta Ethnikis Antistasis*, 1981, vol.1: 309). ELAS' officials obviously attempted to falsify the dates in order to give the impression that the battle in Klima and the attack on Kaloskopi were simultaneous. The truth is however that those two events not only were not simultaneous, but that they also had nothing to do with each other.

ELAS' final assault in Klima was launched at 03:00 of 17 April and was finished almost two hours later between 05:00 and 06:00 in the morning (Pyromaglou, 1965: 308, Kaimaras, 1979: 161-168, Koutras, 1981: 99-103). On the other hand, Kaloskopi was attacked and burned by the Germans during the 17th and the 18th of April and not on the 16th as the ELAS report claimed. According to a newsletter issued by the Kaloskopi inhabitants association, on 16 April Kaloskopi was not attacked, instead:

“Free Kaloskopi was celebrating, Jesus Christ’s resurrection as well as its own freedom. Throughout the village people lit fires in order to grill the Easter lamp...in the afternoon, everybody was dancing at the village’s square” (Koukouvista, vol.6, March-April 1976).

The Germans launched their attack against Kaloskopi at 07:00 in the morning of the next day (17 April) ¹²⁷—one or two hours after the battle of Klima was over. Consequently the German attack against Kaloskopi did not benefit the 5/42 at all not only because it was launched after the 5/42 no longer existed, but also because Kaloskopi was almost two days (on foot) away from Klima. If the Germans had the intention to assist and relieve the 5/42 with a diversion, they would have launched their attack in an area near Klima so that ELAS would withdraw forces from the battle.

Furthermore, the only ELAS force that was in Kaloskopi during that time was the village’s few reserves. If the Germans wanted to make a diversion they would attack large ELAS forces. The German attack against Kaloskopi did not intend to assist the 5/42. It was not even a mopping up anti-guerrilla operation. Their objective was to loot the village and that is proven by the fact that:

“The Germans and the companies of their Rumanian, Slovak and Moroccan collaborators had brought with them a number of donkeys without any burden upon which they loaded their loot” (Koukouvista, vol.4, October-November 1975).

The fact that the assault against Kaloskopi had the objective of looting and not assisting the 5/42 is also proven by the fact that the Germans stayed in the village looting and burning for almost a whole day and they did not assault any other nearby ELAS band.

¹²⁷ “Koukouvista” v.10 March-April 1977 “In the next day around 7:00 the first gunshots were heard from the Zaganas area”

Second accusation

“On 10 April, a German motor-boat from Patras reached the shores of Monastiraki [a village near Klima] and delivered 150 weapons and other provisions for the 5/42. The Germans met with Major Kapentzonis, who officially represented 5/42-EKKA. According to positive information Major Kapentzonis asked the Germans to reinforce the 5/42 with security battalions which would attack ELAS from the Naupaktos area” (DIS/GES F/928/Z/1).

That alleged incident was not mentioned in ELAS’ first report about the 5/42’s disbandment of 2 May. It is only mentioned in the second “revised” and “updated” report of 14 May. However, although there is no information about Major Kapentzonis’ activity during that day, it is a fact that the Germans had contacted Psarros on 4 April and made him an offer for collaboration. However, immediately after that contact, Psarros informed the Regiment’s British Liaison Officer Gordon Creed about that meeting with the following letter:

“Two days ago a German motor-boat carrying the German commander of Patras reached our beach. Out of the boat came a Greek liaison who expressed his will to meet with me in order to inform me that the Germans are willing to reinforce the regiment with troops in its struggle against ELAS. I repulsively rejected that proposal and I ordered the Greek liaison to get out of my sight immediately. I told him that even if I was attacked again by ELAS, not only would I never ask the Germans’ assistance, but I would attack them savagely if they appeared in the area. I would rather be killed a thousand times by Greek bullets than to accept such an disgraceful collaboration with the Germans” (PRO H5 5/279).

Creed answered:

“Dear Colonel, I just received your letter and I would like to congratulate you about the uncompromising attitude that you maintained towards the German proposal” (PRO H5 5/279).

That was not the only case that the Germans attempted to approach Psarros. During November 1943, a German officer asked Psarros’ permission to negotiate with him. Psarros answered that the only issue that he was willing to negotiate with the Germans was their unconditional surrender to the 5/42. After that he notified not only the

British Military Mission, but also EAM (Pyromaglou, 1965: 213). Although it is true that the Germans approached Psarros on 4 April, ELAS' report claims that the meeting was held on 10 April. Whether the Germans contacted Psarros again on 10 April or whether ELAS was just misinformed about the exact date of the event can not be verified.

Documents indicate that there was no plan for a joint 5/42-German attack against ELAS from Naupaktos and eventually such an attack never happened. Furthermore, there are also two serious facts which indicate that such an attack was impossible to have happened anyway. Firstly, during that time there were no security battalions in Naupaktos. The Naupaktos security battalions were formed two months after the disbandment of the 5/42 (27 June 1944).¹²⁸ Secondly, the only German force that was stationed in Naupaktos during that time was just a small garrison of 10 Germans along with 10 gendarmeries (Staurogianopoulos, 1974: 180-187).

Third accusation

“Captain Psilogiannis, the 5/42's commissary associated openly with the Germans of Amfissa” (DIS/GES F/928/Z/1).

It was true that Psilogiannis was collaborating openly with the Germans since February 1944 (Koutras, interview, 9 January 2000, Kaimaras, interview, 18 December 1999, Raptis, interview 23 August 2000). Although ELAS' accusation is completely true, by no means can Psilogiannis' collaboration with the enemy constitute an accusation against the 5/42 since:

¹²⁸ See Staurogianopoulos, 1974: 214. Staurogianopoulos was an officer of the local security battalions and given the fact that in his book he praises the security battalions as the saviours of Greece, he would not have a problem to admit that the security battalions collaborated with the 5/42

“During February 1944, Colonel Psarros issued a specific order about him discharging him from the Regiment due to undisciplined conduct” (Kaimaras, 1979: 74).

More specifically, one day Psilogiannis was talking with Psarros in an office and after a while Psarros kicked and punched him out of the room probably because Psilogiannis proposed Psarros either to collaborate with the security battalions or to misappropriate the Regiment’s money (Kaimaras, interview, 18 December 1999, Koutras, interview, 9 January 2000). After his discharge from the Regiment, Psilogiannis continued collaborating with the Germans and after the Regiment’s final disbandment he formed a security battalion in Amfissa (*Fokikos Laos*, 11 May 1949). The fact that he was dismissed from the regiment proves that there was no collective responsibility and thus his actions must be considered as individually motivated. Moreover, the fact that his dismissal was announced publicly by the 5/42 (Kaimaras, interview 18 December 1999) leaves no doubt that ELAS was aware that Psilogiannis did not any longer belong to the 5/42’s personnel when they made the accusation.

Nevertheless, although Psilogiannis was discharged from the regiment, there is hard evidence which proves that he maintained unofficial contacts with his ex comrades of the 5/42. It is difficult however to classify those contacts as cases of collaborationist activity. During an interview with Koutras, I asked him to give his opinion about Psilogiannis and his collaboration with the enemy. By just hearing the name Psilogiannis Koutras became visibly emotional, he brimmed with tears and said “Psilogiannis was the most wonderful man within the 5/42. I owe him my life”. Koutras explained that immediately after the battle in Klima, ELAS launched a large-scale manhunt for the arrest of all ex-5/42 officers. During that time Captain Koutras was

hiding in Amfissa. ELAS soon was informed that Koutras was hiding in Amfissa and started searching houses that could be possible hideouts for him. Psillogiannis was aware that ELAS was looking for Koutras and as soon as he found out Koutras' hideout, he hurried to the house and took him out of Amfissa in a German truck (Koutras, interview 9 January 2000). In another interview with Nikos Raptis, I asked him to give his opinion about Psillogiannis' collaboration with the Germans. Raptis answered that "It is true that Psillogiannis was a collaborator, but he always meant good" and he explained that he also owed his life to Psillogiannis. Raptis was a young 5/42 supporter who had no active participation in the regiment. During a raid in Itea, the Germans arrested him and imprisoned him in the Itea German camp. The next day after his arrest, Psillogiannis accidentally saw Raptis in Prison and let him go without even asking the German's permission (Raptis, interview 23 August 2000).

Captain Koutras was one of the first people who undertook resistance activity in Fokida. He had participated in a number of battles against the occupation forces, many times side by side with ELAS' antartes.¹²⁹ He is considered as one of the most distinguished and brave men within the regiment who always remained loyal to the national resistance cause, even according to EAM-ELAS veterans and sympathisers (Gregoriadis, vol.1: 51, Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2, 272, Roupas, interview 24 April 2000, Koutroukis, interview 22 April 2000, Giangis, interview, 17 August 2000). On the other hand Raptis was just a 5/42 supporter, he was someone who did not have any participation in the resistance and in the 5/42-ELAS conflict. In order to give an answer whether these two cases were incidents of collaboration and whether Koutras and Raptis were also collaborators –since both of them benefited from a collaborator- another

question needs to be answered first. What would be the benefit for the nation's resistance struggle if eventually Koutras was killed by ELAS and if Raptis was executed by the Germans?

The fact that both Koutras and Raptis were saved by a collaborator does not by itself constitute a case of collaboration with the enemy. It was not an action that was turned against EAM-ELAS or any other Greek and it did not harm the interest of the national resistance struggle. It was an action motivated by interpersonal relations and the esprit de corps. It would be wrong to judge the actions of all participants in the national resistance and the civil conflict during the occupation according to a strict and inflexible perspective which places duty above all and which considers people as being motivated exclusively by their sense of duty. The people who joined ELAS, the 5/42 regiment and the security battalions and fought against each other, did not meet for the first time during the occupation, they were not alien to each other. They were friends, fellow-villagers, schoolmates, colleagues, in many cases even brothers. Some of these friendships and family bonds survived the civil discord and proved stronger than the sense of membership and duty.

Fourth accusation

“Major Kapentzonis and Captain Dedousis along with some other officers and 100 men fled to the Peloponnese and they continued their treason by joining the Patras security battalions” (DIS/GES F/928/Z/1).

As far as Captain Dedousis is concerned, ELAS' accusation was completely untrue. Dedousis never joined the security battalions, instead after the battle in Klima he fled first to Amfissa and then to Athens where he tried to escape to the Middle East.

¹²⁹ See ch 2.2.i, p 74.

However, the Germans arrested him and Dedousis spent the rest of the occupation in Prison (Dedousis, 1949: 86-87, Kaimaras, 1979: 55, G. Koutsoklenis, interview 17 May 2000).¹³⁰ On the contrary, ELAS' accusation about Major Kapentzonis is absolutely valid.

“Major Kapentzonis with a unit of 90 men, 10 of which were officers, went to Patras with their weapons and ammunition. Most of them joined the 2nd regiment of evzones [security battalion] (Staurogianopoulos, 1974: 183)”.¹³¹

Those men under Kapentzonis maintained the title “5/42 regiment of evzones” and after three months they returned to Naupaktos where they continued fighting ELAS.

Kapentzonis and his men joined the security battalions when the 5/42 did not exist. From the moment that the 5/42 was permanently disbanded, there was no such thing as collective responsibility and each man was personally responsible for his actions. Kapentzonis' defection to the security battalions was definitely collaborationist, however his actions cannot blacken the 5/42's reputation and by no means can justify a case of collaboration against the regiment. Moreover, it is rather irrational to present an event that happened after the 5/42 disbandment as a reason or argument for the justification of the disbandment.¹³² However, the case of Kapentzonis' defection to the security battalions has a number of interesting moral aspects.

¹³⁰ This is also reconfirmed by ELAS' antartis and wireless operator attached to Velouchiotis' guard Babis Roupas (Roupas, interview, 24 April 2000).

¹³¹ The rest of the 5/42 officers who joined Kapentzonis in the Security Battalions were: Lieutenant of Calvary Vitsas Dimitrios, sub-lieutenants Genovezos Nikolaos, Kokoris Sotirios, Karamazakis Ioannis, Koutsomanis Konstantinos, Zafirios Michael, Tzivas Konstantinos (Staurogianopoulos, 1974: 215)

¹³² In addition to the above accusations, ELAS' report includes three more alleged cases of collaboration between the 5/42 regiment and the Germans or the security battalions. “a) Many times, motorboats from Peloponnese delivered ammunition in the Monastiraki-Marathias beach for the 5/42 regiment of EKKA. B) There was positive information that they [5/42] expected reinforcements of officers and security battalions to arrive by motorboat from Athens via the Gerania area to strike us in the rear. C) Beyond any doubt information verified that they had a number of boats standing by in the Monastiraki-Trizonia area. Their purpose was to keep contact with the Germans and the security battalions in the Peloponnese and to carry reinforcements from there”. (DIS/GES F/928/Z/1) These accusations are very general and rather hypothetical and it was impossible to reconfirm them or reject them based on solid evidence. Any attempt

ELAS with all the aggression that it showed against the regiment managed to provide a very convenient alibi to Kapentzonis and those who followed him. Kapentzonis and his men were beyond any doubt anti-communists. Their deep anti-communist sentiment however, was not probably the only motive that led those men to the security battalions. The circumstances and dilemmas that these men had to face after the battle in Klima need also to be taken under consideration in explaining their journey from national resistance to collaboration with the enemy. ELAS had set a price on Kapentzonis' head as well as on the heads of almost every other ex 5/42 officer and antartes. These people had very slim chances to survive if they returned to their homes. Since Fokida was under the complete control of ELAS, joining the security battalions in the Peloponnese was for many who had been stigmatised by ELAS probably their only alternative to survive. The two things that these men tried to obtain by joining the security battalions were safety and revenge. They would increase their chances of survival and they would have the opportunity to revenge ELAS.

It was no coincidence, that Kapentzonis' unit became the most combatant and brutal security battalion in the area. According to General Staurogianopoulos who was a security battalion officer in Naupaktos:

“That unit was distinguished for its combatant spirit and it carried out attacks against ELAS on a daily basis” (Staurogianopoulos, 1974: 275).

to cross-reference them with other sources or testimonies proved unsuccessful. Interviewees from both sides either reconfirmed them in a rather mechanical or reflexive manner, without adding any clue (See Bekios, interview 8 May 2000, Koutras, interview 11 May 2000, Koutroukis, interview 22 April 2000, Deniozos, interview 21 August 2000), or rejected them in the same manner without also giving any proof (Interviews with Kaimaras, interview 11 May 2000, Protopapas, interview 14 January 2000). Any conclusion about these accusations should therefore be based by comparison with events. As far as the second accusation, such an attack never happened, and reinforcements of security battalions never came to assist the 5/42 regiment from Athens or anywhere else. As far as the third accusation, it is true that there were some boats standing by in the Monastiraki-Trizonia beach, but these boats were never used to carry reinforcements from the Peloponnese, instead were used to carry some of the regiment's men to the Peloponnese after the collapse of the 5/42 defence.

Nevertheless, even Staurogianopoulos who praises the security battalions in his books considers the activities of Kapentzonis' unit as one of the blackest stains in the history of the security battalions.

“That unit was the most vengeful. Its men had suffered so much from EAM-ELAS and they thought that due to that, they could do whatever they liked [against ELAS]. Without any permission from the security battalion's headquarters to which they belonged, they were arresting members of EAM and imprisoned them in a warehouse that did not fill even the minimum standards to accommodate people. Many times, their actions were completely out of line and they executed people without any permission from the battalion's headquarters. Many of the battalion's officers complained to Major Kapentzonis about his men's behaviour and although Kapentzonis told us that he disapproved such activities, he did not take any measures to prevent them and such atrocities were repeated. Due to the tactics that Kapentzonis adopted, the relationships between him and the rest of the battalion's officers were not good” (Staurogianopoulos, 1974: 274-275).

From one point of view, the defection of Kapentzonis and his men to the security battalions was understandable and many excuses and alibis could be given. On the other hand, however, whatever the motive, “just the sight of armed Greeks on the side of Germans is disgusting” (Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2: 295). To a large degree, Kapentzonis' case is a moral issue and defining whether his defection was justified or not depends largely on individual perception and individual sensitivity over the issue of collaboration with the enemy. It would be very difficult to come up with a clear “verdict”, to condemn or acquit Kapentzonis and his men as traitors. Even Hagen Fleisher who is considered by many as an important researcher of the occupation falls in a contradiction in terms when in the same sentence he characterises the defection of Kapentzonis' men to the security battalions as “understandable but inexcusable”.¹³³

¹³³ See Fleisher, “Contacts between German occupation forces and Greek resistance organisations” in Greece during 1940-1950 “A nation in crisis”, 1984: 92.

Similar confusion and contradiction is also obvious among the 5/42 veterans and the attitude that they maintained towards the “prodigal son” of their regiment. Most of the 5/42 veterans kept a short-sighted, thoughtless attitude towards the Kapentzonis case due to a distorted sense of camaraderie and a false conception of the true meaning of the esprit de corps. Many of the 5/42 veterans try to hide the fact that Kapentzonis joined the security battalions. An ex-5/42 antartis who wishes to maintain anonymity said:

“It is true that Kapentzonis joined the security battalions, but you do not have to mention that in your research”.

Others try to find excuses to justify the actions of their ex comrade. General Athanasios Mamarelis insists that:

“When your band has been disbanded three times by ELAS, when comrades of yours have been killed and when you face death, it is very difficult to maintain a moral attitude. You will join the security battalions a thousand times” (A. Mamarelis, interview, 3 January 2002).

Like General Mamarelis, General Kaimaras also tried to defend Kapentzonis’ action with a letter that he sent to “*Kathimerini*” newspaper on 14 November 1999.

“What should these poor patriots do? Stay in Klima and say to Velouchiotis’ men yes, please kill me I want to become a martyr” ¹³⁴ (5/42 regiment of evzones: Veterans association newsletter, vol.4: October-December 1999).

The attempt of the anonymous antartis, of General Mamarelis and of General Kaimaras to defend their ex-comrade is understandable. Participation in a resistance group creates bonds of solidarity between the members, and these bonds become even stronger when there is a common enemy and common negative experiences. The post-war “abolition of sins” that was so generously given to all collaborators reinforced that sense of solidarity. However the anonymous 5/42 antartis, Mamarelis and Kaimaras seem to forget that they followed totally opposite journeys than Kapentzonis. After the battle in

Klima Kapentzonis as well as the above 5/42 antartes and officers had to face exactly the same circumstances and had to deal with exactly the same problems, their lives were equally in jeopardy as Kapentzonis' was. Nevertheless, instead of joining the security battalions, the anonymous antartis fled to Athens where he was hiding from ELAS until Greece was liberated, Athanasios Mamarelis returned to his home and was close to being executed by ELAS ((A. Mamarelis, interview 3 January 2002), while Georgios Kaimaras tried to escape to the Middle East in order to continue the fight against the invader, he was arrested by the Germans and imprisoned for the rest of the occupation (Kaimaras, 1994: 54-55).

All of those three men who defend Kapentzonis with such zeal, were also desperate, they were also anti-Communists and thirsty for revenge, they as well had lost comrades and all of them had the chance to join the security battalions and retaliate against ELAS side by side with the Germans. However none of them did. They chose to remain loyal to the ideals of the national resistance no matter what the cost was. They had the moral strength to continue thinking as resistance fighters even at the time when their lives were in jeopardy. General Kaimaras explains the reasons why he refused to join the security battalions:

“After Psilogiannis’ proposal, the Amfissa security battalion issued an order to present myself to it. However, I did not want to blacken the national struggles that I personally gave with the 5/42 regiment and I did not come in touch with the people who served in the security battalions or the collaborationist government” (Kaimaras, 1994: 55).

Kaimaras’ attitude towards Kapentzonis is contradictory. On the one hand he like most of the 5/42 veterans argue that joining the security battalions was something derogatory, while on the other they defend Kapentzonis who joined them.

¹³⁴ Greek slang expression

In his book, Takis Papagianopoulos goes one step further than just defending his ex comrade. Papagianopoulos was a 5/42 officer who was arrested successively by both the Germans and ELAS and who suffered terrible tortures by both of them. In his book he includes a number of pictures of many 5/42 officers and antartes. Below every picture, there is a brief praising comment for every man. Below Kapentzonis' picture, Papagianopoulos writes:

“Major Georgios Kapentzonis: The legendary fighter who apotheosised the meaning of patriotic duty” (Papagianopoulos, 1981: 34).

The pompous adjectives and characterisations that so generously Papagianopoulos gave to Kapentzonis, are more than unfair. Above everything else, they are unfair to himself and the rest of the 5/42 resistance fighters who never betrayed the ideals of national resistance. They are also unfair against those 5/42 men who were killed in the battlefield or in the prisons of the Italians and the Germans, whom Kapentzonis served so loyally.

5.1.iii. The Verdict.

A number of documents and individual testimonies knock down ELAS' argument about a case of collaboration between the 5/42 regiment and the enemy. Collaboration –at least in the sense that this thesis perceives it¹³⁵ was not proven in any of the specific accusations that ELAS launched against the regiment.

In 1983, forty years after the disbandment of the 5/42, ELAS officer Nikiforos who was one of the officers who led the attack against the 5/42 in Klima rejected those accusations as fabricated:

¹³⁵ See ch 5.1.i, p 211.

“[...] The report that ELAS Headquarters issued concerning the 5/42's third disbandment is a document that has nothing to do with reality. [...] The alleged cases of collaboration between 5/42 officers and the Germans were just German attempts to exploit the regiment's tough situation. These offers were rejected. The accusation that the German attack against ELAS in Kaloskopi was the result of collaboration between the 5/42 and the enemy is an unacceptable claim. The Kaloskopi village is two days away from Klima and the Germans attacked the village for their own objectives and certainly not to assist the 5/42. Finally, the claim that ELAS attacked the 5/42 because it was collaborating with the Germans is completely untrue and ridiculous. In other words, that official document that our side issued in order to justify the attack against the 5/42 is a farce. Even the accusation that some 5/42 survivors “joined ” the security battalions in Patras is a pathetic attempt to incriminate those people whom we had not left a chance to survive in their homeland” (*Eleutheros Typos* 4 December 1983)

Nevertheless, ELAS' final attack against the 5/42 was justified upon these specific accusations. The question that arises is whether ELAS gave sincere faith in the validity of those accusations, or whether ELAS' officials fabricated the accusations and intentionally distorted the actual events in order to construct the necessary moral ground upon which they could justify the disbandment.

The alleged diversion in Kaloskopi did not contribute anything to the 5/42 and the suspected diversion from Naupaktos did never happen and could have never happened. These were facts that ELAS could not possibly not have known. ELAS could not possibly not have known that Psilogiannis was discharged from the regiment and could not possibly have believed that Kapentzonis' defection to the security battalions after the regiment's disbandment was a collaborationist activity which proved that the 5/42 was a collaborationist organisation. All these along with the fact that ELAS' officials were “processing” these accusations for twenty-seven days leads to the conclusion that these accusations were fabricated and that the presentation of events had been intentionally distorted. The purpose was to justify a tragedy.

In contrast with the two previous disbandments of the 5/42 in Stromi and in Taratsa, events in the third disbandment ran out of control. A bloody battle took place, the regiment's leader Colonel Psarros was murdered, whilst extensive atrocities were carried out against the regiment's officers and antartes while they were prisoners. The tragedy in Klima was a major political mistake. It backfired on EAM-ELAS and it had a major negative political effect. EAM-ELAS had to give a rational explanation to an irrational political mistake. Therefore, for once more in the history of the national resistance struggle, the accusation of collaboration with the enemy was launched.

The accusations that ELAS launched against the 5/42 regiment cannot blacken the regiment's legacy. According to the chief of the German intelligence bureau during the occupation Ronald Hampe:

“Throughout its existence, the 5/42 never collaborated and such allegations are unfounded and malicious”.¹³⁶

Neither did the 5/42 collaborate with the security battalions. There might have been proximity and a silent peace between the 5/42 and the security battalions, but it never developed into a collaboration of any kind and they never joined their efforts against EAM-ELAS. The security battalions were formed with the exclusive purpose to fight EAM-ELAS. They never attacked the 5/42 and the 5/42 never attacked them. On the other hand, EAM-ELAS fought the security battalions bravely and thousands of EAM-ELAS fighters and followers were tortured and murdered by the security battalions. Nevertheless, this contrast by itself cannot lead to an inductive conclusion that the

¹³⁶ See Fleisher, “Contacts between German occupation forces and Greek resistance organisations” in Greece during 1940-1950 “A nation in crisis”, 1984: 92. (From a personal letter sent to Hagen Fleisher by Hampe himself)

security battalions and the 5/42 were collaborating. Just the fact that the 5/42 and the security battalions had a common enemy does not necessarily mean that they were allies.

The 5/42 regiment might have not contributed much to the national resistance struggle and it might have not caused tremendous casualties to the enemy. However, there is hard evidence to indicate that the regiment did not betray the purpose that it served. It did not allow and it did not invite the Germans and their collaborators to engage in its own conflict with EAM-ELAS. Even at times when the regiment was under serious pressure from ELAS, the 5/42 did not give into treason. It managed to distinguish the domestic from the foreign enemy and it managed to distinguish civil war from national resistance.

5.2. The Real Causes: Removing the Thorns

EAM was a national resistance front, which numbered almost one million supporters nation-wide.¹³⁷ It was a powerful and radical political movement with a tremendous popular appeal. Its military wing ELAS included almost 50.000 regular and reserve antartes (DIS/GES KKE archives),¹³⁸ a mighty and effective guerrilla force with large units all over Greece. ELAS had fought many battles against the occupation forces and had carried out the lion's share of the national resistance struggle. EKKA on the

¹³⁷ It is rather impossible to calculate the number of EAM's followers accurately. The figures concerning EAM's supporters within the literature vary. According to Hatzis, EAM had 1,520,000 members and followers throughout Greece (Hatzis, 1983, vol.2, 328). Bartziotas raises the number to 2,500,000 (in Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.1: 331). In general terms, these figures can be considered as rather excessive. According to more moderate and probably accurate estimations, EAM during the last year of the occupation must have had approximately one million supporters (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.1: 331)

other hand remained throughout its existence a small society of political friends without any popular support, while the 5/42 regiment remained a small local guerrilla force of almost one thousand men, with very limited contribution to the resistance effort. In political and military terms, the difference between EAM-ELAS and EKKA-5/42 was enormous. EAM-ELAS however had a major political interest over EKKA and the 5/42 regiment.

From day one of EKKA's formation, the organisation was politically placed in EAM's right and in EDES' left. As far as the 5/42 regiment was concerned, Colonel Psarros declared that his regiment was a pure military force dedicated exclusively to the resistance struggle and had nothing to do with politics. According to Pyromaglou:

"The leaders of EKKA perceived the resistance struggle in an idealistic manner. They were touched by the idea that the liberation struggle should aim exclusively at causing damage to the occupation forces and driving them out of the country. They believed that political and ideological beliefs should not come to the surface until liberation and only when the last German would have left Greece, then and only then should they be brought back to life and become agents of the country's political life. It aimed to build a road side by side with the rest of the national resistance organisations that would lead to national harmony among all Greek resistance fighters" (Pyromaglou, 1988: 333).

Pyromaglou's comments about the leaders of EKKA-5/42 were rather embellishing, but still they include elements of truth. It is a fact that EKKA and the 5/42 regiment were moderate agents within the resistance movement. They adopted temperate political tactics and they maintained a moderate political profile while the tension and discord within the resistance organisations was rising. Although EKKA and the 5/42 were small organisations with very few followers, they "silently" represented a significant number of Greeks. They represented the people who were between EAM and EDES. The people who disapproved EAM's radicalism and ELAS' arrogance, but who

¹³⁸ This number refers to the last few months before liberation

also disapproved Zervas' political opportunism and his attachment to the British and the King. This "silent" group was not attached to EKKA or the regiment, but their attitudes were similar with the moderate attitude that EKKA and the 5/42 maintained towards the increasing polarisation within the resistance movement.

The importance of EKKA-5/42 within the political arena was the fact that it was a political group that represented the centre. As usual, the attitudes of the centre is what determines the outcome of a political struggle and EAM-ELAS was definitely aware of that rule. Although EAM-ELAS included moderates and even conservatives, their numbers were rather small. The vast majority of moderate and conservative political groups maintained their suspicion towards EAM-ELAS and their belief that KKE dominated both EAM and ELAS.¹³⁹ One of EAM's most important political objectives was to find ways to penetrate the centre and attract as many moderate and conservative political groups to it. EKKA-5/42 could become a Trojan horse for such a task.

EAM-ELAS would have achieved a very important political success if EKKA-5/42 –the third pole of the Greek resistance movement- eventually joined in. EAM-ELAS would have dispelled the impression that they were both controlled by KKE. Furthermore, the participation of a respectable and well known officer such as Psarros would also increase ELAS' military credibility. A possible merging of EKKA with EAM would give the impression that EAM was a genuine, integrated and wide democratic front and that would probably make even more conservatives and moderates to abandon their suspicions towards EAM. Moreover such an achievement would bring a serious blow for EDES and would contribute to Zervas' isolation from the centre.

¹³⁹ See ch 3.3.i, p 156.

On the other hand, EAM-ELAS would have to face serious negative consequences if it failed to assimilate EKKA-5/42. If EDES managed to form a political or military alliance with EKKA and the 5/42, EDES would then come out of its isolation. EDES would have a bridgehead to the centre and such an alliance would have dispelled the impression that Zervas had turned royalist and was entirely dependent upon the British. Although that was a scenario that EAM-ELAS' officials feared (Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2: 134), it was not the worst case scenario. What would have been the most dangerous development for EAM-ELAS would have been the possibility for EKKA-5/42 to have maintained its independence. In that case, EAM-ELAS would have an extra competitor to confront in addition to EDES. It was well known that Psarros and Kartalis were democrats and that EKKA was a group with socialist tendencies. If EKKA-5/42 remained, that would give the impression that opposite EAM-ELAS there was not just "the traitors and the British henchmen", but a whole democratic block of organisations. Consequently EAM-ELAS' could leave only two alternatives for the future of EKKA and the 5/42. They should either be assimilated by EAM-ELAS or they should be disbanded. There could be no alternative that would secure EAM-ELAS' interests.

EAM-ELAS followed a tactic of inconsistent hostility against EKKA and the 5/42, a contradictory and controversial tactic that resembled the primitive method of curing psychopaths with continuous cold and hot showers. On the one hand EAM-ELAS followed a line of unity and approach, while on the other they adopted a hard line of aggression. The problem however was not the fact that EAM-ELAS followed two different strategies against EKKA-5/42, but that it followed them simultaneously. That

controversy was so inexplicable that it caused doubts and concern even within EAM-

ELAS' officials such as KKE's subsequent General Secretary Harilaos Florakis:

"How is it possible to explain Comrades the fact that we disbanded Psarros three times and that still for another three times we sent people in every city and village of Parnassida and Dorida saying: forgive us, it was our mistake, Psarros is a patriot, we are going to help him form again his traitorous army" (5/42 regiment of evzones: Veterans association newsletter, vol.3: July-September 1999).

The explanation for that mysterious and controversial policy was the fact that the hard liners who followed an aggressive strategy towards EKKA-5/42 operated in secret and independently from the moderates who followed a temperate policy and who were in favour of friendly relationships. According to Pyromaglou:

"Siantos maintained an aggressive and uncompromising line [...] that line was applied directly, without passing the institutional channels of EAM and ELAS' decision making" (Pyromaglou, 1965: 185).

In other words, while EAM's official line was unity and co-operation with EKKA-5/42, Siantos averted the official EAM-ELAS channels of decision making and enforced his aggressive policy which was applied with the three successive disbandments of the 5/42. That scenario probably explains satisfactory the "misunderstanding" of the first two disbandments in Stromi and in Taratsa. It probably explains why Orestis who was a loyal follower of Siantos and who was responsible for the first disbandment never suffered any disciplinary action.¹⁴⁰ It also explains why Zoulas who was responsible for the second disbandment and who murdered Psarros also never suffered any disciplinary consequences.¹⁴¹ It explains the ignorance and surprise of moderate EAM-ELAS leaders (Leuterias, Vlachopoulos, Maniatis, Sarafis etc) about the two first disbandments.¹⁴² It explains the fact that although these moderate EAM-ELAS leaders gave guarantees about

¹⁴⁰ See ch 3.1.i, p 129 and ch 3.1.iii, p 134.

¹⁴¹ See ch 3.1.iv, p 137 and ch 3.1.v, p 143.

friendly relationships after the first disbandment, a few days later the regiment was disbanded for once more. According to Pyromaglou, the successive cold and hot showers that the 5/42 received from EAM-ELAS can be explained by the existence of an “invisible and unrestrained authority” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 173) within EAM-ELAS which enforced a totally different policy from EAM-ELAS’ official policy towards EKKA-5/42. According to Pyromaglou that invisible authority was Siantos.

The two first disbandments in Stromi and in Taratsa were not accidental. Most probably Orestis and Zoulas had clear orders from Siantos himself to disband the 5/42. Orestis’ excuse that he misunderstood Siantos’ orders concerning the 5/42 and Zoulas’ excuse that he ordered the disbandment of the 5/42 because his wife was a psychopath cannot be considered as genuine.¹⁴³ The objective of those excuses was to protect Siantos from any responsibility. The 5/42 disbandments had to be presented not as parts of a carefully prepared plan, but as accidental events, as accidental deviations from EAM’s official policy that favoured unity and co-operation with the 5/42. Siantos’ policy had to be applied secretly in order to cause as less damage as possible to EAM-ELAS’ national policy of unity and co-operation with every other resistance organisation. Siantos’ short-sighted and inconsistent policy was a complete failure and it led to completely opposite results than what he probably expected. On the one hand it undermined EAM’s official policy of national unity and made EAM’s declarations sound like farce, on the other hand, it also failed to disband the 5/42 for once and for all.

After the fiasco in the Cairo conference, the invisible and unrestrained authority was becoming less invisible and more unrestrained. EAM-ELAS’ official attitude

¹⁴² See ch 3.1.iv, p 137 and ch 3.1.v, p 143.

¹⁴³ See ch 3.1.v, p 143.

towards EKKA-5/42 was becoming more aggressive since Siantos was alone in defining EAM-ELAS' policy. All moderate members of KKE's political bureau (Tzimas, Rousos, etc) were set aside by Siantos and were allocated to less influential posts where they could not participate in KKE's decision making. According to Pyromaglou:

“Siantos became the undisputed political leader of ELAS, he became a leading member of ELAS' General Headquarters and since he was also KKE's General Secretary, he had the ultimate power within EAM-ELAS and he was capable to decide on his own” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 210).

In October 1943 Siantos personally left Athens and went up the mountains from where he personally undertook the political and military command of EAM-ELAS. “From now on where EAM, read KKE” (Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2: 232), or rather read Siantos.

Siantos did no longer have to use the secret policies and the intrigues that he used during the first two disbandments. The decision to disband the 5/42 regiment for the last time was sealed not only by ELAS' General Headquarters (Sarafis, Siantos), but also by PEEA (Bakirtzis, Mantakas, Siantos) as well. In other words, PEEA -in which Siantos was the Secretary of domestic affairs- authorised ELAS -in which Siantos was the political leader- to disband the 5/42.

After the regiment's second disbandment and until the end, EAM-ELAS adopted a hard line of political and military pressure towards EKKA and the 5/42. The purpose was to force EKKA-5/42 to join EAM-ELAS. In Fokida, ELAS had surrounded the 5/42 and although there was peace between the two guerrilla bands, ELAS maintained a provocative attitude towards the regiment. This psychological war aimed to bring down the morale of the 5/42 men. On the political level, Siantos kept applying all of his pressure upon EKKA in order to convince or force its leaders to join EAM. Although that

tactic did not lead to a merging of EKKA with EAM, EKKA still maintained a pro-EAM attitude throughout the ELAS-EDES war.¹⁴⁴

As mentioned above EAM-ELAS left the 5/42 with only two alternatives: either to join EAM-ELAS or disband. The 5/42's third disbandment was not accidental, nor was it due to Varsos' murder or due to the alleged cases of collaboration with the enemy. The 5/42 was disbanded when it had become obvious that there was no chance of EKKA-5/42 joining EAM-ELAS. The first obvious indication of that was Dedousis' memorandum, signed by 68 of the regiment's officers. The issuing of Dedousis' memorandum was an event of the utmost importance which played a very significant role in determining the relations between the 5/42 and ELAS. Relations between both organisations were never good. Even during the time where there was not any conflict between them, hostility and suspicion between them was obvious. Nevertheless, the 5/42 throughout its existence maintained a moderate, self-restrained attitude towards ELAS. Dedousis' memorandum and the appeal that it had among the 5/42 officers was the proof that patience and self-restraint were diminishing. It was the proof that there was no chance for the 5/42 officers and antartes to join ELAS and furthermore it was the proof that they would not tolerate any more humiliation and provocation by ELAS. Moreover Dedousis' mutiny was a proof that Psarros did no longer have the regiment under his control, therefore EAM-ELAS had realised that the promises given by Psarros could not be actualised. Kartalis as well was proven a not credible negotiator for EAM-ELAS. His reversal in the Myrofiloplaka conference and his identification with EDES and Woodhouse¹⁴⁵ was clear evidence that EKKA would never join EAM and that the pro-EAM-ELAS attitude that EKKA

¹⁴⁴ See ch 4.1, p179.

¹⁴⁵ See ch 4.1.ii, p 183.

maintained throughout the ELAS-EDES war was nothing more than a political manoeuvre.

According to Gregoriadis:

“While EKKA-5/42 were closer to EAM-ELAS and further from EDES there was peace [between EKKA-5/42 and EAM-ELAS]. Nevertheless when EDES and EKKA came closer to each other after the Myrofilo-Plaka conference in February 1944, ELAS stopped being tolerant towards EKKA” (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 620).

After the ELAS-EDES war was over and after EKKA and the 5/42 showed their true colours, the value of EKKA-5/42 for EAM-ELAS fell to zero. EAM-ELAS had nothing to gain from EKKA or the regiment since it had become obvious that they would never merge with EAM-ELAS, while the signs that they were becoming more attached to the anti-EAM-ELAS camp were becoming more and more obvious (Dedousis’ memorandum, Kartalis’ reversal etc). Therefore, since it was obvious that EKKA-5/42 would not join EAM-ELAS, the regiment did not have any reason to continue existing for EAM-ELAS.

In addition to the political causes of the 5/42 disbandment, there were also a number of military and strategic causes. Fokida is a region with a tremendous strategic importance. Firstly, Fokida’s shores extend throughout the Corinthian gulf and they are very close to the Pelloponesian shores. Within and near to the region, there are the two main sea routes, Rio-Antirio¹⁴⁶ and Aegion-Agios Nikolaos, which connect Roumeli with the Peloponnese. Secondly, Fokida is very close to Athens and the only road that connected Athens with northern and south-western Greece passed through the region. Therefore, the fact that Fokida region was under the control of 5/42 forces was a major

¹⁴⁶ Antirio belongs to the Aitolokarnania region, but it is located upon the limits of Fokida-Aitolokarnania regions.

strategic problem for ELAS and it was a serious obstacle in accomplishing two of ELAS' most important plans.

The first plan was ELAS' expansion in the Peloponnese. The Peloponnese was traditionally a pro-royalist stronghold. EAM-ELAS was much weaker there than it was in Roumeli or Thessaly. The fact that the first ELAS unit in Peloponnese was formed in July 1943 and was manned by less than 200 men (Fleisher, 1995, vol.2: 98) was illustrative of how weak EAM-ELAS was in the Peloponnese. On the other hand, the security battalions in the Peloponnese were powerful. According to Sarafis:

“The situation in the Peloponnese was very difficult because our troops were under constant pressure by joint security battalions and German campaigns” (Sarafis, 1964: 283).

The situation was so unfavourable for EAM-ELAS that in March 1944 Siantos sent Velouchiotis himself to organise local ELAS forces.¹⁴⁷ He told him:

“We are losing the Peloponnese. Only you can sort things out there” (Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2: 56).¹⁴⁸

In order to strengthen the Pelloponesian ELAS and neutralise the security battalions there, it was necessary to maintain continual communications with Roumeli. Communication with Roumeli via the Corinth isthmus was impossible since the Germans maintained large units in the area. Consequently the only route of communication between Roumeli and the Peloponnese passed through Fokida which was under the 5/42's control. The fact that this crucial route of communication was under the control of a hostile force, was a great jeopardy for ELAS' expansion to the Peloponnese, therefore, disbanding the regiment was a necessary action for achieving that objective.

¹⁴⁷ Velouchiotis got engaged in the ELAS-5/42 conflict while he was on route to the Peloponnese.

The second and most important plan was the capture of Athens. Since August-September 1943, while the Cairo conference was ending in a fiasco, Ioannidis and Siantos along with the rest of KKE's political bureau ordered Major Theodoros Makridis (Ektoras) –KKE's Chief military advisor "to come up with a plan for capturing the Attica basin (Athens, Pireus, outskirts) simultaneously or immediately after the withdrawal of the occupation forces, which was expected to happen soon" (Farakos, 2000, vol.2: 108). Although a copy of that detailed plan was never found, according to Makridis it included a description of the political and military condition in Greece, an evaluation of the combatant ability of every Greek antartes force, the kind of activities and measures that had to be taken for the seizure of Athens etc. The plan was a clear proof that a year before the liberation of Greece, KKE's leaders were preparing the ground, either to capture state authority with the use of force after the liberation (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.2: 338), or at least to have the upper hand in terms of military strength towards every other military and political competitor during "zero hour" (Fleisher, 1995, vol.2: 195).

ELAS had to secure its rear in order to achieve free and safe communication to and from Athens. That was of the utmost importance and would play a decisive role for the success of the overall plan. ELAS forces in Athens included approximately 20,000 fighters, but just 6,000 of them were armed. Athenian ELAS had a major shortage in weapons and ammunition and its supplies came almost exclusively from the nearby areas of Roumeli including Fokida. Furthermore, the plan for the seizure of Athens included the transportation of large ELAS units from Roumeli. These units should be on red alert and ready to move to Athens when the signal was given (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.2: 341).

¹⁴⁸ Apart from the fact that Velouchiotis was probably the only one who was capable to turn things favourably for ELAS in the Peloponnese, his transfer there served also some political purpose for Siantos

The existence of the 5/42 in Fokida would be a major problem for ELAS. The 5/42 forces could cause serious problems to ELAS' transportation of troops and supplies to Athens, while having a hostile force on ELAS' rear would jeopardise the success of the whole plan (Kaimaras, interview 18 December 1999, Protopapas, interview 6 May 2000, A. Mamarelis, interview 15 January 2000). Finally, in addition to those strategic plans, the booty was another military profit for ELAS. The 5/42 was a "rich" guerrilla band. It had efficiency in weapons (machine-guns, mortars, etc), ammunition, money and provisions due to the British support.¹⁴⁹ All that equipment and provisions were vital for ELAS and ELAS' officers and antartes were eager to get them in their hands.

Conclusion

The moral ground upon which ELAS disbanded the 5/42 was treason and collaboration with the Germans and the security battalions. In order to back up this accusation, ELAS launched a number of specific accusations against the regiment. This chapter's first purpose was to test the validity of those accusations. That was probably the most difficult task that this thesis had to deal with since the issue of collaboration is a highly subjective one, inseparably bound with morals and individual perception, while the search for hard evidence is a very hard task. Having all those difficulties in mind, this thesis tried to use the maximum possible amount of references and evidence concerning

who wanted to have Velouchiotis in some sort of political isolation (Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2: 254-257).

¹⁴⁹ See ch 7.1.i, p 268.

ELAS' accusations against the 5/42 and to evaluate these accusations according to the most objective term of collaboration.

According to the findings, the accusation that the 5/42 collaborated with the enemy was not substantiated. ELAS established the case of collaboration against the 5/42 posthumously, after the disbandment had happened. The first purpose that these accusations served was to create a convincing moral ground that would justify the tragedy that happened in Klima. The second purpose was to create a smokescreen that would camouflage the real causes behind the disbandment of the 5/42.

This chapter's second purpose was to highlight the real causes behind the disbandment of the 5/42. The regiment posed a serious threat against the political and military interests of EAM-ELAS, therefore EAM-ELAS had given the 5/42 two choices; either to join EAM-ELAS or be eliminated. Although ELAS had the military strength to disband the 5/42 at any given time, they did not do so as long as EKKA-5/42 remained potential allies. Nevertheless, as soon as it became obvious that the 5/42 had become an openly hostile force and as soon as it was understood that the gap between the EKKA and EAM was not going to be bridged, ELAS took the decision to disband the 5/42. EAM could not risk the existence of an additional competing political organisation next to EDES. That would be a benefit for the anti-EAM camp and would seriously jeopardise the political dominance of EAM in occupied Greece. In addition, ELAS could not risk the existence of a hostile armed force in Fokida because this would jeopardise ELAS' military plans for expansion in the Peloponnese and for the capture of Athens.

The third and last disbandment of the 5/42 was a rational choice for EAM-ELAS. It was an offensive approved by ELAS' General Headquarters and PEEA and it served a

number of strategic objectives. Nevertheless, events ran out of control in Klima. ELAS did not just disband the regiment, but also murdered Colonel Psarros, one of the leading figures of the Greek resistance. That mysterious and inexplicable event will be studied in the following chapter

CHAPTER 6

The Hidden Causes and the Obvious Effects of Psarros'

Murder

Although Colonel Psarros and his regiment had the same fate, it would be more appropriate to study the disbandment of the 5/42 and the murder of Psarros as two separate events. The first reason for that is that while the regiment's disbandment was officially ordered by PEEA, Zoulas had no official order or authorisation to execute Psarros and his motives were rather dark. The second reason is that the political magnitude of Psarros' murder was by far greater than that of the regiment's disbandment. Throughout the occupation, ELAS had disbanded many other competing resistance organisations, while they had disbanded the 5/42 twice. However the murder of a resistance leader such as Psarros was an unprecedented event that caused much more serious political effects than the disbandment itself.

The meso-level analysis in this chapter will focus on the causes and effects of Psarros' murder. In the first half of the chapter, the discussion will highlight the different versions and scenarios concerning the causes and motives behind the murder. Although, EAM-ELAS tried to cover up Psarros' murder as an accidental event, facts indicate that it

was a premeditated crime and that Zoulas had a clear intention to kill Psarros. However, his motives remain rather mysterious and controversial. According to one view, Zoulas killed Psarros on his own initiative due to personal reasons, while according to another view, Zoulas was ordered to assassinate Psarros by someone who was above him in ELAS' hierarchy.

Psarros' murder is surrounded by mystery. Primary sources are very scarce and in most cases, they certainly serve ulterior causes. On the other hand, although secondary sources and personal testimonies are more in number, they are still very subjective and biased. Therefore, the purpose in researching the causes of Psarros' assassination is not to fingerprint the mastermind behind the murder since that would be impossible due to the shortage of reliable evidence. The purpose here is to highlight the different versions concerning the murder's causes and to comment on them using objective and rational criteria.

Whatever the causes, the effects of Psarros' murder were tremendous and the unanimous opinion among national resistance protagonists and researchers is that it had devastating effects for EAM. In the second half, this chapter will focus on the impact that Psarros' murder had on the political developments during the last months of the occupation. Psarros' murder became a central issue in the Lebanon conference between the exiled Greek government, the national resistance organisations and the pre-war political parties. Although the conference's objective was the achievement of national unity, the conference was turned in to a trial for EAM-ELAS based on Psarros' case. Eventually, the conference resulted into a disaster for EAM-ELAS and the purpose of this chapter is to highlight the way in which Psarros' legacy contributed to such a disaster.

The legacy of Psarros' murder however, influenced not only the outcome of the Lebanon conference, but it also had long term effects in the political antagonisms during the last months of the occupation. It had a great impact on Greek public opinion and it sharpened the polarisation. It fueled the anti-communist sentiment, it reinforced the coherence of the anti-EAM camp and it benefited the extreme anti-EAM organisations by giving them propaganda material. In its second half, this chapter will highlight the way in which extreme anti-EAM groups used Psarros' murder in their propaganda.

6.1. Crime.

The murder of a prisoner is under any circumstance a brutal and unethical act; therefore, Psarros' murder has a fundamentally moral-ethical aspect. From the first moment, EAM-ELAS' leadership realised that they had to cope with a serious moral issue that could have very serious consequences. That is why official EAM-ELAS tried to cover up the murder and undermine its importance. According to ELAS' official version of events, Psarros was killed during the battle in Klima. In ELAS' official 12 paged report concerning the 5/42 disbandment, Psarros' death is referred to in a single sentence:

“During the battle, there were many casualties from both sides, among which Colonel Psarros” (DIS/GES F/928/Z/1).

The same explanation was given by EAM-ELAS propagandist newspapers such as “Roumeli” (PRO H5 5/279).

Nevertheless, the rumour that Zoulas was the man that had killed Psarros was spread all over Greece. Therefore, ELAS had to come up with a more realistic and

convincing explanation. British liaison officer Lieutenant-Colonel Hamond made an investigation on Psarros' death. According to his report, ELAS officially gave him the following explanation:

“The version of what happened between Marathias and Klima that seems to bear ELAS approval is as follows: Col Psarros, his men and the ELAS men who were conducting the group to Klima were met by Col Zoulas, 5th Brigade ELAS, and a group of ELAS antartes going from Klima towards Marathia: Col Zoulas stopped to talk to Col Psarros. Col Zoulas is reported to have said: “Psarre you are a whore”. Col Psarros drew a gun to shoot Col Zoulas, however Col Zoulas' groom killed Col Psarros before Col Psarros fired. There is a discrepancy here with reference to where Col Psarros pulled a gun from; Some stories say from a sideholster and some say the gun was concealed in his sleeve” (PRO H5 5/292).

Although Lieutenant-Colonel Hamond rejected this version of events in his report and assured that “A slight knowledge of Col Psarros leads me to doubt that he would draw a gun” (PRO H5 5/292), another ELAS report went even further arguing that Psarros shot Zoulas and Zoulas was forced to kill him in self defence (DIS/GES F/914/Z/1b). Hatzis, one of KKE's leading figures gave a far more convenient and “naïve” explanation about the murder:

“While Psarros and Zoulas were having an argument, Zoulas shouted in anger “Oh somebody kill him”. One of Zoulas' men took these words as an order and he shot the unlucky Colonel. Psarros dropped dead” (Hatzis, 1983, vol.3: 170).

Although ELAS tried desperately to present Psarros' murder as an accidental event, the vast majority of sources coming from both the 5/42 and ELAS agree that events happened as follows: When Zoulas met Psarros, Zoulas started shouting threats and insults at him and threatened to kill him. Then Psarros told Zoulas “Alright Thymios do as you please, here I am” and he opened his coat showing Zoulas his chest. Then Zoulas ordered his antartis Velentzas (nickname “dwarf”) to shoot and Psarros got hit on

the brow and chest and died on the spot.¹⁵⁰ Without any doubt, Zoulas had the intention to kill Psarros. However, the key question is whether Zoulas killed Psarros based on his own personal motives, or whether Psarros' murder was premeditated and ordered by someone who was above Zoulas in ELAS' hierarchy.

According to the first view, Psarros' murder was a crime of passion and the apple of discord between Zoulas and Psarros was Psarros' wife. According to the *cherchez la femme* scenario, Zoulas had a secret love affair with Psarros' wife and killed him out of jealousy. Most 5/42 and ELAS veterans however considered this version as unreal and a fabricated rumour.¹⁵¹ On the contrary, there is evidence that Zoulas and Psarros had been friends during the past. Both were in the same class (of 1916) in the military academy and both took part in the 1935 coup and both were degraded. Moreover, the biggest proof that their relations were good –at least until they joined different camps during the occupation- was that when in the early months of the occupation EAM was recruiting officers for ELAS, EAM officials sent Zoulas personally to try to convince Psarros to join ELAS (Hatzis, 1983, vol.1: 275). Obviously, if there was hatred between the two men, EAM would choose someone else to approach Psarros and not Zoulas. Whatever the personal relationship between Zoulas and Psarros, the hypothesis that Zoulas killed Psarros because of personal reasons must be treated with scepticism for two reasons. Firstly because in such a delicate issue that concerned the two men's private lives it would be very difficult to make a distinction between gossip and fact and secondly

¹⁵⁰ See PRO H5 5/279, Kaimaras, 1979: 164, Koutras, 1981: 102, Gregoriadis, vol.5: 49, Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.2: 182, Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2: 287, Papadakis "Leuterias", interview 13 September 2000, Protopapas, interview 6 May 2000, Rodakis, interview 21 April 2000, Roupas, interview 24 April 2000.

¹⁵¹ See Protopapas, interview 6 May 2000, Papadakis "Leuterias", interview 13 September 2000, Roupas, interview 24 April 2000, Rodakis, interview 21 April 2000

because such a simplistic explanation for such a serious crime can be considered as particularly “convenient” for ELAS.

The biggest proof that justifies the hypothesis that Psarros’ murder was premeditated and that Zoulas had the support and the cover of someone of his superiors was that ELAS never punished Zoulas for his action. As in the case of the second disbandment of the 5/42 –where Zoulas’ gave no excuse why he ordered to disband the regiment- Zoulas was not called to justify his action. ELAS never made an official enquiry for Psarros’ murder and Zoulas was not referred to any disciplinary board He did not go to trial not even by a puppet court-martial and he never suffered the slightest penalty for an action that was disastrous for EAM-ELAS. Contrary to Zoulas, other ELAS antartes and officers had been sentenced to death due to rather minor incidents such as the accidental wounding of fellow antartis and due to petty-crimes such as the theft of a chicken etc.

According to Haritopoulos:

“Anyone who is the least familiar with KKE’s hierarchy and with the way that things work in KKE can argue that it would be impossible for Zoulas to take such a serious decision on his own...Why was not there not even the slightest reaction from PEEA, not even a fixed court-martial” ?(Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2: 287)

Zoulas was not so high in ELAS’ hierarchy to be in position to decide the execution of the leader of the third largest resistance organisation. Such a serious decision could only be taken by someone who was superior to Zoulas, someone who was at the top of the EAM-ELAS, PEEA and KKE pyramid.

However, all of EAM-ELAS and PEEA leaders seemed shocked and devastated by Psarros’ murder. For example, after having heard the news, Aris Velouchiotis did not speak to anyone for four days, he kept smoking and talking to himself “We have lost half

of our struggle, we will pay for this dearly” he kept repeating (Bekios: 417, Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2: 267). According to Sarafis, everybody in PEEA was shocked:

“Psarros’ death grieved not only Colonels Bakirtzis and Sarafis who were close friends with him for 25 years, but all other PEEA members as well, especially comrades Svolos, Tsimokos and Siantos” (Sarafis, 1964: 283-284).

When Siantos heard about Psarros’ murder, he was thunderstruck:

“Disaster! They killed Psarros” (Pyromaglou, 1965: 326).

All of EAM-ELAS and PEEA’s leaders seemed surprised, but still someone must had armed Zoulas’ hand.

In 1951 and while Zoulas was a political refugee in Romania, he wrote a personal report about his role in the disbandment of the 5/42 and in the murder of Psarros:

“Supplementary report on my biographical curriculum:
I met Siantos through Polydoros before I joined ELAS. Siantos guided me personally and directly on my relations with EKKA-Psarros-Kartalis. I killed Psarros when I captured him after the battle in Klima in April 1944. I was afraid that Bakirtzis was going to save him and that the 5/42 would be reformed again. That would cause serious problems in case when my regiment, the 36th, would be ordered to move for the capture of Athens. Along with Psarros, we killed some EDES officers who were also officers in EKKA. Nikiforos (who is now in the Aegina prison and is to be executed) captured Psarros. I had ordered Nikiforos – whose battalion was under my orders- to execute Psarros, but instead he sent him to my headquarters. I had agreed about Psarros’ execution with Aris. Siantos had not given me any orders about Psarros. During that time Siantos was in Athens and I know that he disapproved the two previous disbandments of the 5/42. He always agreed with the British liaison officers to reform the 5/42 and he was sending us orders about the relations that we would have (with the 5/42) in the future. 3.3.1951, Thymios Zoulas (Farakos, 1997: 296).

Zoulas argued that his motive in killing Psarros was to prevent a possible new reformation of the 5/42, that he acted on his own and that he was not ordered by anyone to commit the murder. However, it would be wrong to assume that the mystery surrounding Psarros’ murder is dissolved with Zoulas’ report. Farakos, who found Zoulas’ report in the KKE archives, questions the report’s sincerity based on two key

points. Firstly the arrogant manner in which Zoulas confessed such a brutal act that had totally devastating effects upon EAM is definitely suspicious (Farakos, 1997: 297). Secondly, although Zoulas did not write that Velouchiotis gave him the order to execute Psarros, he wrote that he had agreed the execution with Velouchiotis. Zoulas leaves the impression that he negotiated Psarros' murder with Velouchiotis and that eventually Velouchiotis was convinced and gave his approval. Taking into consideration the channels of decision making within ELAS, Zoullas' claim sounds rather irrational. A serious decision such as the execution of the leader of EKKA-5/42 could come from the top (Velouchiotis) to the bottom (Zoulas) and certainly not vice versa.

The third and most obscure point in Zoulas' confession however is a series of contradictions concerning Siantos. On the one hand, Zoulas claimed that Siantos was giving him direct and personal guidance concerning Psarros, Kartalis and EKKA-5/42, while on the other he claimed that Siantos was unaware of the two previous disbandments of the 5/42, that he disapproved of them and that he had not given him any orders what to do with Psarros. In other words, Zoulas who was responsible for the second disbandment of the 5/42, who was always being provocative against the 5/42 even while the ELAS-5/42 relations were calm and who had killed Psarros, claimed that he was always under the direct orders of Siantos, but at the same time he claimed that Siantos knew nothing and disagreed with all of the above actions.¹⁵²

¹⁵² There is no doubt that Siantos knew about Zoulas' provocative attitude against the 5/42 during the time where the relationship between the two bands was peaceful. The letters of complaint that Psarros had personally sent to ELAS General Headquarters and Siantos prove that beyond any doubt. In those letters, found in the archives of the Army's History Bureau, Psarros was complaining about Zoulas' unwillingness to co-operate with him and generally about the hostile attitude that Zoulas was maintaining against the regiment and him personally, while he was asking ELAS Headquarters to remove Zoulas from his post. (DIS/GES F/929)

Pyromaglou implies that Siantos' surprise after he heard about the murder of Psarros was hypocritical and indirectly incriminates Siantos as the mastermind behind Psarros' murder (Pyromaglou, 1965: 326). Although there is no solid evidence which proves beyond doubt that Siantos was the mastermind behind Psarros' murder, it is a fact that Zoulas was appointed by Siantos as the "5/42 affairs secretary". Zoulas was guided by Siantos and he enjoyed Siantos' trust and protection before and after Psarros' murder.

Firstly, the fact that Zoulas was never punished for the damage that he caused to EAM by murdering Psarros incriminates Siantos above all other EAM-ELAS and PEEA officials. Siantos was the leading figure in EAM-ELAS, PEEA and KKE and any decision to take disciplinary action against Zoulas was dependent on him. Secondly, among ELAS officers Zoulas was considered as a person attached to Siantos' close circle, as Siantos' "henchman" (Papadakis "Leuterias", interview 13 September 2000¹⁵³). In fact, Siantos intended to make Zoulas the chief political instructor of ELAS. In September 1942 ELAS was still small and vulnerable and Velouchiotis had already started showing signs of disobedience towards KKE. Siantos and Hatzis started looking for a reliable officer, loyal to them in order to appoint him as the chief political instructor next to Velouchiotis so that KKE's line would be enforced upon ELAS and so that Velouchiotis would be restrained. Siantos and Hatzis chose Zoulas for that task, but eventually they appointed Leuterias because in the meantime Zoulas got sick with icterus and he had to stay in Athens (Hatzis, 1983, vol.1: 317-320, Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2: 284, Papadakis "Leuterias", interview 13 September 2000). After the 5/42 was formed, Zoulas whose regiment was based in the Fokida area as well, was appointed member of

¹⁵³ Papadakis' view can be accepted as totally valid since he was also considered as an ELAS official loyal to Siantos.

the ELAS General Roumeli Headquarters and his exclusive task was to monitor the 5/42. According to Leuterias who had Zoulas under his orders, Zoulas was instructed by Siantos “to keep an eye on Psarros and not let the 5/42 breathe” (Papadakis “Leuterias”, interview 13 September 2000).

After the end of the 1946-1949 civil war, ELAS antartis Babis Roupas met Zoulas in Romania and had a conversation with him. According to Roupas, Zoulas told him that he did not want to kill Psarros and that someone superior had ordered him to do so. Zoulas promised Roupas that he would talk one day, but eventually he did not keep his promise (Roupas, interview 24 April 2000). Zoulas died alone in a psychiatric asylum in Bucharest (Mannaïos, interview 5 May 2000) and took his secret with him.

6.2. And Punishment.

6.2.i. The Haunted Conference: Psarros becomes Banquo.

Psarros’ murder was an act of political suicide for EAM. The consequences and the damage that EAM suffered were more than severe, they were irreparable and the echo of the shots that killed Psarros reached as far as Lebanon. In 17 May 1944, exactly one month after Psarros was killed, in the “*Bois de Boulogne*”¹⁵⁴ hotel of Lebanon, the proceedings of the Lebanon conference started. The conference was organised by the new Prime Minister of the Greek Government in exile, Papandreou, and the British Ambassador, to Greece Leeper. Delegates from all national resistance organisations and

¹⁵⁴ “The forest of Boulogne”

all pre-war political parties took part in the conference. Svolos, Angelopoulos and Askoutsis from PEEA, Porfyrogenis and Stratis from EAM, Sarafis from ELAS, Pyromaglou, S. Metaxas and A. Metaxas from EDES, Kartalis from EKKA, Ventiris and Stathatos –who claimed that they represented 150.000 fighters from all Athenian “National Combatant Organisations”. In addition to the national resistance representatives and Ventiris-Stathatos, 12 more delegates from all political parties with parliamentary representation before the Metaxas regime took part in the conference, among which Venizelos from the Liberal party, Londos from the People’s party, Rousos from KKE.

The purpose of the Lebanon conference was once more the achievement of national unity. More specifically, the main issues in the conference’s agenda were the formation of a provisional national unity government with the widest possible political representation and the formation of an integrated national army with the participation of all national resistance organisations. Those might have been the conference’s official objectives, but according to an unnamed British diplomat, “the Lebanon conference was nothing more than the open mouth of a hungry wolf for EAM” (Pyromaglou, 964: 334). Leeper who had Papandreou under his direct guidance authorised him to adopt an aggressive and strict line against the delegates of PEEA, EAM-ELAS and KKE. Such a line could lead to two possible developments, both of which would be positive for the British and the anti-EAM camp. It could either push things to the edge and force EAM’s delegates to maintain an equally aggressive attitude, something that would lead to a fiasco, or it could prove effective and force EAM’s delegates to submit to Papandreou’s terms. In the first case, EAM would be exposed to the eyes of the Greek public opinion as

the aggressor who undermined national unity, while in the second case, EAM would be neutralised. It would join the national unity government and would lose its control over ELAS since all antartes forces would either be disbanded or be set under the direct orders of the national unity government.¹⁵⁵

The Lebanon conference was overshadowed by the recent murder of Colonel Psarros. An empty seat in the conference table reminded gruesomely his absence (Zaousis, 1987, vol.2: 433). In his opening address, Papandreou launched a frontal attack against EAM with Psarros' murder at the tip of his spear:

“Today the situation in our country is hell. The Germans slaughter, the security battalions slaughter, the antartes slaughter, they slaughter and burn. What is going to be left out of this poor country? EAM did not just intend to carry out a national resistance struggle; it aimed to prepare its post-war political dominance with the use of force. For that reason, EAM tried to monopolise the national resistance struggle. They do not allow anyone else to go up the mountains and fight the invader and they punish with the penalty of death any Greek who wants to fulfil his patriotic duty. An old example to that is the present Colonel Sarafis,¹⁵⁶ while a recent one is the absent Colonel Psarros” (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.2: 452).¹⁵⁷

After Papandreou, Kartalis launched his own attack against EAM. Although Kartalis was himself a victim of EAM-ELAS, his speech was by far less pompous and demagogic than Papandreou's was. In his two hours speech, Kartalis made a review of everything that the 5/42 had suffered from ELAS, he also stigmatised EAM's attempt to monopolise the national resistance struggle and he spoke about the “terrorist campaign” that ELAS had launched throughout the country (Pyromaglou, 1965: 347). At the end of his speech Kartalis said:

“Mr Rentis in his speech said that EAM-ELAS did not conduct any national resistance struggle. I think that EAM-ELAS fought for national liberation, but “*sui*

¹⁵⁵ See Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.2: 580

¹⁵⁶ At that point, Papandreou left a hint about Sarafis, since it was well known that Sarafis joined ELAS and became its military leader while he was under arrest from ELAS (see footnote 95, p157).

¹⁵⁷ All of Papandreou's speech in Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.2: 451-456.

generis". They fought with thrift and they had objectives beyond national resistance. They fought just because the English asked them to and because they wanted to gather as many weapons as possible from the enemy. However, they fought with thrift because they save the weapons for the civil war, for the moment that they will try to assume power by force" (Pyromaglou, 1965: 362).¹⁵⁸

In respect to Psarros' murder, Kartalis maintained an absolutely decent attitude. He did not use his murder to attack EAM-ELAS. Probably that was not necessary since the symbolism was overwhelming. Kartalis, "the ghost of EKKA" (Woodhouse, 1976: 287) gave the impression that Psarros was speaking from the grave.

The magnitude and the importance of Psarros' murder was repeated and over-emphasised by all anti-EAM delegates. Rousos, KKE's representative wrote:

"All of them [anti-EAM delegates] like they were in a choir kept repeating the anti-EAM tune that Papandreou and the British gave them about "EAM's terror" and Psarros' death. Psarros was transformed to a Shakespearean ghost" (Gasparinatos, 1998: 425).

EAM's delegates suffered a total moral and political defeat.

"The murder of Psarros became a strong argument against EAM and added many arrows to the quivers of EAM's opponents" (Gasparinatos, 1998: 424).

All of EAM-ELAS' achievements were overshadowed by Psarros' murder and were conveniently ignored by anti-EAM delegates. The fact that EAM was the most popular and massive political resistance organisation with approximately a million members was ignored. The fact that ELAS had under its control most parts of Greece was also ignored. The fact that ELAS was the largest and most effective resistance force which had carried out a successful resistance war against the occupation forces and which had suffered thousands of dead was forgotten. All that mattered was that ELAS had killed Psarros and that was the most solid evidence of what anti-EAM delegates wanted to prove; that EAM

¹⁵⁸ All of Kartalis' speech in Pyromaglou, 1965: 347-364.

was nothing more than a political organisation which intended to destroy any political opponent and to assume power by force.

The “Psarros argument” was the strongest weapon that anti-EAM delegates had in their hands. It was a genuinely unshaken argument and it was impossible for EAM’s delegates to defend the crime or at least present a convincing explanation about it. Due to the “Psarros argument”, EAM’s delegates had to follow a defensive line right from the start and that created a vicious circle. Anti-EAM delegates escalated their attack, while on the other hand EAM delegates became even more defensive. Since none of EAM’s delegates were experienced diplomats¹⁵⁹ and since they were cut off from EAM’s headquarters from Greece, they eventually collapsed (Kedros, 1960: 102).

The Lebanon conference was a disaster for EAM and EAM’s delegates were highly responsible for that disaster. According to Gasparinatos:

“The unanimous opinion is that EAM’s delegates were trapped in the Lebanon conference, that their capability to handle the situation was far below average, that they did not follow the directions that they were given, that they caused severe damage –if not betrayed- EAM’s struggle” (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.2: 573).

According to Woodhouse:

“PEEA, EAM-ELAS and KKE’s delegates received such a pounding that after a point they sunk into a state of mental lethargy and they were no longer responsible for their actions” (Woodhouse, 1976: 288).

They cracked beneath the burden of the continuous accusations, they retreated from all of their demands and eventually they signed an agreement which:

“In the national resistance dictionary the word Lebanon means defeat, treason, disaster, submission” (Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2: 329).

¹⁵⁹ Surprisingly enough, Rousos who was one of the oldest and more experienced KKE officials and the most experienced politician and diplomat compared to the rest of EAM delegates, maintained the most compromising attitude. Sarafis on the other hand, who was a genuine military man, was the only one of all EAM delegates who maintained a non-pleading attitude towards anti-EAM delegates.

Before EAM's delegates left Greece, Siantos and Ioanidis had given them a series of instructions about the attitude that they should maintain in Lebanon and about the claims that they should make considering the provisional national unity government and the national army. Siantos and Ioanidis instructed them to demand at least 50% participation for EAM in the government, to get by all means the strategic Ministries of military and domestic affairs for EAM and to demand the immediate transfer of at least seven ministries on Greek soil, in mountainous free Greece. As far as the King's issue was concerned, the instructions were to demand an explicit statement from the King himself declaring that he was not going to return to Greece before the people gave their verdict in a referendum. In regards to the national army, the instructions were to accept the formation of an integrated army along with EDES but with Sarafis or Sarigianis as Chief Generals. Furthermore, Siantos and Ioanidis instructed them to demand an explicit denunciation of the security battalions from all delegates

Every negotiation includes losses from the initial demands, however, in the Lebanon conference EAM's retraction from its initial demands can be considered as a complete surrender. It was agreed that EAM would participate in the provisional national unity government, but there was no explicit agreement about how many and which Ministries EAM would get. (Eventually on 24 May when the first provisional government was formed, EAM did not get any ministries). It was agreed that both ELAS and EDES were going to disband and that a national army was going to be formed, but the process under which that was going to happen was not determined. (The vagueness concerning the issue of the national army was going to become latter the *casus belli* of the December 1944 conflict). The security battalions were denounced, but under the

pretext that the national unity government was just provisional, it was decided that the next elected government of the Greek State should handle the persecution of the security battalions. Finally as far as the King's issue, no explicit statement was made (Gasparinatos, 1998, vol.2: 548-563).

The Lebanon conference was EAM's Waterloo, a total disaster. Before the Lebanon conference, EAM-ELAS and PEEA had the political and military situation in Greece under their control. On the other hand, the anti-EAM camp was weak and deeply divided. Militarily, the only considerable anti-EAM force was EDES, by far weaker than ELAS. Politically, the anti-EAM camp included just the powerless and isolated King, the exile Greek government, with no appeal to the public opinion, and finally the pre-war political parties, which were under a state of, complete disintegration. After the Lebanon conference however, the tables were turned and the *status quo* was overthrown. The anti-EAM camp was integrated to a united and mighty political front under the seal of the official Greek national unity government. That was the government that officially represented the nation and EAM-ELAS were simply instruments, or rather the outcasts of that government. EAM was still the most popular resistance organisation and ELAS was still the strongest armed force, however after the Lebanon conference they were no longer masters of the political situation.

The expression "timing is everything" is confirmed many times in history and in Psarros' case this was certainly true. Not only Psarros' murder was an event of the utmost importance, it also occurred at the worst time for EAM. The fact that it was so recent played a catalytic role in the Lebanon conference and it contributed significantly to EAM's defeat in the conference. With Psarros' murder so recent in EAM's balance sheet,

the Lebanon conference was transformed into a trial and EAM's delegates were transformed into defendants. In a rather malicious manner, right wing historian Zaousis wrote about the Lebanon conference:

“In Lebanon, EAM paid the price for all of the acts of civil war that it had committed. Psarros' murder was the most recent of those acts and that made EAM look like a criminal who was caught in the act. The final countdown of EAM's continuous retreats had started” (Zaousis, 1987, vol.2: 444).

6.2.ii. The Abused Legacy of Psarros.

In addition to the political consequences that Psarros' murder had on the Lebanon conference, it also had a major impact on the Greek public opinion during the last six months of the occupation. Psarros had the reputation of a decent man. He was one of the most moderate resistance leaders, while the 5/42 and EKKA were considered the breakwater between EAM-ELAS and EDES. The disbandment of the 5/42, but more importantly the murder of Psarros increased the gap between EAM and the anti-EAM camp and made the borderline between them more visible to the eyes of all Greeks.

Psarros' murder was a moral defeat for EAM. According to the leftist historian Haritopoulos:

“Nothing ever had a more devastating effect upon EAM and the overall resistance movement than the murder of Colonel Psarros. It blackened ELAS and gave to all those who collaborated with the Germans or who were hiding and had contributed nothing to the nation's resistance the alibi that they were looking for. From that point onwards, the indictment for ELAS was ready and all ELAS antartes were considered collectively guilty for that crime. They were all transformed from freedom fighters to Psarros' murderers. The whole case of the tragic Colonel and his regiment was going to influence catastrophically the struggle” (Haritopoulos, 2001, vol.2: 288).

Psarros' murder became a very strong propaganda weapon for the radical anti-EAM groups and especially the collaborators and the royalists. Although Psarros was a dedicated anti-royalist and his leadership was undermined by royalists and although he had repeatedly refused to collaborate with the enemy, the royalists and the collaborators were the ones who showed the greatest zeal in stigmatising ELAS about the brutal crime. The message that both of these groups wanted to send through their propaganda was that there could be no co-operation and conciliation with EAM-ELAS. Psarros' example was ideal for that purpose. It was well known that Psarros always wanted to have good relationships and co-operation with EAM-ELAS. According to Gregoriadis "he was the most harmless and modest of all those who opposed ELAS" (Gregoriadis, vol.5: 44) and the fact that he eventually got killed by ELAS proved exactly the collaborators' and the royalists' point.

In June 1944, the collaborationist newspaper "The voice of Greeks" sponsored by the German Military Command of northern Greece, published an article titled "How did ELAS, the unfaithful Alli Pasha,¹⁶⁰ kill Colonel Psarros and his comrades". According to the article:

"On 19.2.44, EKKA and EDES signed a common agreement of co-operation with ELAS and agreed to launch a joint campaign against the German army with the pretext to "liberate" Greece¹⁶¹...All Greeks know which was the result of that agreement between the wolf and the sheep. ELAS, the unfaithful Alli Pasha, violated the agreement and during an ambush in the Klima-Karaiskos village in Akarnania, they killed Colonel Psarros with all of his officers and his 200 men. All of them were butchered by ELAS' "liberators" and their bodies were left unburied to be eaten by jackals and rapacious birds...That is the fate of everyone who co-operates with Communists, either these are naïve officers like Psarros or ambitious

¹⁶⁰ Alli Pasha was the Pasha of Epirus during the late 18th century. He was a cruel ruler and an intriguer and was notorious for his conspiracies against his associates and allies. The expression "unfaithful Alli Pasha" is used in modern Greek in describing someone who is dishonest and plots against his/hers comrades and friends.

¹⁶¹ It means the Myrofilo-Plaka agreement signed in 29.2.44 (see ch 4.1.ii, p 185).

politicians. Communists co-operate and trust only fellow communists and fellow criminals and they have no trust for people with other political beliefs” (Anagnostopoulos, 1960: 31).

According to the same spirit, royalist ex-member of Parliament and Dedousis’ mentor Christos Zalokostas wrote a rather ironic and malicious comment about Psarros’ murder:

“He believed in democracy and democracy is what killed him. If he had not believed so much in democracy, he would have attacked the communists and he would have saved himself, but he was such a fanatic democrat. He used to wear the same torn up army coat that he was wearing in 1935 at the day he was degraded. The coat’s shoulder straps were torn and it was full of spittle, but for Psarros it was a symbol of democracy. He was killed and buried in that coat” (Zalokostas, 1997: 218).

For collaborationists, royalists and generally for all fundamentalist enemies of EAM, Psarros’ murder was literally a god-sent gift. They were all “proven right” and their appeal to the public opinion increased, especially upon the moderates who were sceptical towards EAM. These people were already suspicious and rather hostile towards EAM, but still they condemned the radical anti-EAM groups and they closed their ears to their anti-EAM propaganda of hate. However, after Psarros’ murder these moderates made a shift to the right and became more hostile towards EAM and more sympathetic to the radical anti-EAM groups. According to Omiros Papadopoulos, member of radical anti-EAM organisation “X”:

“Only after Psarros was killed did the Greeks wake up and realise what EAM was. Everyone realised that all the stuff they were saying about national resistance etc was crap and that they just wanted to assume power, but when we were saying that from the first moment, we were being called fascists and gestapites” (Papadopoulos, interview 10 May 2000).

The first irony concerning Psarro’s legacy was the fact that his memory was defended by all those who opposed him while he was alive. The second irony was the

fact that although Psarros was a moderate resistance leader who worked towards the achievement of unity within the national resistance movement, his legacy added more fuel to the civil discord. Psarros' murder was certainly an event that contributed to the polarisation between EAM-ELAS and its opponents. His legacy helped in the integration of the scattered anti-EAM factions. The anti-EAM camp got its martyr and that contributed in making it more concrete. According to Petimezas:

“Without Psarros' sacrifice, there would be no solid and convincing evidence about which were EAM's objectives...Psarros' sacrifice gave the signal for a full scale mobilisation against communism” (Petimezas, 1991: 310).

As the day of the liberation was coming closer, the issue of post-war political and military dominance was becoming more and more visible. The conflict between EAM and its opponents was escalating and during those last months there was a shift within the Greek public opinion. On the one hand, the appeal of moderate democratic nationalist organisations was declining, while on the other EAM was losing much of its popularity, especially in the big cities. Polarisation was increasing and the royalist and collaborationist propaganda called Greeks to chose between “the established social order” and “Bolshevism”.

For many years, Greece was a ‘communistophobic’ society and people were raised to hate and fear communism. During the occupation, the rise of EAM-ELAS increased the fear of communism among many Greeks, especially among the urban middle classes. EAM-ELAS' aggression against all other competing republican resistance organisations, its attempt to monopolise the national resistance struggle and a number of atrocities such as the murder of Psarros justified those fears and made the danger of “Bolshevism” more clear. These fears were manipulated by radical anti-EAM groups

who wanted to reinforce the Machiavellian attitude that anything that can prevent Greece from being “Bolshevised” was justified. That was the attitude that transformed the security battalions and the Athenian pseudo-resistance, semi-collaborationist organisations to crusaders of the anti-Communist campaign and eventually, in the eyes of many, to national heroes. The controversy is that the legacy of a consistent democrat and resistance fighter such as Psarros contributed to that.

Conclusion

This chapter’s two main objectives were to study the causes and effects of Psarros’ murder. As far as the causes are concerned, this chapter did not achieve to resolve fully the true motives behind the murder. In such a mysterious case, there are so many difficulties in recovering hard evidence that it would be almost impossible to achieve that ideal objective. Facts and testimonies however indicate that Zoulas did not take the initiative to kill Psarros based on his personal motives. On the contrary they indicate that Zoulas had the approval and the protection of one or more high rank PEEA or EAM-ELAS officials. The fact that PEEA and EAM-ELAS tried to cover up Psarros’ murder, the fact that they never undertook an official enquiry concerning the murder and the fact that Zoulas never suffered any disciplinary action reinforce that view.

Who was the official or officials who allowed or ordered Zoulas to kill Psarros was another mysterious issue that could not be answered beyond any doubt. The lack of documentary evidence or the reliability of the existing sources, make that question

impossible to answer. Zoulas might have been Siantos' "henchman" and he might have had Siantos' authorisation in handling the 5/42 issue, but still those indications are not enough to consider Siantos as the mastermind of Psarros' murder. Nevertheless, from a moral point of view, the whole of PEEA and EAM-ELAS' leaders and primarily Siantos can be considered as collectively responsible since none of them ever officially disapproved of Psarros' murder.

This chapter also tried to highlight the impact of Psarros' murder on the political developments throughout the last six months of the occupation. Psarros' murder was an inexcusable mistake for EAM. It caused nothing but damage and it benefited no one else than EAM's most extreme enemies. According to Petimezas:

"The damage that dead Psarros caused to KKE was by far greater than the damage that he caused while he was alive" (Petimezas, 1991: 365).

In the Lebanon conference, EAM suffered a total defeat and Psarros' case played a decisive role in that defeat. Due to Psarros' murder, EAM's delegates were brought into a defensive position and soon the Lebanon conference was transformed into a trial for EAM-ELAS. On the other hand, Psarros' legacy played a major role in the political antagonisms in occupied Greece, Psarros became a symbol for the anti-EAM camp and his legacy contributed a lot to the coherence of that camp. The most extreme anti-EAM organisations and groups used Psarros' case in their propaganda in order to approach the moderate nationalists. The Greek Right might have had its own heroes, but contrary to the Greek Left, it never had many martyrs. Psarros' murder gave to the Greek Right its martyr. Although Psarros had never been a genuine right winger, the Right appropriated his legacy and he became a point of reference for all of EAM's enemies.

CHAPTER 7

The 5/42 and the British: Revisiting an Enigmatic Coalition.

The macro-level analysis looks at the 5/42 within the context of the British politics in Greece during the occupation. In general terms, the British policy towards the national resistance movement is one of the most controversial themes of the occupation. The British did not just contribute to the active resistance against the occupation forces, but also intervened in the most direct way to the political antagonisms between the national resistance organisations. Previous works and historical research has brought out a substantial amount of documents concerning the British attitude towards EAM-ELAS and EDES (see Woodhouse, 1976, Myers, 1975, Fleisher, 1995, Mathiopoulos, 1977, Gasparinatos, 1998, Iatridis, 1981, Clogg, 1981, Hondros, 1983) and there is a quite clear

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largest national resistance organisation has remained a rather ob
issue. Although the British and the 5/42 were on the same side

mysterious attitude towards the regiment. The obscurity and mystery concerning the relationship between the 5/42 and the British becomes even greater due to the total lack of British documents covering that issue.

For the retrieval of such documents, the current research followed the advice that Chris Woodhouse gave to the son of the 5/42 veteran, Brigadier Ioannis Papathanasiou:

“It is my misfortune to have lived so long and forgotten so much. The only advice I can offer you is not to take other men’s advice or trust, but to go to the Public Records Office in London and study the documents on the Greek resistance, which are now open to the general public. The only difficulty is that they are vast in quantity. Like myself, you will learn far more about the Greek resistance than can be learned from impassioned reminiscences” (Woodhouse, letter to Papathanasiou, 29 December 1998).

A considerable amount of British documentation concerning 5/42 and EKKA were found in the Public Records Office. These documents include a series of reports, memorandums telegrams and letters (in Greek and in English) exchanged between British officers, as well as between British officers and the 5/42 and EAM-ELAS.

Based on these documents, this chapter in its first part will try to highlight the actual relationship between the 5/42 and the British. That is a very important and sensitive issue which needs thorough examination since according to EAM-ELAS veteran’s claims, the 5/42 was a political instrument of the British. Obviously such serious accusations question the credibility and the esteem of the 5/42 as a national resistance organisation and that is why these claims need to be carefully tested against the relevant documents found in the PRO files.

In its second part, this chapter will focus on the attitude that the British maintained during the last conflict between the 5/42 and ELAS in Klima. A number of 5/42 and EAM-ELAS veterans as well as EDES’ Sub-Commander Komninos

Pyromaglou, argue that the British abandoned the 5/42 to its conflict with ELAS. Both the 5/42 and EAM-ELAS veterans have developed their own conspiracy theories. According to the 5/42's veterans' theory that abandonment was due to a communist conspiracy plotted by British communist officers and Soviet agents. On the other hand, according to the theory supported by EAM-ELAS veterans, the British intentionally abandoned the 5/42 and caused the tragedy, because that would benefit their political objective which was to blacken ELAS' record with a fratricide. A series of documents found in the PRO depict quite clearly the attitude that the British maintained towards the regiment during its last days and solve many the mysteries, while they overthrow established views over the relationship between the 5/42 and the British.

7.1. British Allies or British Henchmen?

7.1.i. The 5/42 Regiment of Evzones: Sponsored by H.M the King of England.

ELAS antartes used to sarcastically call the 5/42 “the golden resistance” due to the generosity of the British funding towards the regiment (Giangis, interview 17 August 2000, Rodakis, interview 21 April 2000, Koutroukis, interview 22 April 2000, Bekios, interview 8 May 2000). That characterisation was rather justified since the 5/42 was a national resistance organisation whose resources and maintenance were entirely dependent on the British aid. The regiment had no alternative sources to sustain and arm itself and almost all of its weapons, equipment and ammunition, as well as the funds used for the purchase of food provisions, came exclusively from British airdrops. Two balance

sheets including the overall amounts of gold sovereigns that the 5/42 received in total from the British were found in the PRO files (Figure 7.1):

Figure 7.1. Amounts of gold sovereigns received from the British

Table A Particulars of sums dropped to mission stations connected with EKKA and not accounted for		Table B Particulars of sums paid to EKKA by mission stations and shown as such in station accounts	
Date dropped (night)	Amounts (Gold sovereigns)	Month	Amount (Gold sovereigns)
19-20 May 1943	1,000	October 1943	800
11-12 July 1943	1,000	November //	800
19-20 Sep 1943	1,000	December //	1,500
27-28 Sep 1943	200	January 1944	600
Total amount	3,200¹⁶²	February //	1,600
		March //	<u>1,600</u>
		Total amount	6,900

*In addition to the above sums received by the 5/42, EKKA's wireless station in Athens received an additional amount of 800 golden sovereigns on August 1943 (PRO HS 5/575).

It is not possible to know the exact amount of golden sovereigns that the 5/42 received until September 1943 (Table A). This obscurity is mainly due to the fact that until then "no amounts were rendered by mission stations" (PRO HS 5/575), but also because the 5/42 had been disbanded twice during that period. Nevertheless, until that period, the 5/42 had just 200 men and it can be assumed that even less than a third of the whole 3.200 golden sovereigns (Table A) would be enough to maintain the regiment's men efficiently. However, since October 1943 (Table B) mission stations started keeping accounting books according to which the 5/42 received an overall amount of 6,900 golden sovereigns for a six months period. In general terms, the above figures indicate

¹⁶² Due to the uncontrollable rates of inflation during the occupation, it is very difficult to calculate the monetary value of a gold sovereign. However, in order to get an idea of the actual value of a gold sovereign, it would be useful to mention that a single gold sovereign could sustain a person's needs in food for a whole month (Kaimaras, interview, 11 May 2000, Kokoris, 19 August 2000).

that the regiment's funding by the British was certainly generous. After the regiment's third reformation in September 1943, its manpower reached 800 regular antartes, while the Middle East Headquarters allowed 2 golden sovereigns as the maximum rate of monetary spending per antartis (PRO HS 5/575). Therefore the maximum maintenance contribution for the 5/42 would be 1,600 golden sovereigns per month and the British certainly delivered that target, or at least they were very close to that.

Historian John Hondros has made a comparative research concerning the distribution of British aid among resistance groups. According to some of his findings, based on Foreign Office documents, throughout the period October 1943-mid January 1944 ELAS and the 5/42 received the following (Hondros, 1983: 146-148):

Figure 7.2. Amounts of Gold Sovereigns and Supplies that ELAS and the 5/42 received by the British

ELAS (Nation-wide)	5/42
9,737 Gold sovereigns	5,500 Gold sovereigns ¹⁶³
56 tons of supplies, of which	16 tons of supplies, of which
22 tons of arms	14 tons of arms
34 tons of food, clothing, medicine	2 tons of food, clothing, medicine

A comparison between the above figures and the manpower of both organisations prove that the British funding towards the 5/42 was by far more generous than towards ELAS. During the period that these figures refer to, ELAS had almost 25 to 30.000 antartes (regulars and reserves) nation-wide, while the 5/42 had just 800 regular and 400-500 reserves. In total, the proportion of manpower between the two organisations was 30 to 1. However, the British supported ELAS and the 5/42 as if the proportion was 2 or 3 to

¹⁶³ There is a slight difference between the findings of this research and Hondros' findings. According to figures that this research came up (see previous page), the amount of golden sovereigns that the 5/42 received during the period that Hondros mentions in his research (October 1943-mid January 1944) was 5,300, while Hondros mentions that the amount was 5,500 gold sovereigns.

1 since the 5/42 received more than the half of the golden sovereigns and almost a third of the provisions and weapons that ELAS received nation-wide.

7.1.ii. An Unemotional Alliance.

The complete dependency of the 5/42 upon the generous British aid has caused serious controversy concerning the actual relationship between the 5/42 and the British. EAM-ELAS veterans and sympathisers have launched a series of allegations against Psarros and the regiment. One of the most serious ones is that Psarros was an agent of the British secret services and that he was working for the protection of the British interests in Greece. According to that allegation, Psarros was recruited in the British secret services through his brother in law Major Tsigantes, and his task was to undermine and divide the national resistance movement.¹⁶⁴ Obviously, this serious allegation undermines Psarros' integrity as a Greek officer and questions his capacity as a national resistance leader.

Some documents found in the PRO give insight about the actual relationship between Psarros and the British, whilst they depict the British attitude over Psarros and the regiment. The first set of documents are two reports written by British officers after the occupation was over. In these reports, the two officers discuss their views about a post-war claim for economic relief submitted by EKKA's central committee to the British military in November 1944. The first report was sent on 1 February 1945 from Lieutenant Colonel Dolby to Lieutenant Colonel Mulgan, an SOE LIQ (Special Operations Executive Liquidation) officer:

¹⁶⁴ See Rodakis, interview 21 April 2000, Koutroukis, interview 22 April 2000, Bekios, interview 8 May 2000, K. Angelidis, interview 7 August 2000, V. Angelidis, interview 7 August 2000

“Subject: Claims for EKKA

[....] Before examining in detail the merit of this case, the following points should be taken into consideration. The claim falls in three parts:

- a) Claims on behalf of the Antartes of EKKA (casualties, hospital expenses etc)
- b) Pension to the widow of the leader
- c) Claims for the maintenance of the W/T set PAN¹⁶⁵ and the intelligence service attached to it.

These three points raised the following question of Principle:

- a) No claims of guerrilla organisations are recognised by SOELIQ. But EKKA, although technically an Antartes organisation, was for all practical purposes an artificial organisation created and sponsored by us. In spite of this, the fact remains that we may open ourselves to similar claims by similar organisations if we accept the principle.
- b) The case of the widow of PSAROS comes under the same condition as given in above para (a). Again, however, we should take into consideration the fact that PSAROS was working almost under our direct orders, that his widow is a well known person in Athens and her sister Mrs TSIGANTES, whose husband was killed by the ITALIANS whilst leader of our THURGOLAND (Midas 614) Mission, received a pension of £1,050.
- c) The Question of the W/T set PAN is slightly different in so far as there appears to be grounds for a claim. Force 133¹⁶⁶ had several “political” W/T sets in the field (EDES, ELAS, etc) and a monthly budget was allowed for them (£200 monthly in the case of EDES).

[....] In view of the above considerations I feel that each point raised by EKKA’s memorandum should be dealt with separately on the principle that we accept payment for what can be defined as past commitments, but refuse liability for what could be defined as claims” (PRO HS 5/575).

Lieutenant Colonel Mulgan’s decision over the issue of compensation to EKKA-

5/42 was the following:

“As regards claims made on behalf of ANTARTES of EKKA –casualties, hospital expenses, pension to widow of PSAROS etc, SOELIQ (MED) have laid down that no claims will be recognised from ANTARTE organisations, but only from agents of SOE, or personnel definitely hired by SOE agents. I do not think we can therefore admit any EKKA claims in this category without exposing ourselves to a flood of similar claims from other political and resistance organisations. This rules out claims concerning medical expenses, maintenance of hostages, disbandment expenses, token pensions for antartes families. The question of a pension to PSAROS’ widow is surely a matter for the GREEK Governor; if it is felt that he

¹⁶⁵ EKKA’s central committee had a W/T station (Wireless Transmitter) for communication with Cairo. That station was used along with the organisation RAN “Rilos Aulon Nisoi”. RAN was a small intelligence resistance organisation which made irredentist claims on large areas of Bulgaria (Rilos), Albania (Aulon) as well as the Dodecanese and Cyprus (Nisoi).

¹⁶⁶ Force 133 was the bureau in the Middle East Headquarters responsible for all British clandestine activities in the Balkans and the Middle East

died as a friend of ENGLAND, for a present from the BRITISH Government through the embassy; but certainly not a matter for Force 133.

W/T set "PAN" appears to be a Force 133 responsibility. We infiltrated the set so as to be in touch with EKKA in Athens and sent them on one occasion a sum of money for maintenance of this set. The position of "PAN" is certainly different from that of an organisation like "EXPEDITE" or "MIDAS" for example, which were wholly a Force 133 responsibility. It might be argued that "PAN" was sent in at request of EKKA for communication back to us and should be maintained by EKKA. I think EAM maintained W/T set "NIKO" without funds from us and regarded it as being there for their own convenience". (PRO HS 5/575).

At the end of his report, Lieutenant Colonel Mulgan concluded that no claim should be admitted neither to EKKA's W/T station not only on grounds of principle, but also because the intelligence transmitted from that wireless station was not of any value (PRO HS 5/575).

The correspondence between the two British officers undermines ELAS veterans' argument according to which Psarros was an agent of the British. It was a well-known fact that Psarros' brother in law, Major Tsigantes, was recruited by the British secret services and that the "Midas 614" operation which he led was organised by them and the Anglo-Greek committee.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, Mrs Tsigantes (who was Mrs Psarros' sister) was awarded a pension as being the widow of a British agent. On the other hand however, although Mulgan in his report kept an open mind on the possibility of awarding Mrs Psarros a pension from the British Embassy in Athens as a gift from the British government, he categorically refused to award Mrs Psarros a pension as being the widow of a British agent.

Nevertheless, the impression that these two reports leave is that although Psarros was not a British agent, he was almost a puppet under the direct orders of the SOE and the Middle East Headquarters (Force 133) and that the 5/42 was an artificial organisation

¹⁶⁷ See ch 2.2.ii.d, p 90.

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

Militarily, just the fact that the 5/42 was funded and armed exclusively by the British proves that the regiment's military dependence upon the British was almost entire. In any case though, the whole resistance movement was in close military co-operation with the British and all national resistance organisations –ELAS included- were to some degree dependent on them. The 5/42 veterans not only denied that dependence, but throughout their memoirs and testimonies, they stress with pride that they were loyal to the military orders of the Middle East Headquarters. Nevertheless, although the military subordination of a resistance organisation to the British allies was considered permissible, on the grounds that it benefited the allied war effort, political subordination was a totally different and by far a more controversial issue since that would imply the interference of a foreign power to domestic affairs. Many radical EAM-ELAS veterans seem convinced that this was exactly the case with the 5/42. They argue that 5/42 and EKKA were under the political orders of the British and that both the regiment as well as its political branch were nothing more than a mere army of praetorians and mercenaries funded and maintained with the sole purpose to sabotage EAM-ELAS and serve the British interests in Greece (Bekios, interview 8 May 2000, Rodakis, interview 21 April 2000, V. Angelidis, interview 7 August 2000, K. Angelidis, interview 7 August 2000).

Documents found in the PRO files challenge that view and depict the actual political relations between 5/42-EKKA and the British, as well as the political attitude of the British towards the regiment and EKKA. A “most secret report of sub-committee on

resistance organisations in Greece” dated 17 October 1943 gives a brief summary of

EKKA’s political manifesto and on Psarros’ activities towards the formation of the 5/42.

At its last paragraph, the report evaluates the political potential of EKKA and the 5/42:

“To sum up: Politically the organisation does not carry great weight. Its importance lies in the strength of its two bands¹⁶⁸ whose value as a resistance force will depend largely on whether they succeed in avoiding further friction with ELAS and in co-operating with the Joint HQ (Joint General Antartes Headquarters)” (PRO HS 5/625).¹⁶⁹

In another most secret report dated 5 December 1943 (probably from the same source)

the secret services in Cairo seem ill informed and confused about EKKA’s political plans.

“Recent reports of EKKA are somewhat conflicting. Their Thessaly branch¹⁷⁰ was reported on 23 Oct 43 to have signed a declaration agreeing to co-operate closely with ELAS; and information to this effect has subsequently been repeated. It is denied by the EKKA representative at Joint GHQ (Joint General Antartes Headquarters) but may be true. One report states that Psarros would consider working with EAM/ELAS and is at variance on this head with the political backers of EKKA in Athens. One source specifically reported EKKA as being terrified at being disarmed again, and therefore likely to go with the winning side, though their sympathy lay primarily with Zervas” (PRO HS 5/236).

For once more, this report concluded:

“The political importance of EKKA does not appear great” (PRO HS 5/236).

The British services that produced these reports seem misinformed about serious political developments within EKKA-5/42, while the reports indicate that although the British had some appreciation about the regiment’s military strength, they had a rather limited appreciation and interest over the political potential of EKKA-5/42. Moreover, another report about the political crisis in Greece written by Woodhouse himself indicates

¹⁶⁸ The report was ill informed over the 5/42’s manpower since although the 5/42 was a single regiment, at a previous paragraph, the report wrote, “On the military side, EKKA now has two strong bands each called a regiment” (PRO HS 5/625).

¹⁶⁹ See ch 3.2.i, p 146.

¹⁷⁰ By “Thessaly branch” the report means EKKA’s delegate in Pertouli, attached to the Joint antartes Headquarters who issued the pro-ELAS proclamation during the ELAS-EDES war. (see ch 4.1.i, p 179).

that the British were in serious doubt over the political credibility of EKKA and Psaros personally:

“EKKA

- i) In EKKA, as in EDES, there seems to be a diversion between the leader (Psaros) and the political backers. Psaros has several times shown leanings towards submission to EAM-ELAS; this was confirmed by photographed copies of letters undoubtedly in his handwriting, which were given me by Zervas in April and in September. On the other hand, many of Psaros' officers and the only EKKA politician I have met (Kartalis) regard EAM-ELAS as the greatest menace to Greek freedom in existence.
- ii) Psaros was reported in September to have gone to see EAM Central Committee in Athens with a view to joining EAM-ELAS. When fighting broke out between EDES and ELAS this month, EKKA produced a proclamation denouncing EDES (see App. E.I). this was signed by Major Vlachos, a pleasant, conciliatory soldier who had worked hard for reconciliation. I have since been assured by Major Papathanasiou that this does not represent the views of EKKA or of Psaros. I am doubtful about this.
- iii) The correspondence of Psaros, intercepted by Zervas, indicates that Psaros had successfully fooled various political parties, including both Communists and Metaxists to have confidence in him. I very much doubt whether Psaros has fooled anybody. He is a good soldier, but an inconsiderable diplomat. He is likely to become in the future more and more a tool of EAM-ELAS, especially if they win the present conflict” (PRO HS 5/270).

This doubtfulness over the political credibility of EKKA and Psaros personally, probably led the British to a more cautious and reserved attitude towards EKKA-5/42. A document found in the PRO files proves beyond any doubt that the British refused to provide EKKA-5/42 the necessary political and military assistance so that the 5/42 could become a large enduring and viable military force that could protect itself effectively from ELAS' aggression and so that EKKA could become a considerable political player with a prominent role in the national resistance political arena. That document entitled “An appreciation of the results of arming EKKA bands in Roumeli” is a report produced by the Headquarters of the British Military Mission in Greece, dated 22 March 1944, (almost a month before the 5/42's final disbandment). The document discussed the

eventuality of increasing the regiment's manpower to 3,000 antartes and the possible political and military implications of such a plan.

"Considerations

3) The organisation of EKKA in the field is connected, though not closely with EKKA in Athens. EKKA in the field, under the command of Col. Psaros, consists mainly of the reconstituted 5/42 Evzone Regiment. This regiment was commanded by Psaros before 1935¹⁷¹ and the present unit has a good reputation for efficiency, complete collaboration with BLO's [British Liaison Officers], discipline and inoffensiveness to other bands. Col. Psaros himself is an excellent soldier. Recently, however, there have been signs of a slackening of discipline in the ELAS-EKKA dispute which has just ended. Politically EKKA (Athens) carries little weight: its political programme, though impressive on paper, is not of a kind to crusade with against such a program as that of EAM. The forces in the field are clearly of more importance, but both are at present politically insignificant. Psaros' sympathies may be with Zervas but his military sense has led him to co-operate adequately with ELAS.

4) Present alignment of political parties with Zervas: The political parties and the Ethnike Drasis¹⁷² and Kanelopoulos groups of Athens organisations have recently expressed "deep confidence" in Zervas and are believed to have sent permanent representatives to his HQ. This action was probably due to the fact that it is widely known that Zervas has been receiving so large share of British support. These parties which did NOT associate themselves with Zervas included EDES (Athens), EKKA (Athens), The Military Hierarchy and EAM.

5) Situation in Roumeli: in addition to the numerous guerrilla bands and Security detachments at present in Roumeli there are many refugees from burned villages. It is likely that most able-bodied men from among the refugees have joined bands or the Security detachments in order to make a livelihood. To increase EKKA by 2,200 implies:

either

- a) Introducing that number of men into a crowded area of extreme food shortage
- or b) Converting that number of ELAS or Zervas followers
- or c) Drawing men away from the Security troops

Assumption

6) Even if it were possible to bring the strength of EKKA armed forces in Roumeli to 3,000 without delay, this could not be done without EAM and Zervas learning of it before recruitment and arming could be completed.

Conclusions

7) Political

- a) As soon as it were known that British support were being given to EKKA on a scale equal to that being given to Zervas, the political support now being given to

¹⁷¹ That is untrue, Psaros never served as the commander of the pre-war 5/42 regiment of evzones

¹⁷² "Ethniki Drasis" (National Action) was a small Athenian republican resistance organisation of intelligence and underground propaganda. It was commanded by P. Sifnaios, G. Drosos, T. Triantafilakis and A. Papadakis.

Zervas by political parties in Athens (para 4) would probably be split. It seems that this could only be avoided if Psaros and Zervas were to unite. The reasons which have hitherto prevented this are presumably still valid.

b) Whether Psaros were to join Zervas or not it is likely that EAM/ELAS would do everything in its power to absorb or break EKKA. The political organisation and propaganda of EAM/ELAS would probably be strong enough to prevent any successful increase in EKKA without an armed rupture of the present truce. An armed rupture of some sort, however, is possible although the recent British threat publicly to denounce any band violating the truce may go far to restrain all parties

c) It is likely that EAM/ELAS will become more intransigent than they are at present if they consider that EKKA is being increased and armed for political reasons and not as a result of active resistance to the enemy particularly after they themselves have been encouraged to reduce their numbers to the force needed for planned operations.

d) The present good relations between Zervas' and Psaros' bands would be likely to suffer through the development of a sense of rivalry between them.

8) Effect on the Antarte effort

a) From the point of view of specific operations the increase of Psaros' forces who have a reputation for whole-hearted co-operation with the British, might well be a gain. On the other hand the additional 2,200 postulated would not at first be equal in discipline or military efficiency to the existing EKKA forces.

b) In general, the effect would be a weakening of potential resistance to the enemy either due to precipitation of a clash between EAM/ELAS and EKKA or the reopening of general hostilities between EAM/ELAS and the combination EKKA-Zervas; although in the latter instance it is unlikely that EKKA could rely on the full co-operation of Zervas' forces (see 7 d above).

9) General Conclusions

To increase and arm EKKA for political reasons and not as a result of proved resistance to the enemy is likely to lead at least to increased political friction among the bands and, at worst, to a resumption of the civil war" (PRO HS 5/236).

Although the British equipped and funded the 5/42 to the end, the above document proves that they were reluctant to provide to EKKA-5/42 their full support. They chose to maintain EKKA-5/42 as their allies, but they refused to give them the means for real military and political might. That was done for two main reasons. The first is that the British regarded Zervas and EDES a much safer alternative than Psaros and EKKA-5/42. In his memoirs Zervas admitted that he was suffering from "incurable love for England" (Zervas, 2000: 14) and obviously the British appreciated that love. EDES and Zervas personally was a much reliable and loyal British ally and a much more

effective adversary to EAM-ELAS. The British did not want to jeopardise Zervas' unconditional alliance. The second reason is that the British were dubious over the reliability of EKKA-5/42 as effective counter-weights against EAM-ELAS. Especially after the period of the EKKA-EAM flirtation, the British felt insecure about the loyalty of Psaros and Kartalis to them. This insecurity by itself is a serious indication that the British did not have the political control within EKKA-5/42 as EAM-ELAS veterans argue.

7.2. Conspiracy Theories.

Although the British had their doubts about EKKA-5/42, they were on the same side with the 5/42 against the Germans, as well as against EAM-ELAS. Nevertheless, the attitude of the British towards the regiment is a rather controversial issue and many 5/42 veterans and sympathisers have expressed a series of complaints. Most of these complaints are turned against the regiment's British Liaison Officer (BLO), Major Geoffrey Gordon Creed or "Geoff" as he used to be called.¹⁷³ According to their accusations, 20 year old Geoff was incompetent, lazy and totally indifferent towards the regiment. They accuse him for being a womaniser who was interested more in his girlfriends in Galaxidi rather than work for the resistance.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ All British Liaison Officers were used to be called by Greeks with their first names.

¹⁷⁴ Moreover, the regiment's veterans were also disappointed about Geoff's post war behaviour. According to a rumour, after the war, Geoff became a mercenary in central Africa and his tracks were lost. However, in 1978 or 1979, the 5/42's veterans association managed to locate Geoff in America where he had settled and they invited him to attend the annual memorial ceremony for Psaros and the 5/42 men. Geoff's answer was that he would attend only if air tickets, accommodation and expenses were covered by the 5/42

According to Kaimaras:

“English Captain (who later became Major) Geoff was the liaison between the 5/42 and the Middle East Headquarters. This young, well built English helped Psarros to form his regiment, but his help was very inadequate and it came at very slow rates. EAM-ELAS on the other hand, were getting much more support in weapons and equipment from the Middle East Headquarters and that is why ELAS was at all times stronger than the 5/42. This English officer maintained a very peculiar attitude towards Psarros and all Roumelian nationalists. Although his mission was to support Psarros, he was supporting ELAS instead. His whole attitude and behaviour prove that he was favourably inclined towards EAM and the communists rather than the Greek nationalists. Indicative to that was the fact that he used communists rather than nationalists for his personal guard” (Kaimaras, 1979: 45).

Geoff’s awkward attitude towards the 5/42 was also reconfirmed in an incident described by ELAS officer Dimitriou “Nikiforos”. While the battle in Taratsa between ELAS and the 5/42 was at its peak, Geoff had just returned from the sabotage in the Asopos bridge. He was not aware of the reasons of that conflict and he asked Nikiforos to brief him about the situation:

“After a while, Geoff asked me apathetically “What is going on here”? We told him that we got engaged in a new conflict with the 5/42. “Fucking Psarros” said Geoff and then his interpreter said something like “Well done, they are getting what they deserve”. His attitude was abnormal, like he wanted to pass the message that he was on our side and that he was glad that we were disbanding the 5/42. “What the hell is this guy saying?” I said to myself. I was worried with that unexpected behaviour on the English officer’s behalf. I felt uncomfortable like I was caught in the middle of a mysterious plot” (Dimitriou, 1965, vol.2: 338-339).¹⁷⁵

In addition to the above testimonies and complaints, there is also a series of much more serious allegations not just against Geoff personally, but against the overall attitude that the British Military Mission and the Middle East Headquarters maintained towards the 5/42. These allegations imply a conspiracy. They imply that the British betrayed the

veterans association and that was considered as an insult from the 5/42 veterans behalf. (All these accusations in Kaimaras, interview 18 December 1999, Karaliotis, interview 4 May 2000, Kouvelis, interview 18 April 2000, Protopapas, interview 6 May 2000, G. Karagianis, 12 May 2000).

¹⁷⁵ ELAS’ officer Gregoriadis who also met Geoff during the battle in Taratsa reconfirms that his attitude was weird (Gregoriadis, vol.2: 491).

5/42 and that they deliberately did not take any measures to protect the regiment from ELAS' aggression. What is most interesting about those allegations is that they come from the side of both EAM-ELAS and the 5/42's, as well as from EDES' Sub-Commander Pyromaglou.

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

"Psarros' murder was committed by some fanatic. More than anyone else, that action benefited the British and their policies. It divided the national resistance movement permanently. Not even the most elaborate and ingenious British political manoeuvre could have such successful results" (Richter, 1975, vol.2: 121).

ELAS' veterans are even more explicit. Skaltsas argues:

"EKKA's disbandment was no accident and it is useless to accuse Siantos, Aris or Mantakas. The causes were much deeper. It was a careful plan, organised by the British and the Dedousis-Kapentzonis faction. The disbandment of the 5/42 and the murder of Psarros were the fulcrums that overthrew the national resistance movement" (Skaltsas, 1984: 131).

ELAS' kapetanios Bekios or "Lambros" claims:

"Looking back in the British colonial policies, we will find many cases where the British themselves wasted loyal allies of their own. In many cases, the benefits for the accomplishment of the British political objectives were being served much more effectively by wasting an ally rather than by continuing supporting him. Psarros served the British for a long time, EKKA and the 5/42 were British allies, they were aces in the sleeve of the British, but the British themselves wasted those aces....If Psarros was sacrificed, the benefits for the British would be far greater. Psarros' sacrifice would be a devastating blow for EAM-ELAS. It would be a political and moral blow and EAM would fall in the British trap. It would have to bow in front of the British" (Bekios: 405).

On the other hand, some 5/42 veterans and sympathisers have also developed their own conspiracy theory. The explanation that they give is that although the Middle East Headquarters and the British Military Mission in Greece had the political will to support the 5/42 and to protect it from ELAS' aggression; a communist conspiracy sabotaged their efforts. Those who support that view claim that many communists had managed to infiltrate the Middle East Headquarters, the Intelligence Service and the British Military Mission in Greece. Some of these men were simply members of the British Communist Party, or mere Leftist sympathisers, while others were genuine Soviet agents. However, either because they were ordered by the Soviet secret services or due to solidarity towards their Greek fellow communists, all of them tried to sabotage the official British policy of support towards the 5/42 and they supported ELAS instead.¹⁷⁶ For example, Dedousis claims that during February 1944 the British did not make any airdrops and his brother's company had a shortage of provisions:

"We were running out of patience and we were getting suspicious. All the time planes were flying above us but they were not dropping their valuable cargo. That was due to an evil communist sabotage. The English wireless operator was a communist and an ELAS agent" (Dedousis, 1949: 58).

EDES' Sub-Commander Pyromaglou did not develop a conspiracy theory of his own, but he highlighted some mysteries concerning the attitude of the 5/42's British Liaison Officers, the British Military Mission in Greece and the Middle East Headquarters during the last days of the 5/42 when the crisis with ELAS was escalating:

"Majors Geoff and John¹⁷⁷ were always near at the area where the 5/42 and ELAS forces had gathered before the final battle. However, which was their contribution in avoiding the bloody conflict and the executions, which followed it? Do they also share some responsibility for letting the conflict escalate? Are they also

¹⁷⁶ See Dedousis, 1949: 57-58, "The 5/42 Regiment", Veteran's association newsletter, January-March 2001, vol.9, Papathanasiou, interview 11 January 2000, Mannaos, interview 5 May 2000.

¹⁷⁷ British Liaison Officer Major John Ponder was Geoff's assistant.

blameworthy? According to my experience and knowledge, I happen know the following:

- a) Every sub-division of British Liaison Officers in every area had its own wireless set and was capable to communicate directly with the Middle East Headquarters.
- b) In almost all cases, the Middle East Headquarter transmitted its orders directly to the sub-divisions of British Liaison Officers and only sometimes did the Middle East Headquarters inform the Headquarters of the British Military Mission in Greece.¹⁷⁸
- c) Although the sub-divisions of the British Liaison Officers throughout Greece were under the supervision of the British Military Mission Headquarters, the Middle East Headquarters had the right to send orders directly to the sub-divisions of the British Liaison Officers.
- d) There can be no doubt that the British Liaison Officers in charge of the sub-division of the 5/42 area sent a full report of the events that were taking place to the Middle East Headquarters. Which were the respond and the orders of the Middle East Headquarters?
- e) On 9 April the local sub-division transmitted to the Middle East Headquarters an appeal by Psarros urging the Middle East Headquarters to take immediate action towards the resolution of the 5/42-ELAS conflict. The Middle East Headquarters did not give any answer.
- f) Throughout that period of crisis, Majors John and Geoff appeared in the area only once or twice and their willingness to intervene and resolve the crisis was mild.
- g) Since 10 April and moreover, since 14 April, the 5/42's tragic fate was more than obvious. In similar cases, other liaison officers (Myers, Woodhouse, Barnes, Hammond) were on the field by the defendant's side. Majors John and Geoff's duty was to be alert and at the spot at all times. One of them ought to be permanently at Psarros' headquarters, while the other should be the messenger and negotiator between ELAS and the 5/42. However, neither at the 15th, the 16th or even at the morning of the 17th (final battle) did the two Majors appear anywhere. I believe that their presence at the field would at least prevent the massive murders of the arrested 5/42 men.

I dare to express the view that the inactivity of the two Majors and their unwillingness to intervene was not due to negligence of duty" (Pyromaglou, 1965: 37-328).

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

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

¹⁷⁸ The headquarters of the British Military Mission in Greece was in Pertouli and later on in Karpenisi and it was commanded by Woodhouse.

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

7.3. Revisiting the Term “Ally”.

7.3.i. “A Foregone Conclusion” and “A Useless Trouble”.

The tension between 5/42 and ELAS started on 3 March 1944 when ELAS antartes surrounded the Sernikaki village and disarmed some 5/42 men. Since the Sernikaki incident a chain of violent clashes followed. Fokida was on red alert and it was rather obvious that the tension was escalating and that the 5/42 and ELAS were heading for a new conflict.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, British Liaison Officers seemed ignorant and not worried about the recent developments. On 9 March, the British Liaison Officer attached to ELAS General Headquarters Lieutenant Colonel Hammond informed the Senior British Liaison officer in Roumeli Major Mulgan¹⁸⁰ that:

“A new clash between the two organisations is not likely because ELAS would fear the onus of a second civil war” (PRO HS 5/355).

After two days, Mulgan sent a telegram to Cairo according to which:

¹⁷⁹ See ch 4.2, p 192.

¹⁸⁰ Probably that is the same officer who wrote the report on EKKA’s claim for compensation. See ch 7.1.ii, 271.

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

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

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

“The BLO [Geoff] commenting on the meeting said there were elements in the 5/42 EKKA Regt which were inclined to be independent and he impressed on PSAROS the imperative need of asserting his authority. The BLO [Geoff] did not anticipate any further fighting” (PRO HS 5/291).

During the last days of March however, it had become obvious that the situation was getting out of hand, Psarros was desperate and he put all of his hopes for a resolution on a British intervention. In 4 April Psarros made an urgent appeal to Geoff:

“Dear Major...Two days ago I sent you a telegram for you to forward to the Middle East Headquarters and to the headquarters of the Allied Military Mission in Greece.¹⁸¹ However, I have no information about your activities towards the suspension of hostilities. Unfortunately, unless the Military Mission intervenes immediately, there is going to be a new civil war with disastrous effects. My whole-hearted wish is to avoid a fratricide and I have stressed that to the telegrams

¹⁸¹ After the Americans sent their own delegate to join the British Military Mission in Greece, the mission was renamed to “Allied Military Mission”.

I have sent to ELAS General Headquarters and to the Allied Mission's Headquarters. I believe that an immediate and decisive intervention on your behalf is absolutely essential for the sake of the allied war effort....Please keep me informed and if possible meet me at my headquarters in the Klima village" (PRO HS 5/279).

On the next day Geoff sent the following answer to Psarros:

"Dear Colonel, I received your letters and I have to make the following comments. I talked with Giotis [Harilaos Florakis, EAM's secretary in Fokida]¹⁸² last night and with Nikiforos this morning in Palaioxari. Both of them reassured me that they have nothing against anyone else in the 5/42 than Dedousis. However, they said that they would not be responsible for the conflict unless you surrender Dedousis to them. They gave me guarantees about Lieutenant Colonel's Lagouranis safety¹⁸³...I am Keeping Cairo and the headquarters of the British Military Mission informed about events and I am doing the utmost to delay hostilities at least until we get some news about the intentions of ELAS General Headquarters. I fully agree with you that the outbreak of a new civil war at this moment will be disastrous for Greece and for the impending operations against the Germans. I understand that your position is very difficult since you are facing two possibilities, civil war or surrendering one of your officers. However, I have arranged a meeting with EAM delegates tomorrow and I will keep you informed. I am hoping that eventually a formula will be found before the situation gets out of hand" (PRO HS 5/279).

Probably Psarros did not get any news from Geoff, since two days later he sent him another desperate appeal almost identical to the first one:

"Dear Major, I am coming back on my appeal to the Allied Military Mission and I am asking for your immediate intervention in order to avoid a new civil war, which as you understand will have disastrous effects upon the allied war effort...If the Allied Military Mission does not intervene immediately, the conflict will be inevitable. I whole-heartily wish to settle affairs with EAM-ELAS and I am ready to immediately start negotiations in order to avoid an escalation of the conflict. I am waiting for your information and proposals. My headquarters is at the Klima village"¹⁸⁴ (PRO HS 5/279).

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

¹⁸² During the 1970's Harilaos Florakis became the Chief Secretary of the Greek Communist Party KKE

¹⁸³ During the 5/42's last days, the regiment's Sub-Commander Ioannis Langouranis defected to ELAS (see ch 4.2, p 197).

¹⁸⁴ At the end of his letter, Psarros informs Geoff that he was approached by the Germans who asked him to join forces against ELAS. Psarros informed Geoff that he refused that proposal and told the Germans that even if he was attacked by ELAS he would still fight the Germans. (See that part of Psarros' letter in ch 5.1.ii, p 217).

"Dear Colonel, I just received your letter...Please be sure that I am doing the utmost possible to resolve the crisis which at this moment threatens Greece. Major John (Ponder) just arrived and is going to be your liaison officer. He will arrive at Klima tomorrow night...I have sent your telegrams (to the Middle East Headquarters and to Lieutenant Colonel Hammond of the British Military Mission) slightly altered due to their length, but I have not changed their concept to a bit. Until this moment however, I have to report that I have not received any comments neither from Cairo nor from Lt Colonel Hammond. I am anticipating for their telegrams" (PRO HS 5/279).

Geoff was giving Psaros nothing but lip service and false hopes. On 4 April, at the same day where he was reassuring Psaros that he was doing the utmost to prevent the conflict, Geoff was transmitting to Cairo the following telegram:

"Psaros reports Dadusis attacked by ELAS. Requests Hammond intervenes to HQ ELAS. My opinion affairs have gone too far for settlement by military means."



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a hope in hell even since their first disbandment last May. Owing to the continuous threats, ultimatums and pressure by ELAS, a proper flow of recruits has never really been forthcoming to Psaros. Those that he has for the most part owe rather shaky allegiance to EKKA and on Psaros' own admission, he cannot enforce adequate discipline upon his men for fear that they either bugger off home, or worse still they are driven to Rallis Battalions [Security Battalions] across the water. The result of all this naturally is a useless trouble from our point of view. Who is to blame for it all? The pretext for them starting the attack was Psaros' failure to fulfil his promises undertaken at the Lidorikion conference of March 13th. True Psaros did fail in this, not because he wanted to fail, but because he ¹⁸⁶ well couldn't help himself. Naturally enough, ELAS also took no measures to fulfil their part either. I have of course tried my best to at least postpone the major clash until something has been effected from your end, but the 5th Brigade when I spoke to them were abundant. Either Psaros hands over Dadusis immediately or else. What the hell can the poor old man do about it, if he does knuckle and hand over that officer, he will at once cause a division in his Regiment. The greater part of his troops will to Kapitsonis and the remainder will go home fed up. By the way, some Boche officers came over the other night trying to contact Psaros. They came to offer him German aid against the red peril. I'm glad to say he refused to see or contact with them. As usual I managed to get myself involved in one of their little battles, this time in Palaioksari when they pinched Lagouranis. This time however, there has been no anti-British sentiments exposed at all, and I have been accorded the greatest help and courtesy the whole time. I enclose some of Psaros' proclamations and pleas. He is conveniently forgetful sometimes. Perhaps you can enlighten me, has the EKKA great political influence in Cairo? I think it must have otherwise we should have left it fade out long ago. All the best (Sgt) Geoff Gordon Creed Major (PRO HS 5/279).

Four days later, in 11 April, Geoff sent another letter to Hammond:

"My dear Colonel. Things have reached rather a deadlock for the moment. The ELAS appear to be gathering their strength and the 5/42 are engaged in a most remarkable display of bravado mingled with periods of sulking. John [Ponder] who has been running backwards and forwards from one side to the other ever since he arrived, put forward what was to my mind a practical solution.¹⁸⁷ I am quite sure that Psaros Langouranis and the senior officers are agreeable, but had been shut down by the extremist element. Anyway, the upshot of it is that the 5/42 are pretending to feel slighted and betrayed by us, have rejected the plan altogether, have issued more against ELAS and appear to be waiting our next suggestion. For my part they can go on waiting. I am bored stiff with the whole outfit. I shall do my utmost to prevent another clash for two reasons only. Firstly Cairo has summounded EKKA representatives in another conference¹⁸⁸ and second I know

¹⁸⁶ One illegible word

¹⁸⁷ Ponder proposal to Psaros was to make the 5/42 "an independent unit directly under ELAS GHQ and PEEA" (PRO HS 5/291).

¹⁸⁸ He means the Koutsaina conference

perfectly well that at least 50% of them will join Ralis in the hope of getting a chance to avenge themselves should the ELAS disperse them. (Sgt) Geoff Gordon Creed Major" (PRO HS 5/279).

On 15 April, two days before the battle in Klima Geoff sent the following telegram to the Middle East Headquarters:

"An ELAS force of approximately 1,000 is closing in on the 5/42 (EKKA) Regiment positions at Klima. Final battle seems inevitable and the result a foregone conclusion. I suggest we accept the new status quo this area and no more ado. Total lack of comment and suggestions from you during past two weeks of troubles has not helped our task" (PRO HS 5/355, HS 5/289).

Geoff's cynicism, ironic attitude and indifference towards the regiment's fate are impressive and rather reconfirms the 5/42 veteran's complaints about his unfriendly attitude towards the regiment. Furthermore, Geoff's letters reconfirm many of Pyromaglou's arguments,¹⁸⁹ since what becomes obvious from these documents is that Geoff had a very limited willingness to intervene and resolve the crisis, that he had frequent contact with the Middle East Headquarters and that he had informed them about the crisis. However, although the Middle East Headquarters had full knowledge over the seriousness of the situation, they did not give any feedback, orders or instructions to Geoff about how to handle the situation. That indifference was so unusual that even Geoff himself protested (see "Total lack of comments and suggestions from you during past two weeks of troubles has not helped our task"). The fact that the Middle East Headquarters did not even make the slightest suggestion or comment is certainly suspicious, but it was not unintentional.

Another document indicates rather clearly that the Middle East Headquarters as well as the high rank officers of the British Military Mission in Greece had written off the 5/42 as a lost cause at least four months before the battle in Klima. On 2 January 1944,

Colonel Hammond sent to Cairo the following telegram, which is probably an answer or commentary to a report, sent to him by the Middle East Headquarters:

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

These documents will probably be disappointing news to the existing 5/42 veterans. For the recently deceased 5/42 veteran and EKKKA official Ioannis Papathanasiou, they reconfirm his worst fears:

“On the basis of the existing evidence it is impossible to explain the idle interference of the Allied Military Mission, their non appearance and the lax intervention of both the Mission and the Middle East Headquarters. That indifference resulted in the encouragement of ELAS to proceed to the final bloody conflict. The coincidences are too many to be accidental. The attitude of all these organisations (PEEA, Allied Military Mission and Middle East Headquarters) was unvarying and indifferent not only before but also after the tragedy. They expressed no abhorrence or emotion whatsoever about the murder of Psaros and tens of his men (to talk about sanctions would be too much). Therefore there are strong indications that the disbandment of the 5/42 was decided in advance. I wish from the bottom of my heart that the above version was inaccurate. If not the destiny of our dead comrades would be doubly tragic since they were killed not only by the brotherly hand of some fanatics, but also with the cool consent of friendly forces (both Greek and allied) with whom we had united our forces in order to fight the fascist invaders” (Papathanasiou, 2000: 170).

7.3.ii. “Give EAM-ELAS Enough Rope”.

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

¹⁸⁹ See ch 7.2, p 282.

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

What is even more awkward is the fact that the British maintained the same disinterested attitude towards the regiment even after the tragedy in Klima. They did not impose the slightest penalty to ELAS (e.g suspend air supplies) and they did not make any issue (e.g formal complaint). On 8 April, almost twenty days after the battle in

- g) Punishment or crime can not be achieved now and should not be sought until backed up by adequate Allied armed strength.
Best course seems leave area Charlie [Fokida] fallow for some time being as Hammond suggests, and add case to Ares' crime sheet for post war action. Papers will be sent to you when all assembled" (PRO HS 5/291).

For Woodhouse, the 5/42 case was closed. That moderate and unemotional attitude, however, was not due to lack of decisiveness on his behalf, and it was certainly not due to leniency towards EAM-ELAS. Another document found in the PRO files suggests that this attitude was the result of a very elaborate and sensitive policy that Woodhouse had came up with since November-December 1943. On 6 May 1944 (two days before Woodhouse sent to Cairo his previous telegram) he had already sent another one where he gave his views about a proposal that he had received; probably from Cairo. That proposal suggested the official denunciation of EAM-ELAS by the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the withdrawal of all allied mission personnel from Greece. In order to expose EAM-ELAS to the Greek public opinion and to prevent EAM-ELAS from seizing power after the departure of the Germans:¹⁹¹

Woodhouse had a totally different view:

"Purpose of proposed plan is destroy power of EAM-ELAS. Can think of no better way to do precisely the opposite. Please see my Nov and Dec appreciation which I consider proved by events. Especially conclusion "Give EAM-ELAS a little more rope with which to pull their weight and in the end they will hang themselves". Situation is that effective resistance to Huns ends with Allied Mission evacuation and gives EAM-ELAS post-war power for nothing whereas maintenance Allied Mission despite Present difficulties offers resistance to Huns and encourages self destruction of EAM-ELAS. Way to beat EAM-ELAS is send as many troops as possible and then more and NOT repeat NOT withdraw from Greece. assured from my tour Allied Mission Officers agree. Respectfully suggest EAM-ELAS attitude will always be weathercock to current of events outside Greece. They behave badly only when they think political game won and all our objectives can be achieved by convincing them it is not repeat not won. Would suggest Edgar be sent to talk to National Liberation briefing specially on gravity of situation. Cannot see any circumstances in which evacuation Allied Mission will do more good than harm

¹⁹¹ See PRO HS 5/223, HS 5/224

and sincerely hope as Englishman and philhellene that this depressing suggestion will be reconsidered. Cairo comments our 429(429) to Mobility requested comments on scheme for possible evacuation of Allied Mission in event of Public denunciation of EAM-ELAS by Prime Minister

4. Enoch 240(240) of four from Stevens. From EKKA SHO crossed pels have received EKKA-ELAS correspondence leading disarming EKKA. Also report of incidents. ELAS action sounds like Hitler against Czechoslovakia. Have documents. If of any interest will send out next chance" (PRO HS 5/223).

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

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

The above documents are monuments of the "a means to justify the ends" mentality. Was it phlegm, realism, foresight, a marvellous exhibition of practical thinking, or an amoral perception of political manoeuvring? Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the British placed their political deliberations above their alliance to the 5/42. They sacrificed, or more precisely, allowed the sacrifice of a friendly national resistance organisation in order to achieve a political objective which ironically was similar with the political objectives of the 5/42 men.

7.4. No Place for Losers.

The attitude of the British towards the 5/42 is only one of the controversies of the overall British policy in Greece during the occupation. In general terms, the source of all

that controversy was the incompatibility of objectives between the short-term and the long-term aims of the British policy. The short-term objective was purely military and it had to do with the success of the war effort against the Germans. The purpose was to maintain a strong and active resistance movement in Greece that would immobilise as many Germans troops as possible. The long-term objective was purely political and it had to do with the protection of the British post-war interests in Greece. According to Sfikas:

“Britain’s policy aimed at the restoration of her influence in post-war Greece and the establishment of a friendly regime that would underpin her imperial position by safeguarding sea communications, the routes to India and the oilfields of the Middle East” (Sfikas, 1994: 24).

It was proved impossible for the British to achieve both objectives efficiently. The achievement of the first objective presupposed the full British military support to the Greek national resistance movement and especially ELAS –the most effective resistance force. The achievement of the second objective presupposed the full British political support to the exiled King. The British tried to reconcile the irreconcilable. They followed a dual policy and they kept contradicting themselves. While the War Cabinet, the Middle East Headquarters and SOE were dropping arms to EAM-ELAS, the Foreign Office and the Secret Intelligence Service were doing the outmost in favour of the King - EAM-ELAS’ worst enemy.

Whatever the contradictions of the British policies towards Greece however, the British had very little to expect from the 5/42 in achieving any of their political or military objectives. Firstly, the 5/42 failed to become a strong and combative resistance force. Due to the successive disbandments by ELAS and due to its domestic conflicts, the regiment had a rather minor contribution to the overall war effort against the Germans.¹⁹²

¹⁹² The battles that the 5/42 gave against the Germans and Italians are listed in ch 3.4, p 169.

On the other hand, ELAS and EDES were by far more experienced and effective guerrilla forces and they could carry out the resistance struggle by themselves. Secondly, the 5/42 never became an effective military opponent against ELAS. Large ELAS forces surrounded the regiment and they were capable to disband the regiment at any given time. On the other hand, EDES was a by far more effective and dependable anti-ELAS band. Thirdly, EKKA never became a reliable political force for the British. Kartalis' incoherent policies and his flirtation with EAM made the British suspicious over EKKA's trustworthiness as political allies against EAM-ELAS. On the contrary, Zervas was a loyal and reliable British ally and the British preferred to pledge all of their trust upon him.¹⁹³

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

¹⁹³ See ch 7.1.ii, p 271.

Conclusion

The assumption that the British conspired in the collapse of the 5/42 cannot be confirmed by the documents examined here. On a purely pragmatic basis, the British cannot be blamed as accomplices to the 5/42 tragedy. They did not cause the tragedy and they did not compel ELAS to disband the 5/42 and kill Psarros. On the same basis they can even be considered as the regiment's benefactors since they provided the regiment with their generous support in arms and funds until the end. However, documents prove rather clearly that the British abandoned the 5/42 to its fate. The British saw a friendly force heading straight to annihilation and they did not lift a finger to prevent that from happening. They intentionally did nothing to avoid or at least minimise the tragedy that happened in Klima.

To the veterans of both the 5/42 and EAM-ELAS, the British lack of solidarity to the 5/42 was a mystery. Since they had no available evidence, both sides produced their own conspiracy theories on this issue. In addition to the fact that those conspiracy theories lacked evidence, they were rather simplistic and convenient interpretations of events. Both sides placed all responsibilities for the 5/42 tragedy on the British and conveniently forgot to make their own self-criticism about their respective responsibilities to the happening of the 5/42 tragedy.

Without even taking into consideration the fact that their own insubordination was one of the main causes of the 5/42's collapse and by stubbornly refusing even to consider the possibility that they were abandoned by their allies and champions, the regiment's veterans found another more convenient theory. According to that theory, an evil

communist conspiracy averted the 5/42 from becoming a mighty force and the unfriendly attitude of the British was due to the dark activities of communists and Soviet agents. However, many of the documents that this research came up with were written by people such as Woodhouse “a good friend of Greece” (“The 5/42 regiment of Evzones”, Veterans association newsletter, vol. 9), or Nicholas Hammond, a well known enemy of EAM-ELAS. These British officers were honoured by the Greek state (Cross of the Phoenix battalion) and Greek academia. They did their utmost to fight EAM-ELAS and prevent the “communist danger” from spreading to Greece. At the same time however, it was them who abandoned the regiment to its fate. The only way that the existing 5/42 veterans could come to terms with that antithesis is to try to understand that the limits of allied solidarity stop at the point where the limits of political deliberation begin.

EAM-ELAS veterans on the other hand came up with their own convenient alibi. Their cliché is that the British used the “divide and rule” tactic in the case of the 5/42 and their own conspiracy theory is that the 5/42 tragedy was carefully planned by the British with the sole purpose to discredit EAM-ELAS. By that convenient theory, EAM-ELAS veterans washed their hand over their own responsibility to the making of the 5/42 tragedy and burdened all responsibilities to the evil British plots. However, although EAM-ELAS veterans used the “divide and conquer” theory as an excuse, they did not really understand how offensive and derogatory that theory really was for them. By accepting that theory, they accept for themselves the role of the irresolute and willess native who was dragged by the will of the mighty colonist. Whatever the excuse or the theory, the fact remains that ELAS disbanded the 5/42 three times and murdered its leader and many of the regiment’s men while in captivity. The truth is that although the

British had every intention to discredit EAM-ELAS, they were not the ones who caused the 5/42 tragedy. The British just stepped out of EAM-ELAS' way and just watched them discrediting themselves. They simply gave EAM-ELAS "enough rope to hang themselves".

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

The tragic demise of the 5/42 regiment of evzones indicates that there was no space for a third pole within the polarised environment of the Greek national resistance movement. The political antagonism was too fierce and the regiment's fall shows that it was very difficult for a small, moderate resistance group to pass through the smashing rocks in safety. In any case though, the 5/42 did not have the necessary prerequisites to become a prosperous third pole.

Firstly, the regiment had a very narrow vital space. Due to the fact that the 5/42 was formed much later than ELAS in Fokida, the regiment was always surrounded by mighty ELAS forces and therefore it was always in a disadvantageous and defensive position. Secondly, the regiment did not have an efficient leadership. The leaders of EKKA and the 5/42 were not proven able to manoeuvre effectively within the political arena of the national resistance movement. Both Kartalis and Psarros failed to cope with EAM-ELAS' aggressive policies and they failed to protect the autonomy and the political prestige of EKKA-5/42. Thirdly, there was no coherence between the leadership of EKKA-5/42 and the regiment's antartes and supporters. Right from the beginning, EKKA and the 5/42 were alienated from each other. The political orientation of EKKA had

nothing to do with the political culture and ideology of the 5/42's men and that alienation grew day by day. Moreover, Colonel Psarros also failed to impose firm military leadership upon his men. He failed to convince the regiment's antartes that he was the safe pair of hands that could lead them to victory. Fourthly, the 5/42 did not have the necessary military and political aid from the British. The British chose not to back up the 5/42 with their support, instead they abandoned the regiment to its fate.

The 5/42 had an influential role within the national resistance movement, but it completely failed to contribute anything of significance towards national unity. On the contrary, the regiment's rise and fall had exactly the opposite results. The 5/42 failed to play an arbitratory role between the two extremes. Instead, it became the apple of discord between them. It failed to bring the two extremes closer to each other. Instead it brought them further away from each other. It failed to decrease the polarisation within the national resistance movement. Instead it added more fuel to the political antagonisms and worse, it added more dead to the body count of the civil conflict during the occupation.

This study covered the history of the 5/42 regiment of evzones from its rise to its fall. In particular, the case of the 5/42 regiment of evzones was studied across three levels of analysis. The micro-level analysis highlighted and discussed the factors that contributed to the formation of the 5/42. It looked at the community within which the 5/42 was formed and at the impact that the local geographic, economic and political conditions had upon the regiment's growth. Furthermore, the-micro level analysis also focused on the objectives and strategies of the group's leaders as well as on the 5/42's internal structure during the early days of its formation. The meso-level analysis highlighted the role that the 5/42 played in the political antagonism within the national

resistance movement and at the impact of the regiment's collapse upon the political developments during the last months of the occupation. The meso level analysis focused on three main points. Firstly, on the policies of the 5/42 leaders towards EAM-ELAS and on the effect of EAM-ELAS' aggression on the regiment's domestic coherence. Secondly, on the grounds upon which EAM-ELAS disbanded the 5/42, and on the actual military and political causes behind the regiment's disbandment. Thirdly, it looked at the motives behind the murder of Colonel Psarros and at the murder's political consequences. The macro-level looked at the 5/42 within the context of British policies in Greece during the occupation. The objective of the macro-level analysis was to highlight the political and military relationship between the British and the 5/42, but also to discuss the attitude that the British maintained during the last conflict between the 5/42 and ELAS.

This last chapter will revisit the findings of the thesis on all three levels of analysis and will make a concluding evaluation over the historical importance of the case study of the 5/42 regiment of evzones. The purpose is to highlight the findings of this study and place them within our existing knowledge of Greece during the occupation period. This concluding chapter is divided into four sections. The first section will discuss the importance of studying the micro-social context of the national resistance and the civil conflict. The second section will discuss the notion of "pure national resistance". It will comment on whether it was possible for the national resistance organisations to make a clear distinction between the national resistance struggle and the achievement of their post-war political objectives. The third section will comment on the international dimension of the case study of the 5/42 regiment. Based on this specific case study, this section will make an evaluation of the alliances that were formed within

the anti-axis coalition during World War II. Finally, the fourth section will make a brief comparison between some peculiarities concerning the regiment's history and the stereotypes concerning the winners and losers of civil wars.

8.1. Back to basics: The Anthropology of National Resistance and Civil War.

The case study presented in this thesis indicates that in studying the roots of the resistance and the causes of the civil war, it is crucial to take into consideration the catalytic role that the peculiarities of each and every Greek region played in the course of events. Although the occupation had disastrous effects for the whole of the nation, every community followed its own unique course. For example, although the vast majority of Greeks shared an equal hate against the invaders, there was a major difference between the contribution that every Greek region made to the national resistance struggle. Roumeli, for example, became "a large German cemetery", while on the other hand, there was absolutely no resistance activity in most of the Greek islands. Moreover, the result of the conflict between EAM-ELAS and its enemies was not uniform all around Greece. Epirus on the one hand was devastated by an intensive civil conflict, while on the other civil war was prevented in Crete. Moreover, although mountainous terrain benefited the development of guerrilla warfare, guerrilla activity was by far greater in the valleys of Thessaly than in the high mountains of the Peloponnese.

These contradictions can be explained by a number of factors. The landscape, the structure of the Greek state, the dominant patterns of political socialisation, the place of

the family in the Greek culture and a number of economic, religious and ethnological conflicts, contributed in dividing the Greek country in numerous micro-worlds. Self-dependent communities settled in isolated islands or mountainous villages with no communication with the city or with each other developed their own distinctive identities throughout the centuries. In many cases, the identity and culture of a community on the one side of the mountain was very different with the one of the community on the other side. During the occupation all communities had to face the same enemy, they had to deal with similar problems. However, they reacted in quite different ways and the history of the community on the one side of the mountain was considerably different from the one on the other side.

It is impossible to study the phenomena of the Greek national resistance and the civil conflict between the national resistance organisations without taking into consideration a number of developments on the national level. Ideology, patriotism, leadership, international and national power politics played decisive roles both in the emergence of the national resistance movement and in the outbreak of the civil conflict. However, during the occupation, the country was the theatre of operations of the national resistance movement and the local communities were the arenas of the civil conflict. Often, the small affairs of life within the local communities played decisive roles in the course of events and sealed the fate of millions of people. In many cases, membership in competing resistance bands was determined by family vendettas and personal interests rather than political orientation. In other cases, personal decisions taken by local resistance leaders played a much more important role than the national strategy of each resistance organisation.

Although the 5/42 was the third largest national resistance organisation nationwide and an important player in the political antagonisms within the national resistance movement, it was still a resistance group with a clearly local identity. The regiment's emergence was influenced by the economic, social and political peculiarities of the local community before and during the occupation. Probably the principal factor that facilitated the emergence of the 5/42 and generally the onset of guerrilla activity in the Fokida region was geography. The mountainous terrain, the lack of a road-network and the isolated villages provided the ideal conditions for the formation of guerrilla bands. Apart from geography, another equally crucial factor that also benefited the formation of the 5/42 was the fact that there was a large number of officers in the region. This phenomenon was a direct result of the pre-war economic and political conditions of the local community. Due to the widespread poverty within the community before the war, career opportunities in Fokida were limited and therefore many local young men pursued careers in the military and the armed services to escape poverty. Eventually, through local political patrons and informal clientalist networks many young men from Fokida managed to become officers and these same men later played leading roles within the 5/42.

The political identity of the 5/42 regiment was also highly influenced by the pre-war political culture of the local community. During the pre-war decade, Fokida was a conservative stronghold. Right wing parties were dominant in the region, while the pro-royalist and anti-Communist sentiments were extremely popular. This conservatism survived also during the occupation. Although the 5/42 was officially a non-political

combatant force serving no political objective, the regiment's officers and men maintained their conservative political beliefs and their prejudice against communism.

The history of the Greek resistance and civil war during the occupation is a large mosaic, made by hundreds of beads. Although our knowledge on the national level is good and the existing literature gives a quite clear picture of the whole mosaic, our knowledge on the local level is very limited and hundreds of individual beads are still covered in dust. This study did not just have the objective to increase our knowledge over the mosaic by highlighting the role that the 5/42 regiment played in the national context of the resistance movement and the civil conflict. It also had the objective to remove the dust from a single bead by looking at the social context in which the 5/42 functioned. As a research field, the micro-social context of the resistance and civil war is by far less saturated than the macro-national. Piles of valuable archives crammed in the basements of city and prefecture halls all around Greece wait to be opened. More importantly, the last of the remarkable people who have witnessed these tragic events have already entered the last period of their lives and wait to tell their stories. It is crucial to save and preserve their experiences not just for the sake of history and science, but for the preservation of memory itself.

8.2. "Pure National Resistance": Illusions and hypocrisy

Throughout its existence, the 5/42 declared that it was a non-political organisation dedicated exclusively to the war effort against the invaders. Nevertheless, the history of

the 5/42 and EKKA from their rise to their fall proves that it was impossible to separate the national liberation struggle from the political struggle over the fate of post-war Greece. It also suggests that a purely patriotic national resistance struggle disengaged completely from personal or political ambitions was a noble but unattainable ideal.

In their memoirs and interviews, 5/42 veterans insist on drawing a clear line between national resistance and politics. They claim that they went up the mountains to serve the nation's struggle against the invaders and that they did not have any political considerations in their minds. They view politics as a miasma, as something humble and self-interested that should have been left out of the nation's magnificent struggle against the invader. They argue that a genuine national resistance fighter should not have any political beliefs and objectives and should concentrate exclusively on the war effort against the invaders. Consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally, all of those who claim the above delude themselves.

Captain Thymios Dedousis, for example, did not have any illusions. He was a dedicated anti-communist and monarchist. He remained loyal to his ideological beliefs. "We are like mules with blinkers. We wear blinkers and we will go on wearing them until the end" (Fokika Nea 17 April 1947) he kept saying. Dedousis did not join the national resistance struggle only because he was a patriot, or just because he wanted to drive the Germans and the Italians out of Greece. He also had a strong ideological motivation and a very clear and specific idea of what he was fighting for. He kept repeating that:

"We went up the mountains to serve the national resistance struggle according to the orders and interests of the King and the Middle East Headquarters" (Fokika Nea 17 April 1947).

According to his mentor Zalokostas, “he was more royal than the king” (Fokika Nea 17 April 1947) and the restoration of the monarchy after liberation was an equally important objective as driving the invaders out of Greece. Dedousis highlighted his pro-royalist beliefs from the first day that he joined the 5/42. Zalokostas wrote:

“At a time when Greeks competed with each other on who would show the most democratic zeal, you Dedousis kept from the first day your royalist ideals and your company within, the legendary 5/42 regiment never took the symbol of the crown off their caps” (Fokika Nea 17 April 1947).

Dedousis’ post-war personal journey also proves that he was more than simply a national resistance fighter. After the occupation was over in 1946 Dedousis was approached by the conservative People’s Party officials who proposed him to join the party’s list of candidates in Fokida for the forthcoming 31 March national elections. Dedousis accepted the offer and he came second in votes gathering 10,611 votes –a record for a first time candidate (Fokika Nea 11 April 1946). A year later however, Dedousis left the People’s Party and joined the more radical right wing “New Party”. In one of his statements in “Fokika Nea” Dedousis declared that he intended “to fight the domestic communist traitors until death” (Fokika Nea 22 February 1947). He kept his promise. In the next month Dedousis abandoned the parliament and formed a detachment of paramilitaries and ex-5/42 antartes in order to persecute the communist guerrilla bands that had started forming in the region. In 2 April 1947 during an ambush he was shot in the back (Dedousis, 1949: 100).¹⁹⁴ For Dedousis, the parliamentary seat was not enough to calm his anti-communist obsession.

Georgios Kartalis did not have any illusions either. He was not the romantic freedom fighter that would withdraw to his privacy after the liberation. He was a genuine

politician motivated by his personal political ambitions. Joining the national resistance movement was an opportunity for him to increase his personal prestige during the occupation, win the national resistance laurels and prepare a successful political career in post-war Greece. The leadership of EKKKA was a first class opportunity to achieve his personal ambitions. Although Kartalis declared that the paramount objective was to fight the invaders and that politics should be left out of the resistance struggle as long as Greece was under occupation,¹⁹⁵ in one of his letters to Psarros he wrote:

“[In post-war Greece]...the people are going to support only those parties and organisations which would have contributed to the national resistance struggle. All other parties will then be considered as zeros. The only organisations that have been acknowledged as resistance organisations are ELAS, EDES and EKKKA. At this point these organisations are shaping the future political elite and government of free Greece” (Petimezas, 1991: 303).¹⁹⁶

For Kartalis, the national liberation struggle during the occupation could not be possibly separated from the struggle concerning the distribution of power in post-war Greece. National resistance was the stepping stone for him to re-enter the political game when Greece would be free again and his post-war journey justifies that argument. After the liberation, he became Minister of Press in the national unity government under Georgios Papandreou; in 1951, under Plastiras’ government, he became Minister of Co-ordination and later on Minister of Economics; while in 1954, he was elected Mayor of Volos.¹⁹⁷

The ideal upon which the 5/42 was formed was a utopia and even the people who led and joined the 5/42 could not adapt to and practice that ideal. The national resistance

¹⁹⁴ According to Thanasis Koutsoklenis’ version Dedousis was not shot by communist bands, but by People’s Party gunmen who were members of his detachment. (A. Koutsoklenis, interview 18 May 2000)

¹⁹⁵ See ch 2.2.ii.c, p 84.

¹⁹⁶ This letter was written in French probably for security reasons.

¹⁹⁷ See Strogylis, 1996: 100-116

movement was primarily a patriotic movement that aimed at inflicting damage to the invaders, but it was also a political movement that aimed to give solutions over a number of unresolved political, economic and social problems concerning the fate of post-war Greece. Just the fact that Greece was under the most brutal reign of oppression did not necessarily mean that these problems should not be taken into consideration. People had ambitions about the country's post-war fate and the question "when was Greece going to be free" was equally important to the question "who was going to govern Greece after it was free". Those who did not understand that were not better patriots, rather they were people with limited political perception.

What the 5/42 veterans do not realise or pretend not to realise is that the national resistance struggle did not necessarily contradict the political struggle. People have multiple identities and play multiple roles. The identity of the patriot can co-exist with the identity of the political follower and the role of the resistance fighter can co-exist with personal ambitions. In fact personal ambition was a major factor that contributed to the rise of national resistance. All those who joined the national resistance had some sort of ambition. In some cases these ambitions were noble and had to do with a series of political and social issues concerning post-war Greece. In other cases these ambitions were humble and had to do with material needs or entirely personal and psychological desires. Whatever the case, it was impossible to take out the element of personal ambition out of the national resistance.

8.3. A small footnote in the history of World War II.

From a local point of view, the history of the 5/42 was a part of the history of the Fokida region during the occupation. From a national point of view, the history of the 5/42 was a part of the Greek history during 1941-1944. However, the history of the 5/42 has also some international dimension. From an international point of view, the regiment was one of the national resistance groups that joined the war effort against the axis across Europe. Although the regiment's contribution to that war effort was certainly insignificant, the 5/42's history still is a brief episode, a footnote, in the history of World War II. It would obviously be foolish to draw any conclusions about World War II, the momentous and consequential event of the 20th century, based on the sole case study of the 5/42. However, since there was some international dimension to the history of the 5/42, it is relevant to place the 5/42's history within the wider context of World War II and to make some observations, especially about the alliances within the anti-axis coalition.

The rise of Hitler was a call for unity among all those who had an interest to resist him and his allies for their own different reasons. That call for unity had an unprecedented and phenomenal appeal across the world and it brought together the United States and the Soviet Union, communism and capitalism. The anti-axis camp soon became a gigantic coalition of states, ideologies, movements, social, political and national groups. All those members that formed this multicoloured and bizarre coalition had very little in common. Their coalition was not formed on the solid basis of mutuality of principles, rather on the fragile basis of mutuality of objectives, which was none other

than to beat the common enemy. Most of the alliances that were formed within the anti-axis coalition were formed hastily; they were occasional and rather unemotional. The alliance between the British and the 5/42 was only one of the numerous unemotional alliances that were contracted against the axis.

British policy towards Greece during World War II had more than one objective. The first objective was military and the purpose was to support the Greek resistance so that it would have the maximum contribution to the war effort against the axis. The second objective was political and the aim was to safeguard British political and economic interests in post-war Greece. The British allied with anyone that could help them achieve both their military and their political objectives, even though it was impossible to achieve both objectives at the same time.

The British allied with ELAS which posed the biggest jeopardy to the achievement of their political objectives, but which at the same time was the only resistance force that could fulfil their military objectives. They allied with EDES which could not compete with ELAS in terms of military strength and contribution to the resistance struggle, but which at the same time was the trustworthiest political ally within the Greek national resistance movement. They also allied with the 5/42. They provided the regiment with the necessary funds and arms, hoping that the 5/42 would become an effective resistance force and a reliable political and military counter-weight against EAM-ELAS. Eventually, the 5/42 did not meet British expectations. It never became an effective resistance force nor did it become a reliable anti-ELAS group. As soon as these deficiencies became obvious, the alliance came to an end and the British abandoned the regiment to its fate.

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

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

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

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

World War II: 50 million dead

What is there to write?

We have abandoned our graves and we roam homeless.

While we were fighting, it did not even cross our minds that we are sacrificing ourselves just for our tombstones to serve as missile launch bases.

8.4. The victimised winners of a civil war

One of the most common clichés referring to civil wars is that “there are no winners and losers in civil wars”. The validity of this cliché depends on the perspective upon which civil wars are viewed and studied. If civil wars are viewed from a broad humanitarian perspective, then obviously there can be no winners and losers out of any civil war. Devastation and human suffering is universal in a society under civil war, it affects all opponents and probably no individual can escape a civil war unharmed. However, if civil wars are viewed from a more specific point of view, from an economic, a political or a social perspective, then things become much clearer. There are winners and losers. There are those groups who have achieved their political, economic or social objectives and those groups who have not, those who control the state power and rule and those who submit to the will and might of their victorious opponents.

In the case of Greece, the armed conflict between the right and the left started during the occupation, it underwent a number of stages and it reached its peak with the 1946-1949 civil war between the royalist, right-wing government and the “Democratic Army” controlled by the Greek Communist Party. Eventually, that bloody civil conflict ended with a victory for the Greek right and a bitter defeat for the left. During that period, the left suffered tremendously brutal persecutions. The official Greek State, in full co-

operation with its non-institutional and paramilitary instruments violated every sense of legality in the persecution of the left. Thousands of communists were murdered by the police or lynched by royalist mobs, thousands more were executed or sent to prison by special court-martials.

Even after the end of the 1946-1949 civil war, and although apparently Greece was a democracy, anti-communism continued being the dominant doctrine for the official Greek state. More than 80,000 fighters and supporters of the "Democratic Army of Greece" were forced to flee Greece and seek refuge in various countries of the eastern bloc. The left continued being under a state of persecution and all those who had been stigmatised as communists or left-wing sympathisers were incriminated and excluded from the economic, social and political life of Greece. Since the onset of the Colonels' dictatorship in 1967, the left suffered a new reign of persecution and thousands of people suffered further violations of their constitutional rights. Ultimately, in 1974 democracy was re-established and only then was Pandora's box permanently sealed for the left.

For almost three decades, the right and the left played rather stereotypical roles in Greek history. The right was the usual aggressor and the left was the usual victim. However, the regiment's tragic history stands rather uneasy against the stereotypical roles that the left and the right played during that period. In the regiment's case, ELAS was the aggressor and the 5/42 was the victim, ELAS was mighty and arrogant, while the 5/42 was weak and powerless. Therefore, the 5/42's case is an indication that the identity of the victim and the identity of the villain cannot be taken for granted and that it is very easy for these identities to change during a civil war.

Even though the side to which the 5/42 belonged was the side of the “villains”, the officers and antartes who joined the 5/42 were themselves victims of ELAS. On the other hand, even though the side to which ELAS belonged was the side of the “victims”, many from that side were themselves villains –as far as the 5/42 was concerned. The case of the 5/42 regiment of evzones is a historical example, which indicates that the defeated of a civil war are not always the innocent victims, the martyrs who suffer the menace of the victorious. On the other hand, it indicates that the winners of a civil war are not always -or better, had not always been- the barbarians who sadistically tortured their weak opponents.

The case of the 5/42 does not challenge any cliché or stereotype over the outcome of civil wars. The stereotype that after any civil war, there is always a winner and always a loser is correct and it is justified in many cases throughout history. However, the case of the 5/42 challenges the roles that the winners and the losers play during and after a civil war. It proves that these roles are not stereotypical and cannot be easily labelled. Although there is no doubt that the losers of all civil wars are victimised, the historical case of the 5/42 regiment of evzones is there to remind us that in some cases the winners are also themselves victims. It is there to remind us that after any civil war it would be more accurate to talk about victimised winners and victimised losers, rather than just winners and losers.

APPENDIX

A. INTERVIEWS (List in alphabetical order)

NAME (and Pseudonym)	POSITION-CAPACITY	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
Mr Kyriakos Angelidis	ELAS antartis	Athens	7 August 2000
Mr Vasilios Angelidis	ELAS antartis	Athens	7 August 2000
Mr Spyros Bekios "Labros"	ELAS kapetanios, veteran of Gorgopotamos sabotage	Athens	8 May 2000
Mr Petros Deniozos	ELAS antartis	Amfissa	21 August 2000
Mr Anastasios Giangis	ELAS reserve antartis	Penteoria	17 August 2000
Mrs Gianio Giangi	ELAS sympathiser, wife of Anastasios Giangis	Penteoria	17 August 2000
Gen. Georgios Kaimaras	5/42 pioneer, Commander of 5/42's 4 th Company	Athens	18 December 1999
		Athens	11 May 2000

Gen. Euthimios Karagiannis	5/42 antartis, ex Chief of the General Military Command	Athens	23 January 2000
Mr Georgios Karagiannis	Son of national resistance heroine Lela Karagianni, liaison and translator of various British military missions in Roumeli	Athens	12 May 2000
Mr Dimitrios Karaliotis	5/42 follower	Athens	4 May 2000
Mr Drosos Karavartogianos	Publisher of the "Tetramina" historical and literary newsletter, expert in the history of Fokida	Amfissa Amfissa	19 May 2000 22 August 2000
Mr Michalis Kasoutsas	5/42 sympathiser, son of priest Argyrios Kasoutsas – member of the 5/42 struggle committee in Itea	Itea	23 August 2000
Mr Athanasios Kokoris	5/42 antartis	Penteoria	19 August 2000
Mr Ioannis Kokoris	5/42 reserve antartis	Penteoria	16 August 2000
Col. Athanasios Koutras	5/42 pioneer, Commander of 5/42's 1 st company	Athens	9 January 2000

Gen. Konstantinos Koutras	Son of Colonel Koutras, President of the 5/42 veterans association	Athens	9 January 2000
Mr Georgios Koutroukis	ELAS reserve fighter	Athens	22 April 2000
Mr Athanasios Koutsoklenis	5/42 antartis	Amfissa	18 May 2000
Mr Georgios Koutsoklenis	5/42 follower, director of the Fokida Studies Society, director of the 5/42 veterans association in Amfissa	Amfissa	17 May 2000
Mr Nikolaos Kouvelis	5/42 reserve antartis	Stromi	18 April 2000
Gen. Athanasios Mamarelis	5/42 antartis	Athens Athens Penteoria Penteoria Athens Athens Athens	3 December 1999 15 January 2000 16 May 2000 14 August 2000 11 January 2001 3 January 2002 18 May 2002
Mrs Niki Mamareli	Member of the 5/42 struggle committee in Amfissa	Amfissa	19 May 2000
Dr Ioannis Mannaïos	Son of Major Loukas Mannaïos-Commander of the Desfina/Arachova double company	Athens	5 May 2000
Mr Themis Marinos	Member of the "Harling" mission which organised the sabotage of the Gorgopotamos bridge	Athens	10 January 2000
Mr Vagelis Papadakis "Tasos Leuterias"	ELAS kapetanios, Chief political commissar in the Roumeli Headquarters of ELAS, Comander of ELAS Roumeli Headquarters	Athens	13 September 2000
Col. Omiros Papadopoulos	Member of organisation "X"	Athens	10 May 2000
Mr Stamatis Papathanasiou	Son of Major Ioannis Papathanasiou -member of EKKA's delegate in the	Athens	11 January 2000

	Common General Antartes Headquarters in Karpenisi, Commander of the 1 st 5/42 battalion of Parnassida		
Mr Ioannis Polyzos	5/42 antartis	Penteoria	16 August 2000
Mr Elias Protopapas "Aetos"	5/42 antartis, Vice president of Panhellenic League of National Resistance Organisations (PSEAO), ex President of 5/42" veterans association	Athens Athens	6 May 2000 14 January 2000
Mr Nikolaos Raptis	5/42 follower	Itea	23 August 2000
Mr Periclis Rodakis	EAM member	Athens	21 April 2000
Mr Bambis Roupas	ELAS wireless operator attached to Velouchiotis' guard, editor of the "EAM-Resistance" newsletter, administrative member of the Panhellenic League of EAM National Resistance Fighters (PSAEEA)	Athens	24 April 2000
Mr Athanasios Siderakos	ELAS antartis	Penteoria	18 August 2000
Mr Bambis Stathopoulos	5/42 sympathiser	Athens	8 January 2000
Mr Ioannis Talamangas	Researcher of Fokida's history	Amfissa	20 May 2000
Mr Euthymios Talantis	Son of 5/42 antartis Haralambos Talantis	Amfissa	23 August 2000
Mr Thomas Zacharias	Member of the 5/42 struggle committee in Penteoria	Penteoria Penteoria	16 May 2000 19 August 2000

B. PRIMARY SOURCES

I. Unpublished Documents and Manuscripts

Athens

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F 914

F 922

F 928

F 929

F 954

F Agorou

F KKE

- **ASKI Arheia Synhronis Koinonikis Istorias [Archives of Contemporary Social History]**

The Archives of EAM-ELAS, Files:

F 20/28/44

F 20/29/71

F 30/1/3

F 30/1/111

F 30/1/119

- **The Private Archive of Mr Ioannis Papathanasiou**

Report of the Parnassida Headquarters (Andreas Mitalas)

Request of Andreas Mitalas to the Greek Military

Manuscript of the speech delivered by C.M Woodhouse in Athens in 9 April 1987

Correspondence between Stamatis Papathanasiou and C.M Woodhouse

Correspondence between Major Ioannis Papathanasiou and General Stefanos Doukas

Correspondence between Stamatis Papathanasiou and General Georgios Kaimaras

- **The Private Archive of Mr Michalis Giakoumos**

The hand-written memoirs of an unknown 5/42 antartis

London

- **The Public Records Office (PRO)**

- HS 5/214 – 1940. Plans against possible enemy occupation of Greece; training of Bands of saboteurs; costs
- HS 5/220 – 1943. SOE correspondence with FO and Leeper about policy towards Greece and guerrillas; supplies to guerrillas; SOE activities in Greece; Panelinios Apeleutherotiki Organosi (PAO – Pan-Hellenic Liberation Organisation) and their collaboration with Germans; Noah's Ark plan
- HS 5/223 – 1944. Policy: general situation; Noah's Ark; German reprisals; Ellinikos Laikos Apeleutherotikos Stratos (ELAS: Greek Popular Liberation Army – military branch of EAM) aggression against EKKKA; Greek communist party; death of Lt Hubbard
- HS 5/236 – 1943-1944. Centre; plan for occupation of Athens by Greek communists; Zervas' report of 23 January 1944
- HS 5/238 – Right; EKKKA/PAO rapprochement attempt; Yperaspistai Voreioou Ellados (YVE – Defenders of Northern Greece); HOMER; six colonels; military hierarchy organisation; Amphictyony organisation; Amphictyony and Theros organisations
- HS 5/249 - 1944. Quisling governments and organisations
- HS 5/270 – 1943. Relations between Allied mission and Greek organisations; interrogation reports
- HS 5/274 – 1944. Relations between Allied mission and Greek organisations
- HS 5/276 – 1944. Relations between Allied mission and Greek organisations
- HS 5/277 – 1944. Relations between Allied mission and Greek organisations
- HS 5/279 – 1944. Evpalion incident; clashes between ELAS/EKKKA etc With Greek newspaper cutting and Greek documents
- HS 5/280 – 1944. Koutsaina Conference: to achieve closer collaboration with Zervas in fight against common enemy
- HS 5/289 – 1943-1944. Clashes between guerrilla bands
- HS 5/290 – 1943-1944. Relations between ELAS and other organisations with newspaper cutting in Greek
- HS 5/291 - 1943-1944. Relations between ELAS and other organisations with newspaper cutting in Greek
- HS 5/292 - 1943-1944. Relations between ELAS and other organisations with newspaper cutting in Greek
- HS 5/340 – 1942-1945. Midas report and claims with Greek language documents
- HS 5/341 – 1945. Midas reports; personnel payments with Greek language documents
- HS 5/346 – 1943. Operations WASHING and LOCKSMITH; demolition of Gorgopotamos viaduct; political developments in Greek resistance; Greek army crisis
- HS 5/354 – 1942-1943. National council proposed by Tzigantes
- HS 5/355 – 1944. Telegrams from field; political reports by BLOs
- HS 5/356 – 1944. Telegrams from field; political reports by BLOs
- HS 5/363 – 1942-1945. Personnel: infiltrated; Greeks working for SOE; British captured; rehabilitation; liquidation

HS 5/364 – 1942-1943. Personnel: Greek-speaking BLO
 HS 5/365 – 1944-1945. Casualties: individual cases A-Z
 HS 5/371 – 1942. Personnel: Greek A-L
 HS 5/372 – 1942. Personnel: Greek M-Z
 HS 5/376 – Foreign personnel suggested for SOE employment
 HS 5/382 – 1942-1944. Personnel: ex-agents
 HS 5/383 – 1943-1945. Personnel: agents in field
 HS 5/405 – 1943-1945. Recruited Greeks A-O
 HS 5/406 – 1943-1945. Recruited Greeks P-Z
 HS 5/407 – 1942-1944. Recruited Greeks: Casualties
 HS 5/425 – Jul-Oct; six Greeks brought to Cairo by SOE
 HS 5/477 – 1943. National bands: guerrilla activities; propaganda; publicity
 HS 5/501 – 1942-1943. Reports; PROMITHEUS I and II
 HS 5/534 – 1942. Colonel Bakirtzis' visit to Cairo
 HS 5/575 – 1944-1945. Liquidation claims on behalf of EKKA Andartes; casualties, pensions, maintenance of PAN wireless set
 HS 5/625 – 1943. Main and local resistance groups; sub-committee on Resistance Organisations in Greece
 HS 5/628 – 1943-1944. Assessment of general state and efficiency; form at a glance; whereabouts of SOE personnel
 HS 5/694 – 1944-1945. Area 3 Thessaly-Roumeli; BOARSHEAD, BOREALIS. CHATHAM, FATALIST, KEEPSAKE, KIRKSTONE, LAMBOURNE; personnel G-W
 HS 5/706 – 1943-1944. Miscellaneous personnel A-O
 HS 5/707 – 1943-1945. Miscellaneous personnel P-Z
 HS 5/708 – 1943-1945. Military mission headquarters; MAUDIE, MOBILITY, MORTLAKE; personnel B-E
 HS 5/709 – 1943-1945. Ditto: MAUDI, MOBILITY, MORTLAKE; personnel F-W

Fokida

- **The Private Archive of Mr Georgios Koutsoklenis**

The hand-written memoirs of Georgios Koutsoklenis
 The hand-written Chronicle of the Italian raid against the Elaionas village
 The hand-written Chronicle of the 5/42's medical service
 Manuscript of the speech delivered by Georgios Koutsoklenis in the annual ceremony of Colonel Psarros and the 5/42 dead 17.5.1998

- **The Private Archive of Mr Euthimios Talantis**

The manuscript memoirs of Haralampos Talantis

II. Newspapers

Athens

Eleutheros Typos
Eleutherotypia
Kathimerini
Vima
.

Fokida

Amfissaiki (1932-1936)
Fokika Nea (1945-1967)
Fokikoi Kairoi (1973-)
Fokis (1924-1951)
Fthiotidofokis (1975-1990)
To Galaxidi (1947-)
O Agon (1982-1998)

III. Newsletters

Athens

EAM-Antistasi (1995-)
Ethniki Antistasi (1982-1992)
Ethnikes Epalxeis (1995-1999)
Nea Ethniki Floga (1995-)
To 5/42 Syntagma Euzonon Syntagmatarhou Psarrou (1999-)

Fokida

Fokika Hronika (1993-)
I Koukouvista (1975-1989)
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Stereoeelladiki Estia (1959-1962)
Tetramina (1987-)

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