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### THE BALANCE OF POLITICAL FORCES IN GREECE

Although the 12 February Varkiza agreement between the Greek Government and the EAM ended actual civil war, political opinion in Greece remains widely diverse. The various political parties are jockeying for position in preparation for the promised plebiscite and elections, and Premier Plastiras continues to be the target of opposition from all sides. His conservative centrist Government has been attacked by the left for alleged failure to fulfill the terms of the Varkiza agreement, and by rightist royalist groups for its anti-monarchist stand. Meanwhile the British, without whose support the Government could scarcely remain in office, appear increasingly dissatisfied with Plastiras.

Six main alignments characterize present Greek political life. On the extreme left the few Trotskyites are reported to have adopted a stand directly opposed to EAM policy. They have refused to recognize the Varkiza agreement with the Government, which was negotiated and fulfilled by the EAM, and appear determined to continue resistance. Their small numbers make it unlikely that they will cause serious difficulties, although they are said to have some following in certain areas near the Yugoslav border.

The largest and most influential Greek leftist group is the EAM, which includes the Greek Communist Party. EAM leaders admit that they have lost some of their following as a result of the recent hostilities. They believe, however, that these former supporters have not joined the opposition and that they may be won back again. Factors which the EAM expects to favor such a development are: the continued hostility of government officials and especially of the police toward EAM and its sympathizers; the solicitous treatment of quislings and the lenient conduct of their trials; and the inability of the Government to cope with widespread economic distress, which is expected to drive low income groups once more to the left. The EAM also counts on support from a significant group of Athens intellectuals who, having witnessed the previous failure of what they call liberal "appeasement of fascism," are increasingly opposed to even temporary abandonment of liberal aims. In order to capitalize on these developments EAM leaders are pursuing two main objectives: to preserve the unity of their organization, and to secure the implementation of the civil liberties provisions of the Varkiza agreement. If these two objectives are achieved, EAM leaders feel that the leftist bloc will be able to win a majority of the popular vote in the coming elections. The EAM appears thus far to have observed scrupulously the terms of the Varkiza agreement and probably will continue its struggle by constitutional means such as petitions, propaganda, and

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demonstrations. However, EAM General Secretary Partsalides has warned that EAM would resist with all available means any move in the direction of a rightist dictatorship.

To the right of the EAM-Communist bloc are elements of the ELD (Union of Social Democracy), SKE (Socialist Party), and AKE (Agrarian Party), which during the civil war repudiated their affiliations with EAM. The anti-EAM statements of these groups, however, were opposed by their recognized leaders, who have refused to abandon their EAM associations. As a result, the dissident wings of ELD, SKE, and AKE have made various attempts to form a leftist, non-Communist bloc. These splinters of parties, whose original following was small, presumably will win few votes away from the EAM. Confronted by a strong rightist combination, the dissident liberals may resume their former allegiance.

The Greek center parties were seriously weakened during the Axis occupation by their failure to take a substantial part in resistance activity. They are at present further weakened by internal dissension, by their failure to provide a program suitable to the needs of the country, and by the civil war, which has tended to drive moderate opinion to more strongly rightist or leftist positions. For example, the conservative wing of the Liberal Party, impressed by leftist strength during the recent hostilities, has now swung still further to the right and favors allowing the King to return as a bulwark against the growth of radicalism. The left wing of the Liberals has maintained the traditional party policy of republicanism and hopes thereby to win over other liberal progressive groups to form a united popular front which would campaign under the slogan of Republican Democracy.

On the right the royalists, who enthusiastically supported the Government against EAM-ELAS during the civil war, now have little reason to continue their cooperation, particularly in view of the pronounced anti-monarchism of Premier Plastiras. In mid-February the (Royalist) Popular Party succeeded in uniting all of its various branches. Royalist leaders, whose devotion to the King had cooled during the Metaxas dictatorship, are now reported to be working actively and vociferously for the return of the King as the sole guarantee of order and security. The strong leftist tide in Greece has frightened many of the well-to-do into espousing the royalist cause. Furthermore, wealthy Greek businessmen in Greece and Egypt, some of whom had been Venizelist republicans since 1915, are now providing the royalists with large sums of money. It is by no means certain, however, that this swing to the right among the well-to-do has been paralleled among the impoverished middle class, peasants, and workers.

On the extreme right a secret terrorist organization is known to operate in Athens, largely against the Communists and EAM. This armed body includes army officers, elements from government security organizations, and the royalist *Khi* organization. However, like the Trotskyites of the extreme left, these rightist terrorists would be a significant political force only in the event of future armed hostilities.

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In coping with the immediate problems of the country the present Plastiras Government appears considerably more competent than its predecessor. It is also more representative: Plastiras, Foreign Minister Sofianopoulos, and Regent Damaskinos command a much greater following than did Papandreou. In addition, the signing of the agreement with EAM and the restoration of peace to the devastated country have undoubtedly enhanced the prestige of the Government. Many Greeks have probably been impressed by the repeated visits to Athens of the British Prime Minister and other high British officials and by their strong championing of the Government.

Nevertheless Premier Plastiras faces a difficult and uncertain future. He will continue to be pressed by EAM on the left and by conservative royalists on the right, and must also cope with personal rivalries and differences of opinion within his own cabinet. A further handicap, which may result from his long years of exile, is Plastiras' apparent inability to gauge the social and political changes brought about in Greece by the war. He seems still to estimate the situation in terms of the traditional conflict between republicanism and royalism, and to look for military solutions to political problems. He remains hostile to the EAM and apparently seeks his chief political support among the weakened and diminishing group of centrist liberals, who have furnished most of the recent appointments to government posts. In the army both EAM officers and royalists are being excluded from high positions.

Final authority and power in Greece today rest in the hands of the British, who appear to be using their influence to prevent a new outbreak of civil strife, and who have warned Plastiras that they expect his Government to implement fully the Varkiza agreement with EAM. British authorities appear increasingly dissatisfied with Plastiras because of his reluctance to accept British advice as shown by his persistent refusal to conciliate either the royalists or EAM. Despite their objections to Plastiras, the British would prefer no major changes to be made in the Government before elections. On the other hand the British cannot afford a recurrence of violence and if the situation becomes tense they will probably countenance a change.

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