

SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS  
INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

LI



2020

# BALCANICA

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ANNUAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

UDC 930.85(4-12)

BELGRADE 2020

ISSN 0350-7653

eISSN 2406-0801



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## Yugoslav-Greek Relations from the End of the Second World War to 1990 Chronology, Phases, Problems and Achievements\*\*

**Abstract:** Yugoslav-Greek relations from the end of WWII to the breakup of Yugoslavia and went through several phases. A short period of interlude when the diplomatic relations were re-established 1945/1946 was followed by a much longer one (1946–1950) of conflict due to the Yugoslav support to the Communists in the Greek Civil War. A pragmatic approach to the issue of both parties resulted in a prolonged period (1950–1967) of working relations that culminated in the signing of tripartite treaties with Turkey, Treaty of Ankara (1953) and Bled Agreements (1954). Even though the treaties lost most of their importance after the reconciliation between Belgrade and Moscow in 1955/1956, and the Cyprus crisis, they created a climate of correct relations between two neighbouring states marked by reciprocal visits on the highest level. The *coup d'état* of April 1967 brought to power a dictatorship in Greece (1967–1974) and thus inaugurated a new period of tensions in bilateral relations. The last period 1974–1990 was characterized by good working relations between Belgrade and Athens mainly due to the Greece's efforts to integrate the European Economic Community (EEC) that supposed good relations with its neighbours. The issue of relations of Athens with Socialist Republic of Macedonia, first as a part of Socialist Yugoslavia, and then, after the collapse of the Federation, as the independent country, proved to be the last problem for Yugoslavia and a lasting one for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as it used to be known after 1990.

**Keyword:** Greece, Yugoslavia, bilateral relations, Greek Civil War, Greek dictatorship 1967–1974, Macedonia

From the end of the Second World War to the end of the Cold War, relations between the neighbouring countries of Yugoslavia and Greece (and in the Yugoslav context, relations between the Serbian and the Greek people) had several conspicuously different periods and were anything but linear and simple. The curve of these relations shows major fluctuations in intensity, breadth and form. Their rise or fall to the point of paralysis was the result of a complex set of political circumstances and processes that have left a deep mark on some se-

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\*\* The first version of this paper was presented at a conference on Greek-Serbian relations organized by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in December 2017.

quences in the post-war global, European and Balkan history. The most crucial of these was the ideological-political break among the Allied countries – USA, Great Britain and USSR, which, in the vortex of the Cold War, drew many other countries into one or the other ideological bloc that emerged in the second half of the 1940s. Thus, the relations between the Yugoslav and Greek “sides” in this period of Balkan history were also marked by the fact that (now in a changed political and ideological context) the “Serbian factor” continued to exist as part of the Yugoslav federation, although it was – from the Greek point of view – always in the centre of interest and often identified as the dominant one.

At the end of the Second World War, the Balkan neighbours struggled with various roles, all of the adverse effects brought by the new political and ideological alignment during the war (when both Yugoslavia and Greece suffered brutal occupations at the hands of Germany, Italy and their allies), the fragmentation of their territories, the creation of collaborationist governments, exploitation of economic and human resources, oppressive measures and the suppression of all forms of resistance, the policy of denationalization, etc. From April 1941 (in the Greek case, until May and the retreat from Crete), the political and military leaderships of both countries were in exile under the protection of their British allies.<sup>1</sup> The occupation policies implemented in Greece and Yugoslavia led to the emergence of powerful resistance movements with ideologically different affiliations. This “polycentrism” in both countries laid the ground for internal divisions which would evolve into civil armed conflicts (in Yugoslavia, from late autumn 1941, the Partisan-Chetnik conflict; in Greece, with the start of the “first round” of the Civil War in 1943 between the left-wing EAM/ELAS and the anti-communist EDES, and the “second round” after the liberation of December 1944/January 1945).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the occupation policy, resistance and collaboration in Greece, see Klaus Olshausen, *Zwischenspiel auf dem Balkan. Die deutsche Politik gegenüber Jugoslawien und Griechenland von März bis Juli 1941* (Stuttgart 1973); Martin van Creveld, *Hitler's Strategy 1940–1941: The Balkan Clue* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Ferdo Čulinović, *Okupatorska podjela Jugoslavije* (Belgrade: Vojnoizdavački zavod, 1970); Branko Petranović, *Revolucija i kontrarevolucija u Jugoslaviji, 1941–1945*, 2 vols. (Belgrade: Rad, 1983); Hagen Fleischer, *Im Kreuzschatten der Mächte. Griechenland (1941–1944). Okkupation-Resistance-Kollaboration*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt a. M., Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 1986); Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece. The Experience of Occupation, 1941–1944* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993); Heinz A. Richter, *Griechenland 1940–1950: Die Zeit der Bürgerkriege* (Mainz and Ruhpolding: Verlag Franz Philipp Rutzen, 2012), 19–23, 34.

<sup>2</sup> Milan Ristović, “The Third Reich’s ‘New Order’ Planning and Practice in the Balkans 1941–1944: Serbian and Greek Cases”, in *Macedonia and Thrace, 1941–1944. Occupation-Resistance-Liberation*, International Conference, Thessaloniki 9–11 December 1994 (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1998), 33–49.

On the margins of the Second World War, attempts have been recorded of the representatives of these two governments in exile to lay the groundwork for closer political and economic cooperation in the future. The Yugoslav-Greek "union" of February 1942 was part of the more comprehensive plan of the British government for the post-war reconstruction of the Balkans and Central Europe, but it failed to have any real effect.<sup>3</sup> There were attempts to establish cooperation between the two anti-communist movements (Draža Mihailović's Yugoslav Army in the Homeland (Jugoslovenska vojska u otadžbini, JVO) and EDES led by Colonel Napoleon Zervas).<sup>4</sup> However, a far more significant event was the mission of the high representative of the People's Liberation Movement of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) Svetozar Vuksanović Tempo at the headquarters of EAM-ELAS in Thessaly (1943). Their cooperation was to result in the creation of a joint "Balkan command" (including the Albanian communist movement). The initiative met with disapproval, primarily from the British allies, and was abandoned after being criticized by the Central Command of the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia (Narodnooslobodilačka vojska Jugoslavije, NOVJ). Tempo's criticism of the tactic of EAM-ELAS and their policy of dependence on the British, and the suggestion to radicalize and revolutionize it "after the Yugoslav example", with opening the "Macedonian Question", was met with little enthusiasm on the Greek side.<sup>5</sup>

The approaching end of the war reopened old and opened new dilemmas in these relations, both concerning internal organization (restoring the monarchy, establishing a republican system of "people's democracy" after the Soviet model, the relationship between communist and bourgeois parties, the issue of the collaborationist "war legacy", rebuilding, etc.) and the international positioning of these countries in the new international context. Factors of decisive importance were the will and interests of major Allied powers, which influenced the future direction that the contemporary history of the two countries would take: the so-called Percentages Agreement (Moscow, October 1944) between Stalin and Churchill (as well as Churchill and Roosevelt's previous agreement on an

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<sup>3</sup> See Detlef Brandes, *Großbritannien und seine osteuropäische Alliierten 1939–1943* (Munich: R. Oldenburg Verlag, 1988), 452–456; Veselin Djuretić, *Vlada na bespuću. Internacionalizacija jugoslovenskih protivrječnosti na političkoj pozornici Drugog svjetskog rata* (Belgrade: ISI and Narodna knjiga, 1982), 122–123; Milan Ristović, *Turska osmatračnica* (Belgrade: Čigoja, 2013), 135–147.

<sup>4</sup> Arhiv Vojske Srbije [Archives of the Armed Forces of Serbia] (AVS), Arhiva neprijateljskih jedinica, b. 347, no. 14/3. On 5 February 1944, Mihailović authorized Captain Mihailo Vemić to represent him in contacts with Zervas.

<sup>5</sup> Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, *Revolucija koja teče*, vol. 3 (Zagreb: Globus, 1982), 14, 15, 101–106.

“exchange” of interests with the Soviets: Romania for Greece), regardless of their “informality” and how the agreement on the “spheres of interest” was reached, cemented the foundations of the ideological-political division in the Balkans.<sup>6</sup> While in the Yugoslav case, a complete “transfer of power” took place in 1945, when the Communist Party of Yugoslavia assumed control of all mechanisms of power and created a system of “people’s democracy” in Yugoslavia, a part of the Soviet sphere of influence, the situation in Greece was very different.<sup>7</sup>

### *Bridging severed ties (1944/5–1946)*

The clashes that began in early December 1944, due to the police intervention during the left-wing protests in Greece, opened the “second round” of the civil war. The British troops joined the struggle between EAM-ELAS and the right-wing forces. The revolt of EAM-ELAS was quashed in January, and the Treaty of Varkiza of February 1945 was to end the conflict and become a step forward in a peaceful political transition (resolving the issue of the king’s return, organizing elections). The Yugoslav stance on the *Dekemvriana* (December events) in Athens was reserved, with no public displays of either sympathy or antipathy. It was influenced by the local situation (the war operations on the Srem (Srem) Front, organization of new government organs, clashes with the remaining political rivals), the warnings of the British allies (Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean, the British representative at the Central Command of the People’s Liberation Army), and Stalin’s passivity. The Greek communists’ pleas for assistance, primarily in armaments, did not receive a positive reply from the leadership of NOVJ and CPY.<sup>8</sup>

After the Treaty of Varkiza, however, Yugoslavia received and organized accommodation for several thousand (4000–5000) émigré members of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and EAM-ELAS, who had refused to accept the terms of the treaty. The Greek commune in Buljkes, near Novi Sad, quickly became one of the key points of contention between Belgrade and Athens until

<sup>6</sup> Elisabeth Barker, *Britanska politika prema Jugoistočnoj Evropi u Drugom svjetskom ratu* (transl. from the English original *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War*) (Zagreb: Globus, 1978), 228, 229.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Modern Greece*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 125–144; John O. Iatrides, ed., *Greece in the 1940s: A Nation in Crisis* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1981).

<sup>8</sup> Richter, *Griechenland 1940–1950*, 141–163; Milan Ristović, “L’insurrection de décembre à Athènes: Intervention britannique et réaction yougoslave”, *Balcanica XXXVII* (2006), 271–282.

its dissolution in September 1949.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, a conflict emerged between KKE and Slavo-Macedonian organizations (SNOF, NOF, MAO),<sup>10</sup> which drew in Yugoslav communists, primarily those from the CPY branch in the People's Republic of Macedonia; this clash was to have far-reaching effects on the relations of the two communist parties and, later on, on the left-wing Democratic Army of Greece during the Greek Civil War.<sup>11</sup>

The process of restoring diplomatic relations between the two governments was unfolding at the same time and – rather less conspicuously – the process of establishing cooperation between the two communist parties. The first post-war Yugoslav minister in Athens, Izidor Cankar, was appointed by a decree of the king's regents on 11 May 1945 but did not arrive in Greece until September; the Greek minister plenipotentiary Alexandros Dalietos arrived in Belgrade in November 1945. Both were recalled from their positions after the relations soured in 1946 and diplomatic relations were reduced to the *chargé d'affaires* level (Šerif Šehović and Kalutzis respectively).<sup>12</sup> Using diplomatic channels and the press, the two governments accused each other of violating minority rights and persecuting leftists (Yugoslavia) or of meddling in internal affairs, supporting communists who were undermining legitimate authority, separatism, and territorial aspirations (Greece). In the brief period of "White Terror", the prelude to the civil war (which broke out in the spring of 1946, when a group of former ELAS members attacked a police station in the town of Litochoro near Mount Olympus), the Yugoslav side supported the position of the KKE and a part of the leadership around its secretary-general, Nikos Zachariadis, on the boycott of the February elections.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Milan Ristović, *To periaġma Mπουλκες. «Ελληνική Δημοκρατία» στην Γιουγοςλαβία 1945–1949* (Thessaloniki: Αδελφών Κυριακίδη, 2006); Serbian ed.: *Eksperiment Buljkes. Grčka utopija u Jugoslaviji 1945–1949* (Novi Sad: Platoneum, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> SNOF – *Slavomakedonski narodnooslobodilački front* [Slavo-Macedonian People's Liberation Front]; NOF – *Nardnooslobodilački front* [People's Liberation Front]; MAO – *Makedonska antifašistička organizacija* [Macedonian Anti-Fascist Organization].

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Rososs, "Incompatible Allies: Greek Communism and Macedonian Nationalism in the Civil War in Greece, 1943–1949", *The Journal of Modern History* 69/1 (1997), 42–76; Risto Kirjazovski, *Makedonski nacionalni institucii vo Egejskiot del na Makedonija (1941–1961)* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1987); Spyridon Sfetas, "Autonomist Movements of the Slavophones in 1944", *Balkan Studies* 36/2 (1995), 313; Milan Ristović, *Na pragu Hladnog rata: Jugoslavija i građanski rat u Grčkoj (1945–1949)* (Belgrade: Filozofski fakultet u Beogradu, 2016), 64–70 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Ristović, *Na pragu Hladnog rata*, 174–175.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 103–105.

### *The Balkan frontier guards of a divided world: 1946–1949/50*

At the outbreak of the Cold War, post-1945 Yugoslavia, a member of the system of *people's democracy* and the Soviet model in the Balkans, and Greece with its restored monarchy and rule of right-wing, anti-communist parties, found themselves at the opposite ends of the ideological barrier. Relations between the two countries reached their lowest point with their sharply divergent positions on the civil war (third round) in Greece. In February 1947, with the activation of the Truman Doctrine, the depth of this rift received a clear geostrategic and military confirmation.<sup>14</sup> During the years of the civil war (until the summer of 1948), Yugoslavia was the most reliable political, logistic and military pillar of support to the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) and its survival depended on it in many respects. DAG's operations were largely focused on the Greek borderlands with the neighbouring countries with communist systems, and its ranks, particularly in the last stage of the war, included many Slavo-Macedonians.<sup>15</sup> Providing armaments, medical supplies, lines of communication, food, and clothing; organizing humanitarian aid; medical treatment of DAG's wounded combatants in Yugoslav territory; providing accommodation for refugees (civilians, children) and military training – all this was just a fragment of the aid that made its way to DAG from or through Yugoslavia.<sup>16</sup> In late August 1947, a part of the KKE Politburo (Ioannidis and Roussos) relocated to Belgrade, while

<sup>14</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. II: *Years of Trial and Hope* (New York: New American Library, 1965), 115–120. On the effects of the Truman Doctrine, see V. Kontis, *Η αγγλοαμερικανική πολιτική και το ελληνικό πρόβλημα 1945–1949* (Thessaloniki: Παρατηρητής, 1986); John V. Kofas, *Intervention and Underdevelopment. Greece during the Cold War* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988); Ristović, *Na pragu Hladnog rata*, 169–201.

<sup>15</sup> Notable examples of the extensive and growing literature on the Greek Civil War include Dominique Eudes, *Les Kapetanios. La guerre civile grecque de 1943–1949* (Paris: Fayard, 1970); Matthias Esche, *Die Kommunistische Partei Griechenlands 1941–1949. Ein Beitrag zur Politik der KKE vom Beginn der Resistance bis zum Ende des Bürgerkriegs* (Munich and Vienna: Oldenburg, 1982); Giorgos Margaritis, *Ιστοριατουελληνικουεμφυλονπολεμου 1946–1949* (Athens: Βιβλοραμα, 2005); *Οελληνικός Εμφύλιος Πόλεμος. Μια αποτιμηση. Πολιτικές, ιδεολογικές, ιστοριογραφικές προεκτασεις* (Athens: Ελληνικά Γραμματα, 2007); Richter, *Griechenland 1940–1950*.

<sup>16</sup> Milan Ristović, “Το ζήτημα της γιουγκοσλαβικής στρατιωτικής βοήθειας προς τον Δημοκρατικό Στρατό Ελλάδας, 1946–1949”, in *Ο ελληνικός Εμφύλιος Πόλεμος. Μια αποτιμηση. Πολιτικές, ιδεολογικές, ιστοριογραφικές προεκτασεις*. ed. Y. Mourellos (Athens: Ελληνικά Γραμματα, 2007); Idem, “‘Helping the Good Greeks’: Yugoslav Humanitarian Aid to the Greek Leftist Movement 1945/1949”, in *Bearing Gifts to Greeks. Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s*, ed. Richard Clogg (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 212–118; Idem, *Ένα μακρύ ταξίδι. Τα παιδιά του «παιδομαζωματος» στη Γιουγκοσλαβία 1948–1960* (Thessaloniki: Επικεντρο, 2008).

Zachariadis, Secretary-General of KKE, and Markos Vafeiadis, Commander-in-Chief of DAG, spent shorter or longer periods in the city.<sup>17</sup> The frontier was the scene of constant incidents that involved members of Yugoslav frontier forces (People's Defence Corps of Yugoslavia or KNOJ) and Greek government-controlled units, with many casualties on both sides. Members of former anti-communist and collaborationist formations and deserters from the Yugoslav Army fled across the border to Greece, while civilian refugees from border areas (along with members of DAG and KKE) crossed the border to the north.<sup>18</sup>

The proclamation of the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece at the very end of 1947 meant that Yugoslavia now faced the temptation of recognizing its legitimacy while maintaining formal diplomatic relations with the government in Athens, but a synchronized diplomatic pressure of the Western powers prevented this. Compared to other neighbouring countries and "people's democracies" (Bulgaria, Albania, Romania, etc.), the intensity and scope of its assistance to DAG and KKE can be seen as part of the growing self-awareness of the Yugoslav government and party leadership as the strongest and most prominent member in the family of communist countries on the southern frontier towards "capitalism and imperialism".<sup>19</sup>

Albeit reduced in scope, this assistance continued even after Stalin's directive of February 1948 "to end the matter of Greece".<sup>20</sup> The conflict with the USSR and other bloc members led to a rift between KKE and CPY. The removal of Markos from the position of DAG's commander-in-chief and "prime minister", increasingly bitter accusations of "Yugoslav insincerity" and "aid sabotage", along with Yugoslav counter-accusations that KKE's policy towards the Slavo-Macedonians had been wrong and that it had launched anti-Yugoslav propaganda, etc., resulted in late August in the suspension of relations,<sup>21</sup> closing down the border and severing assistance. That was one of the prerequisites for thawing relations with the West during Yugoslavia's total blockade by the Cominform

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<sup>17</sup> Ristović, *Na pragu Hladnog rata*, 136–138.

<sup>18</sup> Milan Ristović, "Small War on the Yugoslav-Greek Border 1945–1950", *Balkan Studies* 1 (2004), 95–108; Idem, "In the Shadow of the Civil War. Yugoslav Political Emigration in Greece 1944–1950", in *The Serbian (Yugoslav)-Greek Relations in the First Half of the Twentieth Century/Srpsko (jugoslovensko)-grčki odnosi u prvoj polovini dvadesetog veka* (Belgrade 2016), 197–218.

<sup>19</sup> Ristović, *Na pragu Hladnog rata*, 238–258.

<sup>20</sup> For the decision to continue providing assistance to DAG after Stalin's criticism, see Arhiv Jugoslavije [Archives of Yugoslavia] (AJ), Arhiva Josipa Broza-Tita (AJBT), I-2-a/35, Minutes of the meeting of the CPY leadership, KKE Secretary-General Nikos Zachariadis, and Yannis Ioannidis, 21 February 1948.

<sup>21</sup> For these disputes, see the Yugoslav documents published by R. Kirjazovski, *Makedonците i odnosite na KPJ I KPG 1945–1949. Oficijalni dokumenti* (Skopje 1995).

countries and its escape from almost complete isolation.<sup>22</sup> The leadership of DAG and KKE in emigration accused Yugoslavia of “backstabbing”. Conversely, after the end of the war in Greece, the official Yugoslav propaganda used publications, films and newspaper articles to deny these allegations, underlining its crucial role in assisting DAG and accusing the KKE leadership and Zachariadis of “ingratitude” and “misguided tactics”.<sup>23</sup> In this context, other important questions included the intersection of the Yugoslav and Greek policies in their Balkan, European and global environment (the position of the Western powers, the Soviet factor, other Balkan countries, international organizations...). In this propaganda dispute, an inevitable segment was the conspicuous presence of different views on the *Macedonian Question*, the Slavo-Macedonian factor in KKE and DAG, and the influence of Greek political émigrés in Yugoslavia.

### *From normalizing relations to being allies: 1950–1967*

As much as the Yugoslav side cared about distancing itself from its previous active support to the Greek communists and DAG, Athens was no less concerned about normalizing relations with its northern neighbour. Pragmatism pushed ideological differences aside, at least for a while, and removed the main point of contention between the two countries from their focus: *the Macedonian Question*. Due to very different understandings of this problem, it was a constant threat, which occasionally resurfaced as a setback in their good relations. The rise of the coalition of liberal Venizelists and the Centre Union Party led by Georgios Papandreou in 1950, which replaced the right-wing Tsaldaris government and his People’s Party, favoured the improvement of relations. Four years after the withdrawal of Izidor Cankar, in December 1950, the new minister Radoš Jovanović arrived in the Greek capital; by the end of the same year, the Greek minister plenipotentiary Spyros Capetanidis came to Belgrade and, late that year, the respective diplomatic missions were raised to the rank of embassies.<sup>24</sup> The re-establishment of severed political, economic and transport links began; the question of the status of the Yugoslav Free Zone in Thessaloniki was

<sup>22</sup> On the severance of cooperation, see Ristović, *Na pragu Hladnog rata*, 309–329.

<sup>23</sup> See I. D. Mihailidis, *Τα προσώπων Ιανου. Οι ελληνογιουγκοσλαβικές σχέσεις τις παραμονές του ελληνικού Εμφυλίου Πολέμου (1944–1946)* (Athens: Πατάκη, 2004); Vasilis K. Gounaris, *Εγνωμένων Κοινωνικών Φρονημάτων, Κοινωνικές και άλλες οψεις τον αντικομμουνισμό στη Μακεδονία του Εμφυλίου Πολέμου* (Thessaloniki: Επικέντρο, 2005). On the Yugoslav “propaganda view” of Greece, see Ristović, *Na pragu Hladnog rata*, 423–452.

<sup>24</sup> Arhiv Minstarstva inostranih poslova [Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] (AMIP), Politička arhiva [Political Archive] (PA), Greece, f. 30, 22, 4224171, 2 December 1950; f. 30, d 25, 423976, 27 December 1950. The Yugoslav mission was raised to the rank of an embassy in December 1952.

broached; on the frontier normalized. In July 1952, a Greek parliamentary delegation arrived in Belgrade, and on 28 November, the Yugoslav president received a Greek military delegation. Greece and Turkey joined NATO in 1952, a move which the Yugoslav leadership saw as a sign – as specified in a confidential document – of the growing American influence in the Mediterranean, “indicating, among other things, cooperation with Yugoslavia as a factor in the consolidation of the government’s position and the strengthening of Greek national independence”. The new situation “objectively demands cooperation with Yugoslavia in the military field”. In this context, in Greece, there was now “understanding for cooperation to an extent that corresponds to our view... not to create any military pacts... but to develop cooperation and understanding in all fields of international relations”.<sup>25</sup>

After the accelerated diplomatic activities between Belgrade, Athens and Ankara, with the support of the US, the tripartite Treaty of Ankara (officially the Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation, 28 February 1953) and the Bled Agreement (9 August 1954) were signed.<sup>26</sup> In view of the different political and ideological systems of the signatories, these accords were a unique experiment that would not be seen in Europe until the end of the Cold War. Due to the signatories’ political differences as well as the nature and the context in which the Balkan Pact emerged, it was ridden with too many ambiguities and obscurities and, as such, doomed to fail from its very inception. Over the course of 1955 and 1956, Yugoslavia re-established its relations with the USSR, which had been frozen since the late 1940s. Athens and Ankara, as well as their Western allies, were apprehensive about the Yugoslav rapprochement with Moscow. On the other side, unresolved Greek-Turkish issues, primarily those associated with the (future) status of Cyprus, undermined the stability of the Balkan Pact. Embedded into its very fabric, these two “viruses”, along with the inevitable impact of the unstable international environment of the Cold War in the 1950s, led to the marginalization and, eventually, dissolution of the Pact.<sup>27</sup> However, despite

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<sup>25</sup> *Balkanski pakt. Zbornik dokumenata iz Arhiva Vojnoistorijskog instituta, Arhiva Ministarstva inostranih poslova i Arhiva Josipa Broza (1952–1960)* (Belgrade: Vojnoistorijski institut, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> See Ugovor o prijateljstvu i saradnji između FNRJ, Kraljevine Grčke i Republike Turske, Ankara 28. Februar 1953; Balkanski pakt: Ugovor o savezu, političkoj saradnji i uzajamnoj pomoći između Jugoslavije, Grčke i Turske, Bled 9. Avgust 1954, in Momir Stojković, ed., *Balkanski ugovorni odnosi*, vol. III: 1946–1996 (Belgrade: JO Službeni list SRJ and Međunarodna politika, 1999), 235–240, 258–262.

<sup>27</sup> After the signing of the Pact in Ankara, the British Ambassador in Ankara, A. Know, told his Yugoslav colleague Pavićević that the idea of signing the pact was good but that “the Balkan Pact needed to establish a link with NATO to form an interrupted chain of defence”. This would, however, be impossible as long as there was the Trieste problem as an obstacle to the realization of the Balkan Pact; AMIP, PA, 1953, R 69, d 14, 417295, Pavićević (Ankara)

being short-lived and having little practical impact, this alliance had a beneficial effect on the relations among the Balkan countries, particularly those between Athens and Belgrade.

The intensity and high level of relations between Belgrade and Athens are evidenced by the chronology of visits and meetings between the leading figures of the two countries. In late May 1954, Josip Broz Tito made an official visit to Greece; the Greek royal couple returned the visit in early September 1955. In 1956, Tito met King Paul and Prime Minister Karamanlis in Corfu. In September the same year, he received a delegation of the Greek Orthodox Church headed by Archbishop Dorotheos. In early November, Primer Minister Karamanlis and Minister Evangelos Averoff made an official visit to Yugoslavia. In July 1957, the Greek royal couple came to the island of Brioni; in 1958, the speaker of the Greek Parliament Rodopoulos visited Belgrade; and in early March 1959, Tito travelled to Rhodes. Karamanlis came to Yugoslavia again in late May 1960. Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou came to Yugoslavia on an official visit in February 1966. In the same period, several high-ranking Yugoslav delegations travelled to Greece. In the early 1960s, the relations soured with the opening of the *Macedonian Question* and then the issues of the status of the Ortodox Church in the Peoples Republic of Macedonia (later: Socialist Republic-SR), the language used in shared documents, the position of Greek émigrés in Yugoslavia, etc. This dynamic of relations came to an end in 1967 after the coup and establishment of the military junta in Greece.

#### *A new “winter” in Greco-Yugoslav relations: 1967–1974*

The military coup of 21 April 1967 by a group of officers led by Georgios Papadopoulos, Nikolaos Makarezos and Stylianos Pattakos represented the culmination of the political crisis that had lasted a few years and the conflicts between the leading political figures and parties, the court and the political elite, along with economic troubles and worsening relations in the region.<sup>28</sup> A few weeks

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to SIP, 24 December 1953. Cavendish Cannon, the US ambassador in Athens, informed Ambassador Jovanović about the view of the NATO leadership that “no military Balkan Pact was possible at the moment” due to the resistance of Nordic countries and Italy. The US government and NATO Command were attempting to form the European Defence Union as soon as possible and to consolidate NATO, and “hence the Balkan Pact was not to create any new problems”, but that his government believed that the Treaty of Ankara was important and supported the cooperation of the three countries, but that “the ground needed to be prepared” before a military agreement could be made; AMIP, PA, Greece, 1954, f 27, d 2, 43398, Jovanović (Athens) to SIP, 17 March 1954; AMIP, PA, R 69, 1954, d 25, highly confidential 18105, SIP to YU Embassy in Athens and Ankara, November 1954.

<sup>28</sup> D. H. Close, *Greece since 1945. Politics, Economy and Society* (London, New York and Toronto: Longman, 2002), 107–110.

before the scheduled elections,<sup>29</sup> a far-right nationalist junta put their plan into motion and “cut” the crisis and introduced a dictatorship, which would last seven years and leave multiple international consequences, including the deterioration of Greece’s relations with Yugoslavia.<sup>30</sup> The coup thus put an end to the positive trend in their relations. Up to the end of 1968, relations between Belgrade and Athens went through a period of almost complete cooling to a gradual and cautious “feeling of the pulse” to the level of guarded normalization. This situation would last, with occasional ups and downs, until the fall of the junta in 1974. Concurrently with international relations, the Yugoslav side maintained intense contacts with the Greek opposition, both its part which operated in the difficult circumstances in the country and its most prominent members and groups of various ideological persuasions that fought against the military dictatorship from abroad.<sup>31</sup> In the first months after the takeover, the leaders of the junta and the regime-controlled press warned the Greek people of the “danger from the north” and the “Slavic threat” mixed with communism, while highlighting the uniqueness of the Greek nation and its Orthodox faith. The increased presence of Greek troops on the frontier and arrests and expulsions of Yugoslav nationals contributed to the deterioration of relations.<sup>32</sup> The coup also exacerbated the situation in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. All of this together led to negative public assessments of the situation in Greece and the distancing of the Yugoslav government from any kind of official contacts with the new regime in Athens that could potentially be interpreted as acceptance of the new situation or legitimizing the junta.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The elections were scheduled for 28 May 1967; AMIP, PA, Greece, 1967, f 40, d 15, strictly confidential 413141, Ambassador Javorski’s report on his conversation with Prime Minister Kanellopoulos, 11 April 1967.

<sup>30</sup> Close, *Greece since 1945*, 115–118.

<sup>31</sup> See Milan Ristović, “Yugoslavia and Greek Political Emigration during Military Dictatorship, 1967–1974”, in *Ο Κωνσταντίνος Καραμανλής στον εικοστό αιώνα – Konstantinos Karamanlis in the Twentieth Century*. Conference, Zappeion, Athens 5–9 June 2007, vol. 1 (Athens: Ίδρυμα „Κωνσταντίνος Καραμανλής”, 2008), 260–277.

<sup>32</sup> A few Yugoslav nationals were arrested in Athens, including the official representative of *Jadrolinija* and two Greek employees of the Yugoslav Embassy: the translator A. Leftarakis and the attorney Ioannis Kokorelis. The list of “agents of enemy intelligence services” included four female Yugoslav nationals married to Greek men; AMIP, PA, Greece, 1967, f 42, d 2, strictly confidential 417399, Javorski to DSIP, 16 May 1967. The prominent football manager Stjepan Bobek was also forced to leave Greece; AJ, AJBT, 193/1, DSIP, no. 414456, II Directorate, Memo on the measures taken by DSIP in relation to the military coup in Greece, 3 May 1967.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. See also AMIP, PA, Greece, 1967, f 41, d 1, strictly confidential 41445, Memo on the measures, 3 May 1967.

On 28 May, the counselor to the Yugoslav state secretary for foreign affairs, Srdjan Prica, summoned the Greek ambassador Nikolaos Cambalouris and presented him with a *démarche*: "...due to the actions of the Greek authorities toward SFRY, our representatives and citizens... (on account of) the suspension of local border traffic... the arrests of the representatives of *Jadrolinija*... (and) two other nationals, hampering the work of representative branches, discrimination of the representative of *Tanjug*, confiscation of press material intended for our Embassy".<sup>34</sup> For his part, the Greek ambassador delivered a protest about the demonstrations in front of the Greek Consulate General in Skopje. The Yugoslav president, the Foreign Policy Committee of the Federal Assembly, the state secretary for foreign affairs, and all political organizations also expressed concerns about the events taking place in the southern neighbour. The Yugoslav press published sharp condemnations of the dictatorship, with the censures of Leon Davičo (reporter of the *Politika* daily) and A. Partonić (reporter of the *Borba* daily, who had been denied an extension of his residence permit in Greece) being particularly stern.<sup>35</sup> The new Greek regime suspended the agreement on local border traffic, claiming that it facilitated the activities of Greek political émigrés living in the Yugoslav borderlands. The Yugoslav State Secretary Marko Nikezić explained that this move on the part of the Greek government represented "...a confirmation of the assessment that the events in Greece could not fail to have adverse effects on the relations between the two countries, in the Balkans, and even beyond".<sup>36</sup> Mihailo Javorski, the Yugoslav Ambassador in Athens, believed that there was a difference between the more moderate and pragmatic-minded civilian representatives in the Greek government (Prime Minister Kollias and Foreign Minister Gouras), who were in favour of good relations with Yugoslavia. Colonel Papadopoulos, a minister with the presidency of the government and one of the régime's chief ideologues, advocated the most radical anti-communist stance. For him and the Interior Minister Pattakos, Yugoslavia was much more dangerous than the Eastern European countries that were members of the Warsaw Pact due to its increased ideological and political "elasticity" and the assertiveness of Yugoslav communists. They saw it as "the old Pan-Slavic threat in a different guise", now reframed as communism. At the beginning of the military regime, Papadopoulos hinted at the possibility of a unilateral and total "freezing of relations" with all socialist countries, mentioning the suspension of relations with Yugoslavia but noting that this depend-

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<sup>34</sup> He was in Belgrade from January 1965 to September 1967.

<sup>35</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1967, f 42, d 2, strictly confidential 422354, II directorate to SFRY Embassy in Athens, 1 June 1967.

<sup>36</sup> AJ, AJBT, 416341, strictly confidential, 559/1, Office of the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 18 May 1967, Memo on the conversation of State Secretary M. Nikezić and Greek Ambassador N. Cambalouris, 15 May 1967.

ed on Yugoslavia “which needed Greece and not vice versa, as has been shown over the years”.<sup>37</sup>

According to the Yugoslav State Secretariat of Foreign Affairs (DSIP, from the early 1970s renamed as the Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs – SSIP), the crisis that resulted from the Arab-Israeli War<sup>38</sup> strengthened the position of the generals’ regime in Athens because the West alleviated its pressure on it. The new situation meant that Yugoslav policy also needed to be adapted. Further refusal to maintain contacts with the junta representatives became “inadequate”. The recommendation was as follows: the Yugoslav ambassador was “nevertheless to visit the new minister of foreign affairs, but among the last”, while bilateral relations were to be continued through “purely practical matters”. The Yugoslav representatives were advised to keep in mind that, “regardless of its regime change”, Greece was a neighbouring country and “represented a constant in our foreign affairs.”<sup>39</sup>

The pro-junta press referred to Yugoslavia as a state with territorial pretensions towards Greece, and the uncanonical proclamation of the autocephaly of the Macedonian Orthodox Church was met with a negative reaction from Athens. In the second half of 1967, the situation was appeased in some statements of Greek officials from the civilian part of the government and the occasional absence of Yugoslav topics in the Greek press. The renewed conflicts in Cyprus were an opportunity to re-establish contacts between the Yugoslav ambassador and Pipinelis, the new minister of foreign affairs in the Greek government.<sup>40</sup>

The Yugoslav diplomats serving in European countries also established contacts with the Greek political emigration but, in this case, they were advised to assume a cautious position and not to become involved “...in any illegal activities or arrangements... aimed at toppling the current regime”, citing the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1967, f 42, d 2, strictly confidential 422354, head of II Directorate Zvonko Lucić to SFRY Embassy in Athens, 1 June 1967.

<sup>38</sup> Arab-Israeli War, also known as the Six-Day War, June 1967. See Martin Gilbert, *Jerusalem in the Twentieth Century* (London: Pimlico, 1996), 272–297.

<sup>39</sup> See *ibid.*, n. 38. See also AMIP, PA, Greece, 1967, f 42, d 2, strictly confidential 425018, DSIP Memo to the embassies in Eastern European countries, 12 July 1967.

<sup>40</sup> In Cyprus, the junta had a reliable yet problematic ally in the leader of the extremist guerrilla organisation EOKA, General Grivas. During and shortly after WWII, Grivas headed the paramilitary anti-communist group known as Organization X or Chites (Χίτες).

<sup>41</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1967, f 42, d 3, strictly confidential 427224, DSIP, II Directorate to SFRY embassies in Europe, 9 August 1967; M. Ristović, “Yugoslavia and Greek Political Emigration 1967–1974”, in *Konstantine Karamanlis in the Twentieth Century*, 260–278.

In early 1968, the situation of the Greek civil opposition, after the failed counter-coup of King Constantine on 13 December 1967<sup>42</sup> and talks with Mavros, an official of the Centre Union, was seen by the Yugoslav Embassy as “being without prospects” and “unclear”; all hopes rested on disunity in the regime’s ranks and international pressure, above all that of the United States. The position of the opposition was judged to be difficult: Papandreou, father and son were under police surveillance, as was the former Prime Minister Kanellopoulos. Mavros was planning to go abroad, make contacts with the king and Karamanlis, and confer with them about the possible responses to the proclamation of a new constitution to suit the interests of the generals’ regime.<sup>43</sup> On 10 January, the Nobel laureate Georgios Seferis<sup>44</sup> visited Javorski; in an act of defiance, Seferis had refused to publish his works in Greece as long as the dictatorship was in power and rejected offers to leave the country. The release of Andreas Papandreou and the composer Mikis Theodorakis, the leader of Lambrakis Democratic Youth who had ties with KKE, was seen as a manoeuvre which the regime had been forced to make to avoid two political trials that would have certainly been highly publicized both at home and abroad.<sup>45</sup>

In early 1968, Ambassador Javorski concluded that, due to the problems of US and NATO with the Greek regime, the USSR was toying with the possibility of making this situation permanent, but was reserved on account of the opinion that any action on its part could accelerate a compromise between the junta and the West.<sup>46</sup>

In an attempt to restore relations between the Yugoslav and Greek communist parties, the Yugoslavs were particularly reserved toward the part of the KKE leadership in exile in the USSR and other Eastern European countries. This “faction” was seen as an instrument in the hands of Soviet policy. The rift between the Greek communists was believed to be harmful to the prospects of the struggle against the junta. Contacts with Partsalidis’s group, seen as more independent and less dogmatic than Koligiannis’s, were intensified. The course

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<sup>42</sup> AJ, AJBT, I-3-a/31-20, Information on Greece after the generals’ coup, 28 July 1967; AMIP, PA, Greece, 1967, f 41, d 5, strictly confidential 442538, DSIP, Directorate for international organizations to the Permanent Mission of SFRY in the UN, Embassy assessment of the king’s counter-coup, 19 December 1967.

<sup>43</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1968, f 41, d 1, strictly confidential 4169, Javorski (Athens) to DSIP, 6 January 1968.

<sup>44</sup> Seferis received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1963.

<sup>45</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1968, f 40, d 1, strictly confidential 4368, SFRY Embassy (Athens) to DSIP, 10. I 1968; Milan Ristović, “Mikis Teodorakis, Tito i jugoslovenski drugovi. Iz istorije odnosa grčke levice i Jugoslavije 1967–1970”, *Tokovi istorije* 3-4 (2004), 55–72.

<sup>46</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1968, f. 41, d 1. strictly confidential, 43033, Javorski (Athens) to DSIP, 22 January 1968.

of relations was influenced by the views on the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia espoused by the members of different groups within KKE. Koligiannis supported the invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia (ČSSR), while twelve members of the KKE Central Committee condemned the Soviet intervention. In late October, S. Zographos, a member of the KKE Politburo (Partsalidis's group), arrived in Belgrade and reported the view that the intervention of the Warsaw Pact was a highly unexpected and unwelcome surprise which added to the increasingly deeper rift within KKE.<sup>47</sup>

In 1968, contacts were intensified with the Greek political émigrés in Europe, the US and Canada. On 11 March 1968, the secretary of the Yugoslav Embassy in Paris Martinović talked with Andreas Papandreou, who informed him that he had formed the "Panhellenic Liberation Movement" (PAK). In late May, the State Secretariat of Foreign Affairs advised its representatives not to avoid contacts with the Greek political emigration but to take care not to seem as interfering in the internal affairs of Greece or as if Yugoslavia was planning any kind of intervention. A special warning was that they were to exclude the possibility of more extensive material aid or participation in any kind of subversive anti-regime activity. In addition, in cooperating with the left, its internal factions, the infiltration of Greek and other intelligence services and possible provocations were to be borne in mind.

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia had led, Athens reported, to "growing sympathy" for Yugoslavia in the ranks of the junta.<sup>48</sup> Belgrade welcomed the official "Greek recognition of our view regarding the occupation of ČSSR (and) understanding for our position and the (expressed) wish to promote cooperation". This was an opportunity to expand contacts with the members of the Greek government, "including Prime Minister Papadopoulos", the start of economic exchange and possibly the exchange of military missions, the renewal of the joint commission, tourist and cultural cooperation. A new "rectification" of the tone regarding the *Macedonian Question* was deemed necessary. Belgrade

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<sup>47</sup> AJ, A CK SKJ, KMOV, Greece, IX-33/I-718-779, 1959-1970, k 7, confidential no. 013/III-1534, Memo on the conversation of D. Kunc, head of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Contacts of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia with S. Zographos, member of the KKE Politburo, 28 October 1968. The plenum of CC KKE held in Ljubljana and Trieste in late April 1969, where a group of younger officials led by A. Brilakis received the majority vote of support. In September 1969, Stane Dolanc, a member of the Executive Bureau of the Presidency of the LCY, promised help to the secretary of Executive Committee EDA N. Karras and the secretary of the KKE Buro B. Drakopoulos, and generally gave his consent to the opening of a KKE branch in Yugoslavia; *ibid.*, Confidential 1705-881, Information on the visit of the KKE delegation to Belgrade, 12 October 1969.

<sup>48</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1968, f 42, d 4, strictly confidential 437258, Javorski (Athens) to DSIP, 12 October 1968.

instructed Javorski not to focus on this topic in his meeting with Papadopoulos since it could be seen as exacerbating relations.

In December 1968, the Greek police for foreigners arrested the assistant of the Yugoslav military envoy, Lt. Col. Čerović, and his wife, after they were tricked by a police provocateur. Ambassador Javorski interceded with Minister Pipinelis, the affair was hushed up, and Čerović was recalled from Athens.<sup>49</sup> After Greece was expelled from the Council of Europe and Karamanlis condemned the junta, the isolation of the regime in Athens became even more pronounced. The Greek government tried to partially compensate for the new situation by expanding its economic cooperation with the USSR. In these unfavourable circumstances for the junta, Yugoslavia was “the easiest and most acceptable partner”.

On the third anniversary of the junta’s rise to power, in April 1970, the Yugoslav Secretariat of Foreign Affairs concluded that, regardless of the anti-democratic and anti-communist nature of the generals’ regime, anything that could negatively impact mutual trust between the countries should be avoided; that “...controversial questions should not impede the development of relations in other fields”; and that the government in Athens would be willing to develop relations only insofar as it suited “...their national and bloc interests”. It particularly stressed that in bilateral relations it should be made clear that the “policy of the (Yugoslav) federal government toward Greece... was a shared policy formulated with the participation of all Yugoslav republics.”<sup>50</sup> This was meant to refute allegations heard in talks with Greek interlocutors that the views of the Yugoslav federal government were not fully consistent with those of the republic-level government in Skopje, and that the pressure of Skopje on Belgrade was the cause of the “misunderstanding” about the *Macedonian Question*.<sup>51</sup> The statement of an MP from SR Macedonia (Naum Pejov) in the Federal Parliament about the position of Slavo-Macedonians in Greece led Athens to issue a new protest and launch a new propaganda campaign, including allegations of certain territorial pretensions on the part of Yugoslavia.<sup>52</sup> The new worsening in relations in the first half of 1971 was the result of attacks on Yugoslavia in a part of the Greek press, especially in Thessaloniki-based papers, and protests of the Greek govern-

<sup>49</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1970, f 51, d 25, DSIP, strictly confidential 490, The case of Lieutenant Colonel Čerović, assistant to the military attaché, 7 January 1969.

<sup>50</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1970, f 53 d 5, strictly confidential 46902, 17 April 1970. “Nacrt platforme za nasu dalju aktivnost prema Grčkoj”.

<sup>51</sup> See, e.g., AMIP, PA, Greece, 1971, f 40 d 2, confidential 410497, Memo on the conversation of the Deputy State Secretary A. Vratuša with the Greek Ambassador S. Tetenes, 22 March 1971, 24 March 1971.

<sup>52</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1970, f 53, d 5, strictly confidential 43160, DSIP to Executive Council of SR Macedonia, 27 January 1970.

ment about the statements made by republic-level officials of SR Macedonia, Greek-language broadcasts on Radio Skopje, the writings of Skopje historians and newspapers, and the showing of the movie "Crno seme" (Black Seed).<sup>53</sup> Regardless of positive advances in economic cooperation, it was stressed that "the most difficult problem in our relations (remains) ... the position of the Macedonian national minority". On this matter, the military regime had continued to pursue the same policy "as all previous Greek governments", and any Yugoslav interest was seen as "interference in internal affairs" and a sign of "covert territorial revendication", with an insistence on not broaching this question.<sup>54</sup>

In October 1970, Anton Vratuša, the Yugoslav Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs, talked with his Greek colleague Palamas in New York about the relations between the two countries. In June 1971, at the airport in Athens, Palamas briefly met the chief of Yugoslav diplomacy Mirko Tepavac.<sup>55</sup> On 23 November 1970, Pattakos received Ambassador Vučinić. The conversation was formal and the Yugoslav ambassador underlined the Greek government's improper treatment of Yugoslavia as an "Eastern European country" and the deterioration of the two countries' relations since the ascension of the "new government". As a gesture of goodwill, Pattakos promised to relocate a juvenile correctional facility from the island of Vido, where a mausoleum to the Serbian soldiers fallen in the First World War is located, and to open the island to visitors.<sup>56</sup> The promise was well-received in Belgrade and seen as establishing "balance" in the relations between Greece and Yugoslavia at the time when an official Greek delegation visited Bulgaria.<sup>57</sup> In late July 1971, Ambassador Vučinić discussed economic relations with Minister Makarezos. One of the questions on the agenda was

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<sup>53</sup> A film by Kiril Cenevski, a Skopje-based director, was awarded first prize at the Festival of Yugoslav Film in Pula (1971). The plot of the movie takes place in 1945, at a military camp on an unnamed Greek island; the internees of the camp are leftist members of the army, including one Slavo-Macedonian, who suffers brutal torture; on the protests of the Greek government against the screening of this film, see AMIP, PA, Greece, 1972, f 40 d 14, confidential 45796, SSIP, II Directorate, Information on the film "Crno seme", 4 January 1972; AMIP, PA, Greece, 1971, f 40 d 2, confidential 410497, 24 March 1971; AMIP, PA, Greece, 1971, f 41, d 7, strictly confidential 410185, DSIP to Executive Council of SR Macedonia, 26 March 1971.

<sup>54</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1971, f 41, d 1, strictly confidential 410186, DSIP, Yugoslav-Greek relations, 16 April 1971.

<sup>55</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1970, f 52, d 5, strictly confidential 439993, SSIP to IV SR Macedonia, Information on the Conversation of A. Vratuša with Palamas in New York, 28 October 1970; *ibid.*, Greece 1971, f 40, d 1, Federal Executive Council. Visit of Deputy State Secretary of the Greek MFA Christos Xanthopoulos-Palamas to Yugoslavia, 8–10 October 1971.

<sup>56</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece 1970, f 53, d 5, SFRY Embassy Athens (Vučinić) to DSIP, strictly confidential 44350, 25 November 1970.

<sup>57</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1970, f 56, d 6, strictly confidential 444512, N. Mandić (DSIP, Directorate for Europe) to Executive Council of SR Macedonia, 8 December 1970.

the construction of an oil pipeline Thessaloniki-Skopje and an oil refinery in Skopje, a matter previously mentioned to the Yugoslav government by Tom Papas, an American businessman of Greek descent. In mid-1968, Papas had visited Belgrade to assess the prospects for cooperation with the representatives of Yugoslav oil companies.<sup>58</sup> Deputy Secretary Palamas made his first (and also highest-ranking) visit to Belgrade from 8 to 10 September 1971, at the time when Greece managed to emerge from its isolation in the Balkans (Palamas's trip to Sofia, the visit of the Romanian minister Mănescu to Athens, establishing diplomatic relations with Albania, an exchange of messages with Ankara).<sup>59</sup> Tepavac and Palamas met again on 11 October in New York.

The political and economic crisis in Yugoslavia and developments in Croatia were highly publicized in the Greek regime-controlled press, which used this opportunity to write extensively about the failure of the Yugoslav experiment, the dangers of a revival of nationalism, and the economic problems of Tito's regime.<sup>60</sup> The crisis was described as "latent" and interpreted as a reason for Yugoslavia's increased need for cooperation with Greece. According to the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, this view was the result of the much-improved position of the Greek regime, which the leading Western powers, led by their own interests, "had accepted... as reality". The USSR was also making "efforts to improve relations, especially on the economic level... while leaving political manifestations to Bulgaria and Romania". The Greek government was prepared to develop cooperation with Yugoslavia in a limited number of fields (commodity exchange, the regulation of the Vardar, road transport). It had a firmly negative position on all questions associated with the *Macedonian Question* (local border traffic, construction of the Thessaloniki-Skopje oil pipeline, liberalization of visas, tourism, and cultural cooperation with SR Macedonia). The Yugoslav Ministry proposed a tactic that had no chance of bringing a positive result: that the focus in bilateral relations in the coming period, including economic relations, should be on a more intense involvement of SR Macedonia. This approach was expected to secure an increased interest of Greek businessmen and indirectly to alleviate reservations toward Yugoslavia and the *Macedonian Question*.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1971, f 42, d 2, strictly confidential 427429, DSIP to Executive Council of SR Macedonia, 29 July 1971; *ibid.*, Greece, 1968, f 42, d 4, Ambassador M. Javorski (Athens) to Executive Council of SR Serbia. Report on the meeting with Tom Papas, 22 May 1968.

<sup>59</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1971, f 41, d 7, strictly confidential 437074, N. Mandić (DSIP) to Executive Council of SR Macedonia, 11- X 1971.

<sup>60</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1971, f 40, d 5, confidential 445512, SSIP to Council for International Relations of the Parliament of SR Croatia, 21 December 1971.

<sup>61</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece 1970, f 38, d 7, 445275, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, II Directorate, Information on Greece and Yugoslav-Greek relations, 29 December 1972.

The Greek request for its warships to visit Yugoslav ports was refused in February 1972, with the explanation that the visit was unacceptable due to the deteriorating military-political situation in the Mediterranean (allowing the US Sixth Fleet to use bases, the events concerning Cyprus) and the role of Greece in the crisis. Another reason was the visit of Soviet ships to Split and the visit of Marshal Grechko, the Soviet Minister of Defence.<sup>62</sup> Given the amicable relations between Archbishop Makarios and President Tito, in early March 1972 Palamas asked Ambassador Vučinić to inform Belgrade of his assurances that the Greek government had not wanted to engineer the overthrow of the Cypriot president with its actions. The intention was to “make him more flexible and allow ... an agreement with the Turkish community and unblock Greco-Turkish relations.” He accused Makarios of being the most responsible for complicating these relations, warning him that he “might become an object in the Soviet game, a development that Greece would hardly be indifferent to”.

The change in the junta leadership (the replacement of Regent Zoitakis) was seen in Belgrade as part of an internal showdown and struggle for power, in which Patakis proved more adroit.<sup>63</sup> The regime was becoming more involved in the crisis in Cyprus and the cracks in the junta leadership were becoming more evident; freedom of the press was suppressed and economic problems were surfacing. The Yugoslav side also highlighted the situation in the opposition. Despite the agreement on the cooperation of left- and right-wing resistance organizations signed on 1 February 1971 in Paris (Patriotic Front, Democratic Defence – Free Greeks and Defenders of Freedom), which did not include Papandreou’s PAK, discord became the most serious obstacle to any meaningful actions against the regime.<sup>64</sup> In October 1972, mass arrests of communists ensued (Parcalidis, Drakopoulos, and thirty-three others), who were accused of terrorism and plotting to break away a part of the national territory. Like some earlier arrests of resistance members, despite their “internal purpose”, these were seen in Belgrade as a gesture intended for the US and Vice-President S. Agnew.<sup>65</sup> In mid-1972, the student movement emerged as a new prospective factor of democratic defence and the instigator of a new dynamic of anti-junta resistance. The attempt to quash the increasingly relevant student protests brought together the university leadership, the Ministries of Education and Internal Affairs, and the

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<sup>62</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1972, f 40, d 5, confidential 46500, Federal Secretariat for National Defense to SSIP, 21 February 1972.

<sup>63</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1972, f 38, d 1, confidential 411364/72, Embassy in Athens (Vučinić) to SSIP, 27 March 1972.

<sup>64</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1972, f 38, d 2, strictly confidential 435390, Embassy in Athens to SSIP, 30 September 1972.

<sup>65</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1972, f 41, d 1, confidential 439479, Embassy in Athens (Vučinić) to SSIP, 1 November 1972.

very top of the country's leadership. Police measures and arrests proved unsuccessful, as did the verbal acceptance of student demands and small concessions regarding academic requirements.<sup>66</sup>

In March 1973, the students of the University of Athens took control of the Faculty of Law; in May, the crew of the destroyer *Velos* mutinied; a wide conspiracy was uncovered in the Navy.<sup>67</sup> The abolition of the monarchy added little to the consolidation of the regime. What followed was a rigidly controlled and referendum with Papadopoulos as the only candidate, who thereby secured an eight-year presidential term, promising to call elections. The uncertainty was exacerbated by the ever-sharper clash within the regime between the "radicals" (Pattakos, Ladas, Gantonas, and Lekas) and the "moderates" (Papadopoulos and his brothers, Makarezos). The mass student uprising in November at the Athens Polytechnic, joined by workers and students in other towns, and the regime's brutal response (heavy deployment of police and tanks in the streets) were a bloody prologue to the last chapter in the rule of the junta. States of emergency and martial courts were introduced. Having put down the uprising, Papadopoulos ended the state of emergency in the country but not in Athens. The Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked its diplomatic missions throughout the world to urgently (no later than 28 November) send opinions and commentaries of the official circles, along with views and assessments of the situation that had resulted from the student uprising and the regime's response, "...which can have significant long-term consequences on the political situation and Greece and some impact on the relations of some NATO members and especially the USA with this country."<sup>68</sup>

However, the military coup d'état led by generals Dimitrios Ioannidis and Phaedon Gizikas took place. The putschists overthrew and arrested Papadopoulos, dissolved the government, and re-introduced a nation-wide state of emergency. In the new, hastily assembled cabinet, the Minister of Foreign Affairs became Spiridon Tetenes, the former Greek ambassador in Belgrade.<sup>69</sup> The

<sup>66</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece, 1972, f 38, d 1, confidential 444015, AMIP, PA Greece, f 38, d 1, Embassy in Athens to SSIP, 6 December 1972; *ibid.*, f 36, d 9, strictly confidential 49374, Activities of the student movement, 22 February 1973.

<sup>67</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece 1973, f 37, d 1, strictly confidential 422834, Embassy in Athens to SSIP (II Directorate), The case of the destroyer "Velos", 28 May 1973; *ibid.*, confidential 424361, Memo on the conversation of Ambassador Vučinić in Athens with Stephanopoulos, the former prime minister, 29 May 1973.

<sup>68</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece 1973, f 37, d 3, confidential 449896, SSIP to embassies, 22 November 1973.

<sup>69</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece 1973, f 37, d 4, confidential 428463, SSIP to I Directorate, Information on the coup in Greece, 27 November 1973; AMIP, PA, Greece 1973, f 37, d 5, strictly confidential 454743, SSIP to Embassy in Athens, 20 December 1973; AMIP, PA, Greece 1973, f 37, d 5, confidential 454183, SFRY Embassy in Ankara to SSIP, 12 December 1974.

first contact with the new foreign minister was seen as “more constructive and positive.” Tetenes “proved himself willing to discuss certain specific questions... including the Macedonian.” The attitude of the Yugoslav diplomacy towards the new government in Athens suggests that it (too) was accepted as an unwanted and unpleasant neighbour but one with which some kind of cooperation had to be established.<sup>70</sup> The question of extending the agreement about the Free zone of Thessaloniki was broached in February. In May, the Yugoslav federal government concluded that the chances of reaching a new agreement on the Thessaloniki zone were null, and that the very existence of the zone had become an anachronism in international law and that its abolishment was inevitable. Filing a complaint with the court in The Hague was not advisable “either politically or legally ... or for practical reasons” because there were no grounds for a positive outcome of such a case.<sup>71</sup>

The defeat of the junta in July and August after the coup against Makarios in Cyprus and the Turkish invasion and occupation of a part of the island led to its downfall. The collapse of the dictatorship was welcomed by the Yugoslav public with enthusiasm and relief. The position of the Yugoslav leadership on this new change in Athens during the interim government and at the beginning of Karamanlis's premiership was positive yet cautious. Karamanlis's resolve to get the army under the government's control and purge it of the officers who had been the key figures of the dictatorship and his arrest of the former leaders of the junta was seen as an important step on the road to restoring democracy.<sup>72</sup> In the comments on the November elections, the dominant opinion was that Karamanlis's victory had not been unexpected because he had shown his ability to purge the country of the remnants of the military regime in a “relatively non-violent and constructive climate”. The elections were not about ideology but about “the practical efficacy of the figures whose authority and concept can lead the country out of the dictatorship and away from the brink of disaster, where it had precariously stood mere months ago.”<sup>73</sup> The restoration of democracy in Greece opened a new chapter in Greco-Yugoslav relations.

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<sup>70</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece 1974, f 41, d 5, strictly confidential 444951, Embassy in Athens to SSIP, Yugoslav-Greek relations in 1973, 14 February 1974.

<sup>71</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece 1974, f 37, d 4, strictly confidential 423613, Federal Executive Council to SSIP, Belgrade, 14 May 1974.

<sup>72</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece 1974, f 41, d 3, confidential 451141, Embassy in Athens (Čalovski) to SSIP, 23 October 1974.

<sup>73</sup> AMIP, PA, Greece 1974, f 41, d 4, confidential 458507, General Consulate of SFRY in Thessaloniki to SSIP, 20 November 1974.

### *A new context: 1974–1990*

The Karamanlis government worked to improve relations with Greece's Balkan neighbours, especially Yugoslavia and Romania, but its diplomatic efforts were primarily directed at achieving the central objective – accession to the European Economic Community (EEC), which was successfully achieved on 1 January 1981.<sup>74</sup> After the November elections and the landslide victory of Karamanlis's Nea Demokratia, the full normalization of relations with Yugoslavia began in December 1974 with the visit of the Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Miloš Minić to Athens.<sup>75</sup> In June 1975, Karamanlis made an official visit to Yugoslavia.<sup>76</sup> Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito visited Greece in May 1976. The intensification of political relations was continued with Karamanlis's visit to Yugoslavia in 1979 – his last meeting with Tito.<sup>77</sup> In 1980, he met with Cvijetin Mijatović in Belgrade. The defence ministers of the two countries, Evangelos Averoff and Nikola Ljubičić, and foreign ministers Ioannis Ralis and Josip Vrhovac, also exchanged visits.<sup>78</sup>

In this period, delegations of the most influential Greek parties made official visits to Belgrade: the Centre Union (headed by I. Mavros) and PASOK (led by Andreas Papandreu) in September 1978,<sup>79</sup> Stane Dolanc, Secretary of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, visited Athens. Several bilateral agreements were signed: on cultural and educational cooperation, traffic and transport, but economic exchange remained rather limited. The number of Yugoslav tourists in Greece increased. However, the list of points of contention did not become much shorter. The new Yugoslav constitution of 1974 had allowed more space for the republics to take up independent positions in foreign policy matters. This, of course, implied a more active role of the republic-level leadership of SR Macedonia and increased insistence on various aspects of the *Macedonian Question* in relations with Greece (and Bulgaria). The other side emphasized the "Hellenic exclusivity

<sup>74</sup> Clogg, *A Concise History*, 243.

<sup>75</sup> AMIP, I Directorate, confidential 461165 dated 25 December 1974.

<sup>76</sup> AMIP, I Directorate, strictly confidential 428091, 9 June 1975, Memo on the conversation between President of SFRY Josip Broz Tito and Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis.

<sup>77</sup> AMIP, I Directorate, 24 March 1979, Contribution to the agenda for the conversation of V. Djuranović, Chairman of the Federal Executive Council, with K. Karamanlis.

<sup>78</sup> AMIP, f 44, Cabinet of the President of the Presidency of the Federal Executive Council and the Federal Assembly, confidential 453381 dated 8 October 1976. Memo on the conversation of Deputy Chairman of the Federal Executive Council and the Federal Assembly Minić with Evangelos Averoff, Minister of Defence of Greece, 7 October 1976.

<sup>79</sup> AMIP, f 42, Federal conference of SSNRJ, Working group for international relations and cooperation, 6 no. 63-398/1-76, Belgrade 8 June 1976; Information on the visit of the delegation of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) from 1 to 4 March 1976.

of Macedonia”, with state-supported archaeology playing a prominent role after the spectacular discoveries in Vergina (1977); the ensuing events included the founding of the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle in Thessaloniki (1982), the celebration of the Year of the Macedonian Struggle (1984); the broaching of the question of the role of KKE and Slavo-Macedonian fighters in DAG in the civil war in the political debates among Greek political parties.<sup>80</sup>

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The opening chapter of the Yugoslav crisis in the second half of the 1980s coincided with Greece’s intensified European integration but also with the constitutional crisis and Karamanlis’s resignation, after which PASOK formed a second cabinet. In 1987, a conflict with Turkey broke out in the Aegean, leading the two countries to the brink of war. However, the crisis was neutralized with the signing of the Davos Declaration in 1988. At the same time, the collapse of the Yugoslav federation was gathering momentum with the dissolution of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, growing separatism, the awakening and growing of nationalism, economic troubles, and clashes among the political elite. In Greece, these processes were followed with attention and concern. After the secession of Slovenia and Croatia, the former Socialist Republic of Macedonia declared independence on 17 September 1991 under a new name – the *Republic of Macedonia*. Greece’s “new-old” northern neighbour emerged on this “redesigned” political map of Europe. The new situation catapulted the *Macedonian Question* into the centre of the traumatic relations between Athens and Skopje, without the previous “mediation” of the Yugoslav federal government.<sup>81</sup> The disappearance of the Yugoslav state now also placed the relations between the Serbian and Greek peoples into new bilateral and international frameworks, as evidenced by the developments of the 1990s. In Serbia, owing to a “historical reflex”, Greece is still referred to as a “neighbouring country.” Regardless of this geographic fallacy, relations between the two states lost none of their neighbourly nature and importance. These relations – political, humanitarian, official and private – ties between private individuals) qualitatively defied the patterns and moulds of the links commonly shared between two countries, resisting the challenges of a very turbulent period. They represent a very important and ambitious historiographic research task that needs to be approached seriously and analytically.

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<sup>80</sup> See Adamantios Skordos, *Griechenlands Makedonische Frage. Bürgerkrieg und Geschichtspolitik im Südosten Europas 1945–1992* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2012), 269–325.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* 359–377.

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