

WOODHOUSE, ZERVAS AND THE CHAMS-EXPLORING THE SECOND WORLD WAR HERITAGE

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The history of the events in Epirus and Chameria in the Second World War in the Greek Civil War period is only beginning to receive much serious study by historians. There are three main countries obviously involved in the enquiry, Greece, Albania and Britain, but for different reasons, little serious historical work was done in any of them during the Cold War period.

In Britain this was because the Greek Civil War was a painful and difficult episode, with several different dimensions. It was a long, complex conflict that passed through several phases between 1943 and 1949. British involvement was a major factor in the outcome, but there were

many different political actors involved and competing strands of policy. Britain effectively had to withdraw from its previously dominant role between 1946 and 1948, largely as a result of the financial crisis of the post-war government in London¹. This was a symbol of British imperial weakness, like the loss of India at the same time, in 1947-1949. The victory of the Right in Greece was only obtained through the financial and military resources of the United States, linked to the wider circumstances of the Tito-Stalin split in the international communist movement in 1948².

¹ for an excellent account of this process, see 'The British Labour Government and the Greek Civil War- the imperialism of non-intervention' by Thanasis D Sfikas, Keele, 1994. For a good general account of US policy development, see 'American Intervention in Greece, 1943-1949' by Lawrence S Wittner, New York, 1982.

² For a general survey of the pre-war background, see 'Greece and the British Connection 1935-1941' by John S Koliopoulos, Oxford, 1977, for the World War Two period, 'British Policy towards Greece during the Second World War 1941-1944' by Procopis Papastratis, Cambridge, 1984. The standard American book in the Cold War period was

Greece at the end of the Civil War period saw the birth of the 'Truman Doctrine', which was to become a central plank of the modus operandi of the Cold War³. Secondly, within Britain, the long and winding struggle of resistance to occupation and civil conflict aroused extremely strong emotions among those who had taken part as British advisers to the resistance movements led by army officers in the Special Operations Executive. The leading Special Operations Executive

'The Greek Civil War 1944-1949' by Edgar O'Ballance, London,1956. On the Tito-Stalin split and its effects on Yugoslav communism in a key period for Greece, see 'With Stalin against Tito - Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism, by Ivo Banac, Cornell,1988.

³ For the background in Greece to the complexities of the Anglo-American relationship, see 'Anglo-American Relations with Greece - the coming of the Cold War 1942-47' by Robert Frazier,London,1991, and 'The Truman Doctrine of Aid to Greece - A fifty year retrospective' ed. E.T.Rossides, New York,1998, and 'Anglo-American Politics and the Greek Problem 1945-1949'(in Greek) by Basil Kondis, Thessaloniki,1986.

British Liaison Officer (BLO) concerned, C.M.(Monty) Woodhouse was also a prominent Hellenist, secret agent, and later a Conservative party politician and historian of Greece in post-war Britain⁴. He essentially provided an *ex cathedra* view of events which in the monolithic atmosphere of much of British Hellenism during the Cold War tended to discourage further academic enquiry⁵.

⁴ C.M.Woodhouse (1917-2001) was the son of the 3rd Lord Terrington, and from a prominent Liberal party family. Lord Terrington, a lawyer, had been prominent in the public eye when he was convicted of fraud in 1928, and received a prison sentence.. He rehabilitated himself by becoming an expert on industrial arbitration, and worked in the Ministry of Food in World War II. See 'Hansard', London, 31 January 1961, proceedings of the House of Lords.

⁵ An interesting academic relationship can be seen in Hugh Seton Watson's standard work on the advance of communism in eastern Europe after World War II, 'The East European Revolution' ,London, 1950. In the chapter on Greece, although he quotes approvingly Woodhouse's views on the general context, he notes the 'contrasts in wealth, an irresponsible ruling class, discontented workers and a corrupt bureaucracy' as the cause for underlying crisis

In Greece it was convenient for the ‘winning side’ of the Greek Right to put forward a standardised version of events to help form the new national narrative post-1949, and detailed study of the alleged ethnic cleansing of Chameria by British resistance ally Napoleon Zervas was elided from view as part of the wider objective of strengthening what was known as ‘national consciousness’ and in order to produce a new historical orthodoxy resting on the assumptions of the victors, as so often happens after civil wars in all periods⁶. There are also wider issues connected to the general position of Greece in British elite perceptions. David Roessel has shown how political actors such as Woodhouse saw themselves in the central Byronic tradition of

throughout those years, not Russian or other outside interference.

⁶ It was, of course, very difficult, after 1945, for Greek or Allied nation historians to enter Albania or interview wartime participants resident there or to use Albanian archives.

Philhellenism, where to them many of the situations and decisions of the Greek War of Independence period were exactly repeated in the Civil War, and where the foreign participants again found unanimity in their writings (anti-Ottomanism / anti-Communism), while the Greeks themselves were deeply split over the issues at stake⁷.

In Albania, the Cham issue was not studied much under communism, as the new post-1944 Cham immigrants had an uncertain position in society, almost no presence in the new Enverist political or academic elite and did not have the traditions of émigré scholarship that sustained

⁷ David Roessel, 'In Byron's Shadow - Modern Greece in the English and American Imagination', Oxford, 2001, p. 272 ff. A representative work illustrating the colonial mentality at that time of the British establishment is Sir Reginald Leeper's 'When Greek meets Greek', London, 1950. Leeper was British Ambassador in Greece from 1943-1947. Its only source value nowadays is perhaps to illustrate the ignorance in Athens about actual wartime conditions, particularly in northern Greece.

Kosovar and Macedonian Albanian intellectual life. The significant Cham diaspora in Turkey dating back to post-Versailles Treaty expulsions in the 1920's had little organic connection with Hoxhaist Albania, and were soon to be mixed with émigrés and expelled citizens from Kosova under Tito. Albanian political organisation was poor, and limited to cultural and religious societies and brotherhoods. In addition, there were very few Chams in the key United States based Albanian diaspora. It was not always easy for members of Cham émigré families in Albania to obtain good secondary education in many places in Albania, let alone Tirana University entrance. The patterns of mutual obligation that grew up between Greece and Albania in their international relations in the late Enverist period, starting under the post-1968 Greek dictatorship and continuing under subsequent democratic governments, led Hoxha to discourage promotion of the Cham issue in all its different dimensions. In the late 1970's, and later under the PASOK government period, post-1982, Greek resistance hero Manolis Glezos was a frequent visitor to Albania, and enjoyed a good

relationship with Hoxha, acting as an unofficial conduit for Athens initiatives⁸.

This has now clearly changed, exemplified by the innovative work of Beqir Meta on the 1930's and the World War II period, and by a degree of invigoration of study in Greece, mainly by Basil Kondis and Eleftheria Manda in Thessaloniki.⁹

⁸ see Enver Hoxha, 'Two Friendly Peoples', Tirana, 1985

⁹ An important milestone in Albanian studies of the Cham history was the publication of 'Ceshtia Came dhe Integrimi European', Arberia, Tirana, 2005, and the foundation of the Institute of Cham studies in Tirana in that same year. For Kondis's views, see 'Greece and Albania: 1908-1914, Thessaloniki, 1976, and other more recent publications, also, in Greek, by Eleftheria Manta, 'Oi mousoulmanoï Tsamides tis Epirou, 1923-2000', ISEP, Thessaloniki, 2003. The impetus of all recent Greek scholarship on Civil War Epirus has been to maintain a monolithic view of all Chams as all Muslims and all active Axis collaborators, although even an outdated and limited work such as O'Ballance's Cold War period book admits they were 'stirred up' by outside forces.

In Britain, as it is now some years after the death of Woodhouse, and of other key ex-SOE officers such as Nigel Clive who were active in Epirus in this period, a reevaluation of the period is clearly possible. There are a number of obvious questions to be addressed. The most important is how far the expulsion of the Chams was seen as an unavoidable necessity in London, in the wartime conditions at the time, and how far it was a product of ignorance and error, rather than of conscious policy decisions.

This obviously affects modern assessments of whether what is now considered genocide under international law took place. Beyond this, there is the issue of what intelligence was received in London about what was happening, how it was interpreted, and what analytical parameters were used. But perhaps the most important point is the issue of Woodhouse's personal role, and how far he, as a prominent Hellenist intellectual who in his own view would probably have spent his life

teaching ancient philosophy in Oxford had the war not intervened, angled both intelligence and policy in a pro-Greek direction¹⁰. Then there are also issues of most interest to students of insurgencies and counter insurgency, with the most crucial issue that of how far Woodhouse and the British were actually in control of what Zervas and his militias were doing in murdering and expelling the Chams, and how far British SOE officers had the capacity to control their resistance client militias¹¹.

¹⁰ For Woodhouse's own personal background and intellectual formation, see his autobiography 'Something Ventured', London, 1982. He belonged to perhaps the last generation of British elite leaders where classical studies were central to the educational process

¹¹ The only Cold War period work to start to touch on these issues in a serious way is O'Ballance's book, although his evaluation is often schematic, highly ideological and depends on sketchy information. It is perhaps significant that it was written by an American counter-insurgency expert, and hence had a degree of objectivity

It should be said clearly that there is copious material from Woodhouse's own writings which must form the starting point of new studies, and also from fellow SOE officers such as Nigel Clive and Arthur Foss who wrote books about their experiences in Epirus, as well as the similar memoirs written by SOE BLO's on the Albanian side of the border, of which the most relevant is that of Antony Quayle, who post-war became a prominent British film actor and director¹². Woodhouse remained active in Hellenist circles in Britain until the end of his life, and for much of that time, right up to about 2001, was guardian of the approved view of events.

towards the material (particularly that from Royalist sources) which is often lacking in the British literature.

¹² It is beyond the scope of this paper to comment on all the implications of these books, but it is perhaps worth noting that even someone so conventional and mainstream Hellenist as Foss notes, in 'Epirus', the continuing existence of an Albanian speaking population in parts of Epirus in the mid-1950's, long after the 1944 massacres.

In my experience, much of this material from ex-SOE officers is still not very well known in either Albania or Greece. Under communism in Albania, it would obviously not have been possible to publish it, and in Greece for many years after 1945 there was little motive to do so. Scholarship did not develop in Britain as might have been expected. There are still no official histories of SOE in Greece or Albania., although some interesting work such as that of Roderick Bailey has been recently published¹³. In the literary sphere, later writers seem to have felt overawed by the heroic classical imagery of the resistance and Civil War, in exploits such as Leigh Fermor's capture of a German general in Crete¹⁴. It is perhaps illustrative of the situation in

¹³ see 'The Wildest Province - SOE in the Land of the Eagle' by Roderick Bailey, London,2008

¹⁴ See Roessell's illuminating quotation of novelist John Fowles's views 'All my generation had been dazzled by the exploits of a celebrated generation of odd men who had fought beside the brave Greek resistance from 1939 to 1945' op Cit p272.

the historiography of civil war Epirus/Chameria that the first real breakthrough in the field came from a Danish scholar, Lars Baerentzen who published the reports of British secret agent David Wallace in Copenhagen in 1982¹⁵. Nigel Clive joined the Secret Intelligence Service, SIS, popularly known as M16 after the war and was obviously prevented from publishing anything for many years, and when he eventually did so in 'A Greek Experience 1944-1949',¹⁶ it was published by a very small publisher in provincial Britain with little accompanying publicity. Clive

¹⁵ British Reports on Greece 1943-1944 Ed Lars Baerentzen, Copenhagen, 1982.

¹⁶ Published by Michael Russell in the UK in 1985, with an Introduction by Sir William Deakin. Deakin occupied a position in the SOE Yugoslav pantheon of equivalent authority to Woodhouse in Greece, and ended up as Warden of St Antony's College Oxford. Although an Establishment figure, unlike Woodhouse, he was never a mainstream Tory on the imperialist-Churchillian wing of the party, and this had a marked influence over SOE Yugoslav historiography.

believed that the post-1945 Labour government in London had been fundamentally mistaken in continuing the essence of Churchill's wartime Greek policy, and that uncritical support for the principle of the restoration of the Greek monarchy had been a major factor in the length and severity of the Civil War¹⁷. The special relationship between British elite classicism, the British intelligence services, and modern Greek politics meant that in contrast to the SOE-element in the Albanian resistance, much of the Greek material and sometimes even the names of the people involved were shrouded in secrecy and self censorship and any public discussion of events in the

¹⁷ Op.cit and conversations Nigel Clive/James Pettifer between 1992 and 2000. Although they were more or less Oxford contemporaries, Clive and Woodhouse came to diverge politically , something that may have affected their subsequent view of the Greek crisis. Clive resigned from the Conservative party over Chamberlain's Munich deal with Hitler, while Woodhouse, according to his own account in his autobiography, found he could live with appeasement as postponing the onset of war gave him more time to complete his studies. Op.cit. p 136.

Cold War was difficult¹⁸. The Albanian situation in historiography was much better, with the full and open publication of memoirs from both the Right, like those of Julian Amery and David Smiley, and from the Left, like that of Reginald Hibbert, and contributed to the vigorous open debate about post-communist Albania after 1990 in London. An entirely different situation had also prevailed with Yugoslavia, although for different reasons. There, the eminence of SOE advisers like Deakin and McLean, their public prominence after the war, and their literary skills had contributed to open historical enquiry. The role of Woodhouse was in essence to preserve the propaganda-based orthodoxies of the wartime period in a narrative which often discouraged critical enquiry and analysis.

¹⁸ This atmosphere continued in some quarters in London for many years, as the furore over the first Channel 4 films about the Civil War in the early 1980's indicated.

It was, oddly enough, with the arrival of the Greek dictatorship after 1968, that this historical logjam began to break. The small number of British communists and other leftists in the League for Democracy in Greece organisation began to emerge from the isolation imposed on them by the domination of the Greek Right in London Hellenism, and found a wider audience as practical opposition to the Athens junta began to develop in Britain¹⁹. Some of the SOE generation

¹⁹ The role of Marion Serafis, as a UK citizen and widow of ELAS military leader General Stefanos Serafis was important in these debates, both within the largely constitutionalist League for Democracy in Greece, and other more radical organisations. In the period of the anti-junta campaign, the League was given a small office within King's College London, a centre of academic British Hellenic studies of many years standing. See 'ELAS - Greek Resistance Army', London, 1980, a landmark publication indicating the change in climate in London as a result of the dictatorship. There are also obviously important wider issues here affecting the historiography connected to the presence of a number of distinguished communists and non-party Marxists in the world of classical and ancient history studies during the Cold War in the United Kingdom, such as Robert Browning, Frank Walbank, George

came out in open opposition to the junta, including Woodhouse, and were prepared to share platforms with League and non-aligned speakers, and thus split the key Cold War alliance in Greek London between the monarchists and the democratic Right, something from which it is arguable the Greek monarchy never recovered and led in part to its final demise. In his personal political activity, after 1974 and the end of the dictatorship, Woodhouse worked as an advocate for

Thompson and Geoffrey St Croix, in contrast to the absence of similar scholars in the field of modern Greek historical studies. In practice, this left the field open for Woodhouse to establish and maintain a de facto orthodoxy of opinion.

then Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis, and put forward generally uncontroversial political positions for Greek political democratisation and modernisation²⁰. The role of the long-running Cyprus crisis and British centrality to the decisions taken were in my opinion a major background factor in the evolution of Woodhouse's views. In the early 1950's he became increasingly critical of Tory government Cyprus policy under Churchill, and somewhat estranged from the top Tory elite groups, even though his personal prestige was at a high level then after his key role within the SIS/MI6/CIA operation to overthrow Mossadegh in Iran and establish the Shah in government²¹.

²⁰ See C.M.Woodhouse 'The Rise and Fall of the Greek Colonels', London, 1985.

²¹ There would be scope for a comparative study of the two operations. There are obvious structural similarities between the use of Zervas's EDES militia as a destabilising force of the Right against the dominance of the communist-controlled ELAS forces in Greece, and the use of street gangs and roughnecks from wrestling clubs in the counter-revolution against Mossadegh in Tehran a few years later.

None of this political liberalisation in London led to the reawakening of the Cham issue in political discourse. That was intimately linked to the re-emergence of Albania onto the international stage in 1990 and the end of the extraordinary period of autarchic isolation of the previous thirty years. As an anecdotal illustration, I wrote a short article for the London Independent newspaper in 1991 about an Albanian government proposal to take the Cham issue to the World Court at the Hague, and subsequently discovered that this was the first mention of the subject in a British newspaper since World War II. .

We need to see that Woodhouse's work was not monolithic, and that he changed at least the presentation and style of his views over time. His first excursion into historical writing was his book 'Apple of Discord', which appeared in London in 1948, when the Civil War in Greece was

still going on. It sets out in considerable detail the recent history of Greece, with an account of the time of Metaxas, and the Second World War in the Balkans, then a very much blow -by- blow account of the course of the Occupation and development of the resistance, and of the British role, including that of Woodhouse himself. It is very strongly anti-communist, and could be said to be a piece d'occasion, reflecting the assumptions of the time and also very bound up with the imperative to keep British public opinion 'on side' in support of Civil War policy, when criticism of British support for the Right and the Monarchists was spreading well beyond the Left, inside and outside Parliament. Although reporting of the Civil War was tightly controlled by the government in London, the effects of USAF and RAF bombing on civilians in the northern mountains as well as on the communist Democratic Army was causing widespread concern. ²²As

²² For data on the methods used by the British government to control media coverage of the conflict, see 'Memories of a Mountain War Greece 1944-1949', London, 1972 by Kenneth Matthews. Matthews was the resident

BBC correspondent in Athens and a man of a conventional centrist outlook, making his exposure of the pro-monarchist media manipulation all the more credible. Techniques pioneered in the 'spin' world in Greece were later widely used in the entire Cold War period. The Greek government also made various attacks on the media, particularly American correspondents in the 1947-1949 period which after the murder of correspondent George Polk in Thessaloniki undermined much of its general credibility as a moderate responsible alternative to the Left. See 'The Salonika Bay Murder - Cold War Politics and the Polk Affair, by Edmund Keeley, Princeton, 1989.

Thanasis Sfikas has shown, the Greek Civil War was a major crisis for the British Left, on a much wider and deeper register than issues connected with the Left in other European nations, like France and Italy, where communist hopes of taking power after the war had also been dashed by events. It was, also, of course, the time when the British government had effectively had to cede control of the foreign military aid effort in Greece to the Right to the United States, and it is perhaps not entirely a coincidence that the only currently available edition of the book is the 1985 American reprint. His writing is imbued with the assumptions of the Truman Doctrine, with all that means in terms of the suppression of complexity in the interests of building a united front in support of the Right. Yet although it is a modern book, in that it is a reflection on contemporary history by a participant who had played a leading role in many of the events that he described, it is impossible not to see the shadow of Woodhouse's traditional classical education in the writing, from Thucydides writing about the fifth century conflicts in which he was an actor, right through

to Roman historians such as Tacitus. The classical moral ideal of the scholar-soldier acting in defence of democracy is seen by Woodhouse as part of an unbroken Greek tradition, and the British, as holders of a special relationship with modern Greece since its 1830-s birth, as political and military actors capable of re-enacting ancient dramas²³. The little bands of heroic resistants

²³ There are many complex issues here of political and cultural identity here that future historians will need to study. In many ways, the BLO's were expected to 'become' Greeks or Albanians or Yugoslavs when attached to irregular forces in the mountains, in order to exert productive influence over the resistance militias. The well known British proclivity for embracing particular Balkan national causes was also a factor. The unique difference with the Greek BLO's was that they were inheritors of the Byronic tradition, where involvement in the promotion of the Greek national cause was not merely legitimate, but also manly and heroic, and in British terms, wholly patriotic. To take up either the Albanian or Yugoslav national causes, as actors like Hibbert, Smiley and Deakin later found, involved a degree of cultural displacement. For an account of how these issues played out in Greek practical politics in earlier generations in the post-Byron period, see 'The British and the Hellenes - Struggles for Mastery in the

that Woodhouse, Clive, and Leigh Fermor describe so well are very directly descended from the Spartans who fought at Thermopylae, but with one significant and in the end fatal difference, in that in 1943 and afterwards, they were split between Left and Right, and were to remain so. It is worth noting that Woodhouse had, even then, an exceptional command of the demotic Greek language, something that may in part explain the admiration Churchill had for him, as someone who was prevented from applying to study at Oxford because of his lack of ancient Greek²⁴.

Eastern Mediterranean 1850-1960' by Robert Holland and Diana Makrides, Oxford, 2006. Most of these issues resurfaced in the Second World War period.

²⁴ On knowledge of Greek as a metalanguage within the British elite, and its social and ideological role see 'The Victorians and Ancient Greece' by Richard Jenkyns, Oxford, 1980. Little had changed by 1939 in many circles, and Woodhouse had received a very conservative classical education at Winchester College. For Woodhouse's own generally sensible views on this tradition, see 'The Philhellenes', London, 1969.

The Chams are only referred to in the section of the book called ‘Minor Armed Collaborators’, and the entire Cham community in Epirus is thus tarred with the collaborationist brush, and described in what can only be called imperialist-racist- terms as a ‘Moslem people commonly called Turko-Albanians’. In this book Woodhouse laid down the orthodoxy in which the Chams were afterwards seen in British historiography for two generations by adopting the terminology of the Greek extreme Right²⁵. He is not without valuable perceptions- he notes that one of the disadvantages the Chams had was that they were a wealthy community, disinclined to

²⁵ In his later academic writing he shows he understands the nature of Greek nationalism quite well, thus he writes in ‘Modern Greece-A Short History’, London, 1982, that ‘Greece included considerably fewer than half of those who regarded themselves as Greeks by virtue of their language, religion, and (less plausibly) their race. It was easy to stir up agitation in favour of enlarging Greece’s borders by a progressive extension of *enosis* (union).’

fight until it was too late, and that the Axis powers in the Balkans were inclined to be fairly sympathetic to local Moslem populations, as happened in Kosovo, compared to the pre-war regimes in Greece or Serbia based on Orthodox Christianity. He notes correctly that the Cham issue has some resonances with the issue of the Macedonian minority in Greece, with its ever-explosive political connotations. He considers, probably wisely, that the Chams had very poor wartime leadership in their communities. Some Cham leaders were very slow to recognise the wider political realities of international relations at the time. But there are also startling lacunae. He omits completely any mention of the small Jewish communities along the coast opposite Corfu at places like Sivota (until 1944, in Albanian *Muros*) or nearby Plataria who lived intermingled with the Chams, and so fails to mention some of the most hapless victims of both Metaxas and then the Axis occupiers. There is also a slant on any use of the word 'Turk' in the book while Greece is always presented as an inherently superior culture. We should not of course forget that

Greece was at one period early in the Second World War the only ally that Britain had or that Churchill - although poor at school and ignorant of most classical culture- had taken in much of the traditional sentimental Hellenism of the ruling elites at that time. The Metaxas period was seen in London as a defeat for British influence in Greece, and a triumph for Germany, and the experience of the Occupation and Civil War did little to modify this perception.

In his later works, Woodhouse somewhat modifies his line on the events insofar as he avoids the use of what would now be regarded as politically unacceptable language derived from colonialist stereotypes, but the essential content changes less. 'The Struggle for Greece 1941-1949', published in 1976 with an introduction by Richard Clogg, does admit that there was an 'Albanian minority in Greece', in defiance of official Athens views that there are no ethnic minorities in Greece, but the Chams or their destiny are hardly mentioned apart from the normal

perfunctory designation of all Chams as collaborators. This at one level might not be surprising if the book did not also contain an extensive and lengthy account of the general activity of Zervas in the resistance, in more sympathetic detail, on the whole, than in 'Apple of Discord' where the character of Zervas's militia soldiers is not glossed over.

In his 1976 book, Woodhouse describes the Chams as 'punished' by Zervas for collaboration, but gives no details of the grim and systematic Zervas militia violence against them in places like Paramithia in 1943-1944, and above all the appalling human rights violations against civilians, particularly women and children²⁶. He does not discuss whether any British attempt was made to stop Zervas's war crimes. It seems likely that there was no such attempt, in accordance with the policy of boosting Zervas in the northwest to tie down communist ELAS forces and

²⁶ See Beqir Meta's 'Tensioni Greko-Shqiptarët (1939-1949)', Tirana, 2002 for an comprehensive Albanian viewpoint account of these events.

prevent them from reinforcing other ELAS forces who were on the point of controlling Athens.²⁷ It may, of course be claimed, as some more intelligent Greek commentators do, that these events happen in wars, and are worse in civil wars, and that similar crimes were committed on all sides. This is of course, the case, but the laws of war existed in 1944, if in a less developed form than they exist now, as the Nuremberg trials showed. There is a case of general double standards in the recent historiography, where, for instance, a book like Nicholas Gage's 'Eleni' received widespread international publicity, with some help, it appears from at least one official US government agency, on the basis of its recording of the violence of communist-led ELAS and Democratic Army guerrillas, while the Cham's sufferings at Greek hands have been elided and

²⁷ For the different currents in British policy, see 'British Intervention in Greece-from Varkiza to Civil War' by Heinz Richter, London, 1985. Also 'Greece at the Crossroads . The Civil War and its Legacy' ed. John O. Iatrides and Linda Wrigley, Philadelphia, 1995.

obscured as irrelevant and unworthy of serious moral concern²⁸.

In Woodhouse's autobiography, 'Something Ventured', published in 1982, there is a mention of Paramithia, but only in the context of a visit to David Wallace's grave, and no mention of the fate of the Chams at all, and the standard view is reiterated that without Zervas and the energy the communist-led ELAS had expended in fighting , ELAS might have been able to take control of the Greek capital²⁹. The Chams have become, so to speak, the Ghost in the History

²⁸ The Greek lobby in the United States is often active in promoting a particular view of the history that amongst other things elides the war crimes of Zervas from the historical record. Gage's book was published in 1983, just when in Greece under the new PASOK government a new evidence-based historiography of the wartime period was developing. It is instructive to note that then and since, Gage's own political activity in Greece, Albania and the United States has been promoting the irredentist 'Northern Epirus' cause.

²⁹ Quite apart from anything to do with political events in Epirus , these claims are highly speculative from a

military point of view. It is quite arguable that what stopped ELAS taking Athens was the confusion and ineptitude of the Greek communist party leadership, rather than a simple lack of ELAS soldiers, coupled with the effective presentation of Archbishop Damaskianos and his entourage by Churchill and the British.. The KKE leadership weaknesses continued long afterwards, see Svetozar Vukmanovic (General Tempo) ‘ How and Why the People’s Liberation Struggle of Greece met with Defeat’, London, 1985. Tempo was Tito’s emissary to the Greek resistance forces and had a detailed knowledge of the personalities and political forces involved.

Machine, unseen and unspoken.

It is clear that the historical work and life of Monty Woodhouse contains many contradictions. He was not a friend of the Greek Left but in his middle and later life in debates in London he did distance himself from their repression under the post-Civil War governments in Athens, above all the junta between 1968 and 1974. In his defence, it could be argued that his acceptance of a mono-ethnic Epirus / Chameria was only in keeping with policies and events that had their roots in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne and its aftermath of mass population exchanges. At a human level he was an approachable and serious scholar-politician who was always open to debate with those of different views, but even his strongest admirers often noted a current of austerity and abstraction in his outlook and personality that could detach him from the sufferings British policy caused in

wartime Greece in the name of anti-communism. He came from an aristocratic family in Britain and had been pro-appeasement and anti-Churchill, but he was to find himself Churchill's chosen man in Greece, with enormous personal responsibilities for British policy. He knew little of the wider Balkans from personal experience but that did not stop him from making sweeping pronouncements on political developments there, and he was particularly ignorant of the Macedonian Question. Although the general SOE tradition in informal warfare was essentially derived from the Arabist T. E. Lawrence Woodhouse had a limited and imperialist view of Islam and the Ottoman and Arab worlds that chimed well with that of the irredentist Greek Right in Epirus. Private debate about Greek history was something that he encouraged, and he was not there a proponent of orthodoxy, but in the end the Chams and other ethnic minorities were not

seen by him as fully Greek and so were not entitled to their full human rights and dignity³⁰. The public discourse, was, however, a different matter, where the maintenance of orthodoxy of view and the suppression of heretical discourse about the ethnic cleansing of the Chams - and many other issues -was always his duty³¹.

³⁰ An interesting illustration of Woodhouse's own understanding of his historic role can be found in his foreword to D.George Kousoulas's volume 'Revolution and Defeat -The Story of the Greek Communist Party',Oxford,1965. This was the first serious attempt by a non-communist Greek historian to write the history of the KKE, and on many issues Kousoulas's views differ substantially from those of Woodhouse, but this does not stop Woodhouse from claiming in his foreword that the Greek author relied mostly on 'Apple of Discord' for his orientation.

³¹ One of the many ironies of his activity was his alienation from mainstream British academia. In his autobiography, he writes very disparagingly of prominent Oxford figures such as Isaiah Berlin and Richard Crossman who taught him at New College, and rather sourly of his time at Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

The Cham issue will need, before it is resolved, to start to write its own history, and that is bound to include some consideration of Woodhouse and his true role in British policy and reactions to events³². This will include a consideration of the wider crisis of British Philhellenism in the Civil War and Cold War periods.³³

³² An important starting point will be to clarify what happened during Woodhouse's 'missing years' after he left the armed forces, and Greece, in Greece in 1945-46, and his return to activity with the SIS/CIA operation in Iran after 1950. He does not mention this period in his autobiography at all, and states that he did not revisit Greece until 1950. He was not involved in the SIS/CIA operations at that time to overthrow the communist government in Albania. But it is hard to believe his unique knowledge of Greece and the region was not drawn upon by the UK government in this period.

³³ See 'The Greek Civil War Essays in a Conflict of Exceptionalism and Silences' Ed. Philip Carabott and Thanasis. D. Sfikas, Aldershot, 2004