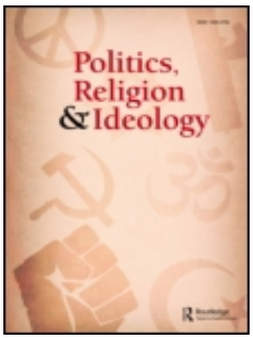

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Mogens Pelt

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The Establishment and Development of the Metaxas Dictatorship in the Context of Fascism and Nazism, 1936–41

MOGENS PELT

In October 1935, Italy launched a fully-fledged attack on Abyssinia, threatening Britain's position in Egypt and the supremacy of the Royal Navy in the eastern Mediterranean. Three years later, in 1938, Germany established her dominance over Central Europe in a series of short-of-war operations, incorporating Austria and the Sudetenland into the *Reich* by *Anschluss* and the Munich agreement.

The dismemberment of Czechoslovakia dealt a fatal blow to the French security system in south-eastern Europe, *la petite entente* with Prague serving as its regional power centre. While the credibility of France as a great power almost completely eroded overnight, Vienna and Prague suddenly provided ready-made platforms to an invigorated and resurgent Germany to project her power into south-eastern Europe, and to rearrange that area in line with Berlin's plans for a new European Order. This, in turn, gave a boost to national vindication in the revisionist states, Bulgaria and Hungary, while it generated shock waves of national insecurity and internal instability in the status quo states, Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia.

On 10 October 1935, only a week after the beginning of Mussolini's African enterprise, a military *coup d'état* in Greece reinstated the monarchy, which had been abolished in the wake of the First World War, and some ten months later, on 4 August 1936, King George II established what was meant to be a permanent dictatorship under the leadership of General Ioannis Metaxas, a prominent royalist. This article will examine and discuss the establishment and

development of the Metaxas dictatorship. It takes as its point of departure that Greece was subject to a number of the same changes in *Realpolitik* which affected the relations between the European states during the 1930s. Greece, too, was affected by the rise of Nazism and fascism, and by the crisis of parliamentarism. In addition, the Great Depression, which had boosted Hitler's rise to power, also dealt a hard blow to the stability of the Greek economy, society and politics.

Where it concerns Greek relations with the great powers, focus will especially be on the repercussions of the rising power of Germany, and Italy's increasingly ambitious policy in the eastern Mediterranean. In order to understand the specific policies and *Weltanschauung* on which the Metaxas regime was based, it is also necessary to discuss the historical and national context in which Metaxas rose to power. This leads us back to the First World War.

A Legacy from the First World War: The National Schism

The immediate impact of the First World War on Greece was strong: it provoked a widening of already existing cleavages and turned politics into a zero-sum game. This divide, known as the National Schism, was generated by conflict wthin the political élite and among those competing for positions in the state and armed forces.

The cleavage originated from a bitter confrontation between King Constantine I and his Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos. It was triggered by conflicting visions about how to bring Greece through the First World War, and to realise Greek national ambitions, known as the Great Idea – *i megali Idea*. In its most far reaching visions, it strived at the resurrection of a Greek Empire in the East – a new Byzantium – with the reconquest of the former imperial capital, Constantinople as its final goal.[1] The King wanted to keep Greece on a neutral course, while Venizelos opted for participation on the side of the *Entente* powers.

Germanophilia is often listed among the reasons for Constantine's stance. It is true that he was related to the German Kaiser by his marriage to Sophie, Wilhelm's sister. It is beyond doubt that he was an admirer of German militarism, of which he had a first-hand knowledge from both battlefields and school. As the commander-in-chief of the Greek armed forces in the 1897 campaign against the Ottoman Empire, the young Crown Prince had witnessed the

efficiency by which the German-trained Turkish troops, in a stunningly brief span of time, managed to defeat his army in a devastating *Blitzkrieg*. Two years later, in 1899, he went to Germany to visit the same teachers who had instructed his enemies so well, entering the Academy of War in Berlin as a student. However, Constantine also feared British sea power, and owing to Greece's geopolitical position as a Mediterranean country he thought it too dangerous to ally with the Central Powers. On the other hand, siding with the Entente would expose Greece's recently conquered lands in Macedonia to claims from Bulgaria, who sided with the Central Powers in 1915.

Macedonia had a special symbolic value to Constantine: his triumphal entrance into Salonika, the prize of the Balkan Wars, did much to exonerate him in the eyes of the public from his ignominious defeat by the Ottomans in 1897. It earned him many devout supporters in both government and the military, and raised his popularity among the Greek public enormously. In 1913, at his moment of triumph and at a time when he was about to succeed his father on the throne, it was widely expected that he would adopt the style of Constantine XII, the successor of Constantine XI Palaiologos, the last emperor of Byzantium, to indicate that he was his direct successor and heir destined to return Constantinople to Greek hands.[2]

The protracted power struggle between the King and the Prime Minister propelled Greece into a state of civil strife, and divided the country into a royalist 'Old Greece' and a Venizelist 'New Greece' with two opposed governments, one under Constantine in Athens, another under Venizelos in Salonika. In 1917, the Entente powers intervened in the conflict on the side of Venizelos and forced Constantine to abdicate, while Greece entered the First World War under the leadership of Venizelos.[3]

As a victorious power at the peace conferences in Paris, not only was Greece allowed to keep her possessions in Macedonia, but she was also awarded former Bulgarian territory in Thrace and vast tracts of former Ottoman lands in Asia Minor. The latter offended Italian ambitions and laid the foundations of an uneasy relationship between the two states which was to last for the whole inter-war period; it further pitted Italy against Greece when Athens, on 19 May 1919, and with British consent, began to land troops in Izmir. In accordance with the St Jean de Maurienne agreement signed in 1917, the Entente

powers had promised to give Izmir to Italy. Furthermore, the Greek landing in Asia Minor made it look as though Greece's moment in the Near East had come, and that it would emerge as a medium-sized, Mediterranean power on a par with Italy. For a short time it even appeared that Britain, or at least Lloyd George, was considering counting on Greece to act as its proxy in that area.[4]

However, in November 1920, Venizelos was surprisingly defeated at the elections by the royalists' parties, and shortly afterwards Constantine returned to Greece while Venizelos went into exile in Paris. This, in turn, transplanted the National Schism to the Greek communities in Asia Minor to the extent that the Holy Synod even considered the excommunication of King Constantine, while Athens retaliated by cutting all financial assistance to the Patriarchate in Istanbul.[5]

The Fall of the King and the Establishment of the Venizelist State

1922–23 constitutes a turning point in modern Greek history. During the summer of 1922, the Turkish nationalists, under the leadership of Mustapha Kemal, drove out the Greek army and, in its wake, more than one million Greek orthodox, all subjects of the defunct Ottoman Empire. It meant the end of the Great Idea as an active force. The disaster in Anatolia led to the influx of about 1.2 million refugees, and to an increase of the Greek population by more than 20 per cent. The short-term consequences were economic and political chaos and a need for immediate relief.[6]

The army and a huge part of the population and, in particular, the refugees who were mainly Venizelists, held the King responsible for the defeat. In the same year, a military government forced Constantine into exile, where he died shortly afterwards, and executed six leading anti-Venizelist politicians and army officers, whom they blamed for the disaster in Asia Minor. After an abortive royalist *coup d'état* in 1923, the Venizelists proclaimed a republic in 1924. In this way, the disaster in Asia Minor and its immediate political sequel became incorporated into the National Schism, while at the same time Venizelists and anti-Venizelists were divided into opposed camps regarding the constitutional issue.[7]

The armed forces played a crucial role in Greek politics.[8] After the disaster in Asia Minor and the abortive royalist *coup d'état*, Venizelist officers got full control of the army. Indicative of this is the fact that

it was the army which transferred power from a military junta to parliament in 1924. As a result of elections held the same year, the Venizelists became preponderantly dominant by securing over 90 per cent of the seats.[9] During the following years, various Venizelist governments ruled the country, interrupted by a military government ruling from June 1925 to August 1926; hereafter the arena of politics was left to parliamentarians but remained under Venizelist dominance. However, in the wake of Great Depression and the signing of the so-called Ankara agreement in 1930, which caused a significant number of refugees to desert Venizelos, the Venizelists lost their parliamentary power.[10]

On 10 March 1933, the anti-Venizelists formed a government under the leadership of the moderate Panages Tsaldaris. This contributed significantly to the widening of the breach between army and government, and multiplied claims for an anti-Venizelist *reconquista* of the state. It led to a revival of the National Schism when the anti-Venizelists launched plans to reform the power structure in the army and to change the electorial system, in order to reduce the impact of the refugee vote. Furthermore, plans were worked out to curtail the power of the Senate, which was still dominated by the Venizelists.[11] This prompted the British minister in Athens to make the following note in his 1935 annual report to London: 'Greek politics are in reality nothing but a struggle between two factions for control of the armed forces …'[12] Venizelist officers began to conspire against the government, while royalist officers, who had lost influence, positions and prestige after the abolition of the monarchy in 1923, were reactivated. Among whom was the would-be dictator, Ioannis Metaxas.

Metaxas and the Revival of the National Schism

Metaxas was a crucial player in the royalist camp. He was a strong supporter of the monarchy and had a long history as a devotee of Constantine, who was also his patron, dating back to the time before Constantine was King. Metaxas, who shared Constantine's admiration for Germany and the Prussian military machine, was sent to Germany to receive military training at the Academy of War. Metaxas returned to Greece imbued with German virtues, like discipline, *Ordnung* and *Ernst* [order and seriousness], and overwhelmed by his first-hand impressions of the results of *Bildung* [education and self-cultivation] and the achievements of state and society.[13]

Metaxas was soon adopted by a small circle of intimates around Constantine, the so-called 'Little Court'. Apart from army and navy officers, the group included the president of the powerful National Bank of Greece, by far the most important private institution in Greece, and several intellectuals. In the realm of *Realpolitik*, the 'Little Court' constituted the closest ties between Greece and Germany. During the decade before the First World War, Constantine and the 'Little Court' had attempted to reorganise and modernise the Greek army with German support, but with only little success.[14]

For a brief period during the First World War, Metaxas acted as the chief of the Greek general staff, but resigned as a protest against Venizelos's plans to commit Greek troops to the British campaign in Gallipoli. He resigned from the army in 1920 as a strong critic of the Greek military adventure in Anatolia. This, in turn, left Metaxas untainted by the disaster in Asia Minor. Metaxas's decision clearly reveals his pragmatic attitude to the Great Idea, and demonstrates that he was prepared to let professional judgements guide him even in situations where he was under strain from ideological pressure within his own camp. However, he remained a devoted royalist even after Constantine's death, and he was a leading figure in the ill-fated royalist *coup d'état* in 1923 which finally paved the way for the proclamation of the republic. He demonstrated his pragmatism by the fact that he was the first prominent royalist to recognise the republic by ostensibly declaring himself a republican, a decision that allowed him an early entry into politics in the Venizelist state. Nevertheless, at heart he continued to identify with the monarchy and remained a sworn enemy of the Venizelist state. He founded the Free Opinion Party, which, apart from the period following the elections in 1926, would remain only a minor factor in party politics.[15] After the formation of the Tsaldaris government, Metaxas became increasingly involved in a series of conspiracies, of an extra-parliamentary nature, instigated by radical anti-Venizelists.[16] In May 1934, Georghios Kondilis, a former Venizelist but then the anti-Venizelists' strongman, informed Metaxas that he was planning a *coup* for 15 August 1934, to enforce the executive power in order to overcome Venizelist resistance. He wanted Metaxas to become President and take charge of reforming the army.[17] By allying Metaxas with his cause, Kondilis had found a personality who, unlike himself, held an undisputed royalist reputation, and whose long and loyal relationship with the late Constantine could be expected to inspire

the necessary trust in royalist officers needed for their support to purge the army from Venizelist dominance. As events transpired, Kondilis did not carry out the *coup*. Instead, on 1 March 1935, a group of Venizelist conspirators under the leadership of their hero from the 1922 revolution, Nikolaos Plastiras, attempted a *coup d'état*.[18] Greece was now precipitated into its worst national crisis since the *débacle* in Asia Minor. For more than a week the country was on the brink of a disintegration similar to the old cleavage between anti-Venizelist 'Old Greece' and Venizelist 'New Greece'.

However, it soon became clear that the conspirators had failed to muster sufficient backing from the army and from the population as a whole. Within the first 24 hours, loyalist troops re-established total control of Athens. On 8 March, Kondilis mustered an army of 45,000 to fight the rebels in northern Greece; within two hours he had managed to neutralise all resistance, and, on 10 March, Thrace and Macedonia were recovered. Finally, on the night of 11–12 March, Venizelos fled the country.[19]

In the aftermath of the attempted *coup*, Metaxas once more came to the fore among the radical anti-Venizelists when he proved his dexterity as a strongman by assisting Kondilis in a massive, and thorough, purge of Venizelist officers.[20] This, combined with the abolition of the Venizelist-dominated Senate, and a large-scale dismissal of Venizelists from the administration, resulted in an overwhelming anti-Venizelist dominance in the state apparatus and in the armed forces. When the Venizelists decided to boycott the election planned for on 10 June 1935, they lost all their influence in parliament, and a final blow was dealt to the Venizelist state.[21]

Metaxas and the Restoration of the Monarchy

Obviously encouraged by this development, and not least by his own role and increasing influence, Metaxas now gave signs that he wanted to enhance Greek–German relations. In May 1935, he established contact with Berlin via a middleman in order to let the German government know that he was interested in economic and political support from Germany, in order to build a strong army and to loosen France's grip on Greece should he come to power.[22] The Germans did not doubt that the middleman was acting on behalf of Metaxas. This took place only six months after the Nazi Party's foreign political office, *Aussenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP* (APA), had declared that for

long-term German interests in Greece it was important to avoid a return to power of the Venizelists, and for that reason it recommended cautious German support for the royalists.[23]

However, as Metaxas did very poorly at the general election in June 1935 the German minister to Greece, Ernst Eisenlohr, did not see any reason to pursue the case any further.[24] Nevertheless, Metaxas clearly indicated that his ambitions were far-reaching, seeing himself in a role of influence regarding the rearmament of Greece, and declaring that he wanted Germany's support to realise these aims. Furthermore, although Metaxas failed utterly at the elections, his royalist cause got a strong boost when, on 10 July, Kondilis made the parliament pass a resolution providing for a plebiscite on the restoration of the monarchy to be held before 15 October. The parliament was then in recess until 10 October.[25] However, on the very day that parliament was due to convene, Kondilis and the three chiefs of the armed forces overthrew Tsaldaris and took control of the country using dictatorial powers. The junta abolished the republic and proclaimed the restoration of the monarchy

On 3 November, a rigged plebiscite ratified the restoration of the monarchy, with 97.87 per cent of the votes in favour.[26] Upon his arrival in Greece on 25 November, George II, who had been living in Britain for almost 12 years, turned out to be determined to reconcile the domestic political world. On 30 November, an uncompromising Kondilis decided to resign in protest over the attitude of the King. George II pardoned the Venizelist participants in the March *coup*, and appointed a caretaker government which was to stay in power until a political cabinet could be formed after the election slated for 26 January 1936.[27]

Kondilis's resignation has been seen as a result of his disagreement with the King over the latter's wish to placate the Venizelists, and grant an amnesty to those involved in the March uprising. It has also been suggested that the King would not agree to act as Kondilis's puppet.[28] Both explanations seem reasonable. It has to be stressed, however, that the King was as adamant as Kondilis in his rejection of the reinstatement of the Venizelist officers; apparently their disagreement did not estrange them irreparably, as both soon afterwards found sufficient grounds to plan joint action, should the Venizelist officers demand reinstatement. According to the counsellor at the German legation, Theo Kordt, the King held Kondilis in reserve should the attempted conciliation with the Venizelists fail.

Furthermore, Kondilis had told Kordt quite frankly that he was ready to obstruct any attempt to reinstate the Venizelist officers, if necessary even by a revolution, 'if some government should prove ready to readmit the "March traitors" into the Army'.[29]

This indicates that the King was ready to resort to heavy-handed government, if the situation so demanded. It should be noted that 12 years of absence from Greece had left George II out of touch with its current political world. Like Kondilis and Metaxas, he, too, nurtured an obvious and ill-concealed contempt for Greek party politics, confiding to the German minister that he simply saw politicians as 'a bunch of sick old men', while praising Kondilis for his loyalty.[30] However, the King soon lost the 'Kondilis option', when the general died in early 1936. This made Metaxas an obvious choice to succeed Kondilis as the King's strongman; Metaxas had already demonstrated his great zeal for creating an anti-Venizelist army. Furthermore, the need for the 'strongman option' increased after the elections on 26 January 1936, which ended in a political deadlock. Neither of the political blocs could form a majority government without the support of the Communist Party.[31] The deadlock soon turned into a prolonged political crisis.

The Establishment of the Metaxas Dictatorship

On 5 March 1936, as a reaction to rumours that the Venizelists and the Communists were negotiating, Minister of War Alexandros Papagos informed the King that the army would not accept a government formed by Communists and Venizelists. However, the King refused to tolerate such interference by the armed forces. He immediately dismissed Papagos and assigned the Ministry of War to Metaxas, who also became Deputy Prime Minister.[32] On 13 April 1936, Constantine Demerdzis, leader of the caretaker government, died, and a few hours later the King appointed Metaxas Prime Minister. According to Kordt, the King had done so in order to have a strongman at hand who was ready to act firmly should parliamentary chaos threaten Greece.[33] This observation seems to the point. On 30 April 1936, Metaxas suspended parliament for a period of five months.[34] On 22 July 1936, the leaders of the anti-Venizelists and the Venizelists informed the King that they were ready to form a government when parliament met again in October. The agreement was based upon the reinstatement of the purged Venizelist officers.

This, however, would spell trouble for the anti-Venizelist army, and could pose a serious threat to the power base of the King and, not least, of Metaxas. The following day, on 23 July, Metaxas told three of his close associates that the King had given him *carte blanche* to establish a dictatorship within ten to 15 days.

On 4 August 1936, Metaxas decided to act and established what became known as the Fourth of August Regime. His official justification for establishing the dictatorship was to forestall a Communist-inspired revolution. According to Metaxas, this was planed in connection with a 24-hour general strike declared for 5 August.[35] By cracking down on the Communists, Metaxas maintained, in an interview with the daily newspaper *Vradini*, that he had prevented bloodshed. Furthermore, he declared that in the long run he intended to win over followers from the Communist Party to his side.[36] According to contemporary diplomatic observers, however, the prospect of a Communist revolution was quite improbable.[37] These observations are supported by historians, who tend to explain the establishment of the dictatorship in terms of the protracted political crisis and the successive deaths of several leading political figures, such as Venizelos, Kondilis and Tsaldaris, within a short span of time.[38] As will be demonstrated below, the impact of German policy also played a significant role in this development, as well as in the decisions that resulted in the establishment of the Metaxas regime.

The establishment of the Metaxas dictatorship efficiently contributed to solidify anti-Venizelist power over the state, bringing to a successful end a process which had begun in 1933 when the anti-Venizelists won the elections. It cemented anti-Venizelist dominance in the armed forces. It symbolised the complete resurrection of the royalist faction in Greek politics, which just one decade earlier had seemed condemned to extinction after the death of the mythical, and unusually popular, Constantine I. However, the regime confronted an array of new and unsolved problems, created by the repercussion of the Great Depression, resurgent revisionism in Europe and a preponderant German influence on the Greek economy.

Fortifying Greece against Revisionism and Stabilising State and Society, 1936–38

The Abyssinian crisis of October 1935 unleashed a state of frenetic panic in the Greek armed forces, as it highlighted the fact that Greece

was in no state of preparedness for modern warfare, let alone for defending its borders against weapons such as tanks, aircraft and gas. This sparked off a series of initiatives to redress this state of affairs, and to reorganise and modernise the Greek armed forces. In October 1935, the Greek general staff established a Special Office for Civil Mobilisation to study and organise industrial mobilisation. Emphasis was placed on safeguarding the supply of shells, gas masks, boots, medicines and so on. In November 1935, an investigation was initiated into the requirements for anti-aircraft defence, and in January 1936, it was decided to co-ordinate the control of the three services in a so-called Supreme Council for the National Defence.[39]

Greece turned to Nazi Germany, informing Berlin that 'Greece is in dire straits regarding war material' and that orders were expected to be in the range of 75–100m Reichsmarks.[40] (At this time Greece's outstanding account on the Greek–German clearing amounted to about 32m Reichsmarks).[41] In order to expedite the matter, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ioannis Theotokis, turned to the head of the *Abwehr* [German intelligence], Wilhelm Canaris, and urged him to do what he could to hurry up deliveries. In return for this, he held out prospects of improvements in the relationship between Greece and Germany.[42] The confidential nature of the exchange shows that the Greek government still considered it necessary to keep the arms affair as secret as possible, perhaps because of competition between the Great Powers, but also because of the conflict between Venizelists and anti-Venizelists. Thus, the French Ambassador in Athens had warned the Greek government that France would regard Greek purchases of German war equipment as a violation of the Treaty of Versailles. Theotokis told the Germans that he had chosen to ignore this, because rearmament was of 'great importance' to Greece.[43] On 24 October, Theotokis informed the German minister that, 'the total financial power of the country will be put at the service of the concept of rearmament'.[44]

However, as a result of the restoration of the monarchy which had brought back George II from his long exile in Britain, and the political deadlock created by the elections on 26 January, the negotiations on German armaments deliveries came to a standstill. Obviously, as long as the outcome of the political crisis remained uncertain, none of the leading personalities in politics or the army would risk making decisions that might tie them to any promises that could destroy their careers if the Venizelists came back into power.

Basing national rearmament on German support could be expected to arouse an incoming Venizelist government and defy the Great Powers, Britain and France, who had been the main foreign sources of military hardware and know-how in the Greek armed forces since Venizelos had sided with the Entente during the First World War. In this situation Berlin placed strong pressure on George II, and threatened to sever German imports of Greek tobacco unless Greece finally decided to place large orders for war material with German firms.[45]

The rising political power of Metaxas coincided in a spectacular manner with a substantial breakthrough in Greek–German arms negotiations. One week after his appointment as Minister of War, and in connection with Germany's termination of the Locarno agreement and the German march into the Rhineland, the Greek government was at pains to assure Germany that Greece intended to remain uninvolved in Central European affairs and distance itself from the French-dominated Little Entente.[46] Kordt, in turn, hailed Metaxas's presence in the cabinet and told the *Auswärtiges Amt* that Metaxas was an asset to German interests, and one of Germany's most reliable friends. Referring to the Greek government's refusal to make the Balkan Entente dependent on the Little Entente, Kordt concluded: 'We have several important friends in the cabinet who will not allow the Balkan Entente to be taken in tow by the Little Entente, that is, by France.'[47]

Less than a month after his appointment as Minister of War, Metaxas initiated a series of negotiations which would finally lead to an agreement on 22 July 1936 that resulted in massive Greek rearmament based on German materials and expertise.[48] It should be noted that it took place on the same day that the Venizelists and their opponents had declared that they were ready to form a government and agreed to the reinstatement of the purged Venizelist officers, and that a renewed Venizelist presence in the armed forces could be expected to pose a serious threat to the agreement with Germany. However, given his *carte blanche* from the King to establish a dictatorship, Metaxas found a way to eliminate this danger and to achieve massive rearmament based on German war material and technology.

This, in turn, provided for a liquidation of Greek assets on the clearing account in Berlin, and created the basis for maintaining Greek tobacco exports to Germany at a high level. In this way, Metaxas's prompt intervention in the arms negotiations solved

several pending problems, which had faced Greece since the Great Depression and Italy's attack on Abyssinia. It also worked to stabilise the social and political situation in the tobacco growing areas in northern Greece.[49]

In the same period, the Greek armament industry expanded by leaps and bounds, and in 1939 it had turned into the most important modern armaments complex in the Balkans and the Near East. This development was based on co-operation between the Greek business tycoon, Prodromos Bodosakis-Athanasiades, owner of the Powder and Cartridge Company, and the German firm Rheinmetall-Borsig, which by 1938 had come under the total control of Hermann Göring.[50] This co-operation was the first German encroachment on the position held by the French steel industry in south-eastern Europe. Schneider-Creusot served as France's industrial spearhead in the area. The French firm controlled Skoda, the leading Czechoslovakian company for steel and armaments production. France also controlled the industry in both Romania and Yugoslavia.[51]

In the second half of 1937, Rheinmetall-Borsig judged that it had no stronghold in the world to compare with its position in Greece.[52] This must be explained by the fact that the French steel and armaments industry still had a firm grip on the rest of south-eastern Europe. It was not until Germany's domination of Central Europe, following the 1938 *Anschluss* and the Munich agreement, that Berlin achieved a major breakthrough in these countries. According to the same assessment, the breakthrough for the German armaments industry in Greece, and the subsequent consolidation of its position, was primarily due to internal political factors: the restoration of the monarchy in 1935 and the establishment of the Metaxas dictatorship in 1936.[53]

Thus, just months after the King had appointed Metaxas Prime Minister, it was clear that George II had found a strongman who was able to cope with the two major problems pending since the Great Depression and the beginning of Italy's aggression in Africa: the issue of rearmament and the huge frozen Greek credits on the clearing account in Berlin. However, Metaxas's role in the development of Greek–German relations was more one of a restoration rather than an innovation, containing as it did obvious elements of continuity connecting Metaxas's efforts to those of Constantine's 'Little Court'. Nevertheless, in his efforts to develop the dictatorship beyond being a mere *ad hoc* response to specific pending problems and into a

permanent feature of Greek politics and society, Metaxas soon faced problems to which neither anti-Venizelist customs nor Greek tradition could provide the answers. Accordingly, Metaxas began to look for models outside Greece, and, primarily, he turned to Nazi Germany. Metaxas made this clear to Berlin from the beginning. On 29 September 1936, he informed the German Minister of Propaganda, Josef Goebbels, that he admired National Socialism's achievements in Germany, privately confiding to Goebbels that he would like to achieve something similar in Greece while at the same time maintaining friendship and peace with both Britain and Germany.[54]

The Fourth of August Regime: Political Methods and Reforms

Metaxas suspended democratic rights and introduced strict censorship.[55] The Security Police was reorganised and began an efficient and brutal persecution of all opponents to the regime, especially the Communists.[56] The regime strived to promote itself as 'anti-plutocratic', as an alternative to trade unions, political parties and professional and industrial bodies. The First of May became a national holiday, rebaptised and celebrated by the regime as the 'National Day of Celebration of Work'. New labour legislation was passed which sanctioned compulsory arbitration and increased the minimum wage, as well as improving social welfare provision. The regime paid great attention to the actual enforcement of the labour legislation, and the Ministry of Labour did not refrain from fining employers if working hours in offices or factories were exceeded.[57] According to official figures, 616,000 workers and 141,000 public servants were covered by the labour legislation in 1939.[58] Wages increased by a nominal rate of 50 per cent from 1935 to 1940, although real growth was hardly more than five per cent owing to an increase in consumer prices.[59]

Job creation was of central importance to the regime. According to the German Embassy, the Greek government succeeded in bringing down unemployment from 128,000 to 26,000 during its first year in power, and in 1939, according to the same source, unemployment was down to 15,000.[60] The key factors, according to the German Embassy, were state-sponsored stimulation of industrial growth and efficient implementation and surveillance of labour legislation; the latter had set the working day for industrial workers at eight hours and for office workers at seven hours.[61] The above figures, however,

should not be taken at face value, and should be treated with considerable caution due to the desire of the regime to promote itself as 'pro-labour', and as an alternative to communism and free trade unions. However, it is a fact that the period under Metaxas was one of sustained industrial growth. This is particularly true in terms of the armament industry.

Propaganda and Ideology of the Fourth of August Regime in the Context of Hitler's New European Order

On certain occasions, the propaganda used by the regime aped the methods of Mussolini and Hitler. Metaxas gave himself symbolic titles, such as 'First Worker' (*Protos Ergatis*) and 'First Peasant' (*Protos Agrotis*), founded the national youth organisation EON (*Ethniki Organosis Neoleas*) which resembled the Hitler Youth, and introduced the 'Roman salute'. However, observers inside and outside Greece agreed that Metaxas failed to generate genuinely popular support.[62]

Moreover, these were not symbols of unity rooted in an original mass movement, and Metaxas's road to power was very different from both Hitler's and Mussolini's. The fact that the regime was not based on a mass movement indicates that it would be wrong to call the dictatorship 'fascist'.[63] Moreover, the regime did not have any plans for territorial expansion: these had been buried in the wake of Greece's disastrous campaign in Asia Minor in 1920–22.

However, all such observations on the Metaxas dictatorship pertain to a regime in its early infancy. The fact that Metaxas obviously intended the regime to be a permanent one makes it necessary also to evaluate the institutions and symbols which Metaxas created in regard to their potential significance and meaning in a long-term context. Seen from this point of view, Metaxas was clearly attempting to transform the Greek mind, and create a generation of new and regenerated Greeks. These efforts were in line with the ones undertaken by Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin to create a 'new man'. The ideological content of Metaxas's reforms, however, had much in common with Fascism and Nazism, and can be seen as an attempt to reorient Greece in a direction which would also make it conform with the planned Axis 'New Order' in Europe.[64]

The fight against communism was the area in which the shared ideological interests of the two regimes were most significant and

successful for both parties. The oppression of political opponents, and in particular of the Communists, during the Metaxas regime was, in terms of determination and efficiency, without precedent in Greek history. In November 1936, on the initiative of the Gestapo,[65] and as the result of an inquiry from the German legation in Athens, Metaxas declared that he approved the Greek Security Police and the Gestapo joining forces to exchange information as a defence against 'Bolshevik agitation'.[66] According to a German assessment, it was because of Metaxas that only a year after the establishment of his regime, communism lost its most important stronghold in the Near East.[67] At the end of 1937, the British legation acquired an item of correspondence dated May the same year between Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, and Konstandinos Maniadakis, the Secretary of Security. This stated that Maniadakis accepted an invitation on behalf of the Greek police to participate in a congress about methods to fight communism.[68] In this way German assistance also played a part in Metaxas's fight against internal enemies. It is notable that the British Foreign Office learned from sources in Germany that ten per cent of the value of the German arms trade to Greece went to Metaxas. The money was used for the establishment of Metaxas's party machinery and propaganda for the regime.[69] The British legation in Athens did not doubt the validity of the information, and in their eyes the crucial question was whether Metaxas would finally manage to claim supremacy and thrust the King into the background.[70]

During the initial phase of the dictatorship, Metaxas made it clear to the public that he did not hold anti-Semitic views. According to Kordt, this reverberated in the censored Greek press, which stressed that the Jews in Greece had the same status as any other citizen, and that anyone in Greece who entertained anti-Semitic feelings was a bad Greek.[71] This stance was also noticed abroad. The *Jewish Chronicle* in London printed a short article in September 1937 which praised Metaxas for prohibiting the publishing of anti-Semitic writings.[72] However, this public image contradicts the impression Goebbels gained from his talks with Metaxas in September 1936, which prompted him to characterise Metaxas as 'strongly anti-Semitic'.[73] This conversation, of course, was private, and Metaxas might have attempted to please Goebbels by expressing such views. Nevertheless, it indicates that Metaxas found it opportune to convey the impression to Berlin that he held anti-Semitic views. The regime

also made some groundwork in institutionalising overt and state-sponsored anti-Semitism, as well as *untermenschen* ideology. Application for membership of the EON, established with an eye to creating a new stock of regenerated Greeks, required the individual to be a Greek Christian. No Jews, Muslims or other minorities were permitted.[74] At its peak, the EON had more than one million members.[75] The frequent, and massive, book-burnings organised by the state included works by personalities whom Nazi anti-Semites systematically identified as exponents of international Judaism, namely Stefan Zweig and Sigmund Freud.[76]

Whether or not this state-sponsored anti-Semitism arose from heart-felt convictions, we should note that it does provide some evidence that Metaxas's Greece was a seriously race-conscious state that would form part of a future Axis-dominated New European Order. Moreover, in general the regime placed much emphasis on creating a national identity based on cultural and ethnic homogeneity. To this end, Turkish-speaking Muslims, Slavophones and Albanian-speaking minorities were forced to compromise their beliefs, and instruction of Greek became mandatory in minority schools.[77] The regime also clamped down on the subculture of the refugees from Asia Minor, in regard to certain manifestations of their specific identity. This, in particular, found an expression in the *rembetika* tradition: certain songs were prohibited, while the police closed down clubs and even imprisoned performers on the grounds that they were politically or morally subversive.[78]

The regime wanted to create a modern, and culturally heterogeneous, Greece in the image of classical Hellas and Byzantium, and introduced a cultural and national policy of integration. Metaxas ascribed paramount symbolic significance to a militaristic and oligarchic Sparta, and depicted Sparta as the first of three Greek civilisations. The two others were Byzantium, representing the Christian Orthodox ideal, and Metaxas's own regime, portrayed as 'the Third Greek Civilisation'. Metaxas believed that after 400 years of Turkish domination, Greek civilisation was totally obliterated, and he saw the ideal of classical Greece as a means to elevate twentieth-century Greece from its present level, as a 'bastard culture' of idle individuals, into a 'pure race' of disciplined and uncorrupted men and women working for the common cause of creating a 'new Greece'. It is notable that Metaxas did not see classical Greece merely as an ideal to be passively admired, but rather

as a method for political action to modernise society and culture. This conception of Hellas probably stemmed from his admiration for German culture. His views to some extent resembled whose of Wilhelm von Humboldt, the architect of the German restoration after the Napoleonic Wars, who authorised the instruction of the classical Greek language and culture as a means of purging German culture and society from French influence and raising Germany to a higher level of civilisation.[79] If one believed that the extraordinary achievements of modern Germany were the results of the Humboldtian reformation, then the high level of German culture and society would appear to be the result of the implementation of the ideals of ancient Greece. Or, to put it differently, of a process in which Germans were to become transformed into ancient Greeks;[80] this is, perhaps, *the* key to understanding Metaxas's deep admiration for German culture.

German admiration for Greek antiquity and the Humboldtian credo, in turn, gave Greek–German relations an emotional quality, which did not exist in German relations with other countries in the region, but which was somewhat similar to the sentiments the National Socialists nurtured for the Nordic countries out of racial attachment to its peoples, whom they believed to be of an especially pure Aryan stock. According to the British minister to Greece, Sir Sidney Waterlow, the National Socialists saw an intellectual affinity between the ancient Greeks and the modern Germans, or, as he expressed it, between Pericles and Hitler.[81] Albert Speer noted that Hitler was primarily influenced by Greek architecture, and regarded Greek culture as an expression of the highest imaginable perfection.[82] From the diaries of Goebbels it is possible to discern the feelings that were aroused in the German Minister of Propaganda during his first visit to Greece. In the following notes he describes how the dream of his youth came true in the airspace above Mount Olympus: 'There towers Mount Olympus and there Parnassus. It makes one warm. Old memories from my youth emerge. A dream comes true. The sun sets beautifully. Over eternal Greece'.[83] On the second day of his visit, Goebbels went to the Acropolis. The minister described it as the happiest morning of his life: 'Yesterday: one of the most beautiful and most significant mornings of my life. On the Acropolis. Only a few people. And I wandered about for hours in these noble places of Nordic art.'[84]

It is interesting that Goebbels depicts Greek antiquity as a part of the pre-Christian Nordic world, a fact that reveals that he subscribed

to the views of racial 'history' propagated by people like Guido von List, who believed that the Aryans originally stemmed form the North Pole but had spread to the Mediterranean and bred the race of the ancient Greeks.[85] It was in this spirit that Goebbels wrote: 'My soul is filled with beauty. Blessed antiquity, which lived in eternal joy free from Christianity. An evening stroll through the town. This joyful highest life. This smell of happiness. How pleased the Fuehrer would be if he were here with us!'[86] His joy at seeing the Acropolis again in 1939 inspired Goebbels further: 'On Acropolis. O, this shattering view! The cradle of Aryan culture.'[87]

Metaxas Takes over Control from the King

Metaxas was a central figure in Greek relations with Germany. This, and the fact that the armed forces, the tobacco industry and a growing section of business, in particular, the armaments industry, increasingly depended on these relations, in turn provided Metaxas with a power base which made him less dependent on the King. Soon after he was installed in power, Metaxas established a number of new ministries and secretariats, or created parallel ones to already existing ones, to which he appointed people who owed him their loyalty. From this platform, and by creating a *Herrschaftsanarchie*, Metaxas began to expand his power to the detriment of the King. In addition, his contacts with Germany, in particular in the realm of trade and armaments, depended on 'unofficial' contacts like Bodosakis, the deputy-director of the Bank of Greece, Kiriakos Varvaressos, and the private institution, the National Bank of Greece. There is strong evidence from German provenance that, at least well into 1937, Metaxas deliberately toned down his pro-German tendencies *vis-à-vis* the public, and attempted to keep the King in the dark.[88] Furthermore, the same evidence demonstrates that Berlin equally regarded this to be in the interest of Germany. Thus, Goebbels wrote in his diary that the cordiality of relations between Greece and Germany must be toned down, otherwise Metaxas could encounter trouble with Britain.[89] However, within months of Germany's conquest of Central Europe Metaxas swung into action, and in November 1938 he emerged victorious from a power struggle with the King.[90]

This in turn necessitates a correction of evaluations which analyses of Greek–German relations based on British evidence have

produced. This is true, in particular, regarding Koliopoulos, an authority on Greek–British relations, who concludes that 'Metaxas could not credibly match the King's British connection with a German one'.[91] However, Koliopoulos, who does not use German evidence, evaluates Greek–German relations rather exclusively on the basis of reports from Waterlow. The British minister indeed believed that the King was in charge of the government, and that he had Metaxas firmly under his control. Assertions that Greece had entered on a pro-German course were linked by Waterlow to the fact that the British community in Athens consisted mainly of business people, and that Britain's commercial interests in Greece were negatively affected by German trade policy.[92] This would also mean that, for some time at least, it would be in Waterlow's own interests to stress the significance of his relationship with the King. The American ambassador to Greece, Lincoln MacVeagh, suggests this explicitly in a letter to the State Department: 'Sir Sidney's [Waterlow] confidence in His Majesty and estimate of his personal influence and ability run far ahead of anything I would care to hazard. Indeed, in the light of the record, his attempt … to guide the King in his choice of advisers, takes on a decided aspect of the blind leading the blind.'[93]

It is notable that the American ambassador did not regard the King as a central element in Metaxas's power base. In words more appropriate to a description of criminal circles, MacVeagh outlined the following persons and institutions as central to Metaxas's position: 'about and behind the Dictator [are] – Drossopoulos of the National Bank, Kanellopoulos of the Youth Movement, Diakos, "the eminence grise", Maniadakis the sardonic reincarnation of Fouché, Bodossakis, the arms merchant et al.'.[94] In June 1939, the Foreign Office replaced Waterlow with the considerably younger Michael Palairet because he had lost his influence with the King and had a poor relationship with Metaxas.[95]

Greece in Search of an Ally, 1939–41

Since the time of the Abyssinian crisis, Greece saw Italy as its main threat. After the *Anschluss* and the Munich agreement, Greece increasingly feared Bulgaria and even the creation of an alliance between the Slavic countries Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.[96] In May 1938, the Greek government contacted Britain to obtain a guarantee against Bulgaria, but in vain. After the Munich agreement, Athens contacted

London twice, on 3 and 16 October, to seek an alliance with Britain in case of war between Italy and Britain. But again it was in vain. Metaxas now warned London that should Britain decline his request, Greece would have to observe a stance of strict neutrality; Metaxas also told the British that only an alliance with Britain would make it possible for Greece to escape the German economic 'stranglehold' on Greece.[97] Throughout this time every indication is that the Greek government paid an increasing political regard to Germany. On 8 October, before the meeting with Waterlow, Metaxas declared to the German minister in Greece, Prinz Victor von Erbach-Schönberg, that in the event of a Great Power conflict he would try to keep Greece neutral as long as possible. The German minister told the *Auswärtiges Amt* that, in his opinion, it was quite likely that Greece would join Britain in case of war. For this reason, according to Erbach, Greek neutrality was the most that Germany could hope for in this eventuality.[98] In a note from Metaxas's diary dated 20 October 1938, it appears that the Greek dictator had another meeting with Erbach just after the meeting with Waterlow, apparently in order to explain the situation to the German minister; the note reads: 'Negotiations with Waterlow. My suggestions [concerning a Greek–British alliance]. I am sure that they will not be accepted. But I am relieved.'[99] At the same time Metaxas asked the King to visit Hitler, something, however, George II managed to avoid.[100]

In this situation, London ordered Waterlow to put pressure on the King to get rid of Metaxas, because, according to London, the King was becoming a hostage of Metaxas, and because the regime was becoming increasingly totalitarian and fascist. However, Waterlow acted in vain and only contributed to make the King move closer to Metaxas.[101] According to the American ambassador, Britain made this move because Metaxas was expanding his control of the state to include foreign policy, and because not only was Metaxas 'a German sympathiser personally' but 'politically' a firm believer in the advisability of neutrality for his country. At the beginning of 1939, the influence of the King further eroded to the extent that MacVeagh stated that the King was now completely dominated by his 'Fascist Frankenstein, the German-educated General Metaxas'. According to MacVeagh, British attempts to liberate the King from this 'monster' should be seen as endeavours to stop the influence that foreign totalitarian states like Germany had gained during the dictatorship.[102]

At the same time, the British attempts to force the King to get rid of Metaxas made Goebbels contact Metaxas via Kostas Kodzias. Kodzias was one of Metaxas's men, and the only one from the regime who had met Hitler. The British often referred to him as the Göring of Greece. Goebbels wanted to know whether the King was ill-disposed toward Germany and if Greece had submitted herself to Germany's enemies.[103] Metaxas rejected the German assessment of the King, informing Goebbels that foreign policy was the responsibility of the Greek government and not the King, indicating that he would not allow the pro-British George II to influence his policy *vis-à-vis* Germany. At the same time, Metaxas emphasised that Greece had friendly relations with all Great Powers and intended to remain strictly neutral.[104] Metaxas repeated these points to Goebbels at a meeting held in Athens on 1 April 1939. From Goebbels's diary it is clear that he believed that Metaxas intended to keep Greece on a neutral course, and that he was convinced that the Greek dictator wanted friendship and peace with Germany.[105] Metaxas obviously attempted to balance Greek interests between several Great Powers to avoid unilateral dependence on Germany.

However, Britain proved reluctant, if not impotent, to counterbalance the rising German influence: it was not until 1939 that Britain granted Greece a £2m credit to buy British arms, a relatively modest amount compared to the Greek–German arms trade. London almost completely failed to assist Greece in taking some of her tobacco exports; after one year of fruitless negotiations with the British government, Athens was giving up the hope of even limited British assistance in this field.[106] The defeatist attitude of the Greek administration is reflected by Simmonds, trade secretary at the British legation, in his description of a meeting with Apostolides, the Greek Minister of Finance, on 28 March 1939:

> I went to see Monsieur Apostolides this morning about commercial affairs and found him in a state of great depression … He asked me not to mention the question of British buying of Greek tobacco as he was sick of hearing about it – he knew it would lead to nothing but more talk … He referred to the recent German economic arrangement with Romania and said that, as far as he could see, Romania had given away almost everything. What was more, he added, was that Greece's position was as hopeless as that of Romania and she might be called on to make a similar or worse agreement.[107]

In the wake of Italy's occupation of Albania on 7 April 1939, and after the outbreak of the Second World War, Greece moved somewhat closer to Britain, but Metaxas was extremely careful not to estrange Germany. On the occasion of the unilateral British guarantee to Greece against Italian aggression in April 1939, the Greek government was at pains to convince Berlin that the guarantee was merely a result of unilateral British conduct, and that the Greek government would defend its harbours against any aggressor.[108] After the outbreak of war, the Greek government concluded a War Trade Agreement with Britain, while private Greek shipowners reached an understanding with London regarding the provision of about 500,000 tons of shipping.

However, in the wake of Germany's successful *Blitzkrieg* in Europe, and after the fall of France, at a time when fear was rising that Italy would enter the war, Metaxas let Berlin know through his 'unofficial' German connections that he had warned Britain that he would not give up the smallest island or piece of land even to Britain or France without fighting. Metaxas also asked the German authorities to force Italy to stay out of the Balkans, and refrain from violating Greek territory. Metaxas's explanation for this 'unofficial' procedure was to avoid the British reprisals that would have been likely as the result of an open and official request to this effect. In fact, he wanted Berlin to know that he was 'dying for' Germany to guarantee Greek borders: 'The German government can be assured that such a guarantee will be received with enthusiasm by the Greek government as well as by the majority of the Greek people.'[109] However, in view of the unofficial character of the request, the *Auswärtiges Amt* informed Metaxas that the Greek government would be better off to declare her adherence to the Axis powers openly.[110]

In this period, Greece and Romania came under heavy pressure as Berlin made an unsuccessful attempt to make certain Greek officers persuade Metaxas to adopt an overt, pro-Axis policy,[111] and the Axis powers forced Bucharest to conform to revisions to which Stalin had also agreed, and surrender lands it had gained after the First World War to Bulgaria, Hungary and the Soviet Union. On 1 July 1940, Romania renounced a British guarantee and complied with Soviet and Bulgarian demands. With the Second Vienna Award signed on 30 August 1940, an international court created an intra-European legal system conforming with the interests of the revisionist states. As a

consequence, Transylvania was ceded to Hungary, while Italy and Germany guaranteed the rest of Romania.[112] A few days before, on 29 July 1940, Metaxas received information from the Greek ambassador in Berlin that the general attitude in Germany was that Greece would only obtain German support against Bulgarian demands for revision if she adjusted to the 'new situation' and joined the Axis.[113] Nevertheless, Metaxas would not believe these reports regarding Germany's attitude to Greece, and was, therefore, convinced that Hitler's love of ancient and modern Greek culture meant that Germany would never support such demands by Slavic Bulgaria. Moreover, Metaxas was sure that an 'honest and sincere' Greek neutrality was appreciated by the German government, and that there was an understanding of the difficulties which Greece's geographical position entailed. For these reasons, Metaxas refused to abrogate the British guarantee.[114] However, from August 1940 onwards, Greece began to violate the Greek–British War Trade Agreement entered into in January of the same year.[115]

At the same time, Italy was searching for ways to provoke a *casus belli* with Greece. In this situation, and in spite of Metaxas's refusal to comply with the demands from the Axis powers, in particular Italian ones, Germany did intervene twice in August towards Mussolini on the behalf of Greece, stressing that a disruption of peace in the Balkans was against German interests. In this capacity, Germany functioned as a kind of protector to Greece.[116] In spite of that, on 28 October 1940, Italy presented Metaxas with an ultimatum demanding access to Greek territory on the grounds that Rome was now the rightful executor of Albanian claims to Greek territory. However, Metaxas rejected Mussolini's demands out of hand by his famous *megali ochi* (Big No), and successfully resisted the invading Italian army, forcing Mussolini's troops to retreat into Albania. Mussolini's Greek débacle, and the need to secure its south-eastern flank, finally made a reluctant Germany decide to undertake a military intervention to bring the hostilities to an end and re-establish 'peace in the Balkans'. To obtain these ends Hitler decided to occupy not only Greece but also Yugoslavia.[117] Following the German victory, both countries were split up and forced to cede lands which were claimed by the revisionists powers in the region, Bulgaria and Albania.

Metaxas died in January 1941 before German troops arrived on the Greek borders, and before British forces were dispatched to

Greece. In the wake of Germany's occupation, the Greek government fled to Egypt to form the backbone of the British-supported Greek government-in-exile. This made it necessary to conform to British values and to abandon its former Nazi and fascist dispositions. The policy of the Metaxas regime can best be described as one of national efficiency, modernisation and integration, implemented through the extensive use of brutality and at the expense of parliamentary principles and democratic rights. In its focus on rearmament and its attempts to establish a corporate organisation of the labour market, as well as by its vision to organise the political apparatus and society according to the same principles, it departed from policies led by previous governments.

Metaxas's reliance on certain aspects of National Socialism and fascism must be seen as an expression of a more general tendency among Europeans, who felt that the Great Depression had widely shown parliamentarism and liberal economic philosophy to be impotent in coping with the new problems of a modern world. However, we should also see Metaxas's reforms as an attempt to prepare Greece for a New Order in accordance with Hitler's visions of a Europe under German leadership. This was especially true after Germany's conquest of Central Europe in the autumn of 1938, at a time when it appeared impossible to contain Germany and far from preordained that it would be defeated, should war come.

However, due to the short duration of the regime, Metaxas's reforms of state and society never took root, and only left a more lasting impression on Greece in the realm of legislation and military matters. Metaxas's foreign policy goals were to protect Greek national integrity and to retain her sovereignty as much as possible. This made it necessary to navigate carefully between the Great Powers. In the realm of trade and rearmament, he made Greece increasingly dependent on Germany. Regarding strategic policy, Metaxas was searching for protection against revisionism and especially against Italian aggression. To this end he approached Britain and Germany, but in vain. After Mussolini's attack on Greece, Germany began to plan a military action to restore 'peace in the Balkans' should the war between Greece and Italy drag on. Britain, in turn, decided to send a token contingent of troops to boost Greek morale.

NOTES

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4. Llewellyn Smith (note 1), pp.12–18; 77–85; 282–3.
5. Alexis Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek–Turkish Relations* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1983), pp.22–4, 70–1.
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7. Mavrogordatos (note 2), pp.55–64.
8. Thanos Veremis, 'The Officer Corps in Greece, 1912–1936', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 2 (1976).
9. Mavrogordatos (note 2), p.31.
10. Ibid., pp.182–225.
11. Ibid., pp.315–18; Veremis (note 8), p.118.
12. Annual Report 1935, FO 371/2 0392, Public Record Office (PRO).
13. Cf. P.J. Vatikiotis, 'Metaxas the Man', in Robin Higham and Thanos Veremis (eds.), *The Metaxas Dictatorship 1936–40: Aspects of Greece* (Athens: ELIAMEP, 1993), pp.189–91. For the early career of Metaxas, see P.J. Vatikiotis, *Popular Autocracy in Greece 1936–41: A Political Biography General Ioannis Metaxas* (London: pub?, 1998).
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15. Mavrogordatos (note 2), p.35.
16. Ibid., pp.315–18; Veremis (note 8), p.118.
17. Thanos Veremis, *I epemvasis tou stratou stin elliniki politiki, 1916–36* [The Intervention of the Army in Greek Politics 1916–1936] (Athens: Odysseas, 1983), pp.195–8.
18. Ibid., p.183; Mavrogordatos (note 2), p.318.
19. Annual Report 1935 (note 12).
20. Ibid.
21. The Venizelists declared the election invalid on the ground that the state of emergency was lifted too late.
22. Geneva, 4 May 1935, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PAAA), Pol.Abt.II, Pol.2, Balkan, 1089.
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24. Athens, 19 June 1935, PAAA, Pol.Abt.II, Pol.2, II Balkan 1462 Gr.; II, Balkan, 1089 Gr.
25. Mavrogordatos (note 2), pp.48–51.
26. Ibid.
27. Hary Cliadakis, 'The Political and Diplomatic Background to the Metaxas Dictatorship, 1935–36', *Journal of Contemporary History* 14/1 (January 1979), p.127.
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41. Mogens Pelt, *Tobacco, Arms and Politics: Greece and Germany from World Crisis to World War, 1929–1941* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1998), pp.143–4.
42. Personal letter from Theotokis to Canaris, Athens, 18 October 1935, PAAA, Geheimakten II FK118, Aus- und Einfuhr von Kriegsgerät nach den Balkanländer.
43. Eisenlohr to AA, Athens, 19 October 1935, eilig und geheim, PAAA, Geheimakten II FK118, Aus- und Einfuhr von Kriegsgerät nach den Balkanländer.
44. Eisenlohr, Athens, 20 November 1935, geheim, PAAA, Geheimakten II FK118 Aus- und Einfuhr von Kriegsgerät nach den Balkanländer.
45. Pelt (note 41), p.140; on the full course of Greek–German arms negotiations, pp.133–51.
46. Gesandtschaftsrat Kordt to AA, Athens, 13 March 1936, ADAP, C, V, 97. See also Berlin, 14 March 1936 ADAP, C, V, 110. Aufzeichnung des Vortragenden Legationsrat von Renthe-Fink.
47. Kordt to AA, politischer Bericht, Athens, 18 March 1936, PAAA, Abt.II, Pol.7, Gr., Ministerien Bd.2.
48. Pelt (note 41), pp.124–6.
49. Ibid., pp.124–6, 142–51.
50. Mogens Pelt, 'Bodosakis-Athanasiadis, a Greek Businessman from the East: A Case Study of the Interrelationship between State and Business', in Lars Erslev Andersen (ed.), *Middle East Studies in Denmark* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1994). On Göring's role, see Pelt (note 41), pp.91–101, 110–12, 161–76, 241–6.
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56. David H. Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War* (London: Longman, 1995), pp.32–59. Yannis Andricopoulos, 'The Powerbase of Greek Authoritarianism', in S.U. Larsen *et al.* (eds.), *Who were the Fascists?* (Bergen: Bergen-Oslo-Tromso Universitetsforlaget, 1980), pp.568–84.
57. Henry A. Hill, *The Economy of Greece: Prepared for the Coordinating Committee of American Agencies in Greece* II (New York: n.d.), p.45.
58. Erbach to AA, Athens, der 1. Mai in Griechenland, 10 May 1939, PAAA, pol.IV, Po.5, Gr. Bd.1.
59. Linardatos (note 55), p.121 n.1.
60. Griechenlands nationale Widergeburt. Zum ersten Jahrestag der Einführung der autoritären Regierungsform, PAAA, Pol.IV, Po.5, Gr. Bd.1.
61. Erbach to AA, der 1. Mai in Griechenland, Athens 10 May 1939, PAAA, Pol.IV, Po.5, Gr. Bd.1.
62. Annual Report 1937, FO 371/23371; Annual Report 1938, FO 371/23777; Political Review of the Year 1938, FO 371/24914 R441, all PRO.
63. Various frequently-cited scholars have suggested that the regime was a Fascist one; Nikos Psiroukis, *O fasismos ke i 4e augoustou* [Fascism and the 4th of August] (Athens: Ekdosis, 1974); Linardatos (note 55); and Heinz Reichter, *Griechenland zwischen Revolution und Konterrevolution, 1936–1946* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1973).
64. On Hilter's New European Order, see Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin, 1998), pp.141–84.
65. The Gestapo's aim was to make Berlin a so-called 'centre for the prevention of political crime'. The purpose was mainly propagandist and to show foreign countries that National Socialism had saved Europe from the Bolshevik danger. Agreements with the secret police in Italy, Hungary and Finland had already been made, and a practical co-operation agreement with Poland and Yugoslavia was instituted. Note by Heinrich Himmler's Deputy State Secretary, Berlin, 8 October 1936, PAAA, Inland IIg, Polizei Abkommen mit Griechenland und Bulgarien.
66. Erbach to AA, Telegram No.143, geheime Reichssache, Athens, 27 November 1936, PAAA, Inland Iig, Polizei Abkommen mit Griechenland und Bulgarien.
67. Erbach to AA, politische Behandlung der zum Jahrestag der Errichtung des autoritären Staats in Griechenland, politischer Bericht, Athens, 28 July 1937, PAAA, Pol.IV, Po.5, Gr. Bd.1.
68. FO 286/1142/71/71/49/37, PRO.
69. The source for this was from Mr Bartlett, agent for the Bristol Aeroplane Company in Europe. He gained the information during a stay in Germany. According to the same source, the Greek King found out and consulted Göring. Southern Department to the Embassy in Berlin, London, 17 March 1938, FO 371/22354/R 2314/18/19, PRO.
70. Athens, 23 March 1938, FO 371/22354, PRO.
71. Kordt to AA, die innerpolitische Entwicklung in Griechenland, Athens 17 September 1937, PAAA, Pol.IV, Po.5, Gr. Bd.1.
72. *The Jewish Chronicle*, no date, 1937, A/8/3, Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1937, A8/3.
73. Goebbels (note 54), II, p.687.
74. Jon V. Kofas, *Authoritarianism in Greece: The Metaxas Regime*, East European

Monographs (New York: Colombia University Press, 1983), p.89. See also Constantine Sarandis, 'The Ideology and Character of the Metaxas Regime', in Higham and Veremis (note 13), pp.147–77.
75. Close (note 56), pp.32–59.
76. Kofas (note 74), p.85.
77. Ibid., pp.89ff.
78. Gail Holst, *Road to Rembetika: Music of a Greek Sub-Culture, Songs of Love, Sorrow and Hashish*, 1st edn. (Athens: Limni, 1975), p.39 and passim.
79. On Humboldt's *Bildung*, see Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down from the Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp.25–32.
80. On Humboldt's Hellenic ideal, see Stathis Gourgouris, *Dream Nation: Enlightenment, Colonization and the Institution of Modern Greece* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp.122–4.
81. Annual Report 1935 (note 12).
82. Renate Meissner, 'I ethnikososoalistiki Germania ke i Ellada kata tin diarkia tis metaxikis diktatorias' [National Socialist Germany and Greece during the Metaxas dictatorship], in Hagen Fleicher and Nikos Svoronos (eds.), *Ellada 1936–1940, diktatoria – katochi – antistasi* (Athens: 1989), pp.50–7.
83. Goebbels (note 54), II, p.682.
84. Ibid., II, p.683.
85. Birgitte Hamann, *Hitlers Wien: Lehrjahre eines Diktators* (Munich: Piper, 1996), pp.293–311.
86. Goebbels (note 54), II, p.684.
87. Ibid., III, p.586.
88. The German legation to AA, Politischer Bericht, Geheim, Deutsche Kulturpolitik in Griechenland. Ein Bericht des Griechischen Gesandten in London, Athens, 10 March 1937, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BAK), R43 II/1445.
89. Goebbels (note 54), III, p.108.
90. Pelt (note 41), pp.185–91.
91. John S. Koliopoulos, 'Metaxas and Greek Foreign Relations, 1936–1941', in Higham and Veremis (note 13), pp.90–1.
92. Pelt (note 41), pp.104–7.
93. John O. Iatrides (ed.), *Ambassador MacVeagh's Reports* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp.151–2, MacVeagh to State Department, Athens, 31 January 1939.
94. Ibid., pp.148–9.
95. Koliopoulos (note 32), pp.107–8.
96. Pelt (note 41), p.108.
97. Koliopoulos (note 32), pp.89–90. See also Dimitris Kitsikis, *I Ellas tis 4s Avgoustou ke i megale dinamis* (Athens: Ikaros, 1974), p.76; and Pelt (note 41), pp.222–5.
98. Erbach to AA, vertrauchlich, Politischer Bericht, Athens, 8 October 1938, ADAP, D, V, 233.
99. Metaxas (note 36), IV, p.311.
100. Kitsikis (note 96), pp.74–7.
101. Pelt (note 41), pp.185–91, 225.
102. Iatrides (note 93), p.156.
103. Rizo-Ragavis to Metaxas, Berlin, 6 March 1939, Metaxas Archive, fak.30.
104. Metaxas to Rizo-Ragavis, Athens, 6 March 1939, Metaxas Archive, fak.30. In the commentary to Metaxas's diary, the event has been dated to 9 March 1939, Metaxas (note 36), IV, pp.335–6. However, as this must be the same event, the discrepancy may have occurred as a result of the publisher printing 6 upside down.
105. Goebbels (note **54/87**), III, p.587.

106. Pelt (note 41), pp.214–21.
107. Athens, 28 March 1939, FO 371/23776, PRO.
108. Erbach to AA, Athens, 19 April 1939, ADAP, D, VI, 231.
109. Aufzeichnung für den Reichsaussenminister, Berlin, 4 June 1940, ADAP, D, IX, 384.
110. Ibid.
111. Pelt (note 41), pp.231–2.
112. Ibid., pp.202–3.
113. Ragavis to Metaxas, Berlin, 25 July 1940, Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1940/A Pol/A/4.
114. Metaxas to Ragavis, coded, Athens, 27 July 1940, Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1940/A Pol/A/4.
115. Memo by Morath, Berlin, 2 December 1940, PAAA, Handakten Clodius, Gr. Bd.4. Koliopoulos claims that Greece was able to live up to the Anglo–Greek War Trade Agreement, Koliopoulos (note 91), p.99. However, this is contradicted by German calculations concerning deliveries of chrome, which concluded that Greece had complied with the war trade agreement in the period between January 1940 and 1 September 1940 and had delivered only 1,073 tons of chrome to Germany in spite of the 15,730 tons agreed upon. On the other hand, it was apparent that the agreed tonnage was delivered to Germany in the period from August 1940. Memo by Morath, Berlin, 2 December 194O, PAAA, Handakten Clodius, Gr. Bd.4.
116. Pelt (note 41), pp.232–6.
117. Ibid., pp.206–10.