

Greece - 2nd to Recent History

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Greece today is a small country, a pawn of great Power politics
Distressed by poverty and ~~and~~ distracted by corruption and internal strife
that ~~has~~ culminated in civil war.

I will divide the review of ~~of~~ Greece into two ~~categories~~ ^{parts}
the ~~background~~ background of the Left and the
Background of the Right.

Ever since Greece became independent of the ~~Turks~~ in 1830
they have been ruled by a monarch and for some eighty years they
maintained a precarious hold on their independence. Great Britain
long ago recognizing the strategic importance of Greece in
the Mediterranean ~~area~~ managed to control Greece through the
effective but not so obvious device of Economic Imperialism.

Britain Stabilized the Greek economy with various loans with interest
~~rates~~ so great that it managed to saddle the Greek ~~with~~ ^{If controlled much of the island, came and with} ~~with~~
~~go~~ budget with debt. ~~It required a sizable proportion of greek~~
~~the debt~~ income to pay off on these debts. One of the conditions for
restoring the Greek monarchy to power after World War II was the pledge
that they would continue to respect and pay towards their loan of
the late nineteenth century.)

Under a new a fiery personality Eleftherios Venizelos
a Turkish Subject ~~under his leadership~~ ^{Navy for} against brought to
~~light for his~~ ^{INSPIRED} leadership against the Turks on his native island, Crete
Greece began a program of expansion. He was installed as prime Minister
in 1910 and lost no time in joining in league with Bulgaria and Serbia
for the purpose of attacking the Turks and partitioning the European provinces
of the Ottoman empire. He added to his laurels by defeating
the Turks and thereby gained more ~~territory~~ for Greece.
His popularity brought him into open conflict with The Monarch
King Constantine.

At the outbreak of World War I. Constantine who was related to the Kaiser did not wish to join the Allies and preferred instead to remain neutral. Venizelos however saw in joining the allies an opportunity of gaining Constantinople for Greece from the Turks.

This rivalry culminated ^{with} Venizelos deciding on insurrection especially when his party in an election in 1916 gained a majority ~~and~~ and King Constantine refused to appoint Venizelos Prime Minister. He withdrew from Athens and established a Government in Salonika in open defiance of the King. He was supported by the French and British anxious to have Greece ~~in~~ on their side ^{for the} ~~and~~ ^{to open} a front on Bulgaria. The allies forced the Government at Athens to come to terms with Venizelos and declare him Prime Minister in 1917. It was an open victory for the revolutionaries and Constantine was forced to relinquish his throne to his second son Alexander.

These events marks the beginning of two rival and hostile parties. New men representing a new class rose to power in Venizelos' wake and shouldered aside the semi-aristocratic families who had previously excercised a near monopoly of political leadership. Thus we see a formation of a Liberal party consisting of agrarian and overcrowding peasants eager to join Venizelos in his quest for more lands for Greece and on the other hand the Peoples or Popular party consisting of the old families and established wealthy and aristocratic Greeks which rallied around the figure of King Constantine. This rivalry ~~centered~~ itself in the ~~centered~~ centered it's power into two different sections. The North became strongly Pro-Venizelist and the South Pro Monarchy. After 1922

the struggle took on a constitutional form: royalist versus republican.

After the defeat of Greece in Asia Minor by the Turks under Mustapha Kemal and the subsequent loss of ~~the~~ part of Asia Minor ~~disgust~~ popular revulsion against the monarchy that brought about this defeat realized itself and three Venizelist officers, Nicholas Plastiras, Stylianios Gonatos and another Admiral Hadjikyriakos seized control of the Government and invited the then reigning monarch King George the 11 to leave the country. In March 1924 George was formally dethroned and Greece officially became a Republic. By this act the Liberal and associated parties became indelibly stamped as republican; while their major rival for political power the Popular Party by virtue of its origin and composition favored monarchy. Thus the constitutional issue was created which has distracted Greek politics ever since.

The Republicans enjoyed ~~an~~ strong but somewhat ~~unstable~~ ^{erratic} power until 1935. During this post war period the principal line of division in Greek politics remained /royalist and republican. The two main groups were in turn extensively subdivided into a large number of splinter parties. These splinter parties generally formed around some prominent politician. The small parties thrown off the by the liberals were in general left of center like the Progressive party under George Kafandaris the Democratic Socialist Party of George Papandreou.

Among the conservatives similar developments took place. After 1924 the main stem of the popular party officially accepted Republicanism but privately clung to the hope of ~~se~~ eing the