

The Civil War in Greece

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_civil_war_in_greece-en-7b5cd676-e47a-45c4-8bbc-17ce67727592.html

Last updated: 07/07/2016



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In the years following the Second World War in Greece, the Communists engaged in violent conflicts against the government forces who were receiving massive military and financial aid from Britain and, later, from the USA. These countries feared that Greece, the last of the Balkan states to resist Soviet domination, would in turn fall to the Communists. As a neighbour of Turkey, Greece was an area of prime importance from an economic and strategic viewpoint for preventing Soviet domination of the Eastern Mediterranean and protecting Middle East oil supplies. The United States was therefore committed to preserving the independence and territorial integrity of the kingdom and encouraged the authorities to establish a government of national unity and to undertake a series of economic reforms. By launching a campaign that would culminate in victory for the royalist armies within two years, the United States assumed the position of undisputed leader of the 'free world'. Greece enjoyed the benefits of the Marshall Plan and gradually became part of the Western system, joining the Council of Europe in 1949 and NATO in 1951. The defeat of the Communist revolt in Greece, in which more than 50 000 people died, marked the end of the spread of Soviet influence in Europe.