



The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949

By Charles R. Shrader

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An explanation of the failure of the Communist insurgency in Greece between 1945 and 1949, this study provides a striking lesson in what happens to an armed revolutionary movement when it lacks adequate manpower and logistical resources, and is divided against itself on such basic matters as foreign policy and the employment of its military capabilities. During the period of 1945-1949, the Greek Communist Party was split into competing factions, each with its own idea of which course the rebellion should take. The Stalinist faction, led by Secretary-General Nikos Zachariades, was pitted against the more pragmatic nationalist wing led by the commander of the Greek Democratic Army, Markos Vafiades. Shrader provides a detailed examination of the logistical aspects of the war, particularly the impact of political decisions and the aid provided to the Greek Communists by outside supporters on logistics and operations.

At each successive stage of the conflict, Zachariades outmaneuvered his rivals and imposed policies that both reduced the resources available to the Communist-led insurgents and sought to turn an effective guerrilla force into a conventional army employing conventional operational methods. The decisions taken by the Greek Communist Party under Zachariades' leadership alienated both the domestic supporters of the Communist rebellion and its key external supporters, such as Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia. Ultimately, the conventionally organized Greek Democratic Army proved unable to sustain itself logistically, and it was defeated in August 1949 by the constantly improving Greek National forces aided by the United States.

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Editorial Review

Review

"[S]hrader's study is exceptionally well-researched and documented....Shrader's study is among the most well-documented English-language histories of the Greek civil war. Shrader's study is especially welcome for its scrupulous objectivity and balance, something lacking in many (particularly Greek-language) studies of the period....[T]he Withered Vine is not only a well-documented and balanced study, but it also provides a great deal of essential historical background to the Greek civil war, focusing on its origins in the Greek resistance during World War 2....Integrating a great number of factors, Shrader weaves them together in such a way as to offer a comprehensive, well-integrated explanation of the loss. In short, *The Withered Vine* is a well-written, fascinating study that deserves to be read by anyone interested in this period of Greek history or in insurgent guerrilla warfare, more generally."-*The European Legacy*

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About the Author

CHARLES R. SHRADER is an independent historian and consultant who currently serves as the Executive Director of the Society for Military History. A Vietnam veteran, he retired from the United States Army in 1987 as a Lieutenant Colonel. He taught history at West Point, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and the Army War College. He also served at the NATO Defense College. His other books include *U.S. Military Logistics, 1607-1991: A Research Guide* (Greenwood Press, 1992), *Communist Logistics in the*

Korean War (Greenwood Press, 1995), and *The First Helicopter War: Logistics and Mobility in Algeria, 1954-1962* (Praeger, 1999).

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