

The Publications of Diplomatic Documents of the Service of Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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The Service of Diplomatic and Historical Archives, and more precisely its Department for Publications, is the service that has the official and exclusive jurisdiction to publish diplomatic documents.

Since 1997 the volumes published by the SDHA have always been thematic. Before that, in a few more occasions (end of 19th century, 1950s) other thematic volumes were published. A series of chronological volumes was published in the 1950s containing documents from the first years of the 20th century. Another similar effort had been made in the 1980s to start a chronological series for the 1930s, but only two volumes were released.

In our volumes documents are always presented in extenso and in some cases there are explanatory annotations made by the SDHA. All the publications also include a chronology of events, biographical notes of those mentioned in the documents, bibliography, index and very frequently illustrations and/or maps.

Today, the publication series are always thematic and consist of the following two groups:

1. 'Collections of Documents' Series

This particular series of publications forms part of the general project of systematically publishing the archival material of the M.F.A. relating to important issues of national foreign policy. The following volumes have appeared to date:

a. The Dodecanese. The Long Road to Union With Greece (Kastaniotis Editions, Athens, 1997), in both Greek and English. This book was published to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the unification of the Dodecanese with Greece. The volume contains 133 diplomatic documents concerning the Greek, Italian and Turkish foreign policy with regards to the Union of the Dodecanese with the nation state, while it also depicts the social, economic and cultural life of the Dodecanesian people and their

participation in the struggle against occupation. The goal of this publication is to present the broad and multi-faceted image of the island's history during 1943-1951.

b. Documents on the History of Greek Jews (Kastaniotis Editions, Athens, 1998), was published initially in English, and was followed soon thereafter by a Greek version in December 2000. This volume appeared first in English because its preparation coincided with the organisation of International Conferences on the search for Nazi gold and compensation for the victims of the Holocaust. It was on the occasion of this publication that Greece was singled out from the forty-seven countries at the Washington Conference for the stance it adopted towards Jews both during and after the Second World War, and also for its efforts and its active role in international meetings and committees dedicated to securing justice for the victims of that dark period of the history of mankind. The Greek edition, comprising 263 documents, shed light to some hitherto unknown aspects of the history of Greek citizens of Jewish faith who took root in our country at the time of Alexander the Great, became acquainted with the Greek civilization through their everyday life, acquired a special bond and a patriotic Greek conscience and participated in the social and military struggles of the country as citizens equal to the rest of the Christian population. These people sought a better tomorrow and, consequently, suffered relentless persecutions during the German occupation despite the significant efforts made by the people, the Church and all the Greek governments to protect Greeks of Jewish faith.

c. Greece on the Verge of a New World. Cold War-Truman Doctrine-Marshall Plan (Kastaniotis Editions, Athens, 2002, in Greek). This is a three-volume collection of 188 documents relating to the American aid made available to Greece, amongst other European countries, after the Second World War. Along with the economic reconstruction of the country, which was given primacy in the prologue to the decision taken by the American Congress, it traces the political, social and military implications of the implementation of the economic recovery program extended throughout Greece especially after the Civil War. Included in the publication is a timetable, biographical information, rare photographic material and the testimony of a former Greek employee at the Embassy of the United States in Athens responsible for the implementation of certain aspects of the Marshall Plan in Greece.

d. The Participation of Greece in the Process Towards European Integration. The Crucial Twenty Years 1948-1968 (Volume One, Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs-

Service of Diplomatic & Historical Archives, Athens, 2003). This first volume of a three-volume series, published simultaneously in Greek and English within the framework of the Greek Presidency of the Council of the E.U., covers the years from 1948 until 1968 and includes 120 documents from the archives of the M.F.A. It also includes a preface by the Minister of Foreign Affairs George A. Papandreou, an introductory historical note by the Director of Y.D.I.A. Photini Tomai-Constantopoulou, while valuable testimonies were provided by the Ambassador e.t. Vyron Theodoropoulos, the former Minister and Commissioner of the E.U. Georgios Contogeorgis, the former Minister and Vice-Governor of the Bank of Greece Ioannis Pesmazoglou and Professor P. C. Ioakimidis.

This publication aims at presenting, through unpublished archival material, the attitude and position of Greece towards the first efforts for European integration: from its stance towards the creation of the Organisation of the Treaty of Brussels (later the Western European Union) in 1948, until the creation of the European Communities and from its participation in the Council of Europe in 1949, until the Association Agreement with the E.E.C. in 1961. By studying this material, the interested reader will quickly discover the explicit European orientation of Greece, evident as early as the first post-war years. It is noteworthy that this European orientation was supported by the majority of the political forces of that time.

Within the framework of the 'Collections of Documents' series, a second and a third volume will be published and presented very soon, concerning the participation of Greece in the process towards European integration and covering the period between 1969 and 2001 (when Greece acceded to the E.M.U.).

2. 'Archive Unit Catalogues' Series

a. Cinematographic Archive (Kastaniotis Editions, Athens, 2000), in both Greek and English editions. This publication is devoted to the operation of a new Y.D.I.A. department, that of the Film Archive. The descriptions and catalogues of this archive, the first such archive within a Foreign Ministry in the E.U., is prefaced by an extensive historical introduction tracing events from the time of the Macedonian Struggle to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. The presentation of the historical events is accompanied by an account of the early steps and subsequent growth of the Greek and Balkan cinema.

b. Catalogue of the Archive of the Italian Administration of the Dodecanese, 1912-1945 (Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Service of Diplomatic & Historical

Archives - Ministry of National Education and Religion - General State Archives of the Prefecture of the Dodecanese, Athens, 2002, in Greek). As its title clearly reveals, this volume contains a catalogue of the files of the Administration of the Italian Islands of the Aegean during the period from 1912 to 1945. These record groups derive from the time the Italian Authorities played an active role in the Dodecanese, when this group of islands belonged to Italy. The archive located in the building of the Castellanian Library, at Aristotelous Square in the Old Town of Rhodes, contains extensive information about the activities of a significant part of the Greek population that played a formative role and prospered in the Dodecanese.

Today we are ready to initiate a new form of publishing documents, that is digital publications.

The first result of this new effort is the creation of a DVD concerning the participation of Greece in the San Francisco Conference for the creation of the United Nations in 1945 and its first participation in the Security Council as a non-permanent member in the years 1952 and 1953. The experience the Service of Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs has had so far while compiling this collection of documents concerning these two events in order to create and release the respective DVD I am about to present you.

The Service in which I have the honour and privilege to serve and its Director Mrs. Photini Tomai-Constantopoulou, decided to produce this project at the beginning of this year, as a tribute and a solemn contribution of the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the occasion of the participation of Greece, for the first time since 1953, in the UN Security Council for the years 2005 and 2006.

For the first time, our Service decided not to proceed to the release of a printed volume, as it has done until now, but to proceed to the production of a DVD, of a digital publication. The main reasons for this decision were four:

1. The project had to be concluded in a short period of time, since the membership period had already started and the outcome should be ready a good while before its end in December 2006. Usually the preparation period for our publications is 18 to 24 months, including the period necessary for research, selection and transcription of documents, editing and printing. The advantage of a digital publication is that the selection, transcription and editing period is minimized, since the selection criteria would be looser and the documents would be scanned instead of transcribed, and editing will not be needed.

2. A digital production in DVD can contain much more documents than those that can be included in a printed volume. Thus, while our publications usually contain 100-130 documents per volume, the DVD on the UN will contain around 400 documents, scanned and organized by date and subject.

3. As mentioned, we deem this to be solemn work on the occasion of Greece's participation this year and the next in the Security Council. The creation of a DVD allows us to make a richer production than usual, using colour pictures of the documents and including even some of their handwritten versions, allowing thus the viewer of the DVD to acquire a more precise feeling of the time and the events described in the documents.

4. The expenses for a digital production are far less than of a printed one, since the greatest part of the work has been effectuated within the Service (scanning, electronic editing etc) or the Ministry in general.

Allow me at this point to refer to the methodology used by the Service of Diplomatic and Historical Archives in the compilation of this collection of documents. And since this is the first time that Greece participates in this kind of Conferences, this is a chance for us to explain very quickly the methodology we use for all our publications, which from what I understand is not very different from the one used by most of the Services represented by you.

The research for the documents was effectuated by a special working – research group of scientific advisors and interns of the Service that have access and study all the files that may contain documents that could be of our interest for the publication. These files could either be from the archives of the Central Registry of the Ministry (that is, all the Directorates of the Ministry located in Athens) or the archives of the Greek authorities abroad that have been repatriated.

As the research group goes through the files of the archives, their mandate is to find and note down all documents that may be useful or interesting to be published. As soon as they spot an interesting document, they photocopy or scan it and they insert its details into an electronic database. Thus, the first part of the selection is made. Usually by the end of this phase of the research a database of up to 1000 documents has been created. From this pool of documents, the Director and the scientific advisers of the Service make the final selection of those documents to be published.

In the case of the DVD on the United Nations, the members of the research group (it consisted of two persons) scanned the interesting documents, thus creating colour images of each one of them, and at the same time they inserted their details into the database which at the end was transformed into the catalogue of the documents appearing in the DVD itself. The criteria used in the final selection of documents were less strict, since the amount of those to be published could be much bigger than in the printed publications that the Service has released until now.

As mentioned before, if original handwritten versions of the documents were also found in the files, they were also scanned and added to the printed one. The images of the documents were then transformed in pdf format, and that is how the viewer of the DVD will have the opportunity to see them.

It is of course the material itself that determines the main subjects of the documents contained in this kind of publications, either they are printed or electronic ones. Thus, the research group for this project, as it is almost always the case, did not have a very clear idea of what it should look for in the files of the Archives when it first opened them. The only certain criterion for the initial selection was that, since the project was until then supposed to be nothing more than a tribute of a more or less solemn nature, the selected documents should be of similar orientation.

The first chapter of the DVD, as mentioned above, concerns the participation of Greece in the San Francisco Conference for the creation of the United Nations in 1945 and the research started from the files concerning exactly this event. The plan was to look thoroughly into the files of the Central Registry of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then, if necessary, to search the archives of the Greek Embassies in Paris, London and Ankara, in order to find supplementary information. The archives of the Greek Embassy in Washington would also have been useful for this research, but unfortunately this series of records has not yet been repatriated and therefore it was not feasible to have easy access to it.

The ideal situation would of course to have the original records of the Greek Delegation to the Conference. A separate series with this name does not exist in the catalogues of the Archives of the Ministry, but a first look at the inventory revealed that a part of these records had been incorporated into the Central Registry, which of course rendered the work of the research group easier.

Or so it was initially considered.

The reality nevertheless was different and this became obvious when the folders of the Central Registry containing the records of the Greek Delegation were opened.

According to the inventory, there was only one folder containing these records, organised in four subfolders, which was by itself a rather strange situation as somebody would expect to find much more material assembled during an important and lengthy Conference like the one that resulted to the creation of the United Nations. What the research group very quickly realized was that there were two different registries for the records of the Greek Delegation. One of the first documents spotted, was a small notebook containing the registry of the Secretariat of the Delegation. There were not many entries in that notebook, only 16 in total, registering both outgoing and incoming correspondence of the Secretariat. Most of the documents noted in that registry were found in the folder of the Delegation records and subsequently they were scanned and their details were inserted into the database, along with the scanned image of the registry itself.

On the other hand, unfortunately there was found no registry of the political records of the Delegation. Instead, and this came as a surprise to the research group, on the cover of the first subfolder, there was a handwritten note indicating, and I translate, that:

“The present file constitutes only a part of the records of the Greek Delegation to the San Francisco Conference. The biggest part of the correspondence of the Delegation was kept by Mr. M[iltiades] Delivanis, Private Secretary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Head of the Delegation Mr. I[oannis] Sofianopoulos . Moreover, the Press Office of the Delegation under Mr. G[eorgios] Cavounides had also separate records. Signed: A. S. Liatis”

Alexis Liatis was a diplomat who during the San Francisco Conference acted as the Secretary of the Greek Delegation.

It was therefore apparent, not only from that note, but also from the content of the four subfolders, that the existing records of the Delegation were far from being complete.

And this is when the research group had the idea of seizing the opportunity of the production of this DVD to make something somehow more interesting and more useful than a simple solemn tribute, at least as far as the part about the San Francisco Conference was concerned: this project appeared to be a very good opportunity of restituting, in electronic / digital format, the divided and possibly partly lost records.

The aim of the research group was consequently to reconstitute the missing registry of the Delegation records. By going through the documents that existed into the four subfolders that were left, it was obvious that the registry of the political records initially included about 300 numbered outgoing documents, while it seemed that the incoming documents were not numbered at all and therefore their exact number remains unknown. The method followed by the research group would be to first find, scan and insert all the outgoing documents, copies of which existed in the four subfolders, regardless of their importance. And thus, even simple administrative notes that had been given a register number, were scanned and included in the DVD. The reason why these simple notes were numbered was mainly because they were signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Head of the Greek Delegation Ioannis Sofianopoulos. In many cases, only the handwritten versions of the documents were found in these subfolders.

As far as the incoming documents are concerned, since there was no relative registry, the research group chose those that it considered more interesting and indicative of the events and the stance of the Greek Delegation during the negotiations in San Francisco, avoiding to include official documents of the Conference or circular documents of other Delegations.

When this phase was over, the real work of reconstituting the records of the Delegation began. Only 29 copies of the almost 300 outgoing documents had been discovered until that moment, which is barely 1/10 of the total. The purpose in the next phase was to search other files of the Central Registry and of the archives of the Greek Embassies in order to discover documents dispatched by the Greek Delegation to various Directorates of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens or to these Embassies.

The first folders that were searched in this framework were those entitled: "Personal Records of Minister I. Sofianopoulos". In a total of seven subfolders, the research group discovered 85 more copies with register numbers of outgoing documents of the Greek Delegation, most of them handwritten.

In the rest of the files of the Central Registry and the above-mentioned Embassy archives, some 50 more documents were spotted having a register number of the Greek Delegation to San Francisco, as they were received by the relevant Directorates or Embassies. Many more printed copies of the handwritten documents that were found in the original Delegation records and the Sofianopoulos' "personal records"

were found in these files and were also scanned and put together with the handwritten versions.

Like this, more than 150 of the outgoing documents of the Delegation were found and included in the database, restituting thus one half of its records in one single digital framework. This of course can prove very useful to potential researchers of the period and restitutes a missing link of the history of the participation of Greece in the United Nations. A few more outgoing documents, with no register number and mainly of administrative nature (signed by the Delegation Secretary Liatis) were also added.

Together with the incoming documents of the period, the total number of documents selected, scanned and incorporated into then DVD concerning the San Francisco Conference in 1945 amounts to 254, those included in two versions (handwritten and printed) having been counted only once.

And thus the first part of the project was concluded.

The second part refers to the first Greek membership of the UN Security Council in 1952 and 1953.

The research group started its work for this part in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs using the same method as before. That is, by looking first into the files of the Central Registry and then in the archives of some main Embassies the records of which have already been repatriated and organized. In the total some more 150 documents were scanned, described in the database and finally incorporated into the DVD concerning this period.

Our project is now almost complete and the DVD will be released by the end of the year.