

Western Akritas: Excavating Modern Greek History in the Hoover Institution Archives

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It's hard to view the rich and bustling San Francisco Bay Area as the Wild West. When it comes to researching modern Greece, however, it often seems a barren landscape. Example: thousands visit or walk by Stanford University's Cantor Museum without ever realizing it is a doppelganger of the National Archaeological Museum in Athens.



Far more disturbing, [the papers of Spyros P. Skouras](#), one of the creators of the Hollywood studio system and Greece's most influential benefactor in the 20th century, had been left unexplored for twenty years after Stanford opened them to the public (1992). The final straw: in January 2014, I discovered that Hoover Institution's official [34 collections on modern Greece](#) were a smokescreen for some two hundred folders on the same subject spread across many dozen collections. The following partial list commemorates a decade of unsponsored research on modern Greece in the Hoover archives. Can Greece (and Greek-America) afford to neglect this treasure trove of sources two centuries after its modern resurrection?

Early 20th century—WWI

- * The complete archive of the [Russian mission in Athens](#) (1874–1925).
- * [Memorandum](#) of Korytza district citizens protesting its annexation to Albania.
- * Photo album of Queen Olga.
- * Book manuscript on the Balkan front by war correspondent Charles Thompson.

Asia Minor catastrophe

- * [Arnold J. Toynbee's correspondence during his tour of the Anatolia front \(1921\)](#).
- * Reports, memoirs, etc. on the persecution of Greeks, Armenians, and Americans in Turkey prior to the closing of Anatolia College and its relocation to Thessaloniki.
- * Reports and eyewitness accounts by Americans regarding the arson of Smyrna, including [H. C. Jaquith's report to Admiral Bristol](#).
- * Autobiography of an Armenian genocide survivor who escaped to and witnessed the destruction of Smyrna.
- * [Deposition of Colonel Tsipouras' American wife about the Revolution of 1922](#).
- * Records of the Near East Foundation's humanitarian work in Greece.
- * Copy of the American Red Cross archive on the humanitarian crisis in Greece.

WWII—Occupation—Civil War

- * Copies of the original maps and diagrams of the ground-breaking [Doxiadis exhibition](#) at the inaugural United Nations conference in San Francisco (1945).
- * [The archive of OSS agent Kostas Kouvaras, including reports on the Operation Pericles \(1944\) and copies of ELAS military records](#).
- * [Records and correspondence of social worker Anna Howell Hayward \(Lisle\) from Western Greece \(1944-46\)](#).
- * [Manuscript memoirs of General Lanz](#), responsible for the purging of Greek resistance in Epirus and the massacre of Italian soldiers in Kefalonia.
- * Collection of Greek war propaganda posters (1940–41).
- * Photographs from the famine and the resistance to the Occupation.
- * Material from the activities of the Greek War Relief Association in America.
- * Photo album of a U.S. observer of the first postwar election in Greece.
- * Reports from the U.S. Embassy in Athens (1947–48).

Cyprus liberation—Junta

- * The [Charles Foley collection](#) documents the EOKA struggle against the British and includes an English translation of George Grivas' memoirs.
- * Large collection of foreign newspaper clippings (in photocopies) about the anti-dictatorial fight.

Digital collections

- * The "[Poster collection](#)" features dozen items dating from WWI to the Junta period.
- * "[Commonwealth Club of California records](#)": includes talks by U.S. Ambassador Henry Grady on the elections of 1946 and the Greek civil war (1948), the King and Queen of Greece's speech during their visit in California (1953), Andreas Papandreou on the Greek junta (1970), and A. K. Simonides on Cyprus (1976).
- * "Firing Line broadcast records": features interviews with [Andreas Papandreou \(1972\)](#), and [the deposed King Constantine II \(1990\)](#).

With a dwindling population, a tanked economy, a minority language, and aggressive neighboring countries, modern Greece needs the historical record to safeguard its right to survival, prosperity, and independence. May the excavation of Hoover Institution's Greek collections contribute to this goal.

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