

**The Road to St. Petersburg 1821 - 1826: The War in Greece and British
Diplomacy**

Anna Degleri

**M.Phil. in History
School of History
University of East Anglia**

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Abstract

The present thesis examines the British involvement in the Greek War of Independence from its outbreak in 1821 to the granting of political status to Greece with the Protocol of St. Petersburg in 1826. During this period, the British involvement ranged from strict neutrality between 1821 and 1823, to unofficial increasing support in 1825, and finally active support in 1826.

One part of the thesis presents the British point of view and shows that Britain became involved in the Greek War of Independence to protect her commercial interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, which were threatened by the outbreak of the revolution in Greece. In addition, it is shown that she also wanted to maintain her presence in the area, which primarily aimed at keeping at bay the Russian aspirations for influence in the Eastern Mediterranean in the detriment of the Ottoman Empire. Once the revolution in Greece created a new status quo in the Mediterranean, Britain was the first to become aware of it. Therefore, she initiated a delicate diplomatic game which aimed at pacifying Greece, which resulted in Britain's rapprochement with Russia, Russia's breaking the ties with the Holy Alliance, and finally the signature of the Protocol of St. Petersburg.

However, the originality the thesis lies in presenting and analysing the Greek reaction to the British policy as that was formed during that period. Most of the information comes from the Greek sources, which confirm that the attitude of the Greeks towards Britain was also gradual, and ranged from hostility and suspicion between 1821 to 1823, to hesitant approach during 1824, and unconditional dependence and trust from 1825 until 1826. The Greek sources

reveal that despite the multitude of views regarding the role of Russia, France, and Britain in the war in Greece, the majority of Greeks realised that only Britain was able to exercise her political and diplomatic influence in order to bring the war to end, and place Greece among the free nations of Europe.

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