

Challenge to

FREEDOM

The Story of
What Happened in Greece

From the Reports of

LELAND STOWE and
CONSTANTINE POULOS

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Table of Contents

	PAGE
FOREWORD	5
LELAND STOWE	
Broadcast, February 3, 1945, New York	9
Broadcast, January 20, 1945, Rome, Italy	13
CONSTANTINE POULOS	
The Record of the EAM	18
The Gathering Storm	20
Agony in Athens	22
After the Massacre	25
General Plastiras	26
British Intervention	27
The Royalists Rejoice	28
British Censorship	29
AIMS OF THE GREEK AMERICAN COUNCIL	32

Foreword

THE ARMED storm in Greece has subsided, a peace agreement been reached between the government and the National Liberation Front, EAM, but as we go to press the situation in

Greece remains deeply troubled.

It was the tragedy of British armed intervention that prevented the Greek people from working out their difficulties through normal procedures, by negotiation, and political struggle. In fact, the British order to disband the democratic ELAS units while other fascist units remained armed and intact, was issued while negotiations on this matter were still going on and before the members of the Greek government had reached any final decision. The armed conflict precipitated by the British intervention in Greek internal affairs has delayed by months the holding of a plebiscite and truly free national elections—key to the stabilization of the Greek political situation.

British intervention shoved the struggle to solve tangled economic and other domestic questions out of the political arena and into the military arena. In signing the peace agreement with the Greek Government, the leaders of the EAM made clear that *arms* must be reserved for the war against Germany, and that to achieve progress in Greece, the Greek people, united under the leadership of the EAM, would wage a *political* struggle through peaceful means. For struggle there will be to ensure that the elections are not postponed nor rigged by reaction, and that democracy lives again in Greece.

The past few months of tragedy have proven to the hilt the strength and unity of the EAM. Every device to split the EAM has been used—from tanks and planes to an unprecedented international campaign of slander. And yet today the EAM is more than ever the expression of the will of the democratic Greek people.

In the words of General Mandakas, Hero of Crete: "The EAM is an indisputable reality. The bonds of its parties are becoming more firm."

On the day the peace agreement was reached between the EAM and the Government—Feb. 12th—the joint communique of Prime Minister Churchill, President Roosevelt, and Premier Stalin meeting at Yalta in the Crimea, was issued, declaring that the "establishment of order in Europe and the rebuilding of national life must be achieved by processes which will enable the liberated peoples to destroy the last vestiges of Nazism and Fascism and to create democratic institutions of their own choice."

These are the very purposes for which the EAM has struggled.

When applied to Greece, the specific program for liberated Europe outlined in the Yalta Declaration, is, in spirit and letter, the program of the EAM—the formation of interim governmental authorities "broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsive to the will of the people," United Nations cooperation in the holding of such elections, and solution by democratic means of all pressing political and economic problems. This is the program of the EAM. This is the program which, if it is fulfilled in Greece, can dissipate the legacy of anxiety and distrust left by the damaging policies of the British government.

Much remains to be done to accomplish these objectives in Greece. The EAM sympathizers in Greece must be freed and the anti-fascist Greek prisoners in the jails and concentration camps of the Sudan, Egypt, and other parts of the Middle East must be released and enabled to return home so that they can vote in the plebiscite and elections.

The quislings and native fascists must be tried quickly and effectively. Food, medicine, clothing must be gotten to the needy immediately, without political discrimination.

But in order to accomplish all this, and more, the political problem, the problem of the representation of the people in the government must be solved.

Constantine Poulos, Overseas News Agency correspondent, writes: "On the basis of having travelled over most of Greece both during the occupation and after liberation, I estimate that in the Peloponnesus the EAM's strength is between 50 and 60 per cent, and in the rest of Greece, 90 per cent."

The tragic story of the flaunting of the will of this overwhelming majority of the Greek people by foreign arms will be found in the pages of this pamphlet in the reports of Leland Stowe, veteran American foreign correspondent, and Constantine Poulos.

We reprint them to set the record straight about Greece and to etch in the memory of all who love freedom the tragedy of error and outrage in Greece, so that it will not be forgotten and repeated in Greece or anywhere in the world.

GREEK AMERICAN COUNCIL

February 27, 1945

What Happened in Greece

• by Leland Stowe

(Blue Network commentator in a broadcast sponsored by the National Board of Fire Underwriters.)

New York, February 3, 1945

TONIGHT I am going to give you my last week's broadcast because it deals with matters far more lasting than one day's headlines.

The script reached War Department censors about two o'clock last Saturday. It was returned to me this Thursday. Only four very slight changes were made. It required *five* days for these changes to be made in Washington, where

censorship for military security alone is recognized.

In Europe military censors would have finished with this script in two or three hours at the most.

That's all I have to say about this matter, for now, anyway.

Now for my report on Greece. It is just as true today as it was last week.

A month ago I went to Greece. That unhappy country was still torn by civil war, with British forces fighting on one side. How had this tragedy come about?

It was impossible to judge without first-hand information. That's why I went to Greece. I found a terribly confused situation. I worked day and night trying to isolate facts from propaganda. I've never worked harder trying to get at the truth. No man can get all the truth. But I can give you some important facts, which have been far too widely ignored until now. And I know this much is indisputable.

Just as the Spanish civil war set the entire pattern for the Second World War, so the Greek civil war threatens to set the pattern for British postwar policy toward all countries in western Europe. That's why we must try to understand what's happened in Greece.

First, let's identify the main elements involved. On one side are the EAM—the National Liberation Front—and its guerrilla army known as the ELAS. EAM is a coalition of Left and Center parties, with Communists prominent in its leadership. ELAS is headed by regular army officers.

On the other side are the Greek Mountain Brigade, created and trained by the British, a small body of Greek royalists known as X-ites, the EDES, a guerrilla band that's fiercely anti-Communist. None of these are strong numerically. They couldn't possibly defeat the ELAS without support of British armed forces, including planes and American-made tanks.

The so-called "security battalions" also fought for the Greek Right-wing groups and the British. These "security battalions" were formed under the Germans. They were paid by the Nazis. They served as Quisling militia, hunting down Greek patriots, sending thousands of them to Nazi firing squads.

Hundreds of these "security" battalion Quislings are now incorporated in the new, British-approved Greek army. General Plastiras himself admitted this to me. "Why not?" he said. "They fought well beside the British."

So the Plastiras government owes its present control of Athens to three armed elements—to the British forces, to the British-founded, pro-Royalist Mountain Brigade, and to at least five hundred "security battalion" Quislings, whom the British accepted as allies.

These are facts, undeniable facts.

On the side of ELAS, there's another unsavory fact. Several hundred escaped criminals joined ELAS ranks during the Athens fighting. Civil war gave them the chance to rob and murder. As in every civil war brutal excesses occurred on *both* sides.

Could this catastrophe have been avoided? I can say this much from on-the-spot investigations. At least *eighty-five per cent* of the American, and *British* correspondents (who are there) are convinced the war in Athens *could* have been avoided. A good many middle-of-the-road Greeks say the same thing. So do a number of British and American officers.

How did the fighting start in Athens on December 3rd? Prime Minister Churchill insists there'd have been a "massacre" if British troops had not intervened, that there was a "Red plot" to seize the government.

I tried to find factual evidence. Athens was liberated on October 12th. For *two* days before the first British troops arrived, and for two days afterward, ELAS forces completely controlled Athens. If they'd wanted to seize political power, absolutely nothing could

have stopped them. Greek friends, who hate ELAS, admitted that to me.

But ELAS made no effort to stage a coup d'etat. And when General Scobie ordered ELAS troops to withdraw outside Athens, they obeyed.

Mr. Churchill says ELAS wanted to establish a "reign of terror." He does not explain why ELAS failed to do that when it controlled all of Athens.

From October 12th to December 3rd, what happened? The British brought in the anti-republican, Greek Mountain Brigade. They barred the ELAS troops from Athens; they let the Mountain Brigade stay inside Athens.

There was occasional looting by ELAS elements. The Mountain Brigade also started rough stuff around the city. A British general, by special order, forbade our correspondents to send any reports on Mountain Brigade disorders. They could tell the world only about ELAS disturbances.

Mr. Churchill has never mentioned this fact. Here are other facts which Mr. Churchill has failed to mention. ELAS agreed to give up their arms, if the anti-Republican Mountain Brigade were also disbanded.

Premier Papandreou agreed to disband the Mountain Brigade. Then within two days, Papandreou informed ELAS he couldn't keep his promise. He turned over a letter from General Scobie. In it Scobie said the Churchill government would not tolerate the disbanding of the Mountain Brigade. Here was a great opportunity to reach a peaceful settlement with ELAS. Why was it rejected in London?

Important observers in Athens call this one of several major British blunders which, they say, contributed directly to the outbreak of civil war in Greece.

It was six weeks before the shooting began. During that period there were no ELAS murders in Athens. In that time not a single Greek traitor was tried and executed. That neglect aroused deep indignation among true patriots in EAM-ELAS ranks. Then they learned that Quisling officers of the "security battalions" were being sneaked into the new Army—behind their backs.

A big protest demonstration was called by ELAS for December 3rd. On the night before, General Scobie told Papandreou

it was time to be tough with ELAS. Informed British sources vouch for this.

The next day Papandreou's police fired into the unarmed mass of ELAS demonstrators. They killed more than twenty persons. Civil war began.

In the previous weeks M. W. Fodor of the Chicago Sun, the most experienced of all correspondents in Athens, twice tried to give this warning. He said the Rightists were trying to provoke a shooting incident, which would compel Scobie to declare martial law. British censors prevented Fodor from sending out this warning.

The shooting came, from Right-wing police, then martial law, just as Fodor had foreseen. Two days later Papandreou wanted to resign. A new premier was ready to take his place. Mr. Churchill himself has said that he insisted Papandreou should remain. Papandreou was weak and distrusted. Keeping him in office was an invitation for trouble. Here again most observers in Athens say the Churchill government assumed a grave responsibility for the bloody fighting in Athens. About one thousand persons, soldiers and civilians, are said to have been killed by ELAS, about 2,500 by British troops and their allies. The tanks and planes were all in British hands. Hundreds of innocent civilians were killed. Was the maintaining of an armed anti-Republican Mountain Brigade worth this price? Were not the Greek people entitled to have another Greek succeed Papandreou and try to make peace?

Mr. Churchill has said the ELAS did very little fighting against the Germans. A British Brigadier, inside Greece with the resistance movements for two years, said: The only real resisters against the Germans were the ELAS.

Another British General had charge of all British liaison officers who served with Greek guerillas. He told American correspondents that ELAS behaved perfectly. A British General in Salonika said he got along wonderfully with the ELAS. The ELAS completely controlled Salonika from its liberation. The British General said there had not been a single execution of any civilian in Salonika in those weeks.

All this is testimony from high British officers who worked with ELAS over many months. One can only conclude that Mr. Churchill never read the reports of his own British officers who were longest inside Greece.

A Greek of the British-created Mountain Brigade said to an Allied officer: "We were brought here for one purpose, to suppress the Left." It's only fair to include what Rex Leeper, the British Ambassador, remarked to me. Ambassador Leeper has played a very big role in the Greek affair. He relays Mr. Churchill's desires to the Greek government. Ambassador Leeper said: "I think we've smashed here any chance of a dictatorship of the Left. It will have an important effect on developments in Italy, in Belgium, Holland and France."

Out of over 60,000 ELAS troops a Greek editor estimates the Communists at about 14,000.

But what is the EAM and ELAS side of the story? When their delegates came to Athens they were locked up. Correspondents could not see them. We could not talk with ELAS prisoners, even with their wounded. Under General Scobie's orders I could have been courtmartialled if I'd done so. Why is it the British refuse to let both sides of the Greek tragedy be reported to the world? We were told that one of the Four Freedoms is freedom of the press.

Rome, January 20, 1945

I've just come back from Athens. Athens is the saddest city in Europe. For some it's a city of rejoicing and revenge. For others, a dark well of fear and despair. Day and night the man-hunts continue in Athens. The police are still cramming the jails with those suspected of belonging to ELAS, or of having Left-wing sympathies. Some of these same policemen fired the first shots on December 3rd. That's the testimony of every foreign correspondent who was on the spot.

That police volley touched off thirty-three days of civil war and bloodshed. It brought armed intervention by British troops—using American-made tanks and half-tracks—and supplied by American trucks—often fed by American food. In Athens bitter street fighting somewhere between two thousand and five thousand persons were killed or wounded. Hundreds of buildings were destroyed, with property losses estimated at two hundred and fifty million dollars. Today barbed wire barriers still encircle sections in the heart of the capital. Those who were riotously welcomed as liberators in October, have fought their way into

complete control. Scores of their tanks are parked close to government buildings. Some Athenians are convinced they've been saved from a Red uprising. A great many others are beaten down and broken-hearted.

All this is part of an Athens I never dreamed of when I was with the Greeks as they threw back the Italians four years ago. All this is a great and heart-rending Greek tragedy. But it's also a British-American tragedy. Neither the British nor the Americans are without their share of responsibility. With the Greeks, of the Left and Right, we have also made serious mistakes. But tonight I shall speak only as a reporter. I knew the Greeks in their days of imperishable grandeur.

I longed to return to Athens—to see once more the noble columns of the Parthenon, standing like an eternal sentinel above the brown-tiled roofs which lie at its feet. I returned. These are some of the things I found.

Across from the Acropolis rises the lofty summit of Lykabetos. On the lower slopes of Lykabetos is the Kolonaki district—the Park Avenue of Athens. Wealthy and well-to-do Greeks have their apartments there. Ordinary Greeks call the upper-class people who live there “the Kolonaki.”

I talked first with these upper-class Athenians. They are almost hysterical in their fear of Elás and the Communists. One of them said, “What we've had here wasn't communism. It was just gangsterism and anarchy.” On every side well-to-do Greeks talked of mob violence. Others told me that criminals had jumped jail and joined the Elás during the fighting—that they had looted and sometimes murdered—that Elás leaders could not control them.

But in the Kolonaki district—where people are obsessed by a Red phobia—not a single burned building exists. The Kolonaki were inside the British lines—a fortunate thing for some of them.

But I noticed one other thing. In Athens the well-to-do Kolonaki all look prosperous. They obviously had plenty to eat all through the German occupation. About twenty thousand Athenians live in this district . . . whereas the population of greater Athens totals one and one quarter millions. The vast majority of these are terribly poor people—people who are worse off than the poorest slum-dwellers in America.

So I talked to these "forgotten men" of Athens. "Did many of the well-off Kolonaki resist the Germans?" I asked. The worker laughed out loud—a bitter laugh. "When the Germans are here the Kolonaki are with the Germans," he said. "When the English are here they are with the English. But why are the English shooting the Elás, just like the Germans shot the Elás?"

I didn't try to answer that. I kept questioning Greeks—from the highest to the lowest. I talked with Archbishop Damaskinos, the new Regent, with General Plastiras, the new premier, with the British and American ambassadors, with Greek officials and editors who are old friends. I asked one of these: "Were many upper-class Greeks active in resisting the Germans?" The editor paused. Then he looked me in the eye and replied: "Yes—there were several."

There were several. This man was too honest to lie to me. He also said, "The Elás fought the Germans at times—and at times they fought middle-class Greeks." Did the Elás chiefly fight middle or upper-class Greeks because they were collaborationists? That's what the Communist-dominated Elás say. But this much seems beyond dispute. From all sides—including American and British officers who were with the Elás guerrillas long before liberation—you get one overwhelming verdict. The Elás resisted and fought the Germans more, and more consistently, than any other group in Greece. Now these same guerrillas are referred to in British communiques as "the enemy."

This is part of the Great Greek tragedy. I speak as a reporter—a seeker for facts. Let me repeat. The overwhelming evidence inside Greece is that the Elás-Eam coalition resisted the Germans more than any other Greek organization. Whether they were more recently misled by communists or other extremists—or to what degree they're responsible for the civil war—is another question.

But you must go to the workers' districts of Athens to learn what the majority of Athenians think and say. I went to one of these districts, where the Elás stubbornly fought off the British-Indian troops for over two weeks. We went beyond the street barricades—far up the hill. In the center of a long square zigzag trenches are now a common grave. Thirty-six pitiful crosses made out of box wood—were stuck in the fresh earth. But the neighbors said over one hundred and fifty persons are buried here—only the names of thirty-six are known. I checked the names on

every cross. Eighteen out of these thirty-six dead were old men, women and small children.

At the foot of the trench a large sign had been put up. This is what it said: "Here lie Greek traitors who collaborated with Germans, Bulgarians and Italians for the destruction of Greece."

So these workers' women and children had collaborated with the Nazis? I asked an old woman. "We didn't write the sign," she said. "It was written by the new soldiers of the National Guard. Of course, what it says isn't true. We know that."

All around us the heads of hungry people nodded in agreement. But how did these women and children die? One woman answered: "About forty people were killed here by bullets from the British planes. One day we were waiting in line to get food. Seven planes came diving and shooting. They came back three times. Seven were killed and forty wounded that day."

A Greek gendarme—a supporter of the new government—came up. He said many people had been slaughtered by the Elases on top of the hill. When he went away the same woman said: "They were officers and cadets of the Greek royalists. They were executed by the Elases—but they were not civilians. I could tell you more—but we can't speak freely now."

Again and again, when I spoke to Greek workers, they said the same thing. The Plastiras government is making wholesale arrests of everyone suspected of Elases or left-wing sympathies. Unless you see them quite alone the workers in Athens do not dare to tell what they know or what they think. This is true of several hundred thousand people in Athens—certainly of more than half of the population.

I went to Kaisariani where ten thousand people live in hovels and shacks. The people of Kaisariani fought forty-nine pitched battles with the Germans and the Quisling Greek police. In one day two hundred and four of their sons and husbands were executed. In Kaisariani there's scarcely a family that does not have one or more who died resisting the Nazis. In well-to-do Kolonaki I never met one Greek family who said they had lost one of their members fighting Nazis in the resistance movements. Some must have done so, but I never met any.

Here, in Kaisariani, we were surrounded by ragged, half-starved women and children—their eyes dark and drawn with tragedy. The British and the royalist Greek Mountain Brigade

had to fight for every foot of Kaisariani. Its ugly homes are blasted with shells, or bombs—many of them are burned to the ground—many more are riddled with bullets. Almost no men are left here—none except old men.

One old woman burst into tears, crying—"Why did they burn our homes?" Another tall, emaciated woman sobbed: "The English planes killed my daughter, while she was sewing." Another said: "We expected the English to come to free us . . . instead, they fought against us."

Everywhere I found ruin and heartbreak and unanswerable questions. Everywhere hunger branded hopeless faces. But in all Kaisariani I did not see a single Allied soup-kitchen . . . I opened a tin of army peanuts. Children went mad, clawing at my hands for a few peanuts. Mothers lifted their babies, fighting to get near me. In one-half demolished shack a woman sobbed:

"I'm a widow. I've lost my last son who supported me. My first was killed in Albania. My second is in a hospital. There's nobody to care for me. . . . What shall I do?" Outside I asked: "Why did the British fight the Elzas?" A sailor said: "There are many reasons—which we don't speak about." When I gave away what little food I had, people stooped and kissed my hand. Later I talked with a working woman—a woman with fine face and intelligent eyes. . . . "We can do nothing but hope," she said. "All we can do is hope."

Storm in Greece

• by Constantine Poulos

(Overseas News Agency correspondent and first American reporter to land in Greece, entering in Mid-August 1944, and living with guerrillas before going to Athens at the time of its liberation. Poulos was the first correspondent in Athens, preceding the British Army by a day. On December 3rd, at the demonstration in Constitution Square in Athens, Poulos ran into the line of fire, between the Greek quisling police and the unarmed women and children, calling on the police to cease firing. Frank Gervasi, Collier's war correspondent, calls Poulos "as brave an American as ever wore a war correspondent's uniform." Following are a number of his dispatches — on the gathering storm, its outbreak, and the wreckage it left behind.)

The Record of the EAM

ATHENS, Oct. 19. (ONA) (Delayed)—Out of the mountains and into free Athens today came men who have been directing the Greek resistance movement for three and one-half years. They are among the men who, starting on Sept. 27, 1941, organized and built the EAM (National Liberation Front) into a strongly-knit resistance force that fought the Nazis on city streets and mountain trails.

Returning to Athens almost as quietly as they left were George Siantos, of the Communist Party; Costa Gabrieldis, of the Agrarian Party; Euripides Bakirdjis, of the Democratic Union Party; and General Emanuel Mandakas, hoary revolutionary from Crete.

For all of them, the fight against the Nazis was a continuation of their struggle against the Fascist dictatorship of General Metaxas. They had escaped from the island dungeons where they had been imprisoned by Metaxas to lead the EAM. The direction they gave to the EAM paid dividends. The organization offered leadership to the nation in its struggle against the Nazis and the Fascists and gave the promise of a new deal for the Greek people.

These men are now reluctant to talk of their work. They are satisfied they did as good a job as was possible under the circumstances. They regret that so little accurate information about their activities reached the British and American people.

They are very proud of the fact that when the Allies landed in

France they did not find a single Greek in the German army which had had recruits from all the other occupied countries in Europe. They credit this to the huge protest demonstrations organized by the EAM.

The early work of the EAM consisted mainly of mass demonstrations such as those called in protest against the deportation of Greeks to Germany for forced labor, to reject a German proposal that Bulgarian troops take over the duties of Italian garrisons in Greece, to force the release of hostages, and to force an increase in the daily bread ration.

After fleeing to the mountains, the EAM's first task was to stop the theft of livestock by bands of brigands who were scourging the countryside and forcing people to sleep with their animals.

The banners of the EAM easily attracted Greek youth. Specific duties and responsibilities were assigned to them. They were sent through the country to secretly organize resistance in villages and cities. Others were sent to join Andarte (guerrilla) bands in the mountains. Even young children between the ages of eight and 16 had a place in the movement. In the dead of night they wrote news and slogans on the walls of houses.

Slowly the EAM grew until it spread over all of Greece except Epirus. As the Andarte Army, later named the ELAS, became a large force and started to liberate entire sections of Greece, the problems of the EAM Central Committee increased. (ELAS was the military arm of EAM.)

Local self-government had to be established. A regular policy of security and courts of justice had to be set up. Relief for starving villages had to be organized. Even schools had to be reopened and teachers found, sometimes from the ranks of the Andartes.

All this work was carried on under the nose of the occupation armies and the Quisling government. Anyone suspected of working with the EAM was tortured to death.

How well the EAM had been organized and how solidly it had been built was demonstrated on the day the Nazis turned Athens back to the Greeks. Half a million people turned out into the streets with EAM banners. That morning I reviewed, with a regular Greek Army general, the ELAS forces from Athens and Piraeus which he commanded. I saw part of the 20,000 uniformed, well-drilled, armed men who had daily been fighting in the streets of Athens for nine months against the Nazis and Quislings.

"The strength of the people," Siantos, secretary of the Communist Party, told me, "which is responsible for this victory, is the greatest guarantee to the order and security of our nation. With deep faith in the Atlantic Charter and in the program set forth by our national government, we will continue the struggle to bring to pass the liberation of all of our people, the independence of our nation, and true freedom—the full expression of the people's will."

The Gathering Storm

Athens, Nov. 25. (ONA) (Delayed)—Newspaper correspondents in Greece are seriously comparing the situation here with that in Spain in 1936. It is similar in only a few, but important respects.

Though loudly protesting non-intervention, a strong British influence is being politely yet firmly exerted in domestic Greek affairs. One reason for this is an attempt to reduce the strength of the Leftist elements in Greece which, if they came to power, might swerve the course of the nation's orientation away from the United Kingdom and toward the Soviet Union.

Great Britain's undesirable, though possibly not entirely unwelcome, bedfellows in this little game are the extreme Rightist and Fascist elements. The Greek Fascists are men who either collaborated directly with the Nazis during the occupation or served them almost equally as well by remaining neutral. They also include the old-line politicians who have been in eclipse since the start of the late Gen. John Metaxas' dictatorship in 1936 and now want to resume positions of power. A good part of Greece's small moneyed class also belongs in this category.

Today these groups have one sole aim—and here is where the resemblance to Spain is greatest—to exterminate the powerful forces of the Greek Left and smother the social awakening of the Greek peasants and workers.

Now they are trying to hang onto the British coat-tails because they think it is a convenient cloak for their activities. Sometimes they make embarrassing mistakes along this line. For example, one of their first posters blatantly proclaimed "Rule Britannia." Surprised that such public devotion and endearment did not appeal to British officials, they went quietly around at night removing the posters.

Fascist tactics have not changed much since Spain, with horror and atrocity tales as plentiful here as the old drachma. Rightist newspapers daily print lengthy reports of massacres in Salonika or the Peloponnesus. Just to play safe they put on a heading to the effect: "We hope the following isn't true."

Provocations are plentiful and regular. Another old but effective Fascist trick, playing on the national aspirations of the people in order to turn their minds away from seeking solutions to domestic problems, is also being used to the hilt.

Expansion of Greece, the "great idea," is back again. In special bulletins, proponents proclaim: "We are fighting to obtain Greek territories such as Albania, Monastir, Eastern Thrace, Eastern Romilie, Constantinople, the Dodecanese, Cyprus, Andros, Tenedos, and interior land 70 miles from the coast of Asia Minor."

"Immediate mobilization" is also one of the slogans of the extreme Right. That is one way to speed up the dissolution of the Left, as it is from families of the Left that most of the soldiers of the new Greek army will have to be drawn.

All Fascist tactics are operating 24 hours a day in Athens: the continued creation of fictitious crises, which have the desired result of giving the entire nation a bad case of jitters; the creation of dozens of confusing organizations, some with names similar to those of the Left; the issuing of dozens of newspapers to create an atmosphere of confusion. The taking of songs of the Left and setting their own words to them; the spreading of rumors about the irresponsibility of the present national unity government; and the attempt to drive a deep wedge between the Andarte (Greek guerrilla) organizations and Greek army units that have come from the Middle East.

Knowing that the strength of the Left is far greater than their own, the Fascists are seeking means other than force with which to carry out their plans. "In time, the British will be forced to declare martial law and treat Greece as an occupied country," Gen. Elias Diamesis, Athens leader of the National Democratic Greek League, wishfully remarked to me recently. "That is one solution," he added. "What we really need is a strong-arm military government to replace the present weaklings who are not taking proper actions against the Bolsheviks. These Communists must have both feet put, not into one shoe, but into half a shoe."

Another leader of the self-styled "Nationalists," Lt.-Col. John C. Christopoulos, also told me of the necessity for an immediate dictatorship to "put the lower classes back in their place." According to Christopoulos, the British forces which came to Greece did not do so with the purpose of helping liberate the country from the Nazis, but only to protect the Greeks from the Russians.

One of his major complaints against the Left is their belief that the Greeks can govern Greece. "They think Greece can govern herself," he protested. "They don't want to be under England and America."

One of the new Fascist outfits is the National Political Organization, organized by collaborators and Quislings in an attempt to cover crimes they committed during the occupation. "We are on the side of the British and Americans against the Russians," organizers told me in the city of Pirgos, as they handed me a copy of the oath each new member takes on joining.

The oath goes as follows: "I swear and give my word of honor before God and the fatherland that I realize fully the objects of our organization; I will work with all my strength for the success of its national aims; and I will not withdraw from the organization before successful attainment of its aims; and that I shall keep secret all our efforts and activities. I know full well that if I break faith with any part of this oath, I shall suffer the consequences of my criminal act against the fatherland."

Like their Spanish counterparts of 1936, these Greek Fascists can cause considerable damage and possibly start a minor civil war. But without foreign aid they have no chance of winning. They will get no more help from the Germans and the Italians, but they persist in believing that by using devious methods they will be encouraged and helped by Great Britain and maybe by the United States.

Agony in Athens

(First eye-witness account of the Athens demonstration.)

Athens, Dec. 3. (ONA) (Delayed)—Tonight there is a little make-shift memorial on Athens' main street that looks like a dump heap with flowers over it. Just 100 yards away from the tomb of Greece's unknown soldier, it is a memorial made up of the banners, flags and placards that fell from the hands of the

Greeks who were killed this morning by Greek police as they demonstrated against Premier George Papandreou's government.

A few people are now standing around, quietly looking down on the torn and soiled and bloody Greek, American, British and Russian flags that are gathered in heaps. Late autumn wildflowers have been spread over the broken banners. Some of the placards are still intact. Looking down on them as they lie flat on the street, they appear cold and final: "We want a real national unity government;" "Death to the traitors;" "Down with Papandreou;" "We can solve our own problems;" "Independence;" and "The people's will."

The clouds were grim and grey as the people gathered this morning in the city's largest square. As usual in EAM demonstrations, youth predominated though there were thousands of old ladies and small children. At about 10:30 the crowd grew and spilled over onto the main street. Here the police used the butt ends of their rifles in an attempt to prevent the demonstrators from coming out into the street. The people prevailed and the police withdrew to a line at the end of the block.

During the next 20 minutes, demonstrators in small groups surged around continuing their demonstrations. "Down with the civil war government," they kept crying. When they noticed Dimitri Kessel, Life Magazine photographer, and myself, they piled close around us and started shouting "Roosevelt, Roosevelt, Roosevelt." A pert, pretty little blonde girl of 15, wearing a green skirt with a white blouse said to me: "Are we asking too much? We don't want trouble. My father and brother fought for our liberties. Now they want to take them away from us." She tugged at my arm, "Please help us," she said. "My mother is here, too," she added proudly.

Telephone, street railway and other workers, wearing their work clothes, milled around. Meanwhile, the numbers of the people had swelled and those with banners were in the front line facing the police at the end of the block. There was no fighting with the police. The demonstrators were asking the police: "Why do you have guns against your own people?"

Suddenly, without any provocation that I could see, the police started firing. There were a few shots at first. I ducked and ran towards a low wall from which Kessel was calling me. Then

there was a heavy barrage of shots as the police fired directly into the demonstrators at short range. The scene reminded me of the famous American painting of the Boston massacre.

Police, standing upright, were firing rifles and tommy guns into the tight mass of people. Accustomed to similar attacks from the Nazis, all the demonstrators, in one movement, flopped flat on their faces. A few of the police shot into the air and shouted for the people to leave. The firing ceased and the demonstrators started to rise. Immediately another burst of fire from the police levelled the mass again. Firing continued at a terrific pace.

It is impossible to describe one's feeling when scenes and emotions shift so rapidly. Yet, because I could not believe and could not comprehend that anyone could shoot so cold-bloodedly into a mass of people, I assumed that the police were firing blanks. I started to get up. Kessel yanked me down. "The bullets are real, you fool," he said.

Just then a man in the front line of demonstrators, lying only 25 yards in front of us, raised his head slowly and looking at us shouted feebly, "help, help." Blood was gushing from his neck. By now, the police had taken positions behind the same wall which we were in front of, and were firing right over our heads into the prone bodies of the people. A grenade landed near us.

The firing ceased. People got up and ran toward the square. Then I saw quite clearly how real the bullets had been. Sprawled and stretched and twisted over their flags, banners, and placards were the bodies of the people who had been killed or wounded. The man who had appealed to us for help was dead. A little boy of six lay still with a bullet through his head. My little fair-haired girl friend was dead. Blood from a bullet in her breast streamed slowly down her white blouse. Her fist was clenched and on her lips was a slow smile.

None of the wounded screamed or cried. They moaned softly. The demonstrators who had run to the Square started coming back. Some stopped to look at the bodies on the street, others picked up the fallen flags and waved them defiantly in the faces of the police, who now held their fire.

More and more demonstrators gathered. The dead and wounded were taken away. The police retreated before the aroused wrath of the people and entered the police station at the corner of the intersection where the shooting took place. There was

more scattered shooting. But the people did not run again and they did not break up or disperse. They continued to shout angrily, madly, defiantly. More demonstrators appeared, and more banners and more flags and more placards. They marched in orderly fashion through the streets, which was all they had intended to do in the first place. With the blood of those who had fallen they wrote on the street: "Death to Fascism."

According to reports tonight, between 14 and 16 were killed and 60 were wounded. (Latest reports place the casualties at 21 killed and 140 wounded.)

After the Massacre

Athens, Dec. 20 (ONA) (Delayed)—After the unprovoked massacre of 22 workers, including women and children by Greek police on Sunday, Dec. 3, isolated groups of Greeks broke the bonds of restraint which had kept them from taking justice into their own hands until then. It must be noted that the people went after the Greek police, Greek armed Fascists, and many collaborators and Quislings who were either still free or were living comfortably in prisons.

There was no original plan. The real power of the ELAS, which is in its mountain forces, was nowhere near Athens when the trouble started. An American coming from Salonika ran into an Andarte Division north of Athens on Thursday, Dec. 7. The *Commanding Officer* pleaded with him: "Tell us what to do. We don't want to fight British soldiers. Please, you Americans must tell us what to do."

Very few of these mountain fighters have as yet taken part in the actual fighting in Athens.

Students of many past Greek revolutions point out that places usually assaulted by Greek revolutionaries attempting to assume control were ignored by ELAS men. In the first few days they attacked only places and persons that in their minds represented anti-popular, collaborationist and Fascist institutions.

The decision of the EAM central committee to take up the struggle was forced upon them by the momentum of the spirit of Athenian workers and students, who took up arms on their own impulse and initiative. It was not until six days had passed that ELAS

leaders in Athens were able to communicate with all their units and to attempt to coordinate their activities.

Naturally, if British troops had not entered the picture on the Tuesday after the Sunday shooting, the ELAS would have eventually won complete control. But the charge that the Greek Left had carefully laid out a plan to seize power, which it sprang on the first Sunday in December, is untrue.

This has not been a civil war, nor has it been a full-fledged revolt. It was an unorganized people's revolt against what they considered dilatory tactics of the government, which was more interested in preserving the corrupt institutions of the past than in trying to meet the wants of a much-tired people—food and work.

General Plastiras

Athens, Jan. 3. (ONA)—“Well, let's settle down to a nice long civil war,” one Greek said when he heard the announcement that Gen. Nicolas Plastiras had been authorized by Archbishop Damaskinos, new Greek Regent, to form a new government.

It may be a premature reaction but it is difficult to reconcile the appointment of the professional militarist, who has indulged in an orgy of vituperation against the Greek Left since he returned to Greece three weeks ago, to any sincere desire for a solution of the crisis and cessation of the fighting.

If the truth behind the appointment could be learned, it would reveal the actual attitudes of all those who are involved in the developments on this side of the barricades. To Royalists and Rightists, who have made no bones about the fact that they want the fighting to continue until the Left is wiped out, the appointment was a God-send. But they are not the ones responsible for the appointment.

It appears that the personalities who are loudest in their public protestations for conciliation and peace are doing business at their old stands and once again playing the familiar double game.

According to sources close to the Premier-elect, he has told British officials that he can easily raise a “loyal” army of 100,000 men.

It is hard to think of any other single move which would have convinced the ELAS fighters that they are fighting against

the imposition of a Rightist dictatorship and make them even more reluctant to lay down their arms. Only five days after his return to Greece, Gen. Plastiras, who led the Greek revolt of 1922, issued a proclamation charging that "a small miscreant gang of anarchist elements, has a long time since launched on the nation a cruel civil war, after having misled a number of patriot Greeks either by fraud or by force."

The EAM calmly answered officially that obviously Gen. Plastiras has been misled and was becoming the organ of those who brought him back from France, while EAM newspapers doubted that the expressions were his own. This conciliatory attitude was blown sky-high later when Gen. Plastiras announced that the only solution was a military one and continued his violent attacks against the EAM at last week's conferences of Greek leaders, including a charge that Greek guerrilla resistance against the Nazis had been valueless.

Earlier Gen. Plastiras had told foreign correspondents that Greece had no collaborators and no Quislings. After the EAM presented its demands at the conference, Gen. Plastiras did not wait for any discussion of them but melodramatically announced that if they were accepted by anyone he would leave Greece.

Maybe he will surprise everyone and become a real moderator. But one observer, taking the historical view, says: "Gen. Plastiras is one more of the old sores that the Greek political body must figuratively sweat out, and it's better that we do so now than later."

British Intervention

Athens, Jan. 10. (ONA) (Delayed)—The extent of British intervention in Greek affairs, which many people in the United States will probably find difficult to believe, let alone understand, has been further confirmed by an incident until now undisclosed.

At 3 P.M., Saturday, Dec. 2, the EAM's Central Committee asked for permission to hold a demonstration the following day. It was immediately granted by the government.

According to various reliable sources, including the chief of the Athens police, former Premier George Papandreou had a conference with British Ambassador Rex Leeper and Lt. Gen. R. M. Scobie later the same day. The British representatives, according

to reports, impressed on Papandreou that this was the time to stand up against the Greek Left, prohibit the demonstration and take the necessary steps to see that it was not held.

Papandreou agreed. He asked, through the Minister of the Interior Philip Manoulidis, that the Athens police chief be instructed to inform the EAM that they could not hold the demonstration.

By the time this notification reached the EAM it was almost 11 o'clock Saturday night, long after instructions had gone to all EAM supporters to participate in the demonstration.

The next morning, with British-manned Sherman tanks for moral support, Greek police killed 23 Greek workers, their wives and children, and wounded 142 others. After that, the fight was on.

The Royalists Rejoice

Athens, Jan. 14. (ONA) (Delayed)—Today's demonstration in Athens' famed Constitution Square was supposed to be a spontaneous and non-political expression of the Athenian workers' gratitude to Great Britain and Prime Minister Churchill for the "liberation" of their city. It was neither.

Press reports on the demonstration all vary; the crowd of approximately 55,000 was well organized, well-dressed, well-fed and overwhelmingly Royalist and Rightist. (Other reports put the crowd at 100,000.)

There was sporadic cheers for Churchill and for Lt. Gen. Ronald M. Scobie, British Commander in Greece. One placard carried by the crowd said, "Everyone for Great Britain." The demonstrators appeared to be expressing thanks to Great Britain not so much for "liberation" as for making the return of the King to the Greek throne possible. "He is coming, he is coming," was the most consistent slogan of the day.

Gen. Napoleon Zervas, leader of the right-wing EDES, his guerrilla bands wiped out completely in five days by the ELAS, led his city supporters in Royalist slogans and songs. An EAM song, calling for, "the peoples' will and no king," was changed to "Greater Greece and George for King."

Gen. Zervas' supporters also carried two banners, one showing a plane shooting down an ELAS fighter, and the other depicting a British tank knocking out ELAS troops. Another poster showed King George with outstretched hands, in which were a can of bully beef, a bottle of wine, and a loaf of bread.

"See, aren't these people dressed better than those in the EAM demonstrations?" one bystander asked correspondents. They were. They were no bare-footed old ladies carrying a piece of bread and a few grapes tied in a handkerchief as there had been in the EAM demonstrations.

Members of the Fascist "X" organization also were prominent. This is the organization which was armed by the Nazis, dressed in German uniforms, and used to fight alongside the Nazis against the underground resistance forces in Athens during the occupation. Today their banner, a huge capital X and a photo of King George, hung blatantly from the Ministry of Communications building, from where speeches were made.

The crowd cheered former Premier George Papandreou, Gen. Nicholas Plastiras, New Premier, and Gen. Stylianos Gonatas—the man said to have helped the Nazis and the Quisling government form the "security battalions."

There were also loud cries of "Death to the Communists" and "No Amnesty."

Street hawkers did a terrific business in King George lapel buttons and photographs, and Greek and British flags. No Soviet Union flags flew during the demonstration, and there were very few American flags.

None of the slogans, banners, placards, posters or songs mentioned the word "democracy."

British Censorship

Athens, Jan. 16. (ONA)—It is becoming increasingly difficult to tell the story of developments in Greece honestly and completely. To the carefully-schooled British military censorship has been added the blue pencil of the British Embassy here.

The policy of not permitting correspondents to see EAM or ELAS representatives, even in the presence of British military authorities, is still in force.

Military censors, determined to protect British policy in Greece against criticism, take it upon themselves to recommend strictly political changes in stories. The necessity of maintaining cordial relations with censors forces many correspondents to make requested alterations.

Sometimes the censors make slight changes in dispatches, such as substituting one descriptive word for another. With a daily word limitation to think of, the correspondents select words carefully and the one word that the censor may change may be, and usually is, very significant.

Now the correspondents have to contend with a British Embassy official also. Stories which the military censors feel should be checked, even when not for military or political reasons, are "referred" to the Foreign Office man. Today I discovered, in the file of my stories at the Censor's office, one dispatch marked "Okayed by Osbert Lancaster," the press attache at the British Embassy.

FOR VICTORY



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UNITED
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WAR
BONDS
AND
STAMPS**

Aims of the Greek American Council

1. To bring clear information about Greece to the American public, and about the United States to the Greek public.
2. To work for the recognition of the sacrifices and accomplishments of the Greek people in this war and for the full satisfaction of Greek national rights.
3. To spur non-political, rapid and generous aid from the United States for the relief and reconstruction of Greece.
4. To support the Greek people's democratic forces, united now in the National Liberation Front, EAM, in their aspirations for freedom and independence.
5. To work for the application to Greece of United Nations' pledges and agreements concerning self-government and freedom in order to deepen the friendship between Greece and her allies for rapid victory and lasting peace.
6. To work for the unity of all Greek Americans in order to increase their effective contribution in the war against fascism and to strengthen American policy along the lines of democracy and freedom, at home and abroad, in war and in peace.
7. To promote cultural relations between Greece and the United States.