

GREECE NEEDS PEACE



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Greece Needs Peace

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Greece Needs Peace

1. THIS IS WAR

"IT'S queer to sit on a wild Greek mountain top and suddenly hear a broad Scots accent, as I did when I sat next to Major Dunlop, of Edinburgh," wrote Keith Butler in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* on August 22nd, 1948. "He told me he had been three months in Greece with the British Military Mission. . . . At first light the Greek Air Force Spitfires were blasting the mountain, doing the bombing shuttle service." And on September 4th the same writer described in the *Sunday Chronicle* how the U.S.A. and Britain were trying out new weapons in Greece (as the Nazis did at Guernica in Spain). "The British 'Napalm' fire bombs were dropped by British-donated Spitfires—50 of them. British experts watched to gain ideas for improving the design and employment of the new bomb. U.S. military experts also saw one of their new weapons being tried out."

A British Staff-Sergeant, R. Bennett, of the Grenadier Guards, was not long ago awarded the Greek Military Cross for having "helped with the training of the Raiding Forces and participated in the tasks which they undertook." He returned to England on demobilisation leave in early 1949. Interviewed by the *Greek News Agency*, he said that he saw conditions in Greece going from bad to worse. "The people," he said, "are being driven by repression to the hills. The repression is getting worse. In 1945 there were only hundreds of 'rebels' in the Peloponnese, but now there are thousands there because of the repression." He added: "The Greek people are not just fighting for the love of blood and killing; that's rubbish. I think they are fighting because of the Right-wing repression. The gendarmerie and police are full of fascists." To back up this statement he described how, early in 1946, he had been standing in the main street of the town of Volos when gendarmes came up and shot a man standing in front of a house. As no Greek dared interfere, Bennett himself got a truck and drove the corpse away.

A sensation was caused on November 10th, 1947, when the story of the recently demobbed Corporal S. H. Starr, of Green Street, Green, Kent, appeared on the front page of the *Daily Mirror* with a photo of Greek soldiers in British battledress parading in the street carrying the bloody head of a murdered victim. The *Daily Mirror* on that day wrote: "British troops stationed in Greece are standing by compelled to witness cruelties and atrocities which are taking place around them." It described some of Corporal Starr's own experiences and, in a leading article, said: "The first thing to be done is to get the British Army out of that filthy hell's broth."

Corporal Starr himself described Athens as follows to a meeting in London: "The shops were stacked with food, clothing, furniture, radios, jewellery, cosmetics, luxury goods of all descriptions, in fact everything you would expect to find in the shops of pre-war London. Along the 'mad mile' leading to Phaleron and Piraeus the motor-car

showrooms had a plentiful supply of new cars, chiefly American makes." In the sharpest contrast he found that for the working people "jobs are very hard to find, wages very low, and the cost of living very high. The Black Market has a great hold on the life of the country and those actively engaged in it can certainly be classed among the wealthy people of Athens, of which there seem so many."

He described how, at Tirnavos, he had seen a man shot in the leg by a gendarme and left to bleed to death. He had also seen the victims of police "interrogation." "One I remember in particular. He was an elderly man and was crawling along the ground in an effort to get out of the sun. He was barefooted and the bottoms of his feet were like a mass of bloody rags!" No medical treatment was given him. He was present with Pte. Smith, L/Cpl. Soames, R.A.S.C., and Driver P. Jackson, R.A.S.C., when they were all almost driven mad by the screams of girls being "interrogated" by the Greek police and military. They saw one girl carried out with "an eye hanging out on her cheek." On another occasion, at Larissa, says Starr, he looked into a room at a police station. "Two policemen were holding a civilian against the wall while another was hitting him with a wooden club. The civilian's face was one mass of blood and he was moaning feebly."

Concluding, Corporal Starr said: "I have seen women and children in Italy fighting for scraps out of the swill bins, but nothing has stirred me so much as the sight of the children in Greek villages, barefooted and in rags, and blue with the cold in winter, giving us the V sign as we went by. I have been ashamed to know I am British when I have seen women and girls outside that grim prison on the road leading to the Rouf Barracks in Athens. That look of blank despair on their faces and the tears in their eyes are a reproach to any true Englishman who knows the true state of affairs in Greece."

Shown Corporal Starr's statement, 25 ex-servicemen back from Greece, including six Captains, signed a document saying: "Some of us have ourselves witnessed atrocities similar to those described . . . and we add our own testimony to the manner in which successive Greek Governments have suppressed the political liberties which we in this country regard as a normal human right." They called for the withdrawal of British troops from Greece. This was at the end of 1947.

A more recent description of the present state of Greece comes from S. E. Modiano, a correspondent of the *Western Evening Herald*, whose report appears in that paper on July 27th, 1949:

"There is a poignant, untold story behind the civil strife that has been raging throughout Greece since her liberation," he writes. "Family unity has been destroyed by differences of political opinion; brothers become enemies, fighting each other on the battlefield; children denounce their fathers; wives arise against their husbands."

As an example he cites the case of George Tsoulou, of the village of Tsangarades, near Salonica. He was a member of the Resistance army, ELAS, during the war. He took part in the fighting of December, 1944. And, as the amnesty became a dead letter, he fled to the mountains because he was "charged by his fellow countrymen with alleged crimes."

His daughter Sophia then published a statement in the press declaring that he "enlisted in the bandit ranks without my consent or that of any other member of the family . . . has betrayed his family and, most of all, our beloved country. . . He is not a father, he is a nightmare, a traitor . . . and I . . . declare that in the event of his taking refuge at our house or elsewhere I shall myself arrest him and hand him over to the police; I shall inform the authorities of any report as to his whereabouts, so that through his arrest our country gets rid of a nightmare."

The correspondent cites this as typical. He does not mention, however, that if the daughter had not signed such a statement she would most likely have suffered one of the fates described by Corporal Starr. He does, however, go on: "More surrendered rebels who are cleared and set free are not returning to their villages for fear of being killed by Right-wing opponents. . ."

Such is the present civil war in Greece, in which the British and American Governments are intimately involved.

2. THE COST

While we in Britain enjoy within the limits of "austerity" the blessings of peace, the war has never ceased in Greece. Though in 1944 the Greek people saw their country freed of the Nazis and looked forward to years of peace and reconstruction, they have instead been plunged into a brutal, savage and exhausting war.

This war is usually blamed on the "guerillas" or "Communist bandits," who are said to be continually infiltrating into Greece from the countries further north, with the sole aim of making trouble for the non-Communist countries of the West. But the two facts that *we still have about 5,000 troops in that country*, and that, according to Major Tufton-Beamish, M.P., *we have spent as much as £400,000,000 on intervening in Greek affairs since 1944*, are not so widely known.*

For £400,000,000 our Government could have built us more than a quarter of a million new houses in this country. Instead, the money has been spent in Greece in such a way that both we and the Greek people are worse off today than we would have been if this money of the British taxpayers had never been spent. Progressive people have never forgotten how Mr. Churchill spent £100,000,000 on intervention in Russia after 1917, a dead loss to both this country and Russia. Today our Government, continuing the policy of Mr. Churchill in 1944,

*This figure of £400,000,000 may seem enormous, as against the £60,000,000 to £100,000,000 officially admitted in Parliament in answer to questions. However, the figures given in Parliament exclude the cost of the fighting in Greece by British troops at the end of 1944, and the cost of keeping at first some 14,000 troops and now some 5,000 troops in that country since 1945. Major Tufton-Beamish, Conservative M.P., was asked by the *Greek News Agency* for the source of his figure and replied that he relied on official Answers to Questions in the House of Commons plus talks with both British and Greek experts in London and Athens. If the cost of our fighting and our troops in Greece is taken into account, the figure seems not unreasonable.

has spent four times as much on intervening in Greece, with just such tragic results for all concerned.

Yet there are people who want us to spend still more on war in Greece today. In Parliament on July 21st this year Brig. A. R. W. Low, M.P., asked that "a joint Anglo-American force" be sent to Greece, "about three or four times" our present forces in that country; and Mr. Raymond Blackburn, M.P., suggested that "we authorise Greece to go into Albania and trap the (Greek) rebels."

Considering that we have already spent, according to one M.P., £400,000,000 in Greece since 1944, how much more would we have to spend if the advice of these two M.P.s were taken seriously? And not only we, but the Americans also, have been pouring money into Greece since 1944. During the past 2½ years alone, under the Truman Doctrine, the U.S.A. has sunk about \$1,000,000,000 or £250,000,000 to bolster up the Athens Government. In the words of Professor Harold Laski, "there can be no serious doubt that from 1944 onwards both British and American intervention has always had the results of strengthening reaction" and today "the Greek Government would not last a week without American support." (*Forward*, 6/8/49.)

This Athens Government, with British and American support, is waging a major war at the present time. Imagine a country with 7,500,000 inhabitants with more than 250,000 in the armed forces of one sort or another. In addition, as the *Scotsman's* special correspondent pointed out on June 1st this year, "Greece today has 700,000 refugees, 1,040,000 indigents, 300,000 orphans and 713,000 people whose breadwinners are in the forces." One third of the population are dependent on State aid for their existence. *If, in Britain, we had one-and-a-half million in the forces, 4½ million refugees (mostly forcibly evacuated from their homes by the government itself) and 16,000,000 people living on State aid of one sort or another we would be in a corresponding position to that of Greece today.*

In addition, blood is being shed on a vast scale. While the figures put out by Athens have been repeatedly shown to be completely unreliable, the figures broadcast by Free Greece Radio (the "rebel" radio) have, wherever checked, proved far nearer the truth. According to Free Greece Radio, Athens lost 15,739 in killed, 28,370 wounded, and 3,567 prisoners in the civil war during the first six months of 1949. In 1948, says the same source, they lost 31,493 killed, 57,157 wounded, 5,987 prisoners, and 2,837 deserters; making a total of 97,000 casualties during last year. In one-and-a-half years more than 47,000 have been killed on the Athens side alone, an appalling bloodletting three years after "peace" was officially restored in Europe.

But the Greek people's plight cannot be calculated simply in terms of loss of life, or refugees. The conditions of the ordinary working people are hard to imagine in this country. Here, for example, is what Keith Butler writes in the *Sunday Times* of July 3rd of the refugees—most of whom, remember, were forcibly evacuated from their villages by the Athens authorities. The Athens Government is now sending many of them back to their "liberated" villages. They are sent back, he writes, "destitute, without tools, without animals of any sort, without the most elementary needs of living and farming. *Only a shadow of the State aid which should have been their due has materialised.* . . .

Small children are fed on bread dipped in water. There is no meat, no vegetables, no oil, no cheese. . . *Even the State's money dole, with which they could buy some basic necessities, is three months overdue in payment.*" (Our italics.) And this payment, even if it was forthcoming, only amounted to about 6d. a day!

According to the Athens newspaper *Eleftheria* on May 15th, 1949, a recent investigation was carried out into workers' conditions in Athens by the Ministry of Labour, the American Mission and the Confederation of Labour (the State-appointed Greek T.U.C.). They reached the conclusion that workers and lower-paid office employees were earning about 2s. 6d. a day while housewives were having to pay more than 4s. per pound for meat, cheese and olive oil (the main cooking fat in Greece) and as much as 11s. per pound for butter. A suit of clothes was costing £25, while even a teacher with 20 years' service did not earn more than £120 a year. A recent article in *World Today*, published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, which is known to work in close association with our Foreign Office, having described living conditions in Greece, concluded that "the Greeks are approaching the end of their tether."

While starvation faces the mass of the people, worker and peasant alike, and while teachers and civil servants live at a level of poverty unequalled anywhere else in Europe, the morale of the people is constantly undermined by the luxury and extravagance of a small rich class in Athens which hardly an observer, official or unofficial, from Britain or U.S.A. has not criticised. This is how our own All-Party Parliamentary Delegation, that was invited to visit Athens in 1946, described them: It said there was "a small class of wealthy people chiefly residing in and around Athens. Members of these families, to which many of the leading politicians belong, live in great luxury. They . . . are indifferent to the high cost of living, and as there is no Income Tax in the British sense they live practically tax-free."

Since the above was written in 1946 there have been a series of sensational financial scandals in Athens, which have been hardly mentioned in the British press. In these scandals M.P.s and Cabinet Ministers have been involved. At the same time, trade unionism has been practically wiped out, and ordinary citizens are liable to arrest, exile without trial, court martial and execution on the evidence of corrupt police agents. This is why Denis Healey, International Secretary of the Labour Party, after visiting Greece last winter, wrote in *Tribune* (18.2.49) that in Athens there was in power a "dishonest, inefficient police state."

Why, in face of such suffering of the people, can there not be peace in Greece?

3. WHY NOT PEACE?

The present tragic war in Greece cannot be understood without going back a little—to 1944. In October of that year the Nazis had already thrown up the sponge in Greece, and the British forces landed to be welcomed as Allies with flowers and embraces. On October 10th General Sir Maitland Wilson congratulated the Greeks in these words: "The Germans are withdrawing from Greece and the heroic Greek

guerillas are by day and night harassing their retreat. . . The brave contribution of the Greek guerillas to the cause of Greece and the Allies will never be forgotten." But within two months Mr. Churchill was calling these same guerillas "bandits from the mountains" and British troops were ordered into action against them. It was this military intervention in Greece's internal affairs that was the beginning of the tragedy which still continues today.

In a short, sharp war in December, 1944, and January, 1945, British troops fought side by side with Greek police and gendarmes who had closely collaborated with the Nazis. In February peace was signed at Varkiza. This Agreement provided for the restoration of full civil and democratic liberties, trade union rights, the ending of martial law and a general amnesty, a purge from the State apparatus of those who had collaborated with the Nazis, a plebiscite on the King's return, and a general election.

But this agreement was violated by the Athens authorities. Though they did formally restore civil and trade union rights, all kinds of unofficial persecution took place and armed Right-wing bands were given freedom to terrorise the countryside. The amnesty was not carried out. There was no purge. Fascist police and gendarmes remained in office, to such an extent that in March, 1946, the Premier, Mr. Sofoulis, cabled Mr. Bevin that a fair election was impossible owing to the close co-operation of the gendarmes and police with armed Right-wing terrorists. Nevertheless, Mr. Bevin insisted that the election be held. In protest, all parties to the left of Mr. Sofoulis's Liberals abstained. The Right was victorious, as was inevitable in the circumstances, and in the new Parliament were many friends of Hitler such as Mr. Tourkovassilis who, during the occupation, was made Governor of the Bank of Greece after writing to the German Ambassador saying: "I am a trusted friend of the German nation. I have been exiled and imprisoned for that reason and for my admiration for Germany's incomparable Fuehrer, Adolph Hitler."

Since June, 1946, more than 2,000 Greek anti-fascists have been executed. The *New York Herald Tribune* on May 19, 1949, gave the figure as 2,313, and since then the high rate of executions continues. In contrast, since liberation, not more than 20 people have been executed for having collaborated with the Nazis.

These 2,000 executions have been carried out under an Emergency Powers Act, introduced after the election of 1946. This Act imposed the death penalty even for so-called "moral instigation" of opposition activities. "Security Committees," which had first been introduced under the Metaxas fascist dictatorship of 1936, and much used by the Germans, were restored. *They had power to exile men, women and children without trial, and tens of thousands have been exiled on their orders. All elected trade union committees were suppressed and replaced by State-appointed committees, including notorious collaborators with Greek and German fascism.* Indeed, the three Labour M.P.s, N. Dodds, L. Solley and S. Tiffany, visiting Greece in the spring of 1946, wrote that a "unilateral civil war" had already been started by the extreme Right against all Greeks who had democratic views. And the British All-Party Parliamentary Delegation that visited Greece in 1946 unanimously recommended "that the special security decrees

should be cancelled and all persons who by order of the Security Committees had been exiled to the islands for political reasons should be allowed to return to their homes." They also stated that "the action of the Government in appointing a new General Council of Labour and nominating new Trade Union Executives should be rescinded and that pending new elections the former elected representatives should be allowed to return to their duties."

These recommendations have never been carried out. The exiling has continued. The persecution of genuine trade unionists has continued. The reign of terror has got worse. And so, in self-defence, more and more anti-fascists fled to the mountains, and there, in the heroic tradition of their fight against the Nazis, built up a new Resistance Army under the very same men who had led the struggle against the Nazi invader. It is this Army which is called the Democratic Army today. It is this army which has made possible the setting up of the Provisional Democratic Government of Free Greece. This Government, and its Democratic Army, today are fighting against both the Athens terror and the steady enslavement of Greece by the United States, aided by British troops. At the same time, they repeatedly offer peace negotiations, but Athens refuses.

And still far too few people in Britain realise the extent to which the Greece of Athens, that refuses peace talks, is now an American colony. Consider the facts.

4. AMERICAN COLONY v. FREE GREECE

Imagine such a thing as this being written about Britain:

"Greece has two queens. She has her official, hard-working, popular young Queen Frederika; and she has Mrs. Henry Grady, wife of the American Ambassador, who has personally adopted the country and become its temporary, unpaid, uncrowned queen. . . King Paul and Queen Frederika are woven warmly into the life of Greece. Mrs. Henry Grady is sort of superimposed on top of it."

This was written by Jenny Nicholson in the *Sunday Despatch* (17.4.49). But she was too flattering to Queen Frederika. She forgot to mention that Frederika was a German princess who was brought up as a member of the Hitler Youth, and therefore is far from popular in the eyes of every Greek who is not a lover of the Nazis.

In March, 1947, when Mr. Bevin said Britain could not afford any more large-scale subsidies for Athens, President Truman announced his new "doctrine" of aid to Greece and Turkey. "It is proposed that American Missions will supervise expenditures of funds and that they will have the power to veto expenditures of which they do not approve," said the *State Department Bulletin* in a supplement of May 4th, 1947.

American control of Greece developed rapidly. A Foreign Trade Administration was set up in Athens, with power to control all Greece's Foreign Trade. Its chief was an American. Since August, 1947, the leader of by far the largest party in the Greek Parliament, Mr. Tsaldaris, has not been allowed to be prime minister—the Americans object. It is even stated that the Americans now draft Greek

laws in bad Greek and will not allow even grammatical corrections to the text. And at least one Cabinet Minister, Mr. Bacopoulos, had not long ago to tell the Americans to write to him in Greek, still the official language of the country.

The military command in the civil war is more and more openly in the hands of the Americans. President Truman in his Third Report tactfully admitted that the American "Military Advisory and Planning Group . . . works with the Greek Army Command and General Staff on the overall strategic and tactical planning of operations against the guerillas." What this means in practice is revealed by the following United Press report of December, 1947: "A high ranking U.S. officer will shortly personally visit the commands of the larger Greek units to check up on the professional capacities of the Greek commanders. Already at Volos it is reported that two American generals and six colonels are engaged on such an investigation." Yet they talk of defending Greece's "independence"!

In the economic field American domination is almost complete. All communications have been swallowed up by the American-owned International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation. The American-owned Cooper Construction Co. now controls Greece's main sources of minerals and hydro-electric power. Trans-world Airlines, another American concern, holds a majority of the shares in the Greek Internal Airlines Corporation. And another American firm, Hellenic Enterprises Incorporated, produces a wide variety of consumers' goods. Finally, to add insult to injury, these U.S. firms operating in Greece are not subject to Greek law and enjoy extra-territorial rights for themselves and their employees (*Hansard*, 9.6.48). Thus, in all but name, Monarchist Greece has become a colony of the U.S.A.

It is in self-defence against the Americans, British, and this terror regime, with its islands of exile, courts martial, executions, and suppression of all civil liberties and trade unionism, that the new Resistance Movement began to be built up in the Greek mountains after the summer of 1946.

Slowly at first, then more rapidly, the movement grew. The open interference by the U.S.A. speeded up the growth of the Resistance, as pointed out by Mark Gayn in the *New York Star* of January 10, 1949: "When the U.S. Army Group arrived here in 1947, there were 17,000 guerillas. Today, despite the blood-letting at Grammos, the figure is put by the U.S. Army at 25,000 with another 150,000 described as active sympathisers."

In the summer of 1947, the formation of the Democratic Army was reported. On December 24th, 1947, the formation of a Provisional Democratic Government of Free Greece was proclaimed. And from then on the war has been waged between the two Governments: the American-controlled Government in Athens based on a reign of terror, with pro-Nazis playing a leading part, and the Provisional Democratic Government and its Democratic Army.

While Athens has never carried out the amnesty provisions of the Varkiza Agreement, nor the recommendations of the British Parliamentary Delegation, the Government of Free Greece has operated an amnesty for all who have fought in the Monarchist armies with the

exception of individuals proved guilty, by the evidence of captured Monarchist soldiers themselves, of atrocities.

While the elected committees of trade unions, suppressed since June, 1946, by the Athens authorities, have never been restored to power, in Free Greece trade unionism is not only permitted, but is guaranteed freedom from interference by the State. While in the Greece of the Monarchists women still receive inferior pay to men and do not enjoy the right to vote for parliament, in Free Greece they receive equal pay for equal work and equal political rights with men. While local government in Monarchist Greece is, in the words of the British Parliamentary Delegation of 1946, "undemocratic and authoritarian," power in Free Greece is in the hands of elected People's Committees based on votes for all of 18 and over. And while the leading spokesmen of Athens are determined to continue the civil war, year after year, until a hypothetical "final victory" is achieved, the Provisional Democratic Government has, ever since its formation, pressed openly for a negotiated peace based on the restoration of civil liberties, democracy, and the independence of Greece.

5. INTERVENTION FROM THE NORTH?

The sole justification which is put forward for American intervention in Greece today is the repeated assertion that the Greek civil war is the result of armed intervention from the north. Thus, to take a recent example, when Mr. Raymond Blackburn, M.P., demanded in the House of Commons that "we authorise Greece to go into Albania," he at the same time accused that country of "continual aggression against Greece." (*Hansard*, 21.7.49.) And President Truman, promising yet more aid to Greece and Turkey on July 25th, 1949, once more referred to "the Communist effort in Greece, in the form of a guerilla war supported from abroad."

In this way the virtual colonisation of Greece by the U.S.A. has been explained entirely on the theory that the civil war in Greece is due to assistance from abroad to the Greek guerillas.

This argument deserves examination.

First, let it be noted that *it was in the middle of 1946, before there had been the slightest suggestion of intervention from abroad, that the M.P.s, Dodds, Solley and Tiffany noted a "unilateral civil war" waged by the Right in Greece. It was earlier still, in March, 1946, that Premier Sofoulis had cabled Mr. Bevin concerning the help given by police and gendarmes to armed Right-wing terrorist bands. It is thus established that, early in 1946, it was the armed Right-wing in Greece, the fascists and collaborators, who were waging war.*

Secondly, it should be noted that at the United Nations it was the U.S.S.R. which first raised the question of Greece, in January, 1946, when it protested to the Security Council that the presence of British troops was a menace to peace. This view was hotly contested by the British and Americans in particular. Then in August, 1946, the Ukrainian Soviet Republic again raised the question of Greece on the Security Council, charging that the Greek Government's policy endangered peace and security in the Balkans. Only twelve days earlier,

in Paris, Mr. Tsaldaris, at that time Premier, was leading a Greek delegation which was pressing the Allies to consider Greece's claim to territory in southern Albania (northern Epirus). According to the correspondent of *The Times* (13.8.46) Mr. Tsaldaris flatly denied at that time any suggestion of intervention from the north as the explanation of guerilla fighting: "The present activity of Greek anarchist bands in northern Greece," he said, "raises only a purely internal Greek question of law and order among the Greek population."

Yet, on December 3rd of the same year, less than four months later, Greece appealed to the Security Council on the grounds that Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria were supporting the guerilla movement in Greece. Note the dates: In August the Greeks are claiming part of Albanian territory and denying that there is any foreign intervention in northern Greece in the form of aid to the guerillas. By December their claim to Albanian territory had been rejected by the Allies, and the U.S.A. is talking of sending aid to the Athens Government. It was then that "foreign intervention" was first put forward as the explanation of the development of civil war.

From the above order of events it is clear that the civil war in Greece started with a fascist reign of terror; that from March, 1946, onwards the Athens Government itself imposed this terror through its Emergency Powers, Security Committees and the suppression of trade unions; that the guerilla movement arose in self-defence against this oppression; and that at first there was not the slightest suggestion that this was the result of foreign intervention. The whole story of foreign intervention was developed at a later stage, and was used to justify American "aid" in a form which has in fact become the political, military and economic colonisation of Greece.

It is against this background that the whole story of Greece at the United Nations must be seen. Following the Greek appeal, the Security Council sent a Commission of Investigation consisting of the representatives of eleven States. Only six of these, including U.S.A. and Britain, gave unqualified support to the view that Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia were giving aid to the Greek guerillas. A reading of the full report shows the number of "presumptions" and "assumptions" on which this conclusion of a bare majority, which included two interested parties, Britain and U.S.A., is based.

The matter was brought to the Assembly. The Assembly appointed the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans (U.N.S.C.O.B.). The U.S.S.R. and Poland refused to take part in view of the biased methods of work of the earlier Security Council Commission on which they had served. It was thus to be expected that U.N.S.C.O.B. would report that Greece's northern neighbours were giving aid to the guerillas, and it did so in due course. But again the evidence is full of assumptions and presumptions and, when closely scrutinised, boils down to very little indeed. No evidence whatsoever was found of either foreign troops serving with the Democratic Army or of weapons of foreign origin (other than British and American, and some German and Italian weapons obviously dating from the occupation) being used by the Democratic Army. At no point has the Security Council or the Assembly of the United Nations accused any of Greece's northern neighbours of aggression against Greece.

In the meantime a great humanitarian task was undertaken by the Provisional Democratic Government. This was the evacuation of children to the countries to the north of Greece which offered their hospitality to save these children from starvation and bombing. *Free Greece Radio* first announced the plan for the evacuation of the children in March, 1948, and at the present time no less than 18,000 Greek children are being cared for abroad. This great evacuation scheme, corresponding in its aims to the evacuation of Spanish Republican children after 1936 and the evacuation of British children to Canada and U.S.A. during the Second World War, was met with a torrent of abuse in Athens, where State and Church united to denounce the alleged "abduction" of children to other countries to "indoctrinate them with Communism." When U.N.S.C.O.B. investigated these allegations, they did not find a single substantiated case of a parent whose child had been forcibly seized and sent abroad. Nevertheless, again on a series of presumptions, they declared that such things had taken place.

The Assembly of the United Nations did not endorse the abduction stories, but instead adopted a unanimous resolution recommending that the evacuated children be returned to Greece where they themselves, or their parents, or in the absence of their parents their closest relatives, "express a wish to that effect."

At the 1949 U.N. Assembly Greece is once more on the agenda. It is clear from the preliminary propaganda now taking place that, above all, Albania will be the main target of attack, with a deliberate attempt to extend the war so as to embrace that country. It should not be forgotten that the Athens Government still declares itself in a state of war with Albania, and this was the main cause for the breakdown of conciliation talks initiated by the United Nations and undertaken under the personal guidance of Dr. Evatt during the 1948 Assembly.

6. THE WAR MAY SPREAD

On numerous occasions the Albanian Government has reported to the United Nations that its frontier had been violated by the Athens forces. Most serious of all these allegations so far has been that of August 10th this year, when the Albanians alleged that for four days their frontier had been violated by the Athens troops along a 30-mile front. This report was at once denied by Athens, but it is significant that the idea of such an invasion had been widely canvassed in the preceding period in the Athens press and even in our British Parliament.

The idea of spreading the war so as to involve Albania in particular has been widely advocated from time to time ever since the Greek civil war began. Albania is the victim selected because of its smallness, the poverty of the country, and its isolation from potential allies because of the present state of tension with Yugoslavia.

In August, 1946, Mr. Tsaldaris was still pressing his claim for Southern Albania. In August, 1948, as the U.N. Assembly approached, the Athens Government asked the U.S.A. to "seal the Albanian frontier." On August 26th, 1948, the Athens paper, *Ethnikos Kiryx*, carried the headline, "Let us invade."

As the time for the 1949 U.N. Assembly approaches there is a revival of the same propaganda, this time against Albania and Bulgaria but not Yugoslavia. And Albania is particularly singled out for attack.

On July 17th, the Athens *Eleftheria* called for "immediate measures against Albania" and reminded its readers that Greece "is still in a state of war with Albania and there is a compelling law of life that people should take the law into their own hands when they see a danger of losing their rights. . ." On the same day the Athens *Kathimerini* published an article by General Georgoulis which called for "drastic action" against Albania in the form of "self-defence," including the blockading of the Albanian ports of Durazzo and Valona, the bombing of roads, and suggesting that "an armed invasion of Albanian territory could be carried out to smash up the enemy hideouts in that area."

In Britain such views have been expressed, though less openly, by the *Economist* for some time. On July 21st, however, even the Liberal *Manchester Guardian* carried a feature by Julian Amery which concluded that "we should encourage the peoples of Albania and Bulgaria to liberate themselves from their present totalitarian regimes." At the same time a Greek "Parliamentary delegation" was in London, and its leader, Mr. Politis, told Members of both Houses at a reception on July 19th that "Albania has been turned into a camp of feverish preparation for new attacks" and called for "the active and effective assistance" of Greece's "great and powerful allies." These various statements were closely followed by the remarks of Messrs. Low and Blackburn in the House of Commons which have been noted already.

Both the British and American Governments are quite open in their hatred of the Governments in Eastern Europe. Both have been equally open in their support, financial and military, of the present terrorist regime in Athens. But so far all efforts to defeat the Greek Democratic Army have failed, and there is no doubt that dangerous moves are now on foot to involve Albania, in a desperate attempt both to win the war in Greece and at the same time establish a further bridgehead for an attack on the Governments in the Balkans. The carrying out of such a policy would lead us, with our present national poverty and austerity, towards a third world war. It could be of no benefit whatever to the British people.

In the United States there are many realists who appreciate that "final victory" in Greece can never be won by military means. "Thus, in Greece, as in China," wrote the *New York Post* in a leading article on December 8th, 1948, "President Truman and his administrators have been brought face to face with the overwhelming failure of the Truman Doctrine's insistence on military answers for economic and social evils." And the *New York Herald Tribune* (31.12.48) wrote as follows: "While less attention has been given to the partial failure of American policy in Greece, there is reason to suppose that what is happening there is not unlike what is happening in China." And in the *New York Star* of January 3rd, 1949, the well-known radio commentator, William Shirer, says: "The spread of Communism in China—as Greece proved—cannot be stopped by handing over arms and money and military advice to outworn feudal, corrupt reactionary regimes."

If these comments are correct, there can be no "final victory" in Greece for the powers that rule in Athens, no matter how much support in arms and men is provided by the U.S.A. and Britain. There can only be an everlasting civil war, with all the suffering and horror that this entails. To spread the war to other Balkan countries can only widen the area of suffering and increase the danger of a third world war.

The alternative to continuing the war is to restore peace. And the Provisional Democratic Government, ever since its formation, has made clear its readiness to discuss peace terms which would guarantee the restoration of civil liberties and democracy in Greece and the independence of the Greek nation from foreign intervention.

7. LET THERE BE PEACE NOW

Even before the civil war had started, E.A.M. had repeatedly called for an ending of the Right-wing terror and for an internal policy of reconciliation. This was again and again turned down by the Athens authorities, the Minister of Public Order on July 4th, 1946, going so far as to denounce it as a "most dangerous and satanic trap."

Thus, the ending of the terror and its replacement by a policy of reconciliation was consistently the policy of the Greek Left: it was the Athens Government that opposed reconciliation, intensified the terror, and made civil war inevitable.

Even, however, when civil war was already a fact, E.A.M. in Greece never abandoned its policy of reconciliation. This policy has been reflected again and again in the various peace offers made by the Provisional Democratic Government, the most recent of which is in its memorandum to the U.N. Assembly dated August 15th, 1949. The sole conditions for peace, it has repeatedly said, are that democracy and civil liberties be restored, that a real amnesty be effected, that free elections be held, and that Greek independence be guaranteed. In fact, these conditions are absolutely consistent with, and almost a repetition of, the proposals made by the British All-Party Parliamentary Delegation of October, 1946. Just as the civil war could have been avoided if these proposals had been operated then, so today peace could be restored if those same proposals were acted upon now.

The first official proposal for peace was made by the Provisional Democratic Government on June 1st, 1948. This was supported in Britain by the League for Democracy in Greece, which asked the British Government "to use its influence to initiate peace negotiations in Greece and to strive for a settlement based upon the proposals made by the Provisional Democratic Government." In Athens, on the same day, it was announced that Premier Sofoulis and Vice-Premier Tsaldaris would make "absolutely no comment" on the peace offer. In London the Foreign Office said that it "saw no purpose" in receiving a deputation from the League, headed by Compton Mackenzie, for discussion of the peace offer.

Despite this cold reception by governments, the peace proposals of the Democratic Government have been warmly received in the rest of

Greece and even in the ranks of the Monarchist Army. In the Grammos and Vitsi areas discussions, through megaphones, were carried on with the Monarchist troops who showed that they were by no means enthusiastic for the continuation of the war. In November, 1948, this pressure for peace became so great that a number of leading personalities in Athens itself cabled to Dr. Evatt at the United Nations, stating that only a policy of reconciliation could end the civil war. The signatories were all important people and the list is worth recording: General K. Manetas, former Minister for War; General Sakellariopoulos, former Minister of Communications; Dr. N. Kolyvas, former President of the High Court and a former Minister of Justice; Professor Bensis, of Athens University and former Physician to the Royal Family; A. Stratigopoulos, President of the Athens Lawyers' Association; G. Kartalis, former Minister of National Economy and the only one of the nine who had ever had any connections at all with the political Left; P. Argyropoulos, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to France from 1944 to 1946; and, finally, Mr. Vorazanis, a Liberal M.P. and former Minister of National Economy.

On its becoming known in the Athens Parliament that Mr. Vorazanis had signed the statement, he was bodily thrown from the Chamber by his fellow Deputies and severely injured.

At the beginning of December, 1948, as many as 108 leading British personalities, including 75 M.P.s, called on the British Government to support a policy of reconciliation in Greece. This, however, the British Government refused to do. And in May, 1949, following more recent peace proposals of the Democratic Government, 45 British M.P.s and 29 other leading personalities signed a statement circulated by the Union of Democratic Control appealing to the British Government "to modify its view and to urge the Athens Government to take the necessary steps to end the civil war by peace negotiations."

A *Tass* message of May 19th this year revealed that informal talks had already at that time been taking place between the British, Soviet and U.S. Governments on the question of Greece and that certain concrete proposals had been put forward by the Soviet Government. These were: that the Powers appeal to both sides in Greece to cease hostilities, that a universal amnesty be proclaimed, and that free elections be carried out by a body which included representatives of Greek democratic circles heading the people's liberation movement. Mr. Gromyko also stressed the need for elections, supervised by the Powers, including the U.S.S.R., and a joint commission of the Powers, including the U.S.S.R., to control Greece's northern frontiers.

These proposals, consistent with the repeated proposals of the Democratic Government itself, were warmly welcomed in Free Greece, where a Cabinet meeting on May 31st declared that "they could form the basis for a peaceful, democratic settlement to bring the civil war to an end." They are again mentioned in the August memorandum to the U.N. Assembly.

With still no move towards the restoration of peace by the British Government, the Executive Committee of the League for Democracy in Greece, meeting in London on July 7th, declared: "We welcome the

repeated offers by the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece to end the civil war by negotiation and deplore the fact that such offers are repeatedly rejected by the Athens Government. We deeply regret that H.M. Government appears to support the irreconcilable stand of the Athens Government and appeal to it, once again, to modify its view and to urge the Athens Government to take the necessary steps to end the civil war by peace negotiations."

But the fighting continues. The war goes on. Neither the American nor British Governments has yet shown any inclination to help to restore peace. Instead, we see at the present time an intensification of the campaign for more aid to Athens, the pouring of more British and American troops, aircraft and machines into Greece, and provocative proposals that Albania should be invaded with the fullest Anglo-American support.

It is four years since the major war in Europe ended. But for nearly three years a civil war has been raging in Greece. There are some who would turn this civil war into an international war and into a Third World War. This is danger not to be sniffed at, for it is a reality. And the cost to the British people, not only to the Greek people, of any such adventures would be disastrous.

Greece has cost Britain £400,000,000 already since the end of the war, says Major Tufton-Beamish, M.P. The U.S.A. have spent in China about £500,000,000 and they now admit their failure to bolster-up Chiang Kai-shek's regime. If the comparative size of Greece and China is taken into account, we have spent far more in Greece than the U.S.A. in China!

Denis Healey, International Secretary of the Labour Party, in the *Tribune* (18.2.49) expresses the hope that "the lessons of the Chinese débâcle have not been lost on the Greeks or on the Americans in Greece." So far, however, this remains only a hope.

Only by reconciliation, peace negotiations, and the restoration of democratic law and order in Greece can we be saved from further additional burdens, in money and lives, arising from our close association with the war and terrorist policy of the present rulers in Athens.

On the question of the Greek terror and the executions the British working-class and progressive movement has made its voice heard, and there is no doubt that many lives have been saved as a result of the widespread protests in this country against these mass executions. But the question of peace is no less vital than the executions. Peace can be restored in Greece. Peace will be restored there so soon as the British people can convince their Government to support a policy of reconciliation instead of the present disastrous adventure of a never-ending war. For the U.S.A. could not continue its policy of colonising Greece without the active support of the British Government and the presence of British troops.

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The League for Democracy in Greece

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Aims

1. To rebuild and strengthen the traditional friendship between the peoples of Greece and of Great Britain on the basis of the establishment and development of democracy in Greece.
2. To enlighten the British public about the situation in Greece and to promote cultural relations between the two countries.
3. To organise relief to those Greeks who have suffered for their democratic beliefs and activities, and to their dependants, and to the dependants of those Greeks who died fighting for democracy.
4. To work for: (a) A general amnesty for all Greek democrats imprisoned for political reasons;
(b) The restoration of trade union and civil liberties generally in Greece;
(c) The suppression of armed terrorism and the trial and punishment of collaborators.

Membership

Individual Membership 5s. per annum
Affiliation: Local Organisation, 10s. per annum; District Organisation, £1 per annum; National Organisation, £5 per annum. (All include *Greek News* monthly.)

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YOU can help in the following ways:—

Send a Donation to the Hon. Treasurer of the Medical Aid Committee, c/o League for Democracy in Greece, 89 Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2, to enable us to buy medical and relief supplies.

Send a Parcel to the same address of used clothing or blankets (clean and in good condition) or tinned food (milk, Ovaltine and soap are particularly needed for women and children on the islands of exile).

Send for supplies of our free illustrated folder and distribute it among your friends and in your organisation. It tells you about those Greek democrats who so desperately need your help and what you can do.