

# THE TRUTH ABOUT GREECE

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BY  
STELIOS  
PISTOLAKIS

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THE TRUTH ABOUT GREECE

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# THE TRUTH ABOUT GREECE

By STELIOS PISTOLAKIS

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D. PARTSALIDES

Secretary of the E.A.M.  
After his election as Mayor of  
the industrial city of Kavalla,  
in Northern Greece, he was  
exiled to Gavdos (the Island  
of Death). He is now the  
leader of the Greek people in  
the fight for liberation.



Members of the Greek community in Melbourne march through the city in support of the Greek Liberation Movement. These citizens have a proud record as democrats and fighters for liberty.

## FOREWORD

The news of the last two months of 1944 that the British Forces intervened in the internal affairs of the Greek people have been sad tidings for the peoples of the United Nations fighting for the freedom of all peoples to decide their own future.

The struggle that is taking place in Greece is an uneven one. On the one hand the E.A.M. and its army the E.L.A.S. representing the 90% of the Greek people, and on the other the remnants of the Fascist Metaxas regime, supported by certain reactionary elements in Britain

To understand the origin and aims of the E.A.M. and its present struggle for democracy within Greece it is necessary to relate not only the birth and achievements of the Movement, but also the reactionary forces arraigned against it represented by the King and his clique.

This pamphlet is only a short outline of the history and evolution of the struggle for unity and independence during recent years, that shed light on the new social dynamics and conditions that are shaping the future of Greece.

The author of this pamphlet, Mr. Stelios Pistolakis, is superbly equipped to make this analysis. He has figured prominently in Greek politics since his early youth. He played an important role in the Liberal Party during the Premiership of Eleftherios Venizelos; he was at various times Commissioner of the Government in the National Agrarian Bank, Governor of the Province of Seres in Eastern Macedonia, General Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and a member of the last Supreme Council of Economics. In 1936 he was elected a deputy of the Greek Parliament from Canea, Crete Island.

Although Mr. Pistolakis attacks King George II of Greece, he does so not of personal interest but because the King and his clique represent not only the remnants of the Greek Fascist regime of Metaxas, but also certain British bondholders who are more concerned about the collection of exorbitant interests on money lent to Greek Governments since 1898, than the salvation, rehabilitation and well-being of the starving Greek populace.

Reading this pamphlet one becomes convinced that the only solution to the Greek problem is the appreciation of the Teheran Agreement.

Whilst the appointment of a Regent (Archbishop Damaskinos) and attempts to form a new Government under General Plastiras or any other individual of the old ruling clique are an indication of shifting of ground on the part of the old reactionary forces there can be no real solution to the Greek situation until the demand for a provisional Government of national unity which could conduct free elections is acceded to.

Such a Government would express the spirit and letter of Teheran. But the application of this agreement can only be brought into effect if every freedom-loving person protested against the use of British Forces in this struggle.

The failures of the old discredited politicians in their attempts to rule by the old methods are an indication of their decay.

Without the support of the progressive forces no Government could have the confidence of the Greek people.

In the words of Mr. Pistolakis: "An old world is dying, a new one coming to birth. Out of the ashes of old temples, the light of a new faith is shining, faith in life, liberty, and the people's cause."



# The Truth About Greece

Few questions vital to the Allied Nations have been more misrepresented to the Australian public than those concerning Greece and its heroic liberation movement.

For years royal Greek propagandists, in close collaboration with some influential allied circles, have distorted the facts and concealed the truth. Needled by nightmares of revolution over the mounting people's movement of liberation in Europe, they deliberately muddied the waters of the Greek situation in an attempt to prove:

1. That King George II of Greece is a "constitutional" king and his regime-in-exile the "legal government" of Greece.

2. That the Greek movement of liberation—Europe's first great upsurge of patriots for their country's freedom—is a suspicious social upheaval, inspired and led by foreigners.

3. That the only way to restore social order and political stability in Greece after its liberation is to bring back the old, dishonest fascist tyrants, crowned and uncrowned, with their talent for "quelling sedition" and "controlling" the people.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to break through the fog of misrepresentation and to reveal the truth about recent events in Greece and in the Middle East, which British censorship has hidden from the allied public. This censorship aroused deep indignation among allied correspondents and the British people. Twenty-four British and American correspondents protested bitterly in Cairo against a censorship which did not allow them to send the "facts" on the recent Greek crisis. Richard Mowrer of the New York Post and Chicago Daily News bluntly warned the American public not to believe the official Cairo dispatches on the Greek situation. The London "Nation and New Statesman" in its May, 1944, issue openly accused Mr. Churchill of "scandalously suppressing the facts in order to stifle the criticism of British public opinion."

This protest welled up out of the conviction that the Greek issue is inseparable from the great people's issues of this war and is of urgent importance for the allies whose sons are fighting and dying on Europe's soil for the cause of liberation.

## ELEMENTS IN THE GREEK SITUATION

There are a number of groups in the Greek situation today:—

1. The democratic forces of the people, who, despite the cruellest tyranny, organised themselves politically and militarily into a provisional people's regime, known as the "National Liberation Front"—E.A.M.—with a powerful national army. This regime and its forces are relentlessly fighting the enemy in the mountains and towns of Greece with epic heroism and self-sacrifice, under the orders of the allied high command of the Middle East.

2. The old political parties—who depended on "passive resistance" to the enemy.

3. The old fascist regime of King George II of Greece with its present offspring and affiliations inside and outside Greece. The old royal fascist regime, after traitorously delivering the army over to the enemy in 1941, and causing the fall of Greece, split in two. One group remained in Greece and formed the Quisling governments of Tsolakoglou, Logothelopoulos and John Rhallis, all of whom were the pillars of the fascist regime and close personal friends of the King. The other group fled with the King into exile and formed the so-called "Greek Royal Government-in-Exile" with a former banker, Mr. Emmanuel Tsouderos, as the Chancellor of the King. Both groups continued the politics of the old fascist regime even though the exile group had to collaborate with the allies, obviously not out of sympathy with democracy but out of hope that the allies would restore them to power after the liberation of Greece.

A most prominent political leader, now in Greece, put it this way:—

"Both these governments, the Quisling government and that of the King in exile, in spite of the different aims they now profess, in essence have the same purpose, the continuation of the fascist dictatorship. . . . When Greece is liberated none of these regimes will be accepted by the people. The King as the head of a tyranny, through which he has collected enormous amounts of money, will not be tolerated to return to Greece."

Sophocles E. Venizelos, son of the great statesman Eleftherios Venizelos—and at one time vice-president of the Greek Government-in-Exile—substantiated this view in an article in the April, 1943, issue of "Common Sense":—

"The royal dictatorship of King George II until the Nazi defeat, held power by virtue of armed force (fastened on the country after the fraudulent plebiscite carried through at the point of military bayonets) . . . . Neither defeat nor exile has forced the royal dictatorship to reconsider its fundamental policies. It has not and never has had



popular support and it exists today only because several years ago it was able to impose its will by force . . . .”

Mr. Venizelos was right in saying the royal regime-in-exile did not change its policies. It abandoned Greece to sure foes and uncertain friends, friends who are not even convinced that the Atlantic Charter applies to Greek territories usurped by the enemy, such as the Dodecanese islands, let alone those kept by friends. It abandoned the Greek people to starvation and the charity of the allied peoples and governments while dissipating the scant remnants of the Greek treasury for the King's fabulous fees and propaganda expenses. It has not raised a finger to support the guerrilla and underground forces of Greece, but, on the contrary, has hidden from the world their epic struggle lest the true splendor of the heroes and martyrs of Greece dim the pseudo-glamor of the fascist king. It has systematically persecuted the democratic elements in the armed forces and outraged all honest and patriotic Greeks.

Indeed, the plans and purpose of the King are best summarised by his notorious fascist pal, Admiral Sakellariou, then Vice-President of the King's regime, who declared:—

“The King's national regime, of August 4—(i.e., Greek fascism)—must be restored again after the war.”

## PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS

As a result, two parallel people's movements began to appear as early as 1942. One arose inside of Greece with the united participation of the fighting organisations of E.A.M. and many elements of the old political parties. Their representatives, meeting in conference at the end of 1942, adopted the following resolutions:—

1. That the resistance movement must be organised to expel the invader and liberate Greece.

2. That the King must not return to Greece before the people had decided the future form of their government according to the Atlantic Charter, and

3. That a government of national coalition must be formed as soon as circumstances allowed.

It is perhaps worth noting here, as indicative of the worldwide unity of all Greek patriots, that the writer of this pamphlet, a few months earlier, in May, 1942, demanded exactly the same things in memoranda and publicly in the name of the Greek democrats.

The second movement appeared at the same time in the Greek armed forces in the Middle East. It came into public prominence, however, a few months later, in March, 1943, when a delegation of the armed forces demanded the removal from the government and high military posts of a number of fascists and quisling collaborators who were scandalously undermining the Greek war effort.

## ROYAL REGIME'S ANSWER

The reactions of the royal regime to these demands were first, an intensive drive to split the democratic front inside of Greece, and second, a systematic drive to crush the anti-fascist spirit of the Greek armed forces in the Middle East by eliminating all democratic elements from their ranks.

It sent its agents into Greece not to bolster the heroic resistance of the Greek people but to split them by playing off one group of guerrillas against another, by attempting to induce some of the less stable elements to support the King and then proclaim to the world that there were also Greeks who were for the King! If this should not succeed—and it did not!—then these agents were to provoke disunity and strife inside Greece and on this basis present the King to the allied public as the only “arbitrator” of the Greeks who would otherwise “exterminate themselves.”

An obvious burlesque, yet Mr. Churchill used it on May 24, 1944, in his address in the House of Commons when he credited the “reconciliation of the Greeks to the intervention of the King!” “Reconciler” is a strange name for a man who stands as a symbol of disunity and embittered strife!

And the London press warned the British Foreign Office that “the hard and heroic struggle of the Greek people against the axis is too precious to the allied cause to be sacrificed light-heartedly for the interest of a small clique—meaning the royal clique—or even for the dynastic ambitions of a King.”

The scandal broke out into the open in the spring of 1943 when the royal propaganda bureau boastfully announced that a leader of one of the smaller guerrilla groups—Colonel Zervas—after this immediately promoted to General—had sent “a telegram of loyalty to the King.” The royal propaganda thus insinuated that a split had occurred in the democratic forces and that the King had at last found at least some support in Greece. This was the first concrete attempt to create division among the fighting forces inside Greece.

Yet this did not change the situation in the least. For the Greek people are bitterly opposed to dynasty as they are opposed to fascism. They want an honest, just and liberal people's democracy. They want a democracy in which the supreme ruler will be the people; the supreme law, justice and equality for all; the supreme goal, liberty and prosperity; the supreme policy, equal friendship and collaboration with all great and small neighbors and allies.

These are the aims and aspirations of the Greek people and they will fight to the end for them against any and all opposition.



Above are (left) Lieut.-Gen. S. Sarasis, a brilliant military leader, commander of the gallant E.L.A.S. (National People's Army of Liberation). (Right) M. Torfyrogenis, an ex-lawyer and member of the late Greek Parliament. M. Torfyrogenis is General Secretary of the E.A.M. (National Liberation Front.)

## **NATIONAL FRONT OF LIBERATION**

These are also the aims of the E.A.M. and for this reason it has attracted the unanimous and enthusiastic support of the people. For the E.A.M. is a powerful people's movement, consciously democratic, and as such a stumbling block to the King's dynastic and fascist ambitions.

The E.A.M. properly speaking is today the people of Greece. This is true because it controls 90% of the guerrilla and underground forces fighting inside Greece—75,000 active fighters and 200,000 reserves. Mr. Eden had to acknowledge this in the House of Commons although he reduced the percentage to 75%. (See House of Commons minutes, April 5, 1944, Mr. Eden answering Mr. Barlett). This is true because the E.A.M. has already liberated a great part of Greece and has established there a real people's democracy. This is true because the E.A.M. expresses today the ideas and aspirations of the Greek people, the indomitable spirit of the Greek masses who kept on fighting the most cruel invaders unarmed, single-handed, in the face of famine, disease, treason and the defeatism which the Quislings, the Germans and the friends of the King all preached.

"Why resist a powerful enemy and destroy the people and the cities when the allies are going to liberate Greece?"

"Go back to your homes," shouted the Chancellor of the King in his New Year's message to the fighters in the mountains of Greece.

"The E.A.M. is communistic, has sold out to the Bolsheviks," declared the Berlin radio every Sunday night.

The agents of the King in Greece repeated, "The Germans are not so bad as those communists of the E.A.M."

One of these agents fabricated a legend, which has been circulated ad nauseam; that "a German doctor was dressing the wounds of a Greek peasant when a devil of the E.A.M. stormed the house and killed the merciful German!"

This is the currency of disruption, the old game of "divide and rule," that the royal regime used in order to split the people and paralyse the all powerful democratic people's movement of liberation.

Needless to say, these shabby fables do not work within Greece, although they have their influence outside with people who have not borne the Axis yoke.

## **PERSECUTION OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

To crush the democratic movement in the Greek armed forces of the Middle East, the royal regime-in-exile resorted to its old methods of violence and oppression. A wave of persecutions followed in the Middle East. Political leaders who had escaped to the Middle East were sent from exile to new exile in India and various British possessions.

Officers and men of democratic convictions were accused of being Communists and sent to concentration camps ruled by men of the old King's gestapo.

For the royal clique did not want a democratic army in the Middle East, but an army of mercenaries who cared nothing for the wishes of the people and would help the King return to Greece and subjugate it anew. When the royal clique failed to turn the Greek Army in the Middle East into mercenaries, it decreed its dissolution.

A Greek democratic leader, now in Egypt, who in 1938 escaped a death sentence of the royal fascist regime, sent me a very significant letter, dated October 5, 1943, in which he wrote:—

The royal government—Admiral Sakellariou, etc.—using heavy amounts of gold sterling, has managed to bring to Egypt from Greece many fascists whom it placed in administrative posts. From these posts they have begun to purge the Greek armed forces of all democratic elements.

... characterising them as anarchists, communists, criminals . . . . Such is the indecency of the royal clique—actually seeking the dissolution of the Greek Army because it refuses to turn into a tool of the King.”

Yet this army, mistreated and slandered, is the army of which General Montgomery said: “This army fought superbly in El Alamein and Tunisia. It is a superb army. I would never wish to have better soldiers.”

This was the state of affairs against which the army protested in March, 1943, and together with it all honest Greeks inside and out of the country. Under the pressure of events and the determination of the army to carry out its national role by fighting fascism—foreign and domestic—the King and his foreign ministers agreed to broaden the royal government-in-exile by including some members of the old liberal party headed by Mr. Sophocles E. Venizelos.

Unfortunately, this did not bring a change in the policies of the King and his clique. Perhaps the only effect of Mr. Venizelos' participation in the government was a broadcast of the King on July 4, 1943, to the people of Greece in which he promised “free elections for a constituent assembly as soon as the security of the country . . . . warrants it.”

But he insisted that he would return to Greece against the will of the people in order to supervise the “free” elections! Who? The man who violated his oath to the nation, abolished the Greek constitution and dissolved the Greek parliament; the man who betrayed the liberty and sovereignty of the people and instituted the most shameful and disastrous dictatorship in Europe!

As was to be expected, the people considered the King's declaration a fraud and concern for the future mounted inside and out of the country.

At that time I wrote to a prominent leader in the royal government expressing my concern. Here is his answer:--

“Unfortunately, a declaration of the King that he would not return before the people decide was not possible because the British are absolutely opposed, and in such an event a break in relations would result and we would have to resign . . . .”

## **E.A.M. DELEGATION IN EGYPT**

The E.A.M., apprehensive lest the people's struggle against the Nazi invaders be impaired by the King's ambiguous declaration and the continued unscrupulous fostering of strife, sent a delegation to Cairo in August, 1943. The

delegation, led by Mr. Elias Tsirmokos, spoke in the name of the fighting people of Greece. They insisted that the King declare he would postpone his return until after the Greek people decide about their form of government. The same demand was voiced by the representative of the political parties, Mr. Exintaris, and even by the representative of Colonel Zervas.

Second, the delegation of the E.A.M. demanded that "a government of national unity must be formed in order to assume the direction of the whole struggle, of the mobilisation . . . and co-ordination . . . of the armed forces inside and outside of Greece."

In answer to this, the E.A.M. delegation was held incommunicado for days. Only after enduring hardships and demanding to return to Greece was the delegation permitted to leave for Greece where they could continue their struggle against the German invaders.

The impact of events, however, and the pressure of Mr. Sophocles Venizelos, forced the cabinet to accept the first of the E.A.M.'s proposals unanimously. But again the King did not comply. Neither did he comply with the second demand of the E.A.M. for the formation of a government of national unity.

In connection with this, the government leader quoted above, wrote to me on October 1, 1943:—

"I agree with your views, which the Government has adopted completely, especially after the arrival here of the representatives of the political parties (Exintaris) and, on the other hand, of the fighting forces inside Greece. Complete identity of views has prevailed among the democratic elements and as a result, a common demarche has been made to the King." (The unanimous resolution of the cabinet.)

....."Unfortunately, the advice of our great allies to his Majesty is not to make any new concession, but to insist upon his declaration of July 4th." My opinion is that not all the allies were meant here.

## **SLANDER CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE E.A.M.**

Strengthened by this intervention, the royal clique was emboldened to the point of declaring virtual war against E.A.M. and the Greek people. They attempted to lay the rift at the door of the E.A.M.; they called the patriots anarchists, communists and tools of Moscow. They systematically exaggerated and played up insignificant clashes of their own manufacture into "tremendous fratricidal strife" and "raging civil war."

Meanwhile the good faith of the E.A.M. was being proved in action; it was collaborating with all the minor fighting organisations. Moreover, in its official reports, dated November 6, 1943, and published in the Greek National Herald in America on September 24, 1943, the E.A.M. delegation praised the struggle of all the minor groups and offered still greater collaboration.

Those who slandered the E.A.M. did it not because they believed their own slanders, but because they wanted to discredit it before allied opinion and thus prevent E.A.M.'s participation in the government. For they knew that the participation of this all-powerful, consciously democratic organisation in the government, would be a serious stumbling block to all intrigues and monarcho-fascist machinations to reconquer Greece.

The E.A.M., however, was not discouraged and continued to demand the formation of a government of national unity. Three times since last September it demanded this, three times the King turned down its patriotic propositions.

What more could the people of Greece do from their imprisonment? What means had they to force the will of the nation upon a clique interested only in power, without caring where this power came from?

What the people of Greece under the yoke could not accomplish, the Greek armed forces of the Middle East undertook. They backed up openly the demands of the E.A.M. This aroused a new series of persecutions against the best elements of the army and navy and the situation grew worse hourly at the end of 1943.

You cannot toy with the hunger for life and freedom of a people who have poured out their blood for the cause of liberty. It became clear that the storm was gathering. In an effort to stave it off, the King and his supporters labored and brought forth a new masterpiece of arrogance—a letter dated November 8, 1943, to the then Prime Minister Tsouderos, in which the King declared:—

“I will examine anew the question of my return to Greece under the light of the military and political conditions of the time.”

Over and over again this haughty “I” of a tyrant, guilty of the greatest catastrophe a nation has ever sustained. “I” will examine; “I” will judge; “I” will decide; “I,” the tyrant, not you, the serfs, the people!

This attitude, together with the reluctance of the King to comply with the will of the nation and form a government of national unity, brought forth the events of last spring and a political crisis.

## EVENTS OF MARCH, 1944

On March 10 of this year, a Political Committee of National Unity was formed in Greece with the explicit purpose of uniting all national forces, political and military, and placing them at the disposal of the liberating armies of the allies for the great hour of liberation.

This Committee was headed by Professor Alexander Svolos, well known authority on constitutional law, and included among its members Colonel Bakirtsis, one of the most prominent officers of the Greek Army, General Mandakas, the guerrilla leader and hero of Crete, Mr. Angelos Angelopoulos, prominent professor of the University of Athens, Mr. Nicos Askoutsis, former cabinet minister and Governor of Crete, Mr. D. Siantos, former deputy of the Communist Party, Mr. Elias Tsirimokos, former deputy of the Liberal Party, and Mr. K. Gavrielidis, former deputy of the Agrarian Party.

This Committee, known as the "Political Committee of National Liberation"—P.E.E.A. are the Greek initials—is a broader committee than the E.A.M., although its backbone is the E.A.M. The P.E.E.A. immediately called upon the royal regime-in-exile and all the political parties to form a government of national unity

The royal regime disdainfully ignored the call.

As a result great demonstrations of protest against the King and his regime broke out in Egypt in which both military men and civilians participated.

On March 31, 1944, a delegation of the armed forces appeared before the Prime Minister, Mr. Tsouderos, and demanded the calling of a national conference of all political parties and people's organisations for the purpose of forming a government of national unity, with due participation of all national forces.

There is no doubt that the armed forces, in sending this delegation, acted on behalf of the Greek people, who under occupation, were unable to exercise their constitutional rights. They acted as a political body constituted by Greek citizens, expressing in the only way possible under existing circumstances the sovereignty of the people of Greece. Their purpose was to defend the rights and liberty of the Greek people through the formation of a government of national unity.

Perhaps the way they acted, from a strictly legal point of view, and under normal circumstances, could not be considered constitutional. But these were not normal circumstances; they were extraordinary. When the country is enslaved by the enemy, the supreme law is not the "constitu-



tion"—even if it were not abolished by the King—but "salus populi," the salvation of the people.

Accordingly, the demand of the Greek armed forces for the formation of a government of national unity was in essence a correct and patriotic action.

Furthermore, a King ceases to be "constitutional" and ceases even to be a King from the moment he violates his oath to the nation and enslaves his people.

In any case, a similar army delegation a year earlier obtained its demands, namely, the removal of some fascist elements and the broadening of the government-in-exile by the inclusion of liberal elements under Mr. Sophocles Venizelos. But the 1944 delegation was arrested! Mr. Tsouderos was not wise enough this time, and gave the order to arrest.

This, of course, precipitated a crisis. The Greek armed forces, who distinguished themselves in the campaigns in Egypt and Tunisia and in naval and air operations in the Mediterranean, protested bitterly and insisted upon their demands. They remained in their ships and barracks awaiting the answer of the government.

This Mr. Tsouderos labelled "mutiny" and called upon the British to "quell the sedition."

The Committee of National Unity of the Greek Armed Forces in the Middle East outlined the real situation in a letter to Churchill on April 15, 1944, about two weeks after the alleged "sedition." This open letter to the Prime Minister of Great Britain reads:—

"Dear Mr. Churchill:

"Confident that we express the opinion and feelings of the Greek Armed Forces in the Middle East, we address to you this open letter to bring to your notice and to the notice of the whole British nation, the present situation which at any moment may result in incidents which will poison irreparably the relations between our two allied Armies. We are making this appeal to you, and through you to the Nation which you lead, because we would like to believe that you are not fully aware of the measures which the representatives of the British government have taken to meet this situation.

"Invariably in your speeches, and especially recently, you have expressed your sorrow at the divisions that exist among the Greeks. We are sure that the sorrow you have expressed implies an ardent desire to see Greece united and to see it become, through this unity, strong and happy. With

all respect, however, we cannot agree with the importance you have attached to certain incidents, on the basis of which you have characterised the Greek situation as chaotic and deplorable. In contrast to your views, certain high personalities among the United Nations have expressed their admiration at the unity of the Greek Nation and have given correct explanations of these incidents. Since we cannot but judge the leaders of the world anti-fascist struggle by the same standards and since we cannot attribute to them divergent feelings towards our Nation, leading in consequence to divergent conclusions, we consider it our duty to bring to your personal notice the facts concerning the present situation, so that, being aware of this, you may arrive at the same correct conclusions about the Greek problem as the other well informed circles among the Allied Nations.

"The Greek Nation was, is and always will be united. Those minor incidents which, we believe, through your lack of information, have driven you to wrong conclusions, were not expressions of dissension among our people; on the contrary, they were simply expressions of national unity, which at every turn neutralised the attempts of those who were trying to disrupt that unity. Recently these attempts at disruption, which have even descended to collaboration with the enemy, have originated directly from those who surround King George II. We do not wish to mention particular incidents since we know that documentary evidence exists in your various departments which confirm the statement we have made. Perhaps because of your close friendship with King George our statement may arouse a certain bitterness on your part against us, but we still believe that a fact, whatever personal feelings it may call up, does not, because of this, cease to retain its validity in the realm of reality. The actions of King George, which we have mentioned, can be fully explained if they are examined in the light of the policy he followed during that dark period which began on August 4th, 1936. The measures then taken carry the indelible seal of royal responsibility. During that period the policy that King George followed was that of a petty autocrat who appointed the most discredited and disreputable elements in Greece to positions of responsibility, and today, it cannot be denied that the closest friends of the King and the executive heads of that period now constitute the Quisling group in Greece. Just as King George selected his advisers and the executives of his will on his arrival in our country in 1936, so today he is trying once again, using the same elements, to impose violently and irresponsibly the same fascist regime of which he is the creator, on the long-suffering Greek people. While the betrayed Greek people would have been perfectly justified in settling first of all their account with King George and his clique, they have

decided to leave this question to the future on the condition that the King declare that he will not return to Greece until he is invited by a free plebiscite of the Greek people. On this particular point, as you are aware, complete agreement exists among the Greek parties.

“This declaration which the whole nation demands from the King is justified by the general mistrust in which he is regarded. This mistrust arises from:—

- (a) The arbitrary decision of the monarchical clique taken on October 10, 1935, for the restoration of the monarchy.
- (b) the faked plebiscite held on November 3rd of the same year.
- (c) the appointment of Metaxas in April, 1936.
- (d) the imposition of fascism on August 4th, 1936, which crowned the three previous measures of a clique of the King's personal friends.

“In order to prevent a repetition of such arbitrary measures, the nation is obliged to demand the afore-mentioned declaration, and the King must agree to sign it if he wishes to prove that he was sincere when he promised to respect the sovereign will of the people. Even if this popular demand touches the personal pride of the King, it cannot be maintained that the dignity of one person is superior to that of a whole people which he betrayed on August 4th, 1936.

“This, in brief, is the general outline of the Greek problem. It remains now to examine how this has created the present state of affairs in the Middle East. It was only natural that the stand taken by the King, and the decision taken by the people not to accept any compromise, should have created around the King groups of vacillating politicians whose popularity varied with the strength of the popular anti-monarchic feeling and whose main objective in Cairo was to retain office at any price. As such, these groups were nothing but an obstacle to the creation of a real government of national coalition.

“With the approach of national liberation, Fighting Greece, under the leadership of the National Liberation Front (E.A.M.) had no recourse but to set up the Political Committee of National Liberation which appealed to all the truly patriotic elements in the Nation with a view to forming a national government. The adventurers around the King refused to collaborate; instead, by a policy of wait and see, they tried to extract from this situation as much profit for themselves as they could. Confronted with these criminal delaying tactics, the Armed Forces in the Middle East

expressed, by their magnificent action, their desire for national unity, thus depriving the handful of disrupters in Cairo of all further pretence that national unity had not yet been achieved. The importance of and the determination behind the decision taken by the Greek Armed Forces in the Middle East, demonstrates both the real democratic feeling of our people and the strength of the present national unity, a unity which cannot be undermined and broken either by distance or by the calumnies of disrupters. In the face of this great national achievement of ours, your representative in the Middle East together with British Armed Forces are besieging the heroes of Albania, and today, Easter Sunday, is the 15th day since the Greek Armed Forces have had their food and water supplies cut off.

"The Greeks, because of their friendship with the British Nation, are patiently enduring this situation, the like of which has never been heard of before in the history of Allied Nations. We must, however, warn you that if these inhuman measures continue, there is a real danger of a serious clash between besieged and besiegers. These measures, which are only paralleled by Hitler's treatment of his allies, are leading to a rapid deterioration in the relationship between two traditionally friendly armies.

"We would like to believe that your personal interest in the strengthening of friendly relations between allies, will put an end to these inhuman measures, which only encourage the small clique of Greek disrupters and prevent the completion of our existing national unity, for which you have so often appealed to the Greek people.

"With profound respect,

"THE COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL UNITY,  
GREEK ARMED FORCES, MIDDLE EAST."

"15/4/'44

"Communicated to: Stalin, Roosevelt."

Unfortunately, the answer to this letter came in British bullets. And the persecutions of civilians and military men that followed were an ugly brown.

According to Mr. Parker, prominent members of the House of Commons, 87% of the Greek armed forces in the Middle East are today in British concentration camps! (See minutes of the House of Commons, June 14, 1944).

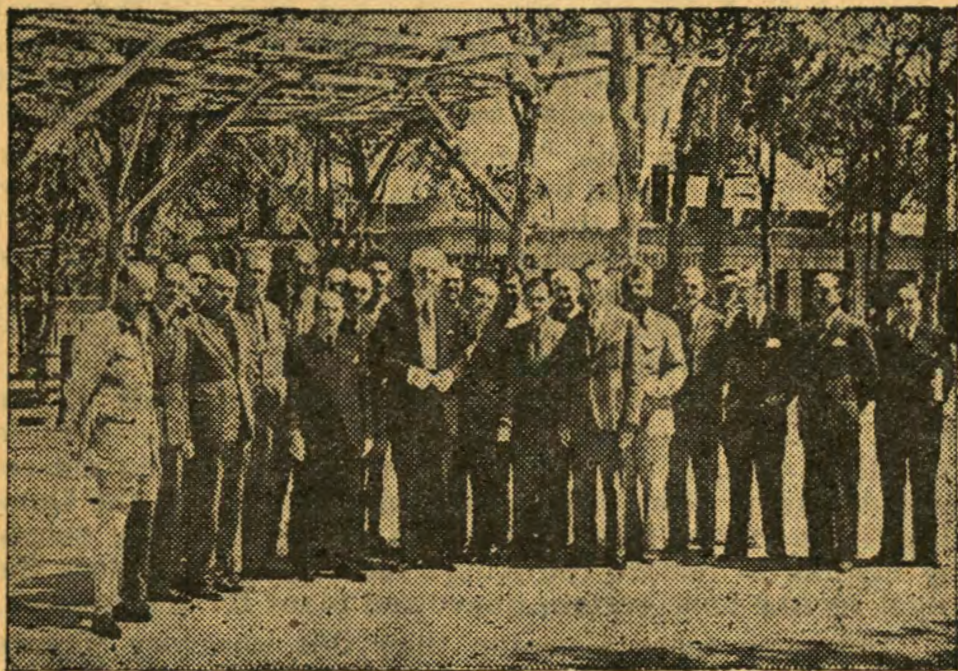
Even the brilliant officer commanding the Greek Navy, Admiral C. Alexandris, who had never been interested in "politics," was imprisoned.

The indignation of the Greek people flared high and hot, and Mr. Tsouderos was forced to resign, despite royal favor and foreign friendships.

## CABINET CHANGES

The next cabinet, that of Mr. Sophocles Venizelos, after having "completely quelled the sedition" was also forced to resign. It was followed by another cabinet under Mr. George Papandreou, leader of a small political party, who came from Greece a few weeks earlier.

These two cabinets—that of Venizelos and Papandreou—called to a national conference in Lebanon, representatives of all political parties and fighting organisations, exactly as the delegation of "mutineers" had suggested. This conference adopted a National Charter and proclaimed that national unity was fully achieved—which is just what the "mutineers" demanded, and for it, at this writing, thirty of them have been sentenced to death!



Delegates to the Lebanon Conference.

What this national charter contains has not been officially revealed. Private information, however, which coincides with that of the Overseas News Agency, outlines the following principal agreements:—

1. That the King must make a statement that he will not return to Greece unless there has been a plebiscite favoring him.

2. That the agreements arrived at during the conference of guerrilla leaders in Plaka, Greece, must be carefully kept.

3. That the government-in-exile must repudiate the "security battalions."

Unfortunately the Papandreou cabinet did not live up to the Lebanon agreements. True, it unanimously accepted the first point concerning the return of the King, but the reluctance of the King, for the third time, to make the necessary statement, left that question also unsettled. In the light of the King's history, Mr. Papandreou's formula "The King is at the disposal of the nation" was not convincing and contained no guarantee.

The King's reluctance to comply with the will of the people and the decision of his cabinet, underlined the hesitation of patriotic Greeks, who do not want civil war after the liberation of their country, to participate in the King's cabinet without the necessary guarantees.

Moreover, according to information reaching this country, Mr. Papandreou did not live up to the second and third points of the Lebanon agreement. Not only did the royal regime refuse to repudiate the Quisling "security battalions" openly and sincerely, but Mr. Papandreou even sought to justify their creation, an ominous note for the future.

For what are the "security battalions?" They are Quisling militia formed by the Quisling government of John Rhallis and armed by the Germans for one purpose, to fight the E.A.M. Only recently the German controlled radio station of Athens spiced the German praise for the "security battalions" with the words of Papandreou in an attempt to sell these battalions to the people.

The Quislings of Athens, all personal friends of the King, on the eve of the liberation of Greece, created these battalions to fight the E.A.M.; the royal regime did not repudiate them. Such a set-up raised questions: do the Quislings hope to save themselves from the wrath of the people by helping to restore the King's old regime, and does the royal regime have certain unavowed plans for the future?

But even more alarming than this unsavory picture were the attempts of the royal regime to dissolve the E.A.M., attempts which were openly discussed in a leading article of the London Times cabled here on July 18, 1944.

## **MR. PAPANDREOU**

It was unfortunate that Mr. Papandreou, an old liberal, capitulated to the allurements of the monarcho-fascist clique and its foreign supporters. His attacks against the E.A.H., his vilification of its leaders, his campaign of slander, "whose edge is sharper than the sword," seriously impeded the formation of a government of national unity.

The court-martial of the heroes of Pindos and El Alamein, with thirty death sentences imposed by judges fresh from Greece, some of them Quisling collaborators, brought to an overflow the cup of Papandreou's responsibility.

"Much justice is much injustice,"—*summum jus, summa injuria*—the old masters of law used to say.

Legal transgressions, if they have sufficient moral and political justification, in world conditions like the present, are not to be measured by old legal standards. Otherwise, in the name of law, tyranny becomes the accuser of freedom. And this is what happened in Cairo—the fighters of freedom were placed in the dock where their accusers, the tyrants of Greece, belonged.

Only a government of national unity can assess guilts and responsibilities, and Mr. Papandreou's government was not such a government. It lacked everything—and especially Greece's new political and military leadership, forged in the white fire of battle, in the whole struggle for the predominance of higher and more just ideas and ideals.

The Greek movement of liberation embodies these ideas. It has the backing of the Greek people because it expresses their hopes and aspirations for the future, because it has the will and the means to fight to the end for the achievement of the people's goals.

## **POLICY OF THE ALLIES TOWARD GREECE**

Are the western allies ready to recognize this fact and change, even at this late date, their attitude toward the people of Greece?

Before answering, let us see what the policy of the western allies is and especially that of the British Government to which, and I borrow a phrase from the London press, "has passed the virtual control of Greek politics."

Frankly speaking, the policy has been a failure. It brushed aside allied pledges to respect the will of the peoples and bolstered the crowned head of Greek fascism. It disregarded allied agreements from the Atlantic Charter to Teheran not to intervene in the internal affairs of the smaller allies. It created a royal regime ready to comply with old foreign financial interests and dedicated to dynastic ambitions without regard for the tragic danger that such a policy might plunge Greece into civil war after her liberation. It underestimated the will of the Greek people to fight to the bitter end for their independence and democratic rights and their ability to do it now, effectively.

Part of the blame for the crisis in Greek affairs and even for the so-called "mutiny," which was a natural reaction although regrettable, can be traced to well-known reactionary forces in England and the United States.

Ever since 1935, the British policy especially has been to support the King against the people. Even when war

came and the Greek people rose as one man to fight at the side of the allies and forced the King to do the same, Churchill called this the King's "contribution to the allied cause" in an effort to strengthen the King's future position. Churchill's cruel thrust at the Greek people's love for freedom and their determination not to succumb to foreign pressure, calling it the "disease of defeat," deeply wounded a people who in the hour of defeat helped England in the spirit of honor and supreme self-sacrifice. They are bitter words for a gallant people, especially when they come from a great allied leader who has inspired the world with his own courage, steadfastness and noble ideals in the dark days of this war.

And they have been coupled with bitter actions. Richard Casey, former British Minister-at-Large in the Middle East, took to task a prominent member of the Greek cabinet because he supported the views of the people and not of the King. Casey's successor, a certain Mr. Reginald Leeper, used such scandalous pressure it aroused violent protest even in the London press. Leeper went on a "Cook's tour" of Lebanon at the time of the Greek national conference to admire the "cedars of Lebanon that give their shade to the lions and to the robbers" and incidentally to see that the Greeks measured their national interests with a British rod. Even Mr. Eden when asked in the House of Commons whether the Atlantic Charter applies to Greek territories, such as the Dodecanese Islands, significantly enough replied that he was not yet sure. At the same time gallant Britishers were declaring that the Atlantic Charter applied to Cyprus, British-held Greek Island.

Neither pressure nor threats can break the will of a free people; otherwise the Greeks would have already submitted to the axis. But pressure is not the language of friendship and the Greeks think:—

"It is excellent

To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous

To use it like a giant."

The London "Nation and New Statesman," in its issue of May, 1944, also warned: ". . . if Churchill continues the truculent foolish policy, which cripples and frustrates the anti-fascist energy of one of the most politically conscious of the allied peoples, such a policy will leave us without friends in Greece, will discredit our declared war aims and will sow the seeds of suspicion in every country."

Such warnings in Britain were legion. A book would not be enough to record the protests heard in the British Parliament and the greatest part of the British press against



the political astigmatism developed by Churchill on the question of Greece.

We Greeks will be forever grateful to those in Great Britain who raised their voices for the national rights of Greece and the liberty of her people. The names of Lord Huntington, Lord Hanky, and Lord Addison in the House of Lords, of Mr. Parker, Mr. Cumings, Mr. Ewer in the House of Commons will be remembered in Greece together with those of Byron, George Cuning and Gladstone and that of Lloyd George after the last war.

Mr. Churchill's official policy toward Greece has stemmed from the desire in reactionary British circles for monarchies on the shores of the Mediterranean to safeguard foreign interests and privileges under the form of "spheres of influence"—privileges which entail strategic advantages over ports, airfields and fortifications, financial advantages in terms of State loans and government concessions, and economic advantages with special trade rights and industrial privileges. It is a truism in history that such concessions lead ultimately to the enslavement of these "spheres of influence" and often to revolution and civil war.

## GREEK NATIONAL DEBT

The Greeks have had rich and ruinous lessons in the meaning of "spheres of influence" and dependence on foreign interests.

One example will suffice—that of the national debt of Greece. The greatest part of this debt, 44,000,000,000 drachmas or about \$400,000,000, was floated in London under incredibly onerous conditions, bearing real interest as high as 8.19% and with the price of the issue usually ranging from 25.30% below par. One third of the annual Greek budget went to service this debt.

Even in the years of the most acute world crisis—1930-31, out of the 9,870,000,000 drachmas of the national budget, 3,150,000,000 drachmas went to pay the interest on this debt. All the other needs of the country, State organisation, service, education, communication, armed forces, public institutions, had to come out of the remaining 6,520,000,000 drachmas.

Under the impact of the crisis and the complete financial and economic ruin of the country, the Greek Republic decided to reduce the service on this debt. This precipitated an international storm against the people of Greece, already made destitute by the crisis, with the British foreign office, under the influence of the Munich forces, leading the struggle against the Greek Republic.

Exploiting the treacherous uprising of a small royalist clique against the Greek Republic, the powerful forces of international reaction brought King George back to Greece against the will of the people on the basis of a fraudulent plebiscite held at the point of bayonets. He was brought back not as a real King but as a custodian of foreign interests. The same forces support him today and try to impose him again upon the people of Greece.

This is the key to the riddle of recent political events in the Middle East and of the renewed efforts to perpetuate Greece's financial burdens and dependence.

I have incontestable information from London that even now the British Foreign Office, on behalf of the bondholders of the Greek debt, is demanding from the Greek government that it continue to: "safeguard the rights and securities at present enjoyed by Greek external loans and to protect the general interests of the bond holders," and "maintain unchanged the rights, privileges and conditions of service which have applied to the Greek government loans since 1898."

The British Foreign Office further demanded that the Greek government continue to allot to the bondholders those "public revenues which stand pledged for and charged with the service of the Greek government loans" and that "the existing priorities would not be disturbed."

All of which means that loans which have been paid for four and five times over already must again be paid in the future by the people of Greece.

"Pay," you millions of Greeks who are starving to death, you consumptive men, women and children, who for years have been fighting singlehanded and destitute against the common enemy!

"Pay," and be grateful to us because we are going to abolish the old international commission which until now collected the debt and institute a new, more "humane" commission!

This voice reverberates in the grave yards and ruined cities of Greece. Needless to say, these policies bitterly disappoint the people. For the old commission added about 3% on to the debt burden of the Greek people in fees and commission expenses. And the so-called "change" to a more "humane" commission means nothing but a change in title, for the fees and expenses remain the same.

Traditionally admirers of the English people, as a great and liberal people, we Greeks collaborate proudly in friend-

ship with them, but we will never become a British protectorate, nor accept Churchill's present treatment.

We love liberty, and we cannot see the future of the world as Jan Christian Smuts sees it. We do not see freedom as the prize of privileged peoples, but as an integral living reality that can endure nowhere without existing for all. For us, democracy is freedom in action everywhere, the principles of the democracy of Pericles, of Lincoln.

We feel confident that all peoples hold this view of democracy, and first among them the great British people and their gallant armies, and the liberal people of this country and their great President, who all free men consider the champion of freedom and humanism.

And for this reason we Greeks expect to be treated as a free and independent people by the government of the western allies, as a people whose self-determination must be respected, as a nation whose rights must be realised.

We expect this also from our other great ally and neighbor, the U.S.S.R., with whom we are bound to have closer collaboration in the future. This is so not only because of our admiration for the astonishing accomplishments of this heroic people and their leader. It stems also from reasons of geography and economics which make collaboration imperative for us. An important factor here is the shrinking of western markets for most of our Greek products and the widening of the Russian market. Russia has been in the past an excellent market for Greek products and at the same time a fine source of supply. So she will be in the future.

## **FOREIGN POLICY OF GREECE**

Greece lies in the most precarious sector of the world, at the crossroads of peoples, interests and empires.

This, within a framework of the new equilibrium of powers in Europe, creates the necessity for a readjustment of the foreign policy of Greece. The foundation stone of this policy will be not only a close and sincere collaboration with her Balkan neighbors, which under certain conditions might result in a Balkan people's federation (not of dynasties but of the people), but also an equally sincere and close collaboration with all her great allies, without any exception.

This policy will mean complete assurance to all powers concerned that Greece will never permit herself to become the exclusive sphere of influence or zone of interest of any one of the great powers but that she will collaborate with all of them equally and sincerely.

For this is the spirit of the allied agreements, especially of the Teheran declaration. This is the only way to avert a new war and keep Greece from becoming its first battleground.

The heart of this policy is collaboration, or, to use the words of Cordell Hull, "agreed action" and not spheres of influence and zones of interest, that, quoting Mr. Hull again, belong "to the unhappy past."

"Agreed action" for the great allies and sincerity of action for the smaller ones; this is the duty of the great nations and the duty and privilege of the smaller nations. Instead of a master, as in the past, the smaller countries today will have several great friends and protectors.

This is the wonder of Teheran, modestly concealed behind the simple and humane words "we look with confidence to the day when all peoples of the world may live free lives untouched by tyranny and according to their varying desires and their own consciences."

This is the realisation of the dreams of the people, the justification of their struggles for freedom through the ages. To "live free lives," masters of their homes, their countries, their destinies . . . "untouched by tyranny," by foreign interests, foreign intervention, dynastic plots and ambitions.

If the Teheran agreement is not a fake—as some die-hard and truculent Blimps still insist it is—then the western allies must adopt a clear, unambiguous policy toward the people of Greece. They must openly and sincerely recognize and help effectively the Greek movement of resistance, the E.A.M., whose goals are exactly those enunciated by the allies in all their agreements.

And this must be done as soon as possible for the allies' stubborn persistence in ignoring the Greek movement of liberation, the first and perhaps the most heroic of Europe's resistance movements, and in supporting the ex-dictator King and the political forces behind him, created an unhealthy situation in Greece.

The way out is clear. It is for the allies to fulfill their pledges with deeds. And in Greece this means recognising the E.A.M. and the national forces collaborating with it as the basis of any interim government inside or out of the country.

## THE CHARACTER OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT

Today the Greek "National Liberation Front" represents Greece, just as the French under De Gaulle and the Yugoslavs under Marshal Tito represent their respective countries. These movements reflect the dynamic interplay of the new social, political and economic forces that are fighting the enemy and struggling against the destitution into which their countries have been plunged. They constitute a powerful mechanism to cope with present needs and fulfill the people's aspirations.

The Greek movement of liberation is the logical answer to the welter of social, political and economic problems heaved up by the catastrophe in Greece. The population is starving to death, 75% of the new generation are consumptive. The cities are in ruins, agriculture destroyed, forests and vineyards laid waste. Industry and trade were wiped out as the Germans transported the most important Greek factories into Germany and inflation reached astronomical proportions—a dollar equalling 100,000,000 drachmas!

Under these hammer blows, the pre-war balance of social powers has almost vanished. New social, political and economic dynamics have been at work, developing new social and political tendencies.

The traditional distinction of three social classes with their respective ideas, ideals, interests and aspirations, is now overshadowed in Greece by the common needs, common struggle, common fears, common hopes of all Greeks irrespective of social classes.

Thus, out of the destruction of the old social structure, a new one is shaping up in Greece. Its main characteristic is the consciousness of man's social interdependence and a spirit of collaboration, of mutual aid and of mutual understanding.

This is the spirit of E.A.M., the dynamics it translates into life.

As a rule, the forces that promote change in society are social classes and elements not content with their conditions. Those who are content do not want change, but react against it and constitute the conservative social forces. Before the war in Greece these conservative forces were the upper and middle classes.

But the war and the foreign yoke made most among these classes not only discontented with their conditions but almost destitute. Consequently they turned to a new social philosophy, liberal, and thoroughly democratic, which found its expression in the E.A.M.

This is why the E.A.M. today includes people of all classes, of all ways of life, of all means. It includes prominent intellectuals, professors of universities, poets, artists, some of whom are internationally known but whose names cannot be published because they may live in places still held by the Germans. It includes prominent officials of the Church, archbishops, and bishops, like those of Kozani, and Seres; outstanding soldiers such as General Othonaios, General Sarigianis, General Mandakas, well known beyond the boundaries of Greece. It includes prominent professionals, businessmen, laborers, peasants, all enthusiastic adherents of the E.A.M.

**E.A.M. includes more than 90% of the population!**

Only the Quislings, the grandees of fascism, their spies and black marketeers inside Greece, and the friends of royal fascism in foreign countries, are today against the E.A.M.

This is the truth that the royal propaganda has distorted by labeling E.A.M. as foreign-inspired and led, and above all, as Communist. But the E.A.M. is not Communist although it includes the Communists also in its ranks. Reliable information reaching me estimates the Communists at 10% of the E.A.M. forces. As confirmation there is the fact that of the eight members of the P.E.E.A. only one, Mr. D. Siantos, belongs to the Communist Party. The other seven belong to different parties

## **UNDERSTANDING E.A.M.**

Unfortunately the character of the E.A.M. and all of the people's movements of liberation in Europe is not fully understood in this country.

This is due not only to the cunning propaganda of the anti-democratic forces, but also to the different conception of the war here and in the European countries especially those occupied by the enemy.

Here the war is fought for the "preservation of the present way of life" and for its betterment and advancement. There, for the creation of a new way of life. In essence it is the same, for both sides seek a decent and democratic way of life. But in Europe the war is a real revolution—a revolution against the Nazis, the fascists, the Quislings and their collaborators, a revolution against all kinds of undemocratic practices, dynastic or dictatorial. It is a revolution not of destruction but of creation, marked with a new spirit of collaboration, the spirit of the allies, from the Atlantic Charter to the Teheran declaration.

This spirit is now pervading Europe, transforming its standards and way of life, changing social and political ideas, re-assessing ethical and cultural values. The driving force behind this spirit is the ordeal of the war, the struggle and agony. The French say: "Souffrir passe, avoir souffert ne passe jamais." Suffering has scratched awake the soul of Europe; it has transformed men.

Already the dawn of Europe is breaking. The day of her regeneration is in sight. The gallant fighters of Europe's liberation armies are cracking the heavy irons of Nazi tyranny and of all tyranny.

The Bastilles of the world are crumbling, the empires of violence capsizing. Anachronistic ideas and systems favoring the few against the many are vanishing; prerogatives, inequities and "backyard" rights are gradually disappearing.

An old world is dying, a new one coming to birth. Out of the ashes of old temples, the light of a new faith is shining, faith in life, liberty, and the people's cause.

This is the faith of the fighting heroes in the liberation fronts of Europe. This is the faith of the Greek National Liberation Front.

When—soon—"happy will ring again the bells of peace," the people of Greece, who have revived the old glory of their nation with their epic struggle for liberty, will continue this struggle for liberty, will continue this struggle with the other peoples of Europe to lay the foundations of a just and lasting peace that will bring a new period of Renaissance in the world, a period of people's prosperity and happiness.

Philadelphia, August 25, 1944

**STELIOS W. PISTOLAKIS**

President of the Greek-American  
Committee for National Unity.

Member of the last Greek Parliament  
and of the last Supreme Council of  
Economics.

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