

GREEK LIBERATION

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FOREWORD

THE PAST few months have been packed with rapid events in Greece. The invader has been driven out, and the land liberated. But liberation was not the matter of a moment; it was the sum of four years of bitter agony and brilliant resistance.

Out of the harsh wound of defeat, betrayal and enslavement, the Greek people fashioned their return to freedom. They hammered out a great weapon—the unity of all patriot Greeks for the liberation of their land and their people. Under the leadership of the National Liberation Front, EAM, this unity grew and deepened; became so strong that with only small arms, often without food, clothing or shoes, the men and women of the EAM, and its army, the ELAS, port by port, village by village, freed their land of the invader. When a few months ago small allied troops landed in Greece, the major work had already been done—by the Greeks themselves.

The Greeks themselves are also solving their internal problems—heritage of the years of dictatorship, defeat, enslavement and war. Solutions of such problems do not come easily. They cannot be picked lightly out of a bandbox, steamed, pressed and form-fitting. Rather, they are being worked out in ferment and difficulty by the government of national unity which includes representatives of the EAM. These solutions are being tested for error and tested for strength by a people matured through heavy years of trial who have come to accept with confidence the vigilant leadership of the EAM. Current reports of known collaborators and native fascists walking the streets of Athens freely, underline the continuing need for the people's vigilance. An item in the October 22nd issue of the official organ of the EAM, *Apeleftheros*, (Liberator) calls the attention of the government to this situation, declaring that if the authorities are unable to handle it, the people will be able to do so.

Progress, however, is being made in many directions. Most important is the news that all the Greek soldiers imprisoned in Alexandria following the so-called "mutinies" in April have been released. In connection with reports of the disbanding of ELAS in December and the formation of a national army, the announcement that ELAS commander, General Sarafis, has been appointed Deputy Chief of Staff of the national army is significant. The appointment of General Othonaios as Chief of Staff of the National Army and the appointment of Generals Sariyannis and Mandakas, noted military leaders of the ELAS, to the military council which will select the officers of the national army, carry through the agreement reached on this matter at the Lebanon conference preceding the formation of the national unity government. The currency has been stabilized and projects are under way for the stabilization of the whole national economy of Greece.

A serious consideration in this country of developments in Greece, however, is being obscured by heavy censorship of factual reports. George Weller of the Chicago Daily News and New York Post, now in Athens, complains that this censorship is making it impossible for correspondents to get full and accurate information through to their papers. However, anti-EAM propaganda gets through freely—for example, the reports of A. C. Sedgwick who files not news stories but propaganda tracts with the New York Times. According to Sedgwick, Greece is torn apart by factions, facing Communist "civil war" because of the attempts of the "extremists" in the EAM to seize power. The reports of other correspondents flatly contradict Sedgwick and his hand-made, semi-weekly "civil war." Reports of Constantine Poulos, ONA correspondent, Michael Rodas, Greek Daily National Herald correspondent, Panos Morphopoulos, contributor to the New Republic, Frank Gervasi, Collier's correspondent, M. W. Fodor, Chicago Sun correspondent, reveal that the overwhelming majority of the Greek people who support the EAM, far from seeking civil war, are displaying the highest discipline and order. Only the group of collaborators, quislings, and members of the security battalions who are unfortunately still at liberty, continue, where they can, their provocations.

It is a great hoax to palm off these provocateurs and quislings on the American public as heroes while the EAM is attacked as the enemy of the nation it saved. Reliable correspondents will

not touch such a hoax with a ten foot pole. It remains for Mr. Sedgwick of the New York Times to labor at it tirelessly.

The truth, however, is coming through. In the last few weeks there have been a number of reports from Athens and Cairo which help to set the record straight. The Greek American Committee for National Unity is publishing a few of these reports for the information of the American public. The Committee does not necessarily agree with every point in the presentation of facts or interpretation of events in these reports, but where differences exist they are minor, honest differences of judgment, part of the mechanics by which truth and understanding are achieved.

Americans have a warm spot for Greece. Today when Greece needs aid, they will be more than willing to aid generously. What is required is understanding. Slanders and lies confuse and divide Americans, crippling their aid, diverting them from the main questions. Knowledge of the truth about the EAM and the situation in Greece is of value not only to Greece but to our own country at the moment of her greatest battles, for only on the basis of such knowledge can we support and implement American policy along the lines of democracy and independence, security and durable peace, so that the people's future, purchased with blood, shall not be drowned in blood again.

GREEK AMERICAN COMMITTEE
FOR NATIONAL UNITY

GREECE WAS READY

By FRANK GERVASI

*(Radioed from Cairo and published in
COLLIER'S MAGAZINE, November 11, 1944)*

○ N A clear, cool morning three years and six months after the German conquest of Greece, British airborne troops dropped out of the sky over Peloponnesos and began the formal liberation of Greece.

Actually, deliverance of the Greeks had begun long before, for the Greeks, like the French, were never conquered. Their resistance took form long ago while the Nazi paratroopers still floated in the skies over Crete, and while big, squat, noisy half-track Nazi troop carriers entered the streets of Athens and Salonika with their last loads of unwelcome guests from Berlin.

The Huns entered the Greek villages, towns and cities abristle with machine pistols and a gleam in new uniforms. They smelled of soap and polish and paint. They came in a confident, gray-green tide, with squeaking equipment not yet well broken in, and they came—they thought—to stay. But when the first returning British soldiers hit the tired soil of Greece, they found only Greeks—wary Greeks and hungry Greeks, children with sores on their bodies, and women with white, drawn faces—all of whom managed, somehow, to find the spirit and energy to cheer and bring garlands of roses and gladioli for their friends, the English.

The Hun tide receded in a dusty, tattered ebb of dirty, ragged men and battered vehicles. The Germans had seemed so irresistible three years and six months before to most of the outside world and to some Greeks, but not to all. And here is a story of those years and months between the time the Nazi tide flowed into Greece and that recent day when it ebbed, and of what we found there.

The white dust of battle still lay thick on the ruins of the villages and olive groves of Greece and Crete when, in a shabby house in an Athens slum, one day in July, 1941, three men met around a battered table. One was a professor of sociology and an amateur Communist. The second was an engineer and a frustrated Socialist.

The third, luckily for what became the Greek resistance movement, was a former professional army officer, a major fired by Dictator Metaxas in 1935 because he believed too well in freedom. Reading from left to right, their names were Apostolou and Yannopoulos and Cladakis, and only the last name is real.

They had a common purpose—to prepare the way for the day (October 5, 1944) when Allied forces would return to free Greece from the Fascist-Nazi invaders and from the jackal Bulgars who had seized Macedonia. They were men of good faith, animated by motives not shared in 1941 by many who had been leaders of the old Greece and might have been leaders of the new.

They met in a mood of desperation. They had gone about the country separately for three months, seeking men of good faith equipped for the essential job of leadership. They found hosts of willing followers among peasants, workers, students, professors, businessmen, clerks and civil servants. But no leaders—no Charles de Gaulle, no Tito.

This wasn't remarkable. Under the rotund, myopic Metaxas, the political life of Greece had been destroyed. Left-wing parties (and to Metaxas, all parties were left wing whose members disagreed with his decrees) had been suppressed. Party newspapers were killed or suborned, and party members exiled, imprisoned or killed.

Apostolou, Yannopoulos and Cladakis went first to the old royalist generals and proposed the foundation of a resistance group. These declined the honor of joining and even more vigorously refused to lead. The three appealed next to the democratic generals. These, too, shied away and, like the royalist generals, were candid with their reasons: They were afraid of becoming involved in any left-wing movement, they said. Actually, they were more worried about their pensions. Their names were inscribed on the memories of Greeks of good faith.

The three men appealed in turn to the old-time democrats and progressive leaders of all shadings and to some politicians known for their royalist sympathies, but known, too, as good patriots. Even these refused to have anything to do with the resistance movement, temporizing, saying that the time had not yet come, some confessing that they thought all resistance was hopeless, for the Germans had come to stay.

Our three friends were worried men, and footsore and heart-weary when they met in the house in an Athens slum. They drafted a plan with pencil and paper, each contributing what little he had learned about so tremendous an undertaking as the liberation of an entire nation. They drew upon their book learning and what little practical experience two of them, at least, had had with demolitions and the art of fighting.

Most of all, they drew from the great well of atavism. They were, after all, descendants of those same Greeks who, 2,500 years before, had crushed history's first totalitarian threat, that of the Persians under Xerxes.

It was a simple plan but it was sound. The first principle it laid down was the continuance of resistance against the enemy in whatever way was possible with what weapons and materials were at hand. The second was to unite all Greeks, regardless of past political beliefs or practices for a common end and to co-operate in whatever way the Allies desired toward achievement of that end.

They went now to students and private citizens of all classes and circumstances, and invited these to join the movement. The masses whom Greeks call *laos* (and you had better note the word well, for you will hear it mentioned often in the future) responded.

Within a few weeks they had formed a central committee to co-ordinate resistance activities and to serve as a nucleus for participant parties, including radicals, Socialists, liberals, Communists, agrarians, the popular Democratic Union, and the ragtag and bobtail of others.

They dug into cellars and slit their mattresses, and brought out old pistols, sabers, muskets and stocks of dynamite they'd once used for clearing patches of meadow of rocks. They gathered food and stored it and shared it, so that all might have some. Clandestine newspapers appeared, and so was born in September, 1941, while the Fascist and Nazi hierarchy was settling down comfortably in the best hotels and finest villas for a long and profitable occupation, the *Ethnikon Apeleftherotikon Metopon*—the National Liberation Front, soon to be known as EAM.

With the exhumed weapons and with what ammunition and other weapons they managed to buy from Italian soldiers or from grafting Fascist officers, the resistance movement armed their mountain bands of ill-clothed, poorly fed and unpaid volunteers.

A few raids on Fascist and Nazi troops produced machine guns, blankets, ammunition and grenades, and now EAM had an army, and they called it ELAS (Greek People's Army of Liberation), although its members will probably remain known to history as Partisans.

Greece is a land of barren mountains, stripped of forests, its soil eroded and impoverished. Its crops and beasts are still those of the Bible—olives, raisins, wine and currants, a few sheep and many goats, for these can find fodder where even sheep cannot. Greek economy was based largely on these crops and on tobacco, but you can't eat tobacco.

Six thousand died every month in the Athens area in the winter of 1941-1942. On the eve of liberation—by which time some relief reached Greece through the Swedish-Swiss commission of the International Red Cross—they were still dying at the rate of two thousand a month.

Somehow EAM and its army survived that memorable winter. The price the Greeks have paid for not wanting to live on their knees can be reckoned now in one million dead from starvation and other causes, in another million rotting with tuberculosis, in 763,000 made homeless by Nazi-Fascist reprisals which destroyed 651 towns and villages.

The only hope of the future now for what was once a nation of 7,300,000 proud, independent, hard-working and peaceable people rests with the Allies and with the United Nations' Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. It rests, too, with those Greeks abroad who will have the courage and selflessness to return to their homeland and restock it and rebuild it. Greece is beyond sulfa drugs and handouts. It needs blood transfusions.

But there is hope, and that this hope is real, that it exists at all, is due to Apostolou and Yannopoulous and Cladakis and several hundreds of thousands of others like them. By October, 1941, our three friends counted 40 per cent of the entire Greek population in the resistance movement.

Across the Mediterranean in Cairo, there existed since the dismal April when the Greeks were overwhelmed by the Nazis after having soundly thrashed Mussolini's Black Shirts, a government-in-exile formed by King George II. Its premier was one Emmanuel Tsouderos, a spare-haired, elegant man who had been a follower of white-bearded republican Eleutherios Venizelos.

Tsouderos possessed, on paper at least, a reasonably liberal political record. But Tsouderos hated Communists and Communism, and he saw in EAM not a people's movement of all political shadings but a threat to monarchy and to the old ways of Greek life.

The government he formed was a government of the most conservative elements in Greek politics and included (unfortunately for Greek unity) a number of gentlemen who had refused to take the responsibility of leading the resistance movement.

Tsouderos lived in a villa in Zamalek, a stuccoed, pretentious suburb of Cairo. His cabinet lived at Shepherd's and the Continental, where their principal worry was an occasional cockroach. They, or their families, and hosts of friends, danced in jasmine-scented nights at Auberge des Pyramides or Shepherd's Garden and played politics and intrigued in a planet all their own, unrelated to the small universe of blood and terror, bleeding feet and weary backs, death and disease that Greece had become.

From the mountains and hills of Greece came frequent appeals by messengers and clandestine radio for food, clothing, weapons, ammunition and medicines. The British were fighting with their backs to the Nile throughout the summer of 1942. Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps was being supplied partly by way of Crete and Greece. The Greeks did what they could to interrupt the Nazis' flow of munitions and reinforcements, and the effort was enough to evoke praise and good wishes from GHQ in Cairo. Some supplies—mostly bandages and disinfectants and a few automatic weapons—were dropped to Greek guerrillas by parachute, but in almost insignificant quantities.

For this, some blame British indifference or lack of understanding. But the reason for the paltry aid the Greeks received lay deeper. One reason was simply a matter of priorities. When the grand strategy for the Battle of Europe was drafted, following the victorious North African campaign, it was decided that the main direct Anglo-American military effort was to be in France. Top priority was assigned to the allocation of shipping, men, weapons and supplies for this campaign. Second priority was given to the Italian campaign; and the Balkans, except for Greece and, to a certain extent, Yugoslavia, were to be largely a Russian concern.

There simply wasn't enough left in the way of shipping and

manpower to do much about Greece. The British, with later the help of the United States, did, however, arm and equip a small army of Greeks in the Middle East, enlarged and modernized the Greek navy and formed a Greek air force.

What was done seemed little after the heroic stand the Greeks had made against the Germans in the spring of 1941—a suicidal struggle, hopeless from the start, which nevertheless helped to save the Middle East.

The Greeks certainly felt that they deserved more material aid than they received, but once they became reconciled to the fact that the last to go down in Europe would not be the first to be liberated, they expected better political treatment than they were given. They hoped particularly for British and American sympathy for their desire to settle the question of monarchy, the underlying cause of Greek dissension.

Not all Greeks want to see King George II out. But there are enough who do, to make the issue one which the Allies were obliged to recognize after months of stalling. The Partisans and the EAM finally proved to the Allies and to the Greek government-in-exile that the king wasn't wanted in Greece; at least, they proved it sufficiently to cause George to announce that he wouldn't stay on the throne unless a plebiscite held six months after liberation approved him, and to cause a new government to be formed, including five EAM ministers.

The Greek case against George includes a widespread antipathy on the basis that he's a foreigner. George, son of pro-German King Constantine who was forced to abdicate for his efforts to line Greece up with the Austro-Hungarians in the last war, descends from the ancient Danish house of Sonderburg Gluecksburg. The Greeks speak of him, however, as "the German king."

A stronger argument against his return to Greece is that he permitted the rise of Dictator Metaxas. The popular antagonism against George asserted itself strongly enough in 1923 to force his abdication. He was restored to the throne in 1935, after a long exile in England, and within a year the Greeks had Metaxas. A point in George's favor is the fact that he supported Metaxas when the latter, aware of the people's sentiments at the time, rejected Mussolini's ultimatum to surrender in October of 1940.

George's only other claims to the throne are those involved in

the complexities of the constitution and the business of the divine right of kings. Had the royalist generals and politicians assumed the burdens of leading the country out of the Nazi-Fascist wilderness, the monarchic question might have remained in the background until after the war. But they did refuse, and the result was civil war.

By the spring of 1943, EAM's army numbered some 30,000 men officered by soldiers trained in its own schools and by former Greek army cadres. The size of ELAS was limited only by EAM's inability to obtain enough weapons. Its leader was Major General Saraphis, forceful in manner and speech. Saraphis is a professional soldier with a republican political background.

ELAS obtained light automatic weapons through the British military mission attached to its headquarters, and acquired mortars and artillery pieces from the Italians when the latter stumbled out of the war. It became an efficient, well-organized, effective weapon against the Germans.

Meanwhile another "army" emerged in Greece. This one was headed by General Napoleon Zervas, one of those generals offered the leadership of EAM's army by Apostolou, Yannopoulous and Cladakis. Zervas' army was called EDES (Greek Democratic National Army), and its mission can be deduced from the character and background of its leader.

Saraphis doesn't possess either the characteristics or the aptitudes to make him, as leader of ELAS, the Tito of the Greek Partisan movement. Zervas, however, definitely fills the role of a Greek Draja Mikhailovitch. His refusal to lead the EAM's army was based on ideological grounds. He said he didn't want to have anything to do with "Reds."

Zervas was a career soldier. He had been a colonel in the Greek army but was retired—some say expelled—by the republican government in 1926 for his political views labeled "reactionary and unprogressive" by persons who knew him then.

Zervas was arrested on suspicion of plotting against the Nazi-Fascists in 1941; he was held for twenty-four hours and released. With five officers who later deserted him to join ELAS, Zervas went up into the hills and started a guerrilla army of his own. He mumbled enough clichés about freedom and "Long live Hellas" and social justice to convince some Greeks and a few British officers of his sincere desire to kill Huns. He obtained British help.

About one thousand Greeks rallied to Zervas, inspired by patriotism but certainly equally as much by gold. Zervas offered each trooper one pound sterling in gold and an equal amount monthly for each soldier's family. By the fall of 1943, Zervas had approximately three thousand guerrillas, and the frustrated soldier-politician had an army dedicated in principle to the job of liberating Greece from the enemy, but equally determined to rid Greece of "Reds."

To understand the appeal of a fistful of gold sovereigns to a Greek, you need to know something of the economic havoc contrived in the country by its conquerors. The Germans saddled Greece with a monthly occupation bill of three billion drachmas, and by the end of October, 1943, they had exacted a tribute of one trillion, one hundred and ninety-seven billion drachmas, or roughly sixty times as much money as was contained in printed notes in the Greek treasury on October 1, 1941, when inflation had already begun. By October, 1944, an American dollar which in prewar days bought 132 drachmas was valued at 1,000,250 drachmas.

Greeks carried their marketing money in suitcases and paid 72,000 drachmas for an oka of rice worth 21 drachmas before the war; 90,000 drachmas for 35 drachmas' worth of olive oil; and 6,000 drachmas for 6 drachmas' worth of potatoes. Matters reached an absurd point when the paper on which the money was printed was worth more on the black market as paper than as money. Prices increased two thousand times but wages only two hundred times. Zervas' gold was a powerful lure, and his ranks swelled. His salary, by the way, was sixteen gold pounds a month.

In October, 1943, the inevitable happened. Civil war broke out in Greece. Undoubtedly each side sought to establish its supremacy in the land in anticipation of an early invasion by the Allies. Indisputably, ELAS saw EDES as a band of men who had abandoned their primary objective—that of killing Germans—in order to destroy the people's army. EAM's Partisans saw in Zervas and his guerrillas a pack of reactionaries fighting to restore the king, or at least to reinstate old regimes whose leadership had refused to participate in the resistance movement.

Zervas and company accused the Partisans of outrages against the Greek patriots. ELAS, Zervas said over his radio and through a well-established propaganda channel with a terminal in Cairo,

was an army of Bolsheviks, intent on destroying private property and propertied people and so raising the bloody banner of class struggle. Zervas' Red-baiting propaganda campaign coincided curiously with the Nazi line, and it was subsequently discovered that the members of EDES forces did co-operate with the Germans in attacks on the ELAS army. When later a truce was signed between ELAS and EDES, one of the terms of agreement was that Zervas would denounce and dismiss collaborators among his officers and men.

General Saraphis doesn't deny Zervas' accusations of outrages committed by the ELAS troops. He does say that Zervas' propaganda exaggerated the extent of punishment inflicted on quislings by ELAS bands. Excesses were bound to occur in a mass uprising of the dimensions of the EAM movement.

The EAM's program is clear on the subject of private property and on what kind of government Greece shall have after the war. Respect of human and property rights is one of the principles laid down in the EAM's indoctrination course for all its officers, men and workers. Regarding the form the Greek government shall assume, the EAM party platform says it must be up to the people to decide freely whether they want a king before he or any member of the royal family returns to Greek soil. On one subject the EAM program is adamant. The National Liberation Front pledges itself resolutely to impede any attempt to impose dictatorship "of any kind" upon the nation.

Immediately the civil war began, the British stopped arms shipments to both ELAS and EDES. This didn't stop the fighting. Zervas had the help of from 6,000 to 10,000 troops commanded by the Greek quisling, Rallis, armed by the Germans and known as "security battalions."

Zervas and his traitorous allies definitely got the worst of the fighting. The ELAS army was better led and better equipped. It was reinforced by at least 5,000 well-armed Italians and had the equipment of two Italian divisions, disarmed when the armistice was signed with Italy.

The National Liberation Front extended its activities against the Germans and its control over Greek territory. By the time the Allies were ready to enter Greece with bread and bully beef for the hungry and medicines for the sick, the EAM's army controlled ten or eleven major ports, while the Zervas mob held only one un-

important portlet, and the political supremacy of EAM was as well established as its military control of the situation.

The events in Greece from October, 1943, to February, 1944, when the truce was signed had violent repercussions in the Middle East. Greek soldiers and sailors, bored with months of waiting for action, and aware of the true state of affairs in Greece, became restless.

Early in March, EAM formed the National Liberation Committee and declared it a *de facto* government of the country. A surge of triumph rippled through the ranks of men who had drilled and sweated in desert camps for nearly three years, preparing for the day of their nation's liberation.

On the morning of March 31st, a delegation of thirteen senior officers of the Greek army and navy called on Premier Tsouderos. Five of the most senior officers were received by Tsouderos in his private inner office. He listened to them with the manner of a banker hearing a prospective borrower's plea for a large loan which he hadn't the faintest notion of granting.

The officers' message was brief and to the point: "Unless you resign, and a government is formed containing a number of ministers representing the National Liberation Front and the National Liberation Committee, we cannot answer for the behavior of the army. The men are restive and demand inclusion of EAM representatives in the cabinet, and we particularly demand your resignation."

Tsouderos told the officers to wait. He made a phone call or two. When he reappeared before the assembled officers in the anteroom, he told them he would consider what they had told him. That night a Greek field regiment bivouacked near Cairo, put its officers under arrest and took command of the camp—in short, they mutinied.

The rebellion spread from the army in the Cairo region to the navy in Alexandria with the cry: "We want the National Liberation Front represented in the government." Greek ships at Port Said echoed the cry, and Tsouderos, on April 3rd, resigned.

King George called on young Sophocles Venizelos, son of the Greek republican idol, to form a government. Now Venizelos is liberal, but he resembles his father politically about as much as Jimmy Walker resembles Joe Stalin. He made radio speeches promising an EAM government representing all Greek public

opinion, but he failed to see or understand what many in the democratic camp of the Allies still fail to see or understand: that, in the antagonisms of revolution, as in war, there aren't "many" shades of opinion, but only two.

In the minds of the people involved—of those who have gone hungry and fought, have killed and have seen their fellow men killed—there are only two definite colors of opinion and no shades in between—black and white, evil and good.

Venizelos' government, which still included Tsouderos and right-wingers and pallid liberals, didn't suit either the Greeks in Greece or the Greeks in the Middle East. The rebellion among the armed forces continued. Venizelos lasted only long enough to quell it by force with the aid of volunteers drawn from the army and navy, wisely more interested in a unified Greece on the eve of liberation than political satisfaction.

Venizelos resigned, and there arrived on the scene a tall, long-faced, eloquent gentleman in his middle sixties named George Papandreou. He appeared in Cairo as though out of the mist. To a friend of mine he said, "I've been appointed by God to save Greece." An opponent irreverently remarked that Papandreou ought to have had a more direct mandate from the people of Greece.

Papandreou's political background is a liberal one and, in spite of the criticism aimed at him from all quarters, he formed a government which, for the first time in the wartime history of Greece, resembled a coalition government. It included five members of EAM in key cabinet posts.

This isn't the end of the story, just as it isn't all of the story. The rest of it will be written in Greece by Apostolou and Yannopoulos and Cladakis and hundreds of thousands like them. These, like the French, Italians, Yugoslavs and other peoples of liberated Europe will prove to you that democratic forces at work on the continent are irresistible. Whether the banner that people will fly there will be red or not depends on us. Allowed—as they have been in France—to settle their problems in their own dynamic way, they will remain what they have always been: antitotalitarian and fiercely democratic. If frustrated, they will turn their faces away from the light of the Lady with the Torch and toward the red glow of the political creed—Communism—which has asserted itself as the energizing force that gave Soviet Russia power and glory and prestige.

GREECE: The Struggle for Power

By PANOS MORPHOPOULOS

(Published in the NEW REPUBLIC, November 6th, 1944)

The following report of the political situation inside Greece was written on October 8, a few days after British forces invaded the country. We hope it may prove an antidote to the biased and ill informed news dispatches by many foreign correspondents, notably A. C. Sedgwick in The New York Times and John Chabot Smith in The New York Herald Tribune, who seem unable to judge facts fairly because of their eager desire for the return of the King, and British control of the country.—THE EDITORS OF THE NEW REPUBLIC.

THE LIBERATION of Greece had been expected for some time. What actually concerned those directly or indirectly interested in the fate of Greece was not so much how soon and in what way the Germans would be driven out, as what would happen after the enemy had evacuated the country. Civil war and anarchy were feared. A menace was evoked by certain circles in the Middle East and elsewhere—the menace of the EAM and its army, ELAS.

For a year, since October, 1943, these two names have been the center of general interest in Greek affairs. With some they were the object of attacks and hatred, and with others, of earnest anxiety. For a year, a constant flow of accusations against EAM-ELAS has been pouring into the eagerly listening market of Cairo, glutting the place and overflowing to other news-outlets, especially to England and America.

The story, peddled around a heavy black market, ran like this: the EAM was presented as a Communist-controlled organization. It had started as a national resistance movement—its initials in Greek mean National Liberation Front—and under this guise it gained the confidence and support of the people. To its ranks the youth of Greece had flocked, young men and women of both liberal and conservative families, led by the patriotic desire to fight the enemy. But these youngsters and the older patriots—professionals, white-collar and other workers, small-town people,

farmers, who joined the EAM—were all said to have been subjected to a sectarian indoctrination and then used by a small cell of extremists whose purpose was to remain the only armed force in the country, to seize power after the enemy left and establish a dictatorship.

The story went that the EAM had actually become a terrorist organization, that a small, dynamic minority was intimidating the moderates into joining its ranks; that the EAM and its army, ELAS, kept the population under their thumb, fought all other resistance groups so that they could monopolize the credit and the power, and perpetrated all kinds of inhuman acts. Its bands were said to be made up of former jailbirds and cutthroats; not only some bands, but all or most of them. Anyway their leaders were.

The story peddlers said that the population, which was controlled by the EAM, was groaning under this new tyranny, that the people, asked to contribute a part of their substance for the maintenance of the ELAS army and of the refugees whom the EAM was caring for, considered their lot worse than under the Germans. In short, the EAM had shown itself to be an extremely leftist group; it was losing ground, it was feared and hated by the majority of the Greek people, who were longing for the arrival of the German-controlled "Security Battalions" to save them from the EAMites.

From this picture one was expected to draw the conclusion that the EAM was more dangerous than useful, that it should be fought and crushed, and that it *could* be fought effectively and *could* be dissolved. It could be dissolved because the people were supposed to be against it. But to make certain that the fight against it would be effective—and here is the catch—assistance should come from the outside, from the Allies, by building up and supporting organizations (such as EDES, EKKA, the PAO, etc.) and by making ready for armed Allied intervention in Greece at the moment of liberation. The Allied armies, according to these panic-mongers, were needed in Greece not so much to chase the Germans out of Greek territory as to crush EAM-ELAS and to restore order—and perhaps, along with it, a King or a favorite Premier.

In spite of these machinations, which could have pushed already martyred Greece into another tragedy of bloodshed and

destruction, the Allied armies did not have to go to Greece, because the larger part of Greece had already been freed from the German heel by the patriots. The Allied armies, and this is more important, do not have to crush any internal organization in Greece, except perhaps, if they feel so inclined, the German-paid "Security Battalions." Nor need the Allied troops be burdened with any responsibility for restoring order, because that order has already been restored by EAM-ELAS, and because it looks as if the only thing to be feared would be an effort to restore a puppet king.

As it is, the government that is making ready to go to Greece has been, since the beginning of September, a national government, relying on the support of all shades of political opinion in Greece and deriving its authority and prestige from the Greek people themselves. As such, it is being received and acclaimed by them.

This result has been made possible because the EAM has the popular support of the part of Greece already freed, the islands, the Peloponnesus and central Greece. (There is a tiny strip 35 miles long and 25 miles wide in southern Epirus which is under EDES control, headed by an independent guerrilla leader, Colonel Napoleon Zervas. The population in this territory amounts to 70,000, and Zervas' bands are estimated to number around 5,000 or 6,000 rather good fighters. His territory is something like a Greek San Marino at this moment.) The EAM has succeeded because it has shown a remarkable sense of discipline and has established a smoothly working democratic administration, run by the people.

Already the National Greek Government, whose seat is temporarily in Italy, has sent some of its members to the liberated provinces to act as its representatives until the whole government arrives. The EAM has greeted these ministers enthusiastically, has acknowledged the authority of, and is working under, the National Government. When the whole government arrives in Greece, it will find a well regulated state of affairs. Its only worry will be how to run a country which has suffered so much under the enemy, with almost all its resources and wealth drained off, with a population that is underfed and ill clothed, and, out of a total of eight million people, one million with tuberculosis and two million suffering from malaria.

As for the Allied officials, the military will have to help the Greek patriots run the last German and the last Bulgarian out of the last corner of the country; the civilians will have to help the government in its task of administering to the urgent needs of the heroic Greek people. This should be a worthier and pleasanter task for allies and friends of the Greek people than that which certain circles were ready to assign to them.

Here are some concrete facts that show how unexpectedly hopeful the internal situation in Greece has turned out to be, because of the wisdom and discipline of the Greeks themselves. Here are some recent news items which have raised the spirits of those who follow Greek affairs. They explode rumors of the past (and even of the present); they serve to place the EAM in its proper perspective and within Greek reality; above all, they strengthen our faith in the political maturity of the Greek people.

About the middle of September, at General Wilson's headquarters in Italy, a series of meetings took place in which the participants were General Wilson himself, the Greek Prime Minister, Mr. George Papandreou, Finance Minister Alexander Svolos (now the acknowledged leader of the EAM bloc), General Stephanos Sarafis, Commander-in-Chief of ELAS, and Colonel Zervas, head of the EDES bands. It was decided that the ELAS and EDES armed forces would come under the unified command of the British General Scobie. Under his command were appointed the military governors of the parts of Greece lying south of the plain of Salonica: Zervas was appointed to the small piece of territory in southern Epirus which has been his bailiwick in the past; General Sariyannis, an EAMite, for Thessaly and central Greece; Group Captain Vastardis, also an EAMite, for the Peloponnesus; General Spyliotopoulos, who enjoys the confidence of Prime Minister Papandreou and of the Chief of Staff in Cairo, for Attica-Beotia (Athens).

A few days later the Greek National Government sent from Italy to the Peloponnesus one of its ministers, Mr. P. Canellopoulos, as the government's representative to take over the administration of this great province. Mr. Canellopoulos' friends in Cairo waited anxiously for news of his reception. The Peloponnesus was entirely under EAM control, and this minister had not been friendly to the EAM. He had left Greece in the spring of 1942, just as the resistance movements were budding, and he came

to the Middle East, where he became Vice-Prime Minister and War Minister in Mr. Tsouderos' government, from which he was forced to resign a year later. As the anti-EAMites stepped up their accusations, he joined in from Shepherds Hotel. Last May, at the Lebanon conference, he ably assisted Mr. Papandreou in his attacks against the EAM, and after this conference he used unsubstantiated charges to warn his listeners of the EAM menace. He was one of the most intransigent members of the Papandreou government, claiming that there was no basis for an understanding with the EAM bloc.

When Mr. Canellopoulos disembarked at the port of Calamata, he was greeted by the EAM leaders, who conducted him to the Administration Hall and presented him to the crowds as the representative of the government. He was told how things were run in the whole freed area. He found that there was no need for him to set up any additional administrative machinery. Everything was functioning smoothly under the EAM Committee of the Peloponnesus, headed by the venerable Archbishop of Elia, Antonios, which declared allegiance to the National Government and its willingness to cooperate.

While Canellopoulos was being received by the people of the Peloponnesus, who had already liberated themselves, two other ministers of the National Government boarded a plane at Bari and soon after landed at an airfield somewhere in central Greece, near the general headquarters of EAM-ELAS. They were John Zevgos, a Communist, and T. Tsatsos, a conservative liberal and violent anti-EAMite. (Tsatsos, when he came from Greece to the Middle East last May, brought along a batch of hair-raising stories about EAM cruelties of which he had only hearsay knowledge, but which he repeated with an abundance of detail.) The friendly reception he was given by the EAM upon his return soon convinced him that his fears were unfounded. In an interview, granted to the Free Greece Agency, he said:

"I saw that reality disproves the false rumors according to which there is disorder and danger coming from the ELAS in the liberated regions of Greece. On the contrary, life has found its regular rhythm; exemplary order and peace prevail everywhere. It is quite difficult for anyone to believe that such high morale as I witnessed could exist among people who have been tortured and have suffered to such an extent."

So it turns out that the Greek people have shown greater wisdom and moderation than their detractors and that they themselves are saving a situation, created exclusively from without, which could have had tragic consequences. It turns out that the EAM bloc has spared the Greek people and the Allies a great deal of trouble. The Greek people and the leaders of their resistance, by being patient and persevering in their determination to run their own affairs, have liberated the larger part of their own territory, have established in it a well organized popular administration and have overcome the dangers of civil strife.

Cairo

THE CHALLENGE OF GREECE

By LELAND STOWE

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

FOUR YEARS ago I saw Nazi power engulfing everything from Vienna to Istanbul and the Aegean Sea. . . .

Four terrible years of slavery and hunger have engulfed Greece since then. One out of every ten or twelve Greeks has died since then. No European people—save possibly the Czechs and the Poles—has suffered such great agonies. Despite all this Greek liberation forces are fighting to aid the British, just as French patriots fought beside our troops in France. Two of their black-bearded leaders near Patras were called Ares and Hermes—straight out of Greek mythology. A Greek cabinet member landed with the British. The Greeks greeted him shouting: "We want rule by the people. We want democracy." But the Churchill government has favored the return of the Greek king—and Greek republicans are still under detention in Egypt. Five members of the Greek government have given notice that they cannot tolerate the intervention of their allies in their own internal politics. So the liberation of Greece raises a great challenge to the British government. Unless the Greeks are allowed to freely decide their own form of government, sooner or later there will be civil war in Greece. The Greeks have a fierce love for independence—and they know how to die. By playing on their fears of communism the Germans also made traitors out of many Greeks. They enrolled them into so-called "security battalions" to help enslave their own people—just as Vichy's pro-Nazi militia were used in France. Today the Greek traitor battalions are even more hated by Greek patriots than the Germans are. They have lived well by helping murder or starve those Greeks who resisted enslavement. So the Greek patriots clamor for revenge—and the Greek traitor battalions try to surrender to the British, to save their skins. This is part of the present Greek tragedy, which will test British statesmanship and integrity beyond anything that has yet happened in

Europe. Suffering and death have made the Greeks much more radical in their thinking. Will the British champion a more progressive democracy in Greece? If they fail to do so, everything indicates that Britain will not have great influence in the new Greece for very long.

But meanwhile, what of the Greek people? Out of a population of seven million, two and one half million suffer from malaria—at least five hundred thousand have tuberculosis. The Greeks have nothing with which to fight disease. Most of them are too weak from hunger to repair an airfield for the British. A *Times*' correspondent reports: "Reserve stocks for Greece were never accumulated in the Near East. Warehouses to hold sufficient medicines were never constructed, although the plight of Greece on her liberation was pretty well known. Many organizations charged with aiding Greece became too top-heavy or too entangled with red tape to cope with the situation. Lack of shipping is given as an excuse. But the Greeks still have seventy of their own ships working for the allies—half of them would suffice. But there's no evidence that this amount of shipping will be available." Apparently the Greeks will not even be able to use their own ships to help feed their starving people—nine hundred thousand of whom are homeless.

When a responsible correspondent is allowed to report facts like these—under Allied censorship—you may be sure that negligence toward the gallant but starving Greeks has been inexcusably great. Part of this responsibility must rest with British authorities in Cairo or London. Part of it must be shared by American relief agencies. It is time for the Red Cross and every other American relief agency to show efficient, energetic leadership to rush food and medicines to Greece. Hundreds of thousands of helpless Greeks will die in the coming months unless government and relief agencies slash red-tape—and act with great urgency. In this war the Greek people have placed all of us in their eternal debt. They have sacrificed out of all proportion to their numbers. What can you and I do? We can let Washington—and the Red Cross—know that we want action now to save the Greek people. We can demand that the most competent men be entrusted with this task.

THE TRUE ISSUE IN GREECE

By JOHANNES STEEL

Broadcast over WMCA, October 18, 1944

THE GREEK government, headed by Premier George Papandreou, returned to newly liberated Athens today amid the tumultuous cheering of citizens who had suffered grievously during the years of Axis occupation.

The Premier arrived aboard the flagship *Averoff*, was met by members of his cabinet at the quayside and driven through the streets packed with masses of wildly excited Greeks.

Two former Premiers, General George Tsolakoglou and Jean Rallis and several of their cabinet members, are under arrest by order of Papandreou on a charge of aiding the Germans. The Mayor of Athens has been deposed.

Meanwhile, the Greek American Committee for National Unity has issued a statement protesting the current campaign of slander in certain New York papers against the Greek patriots.

The statement insists that while the British censorship blacks out factual reports from Greece, certain British circles which cling to their Munich ideas, sponsor the misrepresentations of these Allied correspondents in the hope of building up a case against the EAM for the future.

Reports like those of A. C. Sedgwick in the *New York Times* and John Chabot Smith of the *New York Herald-Tribune* stand truth on its head and pass off night for day. In their stories the Quisling Security Battalions who murdered thousands of patriots have by a strange alchemy known only to obscure storekeepers suddenly become the saviors of Greece whose every hair it is necessary to protect, while the heroes of the EAM and ELAS who have wrested almost the whole of Greece from the invader and won the love and confidence of the whole Greek people are suddenly the enemy of Greece, "extremists" who are attempting to bring off a coup d'etat to ensure a "Communist regime."

This issue has no place in Greece; it is being artificially interjected by these correspondents for political reasons to split the magnificent unity of the Greek people and manufacture civil war from outside Greece.

They would foist political warfare on the Greek people in return for four years of agonizing struggle and epic heroism. It is not the business of any Allied correspondents to engineer internal strife among the malaria-ridden, tuberculosis-ridden and starving Greek people. When journalism descends to this, there is danger it will leave its print in blood not ink.

Their reports are false from beginning to end. The Greek people are united. Ninety-five percent of them are solidly behind the National Liberation Front, E.A.M., and its patriot army, the ELAS. Out of a population of seven million, EAM has two million members, that is, almost every adult. They have liberated more than two-thirds of Greece.

So thorough was their job, that the Allied troops landed with only small forces, encountered no opposition and suffered hardly any losses. This was confirmed in earlier reports in the *Times* by Milton Bracker.

There is no rift among Greeks. All Greeks are united in hatred against the small group of collaborationists, the Security Battalions, remnants of the old King George-Metaxas dictatorship reinforced with new elements recruited under the Nazis and Quislings. All Greeks are united in demanding a government of their own choice.

NO FASCISM FOR GREECE!

By LISA SERGIO

Column of the Air, October 20th, 1944
(Broadcast over Radio Station WQXR)

○ F THE many stories which have come from Europe in this exciting period of the liberation of many peoples and their lands, none, perhaps, is as striking and as moving as that of the liberation of Athens.

For eight long weeks, the bloody struggle lasted in the streets of the ancient city and of the new, with Greek guerrillas bitterly attacking the staunch Nazis without a moment of respite.

The first American correspondent to land in Greece, Constantine Poulos, reached the capital before the British troops, and lived through the forty-eight hours of unbounded jubilation which marked the end of all Nazi resistance to the guerrillas before the Allies landed.

It was Wednesday night, October 11th, as Poulos tells it, that the Mayor of Athens was notified by the German commander that the occupation forces were evacuating the city.

The next day the few Nazis who remained behind set off demolition bombs and mines in the port areas.

Through the thundering of the bombs the Greek people, suddenly awakened from the long nightmare, began to celebrate.

Poulos had been living in the mountains northeast of the Greek capital with a group of Andarte until then. Disguised as a peasant he started towards Athens. His small old Ford truck had to stop every little while because the Germans were blowing up all the bridges.

Eventually the correspondent and his party reached the suburbs of the city. People already jammed the streets: There were parades every few blocks. Greek, British, American and Russian flags were held aloft by the paraders, were flown from windows, were painted across the fronts of buildings.

In the Capital itself the parades were more orderly. The EAM had organized a major demonstration. There were speeches and terrific shouts from people demanding everywhere that the Fascists be thrown out.

In Greece, as elsewhere in Europe, the main idea in the minds of the people is to get rid of the Fascists. During four years of dark terror, people have come to realize how it was that the enemy invaded their land. They know that native Fascists had a hand in bringing the enemy in. The native Fascists in Greece let Mussolini's ambassador to Athens believe that if the Italian troops marched in, the Greek people would receive them as liberators. The Italians did march into Athens in 1940, and the Greek people received them with rifle fire and machine guns and with every missile they could lay their hands on. The Nazi armies had to come into Greece to save the face of the Axis.

Now the demonstrations for the liberation of Athens have lasted four days. The delirious populace appeared not to care if they had anything to eat or any place in which to sleep. They wanted to shout and demand the ousting of the Fascists.

Wrote correspondent Poulos, of the ONA, at the end of the thrilling days:

"As the first American to arrive in Athens, I was responsible for a few minor demonstrations myself. Upon seeing the little American flag on my sleeve, the Greek people poured out all their warm feeling for the United States. Old ladies tried to kiss my hand, many young women did kiss me on the cheeks, as did many men. Four times I was yanked out of that automobile and carried many blocks on the shoulders of young people. Old men, trying to smile through tears, just shook my hand saying 'Americanos, Americanos.' Hatred for the Germans is stronger than almost anywhere else."

This is nothing to wonder at. There have been perhaps scores of Lidices in Greece. George Harjas, Greek Red Cross official in Megara, said that 70,000 Jews had been deported, of which perhaps fewer than 4,000 might still be alive.

On the heels of the British army later came history's greatest relief expedition. Enormous as it is, however, it is still not going to be sufficient to care for the seven and a half million Greeks im-

poverished by the cruellest occupation of all Europe, with the possible exception of Poland.

The relief expedition is under the military command of British Major General I. T. Hughes and America's Brigadier General Percy Sadler. UNRRA is moving in along with a number of American and Greek civilian relief agencies. Military officials charged with Greek relief said that the gravest need, and one which has not been met due to a world shortage, is that of clothing and blankets for the coming winter. Only 400,000 articles of clothing are available, while over seven million are needed. There is food to last until Christmas and huge stores of medical supplies in sufficient quantity.

"All we can hope to do this winter," said one official, "is to avert mass starvation and large epidemics." The greatest obstacle to swift relief for all of Greece is the lack of both sea and land transport. The Germans blew up roads in their retreat and engineers will face a spectacular problem in repairs. The personnel engaged in Greek relief is largely British, but two-thirds of the supplies will be American.

Meanwhile the political situation was also becoming fraught with significance. Stelios Pistolakis, President of the Greek American Committee for National Unity, revealed the precise program of the EAM, the Greek liberation front. The program is the following: There shall be respect for the sovereignty, will and aspirations of the Greek people; there will be complete respect for the spirit and letter of all allied agreements from the Atlantic Charter to the Teheran declaration. The program calls for resolute determination to keep all foreign pressure or intervention out of the affairs of Greece and it is a program which is too sound to bear comment. It must be carried out.

In addition the EAM wants the immediate release of all political prisoners from concentration camps not only in Greece, but also in Egypt, India and various British possessions, and the reorganization of the Greek Army of the Middle East in order that it may collaborate with the EAM forces inside Greece.

The government is also required to collaborate entirely with the Allies on military operations and to take all measure to relieve the people of their suffering.

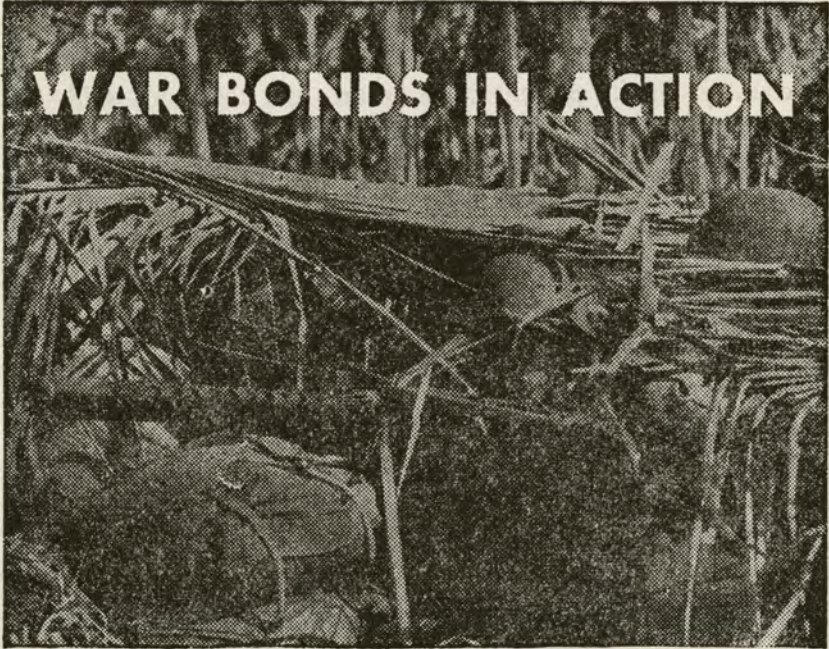
Here, therefore, is a brave people who for four years have struggled against the Axis enemies, refusing to accept defeat or to accept any compromise with their own principles and whose demands are all based on the idea of the sovereignty of the people themselves in shaping their future.

Highly significant is the stress laid on the demand that the government shall keep all foreign influences and pressure out of the country. In its present constitution, Mr. Pistolakis said, the Government is not entirely of the people and by the people. There are in it elements which are not sympathetic to the aspirations of the masses. But it is a government of coalition and if it does adhere to the program of the EAM it may eventually become a real government of national unity.

This is the chief objective not only of the Greeks but of all people in Europe: A truly representative government and complete freedom from the outside pressures of the major powers.

The Greeks have shown their determination in this gigantic struggle, as well as their courage. They will know how to continue the struggle into the political field if this is to be the only way in which they can achieve the freedom and the self-determination to which they have amply earned the right.

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