Organisations referred to in this pamphlet:

**EAM**
The Greek National Liberation Front, supported by all democratic organisations.

**ERGAS**
The Workers’ Anti-Fascist Coalition—the Resistance Trade Union Movement during the German occupation.

**MAKRIS GROUP**
Followers of Makris, who is successor to Hadjidimitriou, trade union leader who was recognised by the Metaxas dictatorship and by the Nazis.

**KALOMIRIS and STRATIS**
These, with Theos (now leading ERGAS), were trade union leaders before the Metaxas dictatorship. They were linked with EAM at the time of Sir Walter Citrine’s visit to Greece, but broke away from this and ERGAS.

**“X”-ites.**
One of the monarchist military organisations; collaborated with the Germans during the war.
CRISIS IN GREECE

The greatest crisis since December, 1944

At the very moment that Archbishop Damaskinos, Regent of Greece, was dining at No. 10 Downing Street as the guest of Mr. Attlee, together with members of the Government and Mr. Anthony Eden, the presses of the News Chronicle were printing one of the most sensational articles on Greece that has appeared in recent months.

This article was sensational, not so much because of what it said, but because of who said it. It was an Open Letter signed by Mr. John Sofianopoulos, who only a short time previously had been Foreign Minister in the Greek Government of Premier Voulgaris.

Sofianopoulos is a man who cannot be regarded as a supporter of the Left. Yet in this article he frankly writes of the "terrorism of the extreme Right" which "still continues"; he states that all that was good in the Government's original programme had been allowed "to be torpedoed—not only by an oligarchy of impudent Capital which had enriched itself during the German occupation... but also by a considerable number of members of the Cabinet itself, who did not feel the need to give sincere and solid support to this task, indispensible to the country's financial health"; he refers to the "clamorous campaign on the part of Capital... and... treacherous opposition on the part of Varvaressos' fellow-Ministers."

Varvaressos, Governor of the Bank of Greece, had just resigned from the Vice-Premiership and from the Ministry of Supplies at the time that this article was written. He has since resigned
also from the Bank. In a statement in the press he referred to the “opposition of the industrialists” as the cause of his resignation.

Sofianopoulos continued by forecasting that a prolongation of present Greek policy must lead to “a collision greater in extent and depth than that of December last”; and called for a new Government, “enjoying the confidence of all political shades and currents, to end the present terrorism, political anarchy, economic chaos and foreign impasse.”

What was the situation in Greece that led Sofianopoulos first to resign from his post as Foreign Minister, and then to write this exposure of the Greek Government in the News Chronicle just at the time that the Regent was visiting Britain? What lies behind the resignation of Varvaressos from the Vice-Premiership, the Ministry of Supplies and the Bank of Greece? What lies behind the resignation of the Voulgaris Government on October 9th?

The crisis in economic life

In a telegram to the T.U.C. at Blackpool, dated September 10th, eight Greek trade union leaders, representing tobacco, building, electrical, leather, tailoring, metal, motor transport and clerical workers, stated that hunger and unemployment were at the same level as during the German occupation and declared that 50,000 workers were on strike in the Athens and Piraeus areas alone. Piraeus is the greatest industrial centre in Greece, and is the seaport of Athens.

This critical situation arose as a result of a series of attacks on the working class, particularly the rapid rise in the cost of living and the constant interference by the Minister of Labour, the police, and by Government-appointed stooges in the normal working of the trade unions.

The strikes which followed the Regent’s leaving for London affected practically every branch of industry, transport and distribution in the Athens-Piraeus area. Some of the strikes were of a demonstrative character, being limited to 24 or 48 hours in duration. Others, such as the strikes of the weavers, continued over a considerable period. Some of the strikes were explicitly declared
against interference in trade union democracy. Others have been fought on the economic issue, demanding wage increases up to 100 per cent. to meet the rising cost of living. In some cases the strikers won their demands, in others they scored only partial victories. One of the most successful was in Volos, where the workers secured wage increases of from 50 to 100 per cent.

The sections of the workers included in the strikes in the Athens-Piraeus area alone include: weavers, tobacco workers, employees of the British and American Services, builders, carpenters, dyers, munition workers, bakers, soap-workers, shoemakers, tramwaymen, busmen, taximen, railwaymen, workers at the waterworks, mill-workers, chemical workers, rubber workers, catering workers (including cooks and waiters at hotels, cafes and restaurants), sewermen, Red Cross workers, glovemakers, miners, flour millers, brassworkers, cement workers, petroleum workers.

These strikes spread rapidly following the resignation of Varvaressos on September 1st, which was followed within a week by the abolition of the system of fixed prices which he had introduced when in office.

True, during Varvaressos’ term of office, his policy of price fixing had been seriously criticised by the workers, owing to the fact that goods went off the market and no adequate measures were taken to prevent this or prevent large-scale blackmarketeering. The removal of the regulations fixing prices simply legalised the black market, and prices immediately rose from 50 to 100 per cent. It was natural that strikes demanding wage increases of up to 100 per cent. should have followed this relaxation of Government control, such as it was.

The state of affairs in Greece has been described as follows in a letter to London from a woman doctor working with UNRRA in Greece at the present time:

“Indeed, from transient experience of Paris and Rome, it’s no exaggeration that Athens is the most prosperous city in Europe. You can literally get anything you want, the prices are not too exorbitant by comparison with London now. . . . It seems that there is almost complete lack of any economic control at all. And
Athens is making hay while the sun shines, but Athens (central Athens) is something entirely separate from the rest of Greece. God knows where all the stuff comes from—undoubtedly things like Army cigarettes and some UNRRA sugar find their way into these channels. There is said, authentically, to be enough cloth in the warehouses for every man in Greece to have a new suit. But channels of distribution are so chaotic, as also is the price control, that the stuff either stays in the warehouses or gets into the Athenian market. . . . There is a system of rationing of basic foodstuffs, and there is also a system of price control. . . . The price control is apparently all right as far as the main centres are concerned. . . . But to get up to the little villages, by mule or manpack, immediately increases the price, and nothing is done to stop that.”

The letter concludes: “As you know, our election at home produced tremendous hope over here, that at last there would be an end to stagnation and corruption and deadlock. And Bevin’s speech was such a bitter pill to swallow—I imagine it has greatly increased the hopelessness and bitterness.”

This letter is dated September 2nd. Price control was abolished on September 8th. And on October 12th, the Director of UNRRA in Greece told newspapers that industrialists were impeding the working up of textile raw materials imported by UNRRA.

**Meddling with the trade unions**

At the time of Sir Walter Citrine’s visit to Greece it was agreed that a delegation from the British T.U.C. should visit Greece in order to supervise the trade union elections. In Appendix B to the Citrine report it was stated: “Elections will also be proclaimed and held in other towns as they come under the administration of the Greek Government.” It was understood by the Greek trade unionists that the British delegation would supervise all these elections. Actually, the delegation completed its mission by June 27th, having only supervised the elections in the Athens and Piraeus area.

On the day after the Delegation’s mission was completed a new United Greek T.U.C. Executive was formed. The new Executive
was to consist of 11 members of the Makris group, 5 of ERGAS (Workers' Anti-Fascist Coalition, led by Theos), and 5 from the supporters of Kalomiris and Stratis. The followers of Makris carry on the tradition of Hadjidimitriou who served both under Metaxas dictatorship and under the Germans. It was therefore only as a result of great forbearance and sacrifice, in the interests of unity, that the ERGAS supporters agreed to form one united T.U.C. with these successors of the pro-fascist officials in the Greek trade union Movement.

The struggle since the amalgamation has been one in which Makris and his supporters, the police and terrorists, often with the aid of the Minister of Labour himself, have tried in every possible way to prevent the growing support of ERGAS candidates from manifesting itself in the composition of the leadership of the various Unions and Labour Centres (Trades Councils).

In the agreement with Sir Walter Citrine, it was decided that at all trade union elections a judge should be present to ensure fair play. One such judge, G. Varelidis, was beaten up by gendarmes and members of the National Guard when supervising elections in Athens in June, 1945. Another was kidnapped just before the election of the Executive of the Piraeus Labour Centre, which was then postponed. Here are some of the devices used to delay fair and proper elections of the Trade Union and Labour Centre Executives:

In the election to the Executive Committee of the Athens Labour Centre on August 26th, the ERGAS candidates received 370 out of 553 votes. The Minister of Labour then declared the election invalid because no judge had been present. And no judge had been present because the Executive of the Athens Centre was still in the hands of the Makris group. This executive resigned on the night before the election was due to take place, handed the keys of the offices to the police, and put in no request for a judge to supervise the elections. Then, three days after the election had been held and won by the ERGAS candidates, the new Deputy President, Kokkinakis, and a member of the new Executive, Gheorghiou, were arrested for "criminal activity" during the events last December!
Then there is the affair of the Piraeus Labour Centre which would be farcical if it did not denote such an intolerable situation in Greece.

On August 26th the first steps towards the election of the Executive of the Piraeus Labour Centre were prevented by the reactionaries, who went off with the register and documents.

On September 2nd, however, as the same performance could not be repeated, the supervising committee for the election of the Executive was elected in the presence of a Government-appointed judge. Of the 236 representatives entitled to vote, 204 attended, and the ERGAS candidates were elected unanimously. In a cable which conveyed this news to London a correspondent commented: “The workers are speculating on what steps the Government will take to have this result declared illegal.”

They did not have to wait long. The final election was due on Sunday, September 12th. A few minutes before the election was due to take place, police entered the building and seized the Government-appointed judge, Mr. Stratigakis. The Inspection Committee immediately cabled the British T.U.C., and postponed the elections for a week.

As a result of publicity, and the strongly worded resolution of the British T.U.C., no further interference was attempted and the elections for the Piraeus Labour Centre took place peacefully and in order on September 16th. The seven ERGAS candidates were all elected.

The situation with regard to the Greek T.U.C. has been even more fantastic. On July 3rd, the Minister of Labour appointed a provisional Executive of the Greek T.U.C., stating that it should hold a Congress by September 20th to elect a new executive. The decree provided that if by September 20th no Congress had been held, then the “five largest Labour centres, Athens, Salonika, Piraeus, Patras and Volos, will each elect three members who will constitute a provisional fifteen-membered Executive.”

Owing to the delays in elections, already described, no Congress was possible by September 20th. The Minister then held a Conference with the provisional Executive with a member of the British Embassy present, to work out plans for a new Executive, but not
on the lines laid down in his decree of July 3rd. The reason for this was that ERGAS representatives had everywhere been elected.

Deadlock resulted from the Conference. So, on October 8th, the Government issued a decision that the Executive should now consist of Theos, Kalomiris, Stratis and Makris, plus 15 members elected from Athens and Piraeus. Since the Athens and Piraeus workers were ERGAS supporters, however, it was also laid down that no single grouping should have more than five members on the Executive!

Two days later Makris seized possession of the Greek T.U.C. offices. He then signed a monarchist manifesto in the name of the Greek T.U.C. This was a bit too much for even Zakkas, Minister of Labour, who ordered the police to clear out the usurpers. However, owing to the resignation of the Government, this order was not published in the Official Gazette, and the police used this as a pretext for disobeying it. Hence Makris was left sitting in the offices of the Executive of the T.U.C.!

At the same time attacks continued to be made on elected trade union committees all over Greece.

The need for an amnesty

In his speech to the new Parliament on August 20th, Ernest Bevin said that, apart from “violent criminals and collaborators with the enemy”, he felt “that it would assist to restore confidence if amnesties were granted at the earliest possible moment, and the prisons were emptied.”

Yet on September 11th, just two days before Sofianopoulos’ revelations in the News Chronicle, the Political Bureau of the Greek Communist Party declared publicly that out of 24 prisons containing 9,636 political prisoners, only 91 had been released. At the same time, however, 307 common offenders had been released. The EAM and Liberal press continue to estimate a total of political detainees in the neighbourhood of 16,000.

The following figures have been officially published by the Ministry of Justice. Further, they definitely exclude a large number of prisoners held in police stations all over Greece. The lesson to be drawn from them is clear.
Figures issued by the Greek Ministry of Justice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total number of prisoners</th>
<th>Number “awaiting trial”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 23rd</td>
<td>16,826</td>
<td>12,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 11th</td>
<td>16,500</td>
<td>14,611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 17th</td>
<td>16,700</td>
<td>14,252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Far from there being an amnesty, there were on September 17th, over 1,300 more prisoners held without trial than when Mr. Bevin made his speech on August 20th.

But not only in Greece is there this scandalous situation of thousands of patriots under arrest without trial. The same applies also in North Africa where it is the British authorities who are responsible. The number of detainees in North Africa is in the neighbourhood of 4,000.

On August 31st, a moving appeal was sent to the Red Cross of Britain, France and U.S.A., and also to the International Red Cross, by relatives of these detainees. The appeal said: “The war is over. Even prisoners of war are already on their way back home. Must Greek soldiers continue to suffer and die in concentration camps in Africa?”

On September 2nd, a message was sent to Mr. Attlee from detainees’ families in Cairo on behalf of men who are being given “unheard of treatment, unworthy even towards enemies, without the slightest accusation having been brought against them.”

On the one hand, the few Greeks in Germany who have worked willingly in Hitler’s war factories have been actually repatriated by plane. On the other hand it has been said that there is no shipping space for the repatriation of Greeks from North Africa. However, it is known that ships have sailed from North Africa to Greece which had plenty of passenger space on board.

It is not only, however, a question of the unlawful detainment of democrats. Even more ghastly is the record of murders of Greek democrats since the Varkiza agreement was signed. On September 18th, the Communist newspaper Rizospastis published its fifteenth list of murdered patriots since the signing of the Varkiza Agreement. This list shows a total of 492. The former
Minister of Justice, Soliotis, never admitted that more than 30 patriots had been murdered, but the next Minister, Kyriakopoulos, later admitted a figure in the neighbourhood of 300, without any of the culprits, all belonging to the monarchist organisations, being ever arrested. The latest estimates are around 650 to 700.

Typical of the kind of "justice" now being administered in Greece is the notorious case of Professor Moutafis, ex-Lord Mayor of Kokkinia, a crowded refugee centre of some 60,000 inhabitants near Athens, who was tried in August by the Piraeus Assize Court together with some other patriots. He was finally acquitted as there was no evidence against him.

The President of the Court—obviously an enemy of the Resistance Movement—declared the jury's verdict a mistaken one and ordered a re-trial, but this time at Chalkis, where the jury included five collaborationists. The new trial was held, and the Professor condemned to death 128 times for committing 128 alleged murders!

Another recent case is that of eight ELAS men who, in the last quarter of 1942, attacked an Italian military truck, capturing it and killing the driver. An Italian military tribunal condemned them all to death and four were shot in January, 1943. The others escaped and continued to fight against the invaders. They are now being put on trial in Lamia for "prematurely deciding and executing a crime against an Italian soldier, and making use of arms which were in their possession without the permission of the authorities. . . ."

Such cases as these appear to a British reader as fantastic—but they are everyday occurrences in Greece at the present time.

The above cases are only concerned with some of the official acts of terrorism which are known. In addition to these there are the continual terroristic acts by members of the National Guard, the "X"-ite royalist organisation and others. For example, just before the gendarmerie took over police duties from the National Guard on September 16th, members of this same National Guard destroyed the printing press of EAM at Lefkas. And during the strike wave that embraced 50,000 workers, not only were between 500 and 800 strikers arrested, but very many more were
attacked and beaten up by National Guardists and "X-ites".

On October 12th, in spite of a ban on all demonstrations by the police, 5,000 monarchists demonstrated in Constitution Square, Athens. That morning "X"-ites forced schoolmasters to close their schools so that the children could attend the demonstration. Although it was banned by the police, the police took no action against the demonstration.

It is quite clear from these facts that not only do Fascist bands have unlimited freedom in Greece at present; but that the Government itself does not hesitate to resort to every sort of Fascist provocation, and to permit Fascist methods in its courts of law. It is no exaggeration to say that powerful forces in Greece are driving hard towards the restoration of Fascism at the earliest possible opportunity, if possible under the patronage of the emigre Greek King George.

The treatment of collaborationists

While the number of democratic detainees is enormous, those who collaborated with the Germans, and who grew rich under the German occupation, still retain positions of power. Thus, in Sofianopoulos' article, we read of the machinations of "an oligarchy of impudent Capital which had enriched itself during the German occupation" working hand-in-glove with "a considerable number of members of the Cabinet itself."

The kind of thing which is going on can perhaps be best illustrated by reference to one outstanding example.

In May of this year the Special Court to deal with the Greek Quislings named Bishop Spiridon of Jannina as one of the leading collaborationists in Greece. This Bishop was the President of the Ecclesiastical Court that dethroned the Bishops of Kozani and Elis for their patriotic stand against the German occupation. To this day Bishop Spiridon remains President of the Holy Synod; and is also Chairman of the Administrative Council of the National Bank of Greece.

The Regent, Archbishop Damaskinos, neither in his capacity of Regent, nor in his capacity of Archbishop, has shown the slightest
disapproval of the collaborationist activities of his colleague, and no steps have so far been taken against Bishop Spiridon.

When the Quisling Premier Tsolakoglou asked the then Archbishop Chrysanthos, a supporter of the Fascist Metaxas regime, to swear in the Quisling Cabinet, he refused to do so on patriotic grounds. It was then that Damaskinos was installed, and without delay swore in the Quisling Government, and all the succeeding Quisling Governments. It might be truly said that Damaskinos became Archbishop with the approval of the Germans, and Regent with the approval of the British, but neither with the approval of, or even consent of, the Greeks. In neither case have the Greeks been consulted.

The democratic weekly, *Neos Dromos*, has published the text of a letter from Damaskinos to Tsolakoglou, expressing approval of his "brave initiative" in surrendering to the Germans. It is authoritatively stated that one reason why the Regent will not offend the monarchists is the fear that they will publish other even more compromising correspondence signed by him during the occupation.

It is therefore no accident that democrats languish in gaol while those who collaborated with the Germans still enjoy both liberty and power.

**The people have "no confidence"**

Such is the present situation in Greece, and this is why all the democratic parties, whether within EAM or outside it, have refused to take part in any elections while the present reign of terror continues.

By the first date when the new electoral registers were due to be completed there had been so few enrolled that the closing date was postponed till the middle of September.

In the middle of September, again, so few people had enrolled that the date had again to be postponed. It is amusing to observe the antics of the Ministry of the Interior on this question. It officially announced on September 14th that the enrolment in the new registers was going on satisfactorily, though it had to admit
that in 30 regions of the country the enrolment had not yet begun. This was owing to the state of terror prevailing.

Three days later, on September 17th, the same Ministry announced the postponement of the closing date to the end of the month. It then published figures showing that in the districts of Serres, Drama, Cavalla, Rhodopi and the suburbs of Piraeus, not more than 20 per cent. of those entitled to vote had registered. In Kalamata, Piraeus and Patras the percentage was 40 per cent. In Salonica it was 21 per cent. When it is realised that these figures were published after the second extension of the period of enrolment had taken place, and that people had already been officially warned that no further extension would be allowed, it is clear how great the boycott of the Government's election preparations. At the end of September the closing date was again postponed to October 10th.

On September 12th, the Union of Athens Republican Clubs, whose President is General Othoneos, ex-commander-in-chief and one of Greece's most revered soldiers, publicly warned the people that the registers were being forged in order to falsify the election results. On September 18th the Republican Clubs of the Piraeus called on their followers to abstain from voting in the elections.

On October 6th, Premier Voulgaris suddenly announced to the press that elections would be held on January 20th. Immediately there was an uproar in the democratic camp, the Manchester Guardian stating that the "Voulgaris Government has reached a point where it is in entire opposition to all the democratic parties" (October 8th). Faced by such a united opposition, and in spite of the most extensive manoeuvring by the Regent and Sir Reginald Leeper, the Government was forced to resign.

The Regent, again in continual conference with Leeper, called successively on the Liberal Sophoulis, the monarchists, ex-premier Tsouderos, ex-Minister Demetracopoulos, in an endeavour to form a new Government. Failure succeeded failure because the Regent would not consider any Government excluding the monarchists, and the monarchists would not consider any Government not built precisely on the Voulgaris pro-Fascist model.

So finally, Damaskinos himself had to form a Government.
A positive policy for Greece.

There can be no restoration of democracy in Greece so long as the Fascist terror is tolerated, and so long as nearly 20,000 political prisoners languish in gaol in Greece and in the British camps in North Africa. The first step in solving the Greek crisis is the carrying out of Mr. Bevin’s declared policy of seeing that “the prisons are emptied.” Till this is done there can be no election that can truly reflect the will of the Greek people. At the same time as a complete amnesty is granted, an end must be put to such judicial farces as the “trial” of Professor Moutafis. Further, a complete end must be put to the repeated terroristic acts which are constantly being perpetrated against democratic organisations and individuals by Fascists of the National Guard and “X”-ite royalist organisation.

A second essential for democracy in Greece is the carrying out of the terms of the T.U.C. emergency resolution on the need for the enforcement of democratic elections in the Greek trade unions. The Greeks themselves regretted that the T.U.C. delegation left Greece so soon after supervising elections only in Athens and Piraeus.

The economic anarchy at present prevalent in Greece, the utter chaos with regard to control of supplies and of prices, the rampant terrorism, the leniency towards collaborationists, the interference with trade union democracy and the terror against democrats and patriots, all these form a complex problem to which there can be only one remedy: the formation of a new government truly representative of the democratic anti-Fascist forces of the Greek nation, including of course the Resistance Movement. It is very regrettable that in his first speech on foreign policy on August 20th Mr. Bevin should have committed himself to the view “that the Voulgaris Government should carry on pending the decision of the Greek people.” The Greek people have shown that they had no faith in the Voulgaris Government.

In a declaration of September 10th, the Executive Committee of EAM expressed its belief that Greece might serve British interests which coincide with those of Greece. It also underlined the fact...
that in 30 regions of the country the enrolment had not yet begun. This was owing to the state of terror prevailing.

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A second essential of the terms of the enforcement of the former policy is the evacuation of the Royalists from Piraeus. The Greeks in Greece so seriously demand this.

The economic chaos with which trade union patriotism, all the Royalists, all the patriots, all the representatives of national, including the regrettable the, are Mr. Bevin should see the Voulgaris G. Greek people's faith in the Voulgaris G.

In a declaration of EAM expressing which coincides
that the Greek people were amazed that the British Labour Government could have continued the disastrous policy previously pursued. The declaration says that EAM trusts that the British Government will alter its policy, being now better informed.

Nothing could better do justice to the democratic forces in Greece than to allow an EAM delegation to visit this country without delay. The Regent has been and gone. The EAM delegation has been waiting since September 8th to receive permission to visit Britain. So far it is our own Foreign Office that has been the obstacle to such a visit.

It is no secret that the visit of the Regent was not the success anticipated. At press conferences and at conferences with rank-and-file Labour M.P.'s he gave the impression of a slick politician rather than that of a champion of democracy. The T.U.C. resolution, adopted during his visit, must have considerably shaken his belief that British Labour supports the present regime in Greece. A continued and growing demand by British Labour that the Greek amnesty be made a reality, that trade union democracy be fully established, and that the voice of EAM be heard in London can do much to put an end to the disastrous state of affairs in Greece, Winston Churchill's most explosive legacy to war-torn Europe.

*October 16th, 1945.*