

## THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF COMMUNISM IN GREECE.

It is my aim here to trace briefly the history of communism in Greece: the way in which the communists started to organize guerilla bands; how they bluffed the people; what they have been fighting for, and the manner in which they have been fighting.

After the failure of their attempt to seize power in 1936, the communists continued zealously their underground activities of spreading propaganda. Most of the leaders of these Greek communists were Russian-trained graduates of the Military-Political School at Kutvin. Having come to Greece as refugees, they had early begun to organize the "working people" into unions and "pyrines", with the aid of "unlawful", or banned, newspapers. Certain men and women, members of the "Narrow Office", went secretly from place to place, especially in the country, to "guide" the people.

The first item of their propaganda was, of course, the usual paradise on earth—shorter working hours, higher wages, education for everyone, a vacation every summer, ample machinery for the farmers, and night schools where the farmers could be taught how to cultivate their land according to the Russian methods.

The second item dealt with the commerce of Greece. It was said, for example, that Greece should import flour, leather, gasoline, and other products from Russia at a reasonable price; and that the Government of Greece should sign an "agreement" with Russia rather than with any other country.

The third item was directed against the King and the "capitalistic clique". This part of the programme was naturally put near the bottom of their list, since they hoped that by this time the people would be sufficiently instructed and prepared to receive it.

The last item dealt with the position of Greece in the Balkans and her entry into the "Skupshtina", or central committee of the "National Front".

After the failure of the revolution in 1936, the "black resistance" (as they called the action taken against them by the authorities) had sent a good number of the communists to prison on certain islands of the Aegean. Later, many of these had been released when they signed a "responsible declaration", renouncing their ideologies. Most of these, however, continued to work with the party after their return to Greece, although they did not have any high position in the organization. For all of the prisoners, these island prisons were actually universities, where the study of communism was the only subject on the curriculum.



By 1942, they were ready to resume their subversive activities on a larger scale. Taking advantage of the German occupation, they started to organize the people. This time, however, they used a good camouflage in order to attract the patriots who were ready and anxious to fight the Germans. In this way, many good patriots, officers of the Greek army, were enlisted as members of E. L. A. S. (National Popular Liberative Forces)—which was nothing more than the communist organization under a different name.

By November, 1943, the people began to fear that E. L. A. S. was communist, and that E. A. M. (National Liberative Front) was its political counterpart, and that the red phantom, which had been carefully concealed, was working and fighting for its own ends. One of their first objectives was the "autonomy" of Macedonia. This State would come under the protection of Bulgaria, which was to come under the influence of Russia. In other words, what the communists actually wanted was the port of Salonika, which would give them an outlet to the Aegean Sea. When the patriots realized what was the real aim of the communists, most of them tried to withdraw from E. L. A. S.; but they found it impossible to do so. All were closely watched by the "Political Office" of communist headquarters; those who did try to escape were caught and sentenced to death by the "people's court".

By this time red flags began to appear in the areas occupied by E. L. A. S., and communistic marches to be heard whenever guerillas passed by. Now and then guerillas would fight the Germans or the Italians, but this merely made conditions worse, because the Germans did not hesitate to burn villages and kill civilians in order to avenge the death of one or two German soldiers at the hands of these guerillas. About two hundred villages were burned and thousands of persons killed by the Germans as reprisals. This policy of fighting the Germans and prompting them to kill the civilians or render them homeless was a deliberate part of the communist programme: it was hoped that the homeless would be induced to join their "national" forces.

By the fall of 1944, as the Germans withdrew, the guerillas had a difficult time to keep their bands in existence; the patriots were deserting them, and the people distrusted them. That is to say, they found it difficult to keep their forces up to strength in the normal way; but they were resourceful—they used force to do it. Young men, regardless of their political beliefs, or their physical condition, were ordered to join E. L. A. S. Those who refused were called "fascist" or "reactionary" and liquidated as members of the black resistance.

The complete withdrawal of the Germans from Greece enabled the people of the country to breathe more freely, for the partisans, or communists, moved into the large cities as quickly as the Germans moved out. A few hours after the Germans had left; thous-



ands of E. L. A. S. troops could be seen walking about the streets of Athens and Salonika, for instance. Many of them, who had come from the mountains, had never seen anything like the fine buildings and the shops of the cities: it looked to them as if their dream had come true, and that what the communists had promised them had actually been achieved. But they did not reckon with the Greek national spirit, which, although wounded, was still strong enough to awaken them from their dream, and show them the proper way of obtaining freedom and rights.

What the communists demanded, of course, was a commanding position in the Greek government. In December they demanded three more offices in the cabinet (they already had seven out of twelve), and when the official government, which had been formed in Lebanon during the occupation, refused, the communists at once declared they would seize power by force. This would have meant the end of Greek Nationalism, and the end of Greece as a free nation.

In December, the communists struck the first blow, in Athens. For all those who lived in the city, it was a time of confusion and mortal danger. At that time the regular Greek troops (those who had fought in Egypt and Italy against the Germans) in Athens did not number more than two thousand, and the total military garrison, including the British, did not exceed three thousand men. For more than a month the city of Athens was a battle field, and from the windows you could see the dead lying in the streets. No one was permitted to move about; the sections occupied by E. L. A. S. were completely destroyed—apartments and public buildings were dynamited. The files of the police and of security headquarters were destroyed by the guerillas, many of whom had criminal pasts and wanted to destroy all evidence against them in case the revolution failed.

And it did fail. At the end of a month, an armistice was signed between the government and E. L. A. S. in a village called Varkiza, not far from Athens. I do not know the exact provisions of the armistice, but I do know that E. L. A. S. was to give up all arms and ammunition to the authorities, and that the government promised to grant amnesty to all communists with the exception of some "Kapetanious", or leaders, who had committed political crimes. A quantity of arms and ammunition was turned in to the government, but it did not exceed half of what had been used in Athens alone—where, believe it or not, they had one complete battery of heavy artillery and all kinds of machine-guns.

After the armistice had been signed, some of the units which were near the Yugoslavian border were welcomed by General Tito, and after being intensively trained in Yugoslavian territory, they returned to Greece for the "third round".

As is well known, the U. N. O. sent to Greece observers who represent many nations, to examine closely the situation in Northern



Greece. The first reports tell of open co-operation between the communists in Northern Greece and those in Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria. Those communists in the north of Greece could not properly be called Greeks: there is not even a drop of true Greek blood remaining in their veins. They have lost all their Greek pride, tradition and national consciousness. Communistic propaganda has changed them into faithful followers of what they call "Fighters for Democracy"—but they are everything but democratic: every good Greek who knows the history of his ancestors knows that without freedom and national conscience you can not have democracy.

—GREGORY LAMBROS '50

---

## A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The word education is derived from a Latin word which means "to draw forth." A man's education consists in the gradual drawing forth of the powers in his soul, which powers we have learned are understanding, will and memory.

Strictly speaking every man is educated to some extent because it is through our senses that we come to all knowledge. We must, therefore, necessarily be influenced by the every day occurrences of life. It is, however, not in this respect that we usually refer to education, but rather to knowledge and ability derived from training and application.

Everything in life is designed for a certain end, and in the realization of this end is its greatest perfection. From this we may conclude that the education of a man reaches its greatest perfection in its fitting him for his ultimate end. That is, to know God, to love Him, and serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him in the next. Unless education does this, it has failed in its objective; unless we keep this end in mind, we can never have a true education because our ideals are not aimed at one goal and we do not know in what direction our minds should be drawn forth.

The Church claims for herself the office of educating her children, for she alone possesses the infallible rules of faith and morals. It is the Church alone that can guide our intellect and enable us to draw forth fully all of our powers and direct them to our last end. As Catholics we know that this is best accomplished in our Catholic Universities, for it is here that we are taught not only Catholic doctrine but also the Catholic attitude towards life as a whole, and are imbued with a spirit which controls and guides our every activity.

—L. ALEXIS MacDONALD '48