

*John Sakkas*

***The Times* and the British Intervention in Greece  
in December 1944**

*Summary in English*

The British military intervention in Greece in December 1944 provoked in Britain a storm of protest by the political world, the labour movement and the press. *The Times*, the most influential and respected newspaper in Britain, made a savage attack on Churchill and his coalition government which astonished the British conservative establishment. The paper's critical attitude towards official policy in Greece stemmed from its deep conviction that the resistance movements in the liberated countries had an important role to play in the reconstruction of postwar Europe. Britain should protect and collaborate with these movements in rebuilding a postwar order where international disputes would be decided on their merits and not by the disposition of military power. In a sense the events in Athens in December 1944 offer the most dramatic example the second world war affords of the impact of the press on the conduct of British foreign policy, through the part it played in shaping the contemporary vision of the external world.

The Greek crisis in December 1944 has been analyzed in immense detail by British and Greek participants and by British and Greek historians<sup>1</sup>. Much of the important documentation is to be found in the files of the Public Record Office in London. In the context of this article only certain salient points

---

1. The author wishes to thank professor John Saville (University of Hull, UK) for his comments and remarks on the paper. With regard to the 1944 December events there is a select bibliography in P. Auty and R. Clogg (eds), *British Policy Towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece*, Barnes and Noble, New York, 1975. See also a later volume, *Greece: From Resistance to Civil War* edited by M. Sarafis, Spokesman Books, London, 1980.

require to be emphasized. The first is that British intervention in Greece in the winter of 1944 was the first direct military intervention against any resistance movement and it took place six months before the war in Europe ended. Its purposes were to contain and if possible to eliminate the dominant resistance movement EAM/ELAS, to restore the Greek monarchy backed by a conservative government, and thereby to safeguard what was still considered to be a major strategic life-line to the oilfields of the Middle East and to India. The second point, and most important, is that the decision to intervene was not a sudden one, for the strategic importance of Greece had long been an established part of British military and political thinking. By the autumn of 1943 the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, was becoming seriously concerned with what was likely to follow in Greece after a German collapse. On 29 September he cabled to the chief of his staff, General Ismay, that «should the Germans evacuate Greece we must certainly be able to send 5,000 British troops with armoured cars and Bren gun carriers into Athens»<sup>2</sup>. Two months later he asked that «EAM and ELAS should be starved and struck at every means in our power»<sup>3</sup>. It was essential, he wrote in his memoirs, «that there should be no political vacuum in Greece. As I minuted on 29 August 1944 ‘it is most desirable to strike out of the blue without any preliminary crisis. It is the best way to forestall the EAM’»<sup>4</sup>.

In October 1944 the Germans left Athens and the Greek capital was occupied by British paratroopers under the British C-in-C, General Scobie. In the following months the internal situation steadily deteriorated as the mistrust and suspicion between the resistance and those ushered into power by British support reached almost unbearable levels. The crisis was precipitated on 3 December by the police firing on an unarmed demonstration in the centre of Athens. Churchill was deeply implicated and two days after the Athens firing he intervened directly with orders to Scobie: «do not however hesitate to act as if you were in a conquered city where a local rebellion is in progress»<sup>5</sup>. The British troops finally intervened on the morning of 6 December. By the beginning of January 1945 ELAS forces had withdrawn from the Greek capital. Britain maintained Greece in her own sphere of influence.

---

2. W. Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol.5, Harmondsworth, London, 1952, σ. 475.

3. Auty and Clogg (eds), *op.cit.*, p.195.

4. Churchill, *op.cit.*, vol. 6 (1954), p. 247-8.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

The British intervention in Greece aroused the passions of many people in Britain to a quite remarkable extent. That British troops should have fired on men who were their allies at a time when the war with the Germans was still going on was thought unbelievable. In the House of Commons there were three major debates on Greece in which Churchill, despite his personal standing and popular esteem among the British people, was subjected to vociferous criticism. Further protests came from a number of political and trade union organizations. At the Labour Party conference on 11-15 December Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour in the coalition government, provided a total defense of Churchill's policy in Greece. It was answered in a short speech by his most formidable parliamentary critic, Nye Bevan, with the following comment: «Mr Bevin has described what is happening in Greece. I have no time to answer him. But there is one complete answer. Only three bodies of public opinion in the world have gone on record in his support, namely Fascist Spain, Fascist Portugal and the majority of Tories in the House of Commons»<sup>6</sup>. The degree of excitement of domestic opinion over Greece was revealed in an opinion poll held by Mass-Observation (an organization for the study of political and social attitudes and habits) in January 1945: at a period when the British people were behind Churchill as a result of the desperate German offensive in the western front, his attitude towards Churchill's intervention Greece was questioned by almost half the population<sup>7</sup>.

The events in Athens occupied a prominent position in the foreign affairs coverage of the British press, while a great debate was carried over onto the editorial pages. Most national newspapers opposed official policy in Greece, but on different grounds, with differing intensities and for different durations. One of them, *The Times*, published a number of editorials on Greece which enraged the ministers and many of its own readers<sup>8</sup>. Undoubtedly its fierce criticism of Churchill's Greek policy stands out as one of the most controversial episodes in its whole history.

---

6. Labour Party Annual Conference, 1944, p.148-9.

7. G. A. Gallup (ed.), *The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls*, vol.1 (Great Britain, 1937-75), New York, 1976, p. 103. For the attitude of the British public towards the intervention in Greece see J. Sakkas, *British Public Opinion and Greece, 1944-49*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, UK, 1993.

8. About two fifth of the correspondence received by the newspaper endorsed the editorial line, while three fifth opposed it. D. McLachlan, *In the Chair*, London, 1971, p. 101.

*The Times* has been one of the oldest and most respected newspapers in the world. Its general political line is moderate and its loyalties lay with conservative governments. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it developed a close relationship with the Foreign Office and other governmental departments. This relationship took an official shape in 1937, when the Foreign Office allowed the newspaper to appoint a diplomatic correspondent to its offices in order to collect news and views on issues of foreign policy. From 1939 to 1948 the diplomatic representative of *The Times* was Iverach McDonald, through whom the Foreign Office could communicate with the newspaper's editor.

The close connection of *The Times* with Britain's traditional political and bureaucratic establishment did not prevent the newspaper from opposing domestic and foreign policy. This is not surprising taking into account the fact that the war itself had to a more or less extent radicalised quite large numbers of the British people so that after its conclusion most newspapers were strikingly reluctant to pick up where they had left off in 1939<sup>9</sup>. During the war the British press had been against a return to the status quo ante in Europe and envisaged a new peace settlement based upon the mutual trust, understanding and cooperation of the great powers. Each of them should have a clearly demarcated and acknowledged sphere of influence respected by all the others<sup>10</sup>. The western governments should accept the fact that the Soviet Union could only fairly be expected to play a stabilizing role in any postwar international system if she was treated as an equal partner and her own security needs in eastern Europe were recognized. The British press became particularly concerned about Greece because she was the most important test up to that time as to whether the British government was willing to work with the popular resistance movement in Greece and other countries in Europe, or it was seeking to shape political developments in ways most conducive to maintaining Britain's economic and imperial interests.

At the time that the crisis in Athens broke there were six British war correspondents in the Greek capital gathered at the Grande Bretagne Hotel in the Constitutional Square<sup>11</sup>. A few Greeks offered themselves to help them

---

9. The extent of popular radicalism was revealed in the general election of May 1945 in which the Labour Party, contrary to all predictions, won an overwhelming victory – with 47.8% of the total vote against the Tories' 39.8%, and with 393 seats in a House of Commons of 640.

10. *The Times*, 4 November 1943, «After the Conference», and 17 July 1945, «The Unity of Europe».

11. G. Hoare from *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*, E. Bigio from the *Daily Express*, F. Salusbury from the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Herald*, J. Nixon from the BBC, R. Bigio from Reuters and C. Hollingworth from the Kemsley Press (Kemsley Press was the largest of the groups of newspapers in Britain. It included three national newspapers, *Sunday Times*, *Daily Graphic* and *Sunday Graphic*, and numerous provincial publications). Another British correspondent, R. Capell from the *Daily Telegraph*, arrived in Athens later, on December 16.

by contributing background information and spelling out Greek names. However, their information about the fighting in the area surrounding them was to come from daily embassy press briefings and by Greek officials as well as from a communication network that they would create.

From the beginning of December until February 1945 the war correspondents' freedom to judge Greek developments freely and objectively was restrained by a strict military censorship and the frequent interferences of the press attaché of the British Embassy, Osbert Lancaster. The terms of their accreditation to the British forces precluded them from crossing over to EAM/ELAS territory, while communication from EAM headquarters rarely reached them. The military censors were so determined to protect British policy in Greece against critics that sometimes made slight changes in dispatches such as substituting one descriptive word for another. Moreover, when the military censors felt that the dispatches were out of the permitted bounds of correspondence they immediately referred them to the British Ambassador in Greece Rex Leeper<sup>12</sup>.

Never in its history was *The Times* subjected to such violent criticism as it was during the editorship of Robert Barrington-Ward (1941-48). Since 1914 Barrington-Ward had been private secretary to Geoffrey Dawson, editor of *The Times* in 1912-19 and again in 1923-41. After his service in the Great War he worked at the *Observer*. Rejoining *The Times* in 1927 he was appointed deputy editor in 1934 and finally succeeded Dawson in October 1941<sup>13</sup>. Politically Barrington-Ward was moderate, open-minded and tolerant of different views.

---

12. FO 371/48234, Lancaster's Memorandum, 21.12.44 and FO 371/48233, R 889, Lancaster to W. Ridsdale, head of the Foreign Office News Department, 11.1.45; W. Byford-Jones, *The Greek Trilogy: Resistance, Liberation, Revolution*, Hutchinson, London, 1946, p. 155-60. See also the revealing report of Constantine Poulos of the Overseas News Agency on British censorship in H. Richter, *British Intervention in Greece*, Merlin Press, London, p. 43-4, n.30. At the height of the December crisis British authorities refused to allow American journalists to interview the ELAS leaders and all of them save one, A. C. Sedgwick (*New York Times*), petitioned for State Department intervention. On 2 February 1945 the Foreign Office gave the following explanation for the events: a) it was undesirable for persons to cross into ELAS territory, and b) many of the American correspondents in Greece were of Greek origin and ardent supporters of the Greek Communist Party «on whose behalf they have been carrying out active propaganda throughout the recent disturbances». FO 371/48233 «Press Reporting of Greek News», R. 889.

13. For R. Barrington-Ward (1891-1948) see *Dictionary of National Biography* (DNB), 1941-50, p. 63-4.

The editorials of *The Times* on Greece were mostly drafted by E. H. Carr, former Foreign Office official and a well-known professor of international politics<sup>14</sup>, and Donald Tyerman, the paper's assistant editor<sup>15</sup>. Both Carr and Tyerman took a very favorable view of EAM/ELAS. They regarded it as an authentic popular resistance movement which embraced the whole range of opinion from Centre to extreme Left<sup>16</sup>. Their enthusiasm about the Greek resistance stemmed from their conviction that the new left-wing forces that were emerging in Europe had a significant role to play in the post-war politics of their countries<sup>17</sup>. The British military intervention was unjustified not only because it was against Greek patriots who had fought the common enemy but also because it would isolate Britain from her allies and would jeopardize the prospects of a better east-west understanding<sup>18</sup>.

The leading articles of both Carr and Tyerman were based upon the dispatches sent by Geoffrey Hoare, the paper's special correspondent in Athens. During the December events Hoare, who suffered from deafness and general ill-health, obtained the assistance of his friend, Clare Hollingworth of the Kemsley Press. It seems that she contributed to the writing of his reports, a fact of which *The Times* appeared ignorant. Although a certain amount of criticism was levelled against Hoare, the real cause of all the indignation was not his (or her) reports but the leading articles. In February 1945 Hoare himself suggested that *The Times*' leader columns on Greece went further by way of comment than anything contained in his messages from Athens justified<sup>19</sup>.

---

14. E. H. Carr (1892-1982) was born in London and was educated at Trinity College, University of Cambridge. He served in the Foreign Office (1916-36) and was professor of international politics at the University College of Wales (1937-47). During the war he advocated cooperation with the Soviet Union and the establishment of a new social and economic order in Britain and Western Europe. His views were trenchantly expressed in a series of books and lectures, notably *Conditions of Peace* (1942), *The Soviet Impact on the Western World* (1946) and the *The New Society* (1951). In the last winter of the war, at the age of 52, he wrote *A History of Soviet Russia*, which was published in fourteen volumes between 1950 and 1978. The most popular of all his post-war writings, however, is the George Macaulay Trevelyan lectures, delivered in the University of Cambridge in January-March 1961 and published as *What is History?* (1961). DNB, p. 1981-85, p.75-6; *Proceedings of the British Academy*, v. lxxix (1983), p.473-511.

15. Donald Tyerman (1908-1981) was assistant and deputy editor at the *Economist* in 1937-44; deputy editor at the *Observer* in 1943-44, assistant editor at *The Times*, 1944-55, editor at the *Economist* 1956-65. DNB, 1981-5, p.396-7. For the history of *The Times* see I. McDonald, *The History of the Times*, London, 1984 (for Greece vol. 5) and McLachlan, *op.cit.*

16. *The Times*, 9 December 1944.

17. *Ibid.*, 14 December 1944.

18. *Ibid.*, 9 January 1945.

19. McDonald, *op.cit.*, p. 119; McLachlan, *op.cit.*, p. 255.

Yet it was his dispatch on 4 December that shocked world public opinion and buffeted the wartime coalition in Britain by a political crisis of both international and domestic dimensions, beginning with these emotive words: «seeds of civil war were well and truly sown by the Athens police this morning when they fired on a demonstration of children and youths»<sup>20</sup>. In Washington the new Secretary of State, Edward R. Stettinius, came out with a statement that was widely interpreted as an official disapproval of British policy in Europe<sup>21</sup>. At home, the coalition government was shaken, when in a parliamentary division on British policy on 8 December, 24 Labour votes were cast against it. At home, the coalition government, which included the Labour leaders Attlee and Bevin, was shaken even though the party line was for abstention<sup>22</sup>. As the parliamentary correspondents duly noted, this was the first time since Dunkirk that the majority of Labour Party backbenchers had failed to support Churchill's government on the conduct of the war<sup>23</sup>.

On 7 December Carr opened the campaign in the paper's columns with an editorial deploring Churchill's decision to send troops to support the Greek Right and stating that the British government had no right to insist «on this or that individual or group as alone qualified to conduct the government of a friendly nation». Two days later a leading article written by Tyerman stressed that EAM was not a gang of communists and bandits as Churchill had insisted in the House of Commons on the previous day, but a wide organization which embraced «the whole range of opinion from centre to extreme left». On 14 December another leading article by Tyerman stated that the resistance movements in Europe had a significant role to play in the post-war politics of their countries:

The national provisional government of any liberated country, in justice and expediency alike, must be built around the active and mostly turbulent resistance movement which has kept the flame of nationhood alight under enemy occupation, privation and terror. Its head must be a man accepted by and active in resistance. Its members must comprise a majority of resisters. Its policies and programme must be in time with those which have been worked out, close to realities, in the fighting underground.

---

20. *The Times*, 4 December 1944.

21. Churchill, *op.cit.*, vol. 6, p. 258-9.

22. *Hansard*, vol. 406, 8 December 1944, cols 1012-3.

23. *The Times*, 9 December 1944; *News Chronicle*, 10 December 1944.

*The Times*' coverage of the Greek crisis caused a lot of offence to the policy-makers and their advisors. According to Osbert Lancaster, Hoare had been «a big disappointment... handicapped by total inability to select from a mass of facts those few which were significant». Lancaster suggested to his superiors in the Foreign Office that the war correspondents in Athens be replaced by diplomatic correspondents who were more capable of interpreting contentious political issues<sup>24</sup>. Alexander Cadogan, permanent under-secretary in the Foreign Office, wished that someone «tie Barrington-Ward and Carr and throw them into the Tames»<sup>25</sup>. Harold Macmillan, the Minister Resident, was also upset with the newspaper: «I do not like to see *The Times* once again completely misrepresenting the facts. It seems where Greece it concerns prejudice colours all that appears on the leader page»<sup>26</sup>. The British officials were also concerned about the impact of the Press' criticism on Soviet and American public opinion. The Soviet Press extensively quoted extracts from the British newspaper but avoided direct offence of an ally. At the Yalta conference on 8 February 1945 Stalin assured Churchill that he had no intention of criticizing British policy in Greece or of interfering in that country. Churchill later recalled that Stalin «adhered strictly and faithfully to our agreement of October [1944], and during all the weeks of fighting the communists in the streets of Athens, not one word of reproach came from *Pravda* or *Izvestia*»<sup>27</sup>. By contrast the American Press was much more consistently hostile. Britain was accused of pursuing anachronistic ways of diplomacy in the context of power politics in order to restore the pre-war order. In an atmosphere of high expectations for a new international conduct, the American journalists in Athens reflected the increasing anxiety of liberal opinion in their country about Churchill's machinations in the liberated countries. It is interesting that, by the end of 1944, 54% of the American public who were dissatisfied with the «Big Three» cooperation blamed Britain for this state of affairs and only 18% blamed the Soviet Union<sup>28</sup>.

---

24. FO 371/48234, memorandum from O. Lancaster to W. Ridsdale, Head of the Foreign Office News Department, 21 December 1944.

25. D. Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-45*, London, 1971, p. 697.

26. FO 371/48233, 4 January 1945.

27. *Foreign Relations of the United States. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945*, Washington, 1955, p. 781-2. Churchill, *op.cit.*, vol. 6, p. 255.

28. FO 371/44559, 'U.S. press criticism of British foreign policy'; J.L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, New York, 1976, p. 154, footnote 39.

Churchill himself was particularly angry with *The Times*' comments on Greece and late on the evening of 22 December telephoned Barrington-Ward. While speaking on a different matter, he suddenly switched the conversation to Greece and said that he wanted an early conclusion to the affair «but not at the price of a humiliating skedaddle by British troops». At the request of the Prime Minister, the editor offered to come and see him after Christmas. Churchill agreed but rang off without revealing to him his imminent departure for Greece<sup>29</sup>.

Churchill flew to Athens on Christmas Eve. Although a political solution to the crisis was not found, the British Prime Minister succeeded in satisfying two important demands of EAM: that the exiled king should not return to Greece until a plebiscite favourable to him took place and that the national government of George Papandreou should be replaced by a more representative one. The British press, which had also espoused these demands, on the whole approved of Churchill's initiatives. The Labour *Daily Herald*, for example, described Churchill's journey to Greece as «the first constructive move towards a settlement». Even the communist *Daily Worker* claimed that in modifying his policy the Prime Minister had abandoned the previously intransigent position and had «taken a further step forward which, though belated, might have far-reaching results»<sup>30</sup>.

*The Times* described Churchill's decision to fly to Athens as «an act of statesmanlike courage»<sup>31</sup>. But Carr did not think that the British Premier had modified his original rigid course towards the Greek resistance. According to the professor, progress had not gone very far and the reason for this was the partisanship of the British representatives. A peaceful settlement was impossible so long as British troops were fighting «the largest organized group of parties in Greece». «This is no question», Carr wrote on 1 January 1945, «of prestige or of the pursuit of a victory for British arms. On this field, military support spells only political defeat... There is no ground for pride or satisfaction in the knowledge that British troops have been engaged in house-to-house fighting in a working-class suburb of Athens».

Barrington-Ward himself found Carr's criticism of British policy in Greece rather fiercer than it need had been. Churchill was infuriated. He proceeded

---

29. McDonald, *op.cit.*, p. 120; McLachlan, *op.cit.*, p. 257.

30. *Daily Herald* and *Daily Worker*, 27 December 1944.

31. *The Times*, 27 December 1944.

in drafting a «scoldish letter» to the editor, regretting that the leading article «should have darkened the pages of *The Times*» but he was dissuaded from sending it on the intervention of Eden, Beaverbrook, proprietor of conservative newspapers, and Bracken, Minister of Information<sup>32</sup>. On the same day Major Maclagan of the War Office expressed his uneasiness over the reporting of press correspondents and suggested that they should have guidance in order to secure a more judicious outlook<sup>33</sup>. In Athens Leeper, who generally had a low opinion of the press, shared Maclagan's feelings and thought that the poor quality of the editorials in *The Times*, the *Daily Herald* and the liberal *News Chronicle* accounted for most of the misunderstanding in Britain<sup>34</sup>. He even suggested that Hoare be resigned from *The Times*<sup>35</sup>.

On 9 January it was Tyerman's turn to attack British policy in Greece. He stressed that despite Churchill's conciliatory moves EAM/ELAS still had no choice other than unconditional surrender or liquidation. Little consolation was to be found in the news that British troops were not to move outside Athens in pursuit of the anti-government forces. Any further aid to the Greek reactionaries would be disastrous:

But at the end the civil war would remain to spring up again with the eventual withdrawal of armed British aid, and a most grave disservice would have been rendered both to Greek peace and democracy and to the British interests in the Balkans and the Mediterranean – and in the war against the common German enemy. These are not questions of ideology or partisanship, but of fact.

When the controversy over events in Greece began to diminish, especially after the truce on 11 January, *The Times* came to take a more restrained line on the government's Greek policy. It still condemned the intervention, but now felt that its lack of information about the internal developments in Greece during the occupation and after liberation had induced it to be less than fair to the British government in judging motives<sup>36</sup>.

---

32. J. Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, p. 548, London, 1985; McLachlan, *op.cit.*, p. 258.

33. FO 371/48233 R209, Major Maclagan to D.S.Laskey (Southern Department), 1 January 1945.

34. FO 371/48233 R515, Leeper to Foreign Office, 7 January 1945.

35. FO 371/48234 R 233, O. Lancaster to W. Ridsdale.

36. See, for example, the editorial of 9 February 1945: «once the tragedy had culminated in the outbreak of open war between ELAS and the British troops, no other course was open to the British government than that which they pursued».

On 18 January 1945 Churchill opened the debate on the war situation in the House of Commons and revealed once again his frustration over the press treatment of the Greek events. Although he named no names everybody present understood that he had in mind above all else *The Times*. He stated:

There is no case in my experience, certainly no case I know in my war experience, when a British government has been so maligned and its motives so traduced in our own country by important organs of the press among our own people. That this should be done amid the perils of this war, now at its climax, has filled me with surprise and sorrow... How can we wonder at, still more how can we complain of, the attitude of hostile and indifferent newspapers in the United States when we have, in this country, witnessed such a melancholy exhibition as that provided by some of our most time-honoured and responsible journals and others to which such epithets would hardly apply.

Listening upstairs in the gallery was the editor and the chief proprietor of *The Times*, both of whom felt the depth of the hostility towards their newspaper within the conservative circles. Barrington-Ward in particular was shocked by the Prime Minister’s open onslaught against his newspaper. In his diary he bitterly commented: «This – a direct and obvious reference to *The Times* – immediately touched off the loudest, largest and most vicious-ever savage-cheer that I have heard in the House. It must have lasted a full minute or more... It was a vent for the pent-up passions of three years, a protest against all that has, wrongly or rightly, enraged the Tories in the paper during that time»<sup>37</sup>.

In later years Churchill and other protagonists of the Greek drama, feeling fully justified by the subsequent developments in the highly polarized European politics, neither forgot nor forgave the performance of the British press in December 1944. In his memoirs Churchill complained that *the Times and the Manchester Guardian*<sup>38</sup> had regarded British policy in Greece as reactionary, while Macmillan recalled in his own war memoirs that the *Times* and a few other newspapers had been «dangerous opponents» throughout the Greek crisis<sup>39</sup>.

---

37. McDonald, *op.cit.*, p. 122; McLachlan, *op.cit.*, p. 253.

38. The liberal *Manchester Guardian* subscribed at this time to *The Times* foreign news service and the same dispatches from Hoare appeared in both newspapers and formed the same raw material from which the leading articles were built.

39. Churchill, *op.cit.* vol.6, p.255; Macmillan, *The Blast of War, 1939-45*, Macmillan, London, 1967, p. 601.

The attitude of *The Times* and other national newspapers towards British intervention in Greece in December 1944 shows first and foremost the impact of the press on the policy-makers and generally on public opinion. Churchill and some of his officials revealed an extreme sensitivity to media criticism and were finally compelled to formulate their foreign policy in accordance with the press' contemporary vision of the external world. Moreover, the stand of the British press to the Greek crisis reflects the profound respect and admiration of the British people for the Greek resistance and illustrates the political radicalization that took place in Britain during the war. Public opinion, particularly working class opinion, had moved to the left politically determined to transform the world that had produced fascism and war. The European resistance movement was seen as the only force capable of opposing the remnants of the pre-1939 illiberal and autocratic regimes in much of the continent and of establishing a new social order based on the principles of freedom, democracy and social equality. The common people of Britain thought that the primary aim of the government should be to protect, encourage and assist anti-Nazi resistance. Instead, they saw it trying to reimpose the old status quo, endangering the whole reconstruction of Europe. It is in this context of high expectations and tragic disappointments that *The Times*' opposition to British policy in Greece and its ardent support for the Greek resistance during the December events must be seen.