

14 April 1969

Dear Professor Hallstein,

I write to you in my capacity as chairman of the Greek Committee Against Dictatorship, which is an organisation of Greeks in Great Britain from a wide range of the political spectrum.

In the next three weeks the attention of all Greeks will be turned towards the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which is due to meet in London on May 5. If the Council of Ministers implements the spirit of the resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly and suspends the Greek junta, this will be a most decisive move forward in the struggle for the restoration of democracy in Greece. We must therefore do everything in our power to persuade the Council of Ministers to act.

In order to match the gravity of the occasion and the importance of the subject, we have reserved for the Sunday afternoon, May 4, the Lyceum Ballroom, one of the largest halls in central London (capacity 2,000), and propose to hold a meeting there, which, we hope, will be addressed by very distinguished European political leaders and parliamentarians.

The purpose of this letter is to extend to you a very warm and urgent invitation to speak at this meeting.

I am glad to say that Max van der Stoep (Dutch deputy, Rapporteur on Greece of the Assembly of the Council of Europe), Karl Czermetz (Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee of Austrian Parliament), Sveq Gustafsson (First Vice-President, Swedish Liberal Party) and Sam Silkin (Leader of the British delegation to the Assembly of the Council of Europe) have already agreed to speak. The National Executive Committee of the British Labour Party has nominated Miss Joan Lester, M.P. as its official representative. The Liberal Party will send one of its Members of Parliament. Invitations to speak have also been sent to O. Falne (Swedish Minister of Education), A. Pertini (Vice-President, Italian Chamber of Deputies) and H. St. John Stevas (British Conservative parliamentarian). Invitations to attend the meeting have been sent to all British Members of Parliament, to Trade Unions, professional and student organisations, etc.

The main object of the meeting will be to demand that the Council of Ministers act in accordance with the spirit of the resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly concerning the suspension of the Greek junta from the Council of Europe. It is intended that a powerful delegation should be appointed at the meeting to visit all the foreign ministers the next day. We hope that you will agree to be a member of this delegation.

We are intending that the meeting of May 4 should be preceded and followed by many activities which will bring the Greek question to the centre of public attention in Britain and, if possible, in the whole of Europe.

In case you want to know more about the Greek Committee Against Dictatorship before accepting our invitation, I enclose a copy of our first annual report; though now out of date, it gives a fair indication of the things we have been doing.

I know that many engagements compete for your time, but, in view of your leading role in the European movement, I am sure that you must be seriously concerned about the problem of Greece, and this makes me confident that you will seriously consider giving priority to this invitation. With the delicate balance which apparently exists in the Council of Ministers on the question of suspension of the Greek junta, a really impressive demonstration of European public feeling, such as we propose, could tip the balance the right way.

For Greece, the suspension of the junta will be a landmark in the struggle for the restoration of democracy. For Europe, it will be an unequivocal expression of opposition to the re-emergence of fascism in its midst.

May I therefore appeal to you in the name of all freedom-loving Greeks to accept our invitation. Your help at this decisive juncture will be invaluable.

We shall of course cover your expenses. (Air fare plus accommodation for two nights in London).

I will greatly appreciate an early reply, as time is running short.

Yours sincerely,

J. S.

J. Spraos

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