

It looked as if Michael's near neighbour - Yugoslavia's Marshal Tito - had assumed the mantle of Kingship over the whole of the Balkans. 57 years old, Joseph Broz - Tito's real name - had come a long way since lining-up with Stalin. The Marshal went to Budapest to draw Hungary closer to the Communist fold.

An agreement signed by Hungary's Premier Dinsey (and Tito) provides for mutual aid between the two countries. It was similar to pacts the Marshal made with Bulgaria and Rumania.

There was only one spot in the Balkans, where things were not going entirely Moscow's way. But, as the new year came in, the Communists were stiffening their efforts in Greece, too. A large scale guerilla war flared up; in the Greek mountains near the Albanian frontier. Striking from the borders, the rebels gained some ground. From Salonika came members of the United Nations Balkan Committee to report on the fighting.

A free Greek Government has been set-up under the rebel leader - General Markos. The Athens' Government replied with wholesale arrests of Communists all over the country. 72 were court martialled in Salonika for illegal possession of arms. The Communist party and all Communist papers have now been banned. In Athens, more than 500 people were taken into custody.

U.N.O. observers said that recognition of the rebel government would constitute a grave threat to international peace. Meanwhile, Greek reinforcements move up to the Northern border. Fitted out with some British but mostly American equipment, they will aid hard-pressed garrison troops.

Whatever the outcome of the rebel offensive in Greece, it is an indication of the extreme steps the Communists are prepared to make, to gain complete control of the Balkans.

Task of the U.N.O. commission is made more difficult by the hostile attitude of Greece's neighbours. The Royalist government alleges that rebel bases have been set-up behind the Bulgarian and Yugoslav frontiers.

Against a background still scarred from Greece-Italian battles six years ago, fighting has broken out anew. Konitsa is the guerillas first objective. Possession of the frontier town would provide a seat for the rebel government.

As the New Year opened, Greece was the one country where the ideological clash, had passed the stage of verbal battle. U.N.O.'s task in 1948 would be to ensure that other danger spots would not resort to civil war to enforce political faiths.