



The GREEKS had a War for It

By Frank Gervasi

King George of Greece having a mug of tea at the canteen he presented to the Y.M.C.A. in London, the first canteen to be staffed entirely by Greeks

King George II of Greece, a monarch temporarily out of a country but not out of a job, comes to the United States to carry on the fight for freedom. Something of the debt the United Nations owe his tough, liberty-loving people is told here by Collier's reporter, who covered Greece before the Axis tide engulfed it

OF ALL the little nations of bewildered Europe that lay in the path of Axis domination of the doomed continent, only Greece, after Poland, loved democracy so well as to fight for it vigorously enough to call what happened a war. It wasn't war in Holland; it was murder. It wasn't war in Belgium; it was a skirmish. In Poland, desperate though the resistance of the Poles had been, the German campaign proved an enormous exercise in panzer tactics. Only the Greeks had a war for it.

All took their toll of the enemy. Holland, Belgium, Poland—even Norway—cost the Germans, and therefore the Axis, many men and much equipment. But, until Russia entered the war, no foe inflicted such punishment on the Axis as the Greeks did upon the Italians, and later, with the help of the British, upon the Germans.

You can't put a calipers on what Greece did for the cause of democracy and measure it accurately. The war isn't over yet. But it *might* have been over had it not been for the Greeks—not the Greek politicians nor big busi-

nessmen. Many Greek politicians were Fascists, as the government of Premier Metaxas had been Fascist, patterned, even down to police methods of handling traffic, after the Fascist design. The big businessmen for the most part thought they could do business with Hitler. Some of the members of the Greek general staff had sold out to the Italians, and at least one important member of the Department of the Interior was a Nazi stooge.

But the Greek people—the goat herders and the tobacco farmers, the wine growers and the tenders of olive groves, the factory workers and the keepers of wineshops—the common people of Greece had no mind to do business with Benito Mussolini or Adolf Hitler. The night the Italians treacherously descended upon Greece from their long-established base in Albania—October 28, 1940—those people filled the village squares and the streets with their clamor: "Down with Fascism!"

They meant as much the Fascism that had been imposed upon them since the day Metaxas invented a Communist rebellion in the provinces, in August,

1936, to seize power, suppress the constitution, close up the parliament and become dictator, as they meant the Fascism of the invader. It was to have been a victorious march to Athens for the Italians. Mussolini's choice of the date October 28th—anniversary of his Pullman-car "march" on Rome—indicated that, as did the bald fact that Italophile members of the Greek general staff had received enormous bribes in gold to induce their regiments to lay down their arms.

He Chose to Fight

Metaxas heard the cries of the people. He was as shrewd a politician as he was an able general, perhaps one of the ablest officers of our times. He saw and seized the opportunity of going down in history as a paladin of democracy rather than a despised dictator. He chose to fight.

And what was to have been another easy victory for Mussolini's "invincibles," those veterans of one-sided battles against unarmed natives in Ethiopia and barehanded Republicans

in Spain, turned into a catastrophic defeat. The adjective is understatement. Italian Fascism, nourished for years on hypodermics of propaganda, on a sort of national Couéism of phony victories and false economics and catch phrases that included the one concerning Mussolini's infallibility—"Mussolini ha sempre ragione" (Mussolini is always right)—died in the mountain passes of Albania.

Fascism fed on glory. There was none for Fascist arms in Greece. Fascism gorged on victory and met costly defeat in Greece. It dawned on even the staunchest Black Shirts with the Greek debacle that Mussolini was very definitely not always right. The decline of the Second Roman Empire that may meet its end one day soon on the sands of Libya began in Greece because Greeks loved freedom well enough to fight for it.

Something more the Greeks accomplished. Italy's mission in the Axis strategy in the Mediterranean region was to have been twofold: The Fascists were to have marched to Athens and
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She crossed her legs impulsively. The crowd whistled madly. She beamed brightly until the man indicated that art had been served



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JAY HYDE BARNUM

HE HAD given her five more minutes for positively the last time when he saw her coming down the street, to the accompaniment of an invisible string ensemble playing in three-quarter time. She wore the skins of six dead sables, a vacuous expression and a corsage of flowers pinned to the furs. He knew the origin of the furs and the beautiful blankness, but the corsage stopped him cold.

His own talent was the source of the handsome animals which clutched gently at her soft throat. Nature had chosen to assemble her features in a pattern not at all unpleasing to the eye, and the corsage probably had come from that leering stewbun who had a buck for every tea bag in China. He scowled and pondered the extensive pleasure to be derived from punching eight million dollars' worth of low character in the nose.

She approached, she saw him, she smiled and the stone lions slumbering morosely in front of the City Hall sat up and took notice, a reaction not at all uncommon to the male animal in the presence of a Dish. He consulted the wafer-thin platinum watch she had given him the time they were held over at the Moonlight Roof and glowered at her, but it was an effort.

"You're forty minutes late, Dog-face," he grouched. "What detained you? A sailor or something?"

"So sorry, darling," she trilled, and a reverent hush enveloped the street, silencing the profane noises competing against her voice. "I didn't realize I was at the beauty parlor so long."

"YOU should've hung around until they waited on you," he said with elaborate sarcasm.

"Ah, darling, please be nice to me, just today," she pleaded. "This really is a difficult situation for me."

"G'wan," he scoffed, "you can do it blindfolded with one hand tied behind your back. You've been planning it long enough—for three years—and driving me crazy every minute. Maybe I would've been better off if I'd cut my throat the day I met you. It would've been quicker and cleaner."

"If you want to back out," she said, and her lower lip trembled piteously, "it's your privilege. After all, nobody is forcing you to go through with it."

"Don't give me that!" he yelled. "You're through playing me for a chump. I was a sucker not to have done this long ago. You making with the eyes at every guy in town on my time. And where did you get the flowers?"

"If you must know," she said, "I bought them myself. I wanted to look radiant for you. I wanted to give you something to remember always, and all I get is abuse and vile suspicion."

"What is that you're wearing, a skirt

or a kilt?" he demanded. "I don't mean to be personal, you understand, but I've seen your legs before. It wasn't necessary to refresh my memory quite so obviously."

"You always said I had nice legs," she pouted. She drew her absurd little skirt taut against her knees, examining them critically.

"You got a swell pair of gams," he assured her, "but I'm old-fashioned enough to believe there are certain sacred things a husband doesn't share with the public."

"You're trying awfully hard to be nasty."

"No trouble at all. Look—we're almost an hour late. The man is waiting to mumble those little words you've been dying to hear."

"Oh, Poopsie will be there all afternoon."

"Poopsie!" he howled. "Who's Poopsie?"

"Judge Poole, you silly goose. You know, that distinguished-looking gentleman who comes to the club so often. He's a lamb."

"If you ask me, he's a sheep in wolf's clothing. No doubt he's told you he can make you very happy after this passing incident in your life is finished."

"An older, worldly man always is more understanding."

"Oh, yeah!" he said. "Well, my winsome witch, if you don't come along and get this silly business over and done with, I'll kick your teeth down your delicious throat."

"I forgot to tell you," she said, "the photographer won't be here for a while."

"Won't you feel uncomfortable posing with all those clothes? If it's not asking too much, would you mind telling me who's taking the picture and for what?"

"For the papers, of course. I can see the caption now: 'Dancer Leaps for Keeps.' That nice boy who does the night-club column in the Star said he would do it specially for me."

"He's probably reciprocating past favors," he retorted. "Do you meet all trains?"

Her eyes suddenly sparkled with tears. "You poor boy," she murmured. "You're jealous and I never knew. Tell me, darling, how long have I been torturing you? When did you decide we couldn't go on this way?"

"When I found out I couldn't support you any more," he said.

"And when did you ever support me?" she blazed.

"For three years I've been lugging you over every dance floor in America three times a night. When I took you out of that coatroom and put you in the act, you were a cute little trick. Now I'm in training to be the bottom man in the pyramid. Don't look now, Butch, but you're bulging in the strangest places."

"If you were a man," she said ominously, "I'd gouge your eyes out. Don't think for an instant I'm not wise to your phony woman's-place-is-in-the-home line! You want to get rid of me so you can get another girl in the act to front for you while you turn on the charm for those frowzy battle-axes who think you're wonderful, you two-timing rat. I'll spoil your dandy little scheme. I'm not going through with it."

"If you don't mind, lady," a little man, with a big box slung over his shoulder, said patiently, "would you please make with the legs over here?"

SHE perched on the ledge in front of the alert lions, crossed her legs, glared at the appreciative audience which had sprung out of holes in the ground, and pulled her absurd, inadequate skirt over her knees.

"Lady," the little man said querulously, "a nice, big smile and a little more leg, please!"

"I will not lend myself to a vulgar exhibition," she said stiffly. "It would only give people with low, vile minds the wrong impression." The crowd stirred restlessly.

"Nice legs always make a good impression on Page 1," the little man said wearily.

"Go on, sugar," her partner called from the crowd. "You owe it to your public."

"Darling, you do understand!" she cried. "Wait for me. I've changed my mind."

She crossed her legs impulsively. The crowd whistled madly, and the little man, a veteran of many cheesecake epics with ladies, momentarily recaptured his lost, forgotten youth and permitted himself the luxury of a fleeting smile.

She beamed brightly upon the crowd and held it until the little man indicated that art had been served sufficiently. She had many offers of assistance but she declined them graciously until a certain party fought his way through the milling mob. She dropped from the ledge into his waiting arms. He sagged slightly but held his ground manfully.

"Darling," she whispered, "forgive me, I was a vicious, narrow-minded woman. You are an artist. You should not be restricted by petty, middle-class conventions. You need your freedom. You can have it if—if you want it," she added tremulously.

"Poopsie is waiting," he murmured.

They ran up the steps of the City Hall, but at the door she stopped and clung to him.

"Hold me tight this way for the last time," she breathed softly. "Oh, darling, I'm scared."

"How do you think I feel?" he asked miserably. "I've never been married before, either."