

Greece During the German Occupation

(Ed. Note: This article was written by a student of St. Dunstan's who spent the war years in Greece. He came to Canada to join his father in Charlottetown, in June of 1946, and is now in process of becoming a naturalized Canadian.)

"The black clouds and the enemy moved away.
The sky became blue again.
But long afterwards the shadow of slavery
remained in our land."

—Xenophon.

I should like to tell you something of what I saw and experienced during the German occupation of Greece, the most difficult time that country has seen for hundreds of years. All these things that I am going to tell you are true; they took place in "the birthplace of the gods" during the years 1941-44, A.D.

It was on April 16th, 1941, that we saw in the streets of Salonika the last of the Greek units that were leaving for Egypt; at eight o'clock in the morning a troopship bore them out of the harbor. After their departure, Salonika had the appearance of a desert. The blue Greek sky was no longer blue, it was filled with German aircraft flying over our country; the people were crying and waiting . . . waiting for the Germans, who had said — when operations began — that they would conquer Greece in two days. But for six weeks they were held off by the courage of a few thousand soldiers, many of them still wearing bandages on wounds received on the Albanian front.

At two-thirty in the afternoon we heard tanks driving along **Ignatius Street** (the street that leads from Greece to Rome, the same street which was used many times by the glorious Greek and Roman armies), proceeding to the city hall, where the armistice was to be signed. Major Reinhart Hofmann, who had spent some time in Greece before the war as an archaeologist, announced:

The Germans are fighting for a New Order in Europe, and have not come to occupy Greece, but to drive the British troops away . . . The Greek people must keep away from military camps. Until

further notice the newspapers will not be published."

Now the Swastika was flying from the top of the **Leukos Pyrgos**, (White Tower); storm troopers were already patrolling the streets.

The next morning the flag of the Third Reich was not waving over the White Tower any more: the guard found it torn into small pieces, and a warning was found on the door of the tower: "Do not try to conquer a people that has never been conquered." No one knew who did it, for civilians were not allowed to circulate after eight o'clock in the evening, and all officers of Active and Reserve Forces who had not escaped to Greece were forced to report to Gestapo headquarters.

In the meantime, German police were taking over apartments, hotels, schools, hospitals, and public buildings. Two days after their arrival, the first train left for Germany, loaded with food and clothing. German officers started black market operations, and soon the prices went so high that seventy-five percent of the people could not buy even their daily bread. Many restaurants were open to the German army only, and all their bills had to be paid by the bank of Greece.

In the early months of 1941, hunger and starvation had already arrived, and by June, 1942, fifty-two thousand civilians were reported dead of starvation. Death and misery — this was the New Order brought by the Germans. All American, English, Canadian, and French citizens had to report twice a week to the Gestapo. The International Red Cross was ordered not to give them relief of any kind until they could be sent to a concentration camp.

Professors and students arrived from Germany to study ancient Greek civilization; when they left a few months later they took with them the best of the ancient treasures. When the Rector of the University of Salonika complained to the University of Munich, he was told that these treasures would soon be sent back; but at the end of the war the Rector was still waiting for them, for the Germans had no intention of returning them.

At the same time, in high school and gymnasium, the students had to study German language and "Kultur" four hours a week. The Greek National Theater, famous for its dramas and lyrics, was now opened by the Germans with plays from Bohnheirate and others.

No civil traffic was permitted to move from one locality to another. Street cars and buses were reserved for the "werhmacht". The Greek Merchant Navy became part of the German Naval Reserve.

Eighty percent of the tobacco and olive oil, the two chief products of Greece, was sent to Germany. German engineering units destroyed all the forests in making synthetic rubber, and the cereals produced were used in making alcohol. Ninety thousand persons were sent to Germany as slave labor, and only a few thousand of them came back.

While all these things were happening, the underground organizations, in co-operation with the Middle East Intelligence Forces, had begun to blow up military trains, etc. Resistance grew stronger as the situation in Greece grew worse day by day.

There are many things I could say about Greece during the German occupation, but they are too numerous to recount here. Four years after Germans captured Greece, we began to hope for liberation. And finally the allies did come, and the Germans departed. But there are many victims who will never be able to return home to celebrate the victory — those who were killed in Albania, Bulgaria, the Middle East, Italy, and the Islands of Crete; those who died fighting the Germans, and those who died in Greece fighting the hunger and starvation brought by the Germans as a "New Order" in Europe.

— Gregory Lambros '50

Facts About Figures

The title of this essay suggests a treatise on national debts and their liquidation. As the reader progresses however he will discover that national debts were never farther from anyone's mind, and will possibly begin to contemplate liquidation as it applies to homicide; (committed on the author,) rather than in its economic connotation. I ask you to bear with me though whilst I ramble amongst my fellow students and bring to your attention a few interesting facts about their figures.

First, fat men. There are two types of fat man. The more common of the species is the rolly-poly, jovial fat man, who is usually (very subtly) named "Slim". Slim is