

A French journalist who recently visited Athens attacks the dictatorship, which is defended by the Greek dictator himself, General John Metaxas.

Two Views of Greece

I. HITLER'S GREEK DISCIPLE

By **RENAUD DE JOUVENEL**

Translated from *Clarté*, Paris Anti-Fascist Monthly

A NEW dictatorship was established in Greece on August 4, 1936—one more Hitlerian dictatorship in Europe. It is headed by General John Metaxas, whose previous rather undistinguished career had nothing in it to warrant such a destiny for him. Hitler's example has tempted this none too redoubtable warrior into dubious paths, and today, after having been one of the first Republicans and later one of the first Royalists in Greece, he is the first Hitlerian.

His rise to power was helped by domestic troubles, both political and economic, which a series of dictatorships, all of them more or less severe but none with any program, had been unable to remedy. The country was in great confusion, the treasury was empty and the people were showing their discontent more and more openly

when General Condylis engineered the King's return.

At that time Metaxas was Vice-President. King George II, who was anxious at the beginning of his reign to show himself a liberal, soon changed his course through fear that he might grant too much. The Republic received its death blow when Venizelos recognized the King, as the Republicans were thereby deprived of their most influential leader. Neither the Liberals nor the Socialists had had time to influence the peasants, or, for that matter, the Greek people as a whole, in favor of a democratic alternative to the monarchy. In the eyes of all Venizelos was the only exponent of liberty. When he abandoned them, they no longer knew where to turn. Venizelos no doubt hoped eventually to return to power but his death and

that of Condylis smoothed the way for Metaxas.

On August 4, 1936, he declared that the general strike scheduled for the next day was in reality a revolt and promptly decreed martial law. Then, on the pretext of saving the country from total collapse, he declared himself dictator. This, he claimed, was a temporary measure—to last only until the political parties found it possible to reach an agreement and form a government. The political parties blindly accepted this proposal and thereby tacitly approved Metaxas's future decrees. From that time on, he began to act as an absolute ruler and to apply the methods of his master Hitler.

At Salonica, where, his secret opponents assert, his own *agents provocateurs* fomented the disorders which served as his excuse for seizing power, the military acted ruthlessly and there were a number of deaths. A hundred persons suspected of liberalism or Marxism were immediately arrested and exiled without trial. A simple decree was made the grounds for deporting them to the penal islands.

In Athens arrests have been much more numerous and have gone on continuously. It is known that at the present time there are about 3,500 political exiles living on the islands, while no one knows how many more are in prison awaiting the Government's decision. These people are not necessarily Communists, although the Communist scare constantly serves the dictator as a pretext for his actions, but liberals, Socialists and very often simple poor people who have not the slightest idea of what it is all about and know nothing about Communism except the name.

So far Metaxas's activities have re-

vealed his ruthless disregard for the law. Two leaders of the Greek League for the Rights of Man, Professors Zvolos and Tatsos, were deported to Milo. Their original sentence to a year's exile was reduced by the Court of Appeals to three months. Metaxas thereupon dismissed the President of the Court, decreed that the two unfortunates were to serve their terms in full and abolished the law which permitted the modification of their sentences.

It was to be expected that the few Communist Deputies would be dealt with summarily, but the régime has also exiled trade union leaders, professional men and women of prominence and intellectuals. In one instance, the authorities even went as far as to exile a young barber, for 'excessive and dangerous politeness, provocative of Communism.'

II

Conditions on some of the prison islands are wretched. Some of them lack good water, so that their inhabitants are exposed to typhoid. Others lack ordinary provisions and none has sufficient housing or medical facilities. The Government allows the exiles the sum of 5 drachmas, or about 5 cents, a day for their upkeep! And so we see thousands of men deliberately exposed to sickness, cold, even death, without being permitted to provide themselves with adequate food and clothing.

The favorite method employed by the régime to extort confessions is a strong dose of castor oil, a method which has been used by other dictatorships. Two workers in Athens actually died after they had been forced to take too large a dose. Ancient forms of tor-

ture also seem to be coming back into vogue. There is the case of one official whose head was crushed in a vise in an attempt to get a confession from him. A certain doctor, Andreopoulos, had his foot crushed for the same reason and a woman worker, Chryssa, was violated and then subjected to hideous torture. And in Athens one hears the story of Mavrodakis, a journalist on the staff of the underground *Rizospastis*, who was killed and thrown out of the window by the police. A courageous physician refused to confirm the verdict of suicide which was submitted for his signature, and his certificate states that Mavrodakis was killed before being thrown out of the window.

Strangely enough, Zachariades, the leader of the Communist Party, was treated less arbitrarily. He was not tortured and was actually granted the privilege of a trial. He was, however, sentenced to 4½ years in prison and 2 years on the islands for his 'opposition to the Government.' Later this verdict was changed to nine years imprisonment for a decade-old crime which he had not committed.

Hitler's methods can easily be recognized in this. The Greek Government has been copying them faithfully, even to the burning of books. About three hundred works have been condemned. Among them are those of Tolstoi, Dostoyevski, Spengler, Kant, Spinoza, Gide and Philindas's new Greek grammar. Only the most innocuous have managed to escape the censorship. The writer saw a volume of poems bearing the stamp of approval of the First Army Corps, which is doubtless well qualified to pass on the merit of books.

The censorship is directed not only

against domestic enemies, but also against France. In Greek papers one reads daily that the devaluation of the franc is a proof of the anarchy now reigning in France. There are no comments, however, about the devaluation of the Italian lira. Every day the *Estia*, an evening daily with a large circulation, published some diatribes against Premier Blum, while other papers feature large portraits of Colonel de La Rocque, or reprint articles from the most reactionary French organs. The dictatorship has abolished the liberty of the press, and papers no longer appear without having passed under the censor's eye and pencil. Many journals have been taken over by the so-called Tourist Ministry.

III

There can be no doubt that Metaxas is supported by the King, who certainly profits from the régime. The King's foster country, England, may worry about the pro-German policy of Metaxas, but George II has no reason to complain. He was recently given a loan of 150 million drachmas (about \$1,400,000), supposedly as a mortgage on one of the old royal estates. Yet in less than two years he has sent more than half a million dollars out of the country for safekeeping in foreign banks. Stock brokers accused of infractions of the Exchange Laws have confessed that they acted on the King's orders. Princess Catherine, the King's sister, is to receive a loan of about \$370,000. These facts show why the royal house is unlikely to interfere with Metaxas.

One of the chief characteristics of this régime is its unpopularity among the masses, an unpopularity that is

caused by the higher cost of living, the lowering of the salaries and the general impoverishment of the worker and the peasant. These have been the immediate results of the dictator's policy. Discontent is apparent everywhere. Proof of this can be seen in the unpopularity of the papers which are known to be in the Government's pay. Their circulation has fallen 70 per cent, while that of *Rizospastis*, an illegal paper, continues to soar.

The rank and file of the Greek people are turning away from the dictator more and more openly. icy silence greets him during parades arranged specially to arouse popular enthusiasm. When the King and the dictator made their recent visit to Crete, the people did not conceal their hatred. It was apparent even in the mayors' speeches of welcome. Their departure was marked by such demonstrations that the Governor of Crete

had to send in his resignation. On the other hand, the funeral in Athens of the old Republican leader, Papanastassiou, was attended by vast crowds.

The dictatorship is far from being popular; but it has behind it the army, the police and Germany. The latter does everything in her power to cultivate this new ally in the Mediterranean, where heretofore she has been without a base. Both Schacht and Goebbels visit Athens. Army orders from Greece go almost entirely to Germany. Metaxas's closest advisers are Falkenhausen, Commander von Habicht and Captain Miror. And there are rumors that the Germans have secured from Metaxas certain mysterious rights in the Lutraki region, near Corinth, and on the islands of Petalia and Anticythera. Are we to believe that these sites will be used as bathing resorts for the 'Strength Through Joy' cruises?

II. MY PEOPLE ARE WITH ME

By GENERAL JOHN METAXAS

From the *Sunday Times*, London Conservative Weekly

[The following explanation of his aims and methods was recently given by the Greek Premier to a special correspondent of the London Sunday Times. THE EDITORS.]

'GREECE is not a land of sentimentalists. England, a large, rich and powerful country, can afford to let herself be moved by sentimental considerations. My country is small; she is poor; her policy must of necessity be governed by practical considerations.

'I ask you to consider her geographi-

cal position. She is a Mediterranean country, and has no interests outside the Mediterranean. England, with whom we have traditional ties of friendship, is a great Mediterranean Power. Is it likely that I should allow sentiment to influence my foreign policy in a direction contrary to the interests of my country?

'Germany is an important customer for us because she buys our chief product, our tobacco. In return for this we take German goods, including a certain amount of armaments, since she cannot pay us in cash. Surely it is