

KING OF GREECE PREFERS RIGHT OVER 'MIGHT'

Behind Metaxas Dictatorship
Is Dramatic Story of
Firm Ruler.

By WILLIAM PHILIP SIMMS
Scripture-Herald Foreign Editor

WASHINGTON, Aug. 7.—Behind the so-called Metaxas dictatorship in Greece is one of the most dramatic stories now being enacted upon the European stage—mostly behind the scenes.

Nine months ago the present ruler of Greece, King George II, was an exile in London. In Greece, on Oct. 10, Gen. Kon- dylis staged a coup and made him- self regent. At once he cabled the exiled monarch to return to Athens. Everything was all set for a restora- tion.

To the astonishment of a cynical world, King George wired back that he was sorry, but he couldn't ac- cept a throne thus offered. Unless at least 60 per cent of the people wanted him back, he preferred to remain where he was.

Held Plebiscite
So Gen. Kondylis held a plebiscite. The count showed 149,992 votes for the King and only 32,452 against.

On Nov. 25, 1935, King George re- turned to Athens. There, Gen. Kondylis explained the situation. In effect he said: "I've got things pretty well in hand. You sit on the throne and I'll run the country."

It was to be a camouflaged dicta- torship of a kind altogether familiar to the present-day world.

"Nothing doing!" the King replied in substance. "Greece is going to be run as a constitutional mon- archy—like England, or Denmark, or Norway or Sweden—or I'll go back to England."

Within 24 hours of his arrival, therefore, the King had broken with the man who had made possible his home-coming—an act requiring an unusual amount of intestinal fortitude.

The death of "The Thunderbolt," as Kondylis was called, what otherwise might have developed into a bad situation. The Chamber of Deputies was called into being and constitutional government got under way. But the King's difficulties had only begun.

He liberated the Army and Navy officers imprisoned after the un- successful revolt led by Venizelos; in- sisted that Republicans, Socialists, Communists and other factions be given proper representation in the government, and otherwise antago- nized the very factions who, Royalist

NEW 'STRONG MAN'



Gen. Metaxas

and Rightist, normally, were strong- est in his support.

"I shall be King of all the Hel- lenes," he said, "or I shall be King of none. I refuse to be the tool of any faction."

On March 5 his minister of war, Gen. Papagos, paid him a call. The general intimated that unless the King barred the Communists from the government, the army might have to take the situation in hand. It was a veiled threat.

"I'll give you your answer within an hour," King George replied, coolly. "Meantime, good morning."

Pressing a button, the King sent for Gen. Metaxas.

"General," he said, without pre- liminary, "are you prepared to take over the ministry of war?"

"But, your majesty, there is al- ready a minister."

"All I want from you is can you do as I ask?"

"Of course, sire, if that is your wish."

Within 45 minutes a priest had been called into the palace from a nearby church. Metaxas had been sworn in and Papagos once more stood in the royal presence.

"Your resignation," said the King, "is accepted."

In Athens last March, neutrals all told met the King was making an amazingly sincere and courageous stand against dictatorship.

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