

AMERICAN AID TO GREECE

Address of

Dean Alfange

*Past Supreme President of the
Order of Ahepa*

Reprinted from the Congressional Record
December 30, 1940

(Not printed at Government expense)



United States
Government Printing Office
Washington : 1941

285845—19888

HERBERT H. LEHMAN PAPERS
N. Y. PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTION

0009-0069-001

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—APPENDIX

Greek War Relief Drive

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. WILLIAM H. KING

OF UTAH

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

*Monday, December 30 (legislative day of Tuesday,
November 19), 1940*

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an address delivered by Dean Alfange, past supreme president of the Order of Ahepa, at the Hotel Roosevelt, New Orleans, La., on December 5, 1940, at the formal opening of the Greek war-relief drive.

My recollection is that Mr. Alfange was born in Greece and came to the United States when he was a very young boy. He has made a most excellent record since coming to the United States. He graduated with high honors from one of the leading universities of the United States, and he occupies an important place in the legal profession in the State of New York. He has been an important factor in the work of the Ahepa Society, an organization which was formed by persons of Greek descent.

It has been my privilege to know Dean Alfange for a number of years, and I take pleasure in testifying to his great ability and to his devotion to democratic principles and the maintenance of our form of government.

As Senators know, a few years ago there was considerable discussion concerning our judicial system, and the Supreme Court was attacked and defended by many citizens and by members of the bar. Mr. Alfange wrote a book entitled "The

Supreme Court and the National Will," which was published in 1937.

The late President Theodore Roosevelt provided a fund from which awards might be made for meritorious works dealing with governmental questions. The committee of judges on the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Award, after considering various writings during the year 1937, awarded the first Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Award to Dean Alfange in recognition of the merits of his book, the title of which I have just indicated. Dean Alfange's book is a scholarly discussion of the Constitution and the Supreme Court of the United States. I ask unanimous consent that the address may be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the address was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ADDRESS BY DEAN ALFANGE, PAST SUPREME PRESIDENT OF
THE ORDER OF AHEPA

Gentlemen, the Order of Ahepa, founded 18 years ago to promote Americanism and oppose subversive activities, appeals to you in behalf of Greece. Greece, mother of civilization, inspirer of poets and philosophers, is once more fighting for human dignity and human freedom. This time, we too have a vital stake in her struggle. If we abandon her, we may abandon the last chance of saving Europe from the forces of bestiality and atheism. If we help her, before the swan song of "too late" is chanted, we may help turn the tide of the war.

With our material and moral support Greece can and shall carry on. Greek genius attains sublimity when a crisis confronts it. The Hellenic will becomes indomitable when the task is prodigious. This was true of the Greeks of Marathon and Thermopylae. It is also valid of the Greeks of Argyrocastron and Koritza. Be assured, then, our efforts in behalf of Greece will not be wasted.

The Italian debacle, in the bleak Albanian hills, affirms the modern Greek as a worthy descendant of illustrious ancestors. It reveals Greek history as one continuing and impelling force, unbroken by the centuries that link its parts together. And what a vital force that history is. The gallant soldiers of Greece, the first to inflict a major land defeat upon the dreaded axis war machine, are conscious of the greatness of their history. They know that western culture was saved at Marathon by Miltiades and at Salamis by Themistocles, and they know that they are now engaged in an epic struggle to preserve it.

And what an epic struggle it is, at once romantic and tragic, full of pathos and full of poetry, and yet overwhelming in its relation to world history. Yes; the Greeks are gambling with destiny, though the stake is total. Terrific odds are against them, yet fierce determination governs their will to win. In the light of such background, one understands their resounding achievements against an enemy vastly superior in numbers and in equipment.

And how the struggle follows the pattern of ancient events. How amazingly similar are the analogies. Twenty-four hundred years ago, Xerxes, King of the Persians, marching upon Greece with the greatest army ever assembled, sent a message to Leonidas, King of Sparta, to surrender his cities or be ruined. Leonidas replied, "Molon lave," which, in ancient Greek, means, "Come and take them," and history records the rest. But Mussolini is no respecter of history. Believing, like Xerxes, that the Greeks would succumb at the sight of his legions, he demanded the immediate surrender of their islands and their cities. The reply he received was the same, "Molon lave," and now history repeats itself with remarkable fidelity. The slogans are the same, the military tactics are the same, and the motivations of world conquest and defense of ideals are the same.

But still more remarkable is the similarity of the implications. The victory of the Greeks over the Persians at Marathon saved civilization. And now the Battle of Greece may be the modern Marathon to save civilization anew. It may well be the decisive turning point of the whole war. History has a curious way of repeating its miracles. The defeat of the Persians under the King Emperor Darius in the year 490 B. C. was a miracle. Who can gainsay that another miracle is not in the offing? The Greeks believe it shall come to pass, and so, imbued with a sense of their historic mission, they proceed with stout heart and grim resolve in their inexorable forward march. And revived to inspire them are the exhortations of the poet Lord Byron:

"Snatch from the ashes of your sires
 The embers of their former fires;
 And he who in the strife expires
 Will add to theirs a name of fear
 That tyranny shall quake to hear,
 And leave his sons a hope, a fame,
 They, too, will rather die than shame;
 For freedom's battle once begun,
 Bequeath'd by bleeding sire to son,
 Though baffled oft is ever won,
 Bear witness, Greece, thy living page,
 Attest it many a deathless age."

Already the Greeks have accomplished what 1 month ago would seem incredible. Just before the Italian invasion began, the cause of the democracies was at its lowest ebb. Japan had joined the axis, Spain and Russia seemed ready to join, and the small nations of Europe, lifeless and listless, had resigned to an inevitable fate. The clouds of gloom hung heavy and all hope seemed irretrievably lost. Yet in 1 short month little Greece, impoverished and undernourished, has changed the entire complexion of the war. She shattered the prestige of Mussolini and brought his regime to the brink of collapse. She imparted to the conquered peoples of Europe

new hope and to the remaining free nations on the agenda of slaughter a fresh determination to resist. But above all she has stiffened the morale of democracy's defenders everywhere, immunizing their will to win, by proving that slaves are no match for freemen, albeit the vaunted invincibility of their machines.

If the enlightened world shall fail this opportunity, the axis may break the back of Greece, though it shall never break its spirit. For the spirit of Greece is made of the stuff that does not break. It is the yearning, the unyielding passion of men to be free. It is the epitome of all mankind's aspirations. Wherefore, the Greeks fight. And Leonidas and Pericles and Miltiades live again and a new ray of light begins to shine above the dark and dismal clouds that have gathered in the east. Who knows, that ray of light, however dim, may be the sunshine of tomorrow, to bring peace, hope, happiness, and brotherly love to a world weary with suffering, hate, and the lust for power, and torn asunder by the mad horsemen of the apocalypse. It may be the new birth of freedom, the restoration of government by law, and the reassertion of the dignity of man.

But let us not rest our case on hope. Let us rather, by our active help, nourish that hope that it may attain the stature of reality. This is a war of civilians, as well as of soldiers, of nerves as well as of guns, of morale as well as of munitions. If, by our help, we sustain the morale of those valiant people, we contribute mightily to the battle. It is our battle, too. It is the battle of democratic peoples everywhere.

Gentlemen, relief for Greece, under present circumstances, is not primarily a matter of charity or humanitarianism. It is, more essentially, a part of our plan of national security and national defense. For if Britain should collapse and Greece should perish, we in America must inherit their struggle and continue the fight to the bitter end alone, if we

prefer our own traditional way of life to Hitler's new order of servitude and bondage.

I am deeply grateful for the gracious attention that has greeted my words. If I sang the praises of Hellas too highly, I will ask you to remember that I, too, hail from that Hellenic stock whose virtues and vices know no middle ground and whose enthusiasm on occasions like this is apt to trespass across the boundaries of modesty and better judgment.

285645—19888