ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR HERBERT H. LEHMAN AT
DINNER IN HONOR OF HIS MAJESTY, KING GEORGE
II OF THE HELLENES, WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL,
NEW YORK CITY, THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 18, 1942.

Your Majesty has done us a great honor in visiting us. You
are not among strangers; you are among friends. Many of your
countrymen have made their homes here. No other citizens have sur-
passed them in loyalty, in devotion and in patriotism. All of our
people know that your Nation is a staunch friend whom we hold in
deep admiration and affection.

I welcome you heartily to the State of New York. I am honored
to bring you the greetings and the heartfelt good wishes of all of
the people of the State of New York.

For twenty-five hundred years Greece has had a rendezvous with
destiny. No country, regardless of size or material wealth, has
played a more important role in shaping the course of world civiliza-
tion than this little but indomitable Nation.

Twenty-five hundred years ago the unconquerable fighting spirit
of the ancient Greeks halted the Persians on the Fields of Marathon.
Outnumbered and outarmed, they halted and crushed the Eastern in-
vaders - more by force of character, by sheer, naked courage,
than by weight of arms.

History has acknowledged Europe's debt to Greece. The Greco-
Persian War was the most momentous conflict in European history,
but it made Europe possible. It won for Western civilization the
opportunity to develop its own economic life unburdened by alien
tribute and its own political institutions freedom domination. It
won for Greece a clear road for the first great experiment in
democracy.

Throughout the centuries the burning flame of the spirit to
live as free men has never been extinguished. The spirit of Greece
is the spirit of liberty. Despite oppression and tyranny, despite
pillage and murder and rape, the people of Greece fight on. Their
bodies may be racked and broken, yet their soul remains uncon-
querable.

I said before that Greece has had a rendezvous with destiny
for twenty-five hundred years. Its latest appointment was kept -
its latest challenge met in October of 1940. Now, as more than
two thousand years ago, it was Greece that demonstrated that the mighty could be opposed. It was Greece that exploded the myth of Axis invincibility. It was Greece that exposed the vaunted legions of Rome as cowards and braggarts. It was Greece that dared to resist the brute force of Nazi Germany, knowing full well that her men, her women and her children would be subjected to death, to torture, to rape and starvation. Greece knew it must be overrun by the mechanized might of the Nazis. It knew what would follow the German occupation. Nazi propaganda technique had already fully informed the world of the brutal, bestial treatment of the Poles, the Czechs, the Belgians, the Dutch and all other peoples who temporarily were enslaved by Nazi Germany. Greece had no illusion regarding its temporary fate. But its people chose to die as free men rather than to live as slaves.

The Star of Greece has never burned brighter or clearer than on that momentous day in October of 1940 when Greece proclaimed once more that it would fight back. On that day the powers of evil and darkness received the first major setback of this World War. On that day the world learned again that the spirit which made Greece great still lived. On that day the world learned again that freemen fight with more than guns and bullets, ships and tanks. It learned again that there is an inner flame and spirit which sustains men when all other things are gone — the spirit of liberty — the spirit of ancient and modern Greece.

The United States of America will not turn back from this crusade until freedom, justice and security has been won. The road we must traverse is long and difficult but it leads upward to the stars. Suffering and sacrifice will be great among our people, as it has been among your people, Your Majesty. But our democracy, as yours, was born in great travail; it was toughened and inspired by suffering. It has never turned back in its march to greater freedom and safety for mankind.

The people of the United States have the greatest admiration for the sturdy and brave people of Greece. We deeply sympathize with them now. We will do much more than sympathize in the months ahead. The rising tide of America's strength will help to break the chains of slavery of the Greek people and of the other liberty-loving peoples of the United Nations.

This is our message to you, Your Majesty. This is our pledge.