

**The International Response to Famine
in Occupied Greece, 1941–1944:
The Determinant Role of the
Greek-American Community**

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More than 300,000 civilians died from starvation during the Axis occupation of Greece between 1941 and 1944, a figure six times larger than the number of Greek wartime military deaths.¹ According to immediate postwar estimates, the famine that gripped Greece during the first year of the occupation would, if unabated, have killed more than two million Greeks by the end of the war.² Yet, before the Axis occupation ended, the famine was cut short and Greece's population was saved from decimation. Thanks to a bold, unprecedented humanitarian intervention, an immense international relief apparatus began to operate in occupied Greece beginning in 1942, effectively ending the famine and supplying the country's food needs during the remainder of the war.

Despite the fact that the Greek relief effort was the only international humanitarian aid project of its kind undertaken in occupied Europe, its importance has only recently drawn significant scholarly attention. In this respect, in addition to the important collaborative works promoted by Richard Clogg, the seminal studies by Lizzie Collingham and Violetta Hionidou represent major advances in our understanding of the interaction of food and strategy in the conduct of the war in Europe and beyond, and in our knowledge

of famine and relief in Greece, respectively.³ In her book, *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food*, the most comprehensive examination of the role played by food in the war, Lizzie Collingham analyzes the Greek famine in the context of Britain's blockade strategy against Axis-occupied Europe, one of the chief causes of the famine and the key obstacle to relief. She concludes that "Churchill eventually caved in to the pressure to allow relief for Greece through the blockade. The famine was on such a vast scale that it aroused American public opinion against the policy."⁴ Furthermore, Collingham notes that "food aid for Greece was the only significant exception Churchill was willing to make and the blockade against the rest of occupied Europe was enforced throughout the rest of the war."⁵ Although Collingham identifies American public opinion as the decisive factor behind Churchill's reluctant decision to reverse his wartime strategy in Greece, a concession made to no other occupied nation, she does not discuss the form and organization of this public opinion movement in America nor how it came to influence Churchill, whose indifference to the loss of human life in the pursuit of strategic goals led former American President Herbert Hoover to describe him as "a militarist of the extreme school who held that incidental starvation of women and children was justified."⁶

In *Famine and Death in Occupied Greece, 1941-1944*, the most authoritative and rigorous study of the Greek famine, Violetta Hionidou also alludes to a critical American public factor behind the relief effort in Greece, but, like Collingham, she does so without any exploration of the issue. Hionidou notes that at the outset of the relief program in Greece "payment for the foodstuffs was made by the Greek War Relief Association (GWRA), an American charity set up during the war specifically for the welfare of the Greek people."⁷ It is problematic that while Collingwood posits that public pressure emanating from the United States produced the change in Britain's wartime strategy which was necessary to make possible the implementation of an international relief campaign to end the Greek famine, and Hionidou identifies an American activist organization as the chief financier of that relief effort, neither

Collingwood nor Hionidou have anything more to state on this obviously crucial aspect of Greece's famine relief history. In fairness to both authors and their brilliant works, this narrative omission and, hence, interpretive neglect reflects the extant historiographical lacunae on the Greek famine, which has failed to accurately recognize, and sufficiently analyze, the salient role played by, not some vague "American public," but specifically by a highly organized Greek-American community in galvanizing an international humanitarian response to the famine in Greece—a central part of the Greek famine record that has remained largely unknown.⁸

The Greek-American response to the famine and humanitarian crisis in Axis-occupied Greece reflected the enduring identification of Greek immigrants and their communities with the welfare of Greece and the Greek people. The Greek-American community was not unique insofar as it, like other ethnic groups in the United States, demonstrated an ardent interest in developments that affected its homeland, but the extent to which Greek Americans turned their group concern into successful lobbying of government and policy formation was arguably without rival during World War II. Indeed, this largely ignored aspect of Greek and American wartime history points to the importance of diaspora groups in influencing the strategic calculus of belligerent Great Powers whose support for humanitarian needs was interpreted against strategic, *realpolitik* considerations. Most of the studies heretofore that have examined the famine and subsequent relief effort in occupied Greece have tended to emphasize state actors to such an extent that the more nuanced, sub-textual, but critical and decisive role of the Greek-American community and its international relief organization, the Greek War Relief Association, has been either misunderstood or altogether overlooked. This study will present a corrective to this conventional narrative by exploring Greek-American efforts to intercede in the international environment as a non-state, non-governmental actor on behalf of humanitarian imperatives in Greece during the Second World War.⁹

The Establishment of the Greek War Relief Association

The same day that Mussolini launched his abortive invasion of Greece on October 28, 1940, the Greek-language media in the United States urged the country's half-million Greek Americans to rise to the support of their homeland.¹⁰ Within hours following newspaper releases and radio broadcasts reporting Italy's attack, an outpouring of concern drove Greek Americans to spontaneously converge in church basements, society halls, coffeehouses, and schoolrooms in the large and small Greek communities scattered across the United States. Just as quickly, Greek-American voluntary associations circulated calls for meetings to bring together members of all community organizations. Little time was wasted in organizing such efforts on a local level. On October 29, for example, representatives from forty Greek-American organizations in New York met, elected a coordinating committee, and established an agenda to unite all Greek-American organizations in New York for the purpose of sending aid to Greece. Similar developments as those in New York took place in other parts of the United States, especially in metropolitan areas, such as Boston, Chicago, and Detroit, where particularly large Greek-American communities were concentrated. While working to coordinate their efforts with other organizations, several groups, especially *topika somateia* (local aid societies), also launched independent efforts to send help, in the form of money, to their communities of origin in Greece. Setting an example that other organizations followed, in the first ten days after the outbreak of hostilities between Greece and Italy, immigrants in New York from Kastoria, through their charitable organization *Omonoia*, established the National Greek Relief Fund of Kastorians and collected 50,000 dollars as the first installment of a general fund earmarked to aid their native city near the Greek-Italian lines. The Society of Kastorian Jews in Manhattan donated the first 4,000 dollars of this amount, while more money poured in from Kastorian fur workers in New York's Garment District, who pledged one day's collective wages to the effort.¹¹

Despite the energetic efforts of the Kastorians and others, it

soon became apparent that a national structure would be necessary to coordinate any large-scale relief campaign. Accordingly, and in response to a call by Archbishop Athenagoras, the head of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, hundreds of representatives from Greek communities and voluntary associations convened in New York on November 7. Guided by Athenagoras' proposals, the representatives agreed to merge their efforts under one Panhellenic and Pan-American organization to be known as the Greek War Relief Association (GWRA). The representatives established the basis for the executive administration of the new organization, elected the influential Hollywood magnate, Spyros Skouras, as national chairman, resolved to adopt a policy of political non-partisanship, and launched an immediate drive for 10,000,000 dollars to aid Greece.¹²

Two days following the meeting that established the GWRA, the state government of New York officially recognized the GWRA as an incorporated organization, and shortly thereafter the association was chartered as a humanitarian relief group by the United States Department of State and legally empowered to raise and distribute funds for the relief of Greece.¹³ Immediately, the nationwide networks of organization and communication developed earlier by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, major voluntary organizations such as the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), the Greek American Progressive Association, and other bodies mobilized themselves to support the GWRA.¹⁴ Archbishop Athenagoras issued an encyclical on November 11 that was read and distributed in all of the approximately 350 Greek Orthodox parishes in the United States, which announced the formation and goals of the GWRA. He followed this formal announcement with personal appeals to community leaders to promote the GWRA. Athenagoras, in fact, urged the Archdiocese's hierarchy, clergy, and parish councils to put aside all other projects and devote themselves and their communities entirely to the relief cause. Underlining his own commitment to this effort, Athenagoras placed the faculty and students of the Holy Cross Theological School in Pomfret Center, Connecticut, in the service of the GWRA, while

effectively transforming the Archdiocese's offices in New York into an organizing center for the GWRA.¹⁵

Working in concert with Athenagoras, Spyros Skouras embarked upon a nationwide speaking tour of Greek-American communities to promote the GWRA. The greatest source of community activism at the crucial local level of organization was generated by the AHEPA, which Skouras acknowledged provided the GWRA with most of its leadership. The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association was established in 1922 by a small group of Greek immigrant entrepreneurs in Atlanta, Georgia. The organization was created to serve as a community bulwark against the then powerful American nativist movement, which targeted Greeks along with other Mediterranean and East European groups for prejudice and exclusion because of their supposed racial and cultural inferiority to Anglo-Saxon Americans. The AHEPA's official message of group survival and prosperity through middle-class acculturation, but not assimilation, appealed to many Greek immigrants. By the late 1920s, the organization had expanded to create a nationwide web of chapters, making it the largest and most omnipresent institutional feature, after the Greek Orthodox Church, in the life of most Greek-American communities. In short, the AHEPA's well-organized chain of chapters, coupled with the wide constellation of Greek Orthodox parishes integrated into a single Archdiocese, provided the GWRA with an essentially preexisting nationwide structural network that it could graft itself onto. Furthermore, the parishes and voluntary associations making up the formal structures of the Greek-American community contained virtually unlimited and diverse human resources that enthusiastically lent themselves to the service of the GWRA.¹⁶

In terms of its organizational structure, the GWRA operated through a hierarchy of chairmen and committees, each working at different levels of responsibility. In ascending order, committees operated on a community, district, state, regional and, ultimately, a national level.¹⁷ By November 19, all the members of the national executive committee had been appointed to their posts, and a nationwide system of administration was in place. The national

executive committee included Spyros Skouras, the national president, Archbishop Athenagoras, the national chairman, George Vournas, who was national vice-president for the GWRA and also vice-president of the AHEPA, and the prominent American philanthropist, Harold S. Vanderbilt, who served as honorary national chairman of the GWRA. The GWRA's national headquarters was located in Manhattan offices donated to the organization by the City Farmer's Bank of New York. Answering to the national executive leadership, nine regional directors and their committees operated out of their respective headquarters in metropolitan New York, upper New York state, Boston, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, San Francisco, New Orleans, and Dayton, Ohio. Most of the regional directors were also leading members of the AHEPA, including AHEPA President Van Nomikos, who led the GWRA's important Chicago-based operations.¹⁸

Not surprisingly, the organization of the GWRA paralleled considerably the AHEPA's administrative structure throughout the United States. Nonetheless, in preparing its organization and fund-raising tactics the GWRA leadership also looked outside the Greek-American community for inspiration. In this regard, the Finnish-American community's mobilization and successful campaign to deliver humanitarian relief to Finland during the 1939–1940 Soviet-Finnish Winter War, a conflict in many ways analogous to the Italo-Greek War, provided the GWRA with a working organizational model in the form of the so-called Finnish Relief Fund. Moreover, the recent, successful example of the Finnish Americans—an immigrant community that was much smaller and less prosperous than the Greek-American community—gave added confidence to Greek Americans that they could achieve their relief goals.¹⁹

The GWRA successfully attracted many prominent mainstream Americans into its membership, which enhanced the organization's public image. The Association's Greek-American leadership made a deliberate effort to bring celebrities and prominent community leaders from outside the Greek-American community into its ranks in order to promote public awareness and support for the

organization and its cause. This initiative was largely successful, drawing many notable philanthropists, academics, and performers, into the GWRA who, in turn, lent their influence to the promotion of Greek relief.²⁰

In this particular effort, the GWRA benefited immeasurably from the business assets at the disposal of Spyros Skouras. As president of 20th Century Fox Films, Spyros Skouras, along with his brother George, who would become head of United Artists Theatres, wielded enormous clout in the entertainment world, in general, and the motion picture industry, in particular. Skouras was not reluctant to commit his considerable influence to the service of the GWRA. Using Hollywood's powerful studio system to his advantage, Skouras enlisted scores of major film stars and hundreds of entertainers and other artists to contribute their celebrity to the Greek cause. Thanks to Skouras, film openings and other highly publicized Hollywood events became occasions for GWRA fund-drives, while GWRA rallies benefited from the participation and support of entertainment personalities. This policy, which aimed to associate respected, popular, and patriotic American public figures with the GWRA, was also intended to produce positive American attitudes towards Greece and its need for humanitarian aid. Broader American involvement in the GWRA was, therefore, important in that it helped promote Greek-American objectives while framing those interests as humanitarian and not parochial. Furthermore, in the view of Greek Americans, the participation of non-Greek American elites in the GWRA marked a social watershed for Greeks as an ethnic community.²¹ The willingness of large numbers of influential Americans to work alongside Greek Americans for the benefit of a Greek cause was regarded as a critical threshold in the Greek-American community's acceptance and respectability. These facts further emboldened Greek Americans to act freely and openly in a public space that until recently would have viewed their actions on behalf of Greece as a sign of questionable loyalty to the United States.²²

Although celebrities, high profile events, and media coverage in support of Greek war relief were instrumental in building public

sentiment for the Greek cause, grassroots efforts within the Greek-American community were the most crucial factor behind the GWRA's success. The initiatives undertaken to gather collect and other resources for relief were as diverse and varied as the Greek-American community itself. These projects were simply too vast in number to identify herein, but some deserve mention as representative examples of both their resourcefulness and the extent to which the relief cause captured the attention and energies of the Greek-American community writ large. Beginning in November, local parish communities throughout the United States met to hold one-hour pledge-drives, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for the GWRA. Inspired by the example of students at the St. Demetrius Greek Orthodox School of Jamaica, New York, who in December donated their candy and allowance money to the GWRA, the roughly 500 Greek-language schools in the United States launched local neighborhood and community fund-raising campaigns.²³ Seeking donations from passers-by, and dressed often in traditional folk costumes, Greek-American schoolchildren and older youth from the AHEPA's junior auxiliaries became a regular presence on busy downtown street corners throughout the country's cities.²⁴ At Columbia University, Greek-American college students formed a fund-raising organization for the benefit of the GWRA, and similar groups who emerged on other campuses throughout the country matched its success.²⁵ Across the United States, sewing centers were established by the Greek Orthodox women's philanthropic organization, the Philoptochos Society, in which women and girls produced tens of thousands of pieces of clothing for Greek civilians. In a move that would be repeated in other cities, the members of the Greek Restaurateurs Association of New York pledged to make weekly donations to the GWRA, to use their premises to publicize the GWRA's cause, and to solicit patron donations.²⁶ Greek Americans owned over 40,000 restaurants, coffeehouses, confectioneries, and other food service businesses in the United States patronized by millions of customers daily, making these ubiquitous establishments ideally positioned to market the Greek relief cause.²⁷ In addition, the GWRA gained consid-

erable public attention through national and local press reports, advertisements, and community-sponsored radio broadcasts and cultural events.²⁸

Regardless of their form or location, fund-raising efforts were subject to standardized GWRA's regulations, which emphasized uniform management and accounting methods, transparency, and the highest ethical standards. During the war and into the liberation period, the GWRA acquired a well-earned reputation with the United States government for uncompromising integrity and efficiency. Indeed, underscoring the GWRA's efficiency and demonstrating the Greek-American community's ability to work effectively in the broader organizational context of international humanitarian assistance, an early wartime study by the Department of State concluded that the Association's operating expenses were the lowest among all the many American organizations involved in humanitarian relief in 1940–1941.²⁹

In a matter of days following its establishment, the GWRA and its cause had been embraced by every virtual segment of the Greek-American community. Indicative of both the scope and intensity of the Diaspora mobilization, by November 15 over 350 Greek Orthodox parish communities and over 2,000 Greek-American voluntary associations had joined the GWRA. Within a few months of its founding, the GWRA had organized 964 local chapters.³⁰ These organizational accomplishments were important insofar as they enabled Greek Americans to achieve their primary objective, specifically, the collection and dispatch of aid for Greece. In the five-month period between the Italian attack and the subsequent German invasion of Greece in April 1941, the GWRA succeeded in sending significant aid to Greece. By the end of November, the GWRA's national executive committee in New York had established a central committee in Athens, led by the United States' ambassador to Greece, Lincoln MacVeagh, to administer services and distribute aid in Greece primarily through the Greek Red Cross.³¹ Prior to the German occupation of Athens, the GWRA had raised approximately 4,700,000 dollars, eighty percent of which had been cabled to its central committee in Athens.³² These funds were used

for a range of philanthropic assistance channeled carefully to civilians; such aid included the distribution of food, heating fuel, clothing, medical services, and financial support to distressed families of slain soldiers. Under Ambassador MacVeagh, the GWRA central committee continued to distribute aid until the last possible moments before the Germans entered Athens on April 27.³³

Occupation, Famine, and Early Relief Efforts

No amount of humanitarian aid could save Greece from German aggression. Intervening to rescue Mussolini from his humiliating fiasco in Greece and in order to secure his Balkan flank before the invasion of the Soviet Union, Hitler invaded Greece and Yugoslavia in early April 1941. Overwhelmed by the combined Axis armies, Greece was overrun and occupied by German, Italian, and Bulgarian forces. Even before the occupation began, Britain imposed a naval blockade against Greece's ports and sea-lanes.³⁴ The blockade was intended to close Greece's shipping lanes and prevent their use for the German war effort. The implementation of the blockade soon led to famine in Greece.³⁵

Greece was a net importer of wheat and relied on foreign sources for more than one-third of its food needs. The Axis occupation and the subsequent British blockade ended the normal means of securing foodstuffs vital to Greece's survival. This situation was worsened by Greece's anemic grain harvest of 1940, which produced roughly one-third less than the prewar average. The Axis expropriation of food stocks intensified the crisis, and the division of the country into Bulgarian, German, and Italian occupation zones disrupted the prewar systems of supply and distribution of food. Soon after the start of Axis occupation these conditions combined to strain Greece's already acutely diminished resources to the breaking point.³⁶

Reports of food shortages in Greece appeared in the Greek-American press in June 1941, and predictions of famine surfaced as early as July.³⁷ Rather than discouraging Greek Americans from

pursuing efforts to deliver aid, the Axis occupation magnified the need to provide immediate relief to the Greek population. In short, the serious deterioration of conditions in Greece drove Greek Americans to expand their relief objectives.³⁸ The Greek-language press led the discussion in the Greek-American community on the widening crisis in Axis-occupied Greece. The press boldly asserted that Britain's blockade should and could be changed to accommodate the delivery and distribution of food to the threatened Greek population. The leading figure in this movement was Basil Vlavianos, the publisher and editor of the influential New York Greek-language daily, *Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald).³⁹ Through a multitude of fiery public appearances, as well as countless editorials, Vlavianos called for a lifting of Britain's blockade against Axis-occupied Greece. Vlavianos insisted that Greece's severe food shortage, in combination with the country's staunch resistance against the Axis, demanded that Allied strategists find some means of reopening the vital shipping lanes to Greece. Vlavianos implored Britain to not only alter its total blockade policy, but also to lend all available support in dispatching food and other humanitarian aid to Greece.⁴⁰

Encouraged by Vlavianos and other community leaders, Greek Americans began a grassroots lobbying campaign. Through mass dispatch of telegrams and letters to their elected representatives in Washington, the Greek-American community worked to enlist the support of the United States government to apply pressure on Britain to alter its blockade policy against Axis-occupied Greece.⁴¹ Meanwhile, working behind the scenes, the GWRA had learned from its contacts with the Greek government-in-exile that Britain had informed the latter that it was in principle willing to allow relief supplies to be sent to Greece from Turkey. Britain had previously agreed that neutral countries within the strategic blockade zone could send supplies to occupied countries in the same region. Turkey, an official neutral, which fell in the larger British blockade zone, was already supplying the Axis with resources for profit. London thus saw no reason to forbid some of these supplies from going to the Greek population. However, no additional resources from

outside the blockade zone could be shipped to Greece, and Britain was determined to silence any demands to lift the blockade. Armed with this information, Spyros Skouras, after outlining a relief strategy with the help of Norman Davis, the executive director of the American Red Cross, met with representatives of the Department of State on August 21, 1941.⁴² With the backing of Davis and Ambassador MacVeagh, Skouras presented a proposal to the Department of State's Division of Near Eastern Affairs for a trial shipment of wheat to Greece. Skouras' plan called for the GWRA to charter a neutral vessel, load it with wheat in Turkey, the United States, or any other willing country, and dispatch it to Greece. In order to insure proper distribution of the intended cargo, the GWRA would send a representative oversight group to accompany the relief goods. If the proposed pilot shipment proceeded satisfactorily, the GWRA would follow it with others. In addition, Skouras' plan envisioned the assistance of the Department of State in securing from the belligerents assurances of safe passage for the relief ship.⁴³

With the understanding that neither the American Red Cross nor the United States government would be directly involved in the operation, the Division of Near Eastern Affairs recommended Skouras' proposal and forwarded it to Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Welles for official approval. The GWRA plan was endorsed for both humanitarian and diplomatic reasons. The State Department's intelligence sources had concluded that the food crisis was more severe in Greece than in any other occupied country, and that it was commonly viewed that Britain, and secondarily the United States, had a distinct obligation to save a country in the Allied camp from famine. Moreover, the Division of Near Eastern Affairs reported that the failure to send aid to Greece had created a perception in the Turkish government that Britain had cynically abandoned Greece after Athens had served its purposes to the fullest and was no longer useful to the Allied war effort. Consequently, analysts in the Near East Division concluded that as long as the Greek crisis was met with indifference by Britain, Ankara would not be receptive to any overtures from London to enter the war on the side of the Allies.⁴⁴

Given the Allies' hopes that Turkey might eventually enter the war on their side, Turkey's interest in the Greek situation created an opportunity for helping Greece. With encouragement from Washington to put into practice its willingness in principle to allow some aid to enter Greece, London accepted a plan whereby food purchased in Turkey by a British commercial corporation acting on the behalf of, and funded by, the GWRA and the Greek government-in-exile would be shipped to Greece and distributed under the supervision of the International Red Cross (IRC).⁴⁵ While the British embassy in Ankara began negotiations with the Turkish government for a trial program of aid to Greece, and as approval for such a plan languished in the Turkish Ministry of Commerce for more than a month, the GWRA began transferring funds to the International Red Cross in Geneva and to its own representatives recently sent to Turkey from the United States. These funds, beginning with an installment of 300,000 dollars sent to the IRC in Geneva, were to be used for the purchase of foodstuffs, vitamin concentrates, and medical supplies, as well as for the cost of the materials' transport to Greece.⁴⁶ Preparations for cargo distribution were entrusted to the IRC Committee in Athens. Acting officially under instructions from Geneva, and in concert with GWRA planning, the Athens IRC sought the advice of the occupation authorities in Athens and, with their consent, appointed an administrative committee of prominent Athenian philanthropists to deal with the logistical needs pertinent to the distribution of the intended cargo.⁴⁷ The IRC also formed an executive steering committee consisting of representatives of the German, Greek, and Italian Red Cross organizations.⁴⁸ In a meeting held on October 21, 1941, the executive committee formulated a management plan for food distribution based on community and institutional needs. Moreover, the committee garnered assurances of cooperation from the occupation authorities.⁴⁹

Shortly after the executive committee outlined its relief agenda, a Turkish steamship, the *Kurtulus*, or Liberation (fortuitously also the name of a predominantly Greek-inhabited district of Istanbul), arrived from Istanbul and anchored off Piraeus. The unloading and

distribution of the *Kurtulus*' cargo began on October 29. Three days prior, the occupation censors had authorized a press release, which announced: "the generosity of American relief organizations has made it possible to make distribution among the Greek population of large food supplies which have been purchased and transported from abroad."⁵⁰ The GWRA was not mentioned in the statement and the Greek public apparently remained unaware of the organization's role in the delivery of the aid shipment.⁵¹ Nonetheless, the occupation authorities honored their pledge to the IRC by aiding them in the transfer of the foodstuffs. As an unprecedented operation in exceedingly precarious circumstances, the GWRA's shipment was a remarkable success. Almost 3,000,000 pounds of food had been sent to, and distributed in, occupied Greece without Axis interference.⁵²

Once Allied intelligence reports confirmed the occupation forces had not seized any of its cargo, the *Kurtulus* was dispatched on a second relief voyage. After taking on another 3,000,000 pounds of food purchased in Turkey, the *Kurtulus* arrived in Piraeus on November 10.⁵³ Thus began a regular pattern whereby food and medical shipments arrived in Greece during the early winter of 1941-1942. The *Kurtulus* made several voyages between October 1941 and January 1942, carrying over 6,700 tons of food to Piraeus before it sank in the Sea of Marmara on its sixth voyage. A replacement ship, the *Dumlupmar*, was sent on two more voyages, delivering an additional 2,400 tons of food to Greece through March 1942. During the winter of 1941-1942, the IRC established 450 feeding centers located primarily in the Athens-Piraeus area, which fed approximately 150,000 people daily. While improving its operations in Athens, the IRC began to develop plans for an expansion of its activities to other parts of the country.⁵⁴

The Famine as an International Political Problem

The IRC's preparations for extending aid operations were, however, soon disabled by the Turkish government. Although Ankara

had initially given assurances that it was prepared to sell 50,000 tons of food for Greek relief, excluding wheat, Turkish military officials soon began to restrict the export of all foods. Subsequently, Ankara announced, in early December 1941, that because its own food reserves were insufficient for the winter, it would be forced to reduce and ultimately cut off its supply of food to Greece in January 1942, or soon thereafter.⁵⁵ In stark contrast to the Turkish government's calculated approach to the food scarcity crisis, prominent members of the Turkish press insisted that Turkey had a moral obligation to aid the Greek people in their humanitarian disaster. Editorials reminded the Turkish public that following the major earthquake of 1939, which demolished Erzincan in eastern Anatolia, their displaced countrymen had benefited enormously from a massive and generous outpouring of humanitarian aid from both Greece and the Greek-American community—indeed, more than 700,000 Greeks, one-tenth of the country's population had contributed directly to relief programs to help Turks made homeless or injured by the earthquake.⁵⁶ Unaffected by moral arguments, the Turkish government affirmed its decision to suspend aid to Greece and insisted that "that the only answer was to obtain aid from the richer countries, Britain and the US, which had given abundant promises."⁵⁷

Confronted by this new obstacle to relief, the GWRA requested the approval of both the British and United States governments to use a source other than Turkey for the purchase of food for Greece. London, however, objected to any shipment of goods to Greece if the relief materials did not originate in Turkey.⁵⁸ This position was, of course, a function of Britain's strategic blockade policy, and it also represented an adroit subtext and secondary objective of that policy. Once London acquiesced to Washington's insistence to allow food to be shipped from Turkey to Greece, British strategic planners worked to take advantage of this small-scale exception to their overall blockade. There is no evidence to indicate that London would have allowed food to be sent to Greece were it not for pressure from Washington, which was acting largely at the behest of the GWRA. Quite to the contrary, British inaction before the

application of American pressure on this front would suggest that humanitarian imperatives did not figure prominently, if at all, in London's approach to the Greek problem.⁵⁹ Consequently, when London agreed to permit the shipment of relief supplies from Turkey to Greece, it did so not only to placate Washington, on which it depended to sustain its own war effort, but as an acceptable application of a strategic contingency. In short, Britain saw the GWRA plan involving Turkey as a means to reduce Ankara's surplus resources. More precisely, the British Foreign Office and Ministry of Economic Warfare were concerned that Turkey, one of Germany's largest economic partners outside the theatre of war and Berlin's chief supplier of chromium, indispensable to Germany's steel armaments production, was contributing more to the German war effort than its official neutrality offered to the Allies. As a result, London accepted arrangements that diverted any Turkish resources, including food, to Allied nationals who would consume supplies that might otherwise become available to the Axis.⁶⁰ Having to some extent accomplished this aim, at least in the short-term, the British were now apparently indifferent to renewed pleas for direct aid to Greece.

Meanwhile, conditions in Greece reached startling levels by mid-winter 1941–1942. In late December and early January, the German military authorities recorded 300 deaths per day from starvation in Athens. The IRC reported a higher number of approximately 400 deaths per day in Athens and on some days as high as 1,000 in Attica. Even before the beginning of winter, the American and Greek-American press were reporting the onset of wide-scale famine in Athens and other urban areas, the islands, and parts of the countryside.⁶¹ In response, the GWRA intensified the urgency of its demand that food be sent to Greece immediately.⁶² Due, in large part, to the ongoing and concerted Greek-American lobbying campaign, as well as mounting intelligence reports confirming the severity of the crisis, the United States government began to show signs of serious concern over the situation in Greece. Moreover, President Roosevelt and the Department of State began to express political misgivings about Britain's blockade policy. Apart from the

risk of alienating Ankara, the blockade gave German propaganda an unparalleled opportunity to attack Britain for the apparently mercenary abandonment of a gravely imperiled ally.⁶³ Sufficiently motivated by these facts to intervene on the behalf of Greece, on December 3, 1941, the United States government invited London to supply information about its blockade of Greece and to confirm or deny allegations of responsibility for the famine. The British did not reply to the request and were asked again on January 5, 1942, to provide a response to the United States government's inquiry. After more than a week, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden answered with a message claiming to exonerate Britain from any role in, or responsibility for, the famine. Eden stated, furthermore, that London's actions were also being performed on the behalf of the Greek government-in-exile. Eden's assertions, however, appeared disingenuous, for the Greek government-in-exile had earlier dispatched a series of desperate pleas to the GWRA and Washington, asking the United States to take direct action to alleviate the famine.⁶⁴ When confronted with this contradiction, Eden simply insisted that it was not Britain's obligation but Germany's responsibility, as an occupying power, to care for the welfare of the Greek people. Eden made it clear that Britain was not prepared, as his government saw it, to in effect help the Germans cope with their occupation problems.

Eden's belated defense of the British blockade had no impact on the United States government's decision to support the GWRA position. In fact, on December 31, 1941, American Secretary of State Cordell Hull had notified President Roosevelt that he should speak directly to Churchill and persuade him of the merit of lifting the blockade. Hull recommended that the United States government allow the GWRA to transfer funds to the IRC in Geneva for food and medical supplies to be sent to Greece. The IRC apparatus in Athens would again supervise distribution of relief supplies, some of which the Turkish Red Crescent had offered to contribute to the project.⁶⁵

Pressure against the blockade mounted in early January 1942, when the British Minister of State for the Middle East in Cairo, Sir

Oliver Lyttelton, a man as close to the Greek problem as perhaps any British official, expressed support for the GWRA's demands to lift the blockade.⁶⁶ Lyttelton was not unfamiliar with the GWRA. In June 1941, the Association had established a liaison committee in Egypt that distributed financial support to Greek refugees in the Middle East and helped to coordinate other aid projects with the National Greek Committee of Egypt, the Greek Egyptian community's wartime organization. Lyttelton's mission in Cairo had already benefited from both the GWRA and the National Greek Committee. In fact, the National Greek Committee carried out the first actual relief operation in occupied Greece. In circumvention of its own blockade policy, London permitted the Greeks in Egypt, with financial and organizational support from the GWRA, to hire neutral Swiss ships to deliver food, medical supplies, and even medical personnel from Alexandria to Crete for a limited period under IRC supervision and with German approval. The recipients of this first humanitarian intervention in occupied Greece, that took place in June 1941, were not primarily Cretan civilians, but, instead, the thousands of wounded and captured British and Commonwealth forces on Crete that had not yet been transferred to prison-of-war camps in Central Europe.⁶⁷ All the same, on January 9, 1942, Lyttelton pleaded with Churchill personally to end the blockade, opining that the extreme suffering of the Greek people would have serious consequences and that history would judge the British harshly for their policy. Furthermore, he warned Churchill that the British abandonment of the Greeks would rupture their historic friendship with Britain and make them susceptible to communism, a fear that would increasingly overshadow and drive British policy towards wartime Greece.⁶⁸

In an effort to quell the unwelcome scrutiny and criticism that its blockade was producing, the British government announced on January 12, 1942, that, pending the availability of transport ships, which were in scarce supply, it would send 8,000 tons of wheat to Greece as a first installment towards relief. Nonetheless, London also stated that the blockade would remain in force.⁶⁹ This pronouncement satisfied none of the parties interested in bring-

ing relief to Greece and it produced a storm of protest from the Greek-American community. Finally acknowledging, on February 16, that the blockade policy was no longer politically viable, Churchill accepted the proposal to permit the renewal of major aid shipments to Greece and to allow them to originate from sources outside of the blockade zone. Accordingly, London notified Washington, on February 22, that it was willing to lift its blockade to relief convoys.⁷⁰ After securing the consent of both the American and British governments, the GWRA prepared the first relief shipment that would go to Greece directly from the United States.⁷¹ With donations from the American Red Cross and the Medical Surgical Relief Committee of America, the GWRA chartered the Swedish vessel *Sicilia* to transport relief supplies to Greece. Loaded with over 2,500,000 pounds of food and 9 tons of medicines, the *Sicilia* left New York for Piraeus in late March.⁷²

Operation Blockade, or the "Swedish Plan," and Sustained Relief

Although the *Sicilia* mission, and dispatch of another ship chartered by the GWRA, the *Industria*, helped to alleviate the food crisis in Greece in the short-term, it was obviously insufficient to end the famine. The GWRA leadership understood that the success of any long-term strategic relief program would require the cooperation of the belligerent governments and a coordinated international effort. After considerable preparation, the GWRA submitted to the Department of State a proposal for a relief plan, which it dubbed "Operation Blockade." At its center, Operation Blockade proposed the use of a neutral party to convey cargoes of food, medicine, and clothing from the United States or Canada to Greece, provided that safe passage could be assured from the belligerent nations. Following deliberations with President Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of State Welles, and Red Cross Chairman Davis, the GWRA leadership expanded the outline of its proposal by adopting the former individuals' suggestions, which emphasized the importance of a

neutral international commission within Greece, presumably the IRC, which would administer the distribution of relief.⁷³ While waiting for a response from London to its Operation Blockade proposal, which now enjoyed the backing of Washington, the GWRA set aside funds for the cost of the plan's initial implementation. The GWRA also used this period to coordinate planning with its Greek-Canadian counterpart, the Greek War Relief Fund (GWRP), and to solicit donations of wheat and other foodstuffs from various Allied and neutral governments, as well as beginning negotiations with the representatives of a commercial fleet of Swedish vessels for their service as relief transport ships.⁷⁴

Britain accepted the outline of Operation Blockade in principle, but concern over the potential repercussions and troubling political precedent that lifting the blockade under American, let alone indirect Greek-American pressure, might pose, led London to insist that a neutral party such as Sweden appear as the originator of the relief initiative.⁷⁵ The GWRA accepted London's conditions and agreed to defer public recognition to Stockholm and effectively participate in a face-saving ruse for Churchill's government.⁷⁶ Thus, on March 2, the British and United States ambassadors in Stockholm, Hershel Johnson and Victor Mallet, respectively, met with the Swedish Foreign Minister Erik Boheman and Sweden's Prince Karl to discretely invite the Swedish government to undertake the relief scheme, which would become known to the public as the "Swedish Plan." Boheman, who had already received a memorandum from Mallet outlining the proposal and conditions, and Prince Karl, the chief of the Swedish Red Cross immediately reacted favorably to the plan. In order to promote the illusion that Sweden was the sole architect of the relief plan, London insisted that the Germans should not be made aware of the origins of the initiative. The Swedes themselves were apparently not informed of the GWRA as a factor in the formulation of the plan.⁷⁷

Stockholm accepted the proposal, and Foreign Minister Boheman presented the relief scheme to the Axis on March 19. The Italians responded in favor of the "Swedish Plan" plan on April 7, and Rome's acceptance was followed by a positive reply from Berlin

on April 27. Implementation of the plan, however, was forestalled by differences over the structure of the commission that would preside over the relief apparatus in occupied Greece. After several months of complicated wrangling between Germany and Italy on one side, Britain on the other side, and the IRC and the Swedish foreign ministry in the middle, the impasse was broken in August 1942.⁷⁸ Consequently, that same month Stockholm officially established the so-called Joint Relief Commission in Athens, made-up of Swedish and Swiss personnel, and led by the Swedish national Paul E. A. Mohn, who would be succeeded by Emil Sandstrom in March 1943, which began implementation of the relief plan originally envisioned by the GWRA. Steadily extending its network of local committees and relief distribution throughout most of Greece, the Joint Relief Commission operated with considerable success during the remainder of the occupation and in the first several months after liberation in October 1944.⁷⁹

Sustained relief in Greece would not have been possible without the kind of regular shipments of relief supplies that the GWRA and GWRF made possible, beginning in August 1942. Carried by three Swedish vessels, and containing 15,000 tons of wheat donated by the Canadian government, as well as 50 tons of medical supplies which the GWRA and GWRF jointly purchased from the American Red Cross, the first of these aid shipments left from Montreal for Greece on August 7, 1942.⁸⁰ Thereafter, relief cargoes originating in Canada, the United States, and Argentina were transported on a monthly basis by a fleet of initially 8, later 12, and ultimately, by the summer of 1944, 16 Swedish vessels.⁸¹ From August 1942, the relief project delivered a minimum monthly shipment of 15,000 tons of wheat, 3,000 tons of dried vegetables, and 100 tons of powdered milk to Greece.⁸² Ambulances and transport vehicles were also included in some of the shipments. The GWRA and the Greek government-in-exile paid the costs for the relief supplies and their shipment through 1942. Helping to sustain this enormous humanitarian initiative, beginning in January 1943, the United States government assumed most of the costs for the relief shipments, excluding the 15,000 tons of wheat, which, subsequent to

persuasive appeals made to Ottawa by the GWRA and the GWRF, were donated by the Canadian government every month to the relief effort.⁸³ By March 1945, the GWRA had dispatched 101 relief convoys to Greece, which delivered approximately 647,000 tons of wheat and other foodstuffs, 3,000 tons of clothing, and 20,000 tons of medicines and other relief goods.⁸⁴ In financial terms, the Greek-American led relief effort delivered to Greece supplies valued at more than 100,000,000 dollars.⁸⁵ Through this humanitarian intervention, the GWRA's Operation Blockade prevented a repetition of the catastrophic winter famine of 1941-1942 during the rest of the occupation and the winter immediately following liberation. Thus, the Greek-American community's humanitarian concern for Greece, the political corollary of which was the concerted lobbying for a change in Allied policy, helped produce the conditions necessary for ending the famine in occupied Greece.⁸⁶

Conclusions and Implications

In the final analysis, apart from the single-minded commitment of Greek Americans, the GWRA was successful in its effort to end the famine in Greece because it was equipped with enormous structural resources. The GWRA possessed significant organizational advantages in the form of local, regional, and national networks that had developed as integral institutions within the Greek-American community before the Second World War. In short, by marshaling the Greek Orthodox Church, voluntary associations, and other organizations, the GWRA was able to combine the Diaspora's diverse community networks into a formidable national movement with, ultimately, international clout. The structures of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and the AHEPA, for example, which had evolved into impressive institutions during the 1920s and 1930s, helped prepare the Greek-American community for successful activism in the 1940s, and the GWRA propelled that activism by effectively consolidating the various grassroots organizations into an influential national pressure group.⁸⁷

The energies directed at providing relief to famine-stricken Greece necessarily took into account not only the financial and organizational needs attendant on such intervention, but the complex political and diplomatic challenges involved in such an effort as well. Undaunted by seemingly insurmountable obstacles, the effectiveness of the GWRA as a lobbying force helped to produce a level of success that no similar organization achieved during the war. In other words, the GWRA effectively compelled the belligerent states to alter their policies in the interests of humanitarian imperatives. Thanks to the GWRA, Greece became the only occupied country in Europe to benefit from a large-scale, prolonged relief program planned and originating in the Allied camp.⁸⁸ The involvement of the Greek-American community in the international effort to relieve Greece from famine had been enormous and decisive. Clearly, at no point since the Diaspora's central role in the development of a modern Greek national identity, had Greeks outside Greece been such a crucial factor in the life of the Greek nation as was the Greek-American community during the Second World War.

In the pursuit of relief goals, Greek Americans came to realize that they could affect international conditions. Encouraged by their success, and conscious of their potential to influence official policy through organized advocacy, Greek Americans turned their organizations into a force for the lobbying of government. Greek national pride was invoked with great urgency during the Italo-Greek War, and guided by their own sense of nationalist vigilance during the occupation period, Greek Americans, through domestic lobbying, as well as the application of political pressure and the use of international structures, prevailed upon Allies and Axis alike, directly and indirectly, to allow the delivery of humanitarian relief to Greece. To what extent Greeks or others in Europe ever became aware of the central, driving role played by the Greek-American community in putting into motion and sustaining this international relief effort is largely moot. What is clear is the fact that the Greek-American community demonstrated both remarkable initiative and political acumen in lobbying on behalf of Greece, all without the induce-

ment, control, or involvement of Greek officialdom and the Greek state. This fact points to a major transformation in the relationship between Greece and the Greek diaspora in America produced by the wartime relief experience.

By independently initiating the championing of humanitarian relief, concurrent with the collapse of an official Greek authority, the Greek-American community reaffirmed its connection to Greece while simultaneously reframing the power balance between Greece and the Greek diaspora, or the Greek center and periphery. The Greek-American community demonstrated that it could act independently and effectively for the collective national good, without direction and, or, permission from the homeland. This realization and the shifting balance of power or, at least, redistribution of influence between center and periphery, created the conditions for a gradual transformation of the relationship between Greece and Greek America. Of course, it is not clear whether from Athens' perspective the GWRA experience implied a Greek-American capacity and right to autonomous action by the periphery on behalf of the center. In many ways, this is a question that remains unresolved.

Notes

¹Neither national nor local wartime mortality statistics for deaths due directly and indirectly to famine are completely reliable. Some postwar Greek estimates place the figure of famine deaths as high as 600,000, while before the war's end the BBC cited the figure of 500,000. The International Red Cross, which commissioned its own study, estimated that approximately 250,000 people had died from famine between 1941 and 1943. For the analytic methods which inform the critical figure of 300,000 deaths, see the authoritative study, Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941-44* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 37-41.

²Theodore Saloutos, *The Greeks in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 350.

³See Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2012); and Violetta Hionidou, *Famine and Death in Occupied Greece, 1941-1944* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). See

also Richard Clogg, ed., *Bearing Gifts to Greeks: Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s* (Houndmills, Basingdale, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan/St Antony's College, Oxford University, 2008). Clogg's edited work comprises a diverse collection of papers presented at a conference at Oxford University, in March 2005, which was dedicated to research on humanitarian relief in wartime Greece. This article draws extensively from both the author's original paper presented at the Oxford University conference and the contribution published in the subsequent corresponding volume; see Alexandros K. Kyrou, "The Greek-American Community and the Famine in Axis-Occupied Greece," in Clogg, 58–84.

⁴Collingham, 167.

⁵*Ibid.*, 168.

⁶Herbert Hoover cited in Collingham, 167.

⁷Hionidou, 130.

⁸The first publication to identify the Greek-American community as the paramount external factor in producing the famine relief effort in occupied Greece is found in Alexandros K. Kyrou, "Ethnicity as Humanitarianism: The Greek American Relief Campaign for Occupied Greece, 1941–1944," in Dan Georgakas and Charles C. Moskos, eds., *New Directions in Greek American Studies* (New York: Pella Publishing Company, Inc., 1991), 111–127. For an expanded version of the preceding publication, which presents its findings against the failure of the extant, copious field literature to grasp the direct and decisive role played by the Greek-American community in ending the wartime famine, see Alexandros K. Kyrou, "Operation Blockade: Greek-American Humanitarianism During World War II," in Eugene T. Rossides, ed., *Greece's Pivotal Role in World War II and Its Importance to the U.S. Today* (Washington, D.C.: American Hellenic Institute Foundation, Inc., 2002), 109–127.

⁹An important and highly detailed work on the diplomatic aspects of famine relief is found in Georgios A. Kazamias, "Turks, Swedes and Famished Greeks: Some Aspects of Famine Relief in Occupied Greece, 1941–44," *Balkan Studies*, 33, 2 (1992): 293–307. Also by the same author, see "The Politics of Famine Relief in Occupied Greece," in Clogg, 39–57.

¹⁰*Atlantis*, October 28, 1940; *Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), October 28, 1940.

¹¹*Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), November 9, 1940.

¹²*Ibid.*, November 19, 1940; George Papaioannou, *From Mars Hill to Manhattan: The Greek Orthodox in America under Athenagoras* (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing Company, 1976), 135; George Papaioannou, *The Odyssey of Hellenism in America* (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, 1985), 176–177. For biographical information on Spyros Skouras, see *The Ahepan*, 15, 1 (January–June 1941): 40–42; and Saloutos, 278–280. Although there were some personnel changes within the GWRA's executive committee, the organization's

national leadership remained largely consistent in its make-up, as follows: Harold S. Vanderbilt, Honorary National Chairman; Thomas J. Watson and Howell W. Murray, Honorary National Vice-Chairman; Mrs. Lytle Hull, Honorary Chairman, Women's Auxiliary; Archbishop Athenagoras, National Chairman; George C. Vournas, National Vice-Chairman; Spyros P. Skouras, National President; William Helis, National Vice-President; Joseph Larkin, National Treasurer; K.P. Tsolainos, National Secretary; Mrs. L.J. Calvocoresse, Chairman, Women's Auxiliary; Oscar Broneer, Executive Vice-President. The National Executive Committee consisted of Winthrop W. Aldrich, Archbishop Athenagoras, William Helis, Charles D. Kotsilibas, Joseph J. Larkin, Thomas A. Pappas, Spyros P. Skouras, Stephen C. Stephano, S. Gregory Taylor, K.P. Tsolainos, Harold S. Vanderbilt, and George C. Vournas. For more information on the GWRA's most prominent national officers, see Bobby Malafouris, *Hellenes tes Amerikes 1528–1948* (Greeks of America 1528–1948; New York: Isaac Goldman, printer, 1948), 218–219.

¹³*Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), November 11, 1940, January 19, 1941.

¹⁴Saloutos, 345. An official, yet highly useful, well-documented history of the largest and most influential Greek-American voluntary and fraternal association is found in George J. Leber, *The History of the Order of AHEPA (The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association), 1922–1972: Including the Greeks in the New World, and Immigration to the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Order of AHEPA, 1972).

¹⁵Papaioannou, *From Mars Hill to Manhattan: The Greek Orthodox in America under Athenagoras I*, 135–136; Papaioannou, *The Odyssey of Hellenism in America*, 177.

¹⁶Saloutos, 345–346.

¹⁷*Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), January 19, 1941.

¹⁸See Demetrios J. Constantelos, ed., *Agones kai Agoniai tes en Amerike, Hellenikes Orthodoxou Ekklesias, Enkuklioi kai Eggrapha ton Eton 1922–1972. Encyclicals and Documents of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America Relating to its Thought and Activity, The First Fifty Years 1922–1972* (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, 1976), 283–285. The GWRA's executive national offices were located at 730 Fifth Avenue in the Heckscher Building of New York, and the City Farmer's Bank of New York City donated the entire premises to the organization. See *Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), November 20, 1940.

¹⁹In response to the outbreak of the 1939–1940 Winter War, Finnish-American communities and voluntary associations throughout the United States successfully merged their initial, multiple grassroots relief movements into one nationwide confederation known as the Finnish Relief Fund. As a centralized national coordinating organization, the Finnish Relief Fund was able to maximize the Finnish American community's potential for humanitarian action, ultimately sending over 3,400,000 dollars in aid to Finland. See *Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald),

October 30, 1940. For a comparative discussion of wartime humanitarian aid projects pursued by the largest Eastern European ethnic group in the United States, see Donald E. Pienkos, *For Your Freedom Through Ours: Polish American Efforts on Poland's Behalf, 1863–1991* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs; New York: Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1991), 73–104.

²⁰For a contemporaneous discussion of methods to be used for soliciting mainstream American support for the GWRA cause, see *Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), January 9, 1941. Much of the GWRA executive staff in New York was, in fact, provided by influential American public figures, several of whom had lived in Greece before the war. For more information, see Saloutos, 346. The American Friends of Greece, a philanthropic and cultural organization founded in 1923 to aid Greece in its postwar refugee crisis, played an especially significant role in promoting the GWRA among American intellectuals and other elites. The organization's members, including the renown Princeton University professor T. Leslie Shear, and other prominent scholars, especially those forming an influential elite of classicists, historians, and archaeologists, who, like Shear, had been associated with the American School of Classical Studies in Athens during the interwar period, offered the public an erudite perspective on the importance of the GWRA's mission. Shear was elected chairman of the Committee for Aid to Greece, formed at Princeton University on November 15, 1940, by members of the American Friends of Greece and scholars associated with the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. Acting in concert with the GWRA, Shear's Committee for Aid to Greece initiated its humanitarian efforts by dedicating, on the day of the committee's establishment, funds for the purchase and maintenance of an ambulance in Athens. See *Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), November 16, 1940.

²¹Greek Americans' public image and group status benefited enormously from Greece's successful defense against Italian aggression. The Greek army's unexpected and stunning victories against Italy produced laudatory reporting in the American press, as well as praise from public officials. The Greek-American community capitalized on the media's lionization of Greece's resistance against fascist Italy, the first Allied victory theretofore in Europe, to acquire for itself a level of group acceptance and prestige previously unrepresentative of the Greek social experience in the United States. For additional discussion, see Charles C. Moskos, *Greek Americans: Struggle and Success* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1989), 49–50; Saloutos, 344. For examples of philhellenic press reporting, see Frank Daley, ed., *Greece, Gallant—Glorious* (Haverhill, Massachusetts: Record Publishing, 1941), 26–37. Apart from relevant articles originally published in the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Boston Herald*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, and other major newspapers, the preceding compilation includes a number of official proclamations made by elected officials illustrating the diverse American support for the Greek cause.

²²Saloutos, 344.

²³*Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), December 6, 1940.

²⁴Leber, 330. Impetus was given to youth involvement in the relief campaign with the organization of the GWRA National Youth Division. Originally formed through the merger of 52 local New York City youth organizations on November 28, 1940, the youth division soon thereafter expanded throughout the United States. The National Youth Division's executive offices were chaired by Soterios V. Papanikas, National Chairman; George T. Gavaris, Chairman; Aristides Lazaros, Vice-Chairman; Anne Anthony, Secretary; Anthony Kourtos, Treasurer; Stathy N. Pandiri, Advisor. *Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), January 12, 1941.

²⁵*Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), December 30, 1940.

²⁶*Ibid.*, January 21, 1941.

²⁷*Ibid.*, November 7, 1940, January 21, 1941.

²⁸*Ibid.*, May 4, 1941.

²⁹For a discussion of GWRA management and accounting procedures, see Saloutos, 347–348. Whereas overhead costs for such organizations, according to the National Information Bureau, which investigated national and international agencies engaged in humanitarian relief, philanthropic, social, and civic work—typically exceeded 25 percent, the GWRA expended only 4 percent. See *New York Times*, May 2, 1941.

³⁰*Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), November 20, 1940; Saloutos, 349. For more information on the development and expansion of the GWRA, as well as the organization's relief activities in Greece before the Axis occupation of the country, see Constantelos, 281–297, 303–306, *passim*; Greek War Relief Association, \$12,000,000, (New York: Greek War Relief Association, 1946); Malafouris, 218–226; Papaioannou, *The Odyssey of Hellenism in America*, 176–181; and Saloutos, 345–350. In terms of its national-level organization, the GWRA was divided into 9 regions, each with its own administrative director and headquarters, as follows: Greater New York (Gregory Taylor, New York, New York); Upper New York State (Dean Alfange, New York, New York); New England (Antonios Pappas, Boston, Massachusetts); Midwest (Harry A. Reckas, Chicago, Illinois); East Central (George Vournas, Washington, D.C.); Middle Atlantic (Stephanos Stephanou, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania); Ohio (Vasileios Chibithes, Dayton, Ohio); West (Peter Boudouris, San Francisco, California); and South (William Helis, New Orleans, Louisiana). For more related information, see “Archbishop Athenagoras to Archdiocese's clergy, community councils, and the Philoptochos Sisterhood, December 13, 1940,” in Constantelos, 283–285.

³¹*Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), November 20, 1940.

³²The GWRA central committee in Athens expended approximately 3,336,000 dollars in relief aid prior to the German occupation of the city on April 27, 1941. On April 14, 1941, the central committee returned, by cable, 255,000 dollars to

the GWRA headquarters in New York in order to safeguard the money from potential confiscation by the Axis. Likewise, the remainder of the funds originally dispatched to the Athens committee, totaling 175,000 dollars, was deposited in a special pharmaceutical reserve account under the protection of the International Red Cross (IRC). *Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), May 5, 1941.

³³Malafouris, 220; Saloutos, 349.

³⁴Detailed studies of the military phases of Greece's involvement in the Second World War during the period preceding the Axis occupation of the country are found in Mario Cervi, *The Hollow Legions: Mussolini's Blunder in Greece, 1940-1941* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1971); Greek Army General Staff, *Ho Hellenikos Stratos Kata ton Deuteron Pagkosmion Polemou: Hellenoitalkos Polemos, 1940-1941*, Volumes I-V (The Greek Army During the Second World War: Greco-Italian War, 1940-1941; Athens: 1966); and Alexandros Papagos, *The Battle of Greece* (Athens: J. M. Scazakis "Alpha" Editions, 1949). An extensive discussion of the Italo-Greek War, which contextualizes Greece's military success in the larger framework of the early Allied war effort, is found in George C. Blytas, *The First Victory: Greece in the Second World War* (River Vale, NJ: Cosmos Publishing Co., Inc.: Washington, D.C.: American Hellenic Institute Foundation, 2009). For an examination of the connection of the Axis campaign in Greece and Yugoslavia to German grand strategy, see Andrew L. Zapantis, *Hitler's Balkan Campaign and the Invasion of the USSR* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs; New York: Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1987).

³⁵See John Louis Hondros, *Occupation and Resistance. The Greek Agony 1941-44* (New York: Pella Publishing Company, Inc., 1983), 67-70; Saloutos, 349. One of the most detailed studies of the onset of the wartime famine is found in Dimitri Kitsikis, "La Famine en Grece (1941-42): Les Consequences Politiques," *Revue d'Histoire de la Deuxieme Guerre Mondiale*, 74 (1969): 17-41. For a discussion of the famine and the political dimensions of relief during the last stages of occupation, see Angeliki Laiou-Thomadakis, "The Politics of Hunger: Economic Aid to Greece, 1943-1945," *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, 7, 2 (1980): 27-42. The chapter titled "The Famine" in Mazower combines multiple case insights with an excellent review of the famine within the larger framework of Axis occupation.

³⁶Karl Brandt in collaboration with Otto Schiller and Franz Ahlgrimm, *Germany's Agricultural and Food Policies in World War II, Vol. II: Management of Agriculture and Food in the German-Occupied and Other Areas of Fortress Europe, A Study in Military Government* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953), 235-238; Hondros, 67. A useful analysis of economic conditions in Axis-occupied Greece is found in Stavros B. Thomadakis, "Black Markets, Inflation, and Force in the Economy of Occupied Greece," in John O. Iatrides, ed., *Greece in the 1940s: A Nation in Crisis* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1981), 61-80. For an excellent and richly documented study of the causes of the

famine, see Violetta Hionidou, "Famine in Occupied Greece: Causes and Consequences," in Clogg, 14-38.

³⁷*Atlantis*, July 8, 1941; *Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), July 7, 8, 1941.

³⁸*Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), July 1, 22, 1941. Blocked from dispatching aid directly to Greece, the GWRA temporarily shifted its efforts to respond to the humanitarian needs of Greeks outside Greece. In short, the GWRA national executive committee resolved to send aid to Greek refugees who had fled the Axis occupation for safety in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East. These refugees also included a significant number of Greek Americans who had repatriated to Greece before the war. With the consent of the United States Department of State, the GWRA established a committee of representatives in Cairo. By the end of July 1941, the GWRA Egyptian Committee had received 10,000 dollars from the GWRA headquarters in New York. These funds, and others which followed, were used to aid in the settlement of growing numbers of Greek refugees in the Middle East.

³⁹The *Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald) began publication in 1915 and soon achieved prominence in the Greek-American community as the chief rival to the older conservative New York Greek-language daily newspaper, *Atlantis*. The two most authoritative studies of the Greek press in the United States are found in Andrew T. Kopan, "The Greek Press," in Sally M. Miller, ed., *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 161-176; and Victor S. Papacosma, "The Greek Press in America," *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, 5, 4 (1979): 45-61. For a cross-cultural examination of the press, see Charles Jaret, "The Greek, Italian and Jewish American Ethnic Press: A Comparative Analysis," *The Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 7, 2 (1979): 47-70. Brief biographical information on Basil Vlavianos, emphasizing his role as a community leader during the Second World War, is found in Malafouris, 370-371.

⁴⁰*Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), August 9, 1941.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, August 7, 1941.

⁴²United States Department of State 868.48/1143, "Memorandum of Conversation," Shipment of food to Greece by Greek War Relief Association acting for the Greek Red Cross, August 21, 1941; United States Department of State 868.48/1144, "Memorandum," Proposed Shipment of Wheat to Greece by the Greek War Relief Association, August 22, 1941. The GWRA was able to independently confirm the outbreak of the famine and routinely provided Washington with detailed reports on its severity. This field reporting was accomplished through the services of a Portuguese agent, Antonio Gomes, who operated as an intelligence officer for the GWRA in Athens from 1941 to late 1943. See British Archives R 13659/4/19, Political Memorandum, From Ridley Prentice to the Political Intelligence Department, n.d. (From the British Archives File of the Michael Matsas Collection, RG 500; Center for Holocaust Studies Documentation and Research, Brooklyn, New

York). The latter materials were relocated, beginning in 1997, to the Museum of Jewish Heritage-A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, Library and Archive, Manhattan, New York.

⁴³United States Department of State 868.48/1144, "Memorandum," Proposed Shipment of Wheat to Greece by the Greek War Relief Association, August 22, 1941.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

⁴⁵United States Department of State 868.48/1163, the London Embassy to the Secretary of State, Food Supplies for German-Occupied Territories, October 18, 1941.

⁴⁶United States Department of State 868.48/1181, official Greek War Relief Association correspondence from Spyros Skouras to Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long, October 15, 1941.

⁴⁷United States Department of State 868.48/1187, the Rome Embassy to the Secretary of State, Food Shipments for Greece from Turkey financed by the American "Greek War Relief Association," November 14, 1941; United States Department of State 868.48/1187, Second Secretary of the Athens Embassy, Burton Y. Berry, "Memorandum" (enclosure to No. 2510 of November 14, 1941, from the Rome Embassy), Condensed account of the preparation for and distribution of the first food shipment received from Turkey on the S.S. KURTULUS, together with an Annex showing in tabular form the quantity of foodstuffs distributed to the various types of organizations, November 14, 1941.

⁴⁸*Ibid.* For general information on the wartime Greek Red Cross and a detailed discussion of the organization's chairman of the Food Distribution Committee in Athens and representative in Greece of the International Committee of the Red Cross, see "Ce que j'ai vu dans la Grece d'aujourd'hui": Alexandros D. Zannas and the Greek Red Cross," in Clogg, 113-124. The important functions performed by the Greek Orthodox Church in distributing food and other forms of aid during the occupation are discussed in Vasilios N. Makrides, "The Greek Orthodox Church and Social Welfare during the Second World War," in Clogg, 148-168.

⁴⁹United States Department of State 868.48/1187, the Rome Embassy to the Secretary of State, Food Shipments for Greece from Turkey financed by the American "Greek War Relief Association," November 14, 1941; United States Department of State 868.48/1187, Second Secretary of the Athens Embassy, Burton Y. Berry, "Memorandum" (enclosure to No. 2510 of November 14, 1941, from the Rome Embassy), Condensed account of the preparation for and distribution of the first food shipment received from Turkey on the S.S. KURTULUS, together with an Annex showing in tabular form the quantity of foodstuffs distributed to the various types of organizations, November 14, 1941.

⁵⁰United States Department of State 868.48/1171, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State to the Greek War Relief Association, November 25, 1941.

⁵¹Saloutos, 349.

⁵²United States Department of State 868.48/1187, Second Secretary of the Athens Embassy, Burton Y. Berry, "Memorandum," November 14, 1941; United States Department of State 868.48/1171, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State to the Greek War Relief Association, November 25, 1941.

⁵³United States Department of State 868.48/1171, the Rome Embassy to the Secretary of State, November 15, 1941.

⁵⁴Hondros, 72; United States Department of State 868.48/1187, the Rome Embassy to the Secretary of State, Food Shipments for Greece from Turkey financed by the American "Greek War Relief Association," November 14, 1941; United States Department of State 868.48/1187, the Rome Embassy to the Secretary of State, November 15, 1941; United States Department of State 868.48/1171, in reply to SD 868.48/1171, November 14, 1941, Confidential Report for the Secretary of State from Joseph C. Green, Special Assistant to the Secretary in charge of the Special Division, November 25, 1941. For detailed information on the *Kurtulus* and *Dumlupınar* missions, the participation of Istanbul's community of 125,000 ethnic Greeks in the relief effort, and the response of the Turkish public, more generally, through the Turkish Red Crescent to the pleas for aid to Greece, see Elcin Macar, "The Turkish Contribution to Famine Relief in Greece during the Second World War," in Clogg, 85-96.

⁵⁵Hondros, 68, 72. The likelihood of a winter wheat export shortage in Turkey had been foreseen by the GWRA as early as August 1941. With an anticipated decline in Turkish agricultural production, coupled with Ankara's policy of low price-fixing that often led to hoarding by farmers, the GWRA had prepared an alternative contingency for maintaining the flow of food supplies that would not depend on Turkish markets. United States Department of State 868.48/1143, "Memorandum of Conversation," Shipment of food to Greece by Greek War Relief Association action for the Greek Red Cross, August 21, 1941; United States Department of State 868.48/1144, "Memorandum," Proposed Shipment of Wheat to Greece by the Greek War Relief Association, August 22, 1941. Shortly before the German invasion, the Greek government had purchased approximately 50,000 tons of wheat from Australia to fill the country's needs through the summer of 1941. The ships carrying the wheat did not reach Greece in time to deliver their cargoes, and remained anchored in Egypt following the Axis occupation. Consequently, in concert with the GWRA's new contingency, the Greek government-in-exile planned to transfer the undelivered wheat languishing in Egyptian ports to Turkey where it would be used to replenish state stores of grain to levels required by Ankara to reopen access to its larger domestic wheat reserves. This proposal was necessarily complicated because it took into account the British demand that all relief supplies originate in Turkey. United States Department of State 868.48/1172, Telegram sent by the Department of State to the London

Embassy, November 26, 1941; United States Department of State 868.48/1172, Wallace Murray from the Division of Near Eastern Affairs to Assistant Secretary of State Welles, December 3, 1941.

⁵⁶Macar, 87.

⁵⁷*Ibid.* This policy position was presented to the Turkish public by the parliamentarian, Necmettin Sadak, a future Turkish foreign minister, as a reply published in the Turkish press to newspaper editorials which had advocated providing aid to Greece.

⁵⁸Hondros, 74.

⁵⁹*Ibid.* Regarding the British attitude towards the blockade, Collingham notes that when he announced the blockade, "Churchill had been adamant that there was to be no question of food aid. To send in food, even for innocent civilians, would, he argued, simply relieve the Germans of the need to feed people, and help their war effort." Collingham, 167.

⁶⁰Hondros, 74. For an analysis of the importance of Turkish agricultural and mineral markets to both belligerent camps during the Second World War, see Selim Deringil, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War: an "active" neutrality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 21–22, 128–132. The most authoritative treatment of Turkey in international affairs during the Second World War is found in Frank Weber, *The Evasive Neutral: Germany, Britain and the Quest for a Turkish Alliance in the Second World War* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1979). An excellent analysis of Turkish foreign policy objectives is found in Alexis Alexandris, "Turkish Policy Towards Greece During the Second World War and its Impact on Greek-Turkish Detente," *Balkan Studies*, 23, 1 (1982): 157–197. Turkish diplomacy during the latter half of the war is examined in Edward Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1943–1945: Small State Diplomacy and Great Power Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

⁶¹United States Office of Strategic Services, Foreign Nationalities Branch, 14/GR-178, January 19, 1942. The IRC counted over 90,000 deaths throughout Greece during the winter famine of 1941–1942, approximately 50,000 of which took place in the greater Athens area. For more statistical details, see Hondros, 71.

⁶²United States Office of Strategic Services, Foreign Nationalities Branch, 14/GR-178, January 19, 1942; United States Office of Strategic Services, Foreign Nationalities Branch, 14/GR-178, March 6, 1942.

⁶³United States Office of Strategic Services, Foreign Nationalities Branch, 14/GR-178, March 23, 1942.

⁶⁴Hondros, 73. For the official British position on London's responses to the famine, see W. N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade*, Vol. II (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1959).

⁶⁵Communication from the Secretary of State (Hull), December 31, 1941, published in United States Congress, House of Representatives, *Foreign Relations*

of the United States: *Diplomatic Papers, 1942, Vol. II: Europe* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1962), 727–729.

⁶⁶Procopis Papastratis, *British Policy Towards Greece During the Second World War 1941–1944* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 117; Telegram from the Greek Minister (Diamantopoulos) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles), December 24, 1941; published in United States Congress, House of Representatives, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1942, Vol. II: Europe*, 726–727; Telegram from the King of the Hellenes (George II) to President Roosevelt, February 6, 1942, published in United States Congress, House of Representatives, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1942, Vol. II: Europe*, 736.

⁶⁷*Ethnikos Keryx* (National Herald), June 3, 1941. For background on the Greek community of Egypt, see Alexander Kitroeff, *The Greeks in Egypt, 1919–1937: Ethnicity and Class* (London: Ithaca Press, 1989).

⁶⁸Papastratis, 117; Telegram from the Greek Minister (Diamantopoulos) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles), December 24, 1941; published in United States Congress, House of Representatives, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1942, Vol. II: Europe*, 726–727; Telegram from the King of the Hellenes (George II) to President Roosevelt, February 6, 1942, published in United States Congress, House of Representatives *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1942, Vol. II: Europe*, 736.

⁶⁹*New York Times*, February 7, 1942: Papastratis, 117.

⁷⁰Hondros, 74.

⁷¹United States Department of State 868.48/3028, March 6, 1942; United States Office of Strategic Services, Foreign Nationalities Branch, 14/GR-178, March 17, 1942.

⁷²See Greek War Relief Association, *A Statement by the Greek War Relief Association, Inc., to its Chapters and Co-Workers* (New York: Greek War Relief Association, Inc., 1943); Malafouris, 221.

⁷³Saloutos, 349.

⁷⁴For detailed information on the use of the Swedish vessels employed in Operation Blockade, see Malafouris, 222. A comprehensive history of the GWRP is found in Florence MacDonald, *For Greece a Tear, The Story of the Greek War Relief Fund of Canada* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Brunswick Press, 1954). Major studies of the Greek Canadian community are found in Leonidas C. Bombas, ed., *Ho Hellenismos tou Montreal/Montreal Hellenism: 1843–1985* (Montreal: The Hellenic Psychological and Pedagogical Institute; Greek-Canadian Documentation Series, 1985); Peter D. Chimbos, *The Canadian Odyssey: The Greek Experience in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd.; Canadian Secretary of State Series: A History of Canada's People, 1980); and Stephanos Constantinides, *Les Grecs du Quebec* (Montreal: Editions Ho Metoikos/Le Metique, 1983). In October

1942, religious-inspired Philhellenes in the United Kingdom established their own organization, the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, which was to play a significant role both in fundraising for Greek humanitarian aid and in lobbying the British government to ease the blockade that was preventing food from reaching the starving Greek population. After the war, the Oxford Committee evolved into Oxfam, one of the largest and most influential charities involved in humanitarian relief in the world. For a discussion of this subject, see Mary Jo Clogg, "Quakers and Greeks in the 1940s," in Clogg, 169–188.

⁷⁵Hondros, 74; United States Department of State 686.48/3157, "Memorandum," June 13, 1942; United States Department of State 868.48/3168, the London Embassy to the Secretary of State, June 30, 1942.

⁷⁶At this stage in the planning process, the GWRA's "Operation Blockade" proposal became known as the "Swedish Plan." See Hondros, 74.

⁷⁷Hondros, 74–75; Telegram from the Minister in Sweden (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, March 6, 1942, published in United States Congress, House of Representatives, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1942, Vol. II: Europe*, 743–744; United States Department of State 868.48/3157, "Memorandum," June 13, 1942; United States Department of State 868.48/4892, Board of Economic Warfare, Blockade and Supply Branch, Reoccupation Division Confidential Report, *Greece: Relief Food Distribution by the Joint Relief Commission*, June 12, 1943.

⁷⁸The German and Italian governments assumed the existing IRC authorities in Athens, which had administered relief operations since the *Kurtulus* period, would manage the distribution of any future relief shipments. The British government, openly antagonistic towards the IRC apparatus, demanded that the original committee in Athens should not participate in any expanded relief operations and that Swedish authorities be given exclusive responsibility for the execution of the program. None of the belligerent powers showed any inclination to compromise and the relief deliberations reached an impasse that lasted until the beginning of August. Under pressure from the United States, the British government finally accepted a compromise plan drafted by Foreign Minister Boheman to establish a so-called Action Committee (ultimately known as the Joint Relief Commission), composed of Greek, Swedish, and Swiss personnel, and to make the new organization solely responsible for relief distribution. The original IRC Committee in Athens would continue to operate, but only as a liaison between the Action Committee and the Axis authorities. See Hondros, p. 74–75; United States Department of State 868.48/3157, "Memorandum," June 13, 1942; United States Department of State 868.48/4892, Board of Economic Warfare, Blockade and Supply Branch, Reoccupation Division Confidential Report, *Greece: Relief Food Distribution by the Joint Relief Commission*, June 12, 1943.

⁷⁹The headquarters of the Joint Relief Commission were located in the

Marasleion School in the Kolonaki district of Athens. The relief apparatus was coordinated between two supreme centers: the Athens general administrative headquarters; and the Piraeus office, which oversaw the processing and transportation of relief shipments. The Athens general headquarters included two subordinate divisions responsible for the distribution of relief. One of these divisions directed provincial distribution, and maintained representatives and major relief centers in Kalamata, Patras, Thessaloniki, and Volos, while the second division served the Athens-Piraeus area. The supervision of distribution on the islands was administered by a Commission field office in Crete and by two mobile representatives assigned to Chios, Lesbos, and Samos. At the local level, a network of committees and subcommittees, numbering approximately 1,600 by 1943, expanding to 3,000 in 1944, and reaching over 5,300 by 1945, were established to manage the apportionment of supplies in the country's towns and villages. In terms of official personnel, by the end of 1942, the Commission included 25 Swedish and Swiss executive administrators, almost 50 Greek and Swiss physicians, some 1,000 nurses and medical volunteers, approximately 3,000 labor volunteers, and over 1,200 employees. See Brandt, Schiller and Ahlgrimm, 240; Kazamias, 304; United States Department of State 868.48/4892, Board of Economic Warfare, Blockade and Supply Branch, Reoccupation Division Confidential Report, *Greece: Relief Food Distribution by the Joint Relief Commission*, June 12, 1943. For local case examples of the administration and activities of the relief apparatus, see Philip Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios by the Germans and Their Administration of the Island, 1941–1944* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 170–175, *passim*; and Greek War Relief Association, *A Letter from Issari* (New York: Greek War Relief Association, Inc., 1943). The most thorough study of the Swedish relief apparatus in Greece is found in Marie Mauzy, "Inter Arma Caritas: The Swedish Red Cross in Greece in the 1940s," in Clogg, 97–112.

⁸⁰Malafouris, 222. United States Department of State 868.48/4892, Board of Economic Warfare, Blockade and Supply Branch, Reoccupation Division Confidential Report, *Greece: Relief Food Distribution by the Joint Relief Commission*, June 12, 1943; United States Office of Strategic Services, Foreign Nationalities Branch, 14/GR-178, April 24, 1942. Instrumental in the success of the GWRA's medical aid projects were the efforts of Chicago physician Speros Demetriou Soterakos. Soterakos was responsible for organizing the Medical Division of the GWRA and helped raise 340,000 dollars in relief donations from his colleagues. Soterakos and other prominent Chicago Greek-American professionals and intellectuals are discussed in Andrew T. Kopan, "Hellenic Letters in the New World: The Greek Pioneer Intellectual in Chicago," in Fotios K. Litsas, ed., *Hellenika Grammata: Essays in Tribute to Hellenic Letters* (Chicago: Modern Greek Studies Series, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1985), 206–213.

⁸¹Brandt, Schiller and Ahlgrimm, 240; United States Department of State

868.48/4892, Board of Economic Warfare, Blockade and Supply Branch, Reoccupation Division Confidential Report, *Greece: Relief Food Distribution by the Joint Relief Commission*, June 12, 1943.

⁸²*Ibid.* Beginning in the summer of 1944, the minimum monthly delivery of food shipments rose to 35,000 tons.

⁸³*Ibid.*, Hondros, 75.

⁸⁴Malafouris, 222.

⁸⁵*Greek War Relief Association*, \$12,000,000, 8–9; Saloutos, 350.

⁸⁶Many estimates anticipated one million deaths if relief had not arrived in Greece before the onset of winter in 1942, while others credited the GWRA for having saved as many as two million lives by the end of the occupation. See Greek War Relief Association, \$12,000,000, 8–9; Hondros, 75; Saloutos, 350; United States Department of State 868.48/3136, Assistant Secretary of State to President Roosevelt, April 15, 1942.

⁸⁷Informative discussions and analyses of Greek-American society, community formation and institutional development, especially relating to the centrality of the local parish and its relationship to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, are found throughout the studies noted earlier by Moskos, Papaioannou, and Saloutos. A useful compilation of works on multiple aspects of Archdiocesan history and organizational structures is found in Miltiades B. Efthimiou and George A. Christopoulos, eds., *History of the Greek Orthodox Church in America* (New York: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, 1984).

⁸⁸See Saloutos, 350.

On Theodorakis' *Song of Songs*

Spyros D. Orfanos

A great hero of the Greeks enters the ancient Herodion Atticus amphitheater at the southern slope of the Acropolis on the evening of September 29, 2007. He is guided slowly and carefully by aides across the large semi-circle area between the front of the stage and the first row of seats. He is tentative in his steps, but confident of purpose. The audience of five thousand gives him a standing ovation for once again coming to the aid of the Greeks with his music. He is raising funds to aid the victims of the devastating summer fires in the historic Peloponnesus region. As he struggles to guide his tall, failing 83-year-old body onto the front row marble seat, he acknowledges the Hellenes by raising his right hand over his unruly white mane of hair and smiles as if to say, "Together, we will triumph over tragedy." The Athenians applaud wildly as they have done hundreds, maybe thousands, of times before. Mikis Theodorakis is leading the Greeks once again in mourning and celebration. He is linking Apollo and Dionysius.

This night and the next one are dedicated to using song to deal with tragedy, an old Greek custom, maybe even a universal one. The songs are all by Theodorakis. For over seven decades he has composed songs about tragedy and trauma—songs for the concert stage, songs for seashore taverns and village squares, songs for the victims of oppression and torture. He creates songs about bread and wine, and about love and death. He weds his melodies to Nobel