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GREECE: 80-Day Premier

For the second time this month a Balkan Premier looked into the future and could see in it no solution but his own destruction. Fifteen days after Hungary's Count Paul Teleki had killed himself rather than break his country's pledge of friendship to Yugoslavia (TIME, April 14), Alexander Korizis of Greece read the hourly tale of Greek and British retreats in the northern mountains, heard the air-raid alarms as Nazi planes swooped over Athens, chose to die by his own hand.

Lean, grey-haired, 56-year-old Alexander Korizis was a banker by profession, a humanitarian by choice, a statesman by force of circumstance. Brought into the inner circle of the Government by his mentor and hero, General John Metaxas, in 1936, he served as Minister of Public Assistance. On his deathbed in January, General Metaxas named Korizis as his successor, left him the difficult war with Italy, the growing threat of German invasion. For 80 days Korizis did his best to defend Greece, killed himself when he felt he could do no more.

Athens gave the unsoldierly man who had filled a soldier's job the honor of a hurried military funeral. Behind the armored car that pulled his coffin marched generals, admirals, an honor guard of cadets. As the procession neared the cathedral an air raid started and the funeral service was read to a crackling background of anti-aircraft fire.

There was little time for mourning. At week's end amiable, Gable-eared King George II announced that he had taken over the Government, proclaimed a "national victory" Government, with himself as Premier, Vice Admiral Alexander Sakellariou as Vice Premier. Next day he turned the Premiership over to old-line banker-politico Emmanuel Tsouderos. That the new Government could stop the flood of the Nazi invasion few could hope, but George VI's cousin George II evidently intended to stick to the end.

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