

"For Poor, Hungry People!"

Kyriakides Hopes Marathon Victory Will Help Impoverished Countrymen

By JERRY NASON

The thin, dark man from Greece, who had known the pangs of hunger, feasted his eyes on the laurel wreath which he had wrested from Johnny Kelley in a savage tussle on the homestretch of the Marathon race.



DEMETER

He, the modern Pheidippides, had sped over 26 miles and 385 yards of American macadam to earn this herbage which abounds in great profusion on the hillsides of his native Athens.

Ironic? No! Proudly he raised it. It represented 2 hours, 29 minutes, 27 seconds of blazing determination—for he was the man with a mission.

"This wreath," said Stylianos Kyriakides, 36, a bill collector for an Athens utilities company, "—this I give to my little kid!"

Victor in a fairy-story Marathon on the golden anniversary of the Boston A. A. race, which in turn stems from the original Olympic contest in Athens, Kyriakides studied the wreath which George Demeter, his friend, had fashioned for the ultimate Marathon winner.

From it fluttered the brave blue and white ribbons, the Grecian national colors—for Demeter had a premonition that, at last, a Greek citizen would win the Boston cobblestone classic.

Cries as He Thinks of "Keedies"

"All the time, like I tell you at the start," said Stylianos, "I have the feeling that I am going to win. Once, I think of my wife, and the two keedies. You don't believe it, but many times they have only peas—just a few peas—to eat!"

Tears burst through the dam of happiness which had held back this grim-running Greek's true incentive for running, and winning—help for the destitute and hungry seven millions of Greece.

They were brave tears, and Kyriakides let them fall—unashamed. Johnny Kelley, the man he ran into the road in a stretch rush for which the script was snatched from Hollywood—well, Kelley's eyes filled up, too.

"Stanley," said John, with the grace of the vanquished for the victor, "nobody deserved to win today more than you!" John slipped his arm over the Greek's shoulder. Kyriakides brushed the tears away with his arm, gave Kelley a squeeze. "Johnny," he said, "you fine boy."

He pronounces it Keer-ee-ah-kee-dees, and he is a man in whose breast burns the fierce fires of national loyalty, and whose mission in this country was to win, if possible, and promote American assistance for his impoverished and hungry countrymen.

To Globe readers Stylianos is no stranger, for he first came here in 1938, when this writer first wrote of him . . . for, with Demeter at the wheel, he took Kyriakides over the Marathon course, introduced him to the Newton hills, explained every twist and turn of the long march to Boston.

Suffering Etched in Face

He was a young man, then—young, and handsome, with fine smile that made you open your heart to him. That as before the Germans came to Greece, and young men like Stylianos became hungry and cold, and sold all their clothes to get food for their starving families.

The history of those grim years are etched in the brown, avail-wrinkled features of this man with the mission.

He's National Hero Now

His company, footing the bills, did not demand that Stylianos win. They were satisfied if he finished one-two-three. Today, he knows, he is the national hero in all of Greece.

For himself he cares little. For Greece, and what this smashing 2:29.27 rush in the famous Boston Marathon may do to assist her, it means everything.

He was born in Cyprus, British colony. He became a Greek citizen in 1936, and ran ~~and~~ in the Olympic Marathon in Berlin for Ellas. He is married, a second time, and has a little boy and a little girl.

And in his breathless run to glory yesterday, in his determined rush to overwhelm Kelley in the last two miles, he carried with him a small piece of paper.

On one side was written, in Greek (by George Demeter): "Do or Die!" On the other, "We are victorious!"

Kyriakides read the first at Hopkinton. He read the second at Exeter st., Boston.

"We," mean Kyriakides and the thought of Greece he carried high in his heart, were victorious!