

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION.

For four years the Cyprus question had been headline news throughout the world. Greek was fighting Briton. A bomb exploding in a Nicosia back-alley, a British serviceman ambushed in the street, an EOKA man blown-up in his hideout, a patriot hanged, or a group of boys or girls stoning a riot-squad - all became tomorrow's news from Santiago to Osaka. It was a fight for self-determination which, to the Greek inhabitants of the island, meant Enosis, i.e. union with Greece. Cyprus was the centre of the story - the arena where the drama with an almost ancient Greek tragic pre-ordination was being played out - but not the whole story. The several weeks I had spent travelling all over the island, ferreting out information, looking for facts and moods, had left me with several loose ends in my hands and only Greece could help me to find their counterparts and join them together.

It was Field-Marshal Papagos who, as Premier of Greece, first raised officially the question of Cyprus with the British Government and in the United Nations and so, indirectly, precipitated ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{of April 1955;} ~~and~~ it was Premier Constantine Karamanlis who, by affixing his signature to the Zurich Agreement in February 1959 helped to bring the question to a close. The battle for Enosis had ended in a way which struck me as being part and parcel of the unending Greek paradox.

A few weeks earlier, flying towards Greece, I had pondered over the violent twists of Greek history and tried to fathom their causes and effects. Most of what happens there has either a symbolic or world-wide significance. It was an uneasy feeling. Somehow in Greece things don't always go in the direction they appear to be moving. Either they flash and disappear in

blankness or proliferate and grow in all directions. This land is a self-fertilising womb of history that affects people well beyond her borders and incidents began to crowd in on my mind while below us gradually unfolded the rough, alive landscape of Greece. We were approaching Corfu and in the distance, luminous in the afternoon sun, lay the snow-covered Grammos range of Northern Pindus, where nineteen years earlier the Greeks met, stopped and turned back Mussolini's attack. The battle of Pindus followed the Battle of Britain - both share the same niche in history; both were major demonstrations of valour which transmitted impulses of hope and resolve to all captive Europe. Nine years later, in the same place, the second Greek civil war was brought to an end with the defeat of the rebels and the post-war chapter of Balkan disturbance which threatened wider conflagrations was closed. Looking down at those mountain masses I relived all the sharp experiences of eleven years earlier when, as a special correspondent for a London daily I trudged from mountain top to mountain top, following the fortunes of an army at bay. Little did I realise at the time that what I had written eleven years before would have a sequel which would take me via prison before the Greek Supreme Court of Appeal.

A few minutes later we were flying over Actium where Mark Antony saw his dreams of Empire shattered. A local battle, but Rome became a monarchy as a result and settled down to the long, sterile twilight of entrenchment and decay. No sooner had we skirted the Ambrakic Gulf, and before the afternoon tea was consumed, we were over Lepanto where, in 1571, Christian Europe met and destroyed the Fleet of the Ottoman Turk. It was simply a naval encounter which hardly disturbed the surface of events at the time, but historically it represents the apogée of Ottoman power. From then

on contraction set in inescapably, remorselessly. Flying to the south of the Gulf of Corinth and before reaching Salamis where the Greeks defeated the Persians in 480 B.C., preserved Greek freedom and opened the flood-gates of intellectual and artistic endeavour which moulded the thoughts of mankind, we saw, on our left, Mount Parnassus. Early spring snow lay thick down to the valleys. Somewhere on its craggy southern slope was Delphi, the omphalos⁽¹⁾ of the ancient Greeks, Apollo's shrine, where the Oracle dispensed its comforting amphibological statements to the anxious and the credulous for over a thousand years. In the 1930's the Greek poet Angelos Sikelianos and his American wife Eva, planned to turn Delphi into a cultural centre of the world where free men could meet and talk. They coined the phrase "Delphis Spirit" and dreamed of an amphictyonia of human thought to save the world from war. In 1958 the Greek Government, in response to this mood and perhaps the honour the poet, declared that it would be prepared to allow Delphi to become a free international centre. The most potent force in the world, the human mind, divided by frontiers and wracked by the constrictive framework of political institutions, is deprived of a common forum where it can freely function. Perhaps Delphi can become such a forum, and who knows! Perhaps Greece, where the intellect was first emancipated and the citizen first tasted political freedom, may provide, at least, the historical setting for a new era of humanism.

All these historical facts - Salamis, Actium, Lepanto - had not a typically Greek significance. Like the Athens of the 5th century B.C. they all had growing world significance. And yet others, Thermopylae for example, or Arkadi with the Cretans choosing to blow themselves up by setting fire to their powder magazines rather than surrender to the Turks remained, despite the heroism, Greek incidents.

My thoughts turned to Cyprus where the imponderability of Greek

(1) Navel of the earth.

history was once again being played out. The fight which began in 1955 had the aim of uniting Cyprus with Greece. It had been the demand and the desire of the people for centuries. It ended in an agreement that precludes Enosis and which imperceptibly but definitely alters the island's historical character. An Hellenic island becomes a Helleno-Turkish island and an indirect charge of Greece and Turkey with Greek and Turkish troops stationed there. Does this represent a solution or is it a calamity? The answer from a broad, world outlook can only be - provided sanity and goodwill prevail - that the Cyprus settlement represents something new in international relations. It gives dignity and freedom to an island which till yesterday was a colonial dependency. It places an equal responsibility, willingly assumed, upon Greece, Turkey and Britain and provides a geographical point of contact for all three. It makes them neighbours and puts a premium on their friendship. What will spring from this contact? Friction and discord or harmony and closer unity? Both alternatives are possible but statesmanship will doubtless strive to achieve the latter. The Agreements on Cyprus strike a balance between the demands of a people for independence and freedom and the demands of our time for the interdependence of peoples and the widening of the areas of common ideals and common economic interests. It guarantees the sovereignty of the island, and, at the same time, subordinates it to the wider interests of all concerned - Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and Britain.

To all intents and purposes this is the first practical political exercise in interdependence. Will the history and example of a Greek island become a pointer to new forms of international relations and presage concord and limitations of sovereignty - among like-minded people as a first step - in the higher interests of European civilisation and of humanity? With the Cyprus

settlement events in the Eastern Mediterranean have been lifted from one groove and set into another. They may conceivably have their beneficent repercussions on the future.

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I was particularly interested in finding out why this has happened and by what process events reached that stage, and a lot more besides - the story of EOKA. My long dissociation from my native land provided me with the detachment of the outside observer and enable me, to an extent, to weigh up facts objectively. As a Cypriot, however, I could not remain ^{entirely} emotionally uninvolved, could feel the passion which plunged these traditionally well-mannered and law abiding people into four years of violence, and could see things from their point of view. But whether Cypriot or not the task of finding things out had not been easy. The EOKA men kept silent, firstly because their oath forbade them to "abandon the struggle" even after the aims have been achieved, without the expressed orders of the Leader - and writing or speaking is part of the struggle - and secondly, because they felt that the time to speak out had not yet arrived.

General Grivas was to tell his own story. He had forewarned, however, that many things will, of necessity, be left unsaid. Some will remain as secrets in the Greek state archives. Undoubtedly there are issues which impinge upon personalities, cut across policies or violate state secrets or concepts of security, which cannot come to light. There are facts and their verification or justification, which are left to him to reveal or explain. In a war where secrecy was absolutely imperative and was also strictly enforced, events appeared, even to participants, to have had many facets. A free-for-all in "revelations" would have resulted in a confused patchwork of information. It might have given too much away. One should not demur. After all, every

made me squint and I had to use my hand as a protection for my eyes. Someone brought me an aluminium bowl of tea and one of the group standing round my questioner offered me a paximadi.⁽¹⁾ I accepted it with thanks. Dipping it into my tea - and if one considers this to be non-U I can only say that this is the only way to eat paximadi unless one is blessed with a strong jawbone and perfect teeth - I had my breakfast. I felt like a visitor from another world and perhaps looked it. I noticed that I was the centre of attention and realised that my tongue had to be loosened somehow.

It was my first night in jail - the Averoff Central Prison in Athens. I was taken in the previous afternoon and had already formed some acquaintances among the prisoners. In a mysterious way - human adaptability? - I felt quite comfortable and at ease with my surroundings. Mr. Stav of Alex⁽²⁾, who told me that he was one of Patrick Leigh Fermor's party of daring raiders who abducted a German general from Crete during the war, put me wise to prison routine and the code of prison behaviour. Every human fraternity has its system of conduct and obeys the unwritten laws of its creation. A Greek seaman, an irrepressible individualist, who had sailed the seven seas and seen the inside of many jails and who was the first to proclaim me an "Englishman" but the cut of my clothes and the type of shoes I was wearing, put me wise to many things concerning personal comfort and hygiene, indicated ways and means of acquiring the requisite furniture for my cell and lectured me on the use of the pot and on how to eliminate smells. A deaf and dumb boy (Stav was the interpreter of his sign language) and an earnest Cretan youth were also among my first acquaintances.

Supper on the first night consisted of a ladleful of chickpeas soaked in olive oil. A mouthful was enough! Though I had had nothing to eat for two

(1) A kind of army biscuit - bread rolls baked twice.

(2) Stavros Hadjistylianou from Alexandria, ^{Greek} an/ex-soldier who served with the 5th Army in the desert. He was in jail pending trial on a dubious charge of bankruptcy.

days (in the State Security Headquarters where I was held the first night upon landing in Greece from Cyprus, no meals were provided) I could not get it down. This did not escape the attention of those standing by me, somehow it got around and before we were locked in for the night a procession passed by my cell: one left an orange, another bread, a third cheese, and yet another a boiled egg. Lucullus could not have been more pleased! Now, standing here in the sun, talking to them, I was conscious of gratitude and I felt friendship welling up inside me. It was time for talk, for confidences.

Prison, like army life, soon breaks down barriers. But before I even formulated in my mind the inhibited questions, so much hemmed in by circumspection, characteristic of the northerners, I was asked:

"How do Greek jails compare with the foreign ones?"

"I don't know. This is my first experience."

"Haven't you been in jail before?"

"No!"

"Not even in England?"

"Not even in England"

"Surely you must have visited one - either as a journalist or to see a friend, a relative?"

"Never".

They looked incredulous. To a Greek whose national life for the past twenty-five years has been a series of massively tragic convulsions - dictatorship, war, occupation, revolutions and repressions which left behind them destruction and misery, broken homes, broken bodies and broken loyalties - prison, exile and death were things for ever hovering on the horizon of his existence. Although tranquility has returned, the memories and bitterness

remain. To them it was inconceivable that a man could reach middle-age, dabble in politics or journalism, take a stand on social or moral issues without, at some time or other, suffering persecution or imprisonment - so much in practice in mid-twentieth century Europe. I explained how things are done in England, that, as a rule, they don't put you in jail for trying to show there is another side to an argument, apologized for my deficiency in this particular aspect of social education, and added that the Greek State was evidently intent upon remedying this ignorance.

What are you in for?" Before I answered, Stav intervened to inform me that I was much talked about by the other prisoners. "They think you are a political bird. They can't make you out. English? Greek? - they don't know. Some say you are a 'war criminal' - we have a German Captain here you know, sentenced recently to twenty years' imprisonment...~~xxxx~~ him over there." He pointed to a vigorous man in a gaberdine overcoat, striding up and down the other side of the small square, absorbed in conversation. He was the only one who took no notice of me as a newcomer. He had been accused of causing the death of many thousands of Greek people during the German occupation. Stav added: "He has all his meals brought in from outside, has an oil-stove in his cell, his own mattress, two sheets on his bed, and all the comforts. If you are one of them you will do well!"

"I am not".

"Others say...cherchez la femme!" Stav, by the way, is a man of wide culture and a linguist. The cryptic import of this statement remained unelucidated. "Someone told me" he continued, "that you are a currency smuggler."

"I wish I were!"

"No kidding!"

"I am nothing of the sort."

"What is it then?"

"High treason".

"High treason! You don't say!"

"I do say"

"What happened?"

"That is all I know. I was arrested at the airport shortly after I landed, sent to Security, appeared yesterday morning before the public prosecutor who sent me to jail pending my trial which will take place in 18 days time."

"But why?"

I explained briefly how eleven years ago I'd visited the guerrilla-held territories of Northern Greece as a correspondent for a British newspaper, that "the indictment said I was an emigré, living in New York, that I'd conspired to alienate Greek territories and overthrow the regime."

"All that?" Stay appeared very interested.

"Nothing more and nothing less!"

"You don't live in New York?"

"I live in London"

"You are not Greek?"

"Of Greek origin, but a British subject."

"Were you ever in the British army?"

"Yes, for nearly six years."

"You were not here during or after the war?"

"No. This is my first visit to Athens - or more correctly to a part of Athens which happens to be a jail - since 1930."

"And you will appear before the Supreme Court?"

"Yes."

"Your indictment is dated when?"

"1948."

"Don't worry" said Stav. "It's nothing. They simply got your name down by mistake - a lot of mistakes happened here. The Special Court Martial of Athens issued a warrant for your arrest, but it will be cleared up in no time. You will see. In a day or two you will be out of here on bail and in two or three weeks you will be free to leave the country."

His airy assurance infuriated me. "It's not the commonest thing in the world to come to a country and as soon as you land, to be accused of the direst of crimes and be flung in jail. If it is as you say, why have they fixed my trial before the Supreme Court?"

"Don't worry, Kyrie Angle" answered Stav with suavity. "Of course, there is going to be a trial. Of course you will have to have a lawyer and prepare to give battle in Court, of course you will have to be troubled to prepare your case, but once before the Court you will see that everything will go smoothly. From what you told us, I guarantee that the public prosecutor and the judges will go through the motions of a trial, ask a few questions, perhaps they will get a witness or two, allow the lawyer to say a few words and then they will stop the trial and declare you innocent. That's what is going to happen. Your ^{Consul} ~~ambassador~~ will tell you the same."

Soon after, the British Consul, accompanied by two of his staff, visited me in jail. In fact he visited me twice. My case was not~~w~~ out of my hands as some part of the machinery of state began grinding on my behalf. Through Stav's eyes and knowledge I could see the whole sequel of dreariness working itself out. A protest by the British Embassy to the Greek Foreign Office about the arrest of a British citizen. The Foreign Office, shocked and bothered, would promise immediate inquiries. It would raise the matter with the Ministry of Justice which would by-pass it, suggesting that it was the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry of the Interior

could only say that it was State Security's job and State Security in turn would plead that there was a warrant lying about issued by The Special Court Martial which, in the meantime, had been abolished.

"That's what's going to happen and while the wheels go round you have to endure it" said Stav.

It was an anti-climax. My drama all of a sudden was transformed into a huge, grim joke. "In a day or two you will be out of here - on bail". So I was. And the trial a fortnight or so later went as Stav said it would go.

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Five men sitting on a raised dais in one of the class-rooms of an ex-girls' finishing school constituted the Court. The President sitting in the centre was a kindly old man, looking like anybody's father. To the left and slightly apart, sat the Public Prosecutor - a sombre ~~looking~~ man with a strong mien who, you felt, could with the same ease fondle a child or have someone's head chopped off. My case was the sixth on the list and so I had some time to observe what was going on. It was unlike anything I had imagined or witnessed before. Judge and defending counsels, as well as defendants and plaintiffs would interrupt and shout at each other. The prosecutor wielded his words like a rapier - weighing in with killing blows. It was fascinating and uncomfortable to be watching this trained gladiator of words perform his grim task. But behind this seeming disorderly chaos of words and clashes there was the stately structure of justice and the court's decisions, as far as I could judge, conformed to it.

When my case came up the presecutor opened with some devastating thrusts. To my counsel's retort that ~~the~~^{no} case could be made out against me and that it should be dropped there and then he answered that the court must enter into the substance of the accusation, i.e. the alienation of Greek

territory and the overthrow of the Greek regime. I felt that it was only a feint - a pretense at earnestness. The few questions of the president to one of the witnesses soon showed the hollowness of the charge and now the prosecutor himself stood up to say so, adding with a sidelong glance at a British Embassy official sitting among the spectators, that what I wrote was written and published in England where the press is free and thought is unfettered. I was acquitted.

This was another difficulty I encountered in my search for material for this book. But as the saying goes, it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. My few days in jail and all the paraphernalia connected with my trial helped me to learn more about the deeper realities of Greece than a score of cocktail parties or a dozen interviews with sophisticated politicians, officials, labour leaders would have allowed me to do. I thus sensed the pathological fear that state organs have for communism, a fear shared by all well-to-do. Also the unassuaged bitterness of all left-wingers towards those in authority. In the microcosm of the prison one sensed this atmosphere very powerfully, permeating both thought and prospect.

The first thing I did as soon as I was out of jail was to visit the "Athenian Agora." In the company of a young lawyer, whose knowledge of classical history and of the classics proved stimulating and instructive, I examined the entire site. The work of excavation has been done by the "American School of Classical Studies at Athens" which has also restored the Stoa of Attalos - a magnificent, colonnaded, two-storey building now housing the archaeological finds unearthed during the excavations.

The Agora was the administrative, political and cultural centre of ancient Athens. Its few acres of ground, literally nestling in the lap of the Acropolis, will have their honoured place in the story of man as long as history

persists. It was here that the word democracy gained currency. Here it was first asserted and put into practice that the individual has rights as well as obligations. It was here that Socrates held some of his famous discussions with his devotees. He put reason and discussion above prejudice and fanaticism. Athens had to kill him for it. Perhaps no other state would have allowed him to have lived that long. Despots and frightened rulers of every epoch have a mortal fear - the intellect.

Not far from the Agora is Theseium. It dominates the scene to the west. It was pointed out to me that it was here that the bitterest battles between members of George Grivas's Royalist "Khi" ⁽¹⁾ organisation and Communist ELAS ⁽²⁾ took place in December 1944. I was jarred back into reality and the purpose of my visit to Greece. It was, I was told, a battle of no quarter. Grivas was eventually rescued by British troops, which after almost a month of hard fighting, ejected ELAS from Athens and made possible the subsequent Agreement of Varkiza, which put an end to the first civil war.

Athenians still speak of these events as if they happened yesterday. They seared themselves on their memories. It was not only the antagonism and mutual hatred of Left and Right bent on political supremacy but also the rise of furious mobs, fed by hunger and despair, brutalised by four years of occupation and oppression, that wreaked vengeance indiscriminately.

In 1944 Col. George Grivas - as he ~~was~~ then was - was fighting, if not with, at least on the side of the British forces in Athens. Eleven years later he was leading the battle against the British in Cyprus. The Greek Communists, as far as Grivas was concerned, were persons beyond the pale. And yet in Cyprus Grivas showed extreme solicitude to all left-wingers who joined his organisation without abating one iota their political beliefs. He discussed things with them,

(1) The letter Khi, X in Greek, stands for the unknown "X".

(2) The military arm of ELAS, mostly under the control of the Communists.

paid attention to their problems and in no way tried to influence them politically. To the Greek Communists and left-wingers in general, on the other hand, Grivas was the personification of everything that is reactionary and held pride of place in their literature of daemonology. And yet in 1959 many hundreds of thousands of people turned out to welcome him on his return to Athens and the Greek Parliament, with its eighty Left M.Ps. (EDA), unanimously voted him honours and showered on him the thanks of the Nation.

Βιβλιοθήκη Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου