



Strange Interlude in Athens

GEORGE BAILEY

ON JULY 12, General Stylianos Patakos, in his capacity as Minister of the Interior, deprived Melina Mercouri of her Greek citizenship and confiscated all her possessions in Greece for "anti-national activities." On the same day the newspaper *Free World*, an organ of the unfree Greek press, carried an illustrated editorial entitled "Tourism and Politics" which complained of "the campaign of intimidation conducted abroad to discourage tourists from visiting Greece." It featured a cartoon from the London *Sunday Times* showing a lantern-jawed Patakos machine-gunning Euripides, Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Aristophanes. It also played up the ingenious counterfeiting of a Greek Tourist Office brochure by a twenty-three-year-old female member of the Liberal Radical Committee of One Hundred: "On your first day in Athens," read the brochure, "take a seat in one of the many sidewalk cafés and watch the tanks, the soldiers with their guns pointed at passers-by, the machine guns manned by frowning military. . . . The hotels in Greece are clean and the prices are very reasonable. It is not impossible that, returning from your swim or your walk one day, you will find that your hotel has been taken over by the authorities to house yet another crowd of political prisoners. Don't forget to

bring your camera, because it may well be that you will be lucky enough to take the first pictures of the second Greek civil war."

I read these passages aloud to Patakos and then showed him his own decree depriving Miss Mercouri and seven other Greeks living abroad of their citizenship. I commented that this was the most effective sort of anti-Greek propaganda. Patakos looked briefly at the announcement and said: "This is wrong. See, here it says, 'In accordance with Constituent Act H of 1967.' Actually, the deprivation of citizenship was undertaken in accordance with Paragraph Gamma, Article 20, of Constituent Act 3370 of the year 1955. We didn't make this law: it has been on the books for twelve years. We applied it." As he spoke, I remembered the new government's first message to the people: "The mission of the government is to apply the law."

The *Free World* editorial also contained a plea for understanding: "This government characterizes itself as transitional and declares that it aims at the establishment of a healthy democratic system." I said that there was surely an inconsistency between a transitional state of affairs and so permanent a thing as the deprivation of citizenship.

"Not so," said Patakos. "Mercouri can apply for restitution of her citizenship and property. The law pro-

vides for that." Then he sought out the relevant passage. "If she comes to Greece within one year of having lost her citizenship she can make application for restitution." "Just how would she apply?" I asked. "She would have to come to me and show that she wants to be a Greek again, that she wants to help Greece." He found the procedure for application and read it to me. "I don't mean she would have to come to me personally or change her mind about me, Patakos. She can think whatever she likes about me. But she would have to show that she had changed her mind about Greece."

AS OFTEN AS NOT, the propaganda directed against Greek tourism from abroad is wildly inaccurate—no country is more hospitable. But this does not render it one whit less effective. So far this summer the number of tourists has fallen off by about fifty per cent compared to last summer. Almost unquestionably, it is the western countries' "moral condemnation" of the Greek military coup that has made the difference. Patakos brushed this aside. "There is an old Greek proverb," he told me. "'As long as all is well in the monastery, then . . .'" There the proverb trails off. The sense of it is that as long as your own house is in order, you needn't worry about what others think.

Patakos was forthright about the large number of political prisoners being held by the government without charges. "That is true," he said. "We are holding them because they are Communists or have been implicated with Communists according to the evidence we have found in the headquarters of the EDA" (Communist-front United Democratic Left). "But that is not the case with all of them," I said, and cited John Tsouderos, a native Greek who served as a paratrooper in the U.S. Army during the Second World War and who is a staunch conservative.

"Ah, yes," said Patakos. "We are holding Tsouderos and other non-Communist party leaders because we had information that they were plotting together in order to prevent a military coup: if we hadn't arrested them, they'd have arrested us. They can be released any time they choose. All they have to do is sign a pledge that they will refrain from doing anything against the government." (So far the government has released about 3,400 of the more than six thousand originally arrested.)

The Case of 'Handy Andy'

Andreas Papandreou, the son of former Premier George Papandreou, leader of the majority Center Union Party, is easily the most famous of the political prisoners. No less a personage than former Governor Edmund G. Brown of California journeyed to Greece with a lawyer and personal friend of Andreas named James Schwartz in an effort to dissuade the Greek government from trying him for high treason. The two men tried to assure the Greek government with some authority that Andreas, once the head of the University of California's Department of Economics who forfeited his American citizenship when he entered Greek politics in 1963, would be allowed to return and remain in the United States.

It was a strange visit. Acting with what the Greeks interpreted as Washington's approval, Brown and Schwartz tried to demonstrate that it could not be in the best interests of Greece to try Andreas and that a sufficient example could be made by deporting him. It would be extremely detrimental to Greece, they

emphasized, if the government went ahead with the trial.

As Minister of the Interior, General Patakos was the appropriate authority for them to see. Patakos took Schwartz, who stayed on after Brown left, along on a swing through his native Crete, and feted him in his home town as a guest of his ninety-year-old mother. Schwartz reportedly was deeply moved by the way Patakos, whom he believed to be a truly good man, measured his old mother's wine and cut her meat for her.

It is typical of Patakos that he should have gone to such lengths to show his own and his government's good will to a visiting American petitioner (and incidentally to demonstrate his personal popularity in Crete) while strictly refusing to make the least concession in the disposition of Andreas Papandreou's case. Throughout, Patakos, who has been



a soldier ever since he was fifteen and who is a singular but even mixture of military sternness and bumpkin affability and humor, controlled his indignation at the attempt of the two Americans "to interfere in Greek internal affairs."

On July 21, the government released a letter written to Patakos by Stanley J. Pincetl, Jr., a professor of history at San Diego State College, which provides a good example of what the government faces generally:

"Your Excellency: This letter constitutes a request to withdraw all political accusations against Andreas Papandreou and all political prisoners arrested with him.

"According to available information, the accusations seem to be of a superficial nature and any pre-

tenses for a just judiciary decision seems impossible.

"Such a decision would strengthen the confidence of our country, which has many interesting links with Greece and has respected its democratic inheritance."

Patakos' reply to Pincetl, in turn, constitutes a good indication of why the government is up against this sort of thing in the first place:

"Sir: I cannot accept that a history professor is able to conclude on the innocence or the guilt of a defendant. This is the work of justice and even children know it. Yours, S. Patakos."

The Colonels' Quandary

It is, in short, the nature of the government itself that invites foreign intervention in its internal affairs, that prompts personal appeals to the Minister of the Interior by visiting American private citizens, that makes it difficult for Professor Pincetl to believe that the Greek government is capable of providing justice for a defendant. The same inherent flaw also excites the suspicion that the noble-sounding proclaimed goals of the coup officers, such as "the creation of a new polity," have been dictated by the necessity for self-justification. In this connection, Patakos may have committed a Freudian slip during our interview. I had asked him if he was satisfied with the way things were going. "Indeed," he replied, "I have written an apologia—I mean an autocriticism—of my performance since the revolution."

The same question applies to the description of the coup as a "revolution." The Army Corps group began by announcing revolution as a goal and then assumed the term as a title—a considerable arrogation in itself.

Inevitably, the most suspect announcements of the government concern its justification for coming into being—the regularly repeated claims of overwhelming dangers narrowly avoided, of the imminent threat of a Communist take-over foiled at the last minute, etc. Every effort of the government to expose Communism in Greece and elsewhere as a mortal danger is immediately discounted because the entire campaign is regarded as identical with the government's propaganda program of self-justification.

It is this aspect of the situation

that compromises and complicates the prosecution of Andreas Papan-dreou: the government will be damned if it does and doomed if it doesn't. Should the government prosecute Papan-dreou, find him guilty, and imprison him, its lack of a constitutional basis and its vested interest in his conviction could make the undertaking backfire. Should it



prosecute Andreas and find him not guilty, the government in effect would be finding against itself. To release him without trial would be an admission by the government of a lack of seriousness. To deprive him of citizenship and deport him after finding him guilty of "the highest crime against his country" would be farcical.

The fact is that Andreas Papan-dreou is a personification of the government's justification for being.

"Andy Papan-dreou was the leader of the unofficial 'American' community in Greece and the most prominent American in the country," a prominent Greek artist told me recently. "He was also the most anti-American Greek spokesman. We could never figure out what he was, and every time we asked an official at the American embassy for an explanation he would quickly change the subject. But when Hubert Humphrey's sister came to Athens, the first thing she did was visit Andy. Whatever else he might have been, for Greece Andy Papan-dreou was a colossal provocateur."

The trouble is that the present Greek government is compromised

by the very act that brought it into being and by the guarantee of its transitoriness. This also accounts for the ambiguous nature of the working relationship between the government and the country's professional elite.

It is widely acknowledged that this arbitrary government can complete tasks that the warring parties could never have accomplished in Parliament. Foremost among these is the drafting of a new constitution. Yet in order to enlist the services of qualified specialists, Premier Constantine Kollias was obliged to assure the Drafting Committee that "Neither the government itself nor, consequently, anybody else interprets your participation in the committee as constituting actual co-operation in the government's task, or even approval of its deeds." Even so, the government had difficulty enlisting the best authorities.

One such task that the government has carried out well is something every responsible Greek politician for the last hundred years has longed to do. Composed of religious men, it nevertheless told the Greek Orthodox hierarchy that it would have to start acting like the state-supported established church it is and stop acting like the state within a state it claimed to be. Less than three weeks after coming to power, the government forced the resignation of the ailing octogenarian Archbishop Chrysostomos and appointed the less elderly palace chaplain Hieronymos in his place. It appointed three new bishops and replaced one (who thereupon sold his predecessor's Pontiac and gave the proceeds to the poor). It reduced the executive synod from twelve to nine members, and reorganized the administration of the central church fund. It also raised and equalized priests' salaries and introduced a new charter aimed at eliminating corruption.

LIKEWISE, the government has announced a wage increase for the civil service and a plan for the establishment of a Civil Service Institute with the first six-month course scheduled to begin in September. A more ambitious plan will attempt a general equalization of tax burdens and will restructure and enforce all forms of taxation.

The egalitarian features of the régime and its program have brought it a fair measure of popularity with those who are more interested in economic justice than in representative institutions: the small farmer, the agricultural laborer, the small businessman, and the factory worker—in short, the groups most favored by former Premier Constantine Karamanlis in his eight-year program of national economic construction. But the régime's proclaimed goal, "to turn Greece into a busy workshop in which industriousness, equality of privileges, law, and prosperity will prevail," has little progress to show thus far.

The government has imposed a degree of monetary stability by freezing prices of basic foodstuffs and most salaries—it has even decreed that no one may have a salary larger than that of the Premier, who draws \$1,000 a month. The one other major economic initiative is a much-publicized campaign to attract foreign investment. A first step was the signing of a contract with Litton Industries, which calls eventually for



Litton, in exchange for a considerable fee, to obtain \$840 million of foreign investment capital over the next twelve years. This is a pilot operation in a double sense, since it is the first of Litton's "regional multi-purpose development" schemes for underdeveloped areas. But the Litton contract is a long-term program. Specific new projects are few and modest: a Goodyear tire factory and a French fertilizer factory, for example, together add up to hardly more than \$18 million; the for-

eign-investment pipeline to Greece, for the moment at least, remains largely empty.

Record sums have been budgeted for education, both in school construction and teachers' salary increases. These and like measures, particularly in housing construction, have been accompanied by budgetary cutbacks in public services.

Drubbing the Drachma

Against the background of economic chaos largely responsible for the desperation that inspired the coup, the government unexpectedly published the gold and hard-currency reserves figures for the first half of this year. They are alarming. The six-months figure of \$260 million represents a real decline of \$42.3 million over the period. (In the corresponding period last year there was a real decline of only \$7.3 million.) Most ominously, there was a sharp drop in June, normally the first big tourist month of the year. Flagging tourism, although a major cause of the decline, is not the only determining factor: construction and repair work in Greek shipyards have fallen off precipitously as a result of the closing of the Suez Canal. If this trend continues—and there are many indications that it will—the Greek government will be forced to undertake measures to curtail domestic demand, as by limiting imports or even devaluing the drachma. But such measures would also dampen the spirit of enterprise and so thwart the campaign to attract foreign investment. The end result of all this is to make tourism more important than ever.

The first-ranking member of the triumvirate, Minister to the Premier Colonel George Papadopoulos, who is silent and unapproachable even to American officials, is responsible for liaison with King Constantine II. The King has generally maintained his distance from the junta, never losing an opportunity in his public addresses to remind the military of its pledge to effect a speedy return to constitutional government. His single success in opposition has been to prevent the appointments of army officers to ambassadorships.

The final paradox of the Greek situation is that the original strength of the military group has since be-

come its chief weakness. The reason the populace was caught flat-footed by the coup was that it came from a totally unexpected quarter—namely, from within the conservative National Radical Union. The military clique that engineered the coup made up the right wing of the party. At three o'clock in the morning of April 21 the King's adjutant, Michael Arnaoutis, says that he realized that his house was surrounded by armed men. He called the King on his direct line to inform him that he was beleaguered by Communists. "Shoot it out with them," commanded the King. A few minutes later Arnaoutis called back. "I can't shoot it out with them," he said. "They are all friends of mine."

WHEN PATAKOS discussed Conservative Party leaders and even Center Union deputies with me, he referred to many of them as old acquaintances and friends. The over-



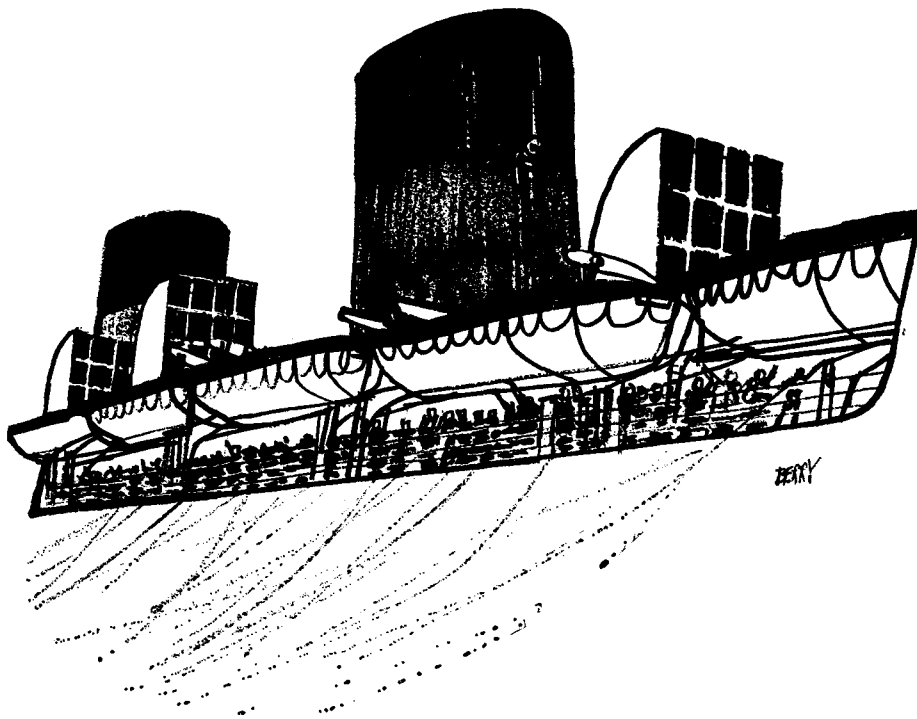
throw of government by their own kind precluded a violent reaction on the part of Conservatives and even at first assured some willingness to lend support. But a prolonged unconstitutional government even by friends is something else. After three months, the willingness to put up with it is vanishing. Moreover, because of their personal ties, the leaders of the régime are both unwilling and unable to inspire the minimum fear necessary to effective totalitarian rule.

While the government has all the administrative levers of power, it has remarkably little of the substance

of authority. This is why, though adjoined by its sympathizers to work fast and be laconic, the government talks so much and tries to act so tough, supplying headlines like "A Warning to Enemies of the Greek Revolution" and issuing acts of deprivation of citizenship. The régime is hostile to a free press because it has no indirect means whatever of influencing opinion. "Censorship is one thing," said a former Greek newspaperman to me. "We are used to that. But this outfit insists on editing the newspapers." Indeed, the Greek government carefully edited out the Israeli-Arab war from all five of its newspapers until the second day. Finally, this straining to be taken seriously is one of the main reasons why the present government has been characterized in the Athens coffeehouses as "a happening."

A senior Greek politician, now retired, has said that the present government must do two things before it leaves: guarantee the security of the country and then guarantee the security of all members of the government for the aftermath. The committee now drafting the new constitution was charged on June 15 to complete its task within six months. When it is completed, it will be presented for acceptance in a national plebiscite. Thereafter a constitutional government can be formed and a general amnesty declared to protect the members of the present government from formal reprisals. A special amnesty within the general amnesty could then be issued by the new government to Andreas Papandreou along with deportation orders. This is probably the only generally acceptable way of dealing with "the Papandreou dilemma."

"WHATEVER HAPPENS," said a prominent Greek publisher, "there will not be chaos. Instead, we shall have had this curious interlude in which a number of Greek senior military officers and their civilian associates may have sacrificed their reputations to the cause of maintaining order and laying the foundations of economic and social reform. One thing more: when constitutional government returns, Patakos will almost certainly return—if he wishes to—as a member of Parliament from Crete."



Farewell to the Great Ships

NOEL MOSTERT

So they're to go at last: the Queens. It's a shock, but they've been greedy sisters lately and have swallowed the Cunard profits; their combined annual losses run into several million dollars, and that couldn't go on. The *Mary* makes her last crossing at the end of this season, and the *Elizabeth* hers next year, and I find it impossible to think of the Atlantic without them. Or the Hudson.

No more that deep, deep boom resounding again and again up from the West Side piers and rocketing through the Manhattan canyons. No more that sudden surprise of seeing the river and the Jersey shore blocked out by these vast and decorative superstructures with their gleaming white decks and handsome red-and-black funnels. No more sitting down at the Battery and waiting, with one's sandwiches, for the occasion of their passing. I say no more with such finality because, although we haven't yet said good-bye to them, the association is, so to speak, over. We can

no longer simply accept them as part of the scene. There can no longer be that casual enjoyment of them on the river or the bay, because any sight of them now only means regretful hoarding of the image.

Still, it's nice to think they'll be around for even a little while longer, and this is a tribute in their presence, as it were. The Queens undoubtedly will remain the greatest ships ever built, however large those super-super tankers grow. Nothing like them will be seen again. No tanker, no matter what its size—and they're thinking of 500,000-tonners that would be a third again as long as the Queens—can ever carry the visual impact of these liners, especially when seen at speed, flinging the ocean aside in huge combers, their whole line one of power and splendor. Oceanic palaces of staggering dimensions.

Those dimensions have in fact helped kill them—the *Queen Elizabeth* was recently refitted at a cost of millions in the belief that she

would continue for perhaps another ten years, earning her way by cruising, but the sad discovery was that size limited her itineraries because so many places couldn't accommodate her, and it also made running her so expensive that fares were of necessity above the average.

THE ROLE of these ships in war and peace, and their impact upon the public imagination all over the world, has been remarkable. The news of their imminent demise made headlines on every front page in Britain and on many others elsewhere. It was brought up in Parliament (the *Queen Mary* should be anchored somewhere and used to help alleviate the national housing shortage, suggested one Labour M.P.), and generally caused such concern that it was hard to believe that they were not national institutions but commercial vehicles after all whose survival was wholly dependent upon the simple but rigid rules of profit and loss.

They've been with us for so long that they have actually come to be considered "camp" (is there anything that hasn't?). They receive this final and most bizarre of their accolades because, I suppose, they are so extraordinarily outside the times and of contemporary taste. To like and admire the Queens is an admission of advancing age and of sedate preferences. Their decoration is not inspiring, indeed for the most part it is without taste and even drab, but it has its own nostalgic comfort, a dark paternal solidity, Ritzish-Pall Mallish, that is possibly the last real Edwardian manifestation in our times.

The British have always had weird ideas about luxury but ever a thoroughgoing sense of the grand, which is a natural corollary of snobbery; their ducal palaces and country houses for the most part convey this misunderstanding of the former and grasp of the latter. The Queens exemplified this confusion. You could never call them glamorous, though they ferried those who were. They did not set off women's clothes the way the *Bremen* or *Normandie* or *Conte di Savoia* did: or the way the *Rotterdam* or *France* or Italian boats do today. They were not for fashion, but they certainly were for class. Other ships might