

'Martyrdom' of 34 in Athens trial

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A defence lawyer said today that 34 people on trial for sedition were not terrorists and traitors, but symbols, national heroes, and martyrs.

"This trial is a political trial dealing with political crimes," said Mr Evangelos Yannopoulos. "The defendants are political opponents of the Government, and their actions were purely ideological."

The Government alleged that the 34 plotted to overthrow the regime which came to power three years ago in a coup.

Six of 40 defence lawyers spoke during the morning session after the prosecutor Major Ioannis Liapis, had called for one death sentence, four life imprisonment terms, and a total of 264 years in prison for 21 other defendants. He also recommended three acquittals and suspended sentences for five men.

Death penalty call

All the defence lawyers rejected Government allegations that the 34 aimed at the violent overthrow of the Government. The evidence did not support the Government charges, they said.

The death penalty was urged for Dionysios Karageorgas, an economics lecturer accused of belonging to Democratic Devence. Life imprisonment for another professor, George Manghakis, and also for Ioannis Starakis, Igannis Kombotis, and Spyridon Loukas.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister, Mr Papadopoulos, is expected to announce some liberalisation measures during a press conference tomorrow. It will be his first since last October, when he announced a partial restoration of civil liberties and press freedom.

Sources suggest that he might announce a modification of martial law in force since the coup or a limited amnesty and release of some of the 1,800 political prisoners detained as dangerous to public security.

In BONN the Justice Min

ster, Herr Jahn, said that Greece's relations with West Germany will be seriously encumbered if Professor Karageorgas is convicted of sedition and sentenced to death.

He said, "I have not given up hope that in its judgment the court will reject the verdicts demanded by the prosecution with the aim of destroying the Government's political opponents." He added that he was shocked at the "extravagance" of the prosecution's demand for a death sentence for Karageorgas and life imprisonment for Manghakis.—UPI and Reuter.

the Greek Prime Minister, Papadopoulos, is expected to announce tomorrow, at a press conference, the re-activation of Article 10 of the new constitution, which safeguards the Greeks against arbitrary arrest and detention. The move is likely to be combined with leniency measures involving the release of political prisoners now detained without warrant or charge.

The regime promised to re-activate the habeas corpus provisions of the constitution "before April, 1970, at the latest" in the timetable submitted to the Council of Europe last December; the Prime Minister clearly wishes to show the regime's good will by adhering to this timetable, although Greece has withdrawn from the council, and eventually to forestall a condemnation of the Government by the council's foreign ministers, who are due to meet next Wednesday.

The European foreign ministers will be asked to consider at their meeting a "concept resolution" approved by their permanent representatives last month. This condemns the Greek regime for multiple violations of the European human rights convention, asks it to stop using torture as an administrative practice, and authorizes the immediate publication of the 1,000-page report of the human rights commission of the human rights Greek Foreign Ministry. The European Foreign Ministry has been trying to persuade western European governments not to release this.

The reinstatement of habeas corpus procedure would eliminate another of the European criticisms of the regime's domestic practices. However, the timing of the trial of the 34 Greek intellectuals, as well as the allegations of police torture made in court, has proved awkward for the Greek regime.

It is pointed out that the alleged tortures refer to dates before last November's agreement with the International Red Cross; and Red Cross delegates have since given assurances they had no evidence of malpractices since then.

European diplomats in Athens feel that the conviction of five journalists and a former minister, which led to the closing of the Athens newspaper Ethnos last week, is likely to carry weight during the discussions at the foreign ministers' meeting. They seem to question the effectiveness of all the safeguards introduced by the Greek Government so long as martial law, which was imposed three years ago, remains the supreme law of the realm.

The trial of the 34 accused of sedition and bomb explosions continued today with speeches for the defence.