

'Kill or stand trial' choice put to Greeks

By CAMPBELL PAGE

Greek police interrogating defendants in a show trial of 34 alleged resistance workers, going on in Athens, are said to have offered them recruitment into the Greek military intelligence service in Europe. Their task was executing leaders of the Greek resistance living abroad.

The claim is made in a document written in French in very small handwriting on one sheet of paper and was smuggled out of the notorious Averoff prison shortly before the Democratic Defence trial opened on Friday. The handwriting and signature have been positively identified as belonging to one of the defendants but the statement represents their common experiences.

The statement clearly shows the regime's efforts to produce a highly manipulated show trial and also emphasises the sufferings of the prisoners who were submitted

...je suis l'un des otages en Grèce - proposition d'échange
des otages - ... M. ... le 31/1/69 ... par le ...
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Part of the document smuggled out of Averoff prison.
The signature has been blacked out

to interrogation by three different arms of the security services.

"The jealousies and rivalries of the different police forces lead the interrogators to propose deals to the prisoners: immediate liberation (disguised as escape); humane treatment for those who agree to accept responsibility for acts of resistance and who promise not to speak of tortures and to appear in court as witnesses for the prosecution.

"Especially at the ESA (military police headquarters) and in the presence of officers from the intelligence service, proposals to work for the KYP (the military intelligence service) in Europe but with hostages left behind in Greece.

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Proposals to execute the leaders of the Greek resistance abroad, always with the same condition of hostages remaining in Greece."

According to the document the prisoners were well aware of the regime's intentions:

"Arrests are made blindly, they don't arrest one suspect but the whole family. The military authorities are preparing for the fabrication of a new court-martial. The by now standard objective is to spread fear, to persuade public opinion that the regime does not hesitate to strike where it wants, when it wants, and who it wants. The victims are chosen according to the needs of the moment in order to impress a specific social or professional group."

"Arrests are no longer confined to Left-wingers or stu-

Ford

German envoy seized

Guatemala City,
March 31

Six terrorists armed with tommy-guns today kidnapped the West German Ambassador to Guatemala as he was travelling from the Embassy to his home in the suburbs of this city.

The police said the gunmen in a car intercepted the vehicle in which the diplomat, Karl Graf von Spreti, was driving at mid-day and abducted him at gunpoint. They are believed to belong to the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR).

Von Spreti's family said he was 62 and suffered from a

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'Kill or stand trial'

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exhaustion (at ESA). The prisoner is made to walk non-stop in his cell under the surveillance of a guard and without food, drink, or sleep. He is beaten on every change of guard, every two to three hours. Very rapidly, thirst and insomnia produce hallucinations. At the end of six or seven days the prisoner becomes deranged, his nails become loose. . . ."

3 "Hallucinatory drugs, mainly at the Gendarmerie station of Nea Ionia. They are employed for up to 15 days continuously, with the result that the prisoner becomes like an animal and loses all control of responsibility. Secondary effects: nervous depression, attempted suicide (two cases)."

4 "Burning with cigarettes (at ESA)."

Under the heading, "Conditions of detention: terror, dehumanisation, blackmail," the document describes the attempts to recruit prisoners in military intelligence and has other pressures.

"Systematic terrorisation of prisoners, who are sometimes registered under false names. Refusal to notify families (of arrests). Continuous threats to men and women of sexual tortures.

"Dehumanisation: prolonged solitary confinement for five to six months and sometimes longer. Without clean linen, cigarettes, soap, without sunlight and often drugged, the prisoner may lose all consciousness of reality and even of his own existence.

"Blackmail: threats to submit the wives of prisoners to the same tortures they have suffered themselves and in front of them. Threats of rape, execution, disappearance."

The document closes by referring to the suspension of visiting rights granted by signed agreement to the International Red Cross last November. The suspension was applied in mid-February and the timing may be significant in a regime which was preparing a show trial to open in March.

The final paragraph says:

"The officers of the Military Police have often spoken with cynicism about the manner in which they had assigned responsibilities to the prisoners for the trial, and about the manner in which they would conduct a managed campaign in the press to prepare public opinion for the revelations of torture, or at least to justify them."

A group of Greeks describing themselves as the "20th of October Movement" yesterday claimed responsibility for explosions in Athens at the weekend. Their message said:

"At the moment when the junta strikes in Athens the 34 patriots in the illegal court martial, a group belonging to the 'Movement of the 20th of October' has placed three bombs which exploded in different parts of Athens and Piraeus. This act . . . was to show their solidarity with the patriots now under trial and with their decision to overthrow the military regime and install a popular sovereignty based on the revolutionary forces of the Greek people."

"Arrests are no longer confined to Left-wingers or students. By now there is no shelter for anyone. Royalist officers are tortured without more ceremony than an unknown student. The group whose trial is now being fabricated comprises essentially radical democratic intellectuals . . . none of whom has ever concealed his hostility to the regime or his will to oppose it."

In triplicate

The prisoners, the statement says, have been through separate interrogations at the hands of the three branches of the police—from the dungeons of the General Security Police in Bouboulinas Street, to the Military Police Headquarters in Queen Sophia's Avenue opposite the Hilton Hotel and next to the American Embassy in the heart of Athens, and finally to the Gendarmerie's establishment in the suburb of Nea Ionia.

Multiple interrogation produces its own absurdities. "And each branch of the police tries to 'prove' the rôle which it wants the prisoner to assume at the trial. In this manner it has frequently happened that several people have confessed to the same act of resistance. The prosecutor will therefore be free to choose."

Four principal methods of torture are listed by the prisoners:

1 "The most common is the 'falanga.' The soles of the feet are struck continuously with a club. The shoes are left on so that the prisoner's feet do not crack. From time to time the prisoner is made to jump on the spot to restore circulation and feeling."

2 "Walking the prisoner to

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