

# Publishers on trial in Athens

From Our Correspondent

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Prosecution witnesses at the Athens special military court said today that a newspaper interview calling for the restoration of democracy in Greece had caused them anxiety and constituted anti-national propaganda.

The witnesses, who included trade union leaders and security police officers, agreed with the charges brought against executives of the Athens daily Ethnos for publishing an interview with Mr. Ioannis Zigdis, a former Cabinet Minister. Mr. Zigdis had called for the formation of a government of national unity in Greece to avert fratricidal strife in Cyprus.

Three of the newspaper's publishers, Mr. Constantine Kyriazis, Mr. Achilles Kyriazis, and Mr. Constantine Nikolopoulos, as well as Mr. Yiannis Kapsis, editor-in-chief, and Mr. Constantine Economides, managing editor, are charged with "spreading false reports likely to evoke anxiety among citizens" and with "engaging in anti-national propaganda". Mr. Zigdis is accused of "moral instigation".

The defendants, who face up to five years' imprisonment on each count and a heavy fine, were arrested shortly after the interview was published on March 24. Five of them are still in custody. The managing editor, who is in poor health, has been released.

Witnesses for the prosecution maintained today that Mr. Zigdis's view of the critical situation in Cyprus constituted "false news" and not "opinion". As such it had aroused anxiety in them.

The military court rejected defence arguments that the tribunal was not competent to try press offences because the new press law refers such offences to the civil courts. It also denied a request for a postponement of the trial on grounds that the lawyers had had no time to consult their clients.

Witnesses for the defence include Mr. Kanellopoulos, the former Prime Minister, and five former Cabinet Ministers.

In the same building another special court continued to hear prosecution witnesses at the trial of 34 members of the "Democratic Defence" organization.

Elias Kalliakopoulos, a law student, who had joined the organization briefly, told the court he was ashamed that he was compelled to testify against his own friends.

He described how he had left the organization 10 days after joining it. He said he was a leftist and did not agree with the limited objectives of the organization. He said the judges should take his statement to the military authorities on this affair with a pinch of salt.