

Greeks hear of police tortures in Athens bomb trial reports

By Michael Manning, Athens, Saturday

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GREEK newspapers today published reports of the allegations, made by defendants in the Athens sedition trial, that they had been tortured by police to make them confess.

This is the first time newspapers have printed such stories since the present government came to power through a military coup in April 1967.

The 34 defendants, who include university professors, lawyers and an army general, are alleged to be members of an underground Democratic Defence organisation. They face possible death sentences on charges which include sabotage, arson and the use of arms to overthrow the Government of Premier George Papadopoulos by violence.

Today the Athens special military court ordered an immediate inquiry into the allegations of torture.

Three of the chief defendants, Professor George-Alexander Mangakis and Professor Dionyssios Karayorgas,

as well as the latter's university assistant, Ioannis Vassiliou, submitted written statements to the court last night, giving a full account of alleged police brutality. The full texts were made available today.

The five-officer tribunal, at the request of the crown prosecutor, Major Liapis, ordered that the chief medical examiner, Dr Kapsaskis, should appear in court to testify. Dr Kapsaskis had been sent to examine Professor Mangakis in jail, after his wife had made a public denunciation that he was being tortured.

I had to say I was not maltreated

Professor Mangakis told the court today that Dr Kapsaskis had called, but had not examined him. "I told him that I was not maltreated, because the police had promised me not to prosecute my wife

if I revealed nothing," he declared. But his wife, Angheliki, was sentenced to four years' imprisonment by a court-martial for "insulting the authorities" because she alleged her husband had been tortured.

A police witness today produced in court a hand-written confession signed by Professor Mangakis in which he admitted he had taken delivery of 13 time-bombs from Bengt Holmquist, a Swedish art critic, and had passed them on to Professor Karayorgas.

One of the time-bombs accidentally exploded in Karayorgas's hands blasting off the palm of his right hand and injuring him in the face and the eye. The explosion betrayed his organization's activities.

In his written statement to the court, Professor Karayorgas said he was taken to hospital and "while I was still regaining consciousness from the anaesthetic, I became aware that two persons in

civilian clothes, each on either side of the bed, were pulling my chest with great ferocity.

My bandages became red with blood

"At the same time they shouted at me to confess who had given me the explosives they had found in my house. As I was not answering, they continued pulling my chest with ever-growing harshness, until exhausted by the operation and the maltreatment I lost consciousness."

The next day, said Karayorgas, two police officers threatened to "exterminate" his whole family if he did not confess. Two weeks later, while still in hospital, two officers lied to him, his wife, mother, brothers and in-laws were "rotting in the detention houses and curse you for that. They will remain in detention

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to have a slow death, in case you don't speak."

That night he suffered a nervous breakdown and a stroke and the doctors asked the police to stop the questioning.

After he left hospital and was taken into custody, Professor Karayorgas said, he was beaten up during interrogation: "They took me to a small room next to the office. They ordered me to stand up with my back on the wall . . . a police captain stood in front of me, with his hands linked he hit my head, and with his knee he was hitting my belly and genitals or kicking my legs."

On another occasion he said he was kicked many times from behind on the waist and on his bandaged, amputated right hand: "This made me sink to the floor, my face was bruised while my

bandages became red with blood."

The full statement of Prof. Mangakis, which was made available today, asserted that he had been subjected to repeated beatings by a police colonel, as well as to "Chinese-style" interrogation which consisted of questioning him for several hours while standing up.

It was after one of these sessions that his wife called with food at the police station where he was held. As he staggered towards her he said in English: "They have struck me, they started torturing me."

"Since that incident, my interrogation was stopped. At the time I did not know why. Now I know it was due to the courageous action of my wife who, showing, I think, rare human bravery, raised her weak voice to protect her life's companion," the statement said.

The third defendant, Ioannis Vassiliou, said in his statement that he was taken by interrogating officers to a suburban house near Athens where, he asserted, he was given the "falanga."

Two gendarmes fastened his ankles to a rifle, he said, and raised the soles of his feet: "There it was, the well-known torture called Falanga. When a policeman began beating me the officers, except one who urged him to hit harder, left the room." After several sessions, he was put in solitary confinement for 90 days where he suffered a nervous breakdown.

The trial, which is being followed by prominent jurists from Western Europe, is expected to last about two weeks. Lawyers for the defence intimated that some other defendants were expected to denounce police brutality during interrogation.