

Diplomats play while Cyprus torn

by Nicholas A. Pittas

The Cyprus problem has a long and complicated history. Much has been written about it from various angles, so I do not propose to re-hash old arguments, which the interested reader can easily gain access to by investing a little time in the library. What I would like to discuss in this article are some of my personal observations and feelings as regards the cruel fate of my native land in recent years.

When the Turkish war-ships and fighter-bombers struck across the narrow stretch of sea, that separates the two countries, I had only been gone a fortnight from my home. After two years of service in the army on Cyprus I had decided to return to Dalhousie to complete my degree in political science. The island I left behind me was troubled, but for the vast majority of

the people life there had an ambience of easy rhythm and prosperity which, coupled with an almost ideal climate, made Cyprus somewhat of a 'Shangrila' both for the local inhabitants, and the many tourists who swarmed to her shores to enjoy the island's bountiful physical and cultural attractions.

Although Cyprus, in terms of territory and population, is a micro-state, in the intensity and variety of her history, physical environment, agriculture and 'international' population, she becomes a phantasmagoric kaleidoscope in which one can perceive the course of our Western civilization over the past several thousand years. If ever there was a cultural mosaic Cyprus was it.

And then the tanks came. In a month of terror and unprecedented destruction Cyprus was reduced to a

bleeding, helpless orphan in the world of nation-states. Diplomats rushed hither and thither 'tut-tutting', the U.N. Security Council rushed to meet in 'extraordinary' sessions and came up with repeated resolutions calling for the usual litany of 'good-will' and restraint. The pleas went unheeded. Greece, Turkey and Britain played diplomatic games at Geneva while the Cypriot was being cruelly crushed into the soil, that up 'till then he had nurtured with his sweat, and which now was being washed abundantly with the blood of its men, women and children.

So now I am reduced to repeating cold figures: over 10,000 killed, over 200,000 refugees in their own country, massive economic destruction, looting and unemployment. If we compare Cyprus to Canada a comparable tragedy in this country would mean 400,000 killed, 8,000,000 refugees and the loss of Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes to the invader.

When the fighting stopped Cyprus had been transformed from a 'Shangrila' into one more divided country in a world which seethes with the problems inherent in arbitrary and violent partitions. Like Ireland, Germany, Palestine, Korea, Vietnam and on, and on and on. It's now too late and useless to allot blame for the massacre of Cyprus, in relations between states (as with individuals) things are seldom 'black and white'. The problem for Cyprus, now, is to try to pick itself up, and hope that the

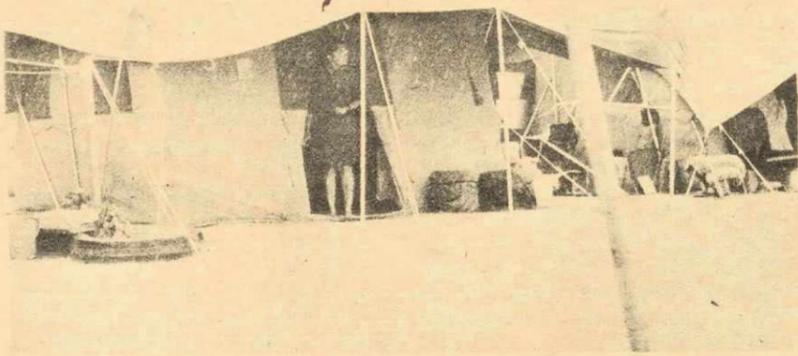
years will erase the scars and bitter memories.

To do this its people, Greeks and Turks, must be allowed to come to a *modus vivendi*. I believe the Greeks and Turks of Cyprus can live and work together. I know this from personal experience, and because the mentality of the Cypriot is neither aggressive nor petty. People can rise above 'ancient hatreds' and feuds, which political opportunists are so adept at manipulating in order to attain their 'strategic' goals, if they are left to put their own house in order.

But will it happen? Nothing is certain, least of all in international Politics, but there are people working hard to bring about 'the conditions for future harmony in Cyprus. Our own Dean of Law (Professor St. John MacDonald) has been engaged, through the 'good-offices' of the U.N. Secretary-General, in assisting the Cypriot negotiators, who are trying (one would hope), to arrive at a workable constitution for the island.

Canada has been contributing peace-keeping forces in Cyprus for twelve years, and has assisted Cyprus in other, less tangible, ways through their association in the British Commonwealth Nations. What we can do, here in Canada, is to support the efforts of the U.N. in this (and other) disputes, and to let our leaders know that in Canada, at least, people will not put up with the institutionalisation of the laws of the jungle and the use of brute aggression in the pursuit of morally reprehensible aims.

The basis for a solution to the Cyprus Problem has already been
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Refugees still languish in camps

Under the Persian carpet

by Lynn Watson

Present-day Iran is a land of vivid contrasts and strong contradictions. More than two-thirds of the population of 26 million are illiterate, while some 10 billion dollars has been spent on American arms in the last few years.

The country is now undergoing a period of extremely rapid modernization, it being the Shah's ambition to turn Iran into a big industrial and military power. The benefits of growth have been distributed very unequally, however, and economic development has been accompanied by severe political repression.

The public image portrayed by the Shah is that of a benign father of a growing nation. He is however a father who expects complete and unthinking obedience, as is shown by his statement that his people "have every freedom, except the freedom to behave treasonably". The definition of treasonable behaviour is interpreted in Iran as meaning the formation of or association with any group whose ideology is opposed to that of the constitutional monarchy as embodied in the person of their ruler.

In 1975 the Shah declared Iran to be a one-party state. Those who refused to join the regime's "Resurgence Party" were warned that they would be "either communist or without a country", and thus be faced with either prison or exile.

The Shah's instrument of repression of any opposition to his autocratic rule is the secret police organisation, SAVAK. This association is invested with wide-ranging powers and it has been ruthless and effective in crushing political dissent before it seriously endangers the Shah's position as an absolute authority.

The Shah has also used the more subtle tactic of appeasement in order to consolidate his own power. Thus he instigated the White

Revolution in 1963, which included a program of extensive land reform, the aim of which was peasant ownership of the land. This reform has in large measure been implemented, and there is little doubt that conditions have improved for many peasants. However, the political effect of land reform has been to transfer the dependence of the peasant from the landlord to the Shah himself, as the landlords have been replaced by State functionaries responsible to their monarch.

Social changes are taking place under the Shah, some of them to the benefit of the poor of the country. He is now faced with the problem of how to reconcile social progress with his own authoritarian, one-man system of government, as with social progress must come a degree of political awareness. At present, there is very strict censorship of the media, the Shah having closed down 95% of the Iranian press last year. Arrests for political offences are a frequent occurrence, and the procedure of trial of political offenders deserves some scrutiny, in the light of the Shah's professed respect for fundamental Human Rights.

Suspected political dissidents are arrested by SAVAK; which is then responsible for the pre-trial investigation of each prisoner. There have been numerous reports of torture during interrogation; SAVAK has made no concessions in order to disprove these claims, and prisoners are not allowed to receive any visitors nor consult with their counsel during the time when SAVAK is building up a file for prosecution purposes. It is disturbing that evidence of guilt has often rested solely on confessions made allegedly under torture.

Political offenders are tried before a military tribunal, and they are represented by a military counsel selected from a short list compiled



by the tribunal. The effectiveness of such defence is demonstrated by the fact that in 1964 four defence counsellors were themselves convicted of political offences as a result of presenting the cases of their clients too earnestly!

Very often political trials are held partly or wholly in camera, and even when the trial is declared 'open' foreign journalists and observers are barred from entry. On several occasions executions have resulted from secret trials, as in March 1972 when the official announcement of the verdict on nine political prisoners was made only after the executions had taken place.

In the course of the trial the onus lies with the defence to disprove the evidence compiled by the SAVAK during the pre-trial period, thus the defendant is seen as guilty until proven innocent.

The difficulty of proving one's innocence is greatly increased as the charges are very often extremely vague, consisting of imprecise allegations of "taking measures against internal security". The prosecution case in many trials has been extremely weak, and in one trial the only 'evidence' produced was that some of the defendants knew all of the others, and that all

of the defendants knew at least one of the others!

The rate of executions of political prisoners has been very high; Amnesty International estimates that a total of almost 300 people were executed for political offences during 1972 and 1973. Obviously the Shah is concerned that his method of dealing with opposition is not made public. Hence, the secret trials, the banning of foreign observers, the expulsion of an Amnesty International delegate in 1970, and the subsequent sentence of ten years imprisonment for this Iranian interpreter.

However, as Iran is a signatory to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and as Teheran played host to an international conference on Human Rights in 1968, such violations of fundamental freedoms as seen in Iran cannot and should not be glossed over.

Evidently the Shah clings to the hope that potential critics will be overawed and dazzled by the glitter of such occasions as his coronation ceremony in 1967 or Persia's 2,500th anniversary in 1971, and will omit to investigate all that has been swept under the glorious Persian carpet.