

U.S. influence?

A chronology of events in the Greek coup

By DEMOSTHENES SAVOPOULOS

"With the heroic stand of the youth, the workers and the people, the Papadopoulos regime has been toppled and its masquerade of democracy has been buried. The CIA and Pentagon fixed Papadopoulos as, in a similar way, they had fixed Diem. They have now assigned to other agents the naked oppression of the people and the colonization of our country.

"The people, who gave the critical blow to the whole military system of power, do not choose among tyrants. The people will continue their unyielding struggle with all means against the new form of occupation. The people will do in their new tyrants in the same way. They will continue and they will escalate the struggle until the hour that the people are sovereign, the army belongs to the nation, and Greece to the Greeks. The hour of popular victory is not far off. The people will win. Democracy will win."

statement of Andreas G. Papandreou, leader of PAK and a York economics professor
Nov. 25, 1973

In November, 1963, Gen. Duong Van Minh and other military officers carried off a coup d'etat against South Vietnam's failing dictator, Ngo Dinh Diem. As documented in the Pentagon Papers, the coup took place with the encouragement and assurances of the U.S. Government. Ten years later, on November 25, 1973, Gen. Phaidon Gyzikis, backed by the chief of the military police, Demetrios Ioannidis, pulled off a coup d'etat against Greece's failing dictator, George Papadopoulos.

The new 'prime minister' is Adamantios Androustopoulos, a lawyer trained in Chicago and with close U.S. ties. The new head of the air force is Alex Papanicolaou who, two days before, received a visit from the air force commander for the southern flank of NATO, U.S. Vice-Marshal Wilson. The New York

Times, Nov. 26, stated "the Nixon Administration had considerable forewarning of the coup d'etat." and despite the change of government, no question of recognition has been raised by the U.S. Instead the Times writes: diplomatic relations continue as before."

No doubt more will be learned about American involvement in this latest coup. But given what we do know about the conduct of U.S. foreign policy — in Allende's Chile, in Greece in 1967, in Indochina for decades — it is reasonable to assume the U.S. helped direct this changing of the guard in Greece. It certainly has the capability. As a Greek-American lobbyist for the junta, Prof. George Kousoulas, told a U.S. House of Representatives sub-committee in the summer of 1971: "For all practical purposes, the Greek armed forces are an extension of American armed forces."

PAPADOPOULOS NOT USEFUL

As with Diem in 1963, the U.S. had good reasons for wanting to do away with the Papadopoulos regime. For Papadopoulos' usefulness to the U.S. ended last month when his ruling junta almost collapsed, following student riots in Athens.

The massive mobilization and confrontation of the past few weeks, led by students and rapidly joined by workers, peasants, professionals and intellectuals, was brought to a temporary halt during the weekend of November 17 when NATO-supplied tanks and Pentagon-trained Greek commando units invaded Athens. In the two days of fighting that continued under martial law, Athens became the scene of terror and death. When it was over, perhaps four hundred people had been killed, two thousands wounded and thousands arrested in systematic block by block sweeps of the city.

Yet, when I spoke to a friend in Athens on Nov. 20, in a call that was very likely monitored, he told me, "Don't worry. We don't fear anything anymore." It was then that I realized what events had already shown: the Greeks had made a decisive and deter-

mined commitment to a struggle for liberation.

INNOCENT BEGINNING

The chain of events which brought Greece to the brink of popular revolution last month began almost innocently a year and a half ago on the fifth anniversary of the Papadopoulos coup which also marked the fifth year of martial law. On April 12, 1972, one hundred students gathered in front of the University of Athens singing the national anthem, songs of Theodorakis and a Cretan fighting song. They shouted "Demokratia". Eleven were arrested. The next day, another hundred students began a march from the Archeological Museum to the Polytechnical School. They were dispersed by police.

Then, beginning on April 25, a wave of student meetings, petitions, strikes and protests swept the university system, eventually involving the schools of biology, geology, physics, mathematics, the Athens Law School and the Engineering School in Salonica in northern Greece. The basic demand of the students was the right to elect their own councils, which were controlled by junta appointees, and their complaints centered on the specific issues of academic freedom and student rights.

From April to July, 1,600 students were arrested and interrogated by the Security Police. Some emerged after 24 hours with bruised and bloodied faces. Others were kept in jail.

Meanwhile, suits in civil courts did gain students the right to hold elections in the fall for their student councils. But the elections, held in November, were a farce and student anger deepened.

MASS STRIKES

By January, 1973, the students had again mobilized.

In February and March, sit-ins involving thousands and mass strikes occurred in all the major educational institutions of Greece. Students faced bloody attacks by police, mass arrests, and a decree drafting protestors into the army.

It was then that many students realized their fight for student freedoms was inseparable from the struggle against the junta regime. At the Athens Law School on March 20, where 2,000 staged a sit-in, students unfurled a banner on the roof declaring "OUT WITH THE AMERICANS."

The decisive escalation of resistance took place, however, on Wednesday, Nov. 14. That evening, 5,000 students barricaded themselves inside the Athens Polytechnical Institute and began broadcasting from a pirate radio station. The next day, the following declaration was heard throughout Athens and parts of Greece:

RADIO BROADCAST

"The students from all the schools during the student movement became



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conscious that our problems in relation to the democratization of education and the operation of the educational system could not be solved without change in the political situation. Thus, beginning our political struggle, the students and working people have closed themselves in the Polytechnical Institute to make our positions clear and to call upon the Greek people to join us and fight with us until the final victory.

"First, the main prerequisite for the solution of all the popular problems is the immediate overthrow of the tyrannic regime of the junta and the simultaneous institution of popular sovereignty.

"The institution of popular sovereignty is intertwined inextricably with national independence from foreign interests which for years have been supporting tyranny in our country. The vast mobilization of the Greek people and the demonstration of solidarity from all corners of Greece is the best answer to all those who tried to defame us.

"Here at the Polytechnic is the centre of the gathering together for the mobilization, en masse, of the popular struggle. All united in the struggle for democracy and national independence."

NAVAL MUTINY

Two major events filled the Greek political scene between March and the November uprising.

First, a naval mutiny disclosed deep divisions in the armed forces over support for Papadopoulos' policies. Papadopoulos survived this and took the opportunity to make a final break with the monarchy.

Second, Papadopoulos named himself president, rigged a referendum to legitimize the post and proceeded with a plan, long pressed for by the Nixon administration, for the politicization of the dictatorship. While lifting martial law and freeing most political prisoners, Papadopoulos retained personal control over defense, foreign affairs, public order and national security.

The ruse of democratization did not work. Politicians, albeit ambivalently, resisted the wooing of the junta's civilian prime minister to join in a plan for restricted elections.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

On November 4, 50,000 people, largely youth, gathered at Athens cemetery for the memorial service of George Papandreou, the last elected prime minister of Greece, who died in 1968. The ceremony quickly turned into an anti-junta demonstration when the crowd began shouting "Freedom", "Down with Papadopoulos", "The People are Sovereign", "Everyone to Sytagma" (the civic center of Athens) and "Andreas Papandreou is coming". Clashes and arrests ensued. The focus of action then turned to the trial of 17 arrested students and workers, and the ensuing student uprising.

Frightened by incipient revolution, the junta declared martial law and a full military alert. A tank smashed down the gates of the Polytechnic. Clashes broke out in every street and square in Athens. People, armed only with rocks and makeshift clubs, occupied buildings and built barricades. They were chased down streets by tanks and machine gun attacks.

Fighting continued until Monday, Nov. 19 when, according to Dean Braelis of CBS news, mass sweeps by commando units arrested everyone in sight who was young. Thousands were detained at Kereskaiki Soccer Stadium in Piraeus and at a military camp near the U.S. Embassy.

In a wrap-up report to the Toronto Star (Nov. 24) Mary Ann Weaver commented, "The Greek resistance movement showed itself to be a well-organized, disciplined force.

MILITARY COUP

It was under these conditions that a group of army officers, all part of the old Papadopoulos junta, and disgruntled by his recent—and largely unsuccessful—efforts to put a political mask on military rule, took control. One can guess that Washington's motives in embracing the coup were somewhat different. For Papadopoulos had become the object of universal vilification. His ability to maintain "internal security" so that the Pentagon could retain unquestioned use of its 12 major military installations in Greece, had become doubtful. New faces—like the obscure Gen. Gyzikis—were needed.

But it seems unlikely that this act of desperation can really be the trick, because, despite the attempt to soften public anger by purging top army and police organs, behind the scenes is Gen. Ioannidis, chief of the military police and director of the infamous torture center, ESA. One can expect that as soon as this new junta is challenged by renewed popular demands for freedom, the pretense of moderation now being cultivated will evaporate.

The Greek resistance has now been baptized in fire and blood. As Andreas Papandreou put it at a recent meeting of the Italian Socialist Party: "For the Chileans, as for the Greeks, the tough reality leaves no room for action beyond systematic, stubborn, programmed mobilization of the people for the overthrow of the oppressive state, for the radical transformation of the structure of power, for national independence."



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York prof gives version of events

By ROBIN ENDRES

"At first it was like a festival," according to York economics professor Andreous Papandreou, discussing the recent popular uprising in Greece to a packed audience at Osgoode's Moot Court Dec. 5. Papandreou is the leader of The Panhellenic Liberation Movement.

The students at Athens Polytechnical Institute occupied the university Nov. 14. They began broadcasting from their radio station with a powerful signal that could not be jammed by the authorities.

Their slogans were "Down with fascism", "Greece out of NATO", and for the first time in the student movement, "All power to the workers."

The student demonstration received too much support for the comfort of the Greek rulers. By Nov. 16, 40,000 Athenians were demonstrating their support in the streets of Athens. Bells began ringing across the city that evening. Citizens spontaneously formed neighborhood committees and built barricades in anticipation of armed repression.

But it was the grass-roots, populist nature of the uprising which scared the generals the most,

Papandreou said.

The junta used three means of putting down the uprising. First, they sent in the Greek green berets "who basically refused to shoot." Next came the Greek police. "You've seen the movie State of Siege?" Papandreou asked. "Well, these police are trained in the manner of State of Siege, by the AID (Agency for International Development) which trains them to treat their own people as the enemy. They shot to kill."

The third force consisted of armed troops, some of whom supported the students when they were asked to join them. Others were shot on the spot by their superiors when they refused to shoot. At least one tank began firing on the police.

The number of dead is unknown, but Papandreou claims 400 is a conservative estimate. North American newspapers have consistently put the figure at 13.

Thousands were rounded up and taken to the main stadium, then transferred to internment camps. The uprising continued, however, when thousands of construction workers and peasants in the streets the following day demonstrated their

support for the students.

The new junta has said only that it will continue to honour its international obligations. The U.S. responded immediately by contributing \$15 million and opening a new base for the Sixth Fleet in Crete. This is the fourteenth American base in Greece.

Papandreou received loud applause when he said, "We feel our struggle is the same as Chile's. The only thing which separates us is distance, nothing else."

As for the response he feels Canadians should make, Papandreou said we must demand that NATO members live up to their responsibility for the oppression in Greece, "for the blood spilt in our streets and to be spilt in our streets."

The guns used by the Greek military are made in Canada, Germany, and Britain, Papandreou informed the audience.

Shortly after the suppression of the uprising, a group of men entered the offices of one of the Athenian newspapers and shut it down. When asked on what authority they were acting, they said, "Chief's orders."

"This is a Kafka world," Papandreou concluded.