

Columnists Bore Gifts to Greeks

By Jack Anderson

The Greek dictatorship has sponsored a luxury tour for some of America's best-read conservative columnists. In some cases, their wives also made the trip.

Not surprisingly, the red-carpet trip produced a gush of pro-junta columns in the nation's press. Readers, however, didn't know that the tour was financed, at \$2,000 a head, by the government-controlled Hellenic Industrial Development Bank, whose urbane governor, Paul Totomis, once rounded up thousands of innocent Greeks in concentration camps.

Totomis was the Junta's Minister of Public Order for six months after the 1967 coup. This charming Athenian man-about-town put up the columnists at the plush King George Hotel, arranged for their first class travel and picked up their bills for fine wines and Greek foods.

The suave Totomis and his bosses would have gotten their money's worth out of the junket if the only man on it had been Ralph de Toledano, who distributes his conservative views to 100 papers. "For the first time in its 150 years of independence," wrote de Toledano, "Greece is prospering and the people satisfied."

But de Toledano had another gift for the Greeks. When Totomis' bank sponsored a pavilion at the Greek-American

AHEPA conference in Atlanta, de Toledano wrote Vice President Spiro Agnew on Totomis' behalf. The Vice President did not know Totomis, but took de Toledano's word for the Greek's good works.

In a personal letter, Agnew — without ever seeing the bank's pavillion — lauded Totomis' contribution to Greek-American amity. The letter has been proudly publicized by Totomis.

The dictatorship reaped further benefits from columnist James J. Kilpatrick, who praised the way things are going under the military regime. The capable, sometimes caustic Kilpatrick failed to tell his millions of readers that the bank had picked up his tab when he singled out the bank for praise.

"The more the present government succeeds in promoting industrial growth around the country, the more secure that government becomes. Through . . . such energetic outfits as the Hellenic Industrial Development Bank, the government is doing just that," wrote Kilpatrick.

Other kind words were written by junketeering columnists Anthony Harrigan, who doubles as executive vice president of the Southern States Industrial Council; former National Press Club President Allan Cromley, Daily Oklahoman bureau chief in Washington; Robert Baskin, Dallas Morning News political writer,

and Oscar Naumann, Journal of Commerce economic writer.

While most of the copy written by the subsidized tourists is favorable to the junta, Cromley and Naumann did take a few honest bites at the dictatorship. Cromley wrote candidly: "The fact is that the present government is a form of dictatorship which exercises sporadic censorship of the press and exists without periodic consent of the government." Naumann criticized the Greek steel industry.

When we questioned the columnists about their week of junketing, the reaction was mixed. De Toledano said: "I'll stick by my friendship with Paul Totomis. I think he's doing a helluva job there." The facile de Toledano said he had even helped out Totomis with a little unpaid public relations work.

Kilpatrick called it a "routine industrial tour," and said he had been led to believe the Greek government had not picked up the tab. Baskin, Cromley and Naumann also spoke frankly with us.

Only Harrigan, who finds even President Nixon's politics too far left for him from time to time, refused to discuss the junket.

We reached Totomis by overseas telephone at his bank in Athens. For 45 minutes he vigorously defended himself. There was nothing wrong with the tour, he said. As for his roundup of Greeks in 1967, he said there had been no com-

plaints from the detainees. In any case, he said he was merely carrying out orders from higher up. "I have lived my entire life in honor," he said.

Footnote: Among other junketeers were travel writer Theo McCormick and U.S. Steel public relations man Tom Geoghegan. One of those invited by Totomis, AP economic writer Sterling Green, turned down the junket because free trips are against AP policy.

Intelligence Reports

Anti-CIA Campaign — The Soviets, apparently, have launched a world-wide campaign to discredit the Central Intelligence Agency. Particularly in Asia, Soviet propaganda blames the CIA for everything from conspiring against President Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines to stirring up ill will between India and Bangladesh.

Mao's Successor — Intelligence reports say China's Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Premier Chou En-lai have discussed how to prepare the Chinese public for the inevitable demise of the revered Mao. The attempt to build up Lin Pao as a successor led to an abortive coup when he got in too big a hurry to take over. Mao is said to recognize, however, that he cannot live much longer and that a successor must be groomed who can hold China together.

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