



*“ , , Six years ago the letter Z suddenly appeared everywhere in Athens; on walls, on sidewalks, on posters, even on official government bulletins. Z stands for the Greek verb ZEI, “he lives.” “He” was Gregorios Lambrakis . . . ”*

# THE LAMBRAKIS AFFAIR



*On the threshing floors where one night the brave danced  
the olive pits remain  
and the crusted blood of the moon  
and the epic fifteen syllable of their guns.  
The cypress remains. And the laurel.*

**Yannis Ritsos**

Wednesday May 22, 1963, in Salonica, Gregorios Lambrakis, assistant professor of medicine at the University of Athens, a deputy aligned with the EDA party (Union of the Democratic Left) and chairman of the Greek Committee for Peace, addressed a rally protesting the placement of Polaris missiles in Greece. As he left the assembly hall he was knocked down by a three wheeled delivery truck. Taken unconscious to the hospital, he died three days later without ever regaining consciousness. Thanks to the spontaneous intervention of a peace demonstrator, the driver of the truck, Spiros Gotzamanis, was arrested the same evening. His accomplice, E. Emmanouelidis, was arrested several days later. Earlier the same evening, a second deputy of EDA, George Tsarouhas, was beaten unmercifully by organized "counterdemonstrators," thugs of a right-wing paramilitary organization.

As Lambrakis was ushered to his grave by 400,000 Greeks, the largest crowd Athens has ever seen, the government and the pro-government papers described the incident as a "regrettable traffic accident." A large segment of the press, however, refused to accept the official version, and a post-mortem examination of Lambrakis' cranium revealed internal hemorrhaging which could not have been caused by a fall to the ground, but only by a blow from a blunt instrument. With public pressure mounting, the Karamanlis government was forced to designate Christos Sartzetakis as Examining Magistrate to investigate the incident. High Court Chief Justice Georgiou, furthermore, investigated the brutal beating of Mr. Tsarouhas, and recognized that "serious charges weighed heavily on certain senior officers of the Gendarmerie."

As the painstaking investigation of the Examining Magistrate started uncovering unshakable evidence of the complicity of high officials, Mr. Kollias, Prosecutor General of the High Court of Athens, travelled secretly to Salonica to "advise" Mr. Sartzetakis against charging the officers of the Gendarmerie. The press, learning of the secret journey, considered it as "the first open intervention of the authorities in the case." Mr. Kollias' intervention had allegedly been suggested by the Palace. Several attempts by pro-government papers to link Mr. Sartzetakis with the Left were proven totally unfounded, and his political preferences were shown to be to the right. The Examining Magistrate completed his investigation refusing to bow under pressure. By September 14, 1963, four high ranking officers of the Gendarmerie (Mitsou, Kamoutsis, Diamandopoulos, and Kapellonis) had been charged with complicity in the assassination of Lambrakis.

In the meantime, the Karamanlis government fell and the leader of the Center Union party, George Papandreou, became prime-minister. The famous composer Mikis Theodorakis founded a youth organisation named "Lambrakis" which played an important role in the democratization of the country. This process was reversed on July 5, 1965, when the King dismissed Mr. Papandreou, thus violating the constitution and creating the conditions for the perpetuation of a fascist state. It is not surprising that in such a political climate, the murderers received light sentences, and the officers never stood trial.

The trial of those "directly and morally responsible" for the murder of Lambrakis started on October 3, 1966. Gotzamanis was sentenced to eleven and a half years in a prison farm, where each year counted double. Mikis Theodorakis, in his testimony during the trial, accused the Palace, and specifically Queen Mother Frederika, of being the actual organizer of the assassination.



The first cabinet after the Coup. Front row from the left: Colonel Papadopoulos, former Prosecutor-General Kollias, King Constantine and General Zoitakis.

## THE MILITARY COUP

On April 21, 1967, two weeks before general elections were to be held, a group of colonels staged a Coup d'Etat. It appears to be established by now that another coup was under preparation by the King and a group of Generals, in consultation with the American Ambassador (see, for example, Atlantic Monthly,

July, 1968.) It is believed that the colonels, having been tipped off by the CIA, simply acted first. The boss of the junta, George Papadopoulos, had been liason between the CIA and the Greek Intelligence Agency KYP. According to all observers, George Papandreou would have won a landslide victory had the elections been held.

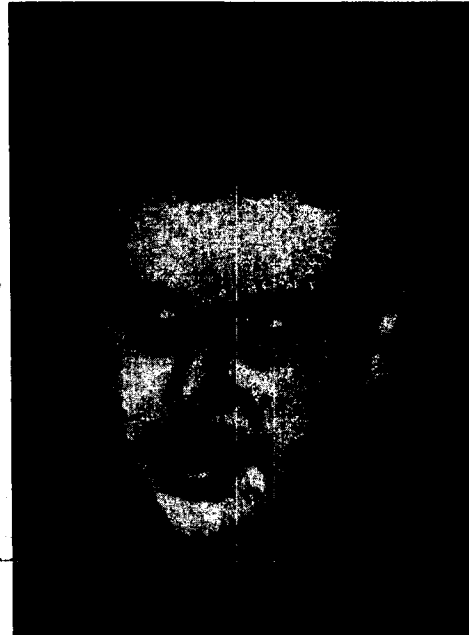
The colonels established a ruthless dictatorship which still rules Greece. Prosecutor General Kollias became Prime Minister, and most important offices were taken by military officers. In an internal struggle for power, the King attempted a second coup on December 13, 1967. This coup failed, and Mr. Kollias followed the King to Rome. Colonel Papadopoulos appointed himself as Prime Minister, and has been ruling Greece ever since. Thousands of Greeks have been imprisoned or deported to remote villages and islands without trial. Torture has become an offically sanctioned method to extort confessions.

Among the colonels' accomplishments has been the administration of "justice" in connection with the Lambrakis affair: General Mitsou and Colonel Kamoutsis of the Gendamerie were cleared of all charges and "rehabilitated" by government decree (September, 1968.) Gotzamanis, the murderer, was recently released from prison. Reporter Bertisios who played a vital role in uncovering the plot in the Lambrakis assassination was sentenced to four years in prison. Ex-deputy George Tsarouhas died after having been arrested by the police (May, 1968.) The official report attributed his death to a heart attack. The "Lambrakis Democratic Youth" pacifist movement was dissolved and all its leaders are held in prison without trial.

Mikis Theodorakis is in prison. He was arrested on August 21, 1967, released on January 27, 1968, rearrested on August 23, 1968, and exiled to the remote village of Zatouna in the mountains of the Peloponesus where he was kept under house arrest. Recently, he was transferred to the Oropos prison near Athens. Theodorakis has never stood trial. His music is banned in Greece today. It is an offense, punishable with imprisonment, to play, lend, buy, and sell his records and tapes, or to perform his music. He has nevertheless composed and smuggled out of Greece several songs; among them the score for the film "Z".

# GREECE TODAY

*My country that was the cradle  
of beauty,  
The cradle of the golden mean,  
Today a place of death.  
So much light turned to darkness,  
So much beauty to fear,  
So much strength to weakness,  
So many heroes to marble busts.*  
—A song by Mikis Theodorakis



Mikis Theodorakis

The Greek people are living today under one of the most backward and oppressive dictatorships. All free nations have condemned and isolated the regime. Most recently, the European community, under the leadership of Sweden, Denmark, West Germany, and England, forced the junta to resign from the Council of Europe.

Yet, the United States Government finds it necessary to support the colonels and to provide them with military aid, which is used to keep the people of Greece enslaved. Pictures of American military officers and congressmen with Greek officials often adorn the front pages of the censored Greek press. The Commander of the Sixth Fleet, Vice President Agnew, Congressman Pucinski, and many others, do not hide their satisfaction for the services rendered to the "free world" and NATO by the junta. The State Department quite unsuccessfully pressed our European allies not to expell Greece from the Council of Europe.

Meanwhile, anti-americanism has reached an all time high in Greece as the people firmly believe that American Might stands behind the Colonels. A resistance movement is swelling slowly but steadily. There are mainly three resistance organizations: Patriotic Front, Democratic Defense, and PAK. Their activities so far have been confined to organizing the structure, fighting police infiltration, and planting bombs; more than one hundred bombs have exploded in Athens alone in the last few months.

Greek politicians, of all political persuasions, have adamantly refused to accept the slightest cooperation with the junta. Qualified observers place the popular following of the regime at less than 5%. The Greek Army is in shambles, its only function being to protect the government from the people. Hundreds of experienced officers have been dismissed or imprisoned while the remaining ones are suspicious of each other. The economy of the country is deteriorating rapidly. The educational system has returned to the dark ages. Literature and the Arts are dead. Every report from Greece carries the plea of the Greek people: "Help to overthrow the shameful regime."

Immediately after the coup, concerned individuals all over the world formed committees whose purpose is to disseminate information about the situation in Greece and the nature of the Greek problem; to discourage travel to Greece; to help families of political prisoners; to urge governments to adopt a firm stand against the junta. One of these committees is responsible for this pamphlet. If you wish more information on the situation in Greece, we would be happy to send you the newsletter "Greece Today."

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*These trees cannot exist with less sky,  
These stones cannot exist under alien steps,  
And these people can only exist under the sun,  
And these hearts can only exist by justice.*

*Yannis Ritsos*

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