

DEMOCRACY AND THE TRUTH

Dear Sir,

I have come across an article in your newspaper about Greece today, which is nothing but a tissue of lies. Please allow me to restore the truth on some points.

Fiction: The writer of the article claims to have appeared in trials in our courts, as an international lawyer.

How could this have taken place, given that Greek legislation does not permit foreign lawyers to appear in trials in our courts?

Fiction: "The courtroom is an old stable belonging to the royal family", a situation which is attributed to the "socialist government".

Fact: Our courts were built immediately after the liberation of the country from the Turkish yoke (by means of the revolution of 1821, which earned just renown throughout the world) and contained courtrooms and offices quite adequate for the administration of justice.

When conditions changed after World War II, our courts

An open letter to the Editor of the Sunday Independent

were housed in other, modern, buildings in the center of Athens until the colossal marble edifice on Alexandra Avenue, currently being extended, could be built.

The old building (what your writer refers to as a stable) has been demolished in order to make room for another of the parks so essential to this populous city.

Fiction: "In the villages of Greece conditions are medieval".

Fact: Do the six million foreign visitors who come to the Greek countryside each year and enjoy its beauty, its cleanliness, its facilities and the smile and hospitality of the people know this?

What has your writer to say to those European scholars and artists and to the thousands of other foreigners who pay astronomical sums in order to acquire houses of their

own in the Greek countryside? Why is land in the villages more expensive than land in Athens itself?

Fiction: "American families have to stay in hotels because shipping of their household goods is unreasonably delayed".

Fact: For reasons of economy the American authorities lease old buildings and are exclusively responsible for what happens there, since it appears to be their wish to constitute separate communities within Greece.

Fiction: The PX is badly stocked and roaches roam freely among the foodstuffs.

Fact: The PX operates exclusively under American management and no Greek has any responsibility for the way it is run.

Indeed, your writer's general attitude is evident from the fact that he refers to the Greeks as "natives", just as Columbus's soldiers referred to the American Indians (NB: Christopher Columbus was the name of an

explorer from Spain, who happened to discover the American continent).

As a Greek I find it regrettable and as a journalist shocking that the public should be subjected to "information" of this sort, even more so when it is provided by an American, supposedly a citizen of a free democracy, a form of government which depends directly upon accuracy of information.

And now I should like to make a proposal to your newspaper. The Union of Greek Journalists has agreed to undertake all the expenses of a visit to Greece by a journalist of your paper, so that he can see for himself and report back with a true image of our country. If even a fraction of what your anonymous contributor has said is found to be true, we, the journalists of Greece, will in addition pay him a large sum to compensate him for his trouble.

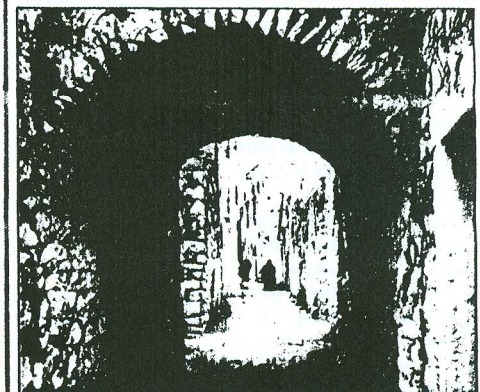
Thanking you in anticipation, Herakles Tzathas, Journalist

WOMEN PROMOTE AGRO-TOURISM

The inauguration of the first women's agro-tourist cooperative on the island of Chios was held on November 9, in an atmosphere of celebration in medieval and traditional dwellings in the villages of Mesta, Pigi, Olympi and Armolia.

Many Greek and foreign personalities supported this ef-

fort for a women's cooperative on the island of Chios. Among the guests were the wife of the Greek Prime Minister and President of the Greek Women's Union, Margaret Papandreou, the adviser to the Prime Minister of Australia Ann Summers and the General Secretary of Equality Chrysanthi Antoniou-Laiou.



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Apart from this new effort in Chios, the General Secretariat for Equality has set up four more women's cooperatives in different parts of the country. The experiment has been successful, leading to the implementation of the program in other parts of Greece.

In a country that devotes so much of its energy to tourism, the establishment of agro-tourist cooperatives was a good place to start.

The central idea is to rent rooms to tourists in the homes of the women who are members of the co-op. Thus, the

human relations and often leads to the formation of close friendships.

The co-op movement with its democratic organization has been seen by the General Secretariat of Equality as one of the most suitable mechanisms for the plan to bring women into production.

The encouragement of women to join the co-op movement is part of the broader political philosophy of the socialist Government within the framework of the positive action plan to bring women into production.

The General Secretary, Chrysanthi Antoniou-Laiou, pointed out that "In the long run, it is our aim that men and women together, in the same cooperatives, will continue with their collective labor for the rapid development of the country, and that this development will be achieved by social justice and the social liberation of women".

GERALDINE FERRARO

Former vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro and W. German "Green" leader Petra Kelly spoke with both humor and bitterness at the Conference on Women and the Mass Media held in Greece and organized by the General Secretariat for the Equality of the Sexes and the General Secretariat of Press and Information.

"I have to say at the beginning that on the whole the press was fair. But did they treat me differently because I was a woman? Absolutely", said Geraldine Ferraro in her presentation. "In the event of a nuclear confrontation, I was asked, are you strong enough to push the button? They should have asked whether I had the knowledge and fortitude to move ahead with arms control negotiations and to prevent getting to the point where we even think of pushing the button".

Later she told SPOTLIGHT that she no longer has the problem with the press that she had during the election period. "Now I am considered a national leader in my country. I now draw crowds. Not only women but men listen to what I have to say. I have become very much a part of national politics".

Petra Kelly had this to say to the conference: "Men predominate in the mass media, which are the most important means by which a change as far as women are concerned could be brought about".

Ben Marr (UK) described the policies of Britain's Thames TV channel, of which he is personnel manager, and the

possibilities of promoting women journalists alongside their male colleagues.

Mrs Kathy Bonk, legal adviser to the major women's organization NOW, spoke to the conference about the way in which the media operate in America.

Androula Vlachou, representing the Cyprus Union of Jour-



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nalists, said the presentation of women in the mass media bore no relation to reality. The women of Cyprus have to fight not only to safeguard their position, but also to ensure their human rights. Their struggle is a dual one - for survival and for liberation - as it is for women in Chile and Salvador.

Among other speakers were: Margaret Gallagher (Ireland) on "Women and information", Gene Wilson (USA), Professor at the University of Missouri, on "The status of women in US media", Maria Polenaki (Greece) on "Women in humor and humor in women", Ilic Dreculic (Yugoslavia) on "Women and mass media in socialist countries", Lina

Alexiou (Greece) on "The woman journalist faced with the problem of equality" and Valentina Federovna (USSR) on "Woman and the Soviet press".

The conference was addressed by representatives of many women's organizations, who analyzed and criticized the role of the press in the continued presentation of women by means of down-graded role stereotypes and made proposals as to action to be taken.

Margaret Papandreou, speaking as President of the Union of Greek Women, referred in her address to the influence of the mass media on the position of women. In order for the reader's intelligence to be respected, Mrs Papandreou said, there is an urgent need for a "ground plan of principles" or "system of ethics" to be formulated within which each newspaper will function.

During an interval, Mrs Papandreou was asked by a SPOTLIGHT reporter how she felt she was portrayed by the media in Greece and abroad.

"In general", she replied, "I am portrayed more honestly and better abroad than I am in Greece. Since I am a political person, I do expect criticism and I welcome it when it has to do with issues. What I find unfair is the attempt to put words in my mouth or to judge my motivation and thus give an image of a woman who is very grasping for power and eats up various ministers and who has extreme ambitions for her children. This is a distorted picture of me and difficult to fight because it is not a question of substance. I should make clear that

I am talking about newspapers and not television".

At the Prime Minister's home

After the international conference we met Geraldine Ferraro and her husband at the Prime Minister's residence in the Athens suburb of Kastri, and we were able to ask her about her meeting with the Prime Minister.

"We discussed the relationship between the US and Greece", said Mrs Ferraro. "I am very pleased to see that we are cooperating on issues of terrorism. We have dialogue. We talked freely because we are both democrats".

Geraldine Ferraro, as she herself said, represents the largest Greek community in the US. "My first speech in Congress was on Cyprus. I am for peace in that area".

Asked how Americans saw the improvement in US-Greek relations, Mrs Ferraro replied enthusiastically that "they are very pleased. Greece is very close to us. We feel very strongly about its position with reference to the entire Aegean. We are delighted that our bases are here. And we see our relationship as being good".

She also told SPOTLIGHT that "You can't separate women from the peace movement. It is their duty as well as men's to continue the battle against armaments. Women are the ones who have been demonstrating and who are demonstrating and protesting. Jesse Jackson was representing a women's group. They collected petitions throughout the country..."

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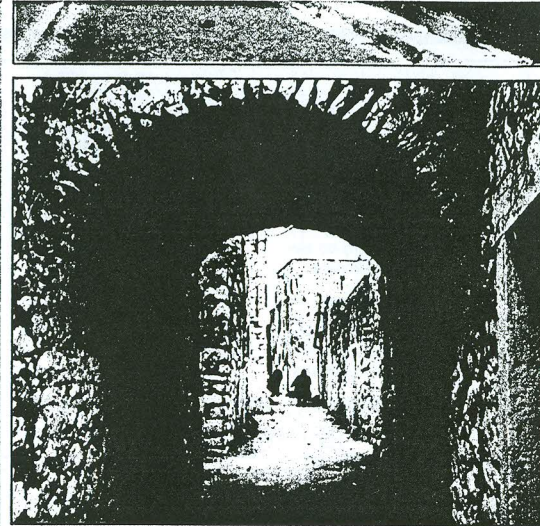
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