

- I. General Koumanakos is a highly educated officer of the Greek Army. His professional abilities, outstanding military achievements, character and principles are recognized by Greeks and foreigners alike.

Graduate of Greek, British and American Military Colleges, Professor of Tactics at the War and General Staff College, Professor of Strategy and Strategic Intelligence at the Greek National Defence College, he is also a graduate of the University of Political and Economic Sciences and has studied widely in Greek History and Philosophy.

During the Albanian Campaign (1940/41) he was promoted on the field to the rank of Captain and was with the first group of officers (June 4, 1941) who escaped the German Occupation to join the Greek Free Forces in the Middle East. Having a Flying Officer's diploma he was posted to the 13th Hellenic Bomber Squadron which was in continuous operation against the Axis Forces in the Middle East and Mediterranean Theatres of War.

From 1947 to the end of 1949 he fought continuously against the communists and he was recognized by his superiors as one of the contributors to final victory (see General Van Fleet's letter) as the capturer of Mount Kleftis, Murgana, Point 1822 etc., for which he was awarded five gold medals for Bravery and was promoted for heroism and outstanding tactics and combat efficiency on the field to Lt. Colonel.

He volunteered during the Korean War, where he served as Commander of the Hellenic Expeditionary Forces (1952-53) and successfully fought against the Chinese and North Korean Communists. (See attached records)

In 1960 he was sent to Cyprus, heading the Greek first Military Detachment. Both the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Averof, and his Cypriot colleague, Mr. Kyprianou, praised his ability in handling such a delicate mission, in letters to the Greek General Staff.

In 1964/65 he was head of Operations, General Staff.

At no time did he accept political or para-military membership in any political party. This earned him respect but also created enemies.

Over 30 Greek and foreign medals have been awarded to this officer, among them: six "gold medals" for bravery, three "war crosses", the U.S.A. "Legion of Merit" and "Silver Star", the Belgian "War Cross" and "Knight of the Phoenix" and the highest Korean war medal, the "Golden Ulto."

The sacrifices made by this officer's family should not be overlooked. His only brother, Flying Captain E. Koumanakos, was killed in action in 1943 during the war in the Middle East.

His uncle, General Kulis Koumanakos, was killed fighting in Athens against the Communists during their attempt to seize power in December 1944.

His first cousin, G. Koumanakos, was also killed fighting the Communists during the Axis occupation with the Vrettakos group of officers.

His wife, a lawyer, served voluntarily as nurse in advanced hospitals during the bitter fighting of the years 1948/49 and was decorated as a member of the national resistance during the Axis occupation.

II During the events of April 21st 1967 General Koumarakos was in Beyrouit, accompanying his wife who was attending a Christian Social Welfare Congress. On May 17th he returned to Greece, believing that he had nothing to fear from an anti-communist regime, an assumption he based on his record and achievements.

On the evening of May 24th, 1967, being at his home with his wife and three children, General George Koumarakos was arrested by order of the Government.

After five months of detention at a Police Station without a charge he was taken on October 21st to the "Averof" Prison and placed in a narrow, damp cell reserved for common criminals. The only furniture available was an iron bed and a chamber pot. There was no window, no electric light after 8 p.m. and all books were forbidden.

No reply whatsoever was made to his protest against such treatment - treatment offensive to human dignity and especially to that of a General of the Hellenic Army who had spent his whole life fighting for his country as well as for the highest human ideals of the free world.

Three days later, on the afternoon of October 24th, the General was found senseless in his cell. The prison doctors diagnosed a heart attack due to shock to the nervous system. They ordered absolute immobility and his immediate transfer by stretcher to the prison hospital, where he remained for many weeks among thirty or forty criminals of the common law.

His imprisonment was attributed to his "calumniating other officers in 1963", a charge which took five months to be formulated. No time was granted for a verbal or a written defence which is the right of every accused person.

Neither the General himself nor any lawyer has been allowed to read the evidence of the charge.

It should be stated that the Greek law can be invoked in the case of calumny (being characterised simply as a misdemeanour) but detention pending trial may be ordered only in cases where the accused is suspected of making an attempt to escape.

It is obvious that there was no reason for changing the already existing detention at the police station to imprisonment under such mediaeval conditions. The suspicion arises, therefore, that there was a premeditated action to provoke the moral breakdown of General Koumarakos.

(It may be worth noting that the investigation against the General was entrusted to a lower ranking officer, Captain Nettos, who was later accused and condemned to six years imprisonment for receiving bribes for covering up the crimes of accused persons.)

After the failure of the King's attempt to restore order and legality to the country on December 13, 1967, Mr Papadopoulos's Government granted an amnesty which included General Koumanakos, since no basis of accusation existed against him.

The General lived for seven and a half months peacefully with his family without any provocation. It was clear, however, that he could be re-arrested at any time and, in fact, the strange attempt against the life of ex-Col. Papadopoulos on Aug. 13, 1968, provided the opportunity.

On August 14, 1968, at three o'clock in the morning the General's house was surrounded by Government agents who led him away, without any explanation whatsoever, from his brutally awakened wife and children. A witness of this scene is Miss Nancy Leonards, American citizen, of Topeka, Kansas, U.S.A., who happened to be staying as a visitor with the Koumanakos family.

After three days of detention at a police station General Koumanakos was sent into exile, characterized as being "dangerous for his country's security."

The first place of exile was the town of Farga on the north west coast of Greece. On October 28, 1968 (the Greek OXI Day) he was transferred by bus, accompanied by two policemen, to Metsovo, a village in the Pindus Mountains. Finally, on February 27, 1969, he was again transferred to Deskati, another village in Northern Thessaly, where he remains.

In Farga he was at all times guarded by a policeman who followed him at a distance of a few paces. In Metsovo and now in Deskati he cannot walk beyond the last houses of the village. He is not permitted to speak to officers and foreigners and from time to time he is ordered to stay for one or more days in his room. People, and especially public servants, are afraid to come into contact with him. Deprived of his family and his friends the General receives the pay of a private soldier i.e. 17 drachmae per day to cover daily expenses more than ten times higher. There is no decent hotel with private rooms and it was only by accident that he was able to rent a house.

His exile, which was originally for six months, was extended for another three months on February 14th. No explanation is given for this extension nor for the continuous change of the place of exile.

In July, 1967, ex Brig. Pattakos, exercising the duties of Minister of the Interior, expressed his astonishment at the imprisonment of General Koumanakos and could not give any explanation. In December last ex-Col. Makarezos, Minister of Coordination, also expressed astonishment and showed tears when he heard from General Koumanakos' wife that his former commander (a hero of the war against the Communists) was in exile in the very same mountains where they had fought as comrades in arms. Similar astonishment was expressed by the Minister of Welfare Services, former University Professor Patras.

One wonders who would be likely to give a responsible answer for the arrest and long exile of a well known public personality like General Koumanakos if three of the main Ministers of the Government are unable to do so.

It is a great irony that the self-styled National Government was celebrating in September 1967 and again in September 1968 the victories of Gramos and Vitsi<sup>x</sup> while General Koumanakos and other officers, who had played a decisive role in these victories, were either in prison or in exile.

*x (an anniversary just fixed by Mr. Patakos as one of the six national Days)*

P.S. Records attached are exclusively those issued from Allied sources, first because they are in English and, second, because their objectivity cannot be in dispute. The Greek appreciation contained in the General Staff's files could be submitted if required. For an easy reference one could also consult the published memoirs of General Tsakalotos, former head of the Greek General Staff.

