

Attic Chronicle by Phocion

Levantine narco-terrorism

The old families who enforced colonial law—and ran guns and drugs—for the British are still very much in business today.

One of the most intriguing political figures of the Levantine Middle East is the attorney general of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Criton Tornarites. He was appointed attorney general in the 1950s, when Cyprus was still a British Crown Colony, by Lord Carradon, known then, if memory serves, as Sir Hugh Foot. In the midst of the Cypriot anti-British, anti-colonial insurrection of that time, when General Eisenhower, then President of the United States, Field Marshall Papagos, then prime minister of Greece, and Gen. George Grivas were all in agreement that British colonial rule should be overthrown by force, Attorney General Tornarites was administering colonial justice on behalf of Lord Carradon and the Crown. When the British occupation forces began executing nationalist revolutionaries by hanging, Mr. Tornarites happily continued to administer the British Empire's law.

Mysteriously, when in 1960 Cyprus, after years of revolutionary warfare and bloody sacrifices, overthrew its colonial status and was declared a sovereign republic, Mr. Tornarites, the British colonial agent par excellence, remained in his post as attorney general. Today, 24 years later, he still is Cyprus's attorney general. His little country experienced great tribulations during these years: revolutions, coups d'état, terrorist campaigns, wars, foreign invasions, loss of territory, deaths of presidents, and assassinations of ministers. Attorney General Tornarites has remained the only permanent fixture on the island.

Cyprus is a hub of international intrigue, where the Mossad meets the KGB, the two meet the British SIS, SIS mediates between them and the CIA, and all four get together to laugh at the Drug Enforcement Agency. Iranian, Syrian, and Libyan emissaries meet to intrigue against Iraqis, Egyptians, and each other. Terrorists meet with drug traffickers and gunrunners from all over the world. Cyprus is an ecumenical whorehouse supervised jointly by the British military authorities at Akrotiri Air Base, Turkish Army authorities, and the Cypriot Communist Party, AKEL, which is jointly owned by British intelligence and the KGB. This filthy British-Soviet collaboration allows all other interests virtual total freedom of action, and Attorney General Tornarites takes care of all loose ends, as he has for over a quarter century.

Tornarites' family made its fortune in the seediest kinds of deals in the British-dominated Near East at the turn of the century. That family's fortune has been deposited in London for many years now. Tornarites considers himself, down to the marrow of his bones, a British subject of the old school.

He occupied my attention momentarily when news came from Athens, via a "special to the *New York Times*," on Oct. 16: One Vikentios Arsenis, head of the Greek government's arms-production industry, was discovered by a senior columnist to have "mishandled" the Greek arms-manufacturing program in a way which was not

clarified except that it benefitted Israeli arms manufacturers. In order to protect his director of the munitions industry, Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou expelled from his Socialist Party's ranks the unfortunate columnist, Mr. Massavetas, who in fact was a member of the party's Central Committee.

Papandreou protected Vikentios (Takis) Arsenis with a haste and vehemence which was very unusual. But Takis Arsenis himself is unusual. Back in the late 1960s, before he had become the Greek Socialist regime's munitions merchant, he was a petty gunrunner and terrorist who had enjoyed the protection of Cypriot Attorney General Tornarites. In those years, while Takis Arsenis was arranging to traffic in terrorist weapons via London and Cyprus, his brother, Gerassimos (Gerry) Arsenis, a friend of Zbigniew Brzezinski, was deputy chief of the U.N. Committee on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Today, Garassimos is Papandrou's minister of national economy and runs Greece on behalf of the Swiss Bank for International Settlements.

The Arsenis family is of old stock from the island of Cefallonia, which, like Cyprus, was a Venetian colony later turned over to the British Empire. The old families of these islands, such as Tornarites and the Arsenis, were first trained in politics of intrigue by Venice and later turned their talents to the service of the British Empire. Today, they are part of that layer of "citizens above suspicion" in the Levant so indispensable for the smooth administration of terrorism, gunrunning, and drug trafficking. They also control what pass as the governments of Greece and Cyprus—administering those countries on behalf of those who own their souls and safekeep their family fortunes back in London.