Making a world: political exiles in 1930s Greece

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Social Utopias and concentration camps are examples on a continuum of extreme social situations: at one end there is an attempt to create a perfect society; at the other, the imposition of the most severely constraining structure possible. In between lie slave societies, prisons, boarding schools and hospitals, and many other examples of "total institutions". The situations I have in mind may well vary in the "degrees of freedom" which are allowed, or tolerated. By this I mean that those involved may be free in some sense to organize their own daily lives, or they may have some sort of order imposed on them. In some, the age and gender distribution is totally "skewed" (adult men only, for example, in prisoner-of-war camps), in others (refugee camps, perhaps) those involved are a cross-section of the total social group (men and women of all ages, with babies and children too).

In this paper I want to discuss a case in which people tried to set up a Utopia under conditions of constraint. They were Greek political exiles (exiled, that is, within Greece) during the Dictatorship of Metaxas (often known as "the Regime of the Fourth of August" from the date in 1936 when Metaxas seized power). Many of them were still in exile when Greece was occupied by German and Italian forces but space does not allow an account of exile under Occupation.

Although these exiles were nearly all men, women were imprisoned and exiled as political dissidents too. Although they were sent to women's prisons, they were not exiled separately but along with men. Some women had babies and small children with them. We have here a rather unusual example of the social organization of life in an extreme situation, because the composition of the exile group was neither entirely single-sex nor entirely adult. As I will detail below, these exiles were more or less allowed, if not constrained by circumstances, to organize

their lives within the broad general constraints of living in exile, rather than having a mode of organization imposed on them. A parallel is, perhaps, the life of political exiles in Siberia (Kennan 1958 [1891]: ch. 5).

I am here concerned with one particular group of exiles, those on the Cycladic island of Anafi, about whom a considerable body of material has now been collected. I have published some preliminary findings (Kenna 1991, 1992) and here wish to bring these up to date as I have now been able to interview some former exiles and to locate further published and unpublished sources. Let me set the scene by explaining how I came to be interested in this topic.

Research and the researcher

I have carried out research as a social anthropologist on Anafi over the course of twenty-five years: in 1966-67 for my doctoral thesis I investigated inheritance, dowry and ritual obligations (Kenna 1976); in 1973 migration from the island to Athens and elsewhere (Kenna 1983), and in 1987-88, the role of returned migrants in tourism (Kenna 1993). At the end of that piece of research, an island family I had known for over twenty-five years showed me a box containing over one hundred and fifty glass and celluloid negatives showing the lives of the Ομάδα Συμβίωσης Πολιτικών Εξορίστων Ανάφης (Collective Life Group [Commune] of Political Exiles of Anafi). This box had been found in an abandoned house in the 1950s by the man who had been my landlord in 1966-67, Thanasis Vafeiadhes. He had first come to the island in 1935 as an exile and later married an Anafiot woman and returned with her to the island at the end of the Civil War. This woman, a widow since 1975, allowed me to make copies of the photo-archive, and to publish them with the results of my researches into the history of the Anafiot political exiles.

Initially my interest in the negatives stemmed from researches on Anafi itself and among its migrants; hence my concern was to establish what influence the presence of so many exiles over several decades had exerted on islanders' ideas and activities, particularly their political perceptions. As the research continued, and I began to trace people who had been

exiles on the island, I became interested in the social organization of exile in its own right.

Internal exile in the Greek legal system

Internal exile was used by successive Greek governments from the beginning of the twentieth century onward as a punishment additional to a prison sentence, and sometimes as an alternative. The categories of people for whom exile was considered an appropriate punishment included not only "politicals", but also those convicted of animal theft and animal killing (ζωοκλοπή and ζωοκτονία), and various kinds of "low-lifers" such as drug addicts and dealers.

The places selected for exile included inhabited islands, with reasonably regular steamer connections to the mainland (e.g. Naxos, Idhra), more remote and less populated islands (Kimolos, Anafi), and uninhabited islands such as Gavdhos and Ai Strati (see Woodhouse 1985: 33). Mainland villages were also used as places of exile: Sarafis was sent to Gytheion in 1920 (and to Milos later), Theodorakis was exiled to the village of Zatouna in Arkadhia. The punishment of internal exile is a double one: removal from one's familiar surroundings, and an enforced domicile in a strange place, among Greeks with whom there is no personal connection.

As far as I know, the first people to be sent into internal exile for political reasons were two members of the workers' movement of Salonika, who participated in the general strike of March 1914, Avraam Benaroyias and Ghionas, exiled to Naxos. Monarchists were also exiled: indeed, the first woman exiled was the monarchist Kalliroï Parren, sent to Idhra in 1917 under the government of Venizelos (Kostopoulos et al. 1993; see also Pikros 1978; Flountzis 1979: 109).

Some accounts of exile are contemporary with the conditions they describe and perhaps need to be treated with caution for that very reason. For example, articles in the newspaper *Ριζοσπάστης* (the Radical) were written by journalists who visited exiles to collect first-hand information (see Pikros 1978) and it is possible that the harshness of conditions may have been exaggerated in order to influence public opinion. On the other hand, accounts and memoirs written much later, sometimes decades after the events described, in some cases after further

periods of prison and exile post-war, or after years in Eastern Europe and the USSR, may well over-emphasize solidarity and forget disagreements and factionalism within exile communes.

Another method by which to assess the accounts of political exiles is to compare them with descriptions of the conditions under which other categories of exile were held. I have not as yet come across memoirs of any exiled animal thieves, but the autobiography of Michalis Yenitsaris gives an account of drug-addicts exiled to Ios (1992: ch. 7).

Sources

One of the most important published memoirs about the commune on Anafi is the second volume of a three-part work of several thousand pages, covering the period 1935-1950, by Kostas Birkas. Although individual chapters in the rest of the work refer to the Anafi commune, most of the second volume (itself published in two parts) is about Birkas's period of exile on Anafi, and is extremely detailed, with long passages quoted from letters and reminiscences of fellow exiles.[1] Birkas was still in exile on Anafi when the Italian garrison arrived in May 1941, as was Kostas Tzamaloukas (1897-1969), whose short book records his period of exile from September 1940 to September 1942 (Tzamaloukas 1975). Another source is the account of Vasilis Bartziotas (b. 1909), who was on Anafi for 14 months from October 1937 to late December 1938 (Bartziotas 1978) when he and six others were sent to Akronafplia. I have also been able to use the Anafi section of the diary of Kostas Gavrielidhes (covering the period 11 August-23 December 1936), from which only a small excerpt has been published in a book by his daughter (Gavrielidhou

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[1] Birkas refers to his "καλό αρχείο από καμιά 200αριά φωτογραφίες απ' όλους τους τομείς και τις εκδηλώσεις της Ομάδας" ("fine archive of about 200 photographs of all the sectors and manifestations of the [Anafi] Commune", Birkas 1966: 325), an archive he gave to other exiles when he was transferred because of illness from Anafi to Santorini, and which he feared had been lost: "Τι κρίμα αλήθεια να μη σωθούν αυτά τα αθάνατα κειμήλια" ("truly what a pity that these immortal relics were not saved", ibid.). The negatives I was shown on Anafi in 1988 are, I believe, the remains of Birkas's archive.

1988: 52-3).[2] In addition, I have consulted Antonis Flountzis's book about the men's prison camp at Akronafplia (1979).

The fullest source in English is by the Australian communist Bert Birtles. The long middle section (chs 11-20) of *Exiles in the Aegean* is an account of a visit to Anafi which Birtles and his wife Dora made in January and February 1936, that is, before the events of 4 August. (Birtles later visited the exiles on Gavdhos; see ch. 28.)

A source which overlaps with Birtles is Yannis Khatzidhimou's account of trades-unionists in exile on Anafi and their hunger-strike, in which he took part, in December 1935. Khatzidhimou left Anafi on 26 January 1936 after one year's exile; some of the names he refers to as fellow-exiles are also mentioned by Birtles (Khatzidhimou, ch. 9: 145; Birtles 1938: 137).

In addition to these published sources I have begun to collect accounts by Anafiot islanders who remember the 1930s and 1940s, and I have notes from 1966 of conversations with Thanasis Vafeiadhes about the time when he was an exile, as well as notes of more recent conversations with members of his family recalling what he told them about that time. In the spring of 1992 I was able to interview people, now in their seventies and eighties, who were able to identify themselves, and others, in some of the photos, and to share their personal reminiscences of Anafi.[3]

Background

Metaxas seized power on 4 August 1936 because of what he said was a "communist threat" to Greece, and immediately ordered the arrest of all known communists, trades-unionists, and left-wing adherents or sympathisers. Most of them were sentenced to exile, usually on Aegean islands. Hence only some of these

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[2] Nitsa Gavrielidhou very kindly allowed me to copy her typescript of the whole diary, to which she added portions from her father's other unpublished writings, and from which she omitted some sections which she felt inappropriate for readers outside her family.

[3] I have incorporated into this paper the information given to me by several former exiles on Anafi, including Demos Nelhis, Eirini Skalidhou, and Alekos Zachariadhes, all of whom I thank for their help.

political exiles, mostly men but also women, were people who were actually communists in the sense of being members of the Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδος, Communist Party of Greece, known by its initials as KKE. Others were arrested on suspicion. A number of those exiled were Jewish Greeks from Salonika,[4] mostly involved in trades-unions.

The exiles sent to the Aegean islands were thus not only varied politically, they were from a mix of social and educational backgrounds, as well as from different parts of Greece. Once in exile, they were left to their own devices, apart from reporting daily to the police, and were thus able to create almost any form of organization for themselves that they wished. They set up "collective life groups". People lived in close proximity who would otherwise never have met or shared such binding experiences (compared with the situation Carlo Levi describes in *Christ stopped at Eboli,* where Italian internal exiles were not allowed to associate with one another). The Greek authorities seem to have tacitly accepted the way in which the exiles organized themselves and to have worked through each commune's representatives and committees. The patterns of organization of commune life, handed on from experienced exiles to those more recently arrived, persisted over several decades. The commune founded on Anafi appears to have worked so well that it continued its existence throughout the Metaxas dictatorship and during the Occupation (for comparative material, see Scott 1990).

The island

Anafi is a small mountainous island (45 sq. kms), the most remote and south-easterly of the Cyclades, and used as a place of exile

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[4] Salonika, with its thriving port and tobacco industry, was one of the first places in Greece in which trades-union activity developed, and had a large number of Jewish inhabitants (in 1900 the population of 173,000 consisted of 80,000 Jews, 60,000 Muslims and 30,000 Christians; see Stavroulakis 1993). Many of those who came to Greece in 1922 as refugees from Asia Minor settled in Salonika. An examination of the names and places of origin of exiles (see the biographical material in Birkas 1966: 960-92) reveals a very high proportion from Salonika and the surrounding area.

since Roman times. In the twentieth century, exiles were sent to the island almost continuously: monarchists in 1918 (Pikros 1978: 15-26), communists during the dictatorship of Pangalos (1925), and "από τότε το νησί δεν έμεινε δίχως κομμουνιστές" ("from then on the island was never without communists", Tzamaloukas 1975: 22; see also O'Connor 1929: 212ff, and Birkas 1966: 48). Other categories of exile were sent there too. Tzamaloukas mentions that during his period of exile there were "μερικοί ζωοκλέπτες και διάφοροι άλλοι του κοινού ποινικού δικαίου" ("several animal thieves and various others [exiled under] the common penal law", 1975: 24). Until the late 1980s Anafi had no harbour or jetty, and visiting steamers had to off-load cargo or passengers into small boats which rowed out from the beach. The inhabitants had a subsistence economy based on agriculture and livestock supplemented by remittances from migrants. In recent years islanders and returned migrants have been exploiting a new source of income: tourism.

Kousoulas in his history of the KKE talks of exile "for a few months with living expenses paid by the Government, to one of the sunny, though lonely Aegean islands" (1965: 17). Many exiles remained on Anafi for years and were hardly living in the lap of luxury. Those who got to know the island describe its beauties (see, for example, Glinos's letters, 1946: 173-9), but also the winter winds and cold, and the isolation when the weekly boat could not be reached by dinghy.

Numbers of exiles

The number of Metaxas exiles on Anafi fluctuated, with newly sentenced people arriving and others leaving, either at the end of their term or being transferred elsewhere (for example, to the prison-camp at Akronafplia, see Flountzis 1979). Shortly after the regime of 4 August began, there were 300 exiles on Anafi (Glinos 1946: 173), then 500 (Linardhatos 1966: 426). At its peak the total was 750 (Bartziotas 1978: 108; Flountzis 1979: 77, Birkas 1966: 38), many more than the indigenous population. In April 1941, just prior to the arrival of an Italian garrison on the island, the number of exiles was 220 (KKE 1978: 154; see also Kolodny 1974: 446, citing Kedros 1966: 87). These figures give some idea of the organizational problems involved in housing

and provisioning such large numbers of people in such an inaccessible place.

In addition there were problems of maintaining health and treating illness and long-term conditions. Tzamaloukas (1975: 27) describes how each new arrival was given a change of clothes and told to wash thoroughly in a tiny shower-room before joining the commune, to prevent the spread of disease and lice picked up in prison or on the journey. Flountzis, writing of Akronafplia (1979: ch. 7), refers to the considerable health risks posed by the numbers of people living at close quarters, particularly when some of them were suffering from tuberculosis. In the caption to a photograph in which some men are wearing white cloths around their coatsleeves, Khatzidhimou notes that TB sufferers wore these armbands (n.d.: 158). Health problems were exacerbated by poor diet; many exiles were weakened by chronic or recurrent illnesses. Islanders, and, it seems, police, often called in the exile-doctor, who played an important role in forging links between the commune and the villagers.

The social organization of exile

The first exiles began to arrive on Anafi within a week of Metaxas seizing power on 4 August (Gavrielidhes arrived on 11 August, for example). They were sent by steamer on the άγονος γραμμή (the "profitless route" because of the small number of passengers to such poor islands), and then jumped down into small boats to be rowed ashore. Once there, the only obligation was to report to the police station twice a day. The police also censored the incoming mail and informed the commune who had received letters, money-orders or parcels which could be collected.

Unless the authorities considered an exile to be from a well-off family, who would be assumed willing and able to send living expenses to the place of exile (though many such families refused to do so), exiles were given ten drachmas allowance per day from the state for all expenses and left to fend for themselves. This is presumably what Kousoulas means, in the phrase quoted above, by "living expenses paid by the government" (1965: 17). Often the allowances were late, delayed, or reduced. Yenitsaris mentions books of ten-drachma coupons which the exiles on Ios exchanged for provisions or food (1992:

55); no such coupon system is mentioned for the political exiles on Anafi, but it may be that the Ios exiles, mostly drug-addicts, were not trusted with cash.

As responsibility for providing food and shelter was transferred by the state to individuals, political exiles were able to group together to organize a system of communal living. Bartziotas and Birkas argue that it was the communists who took the initiative in the organization of the Anafi commune, although in a minority, because their political philosophy and training gave them the theoretical and practical basis on which to organize several hundred people. But they had to do this with the agreement of all the others. They had to create and maintain a group identity, organize daily life, and establish order and control over a collection of people, two-thirds of whom were from a range of varied political and non-political backgrounds.[5] Bartziotas claims that the reason for creating an ομάδα (commune) on Anafi rather than the "γνωστή μας κολλεκτίβα" ("our familiar collective"), was precisely because communist members were not in a majority (1978: 108). It is interesting to note here that Birtles, in his account of the visit to Anafi in early 1936, prior to the Metaxas dictatorship, refers to the small group of exiles he and Dora found there (presumably hard-line Marxists?) as "The Collective" (Birtles 1938: ch. 12). Gavrielidhes's diary entry for Thursday 17 September 1936 may refer to these people: "Τέσσεροι αρχειομαρξισταί (sic) μέλη της ομάδας μάς έστειλαν επιστολή όπου γράφουν ότι δια λόγους πολιτικούς υποχωρούν από την ομάδα" ("four old-style Marxist members of the commune sent us [i.e. Gavrielidhes and the other ten members of the committee] a letter in which they wrote that for political reasons they were splitting off from the commune"; n.d. typescript addendum to p. 28). This splinter commune seems not only to have survived separately for several years but even to have increased in size (see below, and Tzamaloukas 1975: 24).

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[5] Including παλαιοημερολογίτες (Old Calendarists, who would not accept the Gregorian calendar adopted by Greece in 1923; see Tzamaloukas 1975: 24).

Committees and sub-groups

While the group of exiles is thus referred to as the ομάδα (the commune) and the exiles are designated σύντροφοι (comrades, companions, literally "mess-mates") or συνεξόριστοι (fellow exiles), a number of other terms and distinctions are used. The word συνθαλαμίτες (room-mates) designates those who shared a house or dormitory, between ten and twenty people. Exiles who received food-parcels or other items were expected to share with their room-mates the half which they were allowed to keep, after giving one half to the commune. Often the men assigned to a particular dormitory were from the same region or town. Birkas mentions sub-groupings based on place of origin, using the phrase "οι υπεύθυνοι των διαφόρων εθνικοτοπικών συλλόγων (Μωραίτες, Αθηναίοι, Μακεδόνες κλπ.)" ("those in charge of the different local national/racial associations, people from the Morea, Athenians, Macedonians, etc.", 1966: 78), implying a very strong bond of cultural identity which appears to have flourished under imprisonment as well as exile. Flountzis has a photo captioned "the first Roumeliots in Akronafplia, 1937" (1979: opposite p. 112), and also photos of "Mytileniots", "Kephalonians", etc. Food-parcels were also often shared with members of one's regional association (Birkas 1966: 87), who also took it in turns to organize excursions to beaches or seaside areas. Such use of regional patriotism to strengthen bonds of fellowship is interesting, because in some circumstances it might have led to factionalism. However, the strength of the group unity established in the commune is evidenced by the fact that when those who had been exiled were transferred elsewhere, or finished their sentences, they still referred to themselves and each other as "Anafiots".

When a particular category or section within the commune requires clear specification, terms such as τα μέλη του Κόμματος (members of the Party, i.e. the KKE) or η κομματική φράξια (the Party section) are used (see Bartziotas 1978: 109, where he claims that Party members made up a third of the total of political exiles, then [October 1937] numbering 350). Both Bartziotas and Birkas claim that Party members were in all the key positions in the organization of the commune, but in such memoirs departures from the rule might not be mentioned. While some sources refer to individuals being "chosen" or "elected" to

particular posts, it is not clear how democratic the selection procedure was (see, for example, Kousoulas 1965: 129). Gavrielidhes's Anafi diary refers to the usual monthly meeting of the commune on 6 September (i.e. the first such after the arrival of those exiled by the Metaxas dictatorship), in which "εξελέγη γραφείο από 11 μέλη" ("a bureau of eleven members was elected", typescript p. 28 iii), of which he was one.

These posts were offices linked to a series of committees which controlled almost every aspect of commune life: subsistence, health, education, etc. The Γενική Επιτροπή (General Committee) was usually called the Γραφείο της Ομάδας (Office of the Commune, Birkas 1966: 77); in addition there was a Γραφειό της Καθοδήγησης (Office of Political Indoctrination, 1966: 120), and a Μορφωτική Επιτροπή (Education Committee). The Οικονομική Επιτροπή (Economic Committee, 1966: 78, 88) worked out, for example, the costs of buying provisions locally or importing them. At the time Bartziotas arrived on the island (late 1937), he says that the then leaders of the commune were eating separately from the other members, and providing themselves with better quality food. This corresponds with my landlord's story (in 1966) that, during his period of exile, he cooked for a small number of exiles (he named Siantos, Porfiroyennis, Glinos, Sofianopoulos and Gavrielidhes[6]). There may possibly be some confusion here between separate menus for the leaders and the special diets which were provided for those who were ill, or suffering from permanent or semi-permanent conditions: tuberculosis, ulcers, etc., particularly when the two categories overlapped.

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[6] Gavrielidhes, in the final entry to his Anafi diary on Tuesday 22 December, just before he left for Athens to undergo an operation for a stomach ulcer, mentions being ready in good time thanks to the help of a fellow exile: "Ο Θανάσης μού τα ετοίμασε και πάλι όλα. Πόσο με υποχρέωσε το παιδί αυτό. Σ' όλο το διάστημα της αρρώστειας μου, στάθηκε σαν παραγματικός φίλος δίπλα μου..." ("Thanasis got everything ready for me. How much I owe to this lad. In all the time of my illness he stood by me like a real friend..." n.d. typescript p. 39). As already mentioned, my landlord's first name was Thanasis, and photographic evidence supports the supposition that he was the person to whom Gavrielidhes is referring.

One other important sub-group within the commune was the Youth Section, the Κόμμα Νεολαίας, made up entirely, it seems, of young men (all the women exiles were of mature age). From references to their activities carrying brushwood, sweeping the village streets, etc., it seems that they were frequently used for tasks involving heavy physical labour.

Life outside the commune

Although any political exile had the right to join the commune set up in any place of exile, some chose not to, or left the commune after disagreements. Tzamaloukas, for example, refers to "10 εξόριστοι αρχειομαρξιστές (sic) που είχαν τη δική τους ομαδική ζωή" ("ten old-style Marxists who had their own commune", 1975: 24; this was presumably the splinter-commune referred to by Gavrielidhes, see above). Some members of the commune were expelled for serious infringements of its rules. Unable, or unwilling, to live apart from the commune, they signed δηλώσεις μετανοίας (literally, declarations of repentance, confessions renouncing Communism, whether or not they had actually been communists), and were released from exile.

Pressure from various quarters was often put on political exiles to sign such confessions. Letters from home and family, with details of privations, illness, etc., begging the husband or son, as main bread-winner, to return, or mentioning the possibility of divorce, seem possibly to have been more instrumental in persuading exiles to sign such "confessions" than the privations and ill-treatment received in exile (although Birkas suggests that some of these letters from home were forged, or written under duress from the authorities).[7] Names of those who signed

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[7] Published sources and photos, for example the plate captioned "Τσαμουνταλίδης, με τη μάνα του επισκέπτρια", "Tsamoundalidhes with his mother on a visit" (see Bartziotas 1978: 157), indicate that exiles were allowed visits, particularly by women. It is possible that the authorities permitted these if the visitor promised to try and persuade the exile to sign a "confession". Often these visitors acted as couriers, bringing left-wing newspapers, letters, and other information. Barziotas's wife and daughter visited him for a month, his wife bringing news and instructions from party headquarters (ibid.: 122); Alekos Zachariades told me that his

such confessions were published in newspapers of every political hue.

Setting up the commune

The exiles to Anafi in August 1936 pooled their resources and set up a commune. The sources I have consulted are unanimous in saying that it would otherwise have been impossible for them to live. Yet we know from Yenitsaris's account of exile on Ios that he and a friend managed to live independently for a year (1992: 58). We have also noted that it was possible for those in political disagreement with the majority in the main commune to move out and live separately, albeit in a mini-commune of their own.

Birkas, quoting the diary of Kostopanayiotis, mentions that when the first wave of exiles arrived on Anafi, they found "twelve old exiles, there under the same law, 4229" (1966: 38). These exiles from earlier regimes presumably helped establish the Metaxas exiles (just as, in the post-Occupation period, and under the Colonels, when there were further waves of exiles to the islands, those who had previous experience helped set up a form of organization).[8] Because of migration from the island there were empty houses for the exiles to rent.

Once they had rented about twenty barrel-vaulted houses in the village, they had to furnish them either as dormitories or for particular use: as a kitchen, dining-room, meeting-place, a doctor's and dentist's surgery, a pharmacy, a recreation room and a library (Birkas 1966: 80; Tzamaloukas 1975: 40).[9] They made beds out of canes, stools and benches out of wooden packing cases and bamboo, and other furniture, and presumably imported large cauldrons for cooking and the plates, bowls and cutlery necessary for feeding several hundred people. Within six weeks of the first exiles arriving (i.e. by mid-September 1936) all the arrangements for the supply and cooking of food, for accommodation, for making and mending clothes, repairing shoes, supplying sheets

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wife Vasso arranged an escape attempt for him and other exiles during her visit to Anafi.

[8] Personal communication from Nitsa Gavrielidhou.

[9] Exiles carried out building as well as repair work: additional rooms were built on to the house used as "Government House" (Birkas 1966: 81).

and blankets, and for the organization of an educational programme were in place (Birkas 1966: 38-9).

The dormitories held between ten and twenty people, under a three-person γραφείο, a committee consisting of a cashier, an "educational and cultural officer" and an overall supervisor (Tzamaloukas 1975: 44).[10] While some people were assigned duties on a rota "for the commune" (e.g. collecting water for cooking and washing up), there were also rotas of "room duties". Donkeys and mules were hired on long-term loan for carrying water and other goods.[11] Most houses in the village stored rain water in στέρνες, cisterns. Presumably the large numbers of exiles meant that the cisterns of the houses they rented would very soon have run dry; hence recourse to the nearest fresh water source to the village. Birkas mentions that the exiles had a flock of sheep and goats; the commune's shepherds (presumably these were permanent positions) grazed them on land rented from islanders; they themselves lived in a cave (1966: 454). Milk was reserved for tuberculosis sufferers and patients in the sick bay as well as for any children in the commune.

The exiles on Anafi also rented farming and garden land, olive trees, and, it seems, fishing boats (see photo in Birkas 1966: 104). They acquired goods "in kind", oil and grain for example, from exchanges with, or labouring jobs for, islanders and bought provisions (often on credit from village grocers) and fresh produce such as eggs and cheese. They bought piglets and rabbits to rear (one exile who bought two rabbits which he hoped to breed found that he had been duped into buying two males). They negotiated with locals for the use of flour-mills and olive-

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[10] Recent information about the organization of the tobacco industry in Salonika (with committees of three in charge of each building) throws new light on this pattern for organizing life in exile. The model may not after all be drawn directly from communist manuals, but from workers' practical experience.

[11] These hired donkeys were named Hitler, Mussolini and Goering (Birtles 1938: 138). An illustration in Birkas (1966: 83) shows Svolos taking his turn as νερουλάς (water-carrier) with two of the donkeys. The commune also acquired dogs, as several memoirs mention. Bartziotas (1978: 108) says the commune's dog was called Goebbels, while one of my informants remembers the name as "Dolfus"; Gavrielidhes describes Dolfus's "singing".

presses with which to process what they had grown or picked. By common consent the commune also bought cigarettes, which were given to those carrying out particular rota jobs (bread-making and baking, or making four copies of the day's lessons) in eighths, quarters, halves, etc.

Fuel was a problem on an island which had so few trees. Bartziotas (1978: 117) refers to an incident when "τα στελέχη του Κόμματος και της Κομ. Νεολαίας" ("the cadres of the Party and the Youth Section") set an example to the others by rising early and going out to collect χινοπόδια, brushwood, for fuel, returning to the kitchen with bundles weighing 15 to 20 okas (about 25 kilos or 50lbs) just as the others were drinking their breakfast tea.

Exiles also shared their skills (doctor, fisherman, baker, teacher, shepherd, tanner, brickmaker, etc.). Some of these specialist skills helped the exiles establish mutually advantageous relationships with locals; the tannery set up by exiles took the skins of locally slaughtered animals, cured them, and sold them back to villagers or exchanged them for local produce. The exiles' doctor was also used by villagers, Greek police, and later by the Italian garrison.

Besides a kitchen run for commune members serving breakfast, as well as a midday and an evening meal, there was a commune café, and a καντίνα, a sort of "tuck-shop", which sold cigarettes, eggs, and additional oil for food by the 50-lepta (half a drachma) and one-drachma spoonful. Incidentally, when small change or actual cash was short, the exiles made their own currency out of cardboard (Birkas 1966: 58, 88); the use of this εσωτερικό νόμισμα, internal currency, spread to the islanders and police.

For all members of the commune, even for the minority of already committed communists, it was a completely new experience to live communally, and on such a scale, for such a long period of time. As one of the women interviewed by Hart said, speaking of women's prison life during the Occupation, "in jail we had a kind of socialism..." (Hart 1990: 108). It must have been a unique experience to carry out all the tasks of everyday life in turn on a rota, without the usual classification of "men's or

women's work",[12] and to discuss and decide the arrangement of their own daily life.[13] Most tasks appear to have been "ungendered" but very heavy physical work and boat duty were carried out by men only (boat duty required rowing out to the steamer and unloading people and parcels: some of the men doing this stripped naked to prevent their one set of clothes from getting wet).[14] The difference from their previous way of life may well have been greater for women than for men, because domestic tasks could not be allocated solely to women by reason of their very small numbers and the very large numbers of men. There were probably never more than ten women in the Anafi commune at any one time, and usually far fewer. There was certainly only one "women's house", which is said to have been small (Bartziotas 1978: 110). The presence of a few women in an overwhelmingly male group caused some organizational problems;[15] in addition, the presence of children required special arrangements for suitable food, and for care.

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[12] In prison conditions, of course, there was no choice, for men or for women; Flountzis has a photo showing a prisoner at Akronafplia (Patlakas) sitting cross-legged and darning socks (1975: fifth plate between pp. 225 and 226), just as post-war women prisoners had to learn how to mend shoes (Nitsa Gavrielidhou, personal communication).

[13] Mikis Theodorakis commented thus on his period on a prison island: "We were permitted to organize our own little society. Illiterate prisoners learned to read and write. There were gymnastic classes. I learned English and I taught solfeggio. There were even some police officers in my classes. Boring and backbreaking jobs like washing dishes and scrubbing floors were rotated. In its rather unhappy way it was an ideal society" (Zwerin 1991).

[14] Boat duty was, in addition, potentially very dangerous; on one occasion in March 1939, two small boats with ten exiles and one policeman were overturned at Prassa (an inlet on the north-west coast of the island used when the harbour on the south coast was inaccessible by reason of prevailing winds). This was the period when weather conditions prevented dinghies from reaching five successive steamers and the island was cut off for 35 days (Birkas 1966: 107-8). Glinos, in a letter dated January 1937, vividly describes the difficulties for exiles and islanders alike when wind and weather conditions interfered with the usual steamer schedule (1946: 175).

[15] Women exiles also experienced difficulties with local men. There were no latrines for either sex, but male exiles were able to walk out of the

The communards as colonisers

The numbers in the commune often equalled or outstripped the numbers of local residents. Although they lived in the village, members of the commune, through its rules, were restricted in their contact with locals. Only designated officers of the commune were allowed to have contact with the police, post-office staff, grocers, and those renting out houses or land. Birkas tells us that before the Occupation one exile was allowed by the police to go to the only village café which had a radio in order to listen to the news and report back to the commune (1966: 130-1).[16] Named individuals in the commune were instructed to visit village houses to buy spare eggs or other additional items for commune use. The expression of any opinion which seemed critical of local custom was strictly forbidden. Theft from locals was severely punished. The exiles' dependence on the goodwill of the Anafiots is said to have necessitated such strictness, and various authors recount stories of the islanders' respect for the honesty of the commune. Living in the village, but in some senses separately from it, the commune moulded the immediate environment in its own terms.

Buildings, and rooms within them, were given names (see Tzamaloukas 1975: 27; Birkas 1966: 79); according to Birtles (1938: 124) the House of Stalin was used as a school, the House of Engels for cooking and eating and the Clara Zetkin House for guests, where Birtles and his wife Dora stayed in the Dimitrov room (1938: 122). Other house names were: Marx, Lenin, Telman,

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village to find somewhere to relieve themselves. Women found themselves spied on by local men. Bartziotas organized a work detail to build a latrine next to the women's house to overcome these difficulties (1978: 117). Gavrielidhes says of the commune's rules regarding male exiles and local women: "και η απλή στραβοματιά τιμωρείται αυστηρά" ("even a simple sideways glance is severely punished"; Gavrielidhes n.d. typescript p. 27). Discipline cannot have been quite as strict as this in practice, or my landlord, and others, would never have been able to marry island women. Bartziotas mentions problems (which he also claims to have solved) concerning sexual relationships between male and female exiles and between male exiles and a local woman.

[16] Exiles may possibly have had secret radios; my landlord described to me putting batteries in cooling-down ovens after bread-making to try to get a bit more life out of them.

Ligdhopoulos, Miliaresis, Laskaridhes, Maltezos, Stavridhes (Birkas 1966: 79). Bartziotas mentions the problems which arose when those in whose honour houses had been named signed "confessions" or were otherwise discredited; it was resolved to give places the names of dead heroes only (1978: 110). Birtles also says that the exiles' houses were decorated with the hammer and sickle as "coat of arms" (1938: 124).

Exiles put up their own personal mottoes, too. Glinos describes pasting up in his room the saying "φέρειν δὲ ὅ,τι ἂν ἡ ζωὴ δῷ γενναίως" ("to bear nobly whatever life gives") (1946: 174; quoted also by Linardhatos 1966: 432); my landlord still had in his café in 1966 the piece of cardboard on which he had calligraphed "και αυτό θα περάσει" ("this too shall pass"), during his time of exile. The room which I rented at that time was decorated with murals painted by one of the exiles. They were still in good condition in 1988.

A newspaper source (*Εθνικός Κήρυξ* [*National Herald*] 29 December 1949: 4, column 8), publishing excerpts from the μυστικό αρχείο του Μανιαδάκη, the secret archive of Maniadhakis (Metaxas's Chief of Police),[17] also suggests that exiles on Anafi named streets in the village publicly: "οι λίγοι δρόμοι που υπήρχαν έφεραν τας εξής επιγραφείας (sic): οδός Στάλιν, οδός Πασιονάρια, οδός Δημητρώφ" ("the few streets which existed bore the following signs 'Stalin Street', 'Passionaria Street', 'Dimitrov Street'"). This source claims that the reason for this was the άφθονα χρήματα (limitless funds) of the communist exiles which enabled them to "predominate" in the communal and political life of the islands. Memoirs of exiles do not confirm this claim of limitless funds; my informants also denied that exiles were able to put up street names, thinking it more likely that names were given to various village paths in a joking fashion. Gavrielidhes refers to the flat area just outside the eastern end of the village, where the exiles used to go for a daily walk, as "κόκκινη πλατεία" (Red Square; Gavrielidhes n.d. typescript p. 28).

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[17] I owe this reference to the kindness of Dr David Close of Flinders University, Australia.

Education and leisure

Under the direction of the Μορφωτική Επιτροπή (Educational Committee) those with little or no schooling were taught literacy and numeracy. For more advanced students language classes in French, English, German and Russian were put on (Birkas 1966: 55, 78; Tzamaloukas 1975: 43). Discussions, debates, and lectures were scheduled. As well as a general educational programme there was a three-stage "party-political" educational programme (Birkas 1966: 54). Public speaking and debating skills were also taught and practised. Because of the shortage of books, the day's lessons were copied out by a team working with four sheets of paper plus carbons (ibid.: 57). Eventually the commune acquired an επίπεδος πολυγράφος, literally a flat/level multicopier, "like the sort used in restaurants for copying menus" (ibid.: 56). Lessons were marked, examinations set and medals and diplomas awarded: "βράβευση των καλύτερων μαθητών" ("[the commune] gave certificates to the best pupils"; Birkas 1966: 54). Handwritten wall newspapers were produced, containing serious articles, critical reviews and humour (Bartziotas 1978: 115). Linardhatos refers to a number of such newspapers: *Εξόρμηση* (*The Charge*, as in a military engagement), *Νεολαία* (*Youth*), *Επιθεώρηση* (*The Review*), *Αντιφασίστας* (*Anti-Fascist*) and *Το Ζαλόγγο* (literally "The Grove", but also the name of a dance, made famous during the War of Independence when a line of women with their children danced on top of a cliff and one by one danced off the edge rather than be taken captive by the Turks; Linardhatos 1966: 432). Birkas says that these newspapers were publications of the various regional associations, *Πρωτοπορεία* (*Vanguard*) for the Macedonians, *Ζαλόγγο* for the Epirots, *Γκαζέτα* for the Pontian-Karamanlians, and *Αθηναϊκή Δροσιά* (*Athenian Freshness*) for the Athenian-Peiraiots (1966: 57).

Leisure activities included putting on plays (one photo in Flountzis shows seven people in quite elaborate costumes, plate 2 between pp. 128 and 129). My landlord showed me in the 1960s the shadow puppets he made during his period of exile. The puppets have been preserved by his family, along with his sketches for scenery. He told me that he put on shows in the village school to an audience of exiles and villagers (see Kenna 1991: 73). Other leisure activities included running a raffle (in

which Birkas once won a leather bag, 1966: 76), recitals, and excursions outside the village (presumably with police permission) for picnics and sea-bathing. There was a commune choir, and a group of musicians with instruments including guitars, mandolins, and a saxophone.

Before the Occupation, the exiles celebrated every boat day (when letters, parcels and money-orders arrived) by holding a dance at which the male exiles took turns to be "καβαλλιέρο και ντάμα" ("squire and lady"). The commune celebrated national holidays and "political" holidays such as the day of the three L's (Lenin, Limberg, Luxemberg), Red Army Day, and the October Revolution (Birkas 1966: 92).

Independence Day 1941

The celebrations on Anafi on 25 March 1941 (the Feast of the Annunciation and the day on which the start of the Greek War of Independence of 1821 is celebrated as a national holiday) marked a turning point for the members of the commune. Metaxas was dead (in January of that year), the Occupation of Greece was under way, but the island had not yet been occupied by an Italian garrison (which arrived on 4 May 1941). A detailed programme for the day was arranged, which was to include the islanders as well as the members of the commune (Tzamaloukas (1975: 72-6): popular songs from the commune choir, poetry recitations and a performance of the play *Ρήγας ο Βελεστινλής* by Vasilis Rotas, about Rigas Ferraios, an early proponent of revolution against the Turks. The choice of this particular work may well have been significant; the police officer in charge was surnamed Rigas.

Representatives of the commune attended the church service. When the service was over, the musicians and choir performed the national anthem. Next, a member of the commune, Zisakis, described as συνδικαλιστής καπνεργάτης (a tobacco-workers' trade-unionist) from Serres, made a speech which related the War of Independence to the situation faced by Greece at that moment. The speaker urged that political differences be put aside in the face of a common enemy and shared patriotism. He ended with the plea for members of the commune to be released immediately, without making "confessions", to fight in the first line at the front. On other islands, exiles were released by the police, and in some cases, went with them in the same boats to

Crete to join the Resistance. Not so for the "Anafiot" exiles. The police-chief refused to let them go.

As Birkas comments, at this point, the Anafi commune had been in existence for five full years, and its members were all seasoned exiles. Some of them had been in prison and exile continuously for as long as ten years, having been "inside" before the Metaxas dictatorship, during the regimes of Kondylis, Tsaldaris, and Venizelos, passing from one communal form of organization in prison, to a commune on one island, and thence to another, building up strong personal friendships as well as loyalties to particular communes, and to commune life in general. It was these bonds, built up over the previous years, which enabled the commune to continue in existence under Occupation for another eighteen months.

Once the Italian garrison arrived, the status of the exiles changed from "απλοί πολιτικοί εξόριστοι" to "αιχμάλωτοι-όμηροι του κατακτητή" (Birkas 1966: 177): they were no longer "simple political exiles", that is prisoners of the Greek state, but "captive-hostages of the conqueror", the occupying forces. Conditions worsened; allowances were stopped, land renting arrangements terminated and other restrictions imposed. The life of the commune under Occupation requires a paper in its own right, and there is not space here to deal adequately with the rest of the story. In brief: the exile commune suffered terrible privations and several members died during the starvation winter of 1941-42 (see Kenna 1991, 1992). By September 1942 the members of the commune were dispersed to prison camps on other islands and the mainland. Many were shot in reprisals for resistance activities, many died of disease and ill-treatment; a few escaped to fight in the Resistance (see lists in Bartziotas 1978: 131-6; Birkas 1966: 960-92). Only about 30 of the 220 in the commune at the start of Occupation were alive at the time Birkas wrote his memoir (1966: 438-9).

Conclusion

The gist of my argument has been that on Anafi, before the Occupation, the exiles had, ironically, the freedom in exile to create the ideal society that the "real world" was not able to give them. They reordered their environment to fit their world-view, and organized their everyday work and leisure time

accordingly. In addition they were forced to become agricultural workers, an experience which may well have affected their political philosophy later when, as guerrilla fighters and resistance leaders, they had to deal with rural people and provision small bands of fighters. Whether anything more far-reaching might have come of their experiences in exile is difficult to say, as so few of them survived to help build post-war Greece.

Commune life profoundly affected the exiles; the way of life of the islanders themselves barely impinged on them. And yet, although certain contractual relationships with locals were necessary (from which financial gains were certainly made), individual and personal ones did develop, whether of anti-pathy, humanitarian feeling, or mutual attraction. Islanders were only able to witness the communal life of the exiles from the outside, and to glimpse its inner workings very occasionally. They may have admired the exiles' way of life in so far as it affected the exiles' behaviour towards themselves; it was not a life-style they wished to emulate. The experiment in Utopia was a closed system.

The long sequence of exiles on Anafi affected the islanders profoundly by demonstrating to them the state's power over dissidents and indicating its view that the island was fit only to be an "open prison". Even in the 1970s Anafiots expressed the view that it was state policy to leave their island undeveloped because of its possible use as a place of exile. They saw the place where they lived through the eyes of those in the centre who regarded it as μακριά απ' το Θεό (literally, far from God, god-forsaken). The irony of this account of Utopia at the edge is that exile provided an opportunity for the exiles, as well as being a punishment; and while it offered opportunities for the locals, it was a punishment for them as well.

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