

SAINT MAMA'S DAY

The UK association of "Ayios Mamas" of Mandres — Fama-gusta celebrated the memory of Ayios Mamas, protector of their occupied village, on Sunday, September 3rd.

The secretary of the association, Mr. Savvas Karayiannis welcomed the friends of the association as following:

"After the Turkish invasion of 1974 the villagers of Lythrangomi were forced to leave and thus abandoned their homes and church.

During this time the Greek Cypriots were denied many basic human rights, including freedom of movement, medical care and the ability to earn a living. Many men from the village were arrested and detained in Turkish jails where they received severe beatings by the Turkish soldiers.

By the end of 1976 all Greek Cypriots in Lythrangomi had vacated the village and sought refuge in the Government controlled part of the Island — Their departure from Northern Cyprus was not voluntary".

This is exactly what happened to the village of Mandres, our village, as well as to the rest of the Greek villages in the now occupied area. Our Association has only recently circulated our Appeal to all Members of the British and the European Parliaments in which we give details as to:

- How the people in the village were removed from their homes by force.
- How they were forced en masse to board lorried and be transferred to camps for interment.
- How a group of men from the village were subsequently forced onto military lorried and are missing ever since.
- How even the name of the village has been changed from Mandres to Agillar.
- How the Church cross has been broken, the church altar damaged and covered with graffiti, and how the village cemetery has been vandalized and deccrated.

And we ask:

Are the United Nations to honour and implement their resolution 3213 which advocates the return of all refugees to their homes in safety?

Are the refugees from Mandres to be able to return to their village and homes?

Or is it a case that Resolution 3212 will simply become another number to be carried on the refugees backs, through their ordeal to their graves?

There are two more aspects which give us cause for alarm.

First: Recently, voices are heard, expressing concern about the rights of the people who seized and occupied our homes, or even worse, about the rights of the settlers who have been deliberately brought into the Island from distant areas of mainland Turkey, or, quite recently, of the rights of Turkish refugees from Bulgaria.

Second: In an effort to reach an understanding with the Turkish Community and to reduce the magnitude of the problem, some people are trying to place the human factor of the sidelines and to introduce mathematics and statistics instead. And they start counting the people who died as refugees since the invasion in 1974 and those, who, for personal reasons may not wish to return home.

But what about the children of the refugees, themselves, born in camps of interment, or the tents during the first years since the tragic events of 1974?

It was fourteen years last year when they were

THE «AYIOS MAMAS» ASSOCIATION OF UK CELEBRATED THE SAINTS' MEMORY

Dreams come true, if you want them to



ed to enter into negotiations for an agreement targeted for June this year.

It is fifteen years now. It will be sixteen years next July and twenty years in four year's time.

In all these years they hold as hostages in their own land the people of Cyprus with forty thousand guns pointed at their heads.

They forced to people out of their living rooms and squeezed them to to perch onto window ledges. From that position they press them to sign over their properties and their rights, to betray their history and the sacrifices of their fathers and forefathers and to legitimize their crimes and atrocities and the stealing of their land, their homes and their livelihood by the occupying Turkish troops and settlers.

And while the people of Cyprus are in this precarious position of self defence and heroic endurance the only help which is offered to them by the outside world is the advice to continue to talk to their captors.

And this has, so far, been the only advice and help we had from the British Government which, as a signatory to the independence and integrity of the Island, ought to have played a more direct and positive role in the search of an immediate, just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem.

The recent message to us from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in answer to our Appeal, has followed the usual stereotype pattern "The British Government will continue to give active support to the Secretary-General's efforts to promote a settlement".

It is the same message which has been given to the Greek Cypriot Community residing in the U.K. by the same Department everytime we urged the Government for help.

Dear Fellow Countrymen, As we are today honoured by the presence of our distinguished guests, supporters of, and fighters for freedom for Cyprus we must not be seen as preaching to the converted. But we felt it necessary that the true situation and present day developments ought to be re-stated and re-examined.

Dear Mr. Cox, We are very grateful to you for your ardent support, your steadfast involvement and your contribution to the efforts for a just solution to the Cyprus problem.

Dear Mrs Pollack, We are grateful to you for being with us today and for including "Justice for Cyprus" and "Human Rights" in your priorities as a newly elected member of the European Parliament to represent South West London.

We do appreciate the stand of the European Parliament on Human Rights and their recent appointment of a special Committee who visited Cyprus in July to investigate and suggest measures to save the cultural heritage of Cyprus from further destruction.

Dear Miss Hoye, We know from your past involvement in Local Government and Party politics that you have been a great supporter of the ideals of Human Rights, Freedom and Democra-

cy. We are sure that from your position as a Labour Member of Parliament for Vauxhall you will continue to champion these ideals which form the basic principles on which the Cyprus struggle is fought. We warmly welcome you with us today and thank you for coming.

Dear Mr. Panayides, Please convey this message from all of us to day to the President of Cyprus Mr. Vassiliou and the people of Cyprus, to hold fast on the locks of the few remaining security valves which guarantee the future and happiness to our beloved Island.

Dear Fellow Countrymen,

Yesterday, all the refugees from Mandres village in Cyprus had a similar gathering, at Kofinou, near Limassol, very far away from their homes, to pray to Ayios Mamas and to PROMISE:

To promise never to forget their homes and their land and to continue, with the rest of the displaced people of Cyprus, the struggle to be allowed to return home under conditions which will guarantee their freedom and safety.

This promise is conveyed to us today by their Chairman **Mr. Soteris Charalambous**, who, last night, took the late flight to London, directly from their meeting, to be with us today.

We warmly welcome our brother, our friend and compatriot Mr. Charalambous a member of the Hambis Gonios Family.

We wish to re-assure him that the distance from our birth place has not, in any way, weakened our bonds with our country. We share with those in Cyprus the same strong feeling of attachment to the land and the homes of our fathers — our land and our homes.

On this special day, when our spirit and faith have been enriched and warmed with our prayers to Ayios Mamas, the Patron Saint of our village, we wish to declare that our destiny is determined only by the depth of our conviction and the strength of our faith.

Let us have faith that the dream of our life to return to Mandres, our village, will soon be realized.

And on this, I can think of no better way, than to repeat my favourite verse from a school song, expressing a child's feeling and dream to see branches and leaves grow on the trunk of tree burnt by lightning:

— **Down the meadow, when the wind blows free**

A whisper of Green in the Lightning Tree — Dreams come true if you want them to

If you want them to — then it is up to you.