

Court in Zurich

The Underworld of Gold

The Case of Aris Nyad

(Legalis) The prosecution's indictment mentioned an American who, according to his name, must have originally been Greek. But that was pretty much the only thing that drew the reporter's attention to the Aris Nyad case, because the offense in itself was uninteresting, a "field, forest and meadow fraud" so to speak, as gets tried every day in our courtrooms. We summarize it here, initially incoherently, in the essential features. It only takes a few words.

System: Bad Checks

Aristotle (or, according to his own abbreviation, Aris) Nyad, a 31-year-old Greek who was naturalized in America during the war, used to present cashier's checks in Swiss grand hotels and first-class restaurants from a certain point in time, in the absence of cash, for which none or insufficient coverage existed. The appearance of the black curly-haired, very well dressed, strong, rather tall young man seems to have impressed the large and small employees of the hotel and hospitality industry. A Packard, at times also a Chevrolet of the latest model, run by its own chauffeur, increased his credit. The prosecution counts five "victims" with a total damage amount of 13,156 Fr. and accepts this amount. Other hoteliers, who also lost money, declared that they were not interested in the criminal complaint. We don't want to trace the motives for this attitude any further here.

The jury board had fully approved the question of guilt. The court sentenced Aris Nyad to one year and six months in prison

less 276 days of pre-trial detention - entirely in line with prosecutor Lüthy's request - and ordered expulsion from the territory of the Confederation for a period of 10 years from the date the sentence was handed down.

Nyad's mysterious three-point proposal

As I said, the case is banal, and we would hardly have said a word about it if it weren't for a story of extraordinary aspects. We do not have to decide what is true and what is false about Nyad's story, as it emerged from the personal questioning and the information given by the accused during the cross-examination of witnesses. We do not have to investigate where the description of reality ended and where the big bluff began, and even if we wanted to, we would not be able to do so - any more than those who investigated energetically for a while, but then the police threw in the towel on shedding any light on the grim background of the affair. The only thing we can do is try to capture in a few pictures of the atmosphere that characterized this trial and, above all, the machinations of which this jury trial is only an insignificant part.

In order to understand the "three-point proposal for the conditions of surrender," which hit like a bomb in the courtroom, you need to know the following:

During the three-day jury trial, Nyad claimed that he worked with two middlemen continuously with two middlemen, for the existence of which, however, he brought up only extremely weak or then fantastical or, in the end, most likely falsified evidence. Nyad swore up and down that the two strangers, Mr. Jack Taylor and Mr. Black, were not fantasy figures, but at most, in our terms,

shady characters who - like the defendant himself said earlier - live on the smuggling of gold, weapons, watches, dollars and streptomycin [Streptomycinschmuggel — could this mean smuggling antibiotics in general?], travel everywhere with false passports and false names and, as a matter of principle, never tell even their best friends which hotel they sleep their sleep of the unjust.

That is supposed to be the reason why Aris Nyad could not name any serious witnesses for the physical existence of the two gentlemen Black and White - pardon: Black and Taylor. Reputable people couldn't [*namhaft machen konnte*].

In our eyes, this question is by no means as unimportant as Nyad's official defender, attorney N. Treadwell, wanted it to be. The existence of the gentlemen Black and Taylor would at least be an indication of the correctness of the accused's portrayal, according to which he constantly expected money (from smuggling affairs) from the two shadowy figures, and if this was the case then it was at least possible, though not at all certain, that Nyad, trusting this money would come into his Swiss bank account, would have honored those check to the Baur en Ville [*the oldest Grand Hotel in Zürich, now the [Savoy Baur en Ville](#)*], Bellerive and Grand Hotel Dolder as well as in the "Chiantiquelle" (Zurich) and the hotel "Royal & Savoy" (Lausanne) which subsequently turned out to be either insufficiently covered or not covered at all.

When, at the end of the evidentiary hearing, the jury president [*Schwurgerichtspräsident*] Tschopp, asked the accused whether he still had a statement to make, he made a declaration in his peculiar English-American, interspersed with a rather strong southern European accent, which corresponded to an actual sensational turn of events — whether or not it would turn out to be based on reality, or whether it was only the last and strongest link in the chain of a web of fantasy and lies created with great consistency. The declaration was based on the existence of mysteriously hinted at powerful black-market organizations, which would have their center in the Russian zone of Austria. They dealt with the transfer of essential war materials from the West - most likely from America — in the direction of the Iron Curtain and - as long as they at least endeavor to transit through Switzerland - has seven Swiss employees. The disclosure of the names would, according to his statements, endanger the life of the accused, so that he would name those employees under the following conditions:

- 1. Consultation with the intelligence officer of the American legation in Bern to be heard as a witness.**
- 2. Assurance of personal bodyguards by the Swiss police to ward off any attacks on the life of the accused.**
- 3. Exclusion of the public from hearings on this subject.**

It is pointless to point out whether this sensational offer was a great diversionary maneuver or whether the communications that Aris Nyad was preparing to prove correspond to reality, because after a half-hour conversation with his lawyer, Aris withdrew the "offer" without further justification.

"Modern Times"

For the existence of highly dubious organizations in Switzerland as well as in Western Europe in general, the mysterious allusions of Aris Nyad would not have been necessary, who repeatedly suggested during the jury trial that he would contact the American secret service after freedom was regained in order to "to make a clean sweep." These organizations are a fact and the recently publicized murder of two "unreliable members" in France has emphatically demonstrated the dangerousness of this gang. In a present that is politically and economically on the verge of insanity, it is not at all surprising that dubious elements, some of whom seem to hold high positions in their country, seek to make the greatest possible use of the unprecedented chaos:

So yesterday's have-nots, failed existences, lower and higher officials, unscrupulous, sluggards and people pushed into the role of modern gold diggers out of weakness or obsession for recognition gain wealth and social prestige overnight. People who lived a very modest life yesterday become highly valued guests of the Haute Volée and Grand Hotels because they can throw pound and dollar bills around as tips, find out about villas in Nice, Lausanne and Riccione with nurses, nannies, Be able to identify a cook, chauffeur and American monster limousines or luxury convertibles. They live from the crisis and from the fear of war of the masses and governments. Your only fear is: the return of normal life. Their only hope is: the rumor of panic that seduces governments, industries, trades and consumers into deliberate and ill-considered lightning-fast dispositions. They are children of time. And we are the fathers of these children, all of us who, through fear and hopelessness, weakness and pathetic egoism, encourage this chaos. It is not enough - and, moreover, quite impossible - to put an end to all those who benefit from this state of affairs. The condition itself, the disease, needs to be attacked - or at least recognized!

Unless we imitate the apes in that simile of an Eastern philosophy by not hearing, not seeing, and not speaking. But where is the jungle into which we can withdraw when the dance of hell begins?

Because it is so typical of this time of flight from fear, of true and false heroism, of the uprooting of generations and peoples, of illusory victories and defeats, we now want to turn to that too,

Aris Nyad's Biography

although again not with the certainty that the description corresponds to reality in all points, as it comes for the most part from **a man who was the victim of chaos** [*even in this, though, they are taking his word for it*] before he became its beneficiary.

Aris Nyad was born in Athens in 1909 as the son of a timber merchant, grew up in an orderly manner, attended primary school from 1925 to 1930, then a kind of grammar school. When the war broke out, Aristotle trained as a pilot, became a pilot, navigator and bomber [*Flugbombenwerfer*]. In 1940 he was assigned to the reserve. As a civilian who paid for his voyage, wearing the uniform of a ship officer, he traveled on a steamer to New York, where he only intended to stay temporarily. After Italy entered the war and the associated expansion of the theater of war, Aris preferred to stay in New York, where he was initially treated as a deserting seaman, rather than return home.

The young Greek made his way through the North American continent as an unskilled laborer without valid identification documents, ending up in California, where he managed to gain a high social reputation. In 1941 he joined the Canadian Air Force, returned to the USA a year later without taking off his beautiful uniform and that's what got him his only criminal conviction (unjustified wearing of a uniform). He served his sentence from early January 1943 in an Arizona labor camp under what appeared to be a mild and generous regime. He was released in the summer - in the late autumn of 1943 he was already a pilot in the American Air Force, passed the pilot examination; and after the war came to Germany with the American occupation troops via North Africa and France. His marriage to an American woman in 1943, from which one child sprouted, was divorced in 1948. It was a typical "war marriage. The husband and wife lived together for a total of four-and-a-half months!

From 1947 on, Aris Nyad was a civil employee in the American Army; he was assigned to the espionage and criminal investigation departments. In this capacity he returned to his Greek homeland. He terminated his contract with the American Army after he had become convinced that the import and export trade would be more profitable for him.

The end follows