

ATHENS HOME FOR THE AGED  
CENTER OF STUDIES  
OF AGE - RELATED CHANGES IN MAN  
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Dear Henry,

What a pleasant surprise was it to receive your most recent printed child: the account of your peregrinations through the "Seven Countries". The book is so well written so that once you open any page of it you can't stop but keep reading to the end. It brought to me vivid memories of several of our meetings in various parts of the world, but also thoughts about the ambivalent nature of man.

Think that today, 30 years after these "happy" post-war times, modern man, Homo Europeanus "sapiens" (!) has returned to the simple expedient way of imposing death on his neighbour just for "being" different and not for "doing" some things differently, or harming others... Could it be that man still remains an omnivorous cannibalistic bipede, devouring his neighbours not to survive but to impose his views, just as the stranded island children of Wm. Golding did in the "Lord of the flies"? Or could it be that the "low-coronary risk male" you so vividly portrayed in pages 145-146 is but a rare surviving sample, an exception of a more ugly reality?

While reading these stories it dawned on me that the last chapter, or an addendum to it, might be extended to bring to a sobering end the fates of the Investigators and their countries, just a little over a third of a century after Ancel Keys put up his theory that the life style in these countries directly influences heart (and other) disease rates, and determines the cause and the time of death of the individual: we have no idea of what has happened to our "Yugoslav" neighbours, and were it not for Alessandro Menotti, this would also be true for our Italian friends.

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You know well by now that Greece has made the natural, inverse MRFIT experiment with the unavoidable end-result; presently, we have just started a painful trek back to where we started after the war, when Crete was an "underdeveloped area" of Europe and Cretans (and less so Corfiots) the poorest and healthiest of the Seven Countries cohorts. If you return to the areas of the study you won't believe your eyes seeing the arrays of jewelry shops, "joints", fast-food restaurants and "rooms for rent" waiting for the tourists who come to these areas to meet the presently extinct species of "healthiest rural, long-lived men" in Europe.

Despite these somber thoughts I think the book is a truly important addition to the SCS bibliography; it gives the reader a sense of being there and watching the beginning of the deterioration. Congratulations !

Best wishes to Stacey, Katia and Heidi, et al.

*Andy Imtas*

P.S. Most 1958-1961 figures, from Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia were taken with my Argus camera, later on stolen by some obliging friend..