



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

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EDITORS: Constantine Tzanos, S. Sakellarides

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22W415 McCarron Road - Glen Ellyn, IL 60137



Upcoming Events

Macedonia: The Struggle for the Heritage, Territory and Name of the Historic Hellenic Land, 1862-2004

On Sunday October 21 at 3 pm, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Dr. George C. Papavizas, in a lecture titled "*Macedonia: The Struggle for the Heritage, Territory and Name of the Historic Hellenic Land, 1862-2004*". The event will be held at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 10249 West Irving Park Road at Schiller Park (southeast corner of Irving Park Road and Mannheim Road). Admission is free for HLM members and \$5 for non-members.

The Macedonian Question from 1862 to 1920 was a complex issue. It was the question of who had the historical, cultural, ethnic, and demographic rights to possess Macedonia after the expected demise of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. The question triggered a political and military struggle in 1904-1908 under the Turks between Greeks and Bulgarians, not between Greeks and "Macedonians." The concept of an independent Macedonianism did not exist before 1944. From the beginning of communism's encroachment into the Balkans in the early 1920s, the struggle for Macedonia took on a different meaning and dangerous new dimensions. It all began as a plundering of Hellenic Macedonia's legacy by the dynamism and the theoretical base of communism, with the Soviet Union looming awesome behind the scenes.

Greece's neighbors to the north have sought since 1991 to tie the identity of their small break-away country from Yugoslavia (known temporarily as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, FYROM) to the ancient Greek Macedonians — even naming their country "Macedonia," seeking false support from the past, which can neither be changed nor falsified. The contemporary misleading rhetoric from Skopje — and more acrimoniously from organizations of the Slavic diaspora — disputing the Macedonians' Hellenism, has been too controversial to be ignored and to fit into a constructive "roadmap of peace in the Balkans."

This presentation examines the plundering of Hellenic Macedonia's legacy, analyzes communism's role as the protagonist in the formation of the new state and as a pivotal influence in the Greek Civil War of 1946-1949, and how the international community has been ensnared in clever political-historical inaccuracies on the Macedonian issue. It also discusses the international community's stance on the issue and how history has reached an untenable point where a small Slavic country calling itself "Republic of Macedonia," not only demands — by the power of its

apprehended name — to be recognized as a Macedonia, but to be propelled to the world as the only Macedonia; and its Slavic people may not only demand — by the power granted to them by a communist dictator — to be some "Macedonians," but to demand recognition as the only Macedonians.

George Papavizas was born in Greek western Macedonia, and studied at the University of Thessaloniki, B.S. in Biology, 1947, and the University of Minnesota, M.S. in Plant Pathology and Genetics, 1953; Ph.D. in Mycology and Biochemistry, 1957. From 1957 to 1992 he was employed by the Agricultural Research Service, of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. During Greece's bloody 1940s, Dr. Papavizas was in Macedonia, where he witnessed the turbulent events of the era, and experienced the hardships of the Greek Civil War of 1946-1949 as a Second Lieutenant of the Greek Army. During the last 22 years of his professional career, he organized and directed the Pioneering Research Laboratory on the Biocontrol of Plant Diseases at Beltsville, MD. He has lectured in many countries, published over 200 scientific papers and edited two books. He has received a number of awards, and he is the author of two books: *Blood and Tears, Greece 1940-1949, A Story of War and Love*, and *CLAIMING MACEDONIA. The Struggle for the Heritage, Territory and Name of the Historic Hellenic Land, 1862-2004*.

The Apology of Socrates

On Saturday, November 3, 2007, the Chicago Humanities Festival presents *The Apology of Socrates*. The event will be held at 7:00 - 8:30 pm at the Northwestern University School of Law, Thorne Auditorium, 375 East Chicago Avenue (corner of Chicago Avenue and Lake Shore Drive).

This celebrated, one-man theatrical performance by esteemed actor/director, teacher, and Emmy-winner Yannis Simonides will reenact Socrates' famous self-defense delivered to an Athenian court that had accused him of corrupting the young, not believing in the gods, and creating new deities. His legal jousting and Cassandra-like warnings antagonized his judges, who condemned him to death. But his challenges seem as pertinent as ever.

"CAVAFY, Passions and Ancient Days": A Reading /Performance by Yannis Simonides

On Sunday November 4 at 3 pm, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Yannis Simonides, in a reading/performance titled "*CAVAFY, Passions and Ancient Days*". The event will be held at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 10249 West Irving

Park Road at Schiller Park (southeast corner of Irving Park Road and Mannheim Road). Admission is free for HLM members and \$5 for non-members.

Cavafy is a solo piece based on the life and work of Alexandrine poet Constantine P. Cavafy (1863-1933). The piece intends to bring to life a man who is considered to be one of the most important poets of the 20th century. By paying homage to the theatricality of Cavafy's voice, his private universe and public persona, Simonides attempts to arrive at the moments of the poet's inspiration, to peer at the workings of his lifelong struggle with adversity and of his ultimate liberation, and to sculpt these findings on stage in a manner that may shock the audience into a recognition of humanity's possible redemption through the power of love, art, irony and the pleasures of learning.

C. P. (Constantine Peter) Cavafy was born in 1863 in Alexandria, Egypt, to a Greek family of Constantinopolitan origins. As a child he lived in England, and his earliest poetic efforts were in English. In 1885 he returned to Alexandria, living the remainder of his life there as a clerk of the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works. He wrote poems constantly, most of which he destroyed, though he had a small number of them privately printed for a small group of readers. His early poems exhibit the influence of the symbolist and decadent movements in late 19th century European literature. He later repudiated their self-consciously poetic quality for a spare prosaic style which he developed to perfection in his mature poems. In his poetry he is inspired by parallels between modern age and that of the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman periods. Politics, history, eroticism, art and love of learning are the ostensible subjects of a very particular voice, which conveys a pagan sensitivity to physical pleasure and a painful sense of tragic futility. E.M. Forster, Arnold Toynbee, and T.S. Eliot were among the earliest promoters of Cavafy in the English-speaking world before the Second World War. His name reached a broader audience right after the war when he became the poet of Lawrence Durrell's city in the four novels of the "*Alexandria Quartet*". His strong reputation in American poetry circles really began when W.H. Auden declared, in his 1961 introduction to the Rae Dalven rendering of Cavafy, that for some 30 years this poet "has remained an influence on my own writing; that is to say, I can think of poems which, if Cavafy were unknown to me, I should have written quite differently or perhaps not written at all."

Born in Constantinople and raised in Athens, *Yannis Simonides* is a Yale Drama School trained actor/writer and Emmy-winning documentary producer. He has served as professor and chair of the NYU Tisch Drama Department, as executive producer of Greek Orthodox Telecommunications (GOTelecom) and as the executive director of Hellenic Public Radio - COSMOS FM in New York. He is the founder and director of the Greek Theatre of New York and of Mythic Media, a performing arts lab. His performance work includes plays by Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes,

Shakespeare, Brecht, Korres, Kambanellis and others, along with solo and ensemble pieces culled from the writings of C.P. Cavafy, General Makriyannis, Nikolai Gogol and others. He co-produced Mikis Theodorakis' 75th Birthday Celebration at Lincoln Center with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and has been associated with the Annual Festival of Greek Music and Dance at Symphony Space in New York City, presented by the World Music Institute and ADAM Productions. He narrated the PBS specials *Axion Esti*, *Visions of Greece* and *Return to the Homeland*. He is touring worldwide with his solo performance in Plato's Apology of Socrates, directed by Loukas Skipitaris and designed by Theoni V. Aldredge.

In Brief

Greece ranks 14th in EU for average wage, 7th for minimum wage

According to figures presented by the EU Commission, Greece ranks 14th among European Union countries for the average annual income of salaried employees, and 7th for the minimum wage among the 20 EU countries where a minimum wage exists. For the year 2006, the minimum monthly wage in Greece was 668 euros. At the top of the scale were Luxembourg (1,503 euros), Ireland (1,293 euros) and the Netherlands (1,273 euros). The lowest monthly minimum wages were in Latvia (129 euros), Romania (114 euros) and Bulgaria (92 euros). Several EU countries have no minimum wage. In terms of average earnings not including social insurance contributions, Greek employees take home 19,764 euros a year. Average annual salaries are highest in Luxembourg (43,399 euros), Denmark (40,088 euros) and Ireland (35,949 euros) while the lowest are in Lithuania (6,132 euros), Latvia (6,126 euros) and Bulgaria (2,493 euros).

Euro-Parliament approves resolution on natural disasters

A resolution dealing with natural disasters that emphasized the recent fires in Greece was approved by an overwhelming majority of members of the EU parliament on September 4, 2007. The resolution states that the "European Parliament condemns the practice of legalizing illegal structures in protected areas and in areas where building is generally not allowed and asks for the immediate cessation of every effort to reduce protection of forests through revisions of the Greek Constitution (article 24)."

From the Treasures of Hellenic Thought

Excerpts from *The Discourses of Epictetus*

Epictetus, one of the great Stoic philosophers, lived from 55 AD to 135 AD. Before the rise of Christianity, the Stoics advocated the brotherhood of humanity and the

natural equality of all human beings. Their ideas had a strong influence on Christian theology.

Of the things which are in our Power, and not in our Power

.....That which is best of all and supreme over all is the only thing which the gods have placed in our power, the right use of appearances; but all other things they have not placed in our power. Was it because they did not choose? I indeed think that, if they had been able, they would have put these other things also in our power, but they certainly could not. For as we exist on the earth, and are bound to such a body and to such companions, how was it possible for us not to be hindered as to these things by externals?

But what says Zeus? "Epictetus, if it were possible, I would have made both your little body and your little property free and not exposed to hindrance. But now be not ignorant of this: this body is not yours, but it is clay finely tempered. And since I was not able to do for you what I have mentioned, I have given you a small portion of us, this faculty of pursuing an object and avoiding it, and the faculty of desire and aversion, and, in a word, the faculty of using the appearances of things; and if you will take care of this faculty and consider it your only possession, you will never be hindered, never meet with impediments; you will not lament, you will not blame, you will not flatter any person."

"Well, do these seem to you small matters?" I hope not. "Be content with them then and pray to the gods." But now when it is in our power to look after one thing, and to attach ourselves to it, we prefer to look after many things, and to be bound to many things, to the body and to property, and to brother and to friend, and to child and to slave. Since, then, we are bound to many things, we are depressed by them and dragged down. We must make the best use that we can of the things which are in our power, and use the rest according to their nature. What is their nature then? As God may please.

What then should a man have in readiness in such circumstances? What else than "What is mine, and what is not mine; and permitted to me, and what is not permitted to me." I must die. Must I then die lamenting? I must be put in chains. Must I then also lament? I must go into exile. Does any man then hinder me from going with smiles and cheerfulness and contentment? "But I will put you in chains." Man, what are you talking about? Me in chains? You may fetter my leg, but my will not even Zeus himself can overpower.

This it is to have studied what a man ought to study; to have made desire, aversion, free from hindrance, and free from all that a man would avoid. I must die. If now, I am ready to die. If, after a short time, I now dine because it is the dinner-hour; after this I will then die. How? Like a man who gives up what belongs to another.

How a man should proceed from the principle of God being the father of all men.

If a man should be able to assent to this doctrine as he ought, that we are all sprung from God in an especial manner, and that God is the father both of men and of gods, I suppose that he would never have any ignoble or mean thoughts about himself. But if Caesar should adopt you, no one could endure your arrogance; and if you know that you are the son of Zeus, will you not be elated? Yet we do not so; but since these two things are mingled in the generation of man, body in common with the animals, and reason and intelligence in common with the gods, many incline to this kinship, which is miserable and mortal; and some few to that which is divine and happy.

Of providence

..... But God has introduced man to be a spectator of God and of His works; and not only a spectator of them, but an interpreter. For this reason it is shameful for man to begin and to end where irrational animals do, but rather he ought to begin where they begin, and to end where nature ends in us; and nature ends in contemplation and understanding, in a way of life conformable to nature. Take care then not to die without having been spectators of these things.

But you take a journey to Olympia to see the work of Phidias, and all of you think it a misfortune to die without having seen such things. But when there is no need to take a journey, and where a man is, there he has the works (of God) before him, will you not desire to see and understand them? Will you not perceive either what you are, or what you were born for, or what this is for which you have received the faculty of sight? But you may say, "There are some things disagreeable and troublesome in life." And are there none in Olympia? Are you not scorched? Are you not pressed by a crowd? Are you not without comfortable means of bathing? Are you not wet when it rains? Have you not abundance of noise, clamour, and other disagreeable things? But I suppose that setting all these things off against the magnificence of the spectacle you bear and endure. Well, then, and have you not received faculties by which you will be able to bear all that happens? Have you not received greatness of soul? Have you not received manliness? Have you not received endurance? And why do I trouble myself about anything that can happen if I possess greatness of soul? What shall distract my mind or disturb me, or appear painful? Shall I not use the power for the purposes for which I received it, and shall I grieve and lament over what happens? "Yes, but my nose runs." For what purpose then, slave, have you hands? Is it not that you may wipe your nose? "Is it, then, consistent with reason that there should be running of noses in the world?" Nay, how much better it is to wipe your nose than to find fault. What do you think that Hercules would have been if there had not been such a lion, and hydra, and stag, and boar, and certain unjust and bestial men, whom Hercules used to drive away and clear out? And what would he have been doing if there had been nothing of the kind?

(to be continued)

From The Riches Of Our Cultural Heritage

Poetry by Pandelis Prevelakis

Pandelis Prevelakis was born in Rethymno (Crete) in 1909 and died in 1986 in Athens. He wrote poetry, theater, critical essays, and studies, but is mainly known as one of the most important representatives of the 1930 generation in Greek prose fiction. He studied Fine Arts and Archeology and was elected professor of Modern Art history at the university of Thessaloniki, professor at the Superior School of Fine Arts in Athens, and, in 1977, to the Greek Academy. His novels are inspired by the struggle of Crete for independence from the Ottomans, by his own spiritual path, by the ideological crisis between the two world wars, and by questions of metaphysics and ethics and the role of the intellectual in the broader world.

Προσευχή

Θεέ της αγρύπνιας και του παθους,
αρχή και πνεύμα της ποίησης,
Εσύ πού διαστέλλεις την καρδιά μου
και φλογίζεις το αίμα μου,
που μέσα στη σιωπή της μοναξιάς μου
κάνεις να τρέχουν όπως σε μάγο κρουστάλλι
οι στεριές οι ουρανοί και οι θάλασσες,
Εσύ που καταποντίζεις τη ζωή μου
στις αβύσσους της φωτιάς
και τη δροσίζεις με πνοές ωκεάνειες,
συγκεραστή του ρυθμού και του λόγου,
σταυροδρόμι των εμπνεύσεων,
καταρράχτη από φως,
Εσύ που σαιτεύεις με την πρόθυμη λέξη,
κυνηγός σε αγρίμια κ' ιδέες,
Θεέ μου, Εσύ αν σε δούλεψα,
σκύψε τα μάτια Σου
και λύσε το γαλανά Σου σγουρά
πάνω σε τούτο το πλάσμα
το μικρό και φλεγόμενο
που κεληδάει στα ματωμένα βάτα!
Ρίξε το σπόρο στην καρδιά του,
το σπόρο που κρύβει το πλατάνι
το βουερό και πολύφυλλο της ποίησης,
και τράνεψε μέσα του τη δύναμη,
λύσε τη γλώσσα του,
στοίχειωσε τη λέξη μες στο πνεύμα του
και το ρυθμό μες στην ακοή του
και κάμε το στόμα Σου
κάμε το σάλπιγγα του θρόνου Σου,
κάμε το φωνή των ανέμων και της θάλασσας,
και στεναγμό της στεριάς,
και κραυγή της φωτιάς,
και σιγή των αστερινών χώρων!

Prayer For A Young Poet

God of wakefulness and passion,
source and spirit of poetry;
You who dilate my heart
and inflame my blood,
who in the darkness of my desolation
make the lands, the skies and the seas
flow as in a magic crystal;
You who immerse my life
in the abyss of fire
and cool it with ocean breezes,
fuser of rhythm and word,
crossroad of inspiration,
cataract of light;
You who shoot with the eager word for arrow,
hunter of beasts and ideas,
masculine and feminine will,
life, purgatory and resurrection,
palpable hope of immortality;
You, my God, if I have served You well,
lower Your eyes
and loosen Your azure locks
on this small and flaming creature
who sings in the bloodstained brambles;
cast the seed in his heart,
that seed which conceals
the roaring and many-leaved plane tree of poetry,
increase his power within him,
unloosen his tongue,
awaken words within his spirit,
and rhythm in his hearing,
and make him Your mouth,
make him the trumpet of Your throne,
make him the voice of the winds and the seas
and the sigh of lands
and the cry of fire
and the silence of starry regions.