



# HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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## *Upcoming Events*

### **Sustainable Development in the Globalized 21st Century: Challenges for the Economy, Environment, and Employment**

On Sunday, December 14, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Prof. Nicholas Askounes Ashford in a lecture titled "Sustainable Development in the Globalized 21st Century: Challenges for the Economy, Environment, and Employment". The event will take place at 3 pm at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 10249 West Irving Park Road at Schiller Park (southeast corner of Irving Park Road and Mannheim Road).

Those that argue that the industrialized state, whether developed or developing, is currently unsustainable emphasize problems with competitiveness, environmental degradation, including toxic pollution, climate change, resource depletion, and problems related to the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity. Economic well-being and environmental burdens are unequal within nations, between nations, and between generations, giving rise to inter-national, intra-national, and intergenerational equity concerns in an increasingly global economy. The hopefully temporary collapse of the global financial system has accentuated the realization that we are in crisis.

Whether solutions involving industry initiatives, government intervention, stakeholder involvement, and financing can resolve these unsustainability problems depends on correcting a number of fundamental faults in the characteristics of the industrial state: (1) fragmentation of the knowledge base leading to myopic understanding of fundamental problems and the resulting fashioning of single-purpose or narrowly-fashioned solutions by technical and political decision-makers, (2) the inequality of access to economic and political power, (3) the tendency towards "gerondocracy"—i.e., governance of industrial systems by old ideas, (4) the failure of markets both to correctly price the value of goods, services, housing, and financial instruments—or the adverse consequences of industrial activity, and (5) to deal sensibly with effects which span long time horizons for which prices and markets are inherently incapable of solving.

This presentation challenges the notion that the global economic system can be fixed by the usual palliatives and that a strong government role are essential for success. Further, achieving the triple goals of co-optimizing competitiveness, environmental quality, and employment is not likely to result from the private sector left to its own

devices.

*Nicholas A. Ashford* is Professor of Technology and Policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he teaches courses in Environmental Law, Policy, & Economics; and Sustainable Development. He holds both a Ph.D. in Chemistry and a Law Degree from the University of Chicago, where he also received graduate education in Economics. Dr. Ashford also holds adjunct faculty positions at the Harvard School of Public Health. In addition, he teaches intensive courses in Sustainable Development at Cambridge University, UK and in Cyprus.

Dr. Ashford is the co-author of a new textbook/reader on *Environmental Law, Policy and Economics* (2008, MIT Press) and is completing another on *Technology, Globalization, and Sustainability*. He has published several hundred articles in peer-reviewed journals and law reviews.

Dr. Ashford was a public member and chairman of the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety & Health, and served on the EPA Science Advisory Board and the EPA National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology. Dr. Ashford is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, has served as an advisor to the United Nations Environment Program, and currently serves as co-chair of the US-Greece Council for the Initiative on Technology Cooperation with the Balkans.

Dr. Ashford's is a native of Chicago and the eldest son of the late Professor Theodore Askounes Ashford and Venette Askounes, a well known educator and social worker in the Chicago Greek-American Community, respectively.

### **Annual Dinner Dance — Scholarship Awards**

The Annual Dinner Dance, New Year Celebration, and Scholarship Awards of Hellenic Link–Midwest will be held on Saturday, January 17, 2009, at the Four Point Sheraton Hotel, 10255 West Irving Road at Schiller Park. The proceeds from the Annual Dinner Dance are used to support the scholarships, cultural and educational programs, and all other activities of our organization. The generous support of our members and friends will be greatly appreciated. For tickets in advance, \$70 for adults and \$45 for children and students, please call 847-498-3686, or contact any of the Board Members. If you wish to purchase tickets at the door on the night of the event, the price will be \$80.

## ***In Brief***

### **Cost of Living in Greece**

Last September, Greece's Economic and Social Committee President, Christos Polyzogopoulos, said one out of ten Greeks cannot pay his rent, two out of ten have difficulty in paying off their credit card balance and four out of ten did not go on vacation Greece is the most expensive country in the European Union The cost of living in Greece is double the average of the eurozone. Over the past three years, in many cases increases on the shelves of supermarkets reached 83.3 percent, and over 200,000 houses all over the country remain unsold.

### **Opinion Poll on Expatriate Greeks**

An unprecedented opinion poll on the Greek expatriate identity was presented in the SAE Europe regional convention held in Frankfurt last October. According to the poll, Greeks who immigrated to America left Greece in search of a better future, while Greeks who moved to Europe left Greece because of poverty.

Most marriages between expatriate Greeks are still held in a traditional manner, thus forming a link with the homeland, while one in three families speaks mostly Greek at home. Family ties are also very strong, with 7 in 10 Greeks having relatives abroad. The majority of expatriates believe that good Greek schools are impossible to exist abroad The majority of them believe that they are more hardworking compared to residents in Greece. Entrepreneurship is higher among expatriates, whereas in Greece a large portion of respondents expressed a desire to work in the public sector.

Greeks abroad are in a better financial state. Only one in ten say that they are on the verge of poverty, compared to 20 percent in Greece. Three in four have property in Greece but only one in three maintain that they are exploiting the property.

A large majority of Greek expatriates have high self-esteem, are hardworking and consider themselves responsible taxpayers. A vast majority said they were extremely proud to be Greek-Americans or Greek-Australians and nine in ten said they wanted their children and themselves to preserve their Greek identity.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents believe that they are integrated in their country of residence and that in the future they will be fully assimilated. Nationality, a good profession and a high-level education are regarded as the fundamental elements for their integration in the societies of their adopted countries.

The Orthodox Church is evaluated in positive light, and one in three ethnic Greeks sees the Church as the foundation for developing social relations.

A high percentage of the Greeks of the Diaspora watch Greek satellite TV; one in three reads Greek newspapers,

while also one in three wants subtitled TV shows. The majority has a positive view of ERT, the Greek national broadcaster, while Greeks abroad are more familiar with the Internet than Greeks in Greece.

## ***From Our History***

### **Bloody December**

*From the book "Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War And The Origins Of The Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949" by Professor Andre Gerolymatos*

The next day, Monday, 4 December, a sea of demonstrators held Athens hostage and this time took to the streets to protest the killings. In the morning, thousands of EAM supporters joined a long funeral procession led by several trucks carrying twenty-four makeshift coffins. Reactions to the funeral delineated the left and right wing cleavages of Athenian society, which also had permeated all of Greece. Although some Athenians mourned the death of Sunday's victims, others seized on the occasion to denounce the tactics of EAM. According to EAM's detractors, the display of twenty-four coffins was exaggerated and intentionally provocative; they also claimed that stones filled several of the coffins and that not all the corpses were those of the victims of Sunday.

At the cemetery, leading members of the KKE and EAM eulogized the dead and condemned the Greek government for Sunday's murders. The demonstrators then headed back to the center of the city. Three young women at the head of the procession carried a long banner proclaiming, "When the people are in danger from tyranny they choose either chains or arms." The rest of the demonstrators chanted slogans, which were also inscribed on placards and carried along with Allied flags and bloodstained pieces of cloth as testimony of Sunday's casualties. Once again a disproportionate number of young women were at the forefront of the Columns and, rendered almost hysterical with rage, spat curses, and threats.

The path for Monday's procession was carefully chosen to challenge the authority of the Papandreou government and, failing that, to provoke a reaction. The possibility of casualties was of little consideration to EAM or to the government—fresh killings would simply generate new martyrs for either side. Around noon, the demonstrators headed to Omonia Square, but before they could advance any further they came under fire from the police and members of the right-wing EDES and pro-monarchist X (pronounced "chi") organizations, who were positioned on the rooftops and in the outlying rooms of several hotels that faced the main streets.

This time, the demonstrators were flanked by armed ELAS cadres, who began firing back. In a few minutes pandemonium broke out as most of the demonstrators started to run away from the shooting and scrambled for protection in the nearest doorways, store entrances, and any other possible sanctuary to shelter them from the

gunfire. The main confrontation took place around the Metropolis Hotel, and by the afternoon, when British troops managed to restore order, forty more people had lost their lives and seventy were seriously wounded.

These new shootings and killings had almost coincided with the gunfire of the reserve ELAS units opening the preliminary round of the battle of Athens. Remarkably, despite the threats and claims by the left of a mass uprising against the Papandreou regime, the initial crisis was a slow burn rather than a sudden eruption or even part of a carefully calculated strategy. The first choice of targets was the police, which the left identified with the provisional government and the last vestiges of the occupation. Over the next several hours the reserve ELAS units sparked dozens of small sieges against the police stations in Athens and Piraeus. By 3:00 PM., ELAS had captured twenty-one of the twenty-four police stations in metropolitan Athens and had unraveled the tenuous compromises that had held the peace since liberation.

These attacks followed a familiar pattern, in which dozens of small, heart-wrenching dramas were played out. After a police station was captured, those not killed during the fighting were accused of collaboration and other crimes against the people. The police would plead innocence, but their entreaties fell on deaf ears. This exchange seldom lasted for more than a few minutes, and afterward the unfortunate officers were shot outright or dragged to the nearest lamppost, tree, or telephone pole and hanged. In some instances British troops, still encountering little or no opposition from ELAS, managed to rescue the condemned. In others, the presence of British soldiers served to encourage the extreme elements to descend into greater human depravity.

In the port city of Piraeus, a British unit attempted to interpose itself between a police station and ELAS but faced overwhelming opposition. After a tense verbal exchange, the guerrillas dragged out several of their prisoners and in front of the British soldiers proceeded to gouge out the eyes of these hapless prisoners. The British soldiers gawked, transfixed by the horror unfolding before their eyes, and felt disgusted by their impotency to interfere. The screams of the police reverberated along the empty streets and shortly were reduced to low guttural moans, but the ordeal was far from over. For a few minutes, the ELAS executioners just grinned while savoring the spectacle of torment and the vulnerability of the British. Then, they took out butcher's cleavers and began to hack off the forearms of the blinded police and continued slashing until the bodies resembled heaps of human pulp. The agony, for victims and spectators, ended when the police were put out of their misery by bullets to their brains. The tormentors exploited such sadistic brutality on several levels—as an exercise of their total superiority over their victims and, by forcing the British to observe the atrocity, a creation of *de facto* British participation.

Yet collectively or individually, other members of ELAS were also capable of remarkable demonstrations of human dignity and courage. During the early days of the fighting and before Ronald Scobie, the commander of all Greek and British forces in Greece, fully committed his forces to battle, a British squadron supported by one tank moved against the EAM-ELAS headquarters in Athens located on Constitution Square, across from the Grande Bretagne Hotel. After the unit captured the building and took a few prisoners, a lone ELAS guerrilla approached them and, ripping off his shirt, stood bare-chested in front of the tank, challenging the British tank to pass over him. In that brief moment, the conflict was no longer anonymous, and for the British tank crew the enemy had a face, commitment, and determination. The intimacy of the moment proved too much, and the embarrassed crew turned the tank around and abandoned the street to the ELAS soldier.

Civil war, with few exceptions, quickly degenerates into brutal slaughter because the violence and killing are localized and personal. Athens in 1944 was a small city in which life revolved around equally small neighborhoods, where everyone knew just about everyone else. The killing, execution, or torture of one individual seldom remained isolated but rippled across many lives. Under these conditions, the emotional involvement of the participants was supercharged, and, as exemplified by the man standing in front of the tank, in Athens it was absolute. Fanaticism and revulsion to it dominated Athenian society during the December Uprising and continued throughout the next stage of the civil war from 1946 to 1949. In this jungle of extreme emotions, atrocities were common and not exclusive to one side or the other.

Another immediate target during the early days of the battle was the extreme right-wing X organization. ELAS units in the early afternoon of December 4 advanced on the X headquarters near the Temple of Theseus, close to the Acropolis, and laid siege to several buildings. X had approximately 1,000 members and was led by Colonel George Grivas, a fierce anticommunist and committed royalist. The organization had come into existence primarily in Athens during the last year of the occupation to counter the overwhelming influence of EAM and ELAS. The left had almost immediately denounced all members of X as reactionaries and collaborators, lumping them with the notorious German-led Security Battalions.

In a short time a fierce firefight ensued, and neither side expected nor was inclined to give quarter. The battle raged all day, and after several failed attempts to capture the X headquarters, ELAS began to bombard the building with mortars. Some structures caught fire, and by late afternoon flames from the burning buildings darted upward, licking the low-hanging clouds. In the evening the glow from the fires rested like a red crown over a dark and dreary Athens. *(To be continued)*

## *From The Riches Of Our Cultural Heritage*

### **Chorus Parts From Sophocles' *Antigone*** (continued from previous issue)

—Many are the world's wonders, But none more wondrous than man. He rides the storm-gray sea mounting white-capped waves in winds that surge and threaten; and holy Earth, the oldest of all the gods immortal, he furrows with his plough, turning her soil with the labor of generations of stallions.

—With excelling sharpness of mind he snares whole nations of birds; takes captive tribes of wild beasts, and catches in woven nets the brood of the ocean's deep. And with his art he masters the lion whose lair is the mountain, and tames the shaggy-maned horse, and the unbroken mountain bull, with the powerful yoke of his will.

—And words and wind-swift thought, and moods that mold a state, and law that rules a city, all, all are his. And his, too, the skill that shelters him from

cold; never without resource, except when Death appears. And yet, from ills that baffle, he has devised escape.

—Intelligence of mind, power beyond all measure, man's fertile skill leads now to good, now to evil.

When laws of man and god are kept, then his city stands with pride.

When man betrays both god and man, then his city falls in shame.

He will never share my hearth.

He will never share my thought.

—Blest are they who have known no evil, for once the gods strike that house is doomed for ever.

Generation after generation falls beneath the blow to the end of days, like the wave, blasting from the black northeast, hurling dark sand from the depths onto the echoing shore.

—I have seen now from ancient times how sorrows pile on

sorrows for the house of Labdakos with no relief from the gods, generation after generation; and now the last light is cut to the root by dust, by dust offered to the gods below, by the folly of a passionate word, by frenzy at the heart.

—Zeus, what human arrogance can check your power, Zeus, whom neither sleep nor track of weariless months of the gods can master? Ageless you reign in the glistening mansions of high Olympos, and near and far, past and future, your law is fixed forever. No greatness ever enters human life, but with it comes the curse of Zeus' heaven.

—For hope, far-ranging hope, is for some men a comfort, but for many a false lure, leading to giddy desires. And so, innocent and

unknowing, they wander into the flame. Ancient wisdom speaks for all. The man god leads to doom will soon say good is evil and evil good; for one brief moment does he breathe free of ruin.

—Love unconquered in battle, Love that plunders the rich, Love that keeps its vigil on the soft cheek of a girl, roamer of seas, visitor of forest dwellings, none among mortals escapes you, nor man whose life is a moment; all in your grip are mad.

—You lead the just man to ruin and injustice; you struck the spark that ignited the strife between father and son: and Love is the victor. Triumphant and bright the desire in the eyes of a lovely bride: Love that reigns beside law, merciless Aphrodite.