



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

No. 65, October–November 2008

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<http://www.helleniclinkmidwest.org>

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Upcoming Events

The Post-Cold War Balkans: Experimenting With Neo-Ottomanism

On Sunday, October 26, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Dr. Nikolaos Stavrou, Graduate Professor of International Affairs and Political Science, Emeritus, at Howard University, in a lecture titled "*The Post-Cold War Balkans: Experimenting With Neo-Ottomanism*". The event will be held 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). Admission is free for HLM members and \$5 for non-members.

The speaker will examine the origins of U.S.-Balkan policies and the ideological foundations of a trend that seeks to institutionalize Turkey as a pivotal regional actor with influence straddling the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean. The trends towards a restoration of Turkey as a Balkan player have their origins in seminal work produced by Yale University and the Rand Corporation. Thus, Graham Fuller of the Rand Corporation "advised" Turkey to curve its own sphere of influence "rather than becoming the tail end of Europe." Similarly, a contributor to Paul Kennedy's *Pivotal States* (Yale, 1996) encourages Turkish elites to seek a *modus vivendi* with their Islamic past, re-defining Kemalism, and to adopt an ideology that is applicable beyond Turkey's borders. That ideology, for lack of a better term, is Neo-Ottomanism. It is an ideology that we thought had died in the Balkan wars and was buried by Leo Trotsky's friend and disciple, Mustafa Kemal. Its revival now threatens a re-Balkanization of the Balkans and the demonization of those nations that suffered the most under its older version, Greece and Serbia.

Dr. Nikolaos A. Stavrou is Graduate Professor of International Affairs and Political Science, Emeritus, at Howard University. His expertise is in Political Theory (Normative and Empirical) while geographically he specializes in Balkan, European and Russian affairs. He is an internationally known specialist on Albanian, Yugoslav, and Greek affairs. He has published over one hundred and fifty articles in professional journals and major newspapers. Dr. Stavrou's publications have appeared in *World Affairs*, *Political and Economic Studies* (Athens), *Global Affairs*, *Politika Themata*, *Mediterranean Quarterly*, and in major newspapers like, *Manchester Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Borba* (Belgrade), *To Vima*, *Kathimerini*, *Eleftherotypia*, and *Ta Nea*. He has appeared on major

TV Channels, and he is a regular political commentator for *ANTI TV and Radio* (Athens). Dr. Stavrou is the editor of *Mediterranean Quarterly*, published by Duke University Press.

Dr. Stavrou received his B.A degree in Political Science from Hunter College (NY) and his M.A. and Ph.D degrees in International Affairs and political Science, respectively, from George Washington University.

The Philosophical Basis of Kazantzakis' Writings

On Sunday, November 16, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Peter Bien, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Emeritus, at Dartmouth College, in a lecture titled "*The Philosophical Basis of Kazantzakis' Writings*". 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). Admission is free for HLM members and \$5 for non-members.

Kazantzakis was a philosophical novelist, one who deliberately created fictions meant to flesh out an abstract system of thought that he had developed much earlier. His system is based primarily on the vitalistic philosophy of Henri Bergson, whose lectures Kazantzakis attended in Paris in 1908. Vitalism posits an evolutionary "life force" that, although working through matter, nevertheless aims to convert matter to spirit. In his fictions, Kazantzakis created heroes who aid this process, and villains who hinder it. Probably the best examples are the two priests in "*The Greek Passion*": Fotis (positive) and Grigoris (negative). Zorba is a vitalistic hero because he teaches the Boss how to deal with materialistic failure. Christ in "*The Last Temptation*" converts his own materialistic failure into the spiritual triumph of self-sacrifice. The fullest treatment occurs in Kazantzakis's gargantuan epic, "*Odyssey*," whose hero evolves along Bergsonian lines from brute to a bodiless angel. These works, although sufficiently effective simply through characterization and plot, fulfill Kazantzakis's purpose only if we appreciate their philosophical basis.

Peter Bien is Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Emeritus, at Dartmouth College. Although in his teaching he concentrated on British and Irish fiction, especially James Joyce, in his research and writing he has devoted his energies chiefly to Modern Greek literature and language. He translated Kazantzakis's *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Saint Francis*, and *Report to Greco*, as well as Myrivilis's *Life in the Tomb*, and poetry by

Ritsos, Cavafy, and Harkianakis. His scholarly writings treat Cavafy, Ritsos, and especially Kazantzakis. A founder of the Modern Greek Studies Association of America, Professor Bien served twice as its president and also as the editor-in-chief of its official periodical, the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*. Together with several colleagues at Princeton, he is the co-author of *Greek Today*, a textbook for the teaching of Modern Greek via the oral/aural method. In 2004 he and colleagues published a 900-page bilingual anthology of twentieth-century Greek poetry. Volume 1 of his critical/biographical study, *Kazantzakis: Politics of the Spirit*, was brought out in Greek translation by the University of Crete Press in 2001; he has also completed volume 2, which was published by Princeton University Press in 2007 and also in Greek by the University Press of Crete. He is now preparing an edition, in English, of Kazantzakis's selected letters. In November 2007 he was awarded an honorary Ph.D. by the University of Thessaloniki.

Revelation in Ancient Greek Religion

Hellenic Link–Midwest is cosponsoring a conference on *Revelation in Ancient Greek Religion* organized by the Department of Classics and Mediterranean Studies of the University of Illinois Monday, November 10, 2008, at the UIC Institute for the Humanities at Chicago (UIC). The conference will be held at 3:00 pm.

What caused ancient Greek religion to maintain its hold over the masses? While it is a truism that ancient Greek religion was not a “religion of the book,” this conference will show that revelation played a significant role through oracles, miracles and divination. Among the questions to be answered are the following. Was it deemed necessary to re-affirm and uphold tradition by discovering the will of the gods? Did the will of the gods, when revealed, enable novelties and departures from tradition? The conference speakers are:

Robert Parker, Wykeham Professor of Greek History at Oxford, will present: “Why believe without revelation? The evidences of Greek religion.” Robert Parker's tremendous impact on Greek religion can be traced back to his seminal book on pollution, *MIASMA, Pollution and Purification in Greek religion* (Oxford, 1983). Inspired by the work of the anthropologist Mary Douglas, Parker carefully applied this model to Greek evidence. In recent years, he has dealt systematically with the historical study of Athenian religion, avoiding banal generalizations. His two latest books, *Athenian Religion, a History* (Oxford, 1997) and *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford, 2007) are considered definitive on their topics.

Albert Henrics (Eliot Professor of Greek Literature at Harvard University) will present “*A History of the Intellectual Tradition of Revelation*” (provisional title). Albert Henric's work is groundbreaking in the field of the history of thought, extending from Greek religion to

gnostic Christianity. One of his specialties is Greek tragedy and the interpretation of its literary metaphors. His latest work deals with the establishment of sacred texts as canons before Christianity. He has published some 300 articles, of which perhaps the best known are on Dionysos and tragedy. Some of his latest contributions are: “*Drama and Dromena: Bloodshed, Violence, and Sacrificial Metaphor in Euripides*” (2004) and “*Hieroi Logoi and Hierai Bibloi: The (Un)written Margins of the Sacred in Ancient Greece*” (2005)

Roger Woodward, Andrew van Vranken Raymond Professor of the Classics at SUNY, Buffalo, will present: “*A Broad Perspective on Athenian and Greek Religion*” (provisional title). Roger Woodward uniquely combines the specialty of comparative linguistics—especially the study of the Greek alphabet—with the study of Greek religion, which he compares to that of Anatolia, the Levant and Asia Minor. Among his latest books are *Indo-European Myth and Religion: A Manual* (Iowa, 2004) and *The History and Nature of Human Writing* (Oxford, 2006).

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

By approximately 10:45 A.M., one column of demonstrators was spilling into Constitution Square. They quickly formed into ranks of right to ten abreast, while every fourth person carried either a British, a Greek, an American, or a Soviet flag. Others waved banners with slogans engraved in red print. W. Byford-Jones, who witnessed the event, writes:

The ages of those who were taking part ranged from ten to twelve years of age to sixty and more. A few of the children were without shoes, most of the people without overcoats, but there were many who were well dressed. As before, there were a predominant number of girls between eighteen and thirty years of age. There was nothing sullen or menacing about the procession. Some of the men shouted fanatically towards the police station and the hotel, but there was a good deal of humorous banter, and many jokes were exchanged between demonstrators and those who watched from the kerbs.

Between the demonstrators and the police station were approximately twenty terrified police, who had taken position between the palace and the corner of the Grande Bretagne Hotel that faced the square. Armed with little more than Italian carbines that were loaded with blank ammunition, the police had no illusions as to their fate if the crowd got out of control.

The police had every reason to fear for their lives, since having served under the jurisdiction of the occupation authorities, they had, rightly or wrongly, been labeled

collaborators by the majority of Athenians. Although many Greek police officials had covertly assisted the resistance and the Allies, not enough time had passed since liberation to permit a clear distinction between the absolute traitor and the sunshine patriot. Indeed, some had had to wear the mask of the former in order to assist the latter.

Making matters worse, the provisional Greek government had failed to purge the security establishments and civil service of collaborators, whose continued presence now tainted every state apparatus. The government had argued that time was required to conduct a meticulous and judicious purge, but such reasoning was lost on the crowds advancing toward the center of the city on the morning of 3 December 1944. To the half-starved population of Greece, what truly mattered were symbols, and the gray uniforms of the police invoked the fear and agony of the occupation.

The handful of police positioned a few yards beyond their station were aware of this reality, and for the past several hours they had witnessed dozens of wounded fellow officers being carried off on stretchers into the station following clashes with groups of demonstrators. As the crowd got closer and closer, the fears of the police turned to panic, and some began to replace their blank rounds with live ammunition.

When the crowd advanced to within less than 100 yards of the police cordon, suddenly a man in military uniform ran out of the station and shouted, "Shoot the bastards!" He then dropped to one knee and began firing his gun. A few seconds later the panic-stricken police followed suit. They did not fire in unison like a disciplined unit but discharged their weapons sporadically. A few of the officers hesitated for a few seconds; some remained transfixed by the spectacle before them, but one after another, each began to fire. The first ranks of the crowd cascaded onto the ground; the fortunate ones found protection behind trees or nearby walls, but most simply lay flat on the ground.

The shooting continued for approximately half an hour, and when it was over twenty-two of the demonstrators remained still, twelve of them dead. A couple of brave souls gingerly darted out onto the square to drag back the bodies of their comrades, while others attempted to cover the wounded with their bodies. Once the firing ceased, rage instantly replaced the fear of the police and anguish over the casualties. The metamorphosis from a disciplined crowd into a frenzied mob took place suddenly, triggered by the sudden release of paralyzing fear and accelerated by anger. Almost straight away, hatred replaced terror, and according to Byford-Jones, "the demonstrators went mad. Thousands of people roared their threats and defiance at the police. It was the ugliest scene I had ever witnessed.... The demonstrators stood screaming and shouting, tearing open their shirts and crying, "Shoot me, you cowards, you Papandreou hirelings.'"

By noon, a second crowd of demonstrators had broken through the police cordons and thousands more soon joined them, until the square was jammed with almost 60,000 people. The police retreated within the walls of their station and locked themselves in. Over the next thirty minutes, the remaining police barricades disintegrated, and most of the officers discreetly left the scene and sought refuge in nearby private homes or managed to reach the safety of the police headquarters. A few police stragglers near the square, however, were not as fortunate. They were seized by dozens of hands, punched, kicked, and spat upon. A torrent of verbal abuse drowned out their protestations of innocence. The lucky ones were dragged off to the nearest lamppost and lynched; some, however, could not be pried away from the clutches of the mob, which, intoxicated by raw animal savagery, tore the men literally limb to limb.

The crowd in the square continued to shout slogans and to wave banners as well as Greek, American, British, and Russian flags. Regardless of the chaos and commotion, every effort was made to display EAM's affection for the United States and its president. The masses repeatedly shouted, "Roosevelt, Roosevelt," and carried numerous large flags of the Stars and Stripes. A group of boys pounced on an American officer passing by, raised him on their shoulders, and carried him over forty blocks until the man managed to kick himself free.

In the midst of this angry mass of humanity, an old woman dressed in widow's black stood outside the police station and, like the furies of ancient myth, hurled threats and curses at the men inside the building. For some time she stubbornly stood leaning on her stick, her presence the incarnation of hatred, fear, and helplessness that had become a metaphor for Greece.

After several hours, the crowd quietly dispersed, and a squadron of British paratroopers advancing single file easily pushed the remaining demonstrators across the square. Despite the bitter fighting that would take place later, most firsthand accounts agree that initially there was no perceptible hostility toward the British. For the time being, and as far as most of the demonstrators were concerned, the killings were blamed on the police and the provisional government.

The police continued to remain within the confines of their station, while the man who had initiated the shooting in the square had disappeared. His identity remains a mystery and yet another strand in the folklore that eventually framed the story of the December Uprising. The questions still linger: Was he an agent provocateur of the left or of the right? Over the years no one has ever come forward to take credit or provide evidence concerning the identity of this man. The identity of the man who almost single-handedly provided the fuse for a sequence of events that catapulted Athens into the brutality of the December Uprising remains an enigma.

(to be continued)

From The Riches Of Our Cultural Heritage

From Sophocles' Antigone

The scene represents the royal palace of King Kreon in Thebes. It is very early morning, barely dawn. The invading Argive armies have only now been driven off by the defending Theban forces. A Chorus of Theban Elders enters the orchestra. They are jubilant at yesterday's victory, exultant in the glory of the new dawn. They speak sometimes together, sometimes separately in varying combinations. The parts of the Chorus Leader ("Coryphaeus") are in italics.

Bright sun, bright ray, great light of lights, glorious, gleaming, eye of golden day, refulgent, radiant chariot of the sun, the fairest that ever shone on Thebes, Thebes, Thebes of the Seven Gates! You rise, you rise, you rise triumphant, triumphant, victorious, victorious over Dirke's streams, out of the dismal barrel of night, routing, routing the Argive invader, the bronze-clad warrior, with his white shield, his silver-white shield, with bolts of light, routing, routing him in headlong flight with the sharp, piercing bit of your steed!	<i>Polyneikes' quarrel swept him through our land, an eagle screaming, swooping, soaring, diving, plunging, his white wings their dazzling shields, his snowy plume their bristling crests!</i> Circling wide, wide, circling wide, circling, he closed on our walls, his ravenous maw gaping wide, his thirsty spears clogging our gates! But before, before, before his jaws could he sated, sated with our blood, blood, sated with our blood; before, before our towers, our circle, our crown, our crown of towers could tumble, crumble, fall to destruction in clouds of	smoke from the Fire-god's flame, his pine-fed flame, Hephaistos' torch, the Dragon rose up. Thebes rose up, Thebes' Dragon rose with a roar in the din of battle, rattling its arms, rose up behind, not to be conquered, never conquered, not to be vanquished, rattling its arms! <i>Zeus who hates a boasting tongue, saw the swarms of Argives swagger in clangorous gold, and blasted, as he reached the top, with fiery bolt, the first to crow!</i> He fell, he fell in a wide arc, wide, flame-streaming torch trailing, trailing, and struck the earth, struck, struck, with a terrible noise, he who	breathed on us blazing white hate like a raging stormwind's savage blast, failing, failing in all he threatened! And Ares, god, storming, raging; Ares, war-god, gave to each man, to each, each, a different death! Ares, Ares gave us victory! <i>Seven invaders, seven defenders, seven gates, seven tributes of enemy arms to Zeus of Battles; two loathing brothers, two hating swords, duel to the death!</i> Now Nike, now Victory, now victorious Nike, Nike victorious comes, comes with the dawn, in answer to Thebes' rejoicing, Thebes of the many chariots! Let us raise	high, let us raise high our voices, let us raise high our joyous voices, our joyous voices, in praise, praise, put battle behind in sweet forgetfulness! Let us lift our voices and feet to the gods, lift high our feet in all-night dancing, with Bakkhos to lead us, Bakkhos, Bakkhos, lead us in joy! Let our stomping, our stomping, our stomping feet lead us, Bakkhos, lead us, and shake, shake the earth, shake with delight! Bakkhos! Bakkhos!
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