



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

The Muse Named Homer

On Sunday, April 26, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Prof. Allan Kershaw in a lecture titled "*The Muse Named Homer*". 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.

The title is deliberately ambiguous: the Muse 'names' Homer in the first line of each epic to be the recipient of her inspiration, to sing the Iliad and the Odyssey. In turn, Homer himself becomes a muse, the inspiration of the subsequent generations, not merely of epic poets, indeed, not merely of poets, but of ALL those who follow him in the passage of time. To be fair, Homer himself was a beneficiary; as Cicero says, 'nothing is at the same time invented and perfected, and there is no doubt that there were poets before Homer'. Who were these poets we may never know.

Let us take as undeniable and long since demonstrated that Homer established the criteria for the composition of epic. Professor Kershaw will focus on some, perhaps, less obvious genres and areas of endeavour for which Homer is also the inspiration, or the Muse. The nine muses, were in charge of epic, lyric, history, tragedy, eventually all poetic genres, also philosophy, music, dance, astronomy, and all intellectual pursuits, including the visual arts. Indeed, it would have been tempting to call this talk, 'Homer, the Tenth Muse', had not the Alexandrians already awarded that title to Sappho for the sheer brilliance and beauty of her songs. Kershaw certainly does not suggest that Sappho is undeserving of this honour, nay, often one word from her lips is worth a hundred from mere mortal poets; let her coinage of 'sweet-bitter' suffice to make the point, and who knows what of hers we have lost.

The inspiration of Homer springs not simply from his words, not merely from his astounding knowledge of everything from anatomy to the tools required to build a raft, but from his HUMANITY and his understanding of the human condition, his love for the hearts and minds of men and women.

Professor Kershaw is presently Clinical Associate professor of Classics and Fellow of the Honors College at University of Illinois at Chicago. He has degrees in Latin and Classics from the U.K. and U.S.A. He has authored

some forty articles, almost entirely on Latin Textual Criticism, in the leading journals of Europe, the U.K., and North America.

The Financial Meltdown of 2008

On Sunday, May 17, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Prof. George Karras and Dr. Peter Evangelou in a lecture titled "*The Financial Meltdown of 2008*". 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.

The talk will focus on the origins of the current crisis, their effects on domestic and foreign economic outcomes such as incomes and employment, government responses including monetary and fiscal policies and their limitations, and probable recovery scenarios and predictions.

The US and many other countries are currently experiencing a serious economic contraction. While economists generally agree on the severity of this crisis, there is considerable debate concerning both its causes and the most appropriate policy responses.

One of the most widely held views is that the origins of the crisis are to be found in the growing "global imbalances" of the last decade (1997-2007), when increasing US current account deficits were financed with capital flows from oil-producing countries and emerging Asian economies. Another prominent view is that the main cause was extremely accommodating monetary policy in the early 2000s which kept interest rates low for too long.

Government responses to the crisis have included both monetary and fiscal policies. Interest rates have been reduced so drastically, that many central banks, including the Federal Reserve, are now operating virtually at zero. The monetary alternative is now "quantitative easing" which focuses on the money supply rather than interest rates. Fiscal policies have combined higher government expenditures and tax cuts.

However, the effectiveness of these policies is constrained by several factors: household indebtedness, the health of the banking sector, and a possible resurgence of economic protectionism.

George Karras is a Professor of Economics at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He specializes in

Macroeconomics and International Economics. He has published more than 80 papers, including articles in the *Review of Economics and Statistics*, the *Journal of Macroeconomics*, the *Journal of Monetary Economics*, the *Journal of International Money and Finance*, the *European Economic Review*, and the *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*. He is listed in the *Who's Who in Economics* and he is also the author of *Macroeconomic Theory*, a graduate-level textbook. He has received the Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Favorite MBA Professor Award.

Dr. *Peter Evangelou* holds a Ph. D in Financial Economics from Northwestern University with additional studies at the University of Chicago. He is the owner of the mortgage company Metrofin Mortgage Banque Inc.

In Brief

Church of Cyprus to File against Turkey at ECHR

According to a recent press release, issued in Nicosia, the Church of Cyprus will resort to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) for the continuing destruction of 522 churches in the Turkish occupied areas of Cyprus. The Church will also highlight the need to safeguard Cyprus' religious and cultural heritage, much of which has been pillaged or destroyed since the 1974 Turkish invasion of the island.

The press release says: "This resort to the ECHR is necessary because Turkey continues consciously to destroy the churches in our island and refuses to cooperate for the reconstruction and repair of all monuments which have suffered barbaric alterations. A lot of churches have been converted into stables, stores, hen-houses, night clubs, libraries, cultural centers, morgues, mosques and military camps".

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

However, Thanasis Hadzis, one of the leaders of the KKE during this period, was less sanguine about the prospects of a quick victory. He writes that the KKE faced two serious problems with respect to an armed confrontation. First, there were the reactions of EAM's followers to Sunday's bloody confrontation; although EAM supporters had been reassured by the widespread outrage against the police and the Papandreou regime, the majority of EAM's supporters still considered the British allies and friends. After the shooting was over on Sunday, thousands of demonstrators continued to wave Allied flags and shout, "Long live Churchill," "Long live Roosevelt," and "Long

live Stalin." This open enthusiasm for the leaders of the major Allies, according to Hadzis, indicated that Athenians only held the police responsible for the killings. Hadzis also states, "The other disappointing factor was the paralysis that took hold of the masses once British troops arrived on the scene and saved the murderers, which prevented any further action against the provocateurs and the police who were shooting at the demonstrators from the hotels in Omonia Plateia."

Hadzis believed that the ELAS reserve units in Athens were not ready, and it would have taken some time to prepare them for war against the "mighty British Empire." Hadzis also realized, he later wrote, "On 4 December the popular movement and its political and military leadership were not ready for a general armed revolt. It was imperative to allow for some time to pass and to acquire tangible evidence . . . in order to convince the masses, that it was necessary to fight the allies when they [the Allies] violate their national independence." The bravado of communists such as Bartziotas and the tempered analysis provided by Hadzis are conveniently reflected in their memoirs, which were written years later, to explain or absolve them of their part in the ultimate failure of the Uprising. Nevertheless, Hadzis' account, in particular, does offer some insight into the reluctance of the KKE leadership to rely on the support of the Greek population for a civil war. More than anything else, this lack of confidence that EAM's followers would participate in an Uprising that also included fighting the British retarded the KKE's ability to launch an all-out offensive in the first weeks of December.

For a short while, this peculiar situation placed the British troops in the awkward position of being simultaneously bystanders and participants. They were seldom fired upon, at least in the first days of the crisis, but had to confront ELAS units daily. In some instances they tried to disarm ELAS members; in others it was a matter of persuading them to hand over prisoners or abandon captured buildings. Frequently British officers were obliged to take part in long-winded discussions with representatives of ELAS or the neighborhood EAM and KKE bosses. Most of these men, especially junior officers or those recently arrived in Athens, often found themselves in a bizarre and surreal environment.

Richard O'Brien had studied law at Cambridge and in 1940 joined the army. For three years he fought in North Africa and Italy, and in early December he and his company were transferred to Athens. After the hard fighting in Italy, O'Brien was not quite certain why his unit might be forced to fight ELAS, an organization that ostensibly had been an ally only a few days earlier. In his unpublished, and partially completed memoirs, O'Brien captures some of the frustration, confusion, and strain that these soldiers underwent during their stay in Athens and Greece. A few days before ELAS escalated the battle to

include the British, O'Brien was ordered, despite his protests, to disarm an ELAS unit in the Piraeus area. He arrived at the ELAS headquarters, located in a small house near the sea, with only an interpreter. According to his account:

"We began by negotiating. Nothing is more of a strain when it is not certain whether the other side is going to shoot you or talk to you. . . . My interpreter and I were ushered into a small room and given seats around a table. The door was kept closed throughout, but during the meeting, it was regularly opened by a guard outside, who would pass in dirty pieces of paper, and mutter furtively to persons inside the room. This comic, if rather sinister, sideshow provided light relief throughout our somewhat tense and protracted discussion. The argument was not important. It followed the obvious lines and went round in circles. I said we did not wish to fight, the Greek people were our allies, not our enemies, for were we not both fighting the Germans? They admitted this; but said that they must keep their arms to defend themselves against their own fascists. They maintained that Britain had no right to interfere in Greek affairs. To begin with, I more than held my own. In the room were three or four elderly amiable civilians, who were ready to agree with me, and had not wished to fight us. There was one soldier, a smartly dressed officer in a blue turn-out, who obviously took no interest in politics but only enjoyed parading around in his uniform; he was ready to do what anyone told him. My defeat was caused by a civilian who came in later, a smallish mean-looking man with a sallow complexion and spectacles. He was a true Communist—narrow, fanatical, embittered; and he swayed over to his side many who before were in two minds. He made no attempt to argue but monopolized all attention by a stream of impassionate harangues, during which he banged on the table, glared feverishly about him, and uttered the usual fatuous clichés "death to the fascists", "freedom to the people", "liberty for the masses". He was so effective in turning everyone against me that I began to feel like a secret agent in a Hitchcock film who suddenly realizes he is about to be found out. I lay back in my chair trying to appear cool but wondering if I was going to get out of the place alive. In the end, we concluded amiably enough, but they refused to hand over their arms, and so my efforts had failed".

To many Athenians, the outbreak of hostilities was almost a relief from the atmosphere of gloom and tension that had gripped the capital for the previous two weeks. A great deal had taken place in Greece during the last three years, and feelings across the political spectrum had run very high. The Greeks had suffered occupation, famine, reprisals, and even a small genocide. These cataclysms had brutalized and desensitized Greek society—people became harder, almost pitiless, and too easily tolerant of killings and torture.

The infighting between the left-wing EAM-ELAS and the other resistance as well as with various paramilitary organizations, including the anticommunist quisling formations, had spawned bitter hatred and even a degree of sadism. The early rhetoric of the resistance claiming liberation, popular rule, and appeals to patriotism had, over the course of the occupation, been dipped in blood, and the outrages committed by the left and right could not easily be forgotten or forgiven. These sentiments promised that the December Uprising would raise the threshold of cruelty in the upcoming battle.

The events that led to the second round of civil war not only epitomized the mistrust and fear that permeated relations between the leftwing resistance and the Greek government-in-exile but fundamentally reflected a manifestation of the collapse of civil society. The occupation had robbed Greece of the institutions that ameliorated political differences in place of vigilantism, leaving the raw power of the gun as the arbitrator for legitimate authority.

In this environment, particularly in the countryside, what passed for justice seeped out of the politics of the resistance. Security was hostage to political affiliation, on the indulgence of one or another of the guerrilla bands, and at the mercy of the occupation forces. Neutrality was tantamount to collaboration. The anarchy of violence ruled the shambles of Greek society. There was little time in the six weeks following liberation to rebuild the political and economic infrastructure of the country and, more important, to start healing the trauma of hate and division inflicted by the occupation.

Amid the ruins of postwar Greece people expected relief from hunger and a modicum of justice, especially punishment for the collaborators. When the provisional government failed to address these critical priorities, there were few avenues to challenge the decisions of the ramshackle state or to seek redress for past wrongs. The followers of the left-wing resistance and the KKE found recourse for their grievances in the street, and when that was denied to them, they accepted the application of violence as a viable alternative.

The provisional government, for its part, daunted by almost insurmountable problems, could only rely on British troops to uphold it as a legitimate authority. In so doing, Papandreu contributed to the transformation of the British troops from liberators into an occupation army. Churchill's directive to General Scobie—"Do not however hesitate to act as if you were in conquered city where a local rebellion is in progress"—underscored not only the preponderance of Britain's sway over Greek affairs but the helplessness and ultimately the irrelevance of the provisional government.

From The Riches Of Our Cultural Heritage

From the Tragedy *Hecuba* by Euripides

Chorus:

O wind of ocean,
wind that blows on the sea
and drives the scudding ships,
where are you blowing me?
Where shall I be slave?
Where is there home for me?
There in the islands?
The salt sea churning, borne on by oars,
to days of mourning in the house,
there where the primal palm
and the bay broke out their leaves
for lovely Leto
in honor of her son?
There shall I sing
with the maidens of Delos,
praising Artemis,
the bow and fillets of gold?
Or there where Athene drives
her chariot of burnished gold?
There in Athens, yoking
the horses on the goddess' robe,
stitching cloth of saffron
with threads of every color,
sewing the Titans there,
killed by stabbing fire,
the thunderbolts of Zeus?
O my children! My father, my mother!
O city, ruined land,
ashes and smoke, wasted,
wilderness of war!
I live, but live a slave,
forced to a foreign land,
torn westward out of Asia
to a marriage that is death!
That morning was my fate,
that hour doom was done,
when Paris felled the tree
that grew on Ida's height
and made a ship for sea
and sailed to Helen's bed—
loveliest of women the golden sun has seen.
Grief, and worse than grief,
necessity surrounds us.
One man's folly made
a universal curse,
ruin over Simois.
Paris sat as judge
upon three goddesses.
His verdict was war.
War, slaughter, and the ruin of my house,
while in her house the Spartan woman mourns,
grieving by the wide Eurotas,

and mothers mourn for their sons,
and tear out their snowy hair
and dredge their cheeks with bloody nails.

O Ilium! O my country,
whose name men speak no more
among unfallen cities!
So dense a cloud of Greeks
came, spear on spear, destroying!
Your crown of towers shorn away,
and everywhere the staining fire,
most pitiful. O Ilium,
whose ways I shall not walk again!

At midnight came my doom.
Midnight when the feast is done
and sleep falls sweetly on the eyes.
The songs and sacrifice,
the dances, all were done.
My husband lay asleep,
his spear upon the wall,
forgetting for a while
the ships drawn up on Ilium's shore.

I was setting my hair
in the soft folds of the net,
gazing at the endless light
deep in the golden mirror,
preparing myself for bed,
when tumult broke the air
and shouts and cries
shattered the empty streets:—
Onward, onward, you Greeks!
Sack the city of Troy
and see your homes once more!

Dressed only in a gown
like a girl of Sparta,
I left the bed of love
and prayed to Artemis.
But no answer came.
I saw my husband lying dead,
and they took me over sea.
Backward I looked at Troy,
but the ship sped on
and Ilium slipped away,
and I was dumb with grief.

A curse on Helen,
sister of the sons of Zeus, and my curse on him,
disastrous Paris
whose wedding wasted Troy!
O adulterous marriage!
Helen, fury of ruin! Let the wind blow
and never bring her home!
Let there be no landing
for Helen of Troy!

