



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

Censorship and the Law in Ancient Athens

On Sunday, December 12, 2010, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Kent Rigsby, Professor Emeritus of Epigraphy and Ancient History at Duke University, in a lecture titled "*Censorship and the Law in Ancient Athens*". 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.

How much freedom of speech was there in classical Athens? Did the Athenians have laws on the books that limited what could be said in public, including in the assembly and on the stage, or monitored what people could write? Until a generation ago it was believed that Periclean Athens banned (and even burned) books and prosecuted critics of the state. This belief is based largely on claims that were made about ancient Athens by people living half a millennium later in Roman Imperial times—who lived under a very different regime when it came to free speech. That evidence can be shown to be biased, reflecting Roman fears of conspiracy. If we look at evidence from classical Athens itself, we see strident criticism on public issues: Periclean Athens allowed and even encouraged free speech and public criticism. When the Roman claims are sorted out, only two episodes contradict this openness: the trial of Socrates in 399 B.C., and a reported law of Pericles banning comedy during the years 440 to 437. But the trial of Socrates can be shown to be political in the sense that the true motive was revenge for his friendliness with the junta of 404/3 B.C., for which he could not be prosecuted because of the amnesty that followed. Pericles' law banning comedy can be shown to be fictitious: it is a Roman scholar's deduction based on a chronological list of comedies which had omissions in it, and which did not mention either Pericles or an Athenian law.

Kent J. Rigsby taught ancient history at Duke University, North Carolina, from 1971 to 2007. His degrees are from Yale, U. of Toronto, and Harvard. He has specialized in Greek inscriptions and history, with particular interests in ancient Greek civil life, religion, and historical geography. His book *Asyilia: Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World* appeared in 1996; his current projects include a volume of the inscriptions of Kos for the series *Inscriptiones Graecae* and a book on Hellenistic religion.

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 22, 2011, at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 10249 West Irving Road at Schiller Park, starting at 6:30 pm. 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 at \$65 per person (\$25 for children up to 12 years old), 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 \$70.

In Brief

EU Deployed Border Personnel to Greece

On October 24, 2010, Greece asked the EU for the immediate deployment of Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABITS) and the EU Agency for the Management of the Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (FRONTEX) for operational support to stem the mass influx of undocumented migrants on its eastern borders. The Greek government stressed that "a mass influx is noted daily on Greece's external land borders with Turkey of third-country nationals who attempt to illegally enter Greek territory with the aim of accessing other EU countries... The increasing pressure of the illegal migrant flows at the Greek borders is a clearly European problem and requires a corresponding European solution in the context of EU solidarity". EU responded that RABITS teams, coordinated by FRONTEX, "will be deployed at the external border and will ensure mutual assistance between Member States of the European Union; they will act under the authority of Greece and will be in place for a limited period of time".

In total, 175 border-control specialists were deployed on November 2, 2010, in the region of Evros. They include experts in false documents, clandestine entry, first and second-line border checks and stolen vehicles as well as dog handlers and specialist interviewers, debriefers and interpreters.

Muslim Festival in Athens

According to the Greek newspaper Kathimerini, in the morning of Tuesday, November 16, thousands of immigrants congregated in squares in Athens for mass

prayers to mark the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha. Despite small-scale clashes between nationalist protesters and police, the congregations ended peacefully. The largest crowd, of around 3,000 worshippers, gathered outside the entrance to Athens University at the center of Athens at 7.30 a.m. The scenes were unprecedented for Athens. Smaller groups of worshippers gathered in at least 12 other locations. On Monday night, dozens of residents from around Attiki Square scuffled with police. The crowd is believed to have included members of the extreme right-wing group Chrysi Avgi, which recently gained a seat on the Athens municipal council. The protesters returned to the square early on Tuesday, but were pushed back by the police. Some residents continued with protests from the balconies of their homes, pelting worshippers with eggs and playing loud music in a bid to disturb their prayers. Other residents waved Greek flags. There were no reports of similar violence in other neighborhoods, but many Greeks interviewed by television reporters expressed discontent.

Naim El-Ghandour, president of the Muslim Union of Greece, told Kathimerini that they had decided to pray in public this year as they could not afford to rent a venue, as they used to. Ahmed Mowias of the Greek Migrants Forum said the construction of a mosque in the district of Elaionas, as pledged by the government, was the only long-term solution. "Images of makeshift mosques in basements and of people praying in the street do not belong to a European capital," he said.

Merkel: multi-cultural society 'has failed'

Chancellor Angela Merkel said that Germany's attempts to create a multi-cultural society in which people from various cultural backgrounds live together peacefully have failed. "Multikulti", the concept that "we are now living side by side and are happy about it," does not work, Merkel told a meeting of younger members of her conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) (Oct. 17, 2010). "This approach has failed, totally," she said. She spoke a week after talks with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in which they pledged to do more to improve the often poor integration record of Germany's 2.5-million Turkish community.

Horst Seehofer, the leader of the CDU's Bavarian sister party, CSU, told the same party meeting the day before that the two Union parties were "committed to a dominant German culture and opposed to a multicultural one. "Multikulti' is dead," he said.

While warning against "immigration that weighs down on our social system", Merkel said that Germany needed specialists from overseas to keep the pace of its economic development. According to the head of the German chamber of commerce and industry, Germany urgently needs about 400,000 engineers and qualified

workers. "The lack is causing a loss of growth of about one percent," he said.

A recent expert study, by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation think tank, showed that 34.3 percent of those surveyed believed Germany's 16 million immigrants or people with foreign origins came to the country for the social benefits, while 35.6 percent think Germany is being "over-run by foreigners". Thirty-two percent of people said they agreed with the statement: "Foreigners should be sent home when jobs are scarce."

Far-right attitudes are found not only at the extremes of German society, but "to a worrying degree at the centre of society," the report noted. Of the 2,411 people polled 58.4 percent thought that the about four million Muslims in Germany should have their religious practices "significantly curbed."

The integration of Muslims has been a hot issue since August when Thilo Sarrazin, a member of Germany's central bank, sparked outrage by saying the country was being made "more stupid" by poorly educated and unproductive Muslim migrants with headscarves. The banker has since resigned but his book on the subject, "*Germany Does Itself In*", has flown off the shelves, and polls showed considerable sympathy for some of his views.

From Our History

The Reasons for the Civil War

From the book "Blood and Tears, Greece 1940-1949" by George C. Papavizas

There are several defenders of the notion that the KKE desired peace after Varkiza. Smith, for instance, believes that from Varkiza (February 1945) to DAG's formation (October 1946) "the KKE tried to influence and develop its mass political base in order to promote a peaceful development in the country. The discussion in the Central Committee's Third Plenum and the Party's Seventh Congress in October 1945 were dominated by attempts to formulate realistic and viable prospects for democratic development and for a peaceful solution to political conflicts... the policy of the KKE until at least the Third Plenum of the Central Committee in September 1947 can be seen as an attempt to avert war." According to him, when Zachariadis met with Soviet representatives in Prague on 3 March 1946, the KKE objectives were free elections and a representative government rather than war. But at the Prague meeting the subject of "liberation of the Slavomacedonians of the Aegean Macedonia" was also raised, and Zachariadis received lavish promises for help, "material and moral," from the Russians and Yugoslavs. Smith also believes that at the Second Plenum (February 1946) the KKE opted for self-defense tactics, and later for full-scale armed conflict, to defend its members against terrorization. *Aftoamina* (self-defense), which began in earnest after the Second Plenum (which also decided that

armed conflict was the most probable course to solve the problem), was not intended to be an offensive weapon. It was a forceful defense measure. Unfortunately, the decision for self-defense, also approved by Tito and Stalin, graduated into a widespread radical action and full-fledged war after the KKE's Third Plenum in September 1947.

Looking back on events, a good reason to blame the Right for triggering the Civil War was the so-called white terror, the indiscriminate terrorization of the Left by clandestine right-wing gangs and paramilitary groups tolerated or encouraged by the government. After the KKE's legalization, it became illegal for individuals to punish leftists suspected or known to have committed crimes during the resistance years. Crimes committed by the Left or Right should have been brought to justice and punished evenhandedly by the courts. But the justice system's disproportionate efforts against the Left led the rural population to anti-government reactions and *aftamina*. The thousands of imprisonments of leftists, the dissolution of leftist organizations, and the nightmarish atmosphere in rural areas of the country were destined to lead to civil war. Moreover, as brutal reprisals against the Left accelerated, many *dosilogoi* (collaborators) and traitors were overlooked. Some were even appointed to high government positions. And many more ELAS fighters were prosecuted and convicted than collaborators.

The discrediting and disbanding of ELAS by the Varkiza Agreement and the misuse of Varkiza by the Right to ensure the KKE's defeat and humiliation are also given as reasons for exculpating the KKE from responsibility for triggering the civil war. The government promoted the clauses of the agreement that suited rightist views and neglected those that could have guaranteed normalcy. Many leftist leaders belonging to EAM/ELAS and low echelon KKE members were harassed, exiled, imprisoned or even killed following the Varkiza Agreement. The Varkiza Agreement itself had many flaws: it did not address the burning issues of the times; it fell short of providing a realistic formula for a just solution; it humiliated the KKE without promoting peace; it accentuated the pretext for retaliations; it afforded a rationale for harsher acts in a society plagued with irreconcilable divisions; it gave the government the "right" to enact harsh new measures and emergency laws against a sizable portion of the population; and it reduced the political standing of the KKE to its lowest point, forcing it to elect violent conflict to avoid oblivion. The excesses of the Left had been replaced by the excesses of the Right.

The view that the Right's reprisals against the Left accelerated the onset of the conflict, but did not actually cause it, is shared by the entire spectrum of those who sided with the government during and after the civil war. It is also supported by those who believe that the war was fought by the nation against domestic and foreign enemies. These people identify the KKE with Soviet expansion and Balkan Communist irredentism at Greece's expense. Those

who believe that Greece's territorial integrity was at risk during the bloody conflict also believe the KKE set the conflict in motion immediately after the Varkiza Agreement. There is powerful evidence to support these contentions.

One piece of evidence is found in Zachariadis' actions as soon as he set foot on Greek soil in the spring of 1945. With his fiery proclamations and inflammatory articles he intended to cause deep cleavage between Left and Right and foment political upheaval. Torn between Soviet plans for the gradual establishment of people's rule in Greece and his own impulse for a fast victory with armed revolt, Zachariadis grudgingly adopted a dual strategy at the outset, i.e., a compromise between vigorous struggle in the political arena and a gradual build-up of the Party's arms. But the gradualism did not last long. Rebuilding the military and paramilitary organization became his top priority.

To attain his goals Zachariadis formed mass defense groups from former EAM/ELAS and KKE cadres, ostensibly to protect themselves from extreme rightist terror. The Party began forming these units almost immediately after Varkiza. *Aftamina* groups eventually became the backbone of regular DAG units. According to Stavrakis, there is evidence that the Party's military arms were extensively restored and that the process may have been supervised or assisted by the Soviets. Soviets were present in Greece after Varkiza under various pretenses to gather information and oversee the KKE's movements, especially in Greek Macedonia. Greek Communists worked harmoniously with Soviet agents in 1945 for the reconstruction of the Communist armed forces. If the KKE abided by the Varkiza Agreement as it claimed, why such frantic political and military activity by its leader? And why did the Party hide the best guns and ammunition immediately before and after Varkiza?

Zachariadis was already leaning toward a full-scale armed conflict as early as mid-1945, four months after he arrived in Greece and nine months before the general elections. His contacts with Tito and Stalin increased during that period. His behavior also betrayed that something more serious than *aftamina* and political agitation was afoot. Evidence shows that as soon as he returned to Greece his activities to restore the KKE's arms were just as swift, vigorous, and extensive as his political activities. British sources reported that in mid-June 1945 Zachariadis met secretly with senior ELAS officers to discuss the reorganization of guerrillas. British intelligence also reported that Soviet agents in civilian clothes were operating with the KKE in northern Greece. The Soviets and the KKE were in agreement on the political and military strategy to follow. According to Stavrakis, "Under Zachariadis' leadership (and apparently with Soviet knowledge and consent), the reconstruction of Greek communist forces began in earnest to gain momentum at this time (1945)." *(to be continued)*

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

Poetry by Nikos Kavadias

FATA MORGANA

Θα μεταλάβω με νερό θαλασσινό
στάλα τη στάλα συναγμένο απ' το κορμί σου
σε τάσι αρχαίο, μπακιρένιο αλγερινό,
που κοινωνούσαν πειρατές πριν πολεμήσουν.

Στρείδι ωκεάνειο αρραβωνιάζεται το φως.
Γεύση από φλούδι του ροδιού, στυφό κυδώνι
κι ο άρρητος τόνος, πιο πικρός και πιο στυφός,
που εναποθέτανε στα βάζα οι Καρχηδόνιοι.

Πανί δερμάτινο, αλειμμένο με κερί,
οσμή από κέδρο, από λιβάνι, από βερνίκι,
όπως μυρίζει αμπάρι σε παλιό σκαρί
χτισμένο τότε στον Ευφράτη στη Φοινίκη.

Χόρτο ξανθό τρίποδο σκέπει μαντικό.
Κι ένα ποτάμι με ζεστή, λιωμένη πίσσα,
άγριο, ακαταμάχητο, απειλητικό,
ποτίζει τους αμρτωλούς που σ' αγαπήσαν.

Rosso romano, porphyro της Δαμασκός,
δόξα του κρύσταλλου, κρασί απ' τη Σαντορίνη.
Ο ασκός να ρέει, κι ο Απόλλωνας βοσκός
να κολυμπάει τα βέλη του με διασκορίνη.

Σκουριά πυρόχρωμη στις μίνες του Σινά.
Οι κάβες της Γερακινής και το Στρατόνι.
Το επίχρισμα. Η άγια σκουριά που μας γεννά,
μας τρέφει, τρέφεται από μας, και μας σκοτώνει.

Καντήλι, διασκοπότηρο χρυσό, αρτοφόρι.
Άγια λαβίδα και ιερή από λαμινάρια.
Μπροστά στην Πύλη δύο δαιμόνιοι σπαθοφόροι
και τρεις Αγγέλοι με σπασμένα τα κοντάρια.

Πούθ' έρχεσαι; Απ' τη Βαβυλώνα.
Πού πας; Στο μάτι του κυκλώνα.
Ποιαν αγαπάς; Κάποια τσιγγάνα.
Πώς τη λένε; Φάτα Μοργκάνα.

Πάντα οι κυκλώνες έχουν γυναικείο
όνομα. Εύα από την Κίο.
Η μάγισσα έχει τρεις κόρες στο Αμανάτι
και η τέταρτη είν' ένα αγόρι μ' ένα μάτι.

Ψάρια που πετάν μέσα στην άπνοια,
όστρακα, λυσίκομες κοπέλες,
φίδια της στεριάς και δέντρα σάπια,
άρμπουρα, τιμόνια και προπέλες.

Νά 'χαμε το λίκνο του Αλαδίνου
ή το γέρο νάνο απ' την Καντώνα.
Στείλαμε το σήμα του κινδύνου
πάνω σε άσπρη πέτρα με σφεντόνα.

Δαίμονας γεννά τη νηνεμία.
Ξόρκισε, Alodetta, τ' όνομά του.
Λούφαξεν ο δέκτης του ασυρμάτου,
και φυλλομετρά τον καζαμία.

Ο άνεμος κλαίει. Σκυλί στα λυσσιακά του.
Γεια χαρά, στεριά, κι αντίο, μαστέλο.

FATA MORGANA (translation by Gail Holst)

I'll take communion with salty water
infused from your body drop by drop
in an ancient goblet of Algerian bronze
that pirates communed with before they fought.

Ocean oyster betrothed to the light,
pomegranate rind, the dry taste of quince
And the secret shade, more bitter and dry,
that the Carthaginians used on vases.

Sheet of leather coated with wax,
scent of cedar, incense, varnish,
smelling like the hold of an ancient ship
built in Phoenicia, on Euphrates' banks.

Pale grass covers the Pythian tripod,
and a burning river of molten tar,
wild, invincible, menacing stream,
washes the sinners who loved you once.

Rosso Romano, porphyry from Damascus,
glory of crystal, Thirian wine.
Let the wineskin flow and Apollo the shepherd
launch his dioscorini-soaked arrows.

Burnished rust in the mines of Mount Sinai.
Cellars of Straton and Yerakina.
The gloss - the holy rust that bears us,
feeds us, is fed by us and finally kills us.

Gold chalice, ciborium, sacred lamp;
holy tongs made of laminaria.
Two sword-bearing demons before the Gate
and three angels with broken laces.

Where are you from? From Babylon.
Where are you going? To the eye of the cyclone.
Whom do you love? A Gypsy woman.
What is her name? Fata Morgana.

The cyclones always have female names:
Eva who comes from the city of Kios.
The witch has three daughters' all in the pawn-shop
and the fourth is a boy with only one eye.

Fish that fly in the motionless air,
shells, young girls with dishevelled hair,
snakes from the shore and rotten trees,
masts, propellers, the wheels of ships.

If only we had Aladdin's lamp
or the aged dwarf who came from Canton.
We sent the danger signal out
on a small white stone, by catapult.

A demon gives birth to the sudden calm.
Alodetta, exorcise his name!
The radio operator's fallen silent
and now he's consulting the almanac.

The wind weeps. A mad dog's howl.
So long shore and farewell tub.

"*Fata Morgana*": Fata Morgana is a mirage seen by sailors. The origin seems to be the Celtic *Morgan Fe*. It is an image of a beautiful woman which heralds disaster. The first section of the poem (the first seven stanzas), full of Christian and pagan imagery, describes an erotic encounter. After the brief dialogue with Fata Morgana, we return to the real world of the storm at sea.