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Upcoming Events

The American Embassy and the Collapse of Democracy in Greece, 1966–1969

On Sunday, February 27, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Ambassador (ret.) Robert V. Keeley, in a lecture titled *"The American Embassy and the Collapse of Democracy in Greece, 1966–1969"*. 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 so-called Colonels' coup of April 21, 1967, was a major event in the history of the Cold War, ushering in a seven-year period of military rule in Greece. In the wake of the coup, some eight thousand people affiliated with the Communist Party were rounded up, and Greece became yet another country where the fear of Communism led the United States into alliance with a repressive rightwing authoritarian regime. The Colonels' coup came as a surprise to the United States (which was expecting a Generals' coup instead). Yet the U.S. government accepted it after the fact, despite internal disputes within policymaking circles about the wisdom of accommodating the upstart Papadopoulos regime. Among the dissenters was Robert Keeley, then serving in the U.S. Embassy in Greece. This is his insider's account of how U.S. policy was formulated, debated, and implemented during the critical years 1966 to 1969 in Greek-U.S. relations. This account is also presented in Ambassador Keeley's recently published book *"The Colonels' Coup and the American Embassy: A Diplomat's View of the Breakdown of Democracy in Cold War Greece"*, a Greek-language version of which has also been published previously in Greece as *"Η Αμερικάνικη Πρεσβεία και η Κατάρρευση της Δημοκρατίας στην Ελλάδα, 1966-1969"*. Ambassador Keeley will sign copies of his book.

Ambassador (ret.) Robert V. Keeley has served as president of the Middle East Institute in Washington, chairman of the Council for the National Interest Foundation, working for peace in the Middle East, and as Ambassador: to Greece (1985-89), Zimbabwe, and Mauritius. In 1978-80 he was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, in charge of southern and eastern Africa. Earlier in his career he had assignments in Cambodia, Uganda, Jordan, Mali, and Greece.

He has received the Christian Herter Award, the Superior Honor Award, a Presidential Citation, and a Presidential

Distinguished Service Award. In 1985 he was elected President of the American Foreign Service Association.

Ambassador Keeley was born in Beirut, Lebanon, where his father, was serving as the American Consul. He was educated in Canada, Greece, Belgium, and the United States. He graduated from Princeton University, with a major in English literature, and did graduate work at Princeton and Stanford. He now works as a free-lance writer, lecturer, and consultant. His interests extend to foreign affairs, domestic politics, economics, and social policy. He has written: *Uganda under the rule of Idi Amin Dada, 1971-73*; *The Colonels' Coup and the American Embassy*, and *Η Αμερικάνικη Πρεσβεία και η Κατάρρευση της Δημοκρατίας στην Ελλάδα, 1966-1969*. In 1995 Ambassador Keeley founded the *Five and Ten Press Inc.*, a publishing company whose purpose is to publish original articles, essays, and short works of fiction and non-fiction rejected, or ignored by the media and mainstream publishers.

Greek Independence Day Celebration

On Sunday March 20, Hellenic Link–Midwest will host its annual Celebration of the Greek Independence Day featuring Dr. Athanasios Zervas, music composer and professor at the Department of Music Science and Art at the University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece. The event will start at 3 pm, at the Hellenic American Academy, 1085 Lake Cook Rd, Deerfield, Illinois.

The program includes a lecture titled: *"Heroes, Heroism, and Heroic Songs of the 1821 Independence through the works of Greek Symphonists."* followed by a concert performance of *"Songs about the Heroic Sacrifice and the Celebration of Greek Independence of 1821"* based on the works of well-known Greek poets set to music by Dr. Zervas.

The lecture will present a selection of symphonic and chamber compositions—sound excerpts and scores—written by Greek composers of the Eptanissian and the National School. The selection of the compositions will be based on material from Greek traditional music (demotic songs), poetry referring to the heroes of the Greek Independence of 1821, and related symbolism. He will discuss the impact of this music on the Greek people, its social implications, its role in the glorification and recognition of the Struggle for Independence, and how it influenced Modern Greek culture and musical art, and the formation of Greek Music Nationalism.

The Concert titled “*Songs about the Heroic Sacrifice and the Celebration of Greek Independence of 1821*”, is based on poetry of Rigas Fereos, Andreas Kalvos, Kostas Krystalis, Dionisios Solomos, Spiridon Trikoupi, Aristoteles Valaoritis, and Georgios Vizyinos. The music was written by Athanasios Zervas and the concert will feature soloists *Dolisha Pleasant* (lyric soprano), *Jason Raynovich* (violin/cello), professor of music theory/composition, Chicago State University, *Mark Smith* (percussion), professor of percussion and chairman of the Music Department, Chicago State University, and *Mark Sudeith* (piano), professor of piano/organ, Chicago State University.

Athanasios Zervas is a composer, theorist, saxophonist, and conductor. He holds a DM in composition and a MM in saxophone performance from Northwestern University, and a BA in music from Chicago State University. Dr. Athanasios Zervas is an Assistant Professor at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki Greece, and chief editor of the electronic music theory/composition journal “mus-e-journal.”

As a composer, Athanasios Zervas has had numerous performances of his music in Europe, Africa, and the US including a performance in Carnegie Hall NY. He is the recipient of numerous academic and composition awards among them the W. T. Faricy Award for Creative Music. His post-serial musical language often fuses elements of Byzantine chant, microtonal sonorities, polyrhythm, and lyric fragments of traditional Greek tunes. He has also performed at the Herodion Odeion, Olympia, the Megaron of Music-Athens, the Megaron of Music-Thessaloniki, the Ancient Theater of Epidaurus, and at the Olympic Stadium in the Opening and Closing Ceremony in “*Olympics 2004*.” He has recorded with BMG, EMI, FM records, Libra Music Ltd, Mercury/Universal Co., Magni Records, Centaur Records, etc.

In Brief

Armenians Sue Turkey Claiming U.S. Air Base Land

According to an article published on December 23 on *The California Courier*, an English-language Armenian weekly newspaper, Armenian-American attorneys have sued the Republic of Turkey and its two major banks last July, seeking compensation for confiscated properties and loss of income.

A new federal lawsuit was filed last week by attorneys Vartkes Yeghiayan, Kathryn Lee Boyd and David Schwarcz, along with international law expert Michael Bazylar, against the Republic of Turkey, the Central Bank, and Ziraat Bank for “unlawful expropriation and unjust enrichment.” The plaintiffs are three Armenian-Americans, who have deeds proving ownership of properties stolen from their families during the Armenian Genocide.

During the Genocide, the Turkish government placed all properties belonging to Armenian victims under seal. Subsequently, it directed the Ziraat Bank to hold all proceeds from the sale of seized properties in trust and for safekeeping on behalf of the Armenian owners. These properties were then transferred to the Turkish Treasury and placed under the administration of the Central Bank. The lawsuit accuses the Republic of Turkey, the Central Bank and Ziraat Bank of unfairly benefiting from the plaintiffs’ seized assets. The Incirlik U.S. Air Base is partly located on their property.

The three Turkish defendants are currently engaged in commercial activities in the United States which grants jurisdiction to U.S. courts. The Republic of Turkey operates several state-owned or controlled enterprises in the U.S.

In addition to seizing the Armenian properties, the Turkish government has pocketed the rent paid by the United States for the Incirlik Air Base during the past 60 years. Several major American corporations, such as Baskin Robbins, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, Starbucks, and AT&T transact business and provide services on the base for U.S. troops. These companies have also been profiting from Armenian-owned lands for many years.

The lawsuit claims that the plaintiffs “are suffering harm from the loss of use and proceeds from their property.” Turkey and its Central Bank’s “continued unlawful use of the property causes a direct effect in the United States because a U.S. commercial entity pays money” to Turkey to lease the Incirlik Air Base and “is engaged in a long-term business arrangement with defendants....”

The “plaintiffs’ action is additionally based upon “their rights in property unlawfully expropriated by Turkey in violation of international law,.. International law prohibits the taking of property when it is done in a discriminatory way or pursuant to gross violations of human rights. Plaintiffs’ property was taken pursuant to the genocidal campaign of the Ottoman Turkish Empire to destroy, in whole or in part, Armenian Christians in Turkey.”

Beyond depriving Armenians of their lives and property during the Genocide, Turkish authorities strictly forbade the survivors from reclaiming their properties, by stamping their passports “Return prohibited.”

The plaintiffs are demanding the current fair market value of their property as well as the accrued rental for the past 60 years, possibly totaling hundreds of millions of dollars. Several other lawsuits are expected to be filed in U.S. courts against the Turkish government and other Turkish entities, including a claim for the Turkish Presidential Palace in Ankara, which is located on land owned by the Kassabian family.

Could the Greeks of Constantinople, Imvros, Tenedos and Asia Minor learn from the above actions of the Armenians?

From Our History

The Reasons for the Civil War

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

Equally powerful evidence that the KKE had been set in motion for civil war were the decisions made at a meeting in Petric, Bulgaria, between members of the KKE Central Committee and Bulgarian and Yugoslav Communist military leaders as early as 15 December 1945. Averoff-Tossizza cited the events of 15 December 1945 as more important than either the events of 12 February 1946 (when the Second Plenum was held, the date the KKE considers as the beginning of the civil war) or 25 October 1945 (on which the KKE's Twelfth Plenum and Seventh Congress expressed the peaceful intentions discussed by Smith). Important, secret, warlike decisions were made at Petric on December 15, more than a year before the elections. The Communist leaders present from three countries decided that the time had arrived to reorganize Greece's Communist partisans into an army to fight new battles to achieve what ELAS had failed to do, i.e., impose a Communist regime in Athens. After the war Markos Vafiadis admitted in his book *Democracy and Totalitarianism* that he had met at Petric with the Bulgarians and Yugoslavs, whose military leaders encouraged the Greek Communists to organize the "*Democratic Army of Greece*" and promised lavish military and political support.

Reorganization of the Communist army began with former ELAS officers from Naousa, Volos, and other hotbeds of Communism in northern Greece. The first corps, a supply unit, secretly gathered weapons and ammunition at the beginning of 1946, transported them to Albania and Yugoslavia near the Greek border, set up supply depots, and directed former ELAS members and KKE cadres to move secretly to Bulkes, where other former comrades had been billeted for training and indoctrination. No one knew what the Greek Communists promised in return for Yugoslav assurances for military aid.

The general elections of 31 March 1946 brought to power a right-wing government. Escalation of rightist violence before the elections and the suspicion that the electoral lists were imperfectly renewed, which was true, forced the entire Left to boycott the elections. At least these were the Left's justifications for abstention (apochi). Another reason for the abstention, according to Margarites, was the KKE's desire to prevent the Right from legitimizing by the ballot the nightmarish conditions prevailing in the country. The real reason for the abstention has never been satisfactorily explained. Petrov, of the international Department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, advised Demetrios Partsalides, a member of the KKE Central Committee in Moscow two months before the Greek elections, to participate in them and adopt a "wait-and-see" attitude. Despite Moscow's admonition to participate and similar

advice from Italian and French Communists, Zachariadis decided to abstain. In later years Zachariadis admitted that the apochi was a "tactical error and not of a strategic nature." Siantos and Partsalides believed the abstention was a blunder. In his book *O Agonas* (p. 38) Vasilis Bartziotas (DAG Major-General) believed that the civil war was inevitable with or without the KKE's participation in the elections. Perhaps he knew that a decision to go to war had already been made before the KKE decided to boycott the elections. After the end of the civil war Zachariadis denied he was pressed by Moscow to participate in the elections and blamed Partsalides and Siantos for influencing the Party to abstain.

The KKE's suspicions that the elections would be rigged could not justify its decision to boycott them. The Left's abstention contributed, at least indirectly, to the onset of the civil war. Zachariadis was already leaning toward a full-scale armed conflict as early as mid-1945, nine months before the general elections. He abstained from the elections deliberately to remove the Party from the political arena. The abstention was only a pretense for blaming the Right for what was to follow. This supposition is not without foundation. Zachariadis was under pressure from hawkish Central Committee members to take military action against the terrorization prevailing in Greece. Abstention also gave Zachariadis a way to exert pressure on Stalin in forthcoming meetings after the elections. Stavrakis points out that the "timing of these meetings (with Soviet leaders and Stalin two weeks after the elections) correlates almost exactly with the KKE's abstention bolstering the argument that Zachariadis decided to abstain in part to pressure Stalin with a situation in which a resort to military force was the only logical alternative."

By abstaining from the democratic process the KKE scorned the parliamentary route, which very plausibly could have improved conditions for the Left. If the Left had participated, the KKE would have secured a substantial percentage of votes and parliamentary seats. This would have shielded the Left from terrorization, ensured it a place in the democratic process, transformed the Party into a power broker, and avoided the civil war. The Right would have been in an awkward position nationally and internationally if it attempted to muzzle political opposition or continue the terrorization after elections validated by the Right itself. But the Party leadership saw no benefit in the democratic process. Zachariadis, always inclined toward Communist dogma, could not wait for a major role conferred by democratic means. He sought the kind of glory that emanated from successful resistance against the country's enemies, which his old comrades, whom he considered inferior, had enjoyed. To legitimize his grip on the KKE he needed a great victory, emanating from his own ability to lead. Moreover, dictatorships of the proletariat were not known to be won by democratic means. *(to be continued)*

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

Poetry of Costas Karyotakis

Το Φεγγαράκι Απόψε...

Το φεγγαράκι απόψε στο γιαλό
θα πέσει, ένα βαρύ μαργαριτάρι.
Κι απάνω μου θα παίζει το τρελό
τρελό φεγγάρι.

Όλο θα σπάει το κύμα ρουμπινί
στα πόδια μου σκορπίζοντας αστέρια.
Οι παλάμες μου θα 'χουνε γενεΐ
δυο περιστέρια·

θ' ανέβουν—ασημένια δυο πουλιά—
με φεγγάρι—δυο κούπες—θα γεμίσουν,
με φεγγάρι τους ώμους, τα μαλλιά
θα μου ραντίζουν.

Το πέλαγο χρυσάφι αναλυτό.
Θα βάλω τ' όνειρό μου σε καΐκι
ν' αρμενίσει. Διαμάντι θα πατώ
λαμπρό χαλίκι.

Το γύρω φως ως θαν τη διαπερνά,
η καρδιά μου βαρύ μαργαριτάρι.
Και θα γελώ. Και θε να κλαίω... Και να,
να το φεγγάρι!

Ευγένεια

Κάνε τον πόνο σου άρπα,
Και γίνε σαν αηδόνη,
και γίνε σα λουλούδι.
Πικροί όταν έλθουν χρόνοι,
κάνε τον πόνο σου άρπα
και πέ τονε τραγούδι.

Μη δέσεις την πληγή σου
παρά με ροδοκλώνια.
Λάγνα σου δίνω μύρα
—για μάλσαμο— και αφιόνια.
Μη δέσεις την πληγή σου,
και το αίμα σου πορφύρα.

Λέγε στους θεούς "να σβήσω!"
μα κράτα το ποτήρι.
Κλοτσα τις μέρες σου όντας
θα σου 'ναι πανηγύρι.
Λέγε στους θεούς "να σβήσω!"
μα λέγε το γελώντας.

Κάνε τον πόνο σου άρπα.
Και δρόσισε τα χείλη
στα χείλη της πληγής σου.
Ένα πρωί, ένα δείλι,
κάνε τον πόνο σου άρπα
και γέλασε και σβήσου.

Tonight the moon...

Tonight the moon will fall upon
the strand, a heavy pearl.
And over me will play the mad
mad moonlight.

The ruby wave will shatter
at my feet, and scatter all the stars.
From my palms two doves
will have been born;

they'll rise —two silver birds—,
be filled— two cups— with moonlight,
sprinkle moonlight on my shoulders,
on my hair.

The sea is molten gold.
I'll launch my dream to sail
upon a caique. I'll tread a diamond,
the glistening gravel.

The encircling light will seem to pierce
my heart, a heavy pearl.
And I shall laugh. And then I'll weep... And there,
there's the moonlight!

Nobility

Make your pain into a harp.
Become a nightingale,
become a flower.
When bitter years arrive,
make your pain into a harp
and sing it like a song.

Don't bind your wound
but with the branches of the rose.
I give you wanton myrrh
—for balm— and opium.
Don't bind your wound,
and your blood royal purple.

Tell the gods "let me die!"
but hold on to the glass.
Buck against your days when
there's a festival for you.
Tell the gods "let me die!"
but say it with a laugh.

Make your pain into a harp.
Refresh your lips
at the lips of your wound.
One dawn, one evening,
make your pain into a harp
and laugh, and die.