



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

The Greek-Turkish Dispute in the Aegean Sea and the Role of the Exclusive Economic Zone

On Sunday, February 26, 2012, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents professor Theodore C. Kariotis, in a lecture titled “*The Greek-Turkish Dispute in the Aegean Sea and the role of the Exclusive Economic Zone*”. 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.

For more than 30 years now, Greece has been insisting in a monotonous way that its only dispute with Turkey is of a legal nature and is related to the delimitation of the continental shelf of the Aegean Sea. But, for more than 25 years, the concept of the continental shelf has been overshadowed by the concept of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Since the beginning of the new Convention of the Law of the Sea (CLOS) in 1982, not a single country on the planet earth has requested the delimitation of its continental shelf along with the simultaneous delimitation of the EEZ.

The Turks are delighted because they hear the Greek government and all the Greek political parties discussing only the continental shelf without ever mentioning the EEZ. The main reason, of course, for this great elation is that they know that Greece can gain much from the delimitation of the EEZ in the Aegean Sea. Figuratively speaking, the Turks are putting their heads in the sand while the Greeks have blinders on and continually mention only the continental shelf.

Dr. Theodore C. Kariotis is a professor of economics with more than 25 years of teaching experience at the University of Maryland University College, at Towson University, George Mason University, and George Washington University. He has received three teaching awards from the University of Maryland University College, and he is one of the first professors in the United States to teach Economics online. Dr. Kariotis holds degrees in Economics from Greece, Canada, and the United States. His most important book is “*Greece and the Law of the Sea*”.

He has served as the Economic Counselor of the Embassy of Greece in Washington, and he was a member of the delegation of Greece to the United

Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. He is an expert on the concept of the Exclusive Economic Zone and has written books and articles on that issue in both Greek and English.

Independence Day Celebration

In celebration of the Greek Independence Day, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents on Sunday March 18 at 3 pm, Dr. Dean Kostantaras in a lecture titled “*Greek Elites of the Peloponnese and the Revolution of 1821*”. 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.

This lecture explores the political imagination of Christian landed elites (*proestoi, prouchontes, primates*) in the Ottoman Peloponnese in the decades preceding the Greek Revolution of 1821. Using a variety of primary and secondary sources, the author offers a view of the collective and corporate mentalities that prevailed among this important cohort of native elites and the manner in which these sentiments informed their political response to the stresses of their times. Specifically, the paper attempts to clarify some of the questions raised by earlier scholars concerning the motivations of these figures by reconsidering the aims disclosed in their various interactions with the *Filiki Etairia* (Society of Friends). These help to illuminate what the proposed revolution actually meant to the Peloponnesian notables from a standpoint of opportunities and risks, as well as the assumptions contained in their notions of sovereignty. By attempting a closer view of what was actually being communicated to the primates by the 'friends' and what they were communicating in return, it may be possible to grasp the palatability of an endeavor that otherwise appears so at odds with the conservatism commonly associated with this group of actors. Suffice to say, it is not so obvious that in seceding from the Ottoman Empire the Peloponnesian notables were equally seeking to 'break with the past.'

Dean Kostantaras (PhD, George Washington University) is a Visiting Scholar in the Department of History at Northwestern University. His work on Modern Greek intellectual history, nationalism and state-building can be found in the monograph *Infamy and Revolt: The Rise of the National Problem in Early Modern Greek Thought* (New York, 2006) and articles

in leading journals such as Nations and Nationalism. In the fall of 2012 he will be offering a course on 'Greece in the 20th Century' at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

In Brief

Former German Chancellor Schmidt on the Greek Crisis

Greek newspaper Kathimerini, Dec 4, 2011:

The co-editor of the German newspaper "Die Zeit", Joffe, asked the former German chancellor Schmidt, "How could Merkel address the crisis more smartly?" Schmidt responded: "Smarter would mean not insulting the Greeks, neither putting ten million people in the same sack with their past governments and then punishing them. It is too easy for the fat German with a population of 80 million to cram the helpless Greek." He said that the current chancellor has completely isolated Germany from the rest of Europe. "I sincerely pity the current Prime Minister of Greece, this poor man who has received a situation that he is not responsible for and which he is now being called to manage", said Schmidt about Mr. Loucas Papademos.

Germany has a huge export surplus as a country. This surplus was created by the deficits of countries currently under duress. "We have a moral obligation to help," said the former chancellor. And he continued: "The Germans should reconsider their role in Europe. As a social democrat, I feel the need for support and solidarity; the weak need help and the powerful that have the means must provide it." Finally, he expressed his annoyance at the Germans' megalomania in assuming that they should be taking initiatives in Europe by themselves. "They have too much dirt on their hands from 1933 to 1945 to be allowed to display such arrogance," he said with profound self-criticism and he invited his compatriots to offer ideas, but not to demand to unilaterally decide on the future of Europe.

Solidarity with the Greek people! I, too, am a Greek!

A group of individuals from the French city of Nantes issued the following appeal, known as the Appeal of Nantes:

We are disgusted by the current humiliations imposed on the Greek people, who have been: shamefully accused of excess and dishonesty; pronounced guilty without being allowed to defend themselves; and condemned to endless austerity and penitance contrition. And all this has been done with a language that evokes 1940 and Pétain with its "moral order," "effort" and "spirit of joy."

Certainly we do not forget those who now sacrifice Greece to the financial speculators, pretending that "economic fascism" will content itself with the little

countries, and will spare themselves.

We do not forget those same people who abandoned Czechoslovakia to Adolf Hitler in Munich in 1938, hoping that he would be satisfied with this new prey, following the cowardice shown to the Spanish republicans.

We will no longer support these nouveaux riches (the triumphant 1% of the globalised world), who ignore the moral debt that humanity owes to the Greek nation, which sowed the first seeds of direct democracy—based precisely on the abolition of debts and the emancipation of citizens who had been reduced to slavery by their indebtedness 2500 years ago.

For all reasons above, we are all Greeks. We want to send a clear signal right now that we will no longer collaborate a minute longer in passivity towards the financial regime imposed on Greece. We wish to express our solidarity with Greece, and to share, at least symbolically, the fate of its people.

We therefore ask for dual Greek nationality, by making a formal request to the Greek ambassador in our country. We will launch this campaign with a list of primary signatories on the 24th of November 2011, a date that is also the anniversary of a significant action by the Greek resistance at the Gorgopotamos Viaduct on the night of November 24 to 25, 1942.

"Your Excellency, in solidarity with your country, I, the undersigned, request personally to be counted at heart a Greek, to enjoy the rights and duties of dual nationality, and to express this international citizenship with a view to the establishment of universal democracy in liberty and equality, twenty-five centuries after the time of Solon, Clisthenes, and Pericles. Thank you in advance for your response, and I express my fraternity with your people. "

We will never forget the paternalistic disdain displayed towards Greece by the leaders of Germany and France, an arrogant and vexatious attitude, made all the more scandalous by the fact that it is these two countries whose major arms deals with Greece have ruined the country.

We are shamed by the Merkel-Sarkozy couple, who lecture to Greece when she is down, forcing upon her people a treatment that is as highhanded and inept as that of the bloodletting physicians of old. And this is a medicine which they plan to administer to their own people.

We cannot accept that for the first time in the history of mankind, a country will lose its political sovereignty at the diktat of financial markets, merely to defend the investments of the privileged 1% of the world, who have bought government bonds.

We will not allow these slanders towards the Greek

people to pass, while the responsibilities of the profit mongers and international traffickers and of their accomplices remain ignored.

We do not forget General Faucher, the French mission chief in Prague, who, sickened by the Munich agreement, submitted an honorable resignation to the French government, and then requested the Czech citizenship.

Greece has given the world the inspiring myth of Antigone, the unconquerable defiance of conscience in the face of arbitrary tyranny.

Greece gave Europe the first seeds of direct democracy. And the first act of the newborn Athenian democracy, though a fragile and imperfect shoot, under the rule of Solon in 594 BCE, was precisely the abolition of debts and the general emancipation of citizens who had been reduced to slavery by personal indebtedness.

We do not forget the eminent and heroic Greek resistance, which participated in the liberation of Europe from Nazism.

The controls imposed on Greece are a blatant coup d'etat against European democracy, a deliberate suffocation of its civil society, a material and moral humiliation of its people. These controls will inevitably spread through a domino effect to neighboring countries, including our own country, and may set the stage for a pre-fascist crisis.

From Our History

The History of the Greek Loans

Translation of an article by George Romaios, published in Greek in the newspaper "TA NEA" on June 14. George Romaios is a journalist and historian (recently issued and circulated the first two volumes of "The Adventures of Parliamentarism in Greece between 1844–1940").

The default: The global financial crisis of 1929 found Greece in a relatively good economic and financial condition. But she was under the "supervision" of the League of Nations, which had guaranteed the public loans. Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, who after a heavy defeat in 1920, returned triumphantly to power after the 1928 elections, was destined to conclude his historic political career with a default. The State was unable to make amortization payments to the lenders. As at the time of Trikoupi, King Constantine was responsible for the loss of a \$ 33 million loan from the U.S, which may have prevented the default. The King wanted to get "revenge" for his removal from the throne by Venizelos after the Thessaloniki movement in 1917.

At that time, the drachma was pegged to the British pound. In September 1931, because of continuous devaluations of the pound and the outflow of large amounts of gold to the U.S., England decided to free the pound from the "gold standard". Venizelos did not follow the UK. He only

limited the buying and selling of foreign exchange and temporarily closed the Stock Exchange.

In eight months the foreign exchange reserves held by the Bank of Greece, amounting to \$ 85 million, were depleted. The only solution was to borrow. In January 1932, Venizelos went to Rome, Paris and London in search of a loan. He returned empty-handed. The governments of France and England were continuing their "feud" with King Constantine. They had declared that if Constantine would return to the throne they would stop any economic aid. After his return, Venizelos requested a meeting with the political leaders, to whom he proposed the creation of a bipartisan government. The leader of the "Popular Party" P. Tsaldaris disagreed, arguing that the bipartisan government would "damage the political parties to the benefit of those who oppose social order." However, his reference to the past and to the execution of the "Six" (political and military leaders found responsible for the defeat of the Greek Army in the Asia Minor campaign) made clear that Tsaldaris did not want to cooperate in any form with Venizelos and his Liberal Party.

In discussion in the Parliament, Venizelos and Tsaldaris stirred up the past with mutual accusations. Venizelos referred to the history of the loss of U.S. funds, for which King Constantine was responsible. The U.S. government had informed the Greek government that the agreement had been signed in 1918 under King Alexander. To release the funds, formal notification had to be sent that King Constantine had returned to the throne. Constantine refused on the grounds that in 1918 he was the king and that Alexander was his regent! When King George ascended to the throne in 1922, he agreed to send to the U.S. government the formal announcement. It was too late. According to Venizelos "while the unfortunate ministers were preparing a bag to put in six and a half million pounds or 33.5 million dollars in gold, the Americans responded that the law for the loan had expired!" The confrontation and the "stirring up" of the past continued, with participation of the press, while the economic situation was moving fast downhill. In April 1932, Venizelos personally attended a special meeting by the Council of the League of Nations. He explained that the Greek government had exhausted all national resources in its efforts to confront the crisis and asked for a loan of 50 million U.S. dollars and a four to five year suspension of the obligation to service the old loans. The Council agreed only to suspend the amortization payment for one year provided that the equivalent in drachmas would remain frozen in the Bank of Greece. The declaration of a temporary debt moratorium seemed inevitable as was the forced circulation of the drachma. However the Finance Minister, G. Maris, a personal friend of Venizelos, disagreed. Likewise, other ministers pressed Venizelos to declare elections, so that the moratorium on the national debt and the halting of stabilization would not burden the Liberal Party (a tactic also followed by Karamanlis in 2009). Venizelos insisted that elections would be held at

the end of his government four year term, as George Papandreou had also insisted recently.

As G. Maris' replacement was appointed Kyriakos Varvaressos, professor at the University of Athens and then Director of the Bank of Greece who drafted a monetary policy bill, which remained in effect up to 1940 and also after the war. The suspension of amortization payments, and the reduction in wages and government expenditures did not avert the economic downturn.

In the elections of September 25, 1932 the anti-Venizelist side did not gain a lot from its intense polemic against

Venizelos on the economic crisis. The percentage of the Liberal Party increased slightly from 31.63% to 33.42%. Venizelos was the target of all eight parties participating in the elections, ranging from the Popular Party (right wing) all the way to the Communist Party. In Piraeus, Venizelos was elected to the Parliament by 20,000 votes, while the other ten fellow candidates received collectively only 2,000 votes! The democratic (i.e. anti-royalist) side was split apart.

(To be continued)

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

Poetry by Alexander Matsas

Αποπλάνησις

Έστρεψες το κεφάλι προς το σκότος
σαν να διψούσες για σιγή και μιά φυγή,
πέρα απ' τον ισημερινό που διέγραφε
στον τράχηλο και στα μαλλιά, το φως του λύχνου.

Ο ώμος σου διηγόταν ιστορίες
για θάλασσες και καρυάτιδες στον ήλιο,
κ' εσήκωνε χρυσό φορτίο μεσημεριών.
Έφηβες νύκτες φώλιαζαν στην κόμη,
στις σκοτεινές αγράμπελες και τις εληές
του μύθου που δεν γνώριζες.

Ω βήματα στην αμμουδιά, με φτέρνα
ταχύτερη κι' αφρόεσσα και χωρίς ίχνη
αστραφτερές βουτιές στο κύμα, μεσ' σε χίλια
σπασμένα βέλη και φτερά!
Έγγλυφη μνήμη του κορμιού σου σε μιά κλίνη,
ινδάλματα σε μάτια και νερά,
είναι τ' αγνάρια της υπάρξεώς σου,
τα όρια του θρύλου σου.

Θρόισμα του Κάλλους, άγαλμα θερμόν,
ανάγλυφο στ' αέτωμα της νύκτας,
εκτός από ταυτότητα και Χρόνο.
ανώνυμο σε δένδρο κι' αποξενωμένο
σα μάρμαρο ποιάν Σίβυλλα ζητά
το βλέμμα σου στραμμένο προς το σκότος;

Ποιός φλοίσβος μίας θάλασσας βαθειάς
που δεν κολύμβησες ακόμα, ψιθυρίζει
στις κόγχες των αυτιών σου;—Πόθε,
φέρε μου πίσω, Πόθε, το κορμί
που με ανίγματα ανεπίλυτα,
ο σκοτεινός Αντεραστής αποπλανά!

The Seduction

You turned your head toward darkness
as though you thirsted for silence and escape
beyond the equator which the lamp's light
traced on your nape and hair.

Your shoulders narrated tales
of seas and caryatids in the sun
and supported a golden burden of noons.
Adolescent nights nested in your hair,
in the dark wild vines and the olives
of a myth you did not understand.

O steps on the sand with heels
swift-winged and foaming, and without trace;
fulgurant dives in the waves amidst
a thousand broken plumes and arrows!
Engraved memory of your body on a bed,
images in eyes and in water,
are the witnesses of your existence,
the boundaries of your legend.

Fragment of beauty, warm statue
carved on the pediment of night
beyond identity and Time;
anonymous like a tree and detached
like marble —what sibyl seeks
your gaze turned toward darkness?

What murmur of a deeper sea
you have never swum whispers
in the shells of your ears? —Desire
bring back to me, o desire, the body
that with insoluble riddles
the Dark Rival is luring away.