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A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

European Union or Disunion? What the Greek Crisis Reveals about European Integration

On Sunday, April 13, 2014, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Dr. *Kostas Kourtikakis* in a lecture titled “*European Union or Disunion? What the Greek Crisis Reveals about European Integration*”. The event will take place at 3 pm at the Four Points by 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 students with ID, and \$5 for non-members.

The Greek economic crisis has roots in the history and policies of the European Union, and it is part of broader European Union developments. In 1950 the founding fathers of European integration envisioned an “ever closer union,” which would bring European nation states together and make another catastrophic war impossible to even contemplate. In the six decades since then, the idea of an “ever closer union” has materialized in the form of numerous common institutions and policies, which currently bind together 28 different countries from across Europe. The euro was the crowning achievement of these long-term efforts. Although the euro crisis was sparked by particular Greek problems, it also ignited a fierce debate about the logic behind European integration and the common policies that support it. In particular, the assumption that all European countries are willing and able to follow common rules has been thrown into question. And so how will the EU move forward after the crisis? Will it continue to set the same rules for all of its members and (if so) how will these rules be enforced? Or will it let a core of countries that can abide by common rules move forward with more integration, while leaving other countries behind? The speaker will discuss this choice that preoccupies European leaders today. He will argue that Brussels’ reaction to the Greek crisis shows that these important questions about European integration have yet to be resolved, and that they set the background against which solutions to the Greek economic problems are being pursued.

Dr. Kostas Kourtikakis (PhD, University of Pittsburgh) is Lecturer and Research Assistant Professor in the

Department of Political Science at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and holds faculty affiliations with the European Union Center and the Program in Modern Greek Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. His area of expertise is Comparative Politics and International Relations, with a special emphasis on European integration. His research and teaching interests revolve around European Union institutions and policies. He is currently the recipient of a “European Union Center of Excellence” grant by the European Commission for a project, which examines European Union foreign policy toward the countries of the Mediterranean and former Soviet Republics. His work has appeared in the *European Political Science Review*, the *Journal of Common Market Studies* and the *Journal of European Integration*.

Genocide or Massacre: the Politics of Death

On Saturday, May 31, 2014, Hellenic Link–Midwest, the Pontian Society of Chicago, and The Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center present Professor *Andreas Gerolymatos* in a lecture titled “*Genocide or Massacre: the Politics of Death*”. The event will be held at 3 pm at the Cultural Center of the Hellenic American Community of Greater Chicago, 5941 North Milwaukee, Chicago, Illinois.

From the first millennium BC, Pontic Greeks were a critical element of Hellenic, Byzantine and Ottoman empires. Their presence in the region is identified from the Homeric period and they maintained an uninterrupted habitation there until the Turkish Genocide of the Greeks of Asia Minor was implemented from 1914-1923.

The systematic ethnic cleansing of the Greek population from its historic homeland in Asia Minor, central Anatolia, the Pontus, and the former Russian Caucasus province of Kars Oblast during the First World War and its aftermath (1914–23) was a crime against humanity. The perpetrator was the new Turkish Republic, which instigated a reign of terror against the Greek and Armenian populations of the former Ottoman Empire. The industrial scale killing included massacres, forced deportations involving death marches, summary expulsions, arbitrary executions, but also the cultural genocide of the Christian Greek Orthodox historical and religious presence in Asia Minor.

Despite the extent of the Turkish crimes, a succession of Greek Governments have, at best, been lackluster in forcing the Turkish Government to take responsibility for the genocide and have only reluctantly lobbied the international community to shame the Turks into accepting this dark part of their history.

Professor Andre Gerolymatos was educated in Classics and Modern History at McGill University in Montreal. In 1996 he received the Hellenic Canadian Congress of BC Chair in Hellenic Studies at Simon Fraser University. In addition to his work in Greek Studies, he specializes in Military and Diplomatic History. He has written several books and articles including: *Espionage and Treason in Classical Greece; Guerilla Warfare and Espionage in Greece 1940-1944; The Balkan Wars: Conquest, Revolution and Retribution from the Ottoman Era to the Twentieth Century and Beyond; Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry 1944-1949; Castles Made of Sand: A Century of Anglo-American Espionage and Intervention in the Middle East.*

He has collaborated with several scholars on a study of *Sovereignty and the Law of the Sea: Aegean Sea Issues After the Cold War*. He was the co-editor of *British Documents on Foreign Affairs, Part IV, Series F: Europe, 1946-1950.*

In Brief

Cash Recovered from Bribes

According to the Greek newspaper "*Kathimerini*", the Greek government confirmed on January 21, 2014 that almost 18 million euros that has been collected in a special bank account for money recovered from bribes and other illegal activity will be spent on health and education. It was said that 13.2 million euros would be given to EOPYY, the country's main healthcare provider, to cover surgery costs for uninsured patients, and 4.5 million euros would go toward providing housing to poor students and for the purchase of computers with braille systems for blind students.

Microsoft to Open Contact Center

As reported in the Greek newspaper "*Kathimerini*", during a meeting at the premier's office in Athens on January 22, 2014, Don Grantham, president of Microsoft Central and Eastern Europe, told Prime Minister Antonis Samaras that Microsoft would launch a contact center in Greece to serve its customers throughout Europe. The center, which is the product of a deal between Microsoft and global customer service company Teleperformance, will employ 350 people in its first phase of operation, and 550 at full operation.

The Microsoft executive also reiterated his company's commitment to support the Greek economy and people, and to contribute to the country's effort to emerge from the crisis. To this end, Microsoft will supply the

necessary software for an e-skills program that will train up to 500,000 unemployed Greeks on information technology and entrepreneurship over the next three years.

The Germans Accept Moral Responsibility!

On his three day visit to Greece starting March 5, 2014, the German president Joachim Gauck visited the village of Ligiades, near the northeastern town of Ioannina, where German troops massacred 92 of its 96 residents in 1943, and the Ioannina synagogue where he met the only two surviving members of the Jewish community from 1944, Esthir Cohen and Janet Sevi.

Over 90 villages and towns suffered the same fate as Ligiades during the German occupation of Greece from 1941 to 1944. Over 1,700 villages were looted and burned, many of them to the ground, by the German troops as reprisals for the Greek resistance. The whole country was plundered and starved by the Germans. During WWII Greece lost 13% of its population mostly from starvation and German war crimes. They looted the archeological treasures of Greece and left the country reduced to ruins.

Around 60,000-65,000 Greek Jews were deported to Auschwitz, most of them from Thessaloniki and Ioannina. In September 1944, only 2,469 Greek Jews were still alive in Auschwitz.

On March 25, 1944, the Gestapo piled 1,725 men, women, and children from the Jewish community of Ioannina on trucks for the journey to Auschwitz - among them 17-year-old Esthir and her family. Less than 50 survived, among them Esthir and her sister.

Germany, in addition to charging Greece exorbitant sums as occupation expenses, obtained forcibly from Greece a loan (occupation loan) of \$ 3.5 billion. Hitler himself had recognized the legal character of this loan and had given orders to start the process of its repayment.

War reparations awarded at the Paris Conference of 1946 were deferred by the London Agreement of 1953 "until the final settlement of the problem of reparation." Greece has demanded payment of the war reparations, awarded by the Paris Conference of 1946, as well as of the forced occupation loan, in 1945, 1946, 1947, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1974, 1987, and 1995. Germany has steadfastly refused payment. German officials publicly offer excuses like: "there is no legal base for Greece to claim reparations from Germany. The legal reasons are complex and I would not like to elaborate"; "as Germans we always accepted our moral responsibility for what happened in Greece"; "the question of war reparations is no longer an issue"; "this matter has been resolved long ago"

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/constantine-zanos/are-the-greek-claims-for-war-reparations_b_3439287.html). They avoid to provide specifics and are not willing to discuss the issue.

In an interview to the Greek newspaper *Kathimerini* and on the question of WWII reparations, president Gauck said: "During World War II, Greece suffered an especially violent German occupation.... Greek Jews were systematically exterminated, and Greeks were shot, hanged, killed in a brutal manner, and many Greeks died of hunger. This ... burdens us with a particular responsibility... I would not like to discuss the legal issue of reparations, but allow me to say this: We do not want to deny our moral responsibility nor relativize it... However, although many Germans are aware of the crimes in other countries, events in Greece escape them to a large degree."

The president of Greece, Karolos Papoulias, raised the pending issue of war reparations and the repayment of the forced occupation loan with the visiting German president. In response, president Gauck acknowledged that Germany carried a "moral debt" for massacres committed by German soldiers in anti-guerrilla reprisals, but reiterated that Germany was not willing to discuss reparations. "I believe the legal way for it is closed," he said.

It has been reported that president Papoulias responded to Gauck that it was "a paradox" that Greeks are saddled with painful austerity measures and commitments while Germany refuses to discuss "responsibilities" arising from WWII. "Your position that 'there is no issue' is something that you claim. It cannot be unilaterally projected as a final conclusion."

From Our History

The Shooting Range at Kaisariani

An Excerpt from: George C. Blytas, The First Victory, Greece in the Second World War

On 27 April 1944, the Greek resistance organization ELAS annihilated a German regiment near Sparta. Among the dead was Lieut. General Franz Crech. The decision for reprisals was swift. In all, 335 men and women were put to death in reprisal for the one dead Nazi. Another 200 hostages were executed for the same reason on 1 May at the Kaisariani shooting range in Athens. The Haidari Prison and the Kaisariani shooting range became notorious as places where death was liberally delivered.

The last few months of occupation were particularly unsettling. Almost daily, the Germans would block the streets of cities, especially Athens, surrounding entire blocks or neighborhoods with SS troops and security

battalions, and forcing everyone who happened to be out into the nearest square. The herding was accompanied by kicking, striking with clubs, and hitting with rifle butts. Then, the worst symbol of the occupation would make its appearance: the Greek traitor with the mask. The "masked one," or *maskoforos*, would walk through the people and point to the "suspects." The Germans and the security battalions would then separate those who had been identified from the crowd for special treatment. Beatings, kicking, and even purposefully nonfatal shootings were widespread. Some were executed on the spot. The objective was to terrorize the population. Eventually the suspects were loaded in the *klouva*, a roughly constructed van, and were taken in for further treatment, or future execution.

Customarily, after the Germans executed a group of hostages they would inform the families by "returning the jackets" of the victims. This was often done by home delivery. A small van would pass in front of the house where the dead man once lived, and his rolled-up jacket, tied with a piece of string, would be tossed from the window of the van.

On 1 May, when the Nazis executed 200 men and women in Kaisariani, the jackets were too many and the Germans refused to announce the names of the victims they had martyred. Mrs. Ioanna Tsatsos in her book *Pages from the Occupation*, quotes Archbishop Damaskinos:

Today at dawn, they have executed two hundred hostages in Kaisariani. They refuse to release their names to anyone; neither to me, nor to the Red Cross, not even to the German Red Cross. "

At 9:00 A.M., the police station at Kaisariani called the archbishop's office. The Germans had sent the clothes of those killed to that station, and the police wanted the archdiocese to pick them up. The archbishop sent a truck to the police station and the jackets were taken to a small warehouse at Appolonos Street. Ioanna Tsatsos was there to receive them. She described her feelings at the warehouse:

When I entered the warehouse, my mood darkened. I felt outraged. All these jackets, still warm from life, with their sleeves hanging limply in front, full of secrets, they wanted something, they were asking for something. But they could not say what that something was. I took one on my hands. The elbows were very worn. In its pocket there was a small crumpled piece of paper with a note. "If I do not have a chance to publish my book you will find my manuscript at...." No name was given.

In another jacket an identity card, with just a name on it. Nothing at all in the next jacket. In another one, a handwritten note: "That Stelios guy talks as if he does not understand people. But he looks like a decent fellow.... Mother came to see me. How shaky her hand was."

Mrs. Tsatsos returned to her office in the archdiocese

where she and other women volunteers decided to see what they could find in the jackets that might identify the owners. Back at the warehouse, the task took the whole day. No one spoke, and the mood was somber. Stress was visible on the faces of the volunteers. After hours of work, they were able to identify the owners of seventy-five jackets. The other hundred and twenty-five gave no clue whatsoever. The next morning, the warehouse was opened to the public and was immediately inundated by women whose husbands and sons had been at the Haidari or Kaisariani camps.

Mrs. Tsatsos continued:

Whoever recognized the names of loved ones was leaving with laments. But more women entered, and searched and searched. When they found nothing they turned to leave; but they could not leave, and returned to search again. Some found an item that belonged to a loved one immediately, others were tormented for hours. A mother found her son's clothes, she hugged and kissed them; then suddenly her eye caught something she had not noticed before and she fainted. She had just recognized the jacket of her second, younger son.

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

Poetry by Angelos Sikelianos

ΓΥΡΙΣΜΟΣ

Ἵπνος ἱερός, λιονταρίσιος,
τοῦ γυρισμοῦ, στή μεγάλη
τῆς ἀμμουδιάς ἀπλωσιά.
Στήν καρδιά μου
τὰ βλέφαρά μου κλεισμένα·
καί λάμπει, ὡσάν ἥλιος, βαθιά μου...

Βοή τοῦ πελάου πλημμυρίζει
τις φλέβες μου·
ἀπάνω μου τρίζει
σά μυλλολίθαρο ὁ ἥλιος·
γεμάτες χτυπάει τις φτεροῦγες ὁ ἀγέρας·
ἀγκομαχάει τὸ ἄφαντο ἀξόνι.
Δέ μου ἀκούγεται ἡ τρίσβαθη ἀνάσα.
Γαληνεύει, ὡς στὸν ἄμμο, βαθιά μου
καί ἀπλώνεται ἡ θάλασσα πᾶσα -

Σὲ ψηλοθόλωτο κύμα
τὴν ὑψώνει τὸ ἀπέραντο χάδι·
ποτίζουν τὰ σπλάχνα
τὰ ὀλόδροσα φύκια,
ραντίζει τὰ διάφωτη ἡ ἄχνα
τοῦ ἀφροῦ ποῦ ξεσπάει στὰ χαλίκια·
πέρα σβήνει τὸ σύφυλλο βούισμα
ὀποῦ ξέχειλο ἀχοῦν τὰ τζίτζικια.

Μιά βοή φτάνει ἀπόμακρα·
καί ἄξαφνα,
σάν πανί τὸ σκαρμὸ ποῦ ἔχει φύγει,
χτυπάει· εἶν' ὁ ἀγέρας ποῦ σίμωσε,
εἶν' ὁ ἥλιος ποῦ δεῖ μπρὸς στὰ μάτια μου
- καί ὁ ἀγνὸς ὄχι ξένα τὰ βλέφαρα
στὴν ὑπέρλευκην ὄψη του ἀνοίγει.

Πετιῶμαι ἀπάνω. Ἡ ἀλαφρότη μου
εἶναι ἴσια με τὴ δύναμή μου.
Λάμπει τὸ μέτωπό μου ὀλόδροσο,
στὸ βασίλειμα σειέται ἀνοιξάτικο
βαθιά τὸ κορμί μου.
Βλέπω γύρα. Τὸ Ἴόνιο,
καί ἡ ἐλεύτερη γῆ μου!

RETURN

Holy, lionlike sleep
of the return, on the sand's
vast spaciousness.
In my heart my eyelids closed;
and radiance, like a sun, fills me.

The sea's sound floods my veins,
above me the sun
grinds like a millstone,
the wind beats its full wings;
the world's axle throbs heavily.
I cannot hear my deepest breath,
and the sea grows calm to the sand's edge
and spreads deep inside me.

The infinite caress exalts it
into a high-domed wave;
the cool seaweed
freshens me deep down;
the foam's lucid spindrift
breaks into spray on the pebbles;
beyond, where the cicadas stridulate,
the leaves' rustle dies away.

From far off comes a sound
that suddenly beats,
as a sail when the yardarm breaks:
it is the wind approaching,
it is the sun setting before me—
and one who is pure opens to its white presence
eyes that are kindred to it.

I leap up. My lightness
is equal to my strength.
My cool forehead glows,
in the spring sunset
my body stirs deeply.
I gaze around me: the Ionian sea,
and my delivered land!