



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

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Upcoming Events

Children of Paidomazoma—Victims or Beneficiaries? A First Hand Account

On Sunday, December 6, 2015, Hellenic Link-Midwest presents Dr. Thanasis E. Economou, in a lecture titled: “Children of Paidomazoma – Victims or Beneficiaries? A First Hand Account” 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 current HLM members and students with ID, and \$5 for non-members.

Every civil war generates a large number of refugees. The current refugee problem in Europe is a horror in happening. It was not different in the case of the brutal civil war in Greece. The children from the war zones were the obvious victims, because they were left unattended while the parents were fighting. The solution adopted to resolve this problem was their removal from the war zones. The Government created the *Paidoupoleis* (*Paidofylagma*) and the antagonists Communists organized the Paidomazoma by sending children between the ages of 2 and 15 to Eastern Europe. Each side in a short period processed about 25,000-30,000 children.

The issues of the *Paidomazoma* and *Paidofylagma* have not been settled yet from a historical point of view. There are still vivid memories of the horrors of the civil war and perhaps these issues will find their proper place in the history of the country after the old generation leaves the scene.

The assertion that children were grabbed from the laps of their mothers and were forcibly sent to communist countries to make them ‘*genitsaroi*’ and to indoctrinate them against their own country proved to be absurd and untrue. In retrospect, considering all the misery, the horrible living conditions and the constant threat to children’s lives, in the opinion of the speaker, the Paidomazoma was the best thing that could happen to these children. He will describe in details the way they left their villages, walked to Albania, ended up finally in Czechoslovakia and how they grew up there, got educated, and what happened to them eventually.

Dr. Thanasis Economou is an astrophysicist at the University of Chicago. He was born in Greece in 1937, but due to the civil war he spent his youth and obtained his education in Prague, Czechoslovakia. He immigrated

to the US in 1964 where he joined a group at the University of Chicago developing techniques and flight instruments for the lunar missions. Later he became the team leader of the group and provided flight hardware for 15 space missions with NASA, the European Space Agency, and Russian and Japanese space agencies to the Moon, Mars, Saturn, and to several comets and asteroids. He has received numerous NASA awards, and has also been recognized extensively in Greece. In cooperation with Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, he is trying to build an optical observatory in Orliakas Mountain in North Western Greece.

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 16, 2016, 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 \$70 per person (\$25 for children up to 12 years old), please call 847-498-0421, or contact any of the Board members. If you wish to purchase tickets at the door the night of the event, the price will be \$75.

In Brief

Turkish Gallery Pays Tribute to George Seferis

Hasan Gürsoy and his partners opened the George Seferis Art Gallery in Urla, near Smyrna in Turkey, in honor of the Greek Nobel laureate. Seferis lived in the region until the age of 14. The local community has embraced the gallery, which has become a venue for artistic events and exhibits since it first opened in January 2014.

Urla’s municipality in western Turkey also named the street where the gallery is located after George Seferis in 1998, and since then the location attracts numerous visitors.

The Turkish owners of the gallery say that Seferis’ formative years in Urla influenced the rest of his life. They point to the numerous interviews where Seferis recounted happy childhood summers spent in Skala, the

Iskele district of Urla, and they believe that the seaside locations with underwater caves, almond trees and coastal breezes that appear in the poetry of Seferis are inspired by areas in Turkey.

Turks also proudly point to the time he spent in Ankara from 1948 to 1950 on diplomatic assignments.

Demographic Time Bomb

According to New York-based nonprofit organization HelpAge International, in 2030, one in three Greeks will be aged over 60. Greece has one of the world's most rapidly aging populations, together with Japan, South Korea, Italy, Spain and Portugal, and by 2050 it is estimated that the number of over-60s will have risen to 40.8 percent of the population.

It has been estimated that the Greek population will shrink by 2.5 million people to reach 8.6 million by 2060. In 2060, six in 10 people in the working population will be above 65 years old, compared with three in 10 today.

The Cost of Corruption in Greece

In an interview to *HuffPost Greece*, the General Inspector of Public Administration Leandros Rakintzis said the cost of corruption in Greece reaches 33 billion per year. *"To fight corruption, among other things, a change in the mentality of citizens and strong political will are need"* he said.

The economic crisis, he said, has significantly reduced the monetary value of corruption. For example, before the crisis doctors in the public health system demanded from each patient a *"fakelaki"* (bribe) up to 5,000 euros, while today the corresponding amount has fallen to 300 euros.

Speaking about doctors, he added that in many cases the cost involves even the loss of human lives in addition to illegal charges to pension funds. He recalled the case of a surgeon who was promoted to a heart surgeon providing even a fake recommendation letter from the famous cardiologist Magdi Yacoub. Eventually he was fired when it was found that the patients who died at his hands were three times more than the average of his colleagues.

In a large state hospital, in the interval of just six months it was found that 32 surgeons, taking advantage of the infrastructure of the institution, served their private clientele performing hundreds of cosmetic procedures (botox, breast lift, patches on the face, rhinoplasties and liposuction), and they were charging the insurer of their clients by reporting these procedures as emergencies (appendicitis etc.).

A public hospital doctor, in violation of the law, maintained a private practice. When he was caught with 6-7 patients waiting at his clinic, he claimed that these people were friends and relatives who came to celebrate

with him his birthday.

Referring to scandals in public works, he mentioned a road bypass in Sparta, where the contractor collected 17 million euros while the bypass was never constructed. Greece is threatened by the European Union with a high fine for this project.

Mr. Rakintzis said that *"All governments proclaim that they will crack down on corruption and that the knife will reach to the bone, but so far I have not seen any knife reaching the bone."*

He also pointed out that codification of legislation to determine what laws are in effect and which ones are inactive is one of the significant prerequisites of transparency. Since the establishment of the state of Greece, 17,500 laws have been passed, he said, and 120,000 circulars have been issued, while the General Construction Regulations consists of 30,000 pages.

Financial Prosecutors Ask for More Staff

According to the Greek newspaper *Kathimerini*, Greece's financial prosecutors sent a long letter, the second to be sent this year, to Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, urging him to appoint more inspectors and expert staff to boost their efforts to raise much-needed revenue from tax evasion.

Apart from the so-called Lagarde List of Greeks with Swiss bank accounts, several other lists of Greeks with deposits or assets in Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom have come under the scrutiny of authorities. But only a fraction of the names have been probed due to a lack of staff. According to prosecutors' estimates, at least 300 trained inspectors and IT experts must be recruited if the probes are to start raising a significant amount of revenue. Technical equipment is lacking too, they say.

Cracking down on tax evasion, particularly among rich Greeks, was a key pre-election promise of Tsipras. But there has been little effective action taken despite the claim by the former minister of state for combating corruption, Panayiotis Nikoloudis, that 2.5 billion euros can be raised. So far the probe has yielded just a fraction of this sum, with some 80 million euros netted from the Lagarde List.

Young People Want to Leave Greece

The European Consumer Payment Report reported that in Greece one in three young people aged between 18 and 24 wants to seek a better life in another country as the unemployment rate in this age group amounts to 49 percent. Even more worrying is the finding that just 41 percent of young Greeks – the lowest among the 21 European countries where the survey was conducted – believe they have a chance of improving their lives.

From Our History

Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind

From the Raleigh Lecture on History, read before the British Academ in 1933, by British classical scholar and writer Sir W. W. Tarn

There was hardly a trace as yet of the more positive sense which Homonoia was to acquire later—a mental attitude which should make war or faction impossible because the parties were at one; and Isocrates extended the application of the word without changing its meaning. He took up a suggestion of the sophist Gorgias and proposed to treat the whole Greek world as one and the futile wars between city and city as faction fight—to apply Homonoia to the Greek race. For this purpose he utilized Plato's idea that the barbarian was a natural enemy, and decided that the way to unite Greeks was to attack Persia; "I come," he said, "to advocate two things: war against the barbarian, Homonoia between ourselves." But somebody had to do the uniting; and Isocrates bethought him of the Cynic Heracles, benefactor of the Greek race, and urged King Phillip of Macedonia, a descendant of Heracles, to play the part. But if Philip was to be Heracles and bring about the Homonoia of the Greek world, the way was being prepared for two important ideas of a later time; the essential quality of the king must be that love of man, φιλανθρωπία, which had led Heracles to perform his labours, and the essential business of the king was to promote Homonoia; so far this only applied to Greeks, but if its meaning were to deepen it would still be the king's business. The actual result of all this, the League of Corinth under Philip's presidency, was not quite what Isocrates had dreamt of.

This then was the background against which Alexander appeared. The business of a Macedonian king was to be a benefactor of Greeks to the extent of preventing inter-city warfare; he was to promote Homonoia among Greeks and utilize their enmity to barbarians as a bond of union; but barbarians themselves were still enemies and slaves by nature, a view which Aristotle emphasized when he advised his pupil to treat Greeks as free men, but barbarians as slaves.

I now come to the things Alexander is supposed to have said or thought; and the gulf between them and the background I have sketched is so deep that one cannot blame those who have refused to believe that he ever said or thought anything of the sort. There are five passages which need consideration; one in Arrian; one from Eratosthenes, preserved by Strabo; and three from Plutarch, one of which, from its resemblance to the Strabo passage, has been supposed by one of the acutest critics of our time to be taken in substance from Eratosthenes, and as such I shall treat it. The passage in Arrian says that, after the mutiny of the Macedonians at Opis and their reconciliation to Alexander, he gave a

banquet to Macedonians and Persians, at which he prayed for Homonoia and partnership in rule between these two peoples. What Eratosthenes says amounts to this. Aristotle told Alexander to treat Greeks as friends, but barbarians like animals; but Alexander knew better, and preferred to divide men into good and bad without regard to their race, and thus carried out Aristotle's real intention. For Alexander believed that he had a mission from the deity to harmonize men generally and be the reconciler of the world, mixing men's lives and customs as in a loving cup, and treating the good as his kin, the bad as strangers; for he thought that the good man was the real Greek and the bad man the real barbarian. Of the two Plutarch passages, the first says that his intention was to bring about, as between mankind generally, Homonoia and peace and fellowship and make them all one people; and the other, which for the moment I will quote without its context, makes him say that God is the common father of all men.

It is obvious that, wherever all this comes from, we are dealing with a great revolution in thought. It amounts to this, that there is a natural brotherhood of all men, though bad men do not share in it; that Homonoia is no longer to be confined to the relations between Greek and Greek, but is to unite Greek and barbarian; and that Alexander's aim was to substitute peace for war, and reconcile the enmities of mankind by bringing them all—that is whom his arm could reach, the peoples of his empire—to be of one mind together: as men were one in blood, so they should become one in heart and spirit. That such a revolution in thought did happen is unquestioned; the question is, was Alexander really its author, or are the thoughts attributed to him those of Zeno or somebody else? ...

"To try to answer that question," Tarn follows with a long and complex analysis of Homonoia and kingship in Greco-Roman history, leading to the universalism of the late Roman empire. The belief that it was the business of kings to promote Homonoia among their subjects without distinction of race thus travelled down the line of kingship for centuries; but the line, you will remember, had no beginning It must clearly have been connected with some particular king at the start, and that king has to be later than Isocrates and Philip and earlier than Diotogenes and Demetrius. It would seem that only one king is possible; we should have to postulate Alexander at the beginning of the line, even if there were not a definite tradition that it was he. This means that Plutarch's statement, that Alexander's purpose was to bring about Homonoia between men I generally—that is, those men whom his arm could reach—must be taken to be true, unless some explicit reason be found for disbelieving it; and I therefore now turn to the Stoics, in order to test the view that the ideas attributed to him were really taken from Stoicism

(to be continued)

From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

“Nefelai” (“The Clouds”) by Aristophanes

(Continued from previous issue)

(The leader of the chorus greets them)

KORYPHAIOS

Hail, superannuated man!
Hail, old birddog of culture!

To Sokrates.

And hail to you, O Sokrates, high priest of poppycock!
Inform us what your wishes are.
For of all the polymaths on earth, it's you we most prefer-
sir, for your swivel-eyes, your barefoot swagger down the
street, because you're poor on our account and terribly
affected.

STREPSIADES

Name of Earth, what a voice! Solemn and holy and awful!

SOKRATES

These are the only gods there are. The rest are but
figments.

STREPSIADES

Holy name of Earth! Olympian Zeus is a figment?

SOKRATES Zeus?

What Zeus? What Zeus! Nonsense. There is no Zeus.

STREPSIADES

Then who makes it rain? Answer me that.

SOKRATES

Why, the Clouds of course.

What's more, the proof is incontrovertible.
For instance, have you ever yet seen rain when you didn't
see a cloud? But if your hypothesis were correct, Zeus
could drizzle from an empty sky while the clouds were on
vacation.

STREPSIADES

By Apollo, you're right. A pretty proof.
And to think I always used to believe the rain was just
Zeus pissing through a sieve.
All right, who makes it thunder?
Brrr. I get goosebumps just saying it.

SOKRATES

The Clouds again, of course. A simple process of
Convection.

STREPSIADES

I admire you, but I don't follow you.

SOKRATES

Listen. The Clouds are a saturate water-solution.
Tumescence in motion, of necessity, produces
precipitation. When these distended masses collide-*boom!*
Fulmination.

STREPSIADES

But who makes them move before they collide? Isn't that
Zeus?

SOKRATES

Not Zeus, idiot. The Convection-principle!

STREPSIADES

Convection? That's a new one. Just think. So Zeus is out
and Convection-principle's in. Tch, tch.
But wait: you haven't told me who makes it thunder.

SOKRATES

But I just finished telling you! The Clouds are water-
packed; they collide with each other and explode because
of the pressure.

STREPSIADES Yeah?

And what's your proof for that?

SOKRATES

Why, take yourself as example.

You know that meat-stew the vendors sell at the
Panathenaia? How it gives you the cramps and your
stomach starts to rumble?

STREPSIADES

Yes, by Apollo! I remember. What an awful feeling! You
feel sick and your belly churns and the fart rips loose like
thunder. First just a gurgle, pappapax; then louder,
pappaPAPAXapaX, and finally like thunder,
PAPAPAPAXAPAXAPPAPAXapap!

SOKRATES

Precisely. First think of the tiny fan that your intestines
make. Then consider the heavens: their infinite farting is
thunder. For thunder and farting are, in principle, one and
the same.

*[Strepsiades is convinced and is initiated into Sokrates'
school. But, alas, he is incapable of learning the subtleties
Socrates sets out to teach him and is contemptuously
dismissed from the school. Then the leader of the chorus
suggests that he fetch his son to study in his place. A
splendid idea.' As Strepsiades drags his son on to the
scene, Pheidippides protests.] , (to be continued)*