

The Hellenic Society Prometheas

Newsletter # 11

April 2002

Greek Independence Day Celebration, March 23, 2002

The celebration for the 181st anniversary of the Greek Independence Day of March 25, 1821, took place on Saturday, March 23, 2002 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Presbytera Maria Grand Hall of Saint George Greek Orthodox Church. Six church parishes, fifteen Hellenic Organizations and three University level Hellenic Student Societies cosponsored the event. Mr. Alexander Philon, the Greek ambassador to the USA, and other dignitaries were among the audience of about 400 people.

The program started with the presentation of the national flags and the singing of the national anthems of Greece and USA by Stephanie Rodousakis. Reverent Father James Paris of St. George invoked the prayer. The president of the Hellenic Society Prometheas Mr. Lefteris Karmires, addressed the audience on behalf of the organizing committee and the participating organizations and Ambassador Philon welcomed the main speaker.

The keynote speaker was Professor **Thanos Veremis**, professor of Hellenic and Southeastern European Studies at the C. Karamanlis Chair of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. The topic of his lecture, which was delivered in English, was “**The Modernizing Spirit of the Greek War of Independence**”. Mr. Veremis’ speech [is attached](#).

In addition, Despina (Skenderis) Fourniades, Pericles Stabekis, and Noni Avramidou, members of the Board of the Hellenic Society Prometheas, read in Greek excerpts from literature related to the contribution of “Warlords of Roumeli” and Makryiannis’ constitution. Elisabeth and Evan Tassis, students at the St. George Greek School, sang an inspiring Greek song. The celebration ended with Greek folk dances performed by the **Return to Origins Dance Troupe** directed by Mrs. Rena Papapostolou. Reception followed. Mr. Dimitris Vassiliadis was the Master of Ceremonies.

Mark your calendars:

Outstanding performance by Greek actress IOANNA GAVAKOU, at Warehouse Theater, March 31-May 5

In Association with the Greek Ministry of
Culture,

SCENA THEATRE presents the U.S. Premiere of

"LETTER TO ORESTES"

and

"THE SUPPER"

by IAKOVOS KAMBANELLIS, THE PATRIARCH OF MODERN GREEK
THEATER

WAREHOUSE THEATRE (1021 7th Street, NW)

March 31 - May 5

Saturday, Wednesday, & Thursday at 8 p.m.; matinee Sunday at 3 p.m. \$10-\$25 to May 5

For Reservations, call: (703) 684-7990

"The Supper" is an account of a reunion of members of the house of Atreus. The dead are united with the living, not in a celebration or a rejoicing, a day of mourning, not forgiveness. Yet, it is a day of potential reconciliation. Kambanellis expertly explores the linking of the two worlds: the dead with the living. We sense the world of ancient Greece colliding with a very modern Greek society. We hear echoes from history, from Greece are various occupying powers. Clytemnestra reminds us: "In Mycenea, power is always in someone else's hands."

Kambanellis, a Mauthausen survivor, injects the human dimension into his works, even as he grips full well the world of power, cruelty and moral absolutes.

"Letter to Orestes": Iakovos Kambanellis is a subtle writer with a gift for unique characterizations. In this monologue, we have a revisionist version of events described by Aeschylus in his monumental "Oresteia". We see again the wronged Clytemnestra, wife-murderer of Agamemnon, as she tells her side of the bloody tale, in the guise of a letter to her son. Clytemnestra mounts her defense with great power, simplicity and what we are led to believe is the truth. Yet, "History" is a Greek word meaning, "story" and is a spoil of war written by victors. We-the audience-are left with questions. Kambahellis,

master playwright and storyteller, introduces into the classical text the finest gradations, areas shaded with gray that might otherwise be rendered in black and white.

The best American writers of Greek descent at St. George on April 14

THE EMBASSY OF GREECE, PRESS OFFICE

INVITES YOU TO A PRESENTATION

OF

MONDOGRECO

A Greek Literary Magazine of Fiction, Travel and Poetry

"Writing the Greek-American Experience"

through the writings of:

David Sedaris, Jeffrey Eugenides, Nicholas Cage, Thea Halo, Stratis
Haviaras, Harry Mark Petrakis, Eleni Sikelianos, Olga Broumas, George
Economou and 34 other contributors

To be presented by its Editor

DINO SIOTIS

SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2002, 4:00 P.M.

St. George's Greek Orthodox Church
7701 Bradley Boulevard, Bethesda, MD
For information, call: 202-332-2727

Greece Views the Modern World

Tuesday, April 16, 2002, 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Woodrow Wilson Center, 6th Floor, Joseph H. and Claire Flom Auditorium
Greece Views the Modern World**

THE HONORABLE ANDREAS ANDRIANOPOULOS

Noted Greek Politician, Author, and former
Woodrow Wilson Center Public Policy Scholar
***Event cosponsored with the University Seminar Program,
Alexander S. Onassis Foundation of the USA.***

To RSVP acceptance by April 12, 2002 or to receive further information, call Maria-Stella Gatzoulis at 202-691-4188. Please allow time on arrival at the building for routine security procedures. A photo ID is required.

Dr. Oreopoulos's lecture on bioethics, April 14 in New York

The Hellenic Link, Inc. and the Hellenic Medical Society of New York are jointly extending a most cordial invitation to you to attend it. If you are going to or can be in New York on April 14, this Lecture will be given at the Cathedral Center at 5:30pm after the end of the Annual Parade celebrating Greek Independence Day. You can come to the Center to relax from the rigorous manifestations of ethnic pride of the day, for an uplifting professional and spiritual experience in fellowship with your colleagues. A reception to which you are warmly invited will follow the Lecture by Prof. Oreopoulos.

The Lecture is on a theme that intersects Medicine and Applied Christianity, with a deep bioethical perspective touching on the inner chords of Christian Humanism. For more information, please contact Dr. Costas Efthymiou at (718)217-4285 or e-mail c.efthymiou@worldnet.att.net

Other News of Interest

"THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PARTHENON MARBLES: Why the Elgin Marbles Must Be Returned to Greece"

[\(see link\)](#)

New publication: "Founded on Freedom and Virtue: Documents Illustrating the Impact in the United States of the Greek War of Independence, 1821-1829"

A new publication, "Founded on Freedom and Virtue: Documents Illustrating the Impact in the United States of the Greek War of Independence, 1821-1829", edited by Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou, are still available since March 23. It is a work of special interest to Greeks and Greek-Americans in that it traces the roots of the relationship between Greece and the United States.

This book, the product of over fifteen years of research aims extensively to document the

American response to the declaration of Greek War of Independence. It is not widely known today that when the news of the Greek uprising reached the United States the American reaction was spontaneous. In large part, due to the efforts of Edward ("Grecian") Everett, Harvard Greek professor and later prominent political figure, some of the most distinguished Americans of the time publicly supported the Greek struggle. Because the Greeks were descendants of the ancients, but largely because of their commitment to democracy and the Christian faith, Americans of all walks of life expressed an intense emotional commitment to the Greek cause and organized an extensive and generous movement in support.

As detailed information on the fighting and the brutality of the Turkish response became known in America, prominent men such as Presidents Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, congressmen Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, Sam Houston and many others, were moved to speak and to act in support of Greek independence. "Founded on Freedom and Virtue" is a collection of official and unofficial contemporary documents tracing the American response.

The book is divided into the following sections on:

1. "Aspects of American Philhellenism," which concentrates on Everett's activities seeking to inform public opinion and to arouse interest in the plight of the Greeks.
2. "The Greek Uprising as Reported in the Press," includes representative articles reporting events that influenced American public opinion such as the fall of Messolongi and the massacre at Chios .
3. "The Grass Roots Response," includes the texts of proclamations of support issued by state legislatures and a range of organizations: fraternal, professional and student groups as well as letters from individuals to the press, editorials and other evidence of popular expression.
4. "The 'Greek Question' as an Issue in U.S. Foreign Policy" documents the debate between the Executive Branch and Congress on whether to support the Greeks. The speeches often eloquently juxtaposed the conflicts still encountered by democracies, i.e. the clash between geopolitical and commercial considerations versus ideals, principles and values.
5. "Tangible Support" documents the actions of some Americans who were moved by the Greek cause to join the freedom fighters. Extracts from their letters and memoirs are included in this section. It is less known that perhaps the first, albeit unofficial, U.S. foreign aid project is probably that which was collected and delivered to Greece. Finally, an extended introduction by Aristide Caratzas and Constantine Hatzidimitriou provides the background and context for each of the document sections.

At a time when foundational values of the United States are tested by policies, such as support for the tyrannical Kemalist Turkish regime, this book in part aims to remind us of the intrinsic relationship between two democracies. The closing lines of the letter by the Messenian Senate asking for support by the citizens, and the United States Congress stated, ". . . the bonds of gratitude and fraternity will forever unite the Greeks and the Americans. Our interests are of a nature more and more to cement an alliance founded on freedom and virtue."

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