



The Hellenic Society Prometheas

Newsletter

October 2002

Mark your calendars:

October 4, 2002:

Lecture by Dr. G. Papavizas: “ Blood and Tears, Greece 1940-49”.

At St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Bethesda, MD

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**The Hellenic Society Prometheas, The St. George Cultural Committee,
and The American Hellenic Institute**

In cooperation with:

**The Macedonian Association, The Pan-Cretan Association &
The Metropolitan Washington Orthodox Seniors Housing**

Invite you to a Lecture and Book Signing by:

**Dr. George Papavizas
Blood and Tears, Greece 1940-1949,
A Story of War and Love**

The book is a powerful autobiography set in the turbulent decade of the 1940s Greece. Through the eyes of the author who came of age in a time of war, foreign occupation, resistance, and civil war, we witness the tragedy and trauma suffered by an entire nation. While uniquely personal, this is also the story of the thousands of young Greek men and women cast unwillingly into the ambivalences and horrors of war and civil war. Against a rigorously research backdrop of the key historical events, we see youthful idealism being forcibly reconciled to the realities of hunger, brutality and death. With a keen eye for detail, the author chronicles the complex Greek spirit over ten tumultuous years. His descriptions are vivid and convincing. We feel the pulse of life in his tiny village. We share his terror as bullets fly and land mines explode. From one man’s humble but

observant account of survival in challenging times, we understand just how crucial were his and his comrades' sacrifices and why we cannot take history's outcomes for granted.

Friday, October 4, 2002 at 7:30 p.m.

St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Grand Hall

7701 Bradley Boulevard, Bethesda, MD 20817

Reception and Book Signing will follow

(biosketch follows)

George Papavizas was born in Krimini, western Macedonia, Greece. He graduated from the historic *Gymnasion Tsotyliou* (Tsotyli High School) and the University of Thessaloniki with a BA degree in the biological sciences.

During Greece's bloody decade of the 1940s, he was in Macedonia, a witness with a unique insight into the turbulent events of the era. He witnessed the magnificent patriotic exuberance when Mussolini's army invaded Greece from Albania and the euphoria that embraced the Hellenic nation; the horrors of the triple foreign occupation by the Germans, Italians, and Bulgarians; the resistance of the Greek people who took up arms to fight the foreign oppressors; British commandos operating in his village, from his own house; and the degeneration of this resistance into a vicious civil war. He witnessed the old curse of the Hellenic race destroy the incredible yet true spirit of harmony that prevailed among the Greeks during the country's finest hour in the fall of 1940. What the Nazis failed to do with their stark brutality was accomplished by the abominable internecine fight.

Dr. Papavizas witnessed the horrors and experienced the hardships of the Greek Civil War of 1946-1949 for almost three years as a Second Lieutenant of the Greek National Army. He visited hundreds of villages and towns in flaming Greece and participated in skirmishes and battles in eastern Macedonia, Evia, Souli, central Greece, and Peloponnesos. He fought in the formidable Communist strongholds of Grammos and Vitsi near the Albanian-Yugoslav border during the bloodiest phases of the civil war. And two weeks before the end, he was severely wounded in a minefield and spent five months in military hospitals. He was awarded to Golden Metal for Bravery, the highest medal given by the Greek Army.

After the war he emigrated to the United States and received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Minnesota. His professional career was with the Agricultural Research Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, where he organized and directed the Biocontrol of Plant Diseases Laboratory for 26 years. He has published more than 200 scientific papers and edited several books. He presented invitational lectures in England, Spain, Greece, Yugoslavia, Israel, Egypt, India, and Pakistan. Retirement allows him to devote considerable time to his favorite subject, history, especially that of his native Macedonia.

The Future of Hellenism in the United States, October 18-19, 2002

Capital Hilton Hotel
16th & K Streets
Washington, DC
PRESENTED BY

The American Hellenic Institute Foundation
in cooperation with the
Foundation for Hellenic Studies

DOWNLOADABLE CONFERENCE BROCHURE AND REGISTRATION FORM
ARE

AVAILABLE THROUGH THE AHI WEBSITE AT:
<http://www.aheworld.org/calendar.html>

Sessions will address the following contemporary issues:

- The Future of Greek American Organizations
- The Role of the Greek American Media
- Greek Language Education in the U.S.
- The Role of the Greek Orthodox Church in Promoting Hellenism in the U.S.
- The Role of the Greek American Lobby: What Does the Future Hold?
- Promoting Hellenism and Hellenic Culture in the U.S.
- The Role of Greek American Professionals in the Promotion of Hellenism in the U.S.

** For additional information or to have a conference brochure and registration form mailed to you, please contact AHI at (202) 785-8430 or via email at maria@aheworld.org

Return to Origins

The annual performance of the Return to Origins will take place on **Saturday, March 8, 2003**. Mark your calendars. More information will be provided as the date approaches.

Dance classes for children are on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Dance classes for adults: Wednesdays at 8:00 PM.

First day of classes: Wednesday, October 2.

For more information, please call **Ms. Rena Papapostolou** at 301-983-5012

Other News of Interest

Archaeologists uncover Byzantine church in southern Jordan

The Boston Globe

September 5, 2002

By Associated Press, 9/5/2002 AMMAN, Jordan (AP) Parts of a church dating to the Byzantine era have been uncovered in southern Jordan, an archaeologist supervising the excavations said Thursday.

"A big mosaic floor, an altar and pillars ... built between 400 and 600 A.D. have recently been unearthed," archaeologist Hamad Qatameen told The Associated Press. Qatameen said the church was in Dhat Ras village near Karak, 93 miles south of Amman, Jordan's capital. He declined to give other details. He said the find, made after two months work, was still under excavation by his archaeology department at the University of Mutaa.

The discovery means "all of Jordan was part of the Byzantine empire, contrary to previous belief that it was only the northern part of the country," he said. Several churches believed to date to the Byzantine era have been unearthed in northern and central Jordan, which lies at a crossroad to the Holy Land a route pilgrims used after Christianity originated in the Middle East in the first century of the current era.

The Byzantine rulers, operating from Constantinople now Istanbul, were the direct successors to the Roman Empire which held sway in the early days of the Christian era. Territory under the Byzantine rule included, at various times, Asia Minor now Turkey, and the Balkan Peninsula, including Macedonia and Greece. The main language was Greek and the predominant religion was Orthodox Christianity. The Byzantine Empire fell to invading Turks in 1453.

Greek culture on line

The Ministry of Culture launched a new website informing viewers of cultural, artistic theatrical events and exhibitions in Greece and abroad (<http://www.cultureguide.gr>). The site is updated with daily and upcoming cultural events.

Μουσική Ενημέρωση:

Frangoulis Serenades America

Frangoulis' new collection, "Sometimes I Dream", was released worldwide on September 17 by Sony Classical Records and is already being touted as the one to watch this fall. Following appearances in national television in the US, a concert is planned for early October, and he is in the process of filming a concert special in Greece to be aired in December on PBS television.

The tenor wowed a VIP crowd on June 2nd in a hotel rooftop party in New York with songs from his new album. Listening to "Sometimes I Dream," it becomes clear that the striking tenor is broadening his repertoire, attempting to cultivate a larger-more mainstream-fan base. Frangoulis uses his smooth and powerful voice perfected from years of classical training to carry him through the 12 songs. He chose to record the album in four languages-English, Greek, Italian, and Spanish-and it includes an eclectic selection of pop songs, dance tunes, film hits, and arias.

The title track "Sometimes I Dream," is a pop recording but has been inspired by Frangoulis' favorite aria, "E lucevan le stelle" from Puccini's Tosca.

Frangoulis is just shy of 35 but he has experience that reflects a lifetime of almost any performer. He was intensively schooled in drama and opera and he has the distinction of being the late great tenor Alfredo Kraus' only private student. Frangoulis left his home in Greece as a teenager to attend London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Since then he has received degrees from the Guildhall, Italy's Verdi Academy, and the Juilliard School of Music in NYC. Upon his Guildhall graduation, he entered London's prestigious West End theater scene snatching the role of Marius in Les Miserables and eventually taking the role of Raoul in Phantom of the Opera at Andrew Lloyd Webber's request.

Source: Odyssey Magazine

Greek rock groups

Please do not take this as a vote for or against the Greek rock music, but I thought to share with you (just in case you are not following these groups (I would be surprised if you do not!)) the names of some of them: "Αρχανθρωποι", "Γλυκιά τιμωρία", "Έλληνισταν", "Ένδελεχεια", "Έν Λευκώ", "Έν ψυχρώ", "Illegal Operation" (no relationship with 17N!), "Καθοδος των μυριων", "Lost Bodies", "Μαυρη Μαγιονεζα", "Νιπτω τας χειρας", "Πρασειν αλογα", "Στρογγυλο Κιτρινο", "Συννεφα με παντελονια", "Τσοπανα Rave" (the mix of Greek and Latin characters is not a mistake), "Ψοφοι κοριοι". My favorites? "Έλλησταν", "Μαυρη Μαγιονεζα" and "Τσοπανα Rave".

Book reviews

Charles M. Sennott: The Body and the Blood: The Holy Land's Christians at the Turn of a Millennium. New York: Public Affairs, 2001. 479 pages. ISBN 1-891620-95-9. \$30.00. Reviewed by Despina Skenderis-Fourniades.

(Despina Skenderis-Fourniades, a free-lance writer, was formerly a journalist with the Voice of America and is currently assistant editor of Mediterranean Quarterly.)

Charles M. Sennott, the award winning Middle East correspondent of the Boston Globe, traveled in the footsteps of Jesus from Christmas 1999 to Easter 2001. He set out to document the life of the local inhabitants and most of all to find out why Christianity was disappearing in the land where the faith was born. But his pilgrimage came to be much more than that as events unfolded and the path he took had become a war zone by October 2000.

In this pilgrimage, as the author goes from Bethlehem to Egypt, Nazareth to Jordan, Galilee to Lebanon, and back to Jerusalem, he finds that military occupation, religious extremism, economic injustice and the strife to control Jerusalem are as acute today as they were two thousand years ago. He talks with Christian Palestinians, Muslim Palestinians, and Israelis, and while he writes about their personal experience he also takes the reader back in time. The author excels in reviving for the reader the history of this land as he gives specific details about the 1948 war and how the families that fled the fighting were never permitted to by the Israelis to return to their homes. It was then that "the Palestinian refugee crisis was born", Sennott writes. The homes of the people who fled were "seized by Israel's Custodian of Absentee Property, and the Jewish Agency turned them over to new Jewish immigrants, who were flooding into the newly founded state".

Another wave of emigration occurred after the Six-Day War in June of 1967, with Israel's stunning victory. History repeated itself; people fled the war and Jewish immigrants from Europe, Russia, and North Africa settled in Israel. As the author explains, demographics changed with Zionism's effort to bring Jews from all over the world to Israel and with the Arab population explosion due to a soaring Muslim birthrate. Due to the economic pressures created by the upheaval of the war and the social pressures created by this demographic shake-up, Christians, too, were squeezed out of Israel.

Within Arab societies throughout the Middle East, Sennott states, Christians were "squeezed further by the upsurge in Islamic fundamentalism", that changed both the social and the political landscape of the Arab world during the past twenty years. As Arabs they were mistrusted by the Israelis, and as Christians, by the overwhelmingly Muslim Palestinians. At the same time, many Christians in the region are still frustrated

with the fact that "the Christians of the West", as some say, "look at us all here as Arab, and they assume we are Muslim...Why don't they look at us as fellow Christians?"

In the chapter "Beit Sahour", referring to a village in the West Bank, the author describes the Beit Sahourans' civil disobedience of not paying taxes and their first major nonviolent action in July 1988, when more than five hundred residents gathered their ID cards and returned them to the Israeli authorities. As the author explains, not only it is illegal under international law to collect taxes on occupied land, the tariffs imposed on the Palestinians by the Israelis were exorbitant. Upon the warning of American consultants to Israel that civil disobedience was unstoppable once it took root, the Israeli government swiftly decided that the movement had to be stopped. "We will teach them a lesson", Rabin is quoted as saying. And on September 19, 1989 hundreds of troops of the Israeli army entered Beit Sahour. They cut phone lines, barred the press from entering and confiscated an estimated \$2 million worth of commercial equipment and personal property.

As Charles Sonnett goes on with his pilgrimage and visits Egypt, where the Holy Family sought refuge after fleeing Bethlehem, he talks about the way the Copt Christians lived through the years under Gamal Abdel-Nasser. He writes about an Islamic cleric's ruling that "the shedding of Copt blood was permissible", a ruling that was revealed at the trial of Anwar Sadat's assassin's in 1981. Sadat had encouraged the formation of Islamic groups out of concern "for the threat from left wing Nasser socialists", the author notes. He continues by referring to injustices by Hosni Mubarak's government which had been worried about "the powerful Washington coalition that had formed around the issue of religious persecution of Christians worldwide", Egypt included.

In Nazareth, known as "the place where everyone got along", the author acknowledges that the issues of religion had surfaced and shaped municipal politics. One of his examples is the dream of the town's Christian mayor to built a "Nazareth 2000" project on a vacant lot, only to be taken over by the Islamic movement. A mosque was built instead.

While the Rabin and later the Peres governments were favoring the mayor's project, the events that unfolded created a rupture in how Nazareth defined itself. The author explains that the mayor and his supporters believed that there was a deliberate attempt by the Israeli government with Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister to create divisions between Muslims and Christians. He notes, however, that Netanyahu's government had repeatedly dismissed this claim.

In the chapter on Jordan, the country with a population of 4.7 million, 60 per cent of whom are Palestinian, the author delves deeply into history. He notes the fact that King Hussein always embraced the Christian minority-today only 2 per cent of Jordan's population- a largely wealthy and educated class. He also mention's the passion of Prince Hassan, King Hussein's brother, for interfaith dialogue long before it was part of the Middle Eastern vocabulary. He explains the ways and conditions Christians converted to Islam but celebrated all the holidays together with their Christian families.

In the chapter on Lebanon, the author examines the country's Maronite Christians and their close ties with the West. He goes on to explain in detail the dynamics of a region in which the Christians allied themselves with Israel against the Palestinians within Lebanon. He reminds us of Israeli goals that date back to 1954 and that came to light in 1979. The details of those goals were written in the memoirs of Israel's former prime minister Moshe Sharett, in which he reprinted a letter from Israel's first Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. According to Sharett's memoirs, three months after that letter was written, Israel's defense minister Moshe Dyan would second Gurion's idea. He advocated convincing or buying off a Lebanese Christian officer, make him the savior of the Maronites in Lebanon, and having the Israeli army occupy territory and create a Christian regime that would ally itself with Israel.

The author brings us back to the recent past and to Palestine when he describes the events of 6 October 2000, the "Day of Rage" against the Israeli occupation, as the Palestinian leadership had declared it. Sennott takes the reader to a CNN interview with Hanan Ashrawi, an academic, a Palestinian Christian, and, after Arafat, perhaps the most recognizable spokesperson for the Palestinian cause in the United States and Europe. She talked about "popular demonstrations...put down with excessive force by the Israelis". Her choice of words made the uprising much more appealing to the West than the Al-Aqsa intifada did, since the latter's emphasis was on the religious differences between Muslims and Jews. As Sennott describes the escalating conflict he points out that Ashrawi, tough and independent had resigned from the cabinet position she had been appointed to by Arafat because of "issues of corruption, human rights and accountability". Having retained her seat on the Palestinian Legislative Council, however, she continued to defend the Palestinian nationalist cause in an assertive and eloquent manner.

Wherever the author went during this pilgrimage, he felt engulfed in a wave of killing. The narrative, most dramatic at times, of the peoples' stories he patiently listened to, reaches its climax in the fall 2000, following the collapse of the Camp David peace talks. The journey itself ends in May 2001. The Middle East bureau chief of the Boston Globe was then transferred to London, where he now is the Europe bureau chief.

At the end of this trip Sennott realized that the real issues between the two sides were still "matters of occupation and land, self-determination and economics, and limited water resources". The fact it all emanated from Jerusalem, the Holy City, gave the conflict a religious tone. "The conflict was no longer between Palestinians and Israelis but between Muslims and Jews", the author points out. As for the Christians, they have become such a small number that they no longer have any effect. *The Body and Blood* is an impressive book that provides a new perspective and a different way of thinking about the land where violence is part of everyday life.

Source: Mediterranean Quarterly 13.2, Spring 2002

***Νεα Ελληνική Ιστορία, 1204-1985, Α. Ε. Βακαλοπούλου,
Εκδόσεις Βανίας, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2001***

When thinking about a history book, the first thoughts are: 3-4 volumes or at least 800-1000 pages full of boring facts (dates, names, etc) with no intellectual challenge. Not this publication! Professor Vacalopoulos has done a superb job in condensing the modern Greek history in about 470 pages and keeping the reader captivated. Yes, captivated by a history book! A history that each one of us thinks that he/she knows very well!!

Vacalopoulos' first publication of the modern Greek history was in French in 1974 with the title "Histoire de la Grece moderne" (Horvarth Press) following another related publication, "The origins of the Greek Nation 1204-1461 (Rutgers University Press, 1970). The 1974 publication has been published also in German (Griechische Geschichte von 1204 bis heute) in 1985. It was not until 2001 when the book was released in Greek language. The latter is the one I read¹.

Vacalopoulos' history is not a presentation of what happened when. In addition to the key events, he presents the socio-economic-cultural trends of the time, so the reader develops an insight into why things happened or why decisions were made the way they were.

He has a superb ability to select what is important and noteworthy, and what does not deserve to be mentioned. He does not burden the reader with unnecessary details. In fact, each sentence is crafted carefully to give the reader in a few words what the author has distilled after long research and careful examination of the facts.

His perspective is broad; he does not limit himself to military, diplomatic and political developments, which dominate history books. He takes every opportunity to provide facts about the social circumstances, the key economic developments affecting the life of the people and developments outside the country which had a direct impact on Greece. Also, he never fails to mention developments in literature and arts. In fact, the latter may be a trademark of this book.

Vacalopoulos has no ax to grind; there is no political or any other agenda. He presents a fair assessment of the facts. For example, while he presents Venizelos as the brilliant man he was, he does not fail to mention what he did wrong. Also, the role of the foreign powers in Greece is very enlightening.

The Greek edition has some additional chapters compared to the French and German, the most noteworthy being the: "Critique of modern Greek society and political life from the perspective of the western friends...". The book is easy to read. In general, it is a book

¹ By the way, I do not present this as a professional book review; I do not feel qualified to do so. But, after reading this book, I feel that I should share my impressions and thoughts about it.

every Greek must read and have in his/her library. It costs only 12 euros, but you may have to ask the bookstore to order it, unless you are shopping in Stoa Panepistimiou.

S.T.