

## Message from the President

This was a milestone year for us as we celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our association. It was Sunday, November the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1991 when 23 academics of Hellenic descent gathered in Toronto to take part in the first General Meeting of the Hellenic Canadian Academic Association of Ontario. The minutes of that meeting were published in January 1992 in the first issue of the association's newsletter *Διάλογοι*, which is now posted on our website along with all the other issues published since.

This year also, the association continued its active engagement in the academic and public discourse on the Greek crisis with important initiatives, which are detailed in this newsletter.

Sadly, this was also the year Dr. Dimitrios Oreopoulos, a long-standing HCAAO member, passed on. His humanity, professional accomplishments and civic engagement will continue to be an inspiration to us.

Theodore Tolia

## 2012 General Meeting

The HCAAO General Meeting took place on Sunday December 9 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Department of Chemical Engineering and Applied Chemistry (200 College St., Wallberg Building, Room 215, (416)-978-1093) at the UofT campus.

Following the reports from the President and the Treasurer, the remainder of the meeting was dedicated to discussing the HCAAO's position on the reported presence of Golden Dawn in Montreal, Canada. The Executive presented the assembled members with a statement in defense of human rights. After discussion and suggestions from the assembled members regarding the content and wording of the statement, the HCAAO published the following on its website:

## *In Defense of Human Rights and Democracy*

*The Hellenic Canadian Academic Association of Ontario is committed to fostering interest in issues of importance to Hellenism worldwide by organizing educational activities and acting as an informed resource to other organizations and the community at large.*

*We are deeply concerned with the rise of ultra-nationalist and xenophobic political forces in several parts of Europe mainly due to an ever-deepening economic crisis and record levels of unemployment. The meteoric ascent of the Golden Dawn party in recent years in Greece is the most direct expression of that.*

*Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees are reporting an increasing number of human rights violations on immigrants and other minorities in Greece committed by members of the Golden Dawn party. Most worrisome is the compromised capacity of democratic institutions to defend the rights of those minorities and, more recently, attempts to intimidate journalists and restrict freedom of expression. This is of deep concern to us.*

*Recently, the Golden Dawn party established chapters in New York City and Montreal and it is likely that they will try to do the same in Toronto. Golden Dawn has capitalized on the disillusionment, despair and the ever-deepening crisis in Greece through a blame-evil-on-immigrants rhetoric. The activities of this party threaten the values that underpin democratic societies worldwide and their presence here should be a Canadian concern.*

*This association will continue to raise awareness in the community on the issues of defending human rights and democracy.*

Signed on: November 5, 2012

By: The Hellenic Canadian Academic Association of Ontario

## University Studies Orientation Day

This year, the HCAAO visit to the Greek Community of Toronto schools was on October 27, 2012. The University Studies Orientation Day (USOD) is an annual event organized by the Hellenic Canadian Academic Association of Ontario (HCAAO) in cooperation with the Greek Community of Toronto. The goal is to help high school students applying for university studies make better and informed choices. Members of the Executive visited two Greek language high schools and met with grade 12 students considering to pursue higher education in Canada. Following a short presentation of the application process for Canadian Universities, HCAAO members shared stories about their own educational journeys, describing in the process the varied pathways available to students. We stressed to students that education is not only preparation for a vocation but an opportunity for personal growth and development and important preparation for civic engagement. We spoke to students about our own educational choices and the ways in which these choices reflected a combination of our personal interests, the financial supports we had in place at the time, our aspirations for a future career etc. Students had a lot of questions about the types of careers they may pursue when undertaking general Arts and Science degrees. They asked about the marks and preparation required for pursuing graduate studies and whether they needed a graduate degree to be successful in what they perceived a highly competitive job market. They asked about the advantages and disadvantages of attending large or small universities, the cost of moving away from home and the benefits of living on campus. We also discussed with students the opportunities they have to continue their studies, in Greek language, history and culture, with particular emphasis on specialization available to them through the Modern Greek History and Hellenic Studies Program at York University.

## Distinguished Guest Speaker Series

The Hellenic Heritage Foundation Chair in Modern Greek History and the Hellenic Canadian Academic Association of Ontario with the generous support of the Hellenic Heritage Foundation organized the conference titled *“From Revolution to Regress; the history of the Greek state and economy from the nineteenth century to the age of crisis”*. The event took place at the Royal Ontario Museum on Saturday, April 7, 2012.

The conference examined the history of the Greek State and economy from the revolution of 1821 to the current crisis. Audience members had the opportunity to experience the unique gaze historical research can provide on contemporary issues. Invited speakers were: Dean Kostantaras from Northwestern University, Maria Christina Chatziioannou from the National Hellenic Research Foundation in Athens, Thomas Gallant from University of California-Davis, Sakis Gekas from York University, Tassos Anastassiadis from McGill University, Kostas Kostis from University of Athens and Michalis Psalidopoulos from Tufts University.

In the first part of the Conference presenters explored the degree to which the formation of a new Greek State constituted a break with pre-revolution Ottoman reality. They discussed the importance of the initial conditions of foreign lending and dependency of the newly formed Greek State for the subsequent history of the Greek State. Presenters also explored the role of violence before, during and after the war of independence.

During the second part of the Conference, presenters debated the conceptualization of the history of the Greek state and its formation as a linear success-story of territorial expansion; the challenges and opportunities the Greek state and economy faced following the annexation of various and diverse regions were discussed. Presenters explored also why institutional reform lagged behind the territorial growth of the Greek State and the role of institutions such as the monarchy and the Church in the development of Greece and the ways in which foreign creditors imposed reforms during moments of economic

crisis since Greeks were unable to implement them without external pressure. In the process they commented on reasons why the Greek economy has failed to stabilize and has suffered debt crises repeatedly since the nineteenth century. The last session looked at the history of bankruptcies in Greece and explained their different origins as well as their diverse consequences. The event ended with an open discussion debating the current economic crises. It was also an opportunity for the historians in the panel to reflect on the writing and teaching of Greek history during the times of crisis.

Dr. Sakis Gekas was integral in the organization of the event, in conceptualizing its focus and putting together a sophisticated program showcasing North American and Greek historical research on the political economic development of Greece. Dr. Tina Martimianakis was the moderator for the day, providing brief summaries after each presentation and facilitating audience participation in discussion around the central themes of the Conference.

The event was well attended and the audience was diverse including students and faculty from Ontario universities and members of the general public.

## Annual Get-Together Dinner 2012: 20 years of HCAAO

On March the 4th, 2012 our association celebrated 20 years of history with a very special get-together dinner at the David Duncan House, 125 Moatfield Drive, Don Mills, Toronto.

The President of HCAAO, Prof. Theodore Tolia, opened the event. An excerpt from his welcome follows:

*"I'm very happy to see you all with us tonight in this special event celebrating our association's 20 years of history.  
Thanks to people like you, the Hellenic Canadian Academic Association of Ontario has been able to contribute to our members and to our community in ways that have made a difference.*

*Dr. Oreopoulos, thank you so much for being with us tonight and thank you for having served on this association's executive. I would like you to know that your humanity, your accomplishments as an academic and physician, and your civic engagement are an inspiration to us all. You have made a lasting difference!*

*Dr. Tastsoglou, it is such a pleasure to see you again after so many years! For many of us, your presence here tonight brings back warm memories. It reminds us of the time when, a few young and aspiring academics set out to create this association. It reminds us of the time when the idea of creating a Hellenic Studies Chair in one of the Toronto universities was born... Thanks to the leadership and generous financial support of the Hellenic Heritage Foundation and of the Greek Community in Toronto, the HHF Chair of Modern Greek History is now reality... Allow me at this point to also acknowledge the valuable contribution of Dr. Christina Christara, past president of this association, in making that happen. Thank you Christina for that and for your many years of valuable service.*

*The association's many activities over the years have ranged from the academic to the artistic and literary, and beyond. More recently, we also engaged in the public discourse relating to the crisis in Greece and Europe.*

*As you all know, our history has been archived and it is available for everyone to see on the association's website.*

*The slide show, which will follow shortly, will highlight some of that, and I hope you will enjoy it. I would like to thank Dr. Nota Klentrou, past president of the association, for creating it."*

The evening's guest of honor was Dr. Dimitrios Oreopoulos, an internationally renowned physician-scientist and exemplary citizen and humanitarian. He was accompanied by his wife Nancy to the event. Dr. Vladimiro Papangelakis introduced Dr. Oreopoulos and spoke about his many contributions to the Greek Canadian cultural fabric. Dr. Oreopoulos spoke about how honored and touched he was by HCAAO's tribute and gave references to HCAAO's achievements during the last 10 years.

Sadly, Dr. Oreopoulos passed away a few months after this event.

Dr. Evangelia (Evie) Tastsoglou, Professor and Chair in the Department of Sociology and Criminology, at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, founding member of HCAAO and member of the association's first executive council spoke next. She described the motivations behind the organization of HCAAO and some of the early events and initiatives undertaken by the first Executive, including the instrumental role the HCAAO had in the fundraising and negotiations for the establishment of the Chair of Modern Greek History and the Hellenic Studies program at York University.

Dr. Nota Klentrou presented the history of our Association through images. This power point presentation set to music was a highlight of the evening. Dr. Tina Martimianakis moderated the event and in between introductions quizzed the audience on their knowledge of HCAAO, stimulating reminiscences among those in attendance during dinner conversations.

## Other Activities

The Canadian media has continued its coverage of the Greek economic crises this past year. HCAAO's President Theodore Tolia was interviewed twice about related issues.

The first appearance revolved around the rise of Greece's extreme right wing party, the Golden Dawn. Anna Maria Tremondi conducted the interview for The Current, CBC Radio One, on Tuesday, October 9, 2012.

<http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/episode/2012/10/09/the-rise-of-greeces-extreme-right-wing-golden-dawn-party/>

Theodore Tolia was also interviewed by Ioanna Roumeliotis on Golden Dawn's (Greece's neo-Nazi political party) attempts to make inroads into Canada (CBC, The National, November 12, 2012) <http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/ID/2303885771/>

**We also would like to take this opportunity to encourage all our members to keep the HCAAO informed of any public activities they are part of that bring awareness to Greek issues so that we can keep our archive up to date.**

### **Renew your membership today!**

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