

HELLENIC AMERICAN PROJECT

NEWSLETTER



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“DISCRIMINATION IS AN UGLY WORD”

The recent 2020 US Presidential Elections were considered as one of the most critical elections, at least, since 1932. We witnessed alarming events, since, democracy, electoral integrity, peaceful transition, and constitutionality, either were tested or put in danger.

At the same time, an interesting socio-political phenomenon of the elections is that, on the one hand we have a visible participation of minority candidates, and on the other, increasingly, since the 2018 midterm elections, nearly one third of the electorate is Black, Latino, Asian-American, or another ethnic minority. Of course, demographic change and transition should not be considered solely by itself as political destiny.

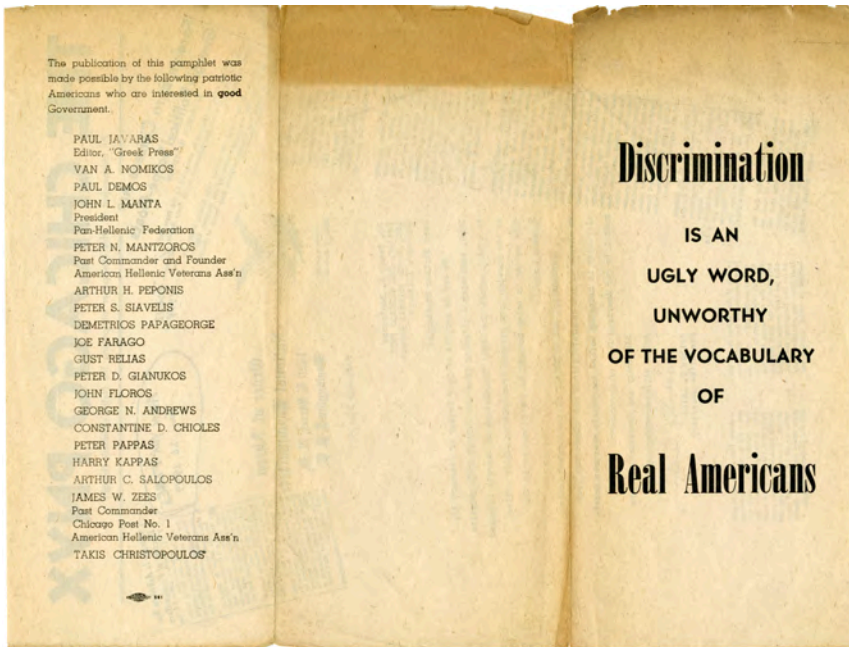
This new diversity pushes against the exclusion of naturalized citizens to run for office. After all, American democracy is about allowing equal opportunities for all, including naturalized citizens (with the exception of the President and the Vice President who have to be natural born citizens).

And perhaps now, we think of this as self-evident or given, but there have been periods in American political life when naturalized citizens were under attack.

In this Newsletter, the Hellenic American Project - Diaspora Center (HAP), in collaboration with the Special Collections and Archives, Benjamin Rosenthal Library, Queens College, CUNY, present a case of a discriminatory legislation proposal against the foreign born for holding public office, in 1949, in the State of Georgia. The presented archival material includes clippings from the New York Times, the Greek American newspaper The Chicago Pnyx, and a letter from AHEPA's National Headquarters: 1. The New York Times reports the proposed measure to bar foreign-born persons from holding elective office in Georgia; 2. The Chicago Pnyx fervently opposes the proposal; and 3. AHEPA's response letter to The Chicago Pnyx for raising awareness about the issue.

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1. New York Times

Georgia Is Asked to Ban Election of Foreign-Born
New York Times. Jan. 26, 1949
By The United Press.

ATLANTA, Jan. 25 - A measure to bar foreign-born persons from holding elective office in Georgia was introduced in the state Senate today.

Senators Edgar D. Clary Jr. of Harlan and Crawford Pilcher, floor leader, of Warren submitted a resolution to change the state constitution to read that only native Americans are eligible for such jobs.

“As Georgia becomes more industrialized,” Senator Clary said, “there will be greater and greater numbers of foreign-born people coming into the state.

“Right now in some other states foreign countries are financing political campaigns by foreign-born citizens seeking election to American offices,” he added. “This is not happening in Georgia now but we don't want it ever to happen.

2. The Chicago Phyx

The Chicago Phyx, "Discrimination is an Ugly Word"

Foreign-Born Citizens Are Georgia Political Scape-Goats

By PETER N. MANTZOROS

Feb 12 1949

A political crime is about to be committed by the State Legislature of Georgia, if a bill now introduced in the State Senate is allowed to become law.

A measure to bar foreign-born persons from holding elective office in the State was introduced recently by two Senators, Edgar D. Clay Jr., of Harlan, and Crawford Pilcher, floor leader of Warren.

I don't know whether these two State Senators are members of the un-American KKK but their so called anti-foreign-born bill certainly smacks of totalitarianism and has a strong odor indicating that it has been OK'd by bands of sheeted figures performing their ceremonial mumbo-jumbo while listening to intolerance preached in the guise of patriotism.

No doubt all Georgia minority groups have noticed this new pattern of reaction and are taking the necessary steps to protect the fundamental rights and principles that the makers of the American Constitution endeavored to secure for our nation: (1) The recognition of complete equality among all citizens; (2) The absolute sovereignty of the people; (3) Protection of the people against usurpation or misuse of authority by their officers.

The Georgia minority groups should resort to public advertisements in their local newspapers, lectures and general meetings, to point out to the good citizens of the

State that the sovereignty of the people is about to degenerate into the sovereignty of the un-American Klanners and that, no more obnoxious mishmash has ever attended politics in an American State. Furthermore, it should be pointed out, especially, to the State senators Clay and Pilcher and their political ilk that foreign-born citizens have more than made their mark in the United States; contributed to its prosperity and advancement everywhere; upheld its institutions and voluntarily served in the armed forces of our nation for the preservation of the American Democracy.

Forty per cent of the Georgia House membership are on the side of the law-abiding progressive citizens of the State who despise the un-American Klan and all it stands for. But, it remains for the citizens of the entire State to clean out the un-American element from their legislative chamber.

If Clay and Pilcher had the interests of Georgia at heart, no doubt they would urge their colleagues in the House to sponsor a bill for the amelioration of almost 500,000 families which live in 485,000 homes without running water; if they believe in 100 per cent Americanism they should also sponsor another bill to stamp out the high rate of syphilis in their State. The rate among the white population of the State averages 145.9 per 1,000 persons as against 4.8 for New Hampshire; and finally if these two gentlemen really believed in social, political and economic justice they would sponsor a bill to make every Georgia town install a public sewer system. According to available statistics only 170 out of 593 incorporated towns have a public sewer system. I suspect that the 170 towns are off limits to all Georgians except the Southern Gentlemen and Southern Aristocrats.

3. AHEPA's LETTER

Order of Ahepa
National Headquarters
1420 K Street, N. W.
Washington-5, D. C.

ARTHUR H. LALOS
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

February 18, 1949

Mr. Peter N. Mantzoros
Editor, THE CHICAGO PNYX
4805 North Wolcott Street
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Brother Mantzoros:

We are in receipt of your letter of February 12, 1949, enclosing a clipping from the CHICAGO PNYX relative to a bill before the State Legislature of Georgia intended to bar foreign born persons from holding public office. This matter is being brought to the attention of the Supreme Lodge.

Personally, and on behalf of the Supreme Lodge, we extend to you congratulations and thanks for your alertness in bringing before the public measures detrimental to our American form of government.

Sincerely and fraternally yours
AHEPA NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Arthur H. Lalos
Executive Secretary

POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY UPRISING: 1973-2020, THEN AND NOW

November 17, 2020 marks 47 years since the Polytechnic University Uprising in Athens, Greece. In this massive student demonstration of rejection of the Greek military junta of 1967-1974 the main demand and slogan was the triptych Bread-Education-Liberty. The student movement in Greece inspired and mobilized many Greeks in America who participated in massive demonstrations with fellow Americans and politicians. Congressman Benjamin S. Rosenthal (whose name has been given to the Queens College Library) was among those who advocated against the junta and the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. That decade was the beginning of the second mass wave of immigration (1960-1980) from Greece, when many young Greeks and Cypriots studied at Queens College. After all, Astoria was considered the largest Greek settlement outside of Greece or Cyprus. A continent away and 47 years later, the triptych could describe the struggles faced by young Americans in 2020. With unemployment rates higher than those of the financial collapse of 1929, the majority of the unemployed are without benefits and/or healthcare. This at a time when education is being conducted remotely or semi-remotely exposing further inequalities among the student body. In addition to the problems faced by students, CUNY Adjunct Instructors, many graduate students themselves, are deeply affected. There are many collegiate Greek American associations and a high enrollment of Greek Americans in higher education, however the student movement is unsubstantial. They do not effectively pursue the rights and interests of students during this socioeconomic and health crisis of American society. Commemorating the Polytechnic University Uprising gives us the opportunity to re-evaluate the important role of student movements, international solidarity, and democratic collective action.

GREEKS **500** years IN AMERICA



Ευάγγελος Κλωνής
1916 – 18/2/1989

Evangelos Clonis
1916 - 18/2/1989

Ο ΣΤΡΑΤΙΩΤΗΣ

THE SOLDIER

Ο φαντάρος-σύμβολο της Αμερικής στο Β΄ Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο. Σε μία από τις πλέον διάσημες φωτογραφίες του Δεύτερου Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου, του διάσημου φωτογράφου Γουίλντν Σμιθ, η οποία δημοσιεύθηκε στο εξώφυλλο του περιοδικού LIFE και μετά από χρόνια έγινε και γραμματόσημο στις ΗΠΑ, εικονίζεται ο ανώνυμος Αμερικανός φαντάρος που πολέμησε για την ελευθερία. Όμως αυτός ο Αμερικανός φαντάρος ήταν στην πραγματικότητα ο Έλληνας Ευάγγελος Κλωνής από την Κεφαλονιά, ο οποίος πολέμησε στην Αφρική, στην Ευρώπη και μάλλον και στον Ειρηνικό Ωκεανό. Τιμήθηκε με πολλά μετάλλια για τον ηρωισμό του. Κατατάχτηκε όταν έμαθε ότι οι Γερμανοί σκότωσαν τους γονείς του στην Ελλάδα.

The Symbol of the Americans in the Second World War. In one of the most famous pictures of World War II by the famous photographer Eugene Smith, published on the cover of the LIFE Magazine and which after years became a US stamp, the anonymous American soldier who bravely fought for freedom is depicted. But this American soldier was actually the Greek Evangelos Klonis from Kefalonia, who fought in Africa, Europe and probably at the Pacific Ocean. He was honored with many medals for his heroism. He enlisted when he learned that the Germans killed his parents in Greece.

VETERANS DAY

In honor of Veterans Day, observed annually on November 11 in the United States, HAP recognizes that Greek Americans have served in United States Armed Forces since their arrival during the first mass wave of immigration, 1900-1924. One such example is George Dilboy (1896-1918), the first Greek American to receive the Medal of Honor during World War I. Dilboy served and died in France and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Another example is the Greek American 122nd Infantry Battalion during World War II. The Commanding Officer was Major Peter Clainos, the first Greek American to graduate from West Point. The unit was named to commemorate 122 years of Greek independence. The role of Greek American veterans is a topic that has not been adequately documented. To this extent, it is a topic that HAP is researching and will continue presenting.

The poster shown is part of HAP’s Museum Permanent Collection. It depicts one of the most famous images of World War II, captured by photographer W. Eugene Smith. For years after it was taken, the identity of the soldier and the exact location where it was taken were debated. Today, we know the soldier in the photograph is Evangelos Clonis, or Angelo Clonis as he signed when he enlisted in 1942. Clonis arrived to the United States as a stowaway in hopes of creating a better future and helping support his family in Greece from his earnings. After several years of working as a food vendor he signed up to the Army after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, when the United States formally entered World War II.

Clonis was honorably discharged in 1945 and received his U.S. citizenship. He returned to Santa Fe, New Mexico and shortly thereafter spent a decade living in Greece with his wife, Angeliki. In 1969 Clonis and his family returned to Santa Fe and in 1971 he opened “Evangelo’s” a cocktail lounge on San Francisco Street.



ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ
ΕΣΤΕΡΝΩΝ



ΓΕΝΙΚΗ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΙΑ
ΑΠΟΔΗΜΟΥ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΜΟΥ

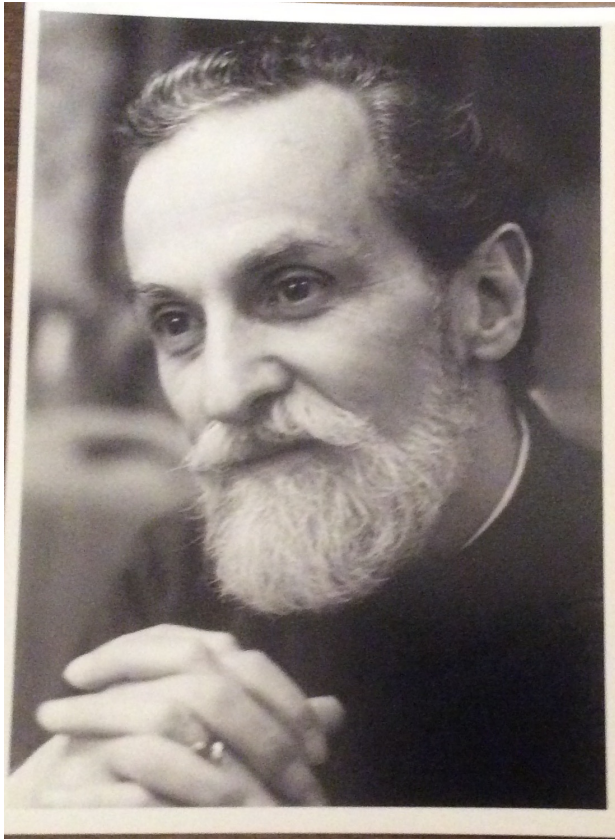


Photo courtesy of Kalliope Decavalles (née Kokinos)

ARTS & CULTURE

As part of HAP's ongoing efforts to present the Greek American community, Arts & Culture features Greek American artists, writers, and poets.

Andonis G. Manganaris-Decavalles (1920-2008) was born January 25, 1920, in Alexandria, Egypt. He completed his elementary and secondary education in the Greek schools of Alexandria. Decavalles studied Law at the University of Athens and in 1954 came to the United States with a scholarship to attend Northwestern University, where he received his Doctoral degree in Modern American Poetry. He was a professor of Comparative Literature and Poetry at Fairleigh Dickinson University from where he retired as a Distinguished Emeritus Professor.

Among other things, he edited the Greek American literary journal *Charioteer* and published many reviews. He published a book about Elytis, *Odysseus Elytis From the Golden to the Silver Poem*, books on Pandelis Prevelakis, *An Anthology of Cypriot Literature*, and many reviews in Greek and American publications. He also published five books of poetry in Greek, and in 1977 he received the Academy of Athens Award of Poetry for his book *Αρμυοί, Καράβια, Λύτρα* (*Joints, Ships, Ransoms*). In commemorating 100 years since his birth, HAP presents this tribute and two of his poems. HAP thanks Kalliope Decavalles (née Kokinos) for her contribution to this tribute.

TIME OF JUDGEMENT

At eight in the evening, properly humble, I went
with movement harmonious and restrained,
poured into the prototype of fear,
with a landscape of devotion on my eyelids,
all as was shown me with much circumspection
by the last mirror:
the kissing of birds on the belt-buckle,
whatever of the chest might be revealed
and arranged with disbelief,
a slight fragrance of narcissus
on my earlobes; I went
at eight in the evening
with a small sheaf of papers watered in sin
to the dreadful encounter with judgement

but found the god had gone
on one of his honeymoons.

ANTONIS DECAVALLES
translated by
KIMON FRIAR

THE WELL

Beside the bed, a wooden door,
before the wooden door, the flagstones
a basin, a piece of marble of an old capital
and a well.

Nothing else was found.

The rusty door creaked in my dream.
I hear the water wakening
with talk and horseshoes and footsteps.
Pails bang on the well-wall
and plop plop the voice deep in the closed space
and plop plop the shining black larynx gulping
in which faces fall and moon tumble.

My dream became one with the dawn of thirst,
my life became one with the life of water.

Source: www.poetryfoundation.org

OPENING OCTOBER 30th

**ODE TO THE GREEK
LIGHT AND LANDSCAPE:
WORKS BY DIMITRIS
DIAMANTOPOULOS**

Featuring 21 landscape paintings by Dimitris Diamantopoulos on the occasion of commemorating 200 years from the beginning of the Greek Revolution of 1821.

Co-curated by

Nicholas Alexiou, Founder/Director
and Tiffany Apostolou



ZOOM RECEPTION - TALK WITH THE ARTIST:
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17th, 2020, @ 6pm (EST)

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://bit.ly/39DwYld>

HAP NEWS

- ❖ HAP recently acquired the archive of Lambros Papantoniou (1946-2009), the Washington diplomatic correspondent for several media outlets. This generous donation from his nephew Stavros Stavrakis consists of 100 boxes of mixed media pertaining to issues of Greek and American diplomacy spanning 30 years. Content will be available on the website as it is curated and digitized.
- ❖ HAP recently acquired three paintings by the renowned Greek American artist, Electros. The works will be on display when it is safe for campus buildings to reopen following CUNY and Queens College instructions.
- ❖ Historical Consultant and author, Peter S. Giakoumis generously donated a copy of his book, *The Forgotten Heroes of the Balkan Wars: Greek-Americans and Philhellenes 1912-1913* to HAP's Greek American Library.
- ❖ Greek American poet Perry Nicholas generously donated two of his poetry chapbooks to HAP's Greek American Library.
- ❖ HAP is conducting Oral History interviews during COVID-19. Click [here](#) to access the interviews.
- ❖ HAP is 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization located in Queens Hall, on the Queens College, CUNY campus. All donations are welcome and go towards ongoing interviews and digitization of materials to continue documenting the Greek American community. Click [here](#) to make your donation.