

TO HREOS

[George C. Vournas is an attorney at law by profession, with offices in Washington, D. C., and a former Supreme President of the AHEPA (1942-1945). In World War II he was commissioned captain in the Army of the United States and was separated from that service with the rank of major. He served at the headquarters of the USAFIME in Cairo in 1943, acting as liaison with the Greek Government and the six representatives of the Resistance Movement who were brought to Cairo with General Meyers for consultation with the British political and military authorities. Mr. Vournas has continued his own resistance against oppression. When Karamanlis "was taking pride that Greece was governed democratically," Mr. Vournas sent protest memos to the effect that "no government is democratic that has ideological laws on the statute books and has the power to jail or to exile opponents and dissenters." At another time (during the G. Papandreou government), when Greek Ambassador Matsis was decorating Mr. Vournas' AHEPA colleagues, Mr. Vournas refused the decoration stating that "as long as Greece indulges in persecuting individuals because of their thoughts and ideologies, I shall never accept anything that would indirectly bind me to such a government." Finally, Mr. Vournas provided the House Subcommittee on Europe an excellent historical rationale against the restoration of military assistance to the 1967 Greek junta.]

Let us assume it was the Greeks of old who said that any act or deed, no matter how bad or repugnant, cannot be totally devoid of some good -- what in modern terms is called a "mixed blessing." With this in mind it will be easier to examine the case of Mikis Theodorakis, for the world -- prior to his exposure as an irrepressible resistance fighter -- knew Theodorakis as a gifted musician. Thanks to the *coup d'état* of the Colonels in Greece of April 21st, 1967 Mr. Theodorakis has been "discovered" as a many-sided being. When in hiding to evade the junta police, in jail, in the hospital or in exile in the waterless islands of the Aegean, this remarkable man did not remain idle. He produced countless appeals, manifestos and observations which took two volumes to reproduce. The appearance of the volumes raises the curtain and permits us to "discover" Mr. Theodorakis the artist, the poet, the philosopher and, last but not least, the political analyst. The books are aptly entitled *HREOS*, Volumes 'A' and 'B' which, literally translated, means "debt," but broadly translated, means "an obligation flowing from the status of the individual as a free man; an obligation to country and society as a responsible human being."

One cannot fail but admire the multi-sided human being that Mikis Theodorakis is -- Theodorakis the poet and the political activist struggling to arouse those around him and beyond, over the fate of his beloved Greece.

Once a famous composer (I do not now recall his name) said,

"Let me compose the music of a nation, and I care not who makes the laws." Pursuant to this apophthegm one could say that Theodorakis might accomplish his objectives were he to confine himself to music and allow his art to work on the subconscious to bring about the political end result. But lo! -- not Mikis! He attacks on the whole front, yielding to nobody and nothing -- and as a political analyst suggests the answers to the present-day problems affecting Greece and Greeks. He begins his analysis with the horrors of the Metaxas dictatorship, examines the enemy occupation and observes and pinpoints the "rewards" reserved for his country by "friends" of Greece, such as Winston Churchill and Harry Truman. And in so doing Mikis Theodorakis, the erstwhile communist activist, does not hesitate to subject Stalin, his successors and the communist bureaucracy to an x-ray examination, and intimates that the promotion of a democratically-governed Greece could hardly be on the agenda of the Soviet bureaucracy. (This obvious fact apparently has sunk into the subconsciousness of a great number of Greek communists who, at long last, have demanded -- as reported recently -- that the leadership of the Party ought to come from the ranks of those who live and do battle in Greece and not the ones "ordained" by Moscow.)

Theodorakis' political analysis and the advocated solutions are akin to those long advocated by Andreas Papandreou, the well-known spokesman for enslaved Greeks, now in Canada. Both are critics of the present American policy -- as, indeed, are intellectuals the world over -- not because they are against the U. S. per se, but because they feel that America's leadership of late has betrayed America's historic role. In support they cite not only the tragedy of Viet Nam, but America's preoccupation with military might at the expense of all other values -- as evidenced by the maintenance of bases everywhere, be it in the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean, points thousands of miles away from America -- where America maintains extraordinary military might on the ill-concealed pretext that America's interests are "menaced." And of course, they are in agreement that the present unrepresentative and repressive regime in Greece could hardly be possible without American aid or at least connivance.

But we must return to Theodorakis' books. They were printed (in Greek) by the Salemi Press in Rome and reached New York through channels of the publisher. (There is also an English translation entitled "Journal of Resistance," published by Howard, McCann and Geoghegan, Inc., of New York.) They make easy reading -- informative as well as pleasant.

And now may we say a few words about the Theodorakis' tour as a musical composer and conductor of his orchestra -- recently concluded. It was his first trip to the U. S., excluding a visit at the U. N., where he remained within the confines to which all U. N. undesirables (from the American point of view) are restricted. It is reported that wherever

Theodorakis performed he was accorded enthusiastic receptions by the American public. The story of his reception -- not only in Washington, D. C., Philadelphia, New York -- from all cities -- has been the same: Never before was a traveling troupe received with such approbation. And Theodorakis responded, giving encore after encore -- enjoying the performance as much as his audience.

Now that the ice has been broken and we are no longer threatened by the views of Theodorakis, which -- alas -- have been heretofore found to be "subversive," we hope that a tour of the U. S. will become an annual event, and we hope, too, that such tours will be better organized. Mr. Theodorakis and his performers will see something of America besides Holiday Inns. They ought to see America as America is -- and at the same time provide to Americans of Hellenic descent the opportunity to know the man Theodorakis!

George C. Vournas
Washington, D. C.

