

A LESSON ON DEMOCRACY

By **MARCUS A. TEMPLAR**

The core of democracy is the representation of the will of the people, which directs the decision making process of elected officials. The representative democratic system collects information through polls, opinions of readers, etc. that guide the representatives of a nation towards the will of the people of the country. In advanced and mature societies when serious and important domestic and national issues arise, a referendum is the most significant and perhaps the only legal, direct, and approving form of guidance for the executive and legislative branches of a country.

The government of Greece has announced the revision of certain articles of the Hellenic Constitution during this year's Parliamentary session that are anachronistic and against the norm of present social and political reality. Yet there is no mention in revising article 44, paragraph 2 of the Constitution resulting the Hellenic voters to decide on all serious domestic and foreign policy issues by collecting a reasonable number of signatures. The whole matter reminds us of magnanimous medieval potentates kindly throwing some crumbs of democratic privileges to their unworthy and immature subjects. It harkens back to the dark ages when those in power held their subjects on a leash lest they escape their subservient and acquiescent destiny. Perhaps the modern potentates of Greece do not feel their citizens ready for emancipation or that they are capable of mature thinking. Nevertheless, collecting signatures and placing important specific questions of domestic or foreign policy on a ballot during local, national or EU elections is part of democracy.

When the late King of Greece Pavlos said, appropriately or inappropriately, that the Hellenic people were immature, politicians of all parties considered such a statement insulting. Yet the same politicians did nothing in their power to demonstrate that the people of Greece were neither undeveloped nor uninformed, but rather treated them as such to the point that the Greek voters have become complacent or indifferent to irresponsive political behaviors. One might argue it was the goal of these politicians to become the masters of their own *ciftlik* called Greece. Nothing has changed since. At the present, politicians of essentially the same political parties continue the inept and insecure policies of treating the Hellenic voters as nincompoops. At least, King Pavlos was honest in expressing his thoughts, something that cannot be said about the representatives of the present three political dynasties, and their cronies who govern Greece.

Those who feel it is not so and those who think this notion has insulted their partisan affiliation should think of a democratic Greece first and then and only then will they clearly see what their partisan sovereigns actually do and not what they say. Furthermore, they should refresh their memory by perusing Pericles' Funeral Oration and especially its third paragraph regarding the Constitution and the laws of the Athenian democracy. It is demeaning for Greece that Skopje, the Constitution of which offers the option of a referendum to its citizens, gives lessons of democracy to Greece, when by all standards the Skopje government is despotic, oppressive, and at best faulty.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Hellenic Parliament,

The Greek citizens have been adept for long time; now it is YOUR turn to become adept, too!