

Panepirotic Federation of America, PO BOX 56046, Astoria, NY 11105  
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## Message From our President

By Φωτης Γκαλιτσης



**Mr. Fotios Galitsis,**  
**President**

Ο Πρόεδρος και το Διοικητικό Συμβούλιο της Πανεπειρωτικής Ομοσπονδίας Αμερικής εύχεται στις Διοικήσεις των Ηπειρωτικών Συλλόγων, Αδελφοτήτων, Μέλη της ΠΟΑ, καθώς και σε όλους τους απανταχού της Γης Ηπειρώτες να

περάσουν τις Άγιες Ημέρες του Πάσχα πού έρχεται με υγεία και ευτυχία.

Οι σημερινές παγκόσμιες συνθήκες και ιδιαίτερος στα Βαλκάνια και στη Μέση Ανατολή, που μας ενδιαφέρουν άμεσα, απαιτούν όσο ποτέ άλλοτε να είμεθα ενωμένοι, συνεργάσιμοι με α πόλυτη αλληλοκατανόηση και εμπιστοσύνη.

Με άπειρη εκτίμηση

Ο Πρόεδρος

Φώτης Γκαλιτσης

## Απογραφή στην Αλβανία

By Σταυρου Τζιμα

Στο αμέσως επόμενο διάστημα, ο Ελληνισμός της Αλβανίας πρόκειται να βρεθεί αντιμέτωπος με μια υψίστης σημασίας για την υπόσταση και το μέλλον του διαδικασία, αυτήν της απογραφής, την οποία έχει ανακοινώσει ήδη η κυβέρνηση της γείτονος. Η τελευταία απογραφή είχε διεξαχθεί το 1989, όταν ακόμη όλα τα σκίαζε η φοβέρα. Τότε, 59.000 δήλωσαν Έλληνες, όμως απέχει πολύ από την πραγματικότητα ο αριθμός αυτός, δεδομένων των συνθηκών ανελευθερίας υπό τις οποίες διεξήχθη η όλη διαδικασία.

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Τώρα, η κυβέρνηση Μπερίσα προγραμματίσει απογραφή για τα τέλη Απριλίου, με διαδικασίες που σε γενικές γραμμές πληρούν τα διεθνή κριτήρια και μεταξύ των ερωτημάτων που θα κληθούν να απαντήσουν οι πολίτες είναι η εθνικότητα και η θρησκεία τους. Οι πληροφορίες από τα Τίρανα αναφέρουν ότι πιθανότατα θα μετατεθεί γι' αργότερα, καθώς συμπίπτει με τις προγραμματισμένες δημοτικές εκλογές που αναμένεται να διεξαχθούν σε συνθήκες όξυνσης και η ήδη βεβαρημένη από τα αιματηρά γεγονότα των προηγούμενων εβδομάδων πολιτική ατμόσφαιρα δεν αντέχει μια τέτοια δοκιμασία.

Τα μηνύματα, ωστόσο, που καταφθάνουν από την γείτονα, με αφορμή την απογραφή, προκαλούν ανησυχία, με τους ακραίους εθνικιστικούς κύκλους να επιδίδονται στην καλλιέργεια πρωτόγονου ανθελληνισμού. Οπως και στην περίπτωση της συμφωνίας για τις θαλάσσιες ζώνες, έτσι και τώρα, στο ζήτημα της απογραφής, καταγράφεται ένας απίστευτος εθνικιστικός κουνιαχτός, με σκοπό να αφαιρεθεί από το ερωτηματολόγιο το ερώτημα της εθνικότητας. το οποίο ωστόσο οι



## *37<sup>th</sup> Panepirotic Biennial Convention*

PANEPIROTIC FEDERATION OF AMERICA

January 25, 2011

Greetings! We are pleased to announce that the 37<sup>th</sup> Panepirotic Biennial Convention will take place in St. Louis, Missouri on May 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> at the Hilton Frontenac Hotel.

The convention committee, co-chaired by Amalia Loli and Stephanie Tsoubanos, along with the members of the Daughters of Epiros-St.Louis, is working extremely hard to organize a successful convention. We are requesting the full support of all the chapters and their members to make this an outstanding event.

We have negotiated a special price of \$79.00 per night for visitors and delegates of the convention. To receive this price you must make your reservation no later than April 27<sup>th</sup>. Please book early to ensure you will be guaranteed a room. You may call the hotel directly at 1-314-993-1100 or 1-800-325-7800 and reference the "The Daughters of Epiros" when booking your reservation. Reservation hours are Monday - Friday, 8:00am - 6:00pm and Saturday, 9:00am - 1:00pm Central Time.

Early registration begins Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> from 6 - 10pm in the hospitality room.

The Convention will commence promptly on Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 9am. A welcoming reception will be held Friday evening in the Hospitality Atrium.

The Gala dinner-glendi will be Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> in the Hilton Ambassador Ballroom. Live entertainment will be provided by the Kosta Kastanis Band, featuring Kosta Triantafilou of Toronto on Klarino and Vasili Patrikis of New York on Violin. Tickets are \$60 per person and will be available through April 27<sup>th</sup>.


Enclosed is a contract form for our convention album, which will be given out at the banquet. We ask for your help and support by taking out an advertisement in our album. The proceeds from this album will help defray the costs of the convention and will also be used to further our charitable donations for our cause. We are counting on your support!

We look forward to seeing you all in St.Louis and are honored to host this convention!

For more information you can contact our co-chairs Stephanie Tsoubanos at 314-456-4591 and Amalia Loli at 314-852-9144. Additional information will be posted on the Panepirotic website [www.panepirotic.org](http://www.panepirotic.org)

The Daughters of Epiros - St. Louis

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*Panepirotic Federation of America* 

The Gala dinner – glendi for the 37<sup>th</sup> Biennial Panepirotic Convention will be held at the Hilton – St. Louis Frontenac Hotel, Ambassadeur Ballroom, on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011. Please submit this form with your donation no later than April 27<sup>th</sup> to secure your reservation.

Tickets are \$60 per person

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Check No. \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this section with the names of individuals who will be seated at your table. Note: We will do our best to accommodate the seating requests.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this completed form with your check to:

The Daughters of Epiros – St. Louis  
C/O Stephanie Tsoubanos  
11 Williamsburg Rd.  
Creve Coeur, MO 63141

*Panepirotic Federation of America*



**37th Biennial National Convention  
Hilton – St.Louis Frontenac  
May 20–22 2011**

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C/O Stephanie Tsoubanos, 11 Williamsburg Rd. Creve Coeur, MO 63141 Tel: 314-456-4591**



*Mr. Elias Betzios*

## ***Panepirotic Federation to Honor Elias Betzios***

The Panepirotic Federation of America will honor Mr. Elias Betzios with the Pyrrhus Award on May 21, 2011 at the Convention banquet in St Louis. Mr. Betzios, a native of Dolo Pogoniani, Epirus has served the Panepirotic for over 50 years and has devoted his efforts to the Northern Epirus Cause. Mr. Betzios the Panepirotic Federation of America and all of its chapters, salute you.

## ***Northern Epirus is Not a Dirty Word!***

*By Konstantinos Kalymnios*

Way back in 1960, just around the time when the leader of the USSR Nikita Khrushchev suggested to the paranoid leader of Stalinist Albania, Enver Hoxha that autonomy be granted to Northern Epirus, as the majority population in this region along the border with Greece, was of ethnic Greek origin, George Papandreou, the grandfather of the current Greek Prime Minister, known also by the sobriquet: "Grandfather of the Republic," said the following in Parliament:

"What all Greek Governments need to know is that the Northern Epirus issue continues to exist. And what should be forbidden down the ages, is the denial of our sacred claims. With regards to Northern Epirus, these claims are sacred and indelible."

Fast forward some fifty years later to the government of George Papandreou's grandson and his namesake, and a totally different state of affairs exists. Recently the Greek Consul in the southern city of Korytsa (Korçë), Theodoros Oikonomou-Kamarinis was recalled to Athens in disgrace after mentioning at a meeting celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the ethnic Greek political party OMONOIA in that city, that "this region is referred to as Northern Epirus," and that "your grandfathers were Greek." That the grandfathers of members of the Greek minority in Korytsa were Greek seems axiomatic. During 1914, bloody battles between Greeks and Albanians took place in order to secure the city for the autonomous Greek state of Northern Epirus and Korytsa's inclusion within that state was agreed to by the Albanian government of the time. Further, between 1916-1918, the region of Korytsa was annexed by Greece and local representatives represented the region in the Greek parliament. As late as 1940, the Greek inhabitants of Korytsa jubilantly welcomed the Greek army into their city, fighting off the Italian invaders. The Greeks are therefore...Greek.

Enver Hoxha did not consider the Greeks of Korytsa to be Greek. When he created a small minority zone - the only region in which the Greek language could be taught or spoken - he made sure to include only one hundred villages along the valley of Dropoli and exclude most Greek inhabited territory from it. As a result, the Greeks of Cheimarra on the west coast, the Greeks of Premeti, Korytsa and Moschopoli were denied education in their language for fifty years. For some strange reason, these Greeks continued to remember that they were Greeks. Paradoxically, considering that they possessed the same culture and history as the Greeks south of the border, they, north of the border, considered themselves to be living in Northern Epirus. Funnily enough,



*Mr. Konstantinos Kalymnios  
Secretary, Panepirotic Federation  
of Australia*

## From Page 5 *Northern Epirus is Not a Dirty Word!*

there exist maps and treatises from Roman times that corroborate their claims. Epirus is a geographical and cultural entity that extends from the Ambracian gulf to the gulf of Avlona. It is not, unless defined as such by nation states, a political entity.

The Greek government would disagree. Ever since the PASOK government came to power, it has displayed a marked aversion to use of the term Northern Epirus, despite the fact that this is the term by which Greeks of the region identify themselves. In its inept attempts to pacify and conciliate Albanian governments who from time to time raise irredentist claims concerning western Epirus, the Greek government has taken upon itself the Orwellian task of making use of the term Northern Epirus a thoughtcrime –considering all those who employ it, rabid nationalists.

This could be excusable if successive Greek governments had a coherent policy concerning the Greeks of Northern Epirus and the rest of Albania, but they have, over the decades, proved they have not. Since the eighties, government representatives purported the fiction that Stalinist Albania was a worker's paradise, which no Greeks lived there and that if they did, they were more privileged than the Greeks in Greece. Consequently in 1987, the official state of war existing between Albania and Greece since the forties was declared over, without the Greek government extracting any concessions as to the protection of human rights of the Greeks in Albania and ever since, Greek government policy in the region could be characterized as a mixture of inept meddling in and undermining the Greek minority's attempts to organize themselves politically, while making no real attempt to safeguard their rights as a minority.

This deprecating attitude towards Northern Epirus and its people can also be evidenced by Greek consulate representatives here in Australia. In a manner eerily akin to the brave Consul Kamarinos, I was warned by a former Greek Consul-General that I had better: "stop talking about Northern Epirus, or there would be consequences." Another, relatively benign and friendly Consul General once remarked to me: "So what do you want us to do? To invade Albania, kill the Albanians, and make room for the Northern Epirots?" Try as we might, we have never been able to convince Greek officials that the fact that hundreds of thousands of Greeks just across the border are subject to a corrupt regime that cannot protect and sometimes cynically abrogates basic rights such as the right to free elections, the right to Greek education and the right to non-discrimination is of grave concern. For them, the whole issue is a joke.

Why should Greece attempt to prohibit use of the term "Northern Epirus," thus denying to its people, the right to self-identification? Why is this term considered offensive and having expansionist connotations when at the same time we freely use terms such as Constantinople (instead of Istanbul), Asia Minor, (instead of Turkiye), or Pontus (instead of Karadeniz Bölgesi), without consideration as to whether these carry similar connotations to a larger and eminently more important neighbour? Obviously this inconsistency can only be explained by cynical, arbitrary policy considerations, not reality.

What the pompous and short-sighted Greek officials who have recalled the feisty and unrepentant Consul Kamarinos to Athens for discipline fail to realise in their arrogance is the fact that for over half a decade, the Greeks of Northern Epirus have been isolated and have stoically retained their Hellenism under the most harrowing conditions – treated as class enemies owing to their bourgeois pursuits and as enemies of the state owing to their ethnic affiliation. These are the descendants of Zappas, Tositsas and so many other

**Please see *Northern Epirus is Not a Dirty Word* on page 7**

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benefactors who donated their entire estates towards the construction of the public buildings of Athens and the founding of the modern Greek state. Today, their beneficiaries, the bureaucrats and the politicians show their gratitude by pouring scorn upon their people and abandoning them to their fate, despite their valiant efforts to cling to their identity. They, and those who are concerned for them are, for neo-Hellenes, nothing more than objects of derision.

The arrogance of Greek officials who persecute those of their brethren who seek to encourage and console their compatriots comes at a most crucial point in the history of Northern Epirus. Finally, after years of refusing to do so, the Albanian government is poised to conduct a census that will reveal much about the status of minorities within that country. All Consul Kamarinos wanted to do, was to remind his long suffering compatriots that he recognizes their heritage and encourage them not to be afraid to freely express this. His masters in Athens however, have other ideas, none of them coherent.

What the Greek foreign ministry implies, by its conduct, is that there is no point for Greeks living without the borders of Greece to cling to their traditions and their customs for these are considered quaint by the metropolis and our efforts of no value. If ever the time comes that we will need protection and a voice of support, it is questionable, in the light of the abandonment of the Northern Epirots – a group of people who have contributed to the welfare of Greece far more than us, whether we will find it in our country of origin.

It is sad that there is so much truth in the Cheimarriot folk song: «Τα Γιάννενα ονειρεύονται, η Κρήτη ξεποστάνει, βουβή η Θεσσαλονίκη, η Αθήνα ξεφαντώνει... Ποιος βογγάει σα να πεθαίνει; -Χειμάρρα, όλορθη.» It is also sad that we, along with brave Consul Kamarinos were led to believe that our culture included values of solidarity, concern and mutual assistance. We have Greek officialdom to thank, for disabusing us of our illusions.

## From Page 1 *Απογραφή στην Αλβανία*

Αλβανοί αξιώνουν να συμπεριληφθεί στην απογραφή, που πρόκειται να γίνει αυτή την εποχή στην ΠΓΔΜ! Ακούγονται κραυγές περί αναζωπύρωσης ελληνικών διεκδικήσεων στην Αλβανία και γίνονται εκκλήσεις για αφύπνιση της εθνικής συνείδησης, προφανώς γιατί ο εχθρός βρίσκεται προ των πυλών! Το πλέον ανησυχητικό ίσως είναι ότι και αυτό το θέμα μπήκε ήδη στις συμπληγάδες της αδυσώπητης εσωτερικής πολιτικής αντιπαλότητας και η αδύναμη κυβέρνηση Μπερίσα δύσκολα θα επωμισθεί το βάρος μιας απογραφής, για την οποία θα κατηγορείται περίπου για εθνική προδοσία.

Το ερώτημα είναι τι σχεδιάζει να κάνει η ελληνική εξωτερική πολιτική, ώστε να εγγυηθεί η αλβανική πλευρά την πιστή τήρηση των διαδικασιών της απογραφής που θα διασφαλίζουν την ελεύθερη βούληση των μειονοτήτων, αλλά και οι Βρυξέλλες που τη χρηματοδοτούν.

Το τι θα δηλώσει βεβαίως ο κάθε Αλβανός πολίτης και μαζί όσοι ομοεθνείς μας απέμειναν ακόμα στη γείτονα όσον αφορά την εθνική και τη θρησκευτική τους συνείδηση, είναι καθαρά δικό τους θέμα. Η Αθήνα όμως δεν μπορεί να παρακολουθεί εκ του μακρόθεν τις μεθοδεύσεις εναντίον της μειονότητας, ούτε, από την άλλη, να σφυριρίζει αδιάφορα σε συμπεριφορές διπλωματών μας, που ρίχνουν νερό στον μύλο όσων εργάζονται για τον αποδεκατισμό του Ελληνισμού στην Αλβανία.



## *Dr. Basil Photos, 95, never forgot his homeland*



Dr. Basil Photos, who died Feb. 13 at 95, was the longtime head of the Panepirotic Federation of America. At a time when Greeks and other ethnic minorities living in southern Albania could not always practice their language, religion and even some customs, 10-year-old Basil Photos was sent away from home to get an education — which eventually included medical school.

“His father selected him as the one in the family to go off to school. In 1926 he set off with a note in his pocket saying, ‘Go see Mr. So-and-So and live with him and go to school,’ ” said Dr. Photos’ daughter Cynthia Abbott.

Dr. Photos’ family members were among the ethnic Greeks living in the area on the border of Albania and Greece known as Northern Epirus — a territory within Albania proper that has seen oppression at various times against the minority population.

“You couldn’t go to church. They closed all the schools; the Greek language was not taught in the elementary or high school level. The only Greek that was taught was in private schools, which ran the risk of being found by the Albanian police,” said Demetrios Tsoumbanos, former leader of the Panepirotic Federation of America, an organization seeking to protect the human rights of Greeks in Albania.

Studying medicine in Athens, Greece, and eventually emigrating to the United States, Dr. Photos was able to escape the troubles of his home region, but much of his family did not.

“He couldn’t speak to or see them for 45 years. Many of his relatives really did suffer quite extensively. His sister’s home was burned down multiple times, his brothers were jailed because they spoke out,” said Abbott. “His struggle from the 1940s all the way into the Iron Curtain was to see his homeland be free.”

Dr. Photos, born in 1916, died Feb. 13 at age 95 following a brief illness. A Glenview resident, he served for years as head of the Panepirotic Federation of America, and was a founder of Chicago’s Greek Independence Day Parade.

After graduating from the medical school at the University of Athens in 1945, Dr. Photos came to the United States for postgraduate studies in medicine at the University of Michigan. Graduating in 1948, he came to Chicago to intern at Grant Hospital and became an emergency room physician at another medical center.

In 1953 Dr. Photos married the former Mary Vaselakos, and opened his own practice in the Loop. He later opened another office on the North Side. A family physician, Dr. Photos delivered nearly 1,500 babies, said his daughter.

Though busy as a physician, Dr. Photos found time to raise awareness about his homeland. Through the Panepirotic Federation, Dr. Photos visited the United Nations several times to discuss human rights violations in Northern Epirus. His efforts were recognized by the Greek government as well as the Greek Orthodox Church.

“Dr. Photos was very instrumental in keeping that idea alive for the last 60 years,” said Tsoumbanos. “Every time we got together it was the first thing he would bring up.”

Dr. Photos never made it back to his home region, though he was reunited with family. Today Albania is considered more welcoming of Greeks in the southern territory, although the area of Northern Epirus has become less populated as it has gained more freedoms.

“What was interesting is that his homeland is in many ways deserted now; people moved to the big cities,” Abbott said. “He would have liked to see the area itself prosper, but most of [the Greeks] left. That was somewhat painful for him.”

Though he struggled with the plight of his homeland, his pride in his Greek heritage was unwavering.

“He had tremendous pride in being Greek and pride in some of the original ideals going back to Socrates and Aristotle — the freedom to express yourself and debate ideas, and chart your own destiny. He was so much a patriot of this country because our ideals are the Ancient Greek ideals he felt strongly about.”

In addition to his daughter, Dr. Photos is survived by his wife, Mary; daughter Thalia Murphy; four grandchildren, and one sibling.



## *Αναβολή της διαδικασίας απογραφής του πληθυσμού στην Αλβανία*

Την αναβολή της προγραμματισμένης, για τον προσεχή Απρίλιο, διαδικασίας απογραφής του πληθυσμού στην Αλβανία, αποφάσισε η κυβέρνηση της χώρας.

Σύμφωνα με όσα ανακοίνωσε ο υπουργός Καινοτομίας, Τεχνολογίας και Πληροφόρησης, Γκεντς Πόλο, «η απόφαση αυτή ελήφθη λόγω των δημοτικών εκλογών, που αναμένεται να διεξαχθούν στις 8 Μαΐου» .

Ο κ. Πόλο ανακοίνωσε ακόμη ότι η απογραφή θα διεξαχθεί τον προσεχή Νοέμβριο και

πρόσθεσε: «η διεξαγωγή της απογραφής σχεδόν ταυτόχρονα με τη διεξαγωγή των δημοτικών εκλογών εγκυμονεί κινδύνους για την περισυλλογή λανθασμένων δεδομένων» .

Εθνικιστικές οργανώσεις, ακόμη και ανώτατοι αξιωματούχοι του κράτους, όπως ο αντιπρόεδρος του Ανώτατου Συμβουλίου Δικαιοσύνης, Κρέσνικ Σπαχίου, με σχεδόν καθημερινές δηλώσεις και διαδηλώσεις ζητούν από την κυβέρνηση την ακύρωση της διαδικασίας απογραφής του πληθυσμού, κατά την οποία, όπως προβλέπεται, κάθε πολίτης έχει το δικαίωμα να δηλώσει ελεύθερα την εθνική του καταγωγή και τη θρησκεία του.

## *World Council of Epirotes Abroad Convention*

The WCEA convention will be held on July 29 & 30 in Ioannina..

This year's convention will take on a new format. Every Federation will be sending its own delegates.

The Panepirotic Federation of America will be sending up to 50 delegates. We ask our chapters to start the process of choosing their delegates. More information will be coming soon.

[www.world-epiotes.org](http://www.world-epiotes.org)

## *2011 University of Ioannina Greek Cultural Program*

The university of Ioannina Greek Cultural program will take place again this summer from July 1 - July 31.

The Panepirotic Federation of America has sent 31 students since the inception of the program. We ask your chapters to spread the word for this wonderful program. Students must be between the ages of 18-32 and must be of Epirotic Descent. For more information contact Dimitris Koutoulas at 508-317-6478 or at [worcepirotiko@aol.com](mailto:worcepirotiko@aol.com)



**Panepirotic Federation  
of America**

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

***May 20-21, 2011 St. Louis, MO***

37<sup>th</sup> Panepirotic Biennial Convention

For info contact:

Stephanie Tsoumbanos (314) 456-4591

Amalia Loli (314) 852-9144

***July 29-30, 2011 Ioannina, Greece***

World Council of Epirotes Abroad Convention

for info contact:

[www.world-epiotes.org](http://www.world-epiotes.org)

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*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[www.panepirotic.org](http://www.panepirotic.org)

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