

# Australian Lawyers Phil-Hellenic Association

Continued from Thursday's Edition

In basic terms, imprisonment was the penalty for the xenos until the judgment was paid. I can see from the corner of my roaming eye that Justice Hammerschlag, Justice of the Supreme Court of NSW, and obviously a Phil-Hellene, is licking his lip and slowly penning his recommendations for the necessary amendments to the Construction List Practice Note for 2011 for the Chief Justice to consider. Practitioners 'watch out'.

I now take you forward 700 years, in 342 AD, the monastery of Mega Spillion, ( Monastery of the Great Cave deep in the mountains of the Peloponnese) introduced the formal teaching of Christianity into Greece from a monastery setting after the Romans continued to participate in their version of Christianity for over 300 years.

This monastery continues its unbroken teaching of Christianity for almost 1,700 years to the present date.

Orthodoxy was introduced into Greece and swept the country like an unrelenting snowstorm

In orthodox canonical law, the gravest and heinous of offences against the orthodox faith was the breach of the apostasy and schism.

The canonical decree of Apostasy was the journey of the brother and sisterhood of mankind. Ecclesiastical orthodox courts would intervene to repel this terrible offence. Interference of the pursuit of a peaceful apostasy by a third party was a terrible crime.

For example, if a man was assaulted or robbed in his journey ( the Apostasy) or his destiny was being obstruct and harmed by another then this conduct was severely punished – this is found in the profound roots of the orders in council of Orthodoxy in the liturgy of the 1st and 6th Synods, the Holy Apostles and Saints Peter, Basil and Gregory of Nyssa.

Schism was generally defined as the tearing apart of the lifeblood of humanity, or, in colloquial usage a partheid, represented by the foundation of the spiritual dimensions of the Holy Orthodox Canon laws which rejected bigotry outright from an early period in Greece's history as inhumane.

Again the orders in council of Orthodoxy and its teaching are principled in the 1st and 2nd Synods, Antioch, Carthage and St Basil.

I quickly move forward a further 1,000 years and find that before the Greeks



arrived as migrants in Australia, the Irish were punished up to the early 20th Century with the words like "NINA" outside factories around Sydney offering vacancies for blue collar workers.

NINA was the acronym for "No Irish Need Apply" - representing oppressive and harsh bigotry for workers who could speak English and needed to feed their families after the 1st World War, but could not because of some notion that they should be excluded from work because they were west of Wales, Catholics, over the waters, and it was 'best to keep those black-ale drinkers away from real people'. The Irish discrimination was considered both appropriate and necessary to avoid contamination of the 'proper English' folk.

The 50's injected the new migrant workers primarily from countries like Italy, former Yugoslavia and, of course, Greece.

Terminology flourished in Australia to welcome the new migrants, familiar terms like 'wogs, daggos, spicks, chockos and greaseballs' into our factories – this pain and suffering was the thread to which the tapestry of racism was woven in the Australia of the 50s, 60s 70s and even, when alcohol has its way, until the present time. ALPHAs here today in their late 30 and in their 40s, like me, remember the after burn of being labelled 'wogs' at school and elsewhere!

This was the prize after suffering from famine in 1941, the occupation of Greece by the Germans during World War II, civil war and wretched poverty as children. The most heart-tearing, of course, was leaving their loved ones behind, sometimes forever, to migrant to Australia as teenagers, so far far away.

Like the Jews after the abject atrocities inflicted upon them during World War II, simply for being Jews, the

Greeks of Australia have lead the way to now make it clear that such conduct will 'never happen again' in this country.

Rather than openly fight such prejudice and discrimination and create hostility in a country that gave them 'psomi' bread to eat and opportunity, the first generation migrants put their heads down, worked even harder and orphaned such gross injustice by training the Diaspora, the lawyers and leaders of the Greek Australian community here today, to be entrepreneurial, obtain an education and respect the Australian community and its laws.

The first migrants did bring something with them as part of their very negligible belongings – Siera (order), Ithiki (ethics) , kai Taxis ( a respect for the law) from their poor Greek families.

These rules remain in my life and I try very hard to live by them and, I would suggest, as part of every Diaspora's life present at this lunch.

We are all discussing what Greece is currently going through. Much pain is being experienced by the Hellenes and, as Diaspora, we feel their suffering. Perhaps a soothing dose of Seira, Ithiki kai Taxis from the medicine cabinet of the 1950s Greek migrant will cure the hurt.

Today in Australia, as one of our Phil-Hellenic guests' Catherine Branson SC, Federal Court Justice and current President of the Australian Human Rights Commission will proudly advise you, not one person here has to tolerate any form of racism or bigotry and, if such acts, behaviour or conduct occur, the law will intervene with such power and force that it will make, Phidippides, the Ancient marathon runner and warrior, look slow.

What a wonderful progression this sun-filled country has achieved in the repulsion of prejudice in less than 40 years. Australia is a world leader in the respect of human rights and is the paradigm of justice.

Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, renowned for his eloquence in preaching and public speech, sat on his marble step and reflected about his learning as a man, as a human, as a spiritual creature and as a Greek deeply trained in orthodoxy.

His views were robust but uncomplicated and, in my view, need to be repeated because of their general application to life notwithstanding one's beliefs, creed, colour, religion, sexuality or political persuasion.

In 405 AD, the Saint said timidly in response to how one should live their life on earth that it is:-

## "AGAPI" LOVE

Love is the prerequisite for the perfect implementation of the law.

Through love, the main cause of transgression against laws and of disorder in the community is removed.

The commandment of love, which must be the reason behind the creation of every canon and law within it.

This truth is really this – in orthodoxy , the beliefs system of most of the Greeks here today – genuineness and certainty were implemented by the Lord Jesus Christ when he assigned to Peter his pastoral function, the human

Jesus said:-

"He who loves Me will keep my commandments. But My commandments and the sum of them is to love one's neighbour. For if you love me, Peter, tend my sheep. To love one's neighbour makes for keeping the commandments, so it is fair to say 'On this simply rule hang all the law, the prophets and the judges.'"

Whether an Orthodox Christian or not, we are all neighbours here today. If we show one another undemanding respect and love, the judges would have very short lists.

Mr. Bizos I present to you representatives of the Australian Greek community at large breaking bread with you and honouring your great achievement. Could I ask you all to stand - with a simple glass of wine we point to you and respect your renowned reputation and say stin igia sou.

I present to you our leaders.

I proudly present to you the lawyers of Greek heritage as the leader of ALPHA.

Most importantly I present to you a tolerant, well adjusted and law abiding country in Australia absent any law contrary to the protection of the right to live and be human.

Finally, I present to you representatives of the judiciary here today who are ALPHA's FILI, and who respect our Greek heritage and roots, our hard work as a community in Australia, our significant contribution to Australian society, but above all the promise to impartially judge citizens despite the colour of their skin, the shape of their eyes, or the spelling of their name and treat people with dignity.

As one we can stand to stop racism in any form. As a united Greek-Australian community we can shine as an example of this standard which will make us stronger than the grand phalanx of the proudest of Ancient Spartan Armies.

Na eise panta kala, Yiorgo Bizos, and thank you for your presence today.

To the management and staff of the Ottoman Cuisine – we thank you for your hospitality, your respect for our culture, as we respect yours, and the wonderful atmosphere and food you have provided our guests to honour Mr. Bizos presently.

What a wonderful life – we are so proud that you are Greek.

For my part, with a Peloponnesian name like Kostopoulos, please permit me a little licence to be sincerely proud of my Peloponnesian roots as you, Mr. Bizos, are part of them.

ALPHA thanks you for your company at our lunch.

ALPHA now warmly invites its patron, Mr. John Hatzistergos, Attorney General of NSW, to speak.

Thank you.

Speech Delivered by Andrew Kostopoulos founding and current President of ALPHA

LIST OF SOURCES ACKNOWLEDGED AND USED IN CONTENT OF SPEECH

- 1.The Greeks and Greek Civilization - Jacob Burckhardt
- 2.Ancient Greek Law ( Cambridge) - Michael Gagarin David Cohen
- 3.Spiritual Dimensions of the Holy Canons - Lewis J Patsavos
- 4.An Overview of Orthodox Canon Law - Prof. P Rodopoulos

## 2010 Logos Dinner

The Archon and Committee of ALPHA is pleased to invite members and their guests to the 2010 Logos Dinner.

Time: 6:30 pm

When: Friday, 26 March 2010

Venue: Athenian Restaurant, 11 Barrack Street, SYDNEY

Cost: \$50 for members, \$60 for non members

RSVP: Friday, 19 March 2010

Pre-paid tickets only.

This year the Logos is to be delivered by Mary Anastasi, Barrister.

Members and their guests are encouraged to RSVP and pay for the dinner as soon as possible as seating is limited.

Payment may be made by sending a cheque to ALPHA or making a direct debit payment directly from their financial institution. All payment details can be located through the ALPHA home page via the internet ([www.alphalaw.com.au](http://www.alphalaw.com.au)).