

THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE – AUSTRALIA

For The Restitution Of The Parthenon Marbles

In April this year our Founder and Chairman Emanuel J Comino OAM JP conducted extensive discussion in Greece, on the matter of Restitution of the Parthenon Marbles. Emanuel was in Athens representing both The AHEPA International Committee and our Committee. While the visit addressed many matters, including the Greek Language abroad and the Cyprus issue, a major focus was the return of the Parthenon Marbles to Greece.

Emanuel met with the Hellenic Minister for Culture and Tourism, Mr Pavlos Yeroulanos. This meeting was extensive and held along with Mr Basil Mossaidis, Executive Director of AHEPA USA, Mr Gus James, past Supreme President AHEPA USA and current Chairman of AHEPA International, Mr Nick Aroutzidis, President AHEPA Canada and Aris Mattheou AHEPA Athens. In the 80 minute discussion Minister Yeroulanos expressed his strong commitment for the return of the Parthenon Marbles to Greece. He also stressed the central importance of educating the public about the history of the Sculptures and the case for their return.

Minister Yeroulanos was happy to receive an opinion on the legality of Lord Elgin's removal of the Parthenon Marbles, that Emanuel presented on behalf of its author George Bizos SC, South Africa's leading human rights lawyer. The document raises important issues around the legality of the Firman that Elgin allegedly received from the Otterman rulers of Greece, at the time.

Subsequently Emanuel conducted extensive discussions with the Ministry Secretariate presenting a comprehensive account of the Committee's history from its inception in 1981 to the present.

The AHEPA International meeting also considered the Bizos opinion and extended its continuing support for E-



Spyros Mercouris and Emanuel J Comino



Emanuel J Comino and Professor Pandermalis

manuel as AHEPA's international spokesman on the Parthenon Marbles. AHEPA International will seek the support of the US Government in pressuring the British Government for the Return of the Marbles. Emanuel will continue to assist in these activities.

There were several other highlights to the visit. The A-



Mr Basil Mossaidis, Mr Gus James, Mr Nick Aroutzidis, Pavlos Yeroulanos, Aris Mattheou and Emanuel J Comino.

HEPA contingent visited the New Acropolis Museum accompanied by the Museum's Director, Professor Pander-

malis. Although this was Emanuel's fourth visit to the Museum he is still struck by its brilliance and its world's best practice presentation. 'The British have no credibility in their claim that Greece is unable to look after the Marbles, for now they have the perfect house for them', Emanuel said.

The Archbishop of Athens and of All Greece Ieronymos II gave the AHEPA group, led by the Supreme President of AHEPA USA, Mr Nick Karakostas, a very warm welcome expressing his appreciation of the good work that AHEPA does abroad and in Greece for Hellenism and the community in general.

For Emanuel another highlight was a special invitation from Spyros Mercouris, brother of the late Melina Mercouri the famous actress and later Minister for Culture in Greece who drew the world's attention to the need for restitution of the Parthenon Marbles. Mr Mercouris extended his sincere appreciation of the continuing work of Emanuel and this Committee and expressed his sincere desire to work with the Committee towards the return of the Marbles.

*Russell L Darnley OAM
Secretary*



Emanuel J Comino, Archbishop Ieronymos II and Nick Karakostas



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