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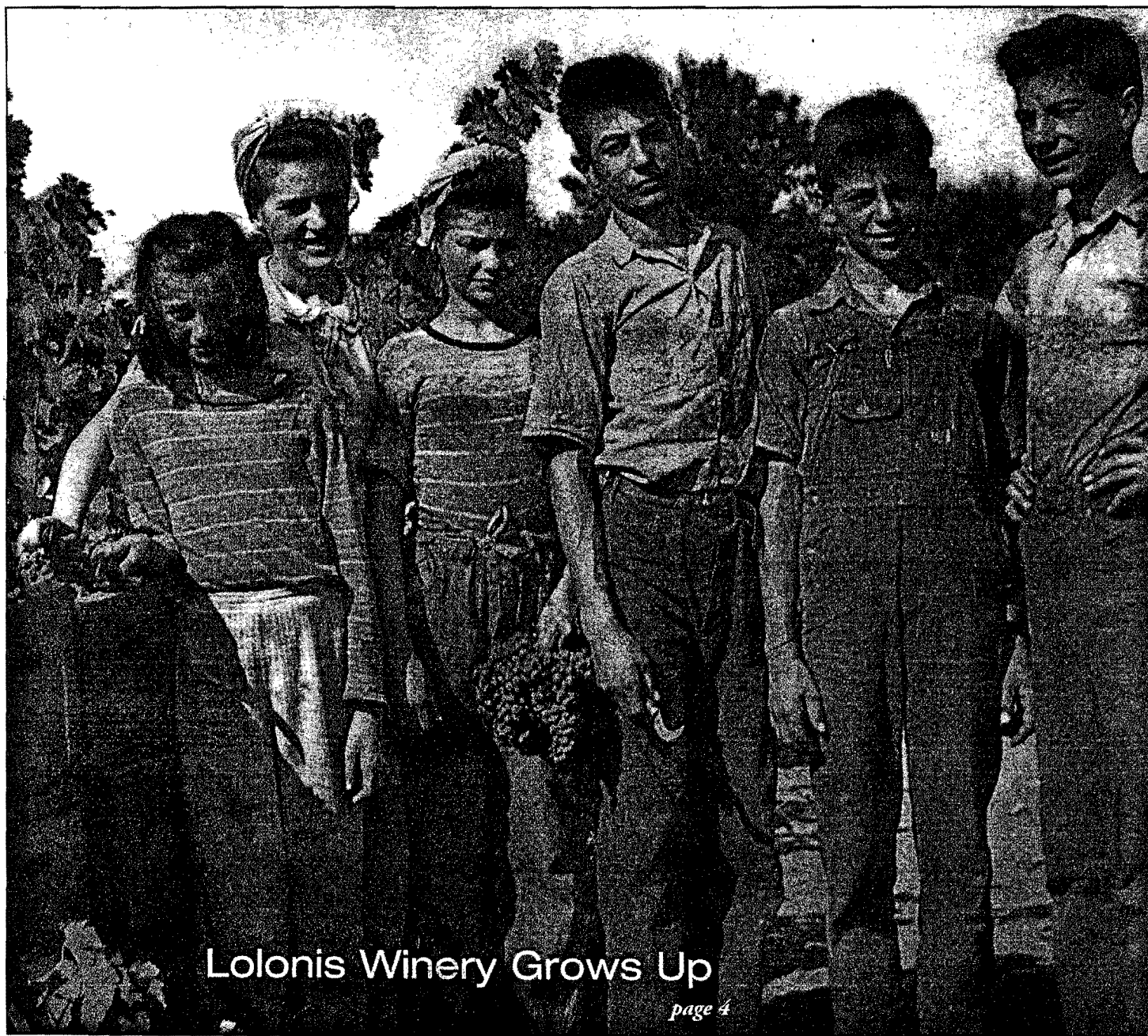


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A First In The U.S.A.

Greek-Turkish Peace Initiatives Program At Portland State University

by Theodora Dracopoulos Argue

The Conflict Resolution Program:

The Graduate Program in Conflict Resolution began in 1995 at Portland State University in Oregon and in 1999 received accreditation from the State Board of Higher Education. As one of the only umbrella programs of its kind on the West Coast, it currently serves almost one hundred graduate degree students. The program is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing from a variety of humanities and social science disciplines including: Philosophy, Psychology, Law, Political Science, Sociology, and Intercultural Studies. The program's current areas of emphasis are: violence prevention, mediation, negotiation, facilitation, restorative justice, nonviolent social change, international and intercultural conflict resolution, dispute-resolution systems design and evaluation. The Northwest Institute for Conflict Resolution is the not-for-profit organization of the Conflict Resolution Program.

The Peace Initiatives Project

It is in the area of international conflict resolution that the Greek-Turkish Peace Initiative Project has found its niche. In the Spring of 2002, Portland State University announced "a unique opportunity to advance the cause of international peace and the resolution of international disputes" with the expansion of its program "to create a new generation of peace makers through education, training and intervention activities connected to the historical conflict in Cyprus, Greece and Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean region in general." "This program will also generate peace-building activities in the

Middle East and other regions of conflict as well."

Dr. Harry Anastasiou of Cyprus was brought to Portland State University in June 2002 to lead the Peace Initiatives program in cooperation with Professor Birol Yesilada, holder of the Turkish Studies Chair at PSU established at four years ago. According to a memorandum released jointly by PSU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean Marvin Kaiser and Portland Greek-American community member and Peace initiatives donor E. John Rumpakis, Dr. Anastasiou "has been in the forefront of the peace initiative" in Cyprus. An international peace scholar and longstanding peace practitioner, Dr. Anastasiou earned multiple post-graduate degrees in his field and is an author and lecturer. "He will bring knowledge, skills, and leadership to PSU's Conflict Resolution Program."

Dr. Anastasiou's arrival in Portland, along with his wife Dora and 21 and 17 year-old sons Anastis and Michealangelo, culminates a long and persistent collaborative effort of Mr. Rumpakis, also on AHEPA's "Cyprus and Hellenic Affairs National Committee;" Dr. Marvin Kaiser; Dr. Robert Gould, and Barbara Tint, Director and Assistant Director respectively of the Program of Conflict Resolution at PSU.

The commencement of the project was formally announced in Cyprus on May 8th at a meeting of nearly seventy-five representatives at the Fulbright Center inside the UN buffer zone of the divided city of Nicosia. In addition to Mr. Rumpakis and Dr. Kaiser, those present also included: Andy Banis, then the Supreme President of the AHEPA, American Ambassador to Cyprus Donald Bandler, Director of the Cyprus Fulbright Commis-

sion Daniel Hadjittofi, and AHEPA delegates and Greek and Turkish Cypriots involved in citizen peace-building initiatives.

Through the program, PSU intends to pursue: (a) bilateral peace-enhancing activities with expert scholars and practitioners from the three pertinent countries; (b) international exchange and study opportunities for students, practitioners and scholars in both in the USA and Cyprus and (c) local and international dialogue processes with various groups relevant to the peace efforts of the region.

The Peace Initiatives Project has received words of endorsement and moral support in writing from prominent leaders in Greece, Cyprus, and the USA, including: George Vassiliou, former President of the Republic of Cyprus and present Head Negotiator for the accession of Cyprus to the European Union; George Papandreou, Foreign Minister of Greece; Retired U. S. Senator Mark Hatfield; and Senator Gordon Smith.

The Curriculum:

The Peace Initiatives program commenced this fall with two graduate level seminars. The one, focusing on Cyprus, entails an historical and socio-political conflict analysis and the prospects, strategies and perspectives for peace and reconciliation. The second course,



Nicosia, Cyprus—At the inauguration of the Peace Initiatives Program in the UN buffer zone: (left to right) E. John Rumpakis of Portland, Peace Initiatives Professor Harry Anastasiou, AHEPA's Andrew T. Banis, and PSU Dean Dr. Marvin A. Kaiser. The plaques held commemorate the occasion.

focusing on the general phenomenon of Nationalism, involves a critical inquiry into nationalism as a factor that has historically contributed to protracted conflicts throughout the 20th century in various regions of the world. Attention also is being given to conciliatory efforts and approaches to governance and the development of political cultures that move beyond nationalism.

Winter and Spring term courses will focus on: multi-level Greco-Turkish relations, particularly as regards rapprochement; the European Union as a peace-enhancing, stabilizing, trans-nationalist system of governance; citizen peace-building in Cyprus; and Ethics of Peace and Conflict. Professors Anastasiou and Yesilada are jointly developing these and other courses relevant to political and peace issues for the Eastern Mediterranean.

As Dr. Anastasiou stated, "our program is the first of its kind, as it involves me, a Greek-Cypriot scholar, and Dr. Birol Yesilada, an American scholar of Turkish-Cypriot background, working in co-operation for the promotion of peace-enhancing research, scholarship and community engagement." Dr. Anastasiou went on to say that "peace-building work, particularly in Cyprus, is largely unknown in the US." "We are greatly encouraged each time we hear of fellow citizens inquiring about our peace-building efforts. Moreover, we are greatly empowered as more and more people join us in the struggle for reconciliation, for a just settlement in Cyprus and for strengthening

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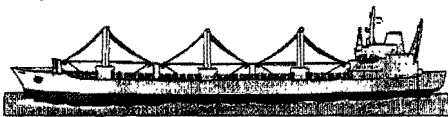
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Greek-Turkish Peace Initiatives Program

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Greco-Turkish rapprochement." Dr. Anastasiou invites persons interested in peace initiatives in Cyprus to look up the web sites: www.tech4peace.org and www.peace-cyprus.org.

Scholarships, Grant Writing, and Research:

The Cyprus Fulbright Commission recently announced its offer of two scholarships for Cypriots to study in Portland in the Peace Initiatives Project, one for a Greek-Cypriot student and one for a Turkish-Cypriot student. Professors Anastasiou and Yesilada have joint proposals in process for projects that will help fund the bringing together of Greek, Turkish, and Cypriot students of both ethnic backgrounds who are attend-



Dr. Birol Yesilada, Dr. Harry Anastasiou, and E. John Rumpakis gathering to discuss the newly-started Peace Initiative Program at Portland State University.

ence Foundation for a grant to conduct joint research in Cyprus relevant to the peace initiative objectives.

Community Involvement

In line with its general philosophy and practice, Portland State University aspires to both serve

and extending the rapprochement culture.

Initial interest has been shown by the youth of the local Greek community, who wish to explore the prospect of following and supporting the example of the bi-communal "Youth Encounters for Peace" initiative that has been very active and creative in their peace-building efforts in Cyprus. One of the more recent initiatives was that of "Steps for Peace," a Cypriot bi-communal dance group that toured Turkey with unprecedented success. For more details on rapprochement activities in Cyprus, see the web sites.

Financial Challenges:

Presently, the Peace Initiatives Program faces two interrelated financial challenges. The first concerns the raising of funds by interested parties to match the amount that Portland State University has committed to the program, namely \$250,000 for five years. Mr. E. John Rumpakis was the first private donor to the program. The second challenge concerns the establishing of a Peace Scholarship Fund that would support Greek, Turkish, and Cypriot students of Greek and Turkish background who wish to study together in the Peace Initiatives Program. Several Greek and Turkish Cypriot students desire to come to Portland to study in the program, but cannot without assistance. Some Greek students from the local Portland community have registered for different courses in the program.


Relevant organizations and the general community are invited to embrace the vision and effort so as to render the program sustainable. For more information, please contact Dr. Harry Anastasiou, Peace Initiatives Program, Conflict Resolution Graduate Program, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Portland State University, 491 Neuberger Hall, Post Office Box 751, Portland, Oregon 97207-0751. He can be reached at 503-725-9741.

The Cyprus Fulbright Commission recently announced its offer of two scholarships for Cypriots to study at the Portland Peace Initiatives Project

ing American universities, for various peace-enhancing workshops, conferences and action projects.

In cooperation with the Oregon Peace Institute, the professors presently are preparing a grant proposal to appropriate foundations in order to help reactivate the first ever bi-communal Greek and Turkish Cypriot magazine, which previously due to a lack of resources could not be sustained. Drs. Anastasiou and Yesilada also have applied to the National Sci-

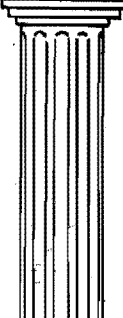
and involve the community in Portland and beyond in the Peace Initiatives program. It aims (a) to promote rapprochement and cooperation between the Greeks and the Turks; (b) to generate support for the Peace Initiatives Program at PSU; and (c) to make known and popularize the rapprochement efforts that have been in progress, particularly at the citizen level, in Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey, and to continue similar efforts in the USA, as a way of sup-



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HJ clergy corner War with Iraq: WWJD?

Fr. Michael G. Pappas

Only recently, Christians of every hybrid bantered the question, "What Would Jesus Do? (WWJD?)," like a sacred mantra. Not satisfied with merely posing the question, those enthusiasts emblazoned that acronym on everything from bumper stickers to bracelets. Sadly, during that era, the challenge of that profound question was overshadowed by its very commercialization. In the face of today's imminent threat of unprecedented preemptive military engagement with Iraq, are those same enthusiasts pondering the implications of that most critical question? I pray that they are.

What Would Jesus Do in the present situation? To answer that question we must turn to the gospels, the canonical text acknowledged as authoritative by all who claim themselves to be faithful adherents to the teachings of Jesus Christ. In the gospels we encounter a Jesus whose liberating teachings and saving miracles ran contrary to mainline public sentiment and beyond the comprehension of human sensibilities; a Jesus whose revolutionary Gospel of peace, forgiveness, mercy and love so angered and threatened the established powers-that-be, that only irrationality, manipulation, treachery, and ultimately the murder of God's only begotten Son could be their response; A Jesus, nevertheless, whose triumphant Resurrection victory over the humiliation and perceived finality of the Cross silenced the establishment and gave affirmation to every iota of His saving good news, His Gospel.

To site specific examples of what Jesus did and said vis-a-vis war and peace, we need only reference the following scriptural verses:

The Jesus Christ of the gospels taught that to distinguish oneself as His disciple meant to "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you (Matthew 5:44)." This teaching He affirms with the very last breaths of His life, when, from the Cross, He looked up into heaven and prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34)." In

praying this remarkable prayer Jesus further suggests that we, who are the crown of God's Creation, human beings endowed with rationality, as opposed to the instinctive response of animals, should embrace this prayer, make it our own, and in the words of the Apostle James, be "quick to think and slow to speak (James 1:19)." And here we might add, slow to act!

The Jesus Christ of the gospels admonished the Apostle Peter, at that most critical moment of Judas' betrayal, to "put your sword back in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword (Matthew 26:52)." In making this admonition, Jesus further affirms, that for His disciples, a people in *but not of the world*, violence is not to be met with violence.

In fact, Jesus Christ's only direct reference to war was that it would be a warning sign of the end times (Matthew 24:6). In the present threat, unbelievably, there are those who profess to be Christians and preposterously encourage the escalation of war so that the end times might be accelerated and ushered in with greater expedience. These believe themselves to be so incredibly justified and saved as to be assured a place in the Kingdom. I ask you, is such warped thinking consistent with the teachings of the Prince of Peace?

With these few scriptural references, we get a clear picture of *What Jesus Would Do* and what He would have us do. Certainly, as citizens of this great nation we are called to pray for our leaders and to serve our country. At the same time, we give thanks to God that we live in a country where we are free to believe and to express our beliefs. To those professing to be Christians, I would pose the challenge to find in the gospels even a single verse which advocates the taking of sacred human life. As Christians we are philosophically opposed to war.

At this profound moment in history we find ourselves in a time of crisis. Ultimately, in this moment of crisis, each of us will define who we are in relationship to our God. Equally, by our response, we will reveal whose Gospel it is that we really embrace, Christ's or our own.

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