

# **THE JOURNEY OF MY LIFE**

**by**

**Lambros J. Stamatiades**

**(1897-1993)**

**Translated by Peter Demopoulos**



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## THE JOURNEY OF MY LIFE

By Lambros Stamatiades

I received from John Stamatiades, a long-time Los Angeles resident, a Greek manuscript written by his father Lambros Stamatiades. I found the writings of a simple man quite fascinating, and the poetry he wrote and exchanged with his fellow Karpathians very interesting. I think that the 15-syllable Greek verses are in the style of the Homeric poems. This is probably because Karpathos, being one of the most isolated Greek islands, has maintained the poetic traditions going all the way back to Homer. The main themes in these poems are the beauty of Karpathos and the nostalgia of Karpathians when being away from their island.

I have never been to Karpathos but, reading these poems and prose by Lambros Stamatiades, I feel that I got to know it, and also feel that I got to know some of the characters in Lambros's life. In the translation I tried to capture the meaning, but I could not possibly maintain the beauty of the original language. The rhyme and the beautiful local idiom exist only in the original Greek.

Despite his lack of education, which he always deplored, Lambros was not intimidated to ponder the big societal problems and express his own opinions. He was an organizer and a motivator in tackling communal projects. In his spare time he corresponded with various people, many times in verse. He thought about our existential questions and in vain he urged his fellow Karpathians to keep cultivating the farmland so that people there can be self-sufficient in bad times, which occasionally come along. Now, with the severe economic crisis in Greece, his words seem very prophetic. He also contemplated the question of our existence in the Universe. In his long poem "*Thoughts about the Universe and Society*" he starts out by wondering:

*Όσα κουκιά στην αμμουδιά τόσες οι ερωτήσεις  
που κάνει η ανθρωπότητα και θέλουν απαντήσεις.  
Τι είναι αυτό το αχανές μ' αμέτρητους πλανήτες  
που ψάχνουμε να μάθουμε χωρίς πολλές ελπίδες;*

....

*As many as the granules of sand on the seashore  
that many are the questions humanity seeks to answer.  
What is this vastness filled with an infinite number of planets  
which we so hopelessly search to learn more about?*

I think it is worth preserving the beauty and wisdom of Lambros Stamatiades's work for future generations. In this web-publication we include a volume in the original Greek and another volume of an English translation. We hope you enjoy reading the wise and beautiful writings of Lambros Stamatiades.

-Peter N. Demopoulos

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## FOREWORD

by Yannis Heiras

With great emotion, indeed great pleasure and humility I accepted the noble request of my highly respected uncle to provide the foreword to this volume.

From my student days in Aperi, Karpathos, I was impressed by his clarity of thought when I read his wise verses and his incisive articles. This impression was reinforced when on April of 1955 I had the good fortune to meet him in person in Long Island, New York.

I met a man with a disciplined and analytical mind. With time I realized that his mind is stimulated and complemented by a warm and very kind heart.

I got to know a person who has the rare ability to understand others, and the virtue and courage to search and judge impartially his own weaknesses and faults. He remembers the kindness in others and appreciates them, but also forgives their weaknesses and knows how to express his love to them.

When I received his manuscript in my hands I started to taste the wisdom that flows from his experiences. I was excited to read it. It made me think. It gave me pleasure and made me cheerful. I was truly moved, my eyes swelled with tears when I recalled memories from the past and dreamed of the future. I was proud to talk to my children about my uncle's wisdom.

The reader will discover the deep faith the author has in the "Carpenter of Nazareth;" and his admiration and love for his parents and his teachers; his great love for the place of his birth, where he grew up; his love and compassion for worker and intellectuals alike; his contempt and repulsion for the exploiters of the honorable sweat of our fellow human beings. Furthermore, the reader will realize how much he is devoted to world peace and human rights, will fathom his aversion to war and to every kind of racism, and his contempt for every backward concept of moral and socio-economic injustice by do-gooders.

Finally, the reader will sense the author's contempt for the many sycophants seeking favors from those in positions of power... and especially for those "drones" who succeed in finding their target to get a dowry and then concentrate in wastefully spending it by showing off while living the "Dolce Vita," including those who spend the victim's money showing off by breaking dishes in night clubs, or spending their money in casinos while spending the hard-earned money of their poor father-in-law who acquired it by blood and sweat.

The rest of us, the big majority that sees things in a moral vein, let us keep the advice that is given by the eldest son of Ioannis Stamatiades, son of Stamatis Katros and Vangeloula, daughter of Ioannis Alexakis. Let us toss out from this sinful world the torn, dirty, and black rags and let us put on a brand new, clean, white suit. Let us marginalize the sinful status quo and stop covering up society's problems with the cloth of ignorance and hypocrisy. If we stay much longer in a state of inertia, we will certainly sink along with many others to the bottom of the social cesspool...

Ioannis Heiras, Pharmacist  
Halandri, Athens, December, 1980



Karpathos 1890

## AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

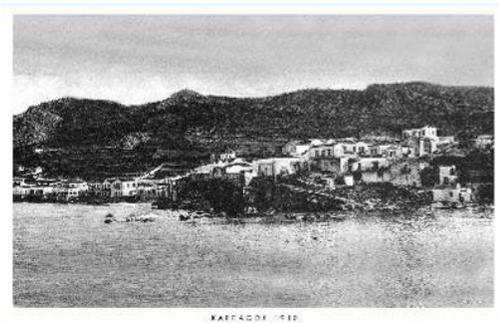
I wrote this booklet as a small keepsake for my close circle of relatives, fellow villagers, and friends from Karpathos in the Dodecanese Islands. I did not write this to achieve any kind of fame or immortality.

Very few of our fellow human beings become immortals in order to have their biography taught in the educational and religious institutions and propagate their trials and tribulations as examples for the betterment of the WHOLE WORLD, a world tortured and tyrannized by fear, worry and uncertainty.

I wrote it as a simple keepsake to memorialize my parents and teachers to whom I caused so much trouble just to get a modicum of education, which now allows me to compose this little booklet.

I beg the forgivingness of the reader if I tire him uselessly.

—Lambros Stamatiades



Karpathos 1910

**THE JOURNEY OF MY LIFE**  
**Lambros Ioannis Stamatiades**

I was told that my life began in Valandou of Aperion, in the small island of Karpathos in the Aegean Sea on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1897.

My parents were Yannis Stamatiades and Vangeloula, daughter of Yannis Alexakis whose immortal lyre-playing is still remembered and danced to by our youth. Both my parents were tireless and devoted children to Mother Earth. They cultivated it all their life. In their patches of land, not so insignificant for the standards of that time in the island, they planted many fruit-bearing trees, especially almond and olive trees.

Having to feed a family of six children, my father was compelled to travel to far-away Khartoum to find work. Mother was left behind to do the child-rearing and tend the farm. As the eldest son, I learned my primary letters in the old school buildings of the village taught by very good teachers to whom I caused considerable troubles because, not only I neglected to do any studying, I was also the most mischievous in my class. My parents, especially my father, were extremely concerned with my lack of learning and tirelessly counseled me on the importance of being a good student so I can eventually go to Athens for higher studies, etc. Once, in his desperation and anger, Father threatened me that he would send me to Anatolia, some place in Turkey, as an apprentice assisting a very moody carpenter from our village and that I would be carrying his huge trunk full of tools. I would be working every day of the week doing the laundry, cook, clean dishes, and all kinds of household chores. And if I ever looked cross-eyed at my master, he would throw his hammer at my head... and then blood would cover me from head to toe.

I just ignored these threats, as my eyes were stuck looking at the horizon, watching the smoke of passing ships coming hither and yonder from distant lands and feeding my desire to travel to distant and exotic places while discarding any thoughts of going to Anatolia.

With lots of difficulty I finally graduated from seventh grade with a barely passing grade. Proof of my lack of learning is the quality of this manuscript.

All the encouragement to get good grades and go on to study in Athens went in vain. Finally, after much nagging, I got my way to travel for the first time to Khartoum in the Sudan, chaperoned by Vangelis Zervoudakis. In Khartoum, my father was employed, along with many others from Karpathos, in building the large Anglican church that was under construction for over six years. To me, this large building with small windows in all the walls looked more like a fort than a house of God.

There I met many fellow villagers and other Karpathians and also some friends and students I already knew. My joy was understandable. I was assigned to be the assistant to the plumber working in a factory owned by Mr. Konidaris who was building a palace for King George of England...

I worked there for six months. The construction of the church was completed and my father decided to return to Karpathos. I contemplated again and again that he would not dare to leave behind his eldest son, fifteen at the time, in the middle of black Africa in the summer time where the sun is so hot that it bakes the bread and burns off the skin. I got a strong feeling that I was not suited for this climate. He decided to take me along on his return trip home to Karpathos.

To avoid being robbed during the trip, father made a special money belt for me, hoping that any robbers that we might come across would suspect me less, and filled it with gold crowns, which was all his money he had made during his five-year stay in that job in the middle of the Sahara Desert. I wore this under my clothing, next to my skin. We traveled through the desert by train and it felt like we were in an oven. Eventually, I had to go to the toilet. The train was speeding at over forty miles per hour across the vast desert. In the privacy of the toilet, my childish curiosity took hold of me and I decided to inspect the gold coins in my sweaty belt. As I was taking the belt off, the weight of the coins and my panic caused me to spill practically all the coins on the concrete toilet floor, which had a large hole in the middle of the floor, through which I could see the railroad ties speeding by underneath. My heart was pumping and I was about to faint as the thought ran through my mind that my father's five-year labor was about to literally go "down the toilet" as coins rolled about and I tried to prevent them with

my feet and hands from falling into the hole and down into the Sahara sands while the train was speeding through the desert.

Miraculously, I was able to gather up all the coins, put them back in the belt and wear it tightly around my waist. I tightened my shirt and pants and went out to my father who was nervously anxious because of my long absence. He noticed my being upset and my pale color and asked me if anything happened. I gave him the excuse that I was overcome with motion sickness from the moving train. Nobody learned of this drama in the toilet that tortured my childish guts.

We arrived at our island and right away my father took up his plow and started doing his agricultural chores in our farms, which, for the village standards, were of significant size.

### GOING TO AMERICA

The big problem for my parents continued to be me. To my delight, they decided to send me to America, in the company of Papa-Christo Kavaliero. Traveling on the ocean liner *MARTHA WASHINGTON*, we met the Italian Fleet sailing eastward to take over the Dodecanese in the spring of 1912. After a 20-day tortuous trip, we arrived in New York and from there we continued on to Prince Port Valley in Ohio to join my cousins Alexis and Nikolis Alexiades, sons of Anastasios. Working there in the mines were most of my fellow villagers and other Karpathians. My first job was being a doorman, making \$3.25 per day, ten hours each day, six days a week.

At that time, profit was king, and certainly more important than the health and lives of the laborers. Health and security measures were almost non-existent. As a result, many of our people lost their health, and in some cases, their life as well.

My mother did not neglect to remind me in each of her letters, actually she begged me crying, to leave the mines before I seriously injure myself or maybe even be killed. I cannot forget when I saw about five thousand miners sitting in the lush, green Ohio Valley and a speaker talking to them for two hours. Unfortunately, I did not understand a single word. Some who understood a little bit of English told us that he was saying: “Miners, unite!

You have nothing to lose but the inhumane working conditions, the dangerous work and the ridiculously low wages.” This courageous leader was the now dead John Lewis who became president of the United Mine Workers America union from 1920 to 1960.

My mother’s advice came to my mind. I felt sorry for making her worry so much about me and decided to leave and go get a job at the iron works in Pennsylvania, where in the summer time the workers are baked from the heat and wilt before they blossom. There too attempts were made to organize the laborers under the leadership of Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor and Eugene Debs of the Socialist Party. They declared the first serious strike in the country with the participation of more than two million workers in the steel industry.

As my English improved, my thirst for learning about the injustices perpetrated by the exploiters of society made me a conscious fighter for the economic freedom of humanity and laborer protection from fear and worry. It felt like having the sword of Damocles hanging over our necks.

As expected, I actively participated for the first time in this strike, together with many fellow villagers and Greeks. On one side we had to contend with the strike breakers within our ranks, including many Greeks who were saying, “We didn’t come here to waste our time to fix America, but we came to grab some money and quickly go back...” On the other hand, we had to contend with the armed violence of the Federal and State police and the armed guards of the companies. Of course the press was against us, as were the clergy, who advised the strikers to return to work, in other words, they urged us to continue serving the status quo of exploitation...

The lengthy strike wiped out the savings of the poor strikers. The armed company guards, and the establishment, supporting exploitation and profit, arrested many of the labor leaders and many of the strikers and sent them back to their country of origin. Some were sent to jail, including me. Having served jail time for this purpose, always made me feel exceedingly proud throughout my life.

The news of my imprisonment did not take long to reach the ears of my parents. All of their letters were full of advice and entreaties to return home. After nine years of hard labor away from home, I could not resist my mother's tears which she shed on every letter she sent me. Finally, I succumbed to motherly love... and in the summer of 1921, I stepped off the boat and onto the tear-soaked quayside planks of the harbor and came back to the usual feasts of weddings, parties, and joyful events of my birthplace, which are the fertilizer that enriches the love for life.

### MY LIFE-LONG COMPANION

It wasn't more than a couple of months after I arrived that my parents and other close relatives began to talk to me about my getting settled. They were saying, "Don't think that you can go back to America a single man..." One more time I bowed to the well-meaning psychological pressure of my relatives.

For my life-long companion I decided to get Marigo, the only daughter of Yanni and Kyrania Skouli, the daughter of Papa-Yorghis Yeratsouli. She was an orphan who at the age of seven lost her mother. Her father was also far away, a coal miner in Pennsylvania. She was raised by her grandparents, the well-liked Papa-Yorghis and his presbytera Maria.

As a newlywed, and constantly participating in the various parties and festivals of the area, I missed the news about the anti-immigrant legislation passed by the U.S. Congress, and the quota system that went into effect limiting immigration and requiring that all immigrants return within six months of their departure or lose the right of return. Having been stranded in my village, I spent five years helping my father farming our land and tending the fruit gardens.

As the laws of nature dictate...our first child was born, a little boy, a beautiful flower, a real angel. Our house was filled with relatives, neighbors and friends who came to congratulate us and offer their wishes. After twelve days, we lost the baby who contracted the Spanish flu virus that choked him to death. It was our first big trouble in our life's journey. It was a sad sight

to see our old grandfather Papa-Yorghis holding our firstborn in his arms at the village cemetery. It was our first tragic event that tore out our hearts.

The passing of time, and the various distractions in life, heal the wounds of pain. The three little girls born after that helped us recover from the loss of our first-born son and pointed us to view the future with courage and hope.

### THE TRAGEDY OF NIKOLIS NIOTIS

I would be remiss if I did not bring up the serious tragedy that occurred during the fascist occupation of our birthplace. Deveci, the right hand of the dictator Mussolini in the Dodecanese Islands, started the Italianization of the islands. He started with the educational system by imposing the compulsory study of the Italian language in the schools, which were actually financed by the communities themselves. Then he decreed that school children wear the black shirts of fascism. Our parents and the youth, with the exception of a few fifth columnists and Italian fascist collaborators, reacted courageously and stubbornly resisted the fascist plans of Roman conquest. The authorities painted numbers on all houses and took a count of all inhabitants so they can impose taxes and a military draft of young men on behalf of the fascist dictatorship.

They started from the village of Menetes. Police and soldiers of the occupation forces, with brushes and black paint painted a house number on each house. The women of Menetes, true heroines, took white lime, mixed with blue paint, and brushes and, when the church bells rang, simultaneously all started to paint the fronts of their houses, including the black numbers that had been painted by the fascists.

After this failure, the “black shirts” turned to the village of Aperi. Our secret network informed all the villages of what was happening. It was late afternoon when I met the late Hatzi Lyvadioti, a courageous man from Menetes, coming from Pylles, mounted on a black mule. We talked about the Italian plans and we agreed that, when the Italians come to Aperi, we will light fires as a signal to the other villages so people from there can run to us for support.

Our secret network informed us that the Italians were coming the following morning. Indeed, at midnight, armed guards accompanied by three mules loaded with machine guns and ammunition stopped at Kolymbithra waiting for daybreak to enter Aperi. None of us slept. It was a general alert in Volanda, Othos, and Pylles. At daylight, people started to congregate on the large plaza in front of the Cathedral. One team of young men, sixteen to twenty year-olds, took off on the road for the hill of Ypapandi, right above the spot where the Italians were bivouacked in Kolymbithra. Of course, we were not there to welcome them but to light the tumbleweeds as a signal to the people of Menetes. The hill was engulfed in fire and smoke, which alarmed the Menetians. However, it appears that they had not been informed as yet by Lyvadiotis who spent the night at his farmhouse and did not go to the village.

Satisfied with our handiwork we started on our way back towards the village. At Agios Efstathios, I pulled out my American hand gun, a Smith 42, and fired five bullets in the direction of Kolymbithra. Later we found out that the gunfire caused the Italians to wait until sunrise before proceeding to enter the village. We reached the crowd at the Cathedral, which was so packed that not even a needle could drop on the floor. My Marigo, with tears in her eyes, held on to me tightly and was in a very agitated state when she saw me because earlier she had warned me to leave the pistol at home. When she heard the shots, she knew it was me shooting and she got exceedingly scared that I was in a lot of trouble.

All the side roads to village homes were jammed with people. The sun rose at the Fort, and fell on Agios Antonios. The Italians appeared marching on to the Public Stable, reached Triois and the house of Chara (“Joy”). When the deep voice of the officer in charge was heard saying, “fix bayonets,” the crowd started jeering and booing. The Italians marched slowly towards the bridge near the fountain and ascended the steps to the coffee shops of Matsakis and Tsangaris, and from there went towards the Cathedral. Six soldiers enter each coffee house. At the coffee house of Nikolis Kafetzidakis, their leader, Marisselo, accompanied by his men, looked

around, went out in the balcony, looked on the street below, and then a shot was heard.

The well-liked Nikolis Niotis, husband of my cousin Evangeloula, was standing at the door of his little store, with his right hand in his pocket trying to find his keys to open the store door and his left hand on his chest where he was hit by the bullet fired by Marisselo. At that moment, I was standing at the front gate of the courtyard of the Tsangaris store, and without thinking of the danger, I ran to help. With his left hand around my neck and his right around my waist, I lifted him with difficulty and took him up the stairs, to the front of his house, and laid him on a bench that was there. In a few minutes, Dr. Elias Hatzimihalis came and immediately diagnosed that there was internal bleeding from a bullet hole through the lungs. With his wife Vangeloula, we were holding his hands and spoke to him words of encouragement as he was gasping the last breaths of his life. Of course he lost his life due to those wild dogs...

I asked for an American flag and hung it at half mast on the balcony. The previously silent crowd broke out in wild, angry screams. "The Menetians... the Menetians are coming. Hurrah, hurrah!"

The courtyard of Niotis's house was filled with people, angry and ready to cause a lot of trouble. At that moment, the officer in charge announced that the troops will depart immediately for Pigadia, and, as they started off, he suggested that people behave and refrain from causing any trouble.

The funeral took place the following day and was attended by all the people from our village as well as people from the surrounding villages. Especially moving was the scene when about thirty Menetians, mounted on mules and holding black mourning flags entered Aperi as kind of an honor guard for Nikolaos Niotis, the first victim of fascism. The late Andreas Hiotakis gave the funeral oration and had everyone in tears when he cried out: "The tree of freedom grows strong when irrigated with the blood of the oppressed of the earth..."

Three days later, by chance, a ship arrived in Pigadia and aboard the ship was the representative of the American government accompanying the remains of Emmanuel Niotis, the son of Nikolaos, who had fallen at the

French Front during World War I. Again the people from the surrounding villages came to Pigadia to pay their respects. It was an opportunity used to protest the fascist pressures.

The American representative, before his speech, asked for the father of Emmanuel Niotis. There was dead silence in the crowd. When he called out... "Nikolaos Niotis," his widow and mother of the fallen soldier, Vangeloula, dressed in black, broke out and cried out, "Marisselo, he is the one who killed him," and she pointed at the officer who was standing next to the official accompanying the remains of the fallen soldier. Marisselo, not expecting this, was standing there, wearing dark glasses to hide his guilt. He swallowed a few times and then mumbled, "There are courts. You can file charges." The remains of the soldier were laid to rest in the new mausoleum, next to the Cathedral of Aperi, and Marisselo hurried off. He was immediately transferred to Kalymnos and from there to Italy to save his skin...

### RETURN TO AMERICA

My nine-year youthful sojourn in the land of Columbus was always in my mind because my farm life in Karpathos did not fulfill my dreams. With many difficulties I was able to secure an Italian quota rating to get back to America and in the fall of 1925, I returned here and went straight to the steel mills. I worked continuously tending the burning ovens of the steel mill. In 1928, the Labor Federation of America started a campaign to re-organize the factory workers. Again I found myself in the front lines, doing my duty in the struggle to bring justice to the workers. The management of the factory where I worked, with about three thousand other workers, predicted the coming strike and shut down the factory with the pretense to make renovations. Not having any other choice, I went back to the coal mines.

After three months working in the mines, we found out the steel factory started up again with the help of strike breakers and other traitors. The fighting members of the labor organization were black-listed and were not allowed to return to the factory. The coal mines were not my favorite place of work, and after about three and a half years away from home, I felt very

homesick. I missed my family and my island. My village celebrations were deeply rooted in my heart. Thus, after three years of hard labor away from home, I returned to my family and got back to the island routine.

Kathara Deftera, the first Monday of the Great Lent, is one of the major holidays celebrated in our land. I thought up and decided to take part in this and sing out the “Fermani” according to the local tradition. This includes riding on a donkey and reciting original lyrics, a tradition that goes back to ancient times. I write about this celebration in a separate chapter.

The holidays passed and on April 1929, I started back on my return trip to America. It was an unforgettable day. A big storm was shaking the ship violently on its mooring. My unforgettable aunt Maroukla Pothitou Zanaki with our little girls, Annika and Fotini, broke my heart as they were shaking their kerchiefs with their little hands, sending me their kisses, and saying their good-byes with their children’s voices. It broke my heart hearing them say, “Oh, Daddy, please come back soon...” As the ship left the harbor and was putting distance between me and the children, the separation from them and my wife who had just given birth to our third daughter, Evagelitsa, my parents, brothers and sisters, our beautiful island, my eyes became fountains as tears were streaming down like the village spring at Pano Aspa...

As I was standing at the bridge of the ship, my eyes and my mind were stuck back at the island which was fading in the horizon and was about to disappear.

I arrived in New York at the start of the worst depression that ever occurred in the land of Columbus, with seven million unemployed and no jobs of any kind to be found anywhere. The soup lines for meager meals were endless. Many churches and the subway stations had become emergency hotels to spend the night. Millions of the unemployed were protesting in the streets of cities and towns throughout America. Most factories and mines were closed except for some that only worked as few as three days a week. The economic hurricane forced me to stay in New York City where I was fortunate to find a job as a waiter in the first class *Hotel Brooklyn*. I was happy not to be in the ranks of millions of the unemployed, even though my wages were very low. I was very happy to have a job. I was

two years in this job, with my friend and cousin, the late Polychronis Vasilakis, as my roommate.

The mailman brought me a letter from Marigo and I read the paragraph:

*“Today we had a big earthquake. All mothers were running like mad to the tottering schoolhouse to see if we our children were alive. Thankfully, none was killed. Our village has well-built homes, but very bad school buildings...”*

As I read it to my friend, both of us were disturbed about the bitter truth of this paragraph. That day was a holiday in New York and we had the day off. We asked ourselves if there was something we could do about our village schools? Maybe a fundraising among our Aperi compatriots was a good beginning. We took the road for the store owned by the late Manoli and Niko Papageorgiou. On the way we met a priest from Mesochora, and Polychronis Vasilakis turned to me and said, “It’s a bad omen, cousin. Yeah, it’s a bad omen. Maybe we should go home and start anew.” But we went forward. We explained the reasons for coming there, and all of us together took the subway for 40<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan where the late Polychronis Papadakis had a tailor shop.

There we met our fellow villagers: Kostis Frangos, Manolis Georgiadis, Dimitros Em. Panagiotou, and others whose names I can’t remember. We appointed a fundraising committee, and everyone there made a contribution. We invited all Aperians living in the interior cities of the U.S.A. (Wheeling, Pittsburg, Chicago, etc.) to participate. Everyone was generous and we collected thousands of dollars so that a new high school building, on the existing walls up to about three feet above the ground, was built but not completely finished.

The fundraising was difficult to be repeated because of the Great Depression that was sweeping America. In an emergency meeting in the home of Elias Vasilakis, after a long and vigorous discussion, it was decided that, instead of a fundraiser, it would be better to establish the organization **OMONIA OF KARPATHIAN APERIANS**.

The bitter experience of the past had proven that charitable organizations fail because many seek to be haughty officers, with titles in name only, and

very few do the hard work that goes with the title. As a result, I proposed an Executive Committee consisting of a secretary, an assistant secretary, a treasurer and four advisers, and for each meeting elect officers from the members who are present and in good standing to implement the decisions of the meeting. My proposal was seconded, there was a vigorous discussion and the majority voted for the idea of an Executive Committee. However, a minority of members objected and walked off saying that this is a “Bolshevik organization.” Thunderstruck, those of us who remained looked at each other in shock. I can never forget the question that I asked at that moment. “If the rest of us do the same thing and leave, then we will always fail.” I withdrew my proposal and we unanimously elected a Board of Directors for OMONIA with its first president the late Niko P. Nisyrios. When he resigned after six months, Emmanuel Georgiadis took his place. After we filed for and got our state charter, we voted and printed the By-Laws which were sent to all the Karpathian groups, including those in the interior of America. We eventually had several chapters and just about all Aperiens in the U.S. joined the organization. With membership dues, social gatherings, and albums, we were able to raise enough funds to finish, not only the High School building, but we were able to fund the building for a new Elementary school, a Sports Field, and many other public works. As a result, the OMONIA organization was honored for its good works by King Paul of Greece.

In 1934, my wife, who had recently arrived in the U.S.A., in cooperation with Maritsa Papageorgiou and Marigo Papageorgiou, organized the Ladies Auxiliary of OMONIA, not only in New York City, but in many other states of the U.S.A. The ladies were very enthusiastic and their organization was even more successfully than the men’s. Especially in singing the *Kalanda* every Christmas and New Year, they collected around a thousand dollars, at no cost and with pleasant results for the town of Aperi, which got a renovated cemetery in Katapergia, a sculptured bust in the Chryson Building to recognize the founder and big benefactor, Dimitrios Ioannis Chrysos. The unveiling of this memorial is described in another chapter of this booklet.

I have no intention to try to write the detail history of OMONIA here. I’ll wait for a capable Karpathian writer with the necessary knowledge and skills

to do this. Here, I simply tried to quickly mention the reasons for which OMONIA and its Women's Auxiliary were founded. I want to emphasize here that its purpose was not to compete with KEPA, as some rumors falsely claimed. If I did not succeed in convincing you, I beg my readers to forgive me and say only that nobody is faultless. I hope your criticism is not very harsh on me.

I worked for about 35 years in New York as a waiter for the Club of the Republican Party in the first class *Hotel Biltmore* and *Waldorf Astoria* (from 1942 to 1962). This job provided the pleasant opportunity for me to socialize with the most prominent people in the sciences, politics, religion, the military, and commerce, not only from America but from all over the World, and to whom I did not hesitate to express my liberal values regarding society, which I also express here in my booklet, however poorly. The long working hours, under the most unpleasant working conditions, and the low wages paid to workers in hotels and restaurants, forced the workers to organize and join unions. I feel pleased, and have no regrets, to belong to the vanguard in the effort to successfully organize the workers in our field. From among thirty thousand members in our union, my membership card is No. 711. I worked for the union without any monetary compensation, not only as a union representative in the union meetings but also as a member of the Union Executive Committee of Local No. 6. In recognition of my work and as one of those who gave more than their fair share, my name has been recorded among the first one-thousand union leaders on the bronze plate at the entrance of the Union Building on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 44<sup>th</sup> Street, which cost then more than two million dollars to build. This building houses the offices of the union which has more than twenty thousand members. I am also a member of the American Labor Federation and the Manufacturing Workers Committee.

To these organizations we owe our relative security in our jobs, the better working conditions, the eight-hour day, the five-days a week, the reasonably better wages with double time on holidays, three weeks vacation a year, a pension, healthcare insurance, and paid funeral expenses.

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## “FERMANI” OF KATHARA DEFTERA OF 1929

### Introduction

On *Kathara Deftera* of 1929 I was in my village, Aperi, in the beautiful island of Karpathos of the Dodecanese Islands. A few days before, I recalled the child-like delight I had in welcoming the Great Lent on *Kathara Deftera*. I remembered the many different ways we masqueraded before the start of Lent. I decided that it was not proper to let the holidays pass without doing something beyond the stereotypical masquerades and try to do something unusual with a social and economic message. I started collecting the necessary tools to do something unusual. I filled a basket with rotten eggs, I collected some old bells, some bread boxes, some old baskets and rags, and filled a big basket of sizable, stinging nettles.

On the morning of *Kathara Deftera*, I loaded everything on the black donkey belonging to my grandfather, Papa-Yorgi Geratsouli. I did everything secretly so not even my grandpa got wind of it. I started from our house in Petrakla of the Inner Aimoros. I passed through Symvoulia, the Ombros River, and the Old Cemetery. When I arrived at the river, I crossed it and continued on to Saint Haralambos. I started announcing in a loud voice that I was selling merchandise. Responding to my calls, a bunch of women at Amaskia came out and surrounded me like bees. After a while, when they saw what I was trying to sell, they realized it was joke but they did not recognize who I was. Wearing a woman's clothing and having my head covered with a head-dress, my voice disguised to sound feminine and with an accent from one of the other villages, I went on. At Toui I came across a lot of people who came out to witness the unusual show. People from Aperi and the other neighboring villages were lined up along the street and on the rooftops. When I came to the bridge at the fountain, climbing up the stairs, I heard my grandmother's voice, the priest's wife, saying to my grandfather, the priest: "Don't you think this donkey looks like ours?" There was so much commotion I never heard my grandfather's reply. Riding the donkey, that by now was scared and perplexed, and accompanied by young and old, locals and strangers

looking on, women and men, I arrived at the plaza, in front of the Tsangaris coffeehouse. There I asked that everyone be quiet so I can make an announcement. I started reciting my poem...

1. *The boys are no longer young, let me tell you something, repatriate to Karpathos and they will all return.*
2. *Show them the way and they'll come back, one after the other Your children and grandchildren that had left for distant lands.*
3. *Friend, I don't know you that well to address you directly, to wish you many good years ahead, happy and healthy ones.*
4. *I want you to know that my best friend is Polychronis, when I first met him it was five or six years ago.*
5. *And he talked to me about our youth, and he talked about you, we miss you very much so please come back here too.*
6. *I showed him the verses sent by my son reading them, his heart hurt, as did mine.*
7. *I started out one way but I ended up differently and from afar I want to squeeze your hand.*
8. *Bests wishes for your happiness and joy in seventy-one, and wish that all Karpathians live in harmony.*

Reply by Lambros Stamatiades

1. *When old age comes it's no fun being alone it's better to be near children and grandchildren.*
2. *Deserts and foreign lands devoured our flesh what can Karpathos do when only bones are left.*
3. *Bones have no value, can't even fertilize the soil to grow green grass and flowers to decorate the earth.*
4. *I shed bitter tears, drops raining down my cheeks every time I think of Karpathos, whenever it comes my mind.*
5. *I am sorry I cannot do more for Karpathos I am far away and tied down with steel bonds.*

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## **WHAT KARPATOS MEANS FOR ME**

### **Introduction**

With spring in full bloom, in the later years of my life, sitting in the yard of our house in Jackson Heights of Long Island, New York, I was watching the sparrows and other birds singing in the bushes and the leaves on the branches of sycamore tree along our street fluttering in the wind. The children were playing innocently across the street in the big yard of the neighborhood Elementary School. In this lively and beautiful environment, as I sat sipping my highballs, I was inspired to fly mentally over the Atlantic and over the place of my birth, to beautiful Karpathos. I flew mentally over the villages, its majestic countryside where I played as a young boy, and then my mind returned to the realities of living away from there. A deep emotion came over me and tears started flowing down my cheeks. My poor verses below, dedicated to my beloved Karpathos, are a product of this emotional moment and were first published in the “KARPATIAN ECHOE”.

### ***WHAT KARPATOS MEANS FOR ME***

- 1. Fellow Karpathians, who live in foreign lands,  
listen to some songs about our beloved Karpathos.*
- 2. I want to tell you a few words, spoken from my heart,  
to explain what Karpathos means to me.*
- 3. 'Tis the place where I was born, and first saw the light;  
this is what Karpathos means for you and me.*
- 4. The home I was raised in, my venerable parents,  
siblings, friends, fellow villagers, and all my relatives.*
- 5. 'Tis the teachers, the schools, the boys, the girls,  
who try to make a more beautiful world.*
- 6. The stone-built homes, laid out in rows,  
and resemble one another like white doves.*
- 7. 'Tis the village young who till the vineyards,  
in their blossoming youth, with fun and gusto.*
- 8. The homemakers of our village, with rosy-red cheeks,  
the village tradesmen, the tillers of fields.*
- 9. 'Tis the shepherds in the hills, the lambs and goats,  
the milk and butter, and Easter's yogurt.*

10. *Harvesters with their sickles, the threshers that thresh,  
and the easterly winds that blow to separate chaff from wheat.*
11. *The blue sea, with its many colors and abundance of fish  
and the rabbits and the partridges chirping in the wooded hills.*
12. *The beekeeper, the bees, the sweet honey,  
drop by drop accumulates, scented by nature.*
13. *And the young girls who gather the ripened grapes,  
whence comes the sweet wine, rosy like their lips.*
14. *The girls picking olives to fill the baskets,  
and from the olive-press, extract our famous oil.*
15. *The hills, the tall mountains, pine forested,  
decorated beautifully with thyme and wild flowers.*
16. *The golden-green myrtle and its branches, the forsythia  
the tumbleweed, and the sweet-smelling wild grasses.*
17. *Our crystalline water, flowing from the spring,  
and the young maiden filling up her pitcher.*
18. *The beautiful countryside, with its cool waters  
and our villagers celebrating by the country churches.*
19. *All the festivals and dances at feast days,  
where people drink pure wine from brim-filled glasses.*
20. *'Tis the lyres and bagpipes and the vine stumps  
which make rich and poor forget their afflictions.*
21. *The lush greenery at Papa Elias' café  
and the Mayor sitting in his City Hall office.*
22. *Where the villagers sit to discuss, in their own way,  
anything about their communal affairs or politics.*
23. *The sky and the sea, and the crystal-clear horizon,  
and the beauty of the dawn as it sweetly lights up the sky.*
24. *The beautiful seashore, the graphic rocks,  
the bluffs and your fish, which no other island has.*
25. *'Tis the sailboats in the shallows, with their white sails,  
the waves breaking on the shore with the bleached seashells.*
26. *The mid-day sun racing towards the West,  
and the moon following behind to light up the night.*
27. *And the unforgettable quayside planks soaked with tears,  
where all the expatriates long to step some day.*
28. *The island's cemetery, at the village edge,  
where our ancestors rest and are eternally remembered.*

29. *The place where I was born, which I have described,  
I would feel very happy buried under when I die.*
30. *Whoever is buried in his birthplace, the soil is light,  
the body will know, even though the mouth is shut.*
31. *If there is a paradise after death,  
I wish my death would come while I'm in Aperi.*
32. *Forgive me, Karpathos, for being one of the uprooted,  
and now I'm bound with wires, far away from you.*
33. *This is what Karpathos means for me;  
this is what it should mean to everyone.*
34. *I ask forgiveness from the poets and the well educated,  
because my stanzas are weak, like the expatriates.*

*Dedicated to my parents John and Vangeloula Stamatiades-Katros.*

--ΛΑΜΠΙΡΟΣ ΣΤΑΜΑΤΙΑΔΗΣ

Note: In the original Greek, this is a beautiful poem in the Karpathian idiom, with the two lines of each verse rhyming. However, it's not possible to do this in translation where an attempt is made to give the essence of the meaning.

### **Commentary on the above verses**

Newspaper "KARPATHIAN ECHOES", July 1968

*"...These published verses are a strong proof of the huge love of those living away from their birthplace, Karpathos. This love, is so strongly rooted, that it shakes up every sensitive soul, and it is evident in the little verses of this amateur poet that he is overcome by his overwhelming devotion, homesickness and nostalgia and needs to pour out his feelings and passion and to express these feelings about the land of our ancestors. We don't think there will be a single reader who will not shed some tears after reading these. We wish from the bottom of our heart that all our fellow Karpathians will get the opportunity to step again soon over the tear-soaked quayside planks where they first boarded the ship and now, when they'll return, to enjoy their stay in the village of their dreams, where they first saw daylight..."*

Evri Varika-Moskovi, Athens 2-26-1971

*“... I send you my warmest regards for you generosity to send me the beautiful verses inspired by the love of our idyllic Karpathos. In these verses one can see clearly the nostalgia for our birthplace of Karpathos. It is evident that you love it and miss it and constantly think about it, as do all of those of us who live far from there. Your verses touched my heart and brought tears to my eyes because they are so genuine, and whatever is genuine is always beautiful and raises the emotions of human beings. I congratulate you and thank you for giving me the pleasure to read them and enjoy them so much. I would like your permission to include these in my new book, “Tales of my Country, Karpathos.” Greetings to your family and to all Karpathians....”*

Logothesis G. Hiotakis, Rhodes, April 1971

*“....Wow, these verses tear at the heart! How a Karpathian, especially one from Aperi, can hold his tears back? I am one of those who has toiled and shed a lot of sweat over the holy soil of our island. Besides that, the memories of our ancestors, our traditions and life’s activities, which you so beautifully describe, bring back tremendous nostalgia and increase our feelings for homesickness. It is the best gift you could give....”*

Prof. Michael Pol. Hiotis, Ohio , March 1972

*“With much emotion, joy and pride I received you exceptionally beautiful poem and find it a catalyst for nostalgia and full of your love for our Karpathos, which proves that the Karpathian hurts and constantly dreams of his childhood in our beloved and sweet Karpathos. It is proof also that childhood memories are burned in our soul forever. Also, I have to say that from our many years of interaction, you are always present in the communal affairs and, of course, simple and direct in your thoughts but rich in your genuine expression and love for others....”*

Nicholas Hadjioannou, Athens, March 19872

*“...I received your letter and the lovely poem about our sweet Karpathos. The verses brought tears to my eyes. I have not found a Karpathian yet who is not inspired or homesick for his*

*birthplace and the experiences of their youth in Karpathos. Otherwise, our island would have been deserted long ago....”*

Ioannis Fokas Economidis, Attorney, Posidion, Karpathos, March 1971

*“...Nostalgia for the birthplace, beauty, bitterness and love, these four I placed on a scale and found that the heaviest one is nostalgia. A stranger in a foreign land must wear black so his outside appearance matches the feelings of his heart and devotion.*

*I received your verses “What is Karpathos for Me,” and thank you for remembering me. They express a lot with their beauty, and move the heart. You are to be congratulated for still having a tremendous memory of the details in our traditions of the old days when life was simple, there was a primitive beauty and the aroma of virginity in the land... Sadly, I must inform you that now there are no young people to till the land and to cultivate the vineyards. There remains only one full-time farmer in Aperion, a mere sample of the old, and unfortunately the future looks bleak.*

*However, you provide a masterful depiction of what we once had, so that future generations can get an idea of how things were. You provide very powerful images. Congratulations....”*

Minas Vardoulis, Volada, Karpathos, March

*“...I want to congratulate you for your poetic description of the traditions of our beloved Karpathos and to thank you for sending the poem to me. I discussed it with cousin Fokas and our hope is that one day we will all meet here in our beloved and much sung Karpathos to talk of these things face to face....”*

Elias F. Stambolis, Piraeus

*“...I received your letter and the verses and enjoyed them very much, as did my family, and thank you for always remembering us. Of course, your verses gave us a lot of pleasure. We go back to them and read them again and again. Every Karpathian loves Karpathos, and I am sure every Greek living in a foreign land longs for his birthplace. We are a special breed of people and possess an excessive passion for our country. Our ancestors used*

*to write 'Equal to the love of father and mother is the love for country.' Congratulations and thank you...."*

Ioannis Michailidis, New York, from in Tilos

*"...I read your poem very carefully and admire you and congratulate you for your immense love and nostalgia for your beautiful little island. I feel the same nostalgia and love for my island. I hope you are always well and continue to write more. Unfortunately I do not have the gift of poetry to write a similar poem for my island, Tilos..."*

Evdoxia M. Papadaki, Long Island, N.Y. July, 1967

*"...I received your verses and my joy and emotions are beyond description. Reading these verses I was so moved as was my mother. Both of us congratulate you. From the bottom of our heart we thank you and hope that you are always healthy and that one day to fulfill your dream for your birthplace..."*

George Sisamis, Acron, Ohio, January 1972

*"...I received your song and want to thank you for remembering me, as I also always think of you as a good and sincere friend. I admire your patience and your recall of so many details in your description so that whoever reads these will remember Karpathos and will feel in his heart all these beautiful and genuine feelings. If you had exaggerated, then the poem would lose its meaning and value. You deserve our congratulations for expressing the feelings of all of us born in Karpathos, which is for us the most beautiful place in the world. I do not want to remind you of the uncertainties in our world because I know you for more than 45 years and you follow current events better than me. However, I remember an old verse and will write it to you here.*

*...I want to be blind, deaf in my old age  
so that my eyes cannot see and my ears cannot hear..."*

Georgios Reisis, Piraeus

*"...I do not know you personally, however, from your booklet that my son Nikos sent me with your beautiful song, I conclude that you are endowed with the virtues of a good patriot. Unfortunately, there are not around that many good people of*

*distinction. Therefore, the few who are, really deserve it. Your verses are very good and bring out the emotions, and show that the man who wrote them loves his birthplace and is homesick for his return....”*

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Seated and standing at left-not known. Standing at center: Polychronis Papadakis and Lambros standing at right (ca. 1920)

## **TO OUR DEAR CAFÉ OWNER, FR. ELIAS, THE PRIEST,**

1. *Father Elias, your café that we now see closed,  
saddens us all and causes melancholy,*
2. *Our café is closed, but we still seek it out,  
hoping to say hello to you, our dear priest,*
3. *We pray to Christ to bring you back  
and see you healthy again at Mr. Goodman's Place in Aperi.*
4. *Come back healthy and soon, this is the prayer  
we pray to Christ, with all our heart.*
5. *All your customers, father, are expecting you,  
and look forward to your return.*
6. *Many times we sit outside in the yard,  
but it's cold and makes us uncomfortable,*
7. *All of us expect you, we talk about you and keep looking  
just in case you walk-in, wearing your beret.*
8. *Our eyes turn at every sound,  
just in case it's you walking in the garden.*
9. *In vain we wait, there's no sign of your return,  
we see no smoke coming out of your chimney.*
10. *In vain we catch cold waiting in front of your little house,  
just in case we get a glimpse of you.*
11. *The café is closed, the street is empty,  
but all of us gather to see the mailman arrive.*
12. *All of us miss you and seek you out,  
we need you to serve us your soothing coffee.*
13. *Come to serve your customers, father,  
to give out postage, to stamp our letters.*
14. *All of us wait, young and old,  
locals and passers-by, everyone from Aperi*
15. *Men and women ask, but most of all the widows,  
you are not here and the poor souls chill out.*
16. *They are locked out and wait on the street,  
they wait for you, and for the mailman.*
17. *They wait for you to open the door,  
to buy postage and to warm us up.*
18. *We are at a loss, we lost our sense and direction,  
and also the billiard players cannot wait to see you.*
19. *We go hither and yonder, we try Tsangaris's café,  
but the priest and his café have no equal.*
20. *The mailman keeps asking, when will the priest return,  
people can no longer stand and wait on the street.*
21. *You will make the mailman happy,  
to give you a few letters, to lighten his load.*

22. *Wherever we look, wherever we stand,  
all of us dream of you and want you back.*
23. *Goodman's Place is deserted without you,  
we hope you return healthy from abroad.*
24. *We hope you found a good doctor in Athens  
and your treatments went well.*
25. *But if she is a lady doctor, behave, and if you still are ill,  
don't be shy, ask her to check you out again.*
26. *Don't be embarrassed to tell her, tease her and tell her,  
"Doctor, you flustered me, now you must heal me."*
27. *And if she touches your privates, and your pulse climbs,  
I think your disease immediately will go away.*
28. *All your customers, good priest, wait for you  
with open arms and with very deep emotion.*

With love from your dear friend (author unknown), March 1986,

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CHRISTMAS CAROLS FOR THE APERIANS WHO  
LIVE AWAY FROM KARPATOS

By Lambros Stamatiades

*Good evening fellow villagers, if it is your wish  
To sing of Christ's holy birth, allow me to enter your home.*

*Having the best interests of our village at heart  
Our Association comes here again to sing the carols for you.  
In our mind and in our words, always first and foremost is Aperi  
And we wish the best for it, here, all of us away from home.*

*We always hope that our dreams come true  
Because Aperi is always in our hearts.*

*We always love Karpathos and all the villages there  
and with health and happiness, we hope to soon all of us visit there.*

The "OMONIA's Caroling Committee, Aperi Karpathos"

Zoe N. Makris  
Zoe G. Frangos  
Venetia M. Tsangaris  
Sophia Em. Markris  
Fotini M. Vasilakis  
Venetia Logothesis  
Mary Logothesis

## A WEDDING POEM

Wishes for the marriage of our nephew, Dr. Yannis P. Stamadiades,  
and Fani I. Gergatsouli.

1. *As the eldest uncle, I offer my best wishes  
and set near heart, 'cause my words come from my heart.*
2. *As you are the eldest son of Pothitos, we are so overjoyed  
with the girl you chose, who now became our niece.*
3. *Your parents also must be exceedingly happy  
because they see Yannis the way they always dreamed of.*
4. *Yanni, you have a well-loved name,  
an ancient one, and glorious in Aperi.*
5. *Great and great-great grand children of an old family tree  
with roots so deep, nobody can destroy.*
6. *Now, dear niece Fani, I congratulate you  
for choosing our nephew Yanni for you mate.*
7. *You chose a scientist but you are the cornerstone  
and you will go on happily together for a whole century.*
8. *My dear nephew and niece ,a rose and cypress tree  
always have goodness flow from your home.*
9. *Oh, Marigo, come say a few words too,  
congratulate them in this, their happy day.*
10. *I, your aunt Marigo, also am happy in my heart,  
to see you have chosen a girl from my side of the family.*
11. *Orphanides, Koumbis, Chrysos and Gergatsoulis  
Hatziantonis family and all the rest of us are happy.*
12. *Harmony and joy always have as your guide  
and may happiness be your life's constant companion.*
13. *May your tree survive forever with flowers and branches  
and under its branches may your children play with grandchildren.*

From your uncles, Lambros and Marigo, who live far away.

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## THE HISTORIC SUMMER OF 1960

The summer of 1960 shall remain a historic one for Karpathos, especially for Aperi. That summer, the bust of the late Panagiotis B. Orphanides was unveiled. He was heroically killed when his aircraft was downed while he was fighting the Italians in the Albanian Front in 1940-1941.

Also, it marked the opening of the new Chrysiou Building and the unveiling of the bust of the late Dimitrios I. Chrysos, the great benefactor of Aperi, as well as the awarding of honors to the Women's Auxiliary of OMONIA in recognition of the contributions it made to the community of Aperi.

First, there was a special blessing by the church, a service led by the Metropolitan Apostolos and Protopresbyter Nikolaos Panagiotou. The Metropolitan spoke beautiful words regarding the generosity of the Great Benefactor, D. I. Chrysos, and blessed the memory of his parents. Following that, the General Secretary of the Women's Auxiliary of OMONIA, Mrs. Kalliopi Karakatsani unveiled the bust and gave a worthy speech emphasizing the goodness and the generosity of the late benefactor.

After that, the organizer of the ceremony and long-time President of the Auxiliary, who was now visiting Karpathos after a twenty-five year self-exile in New York, emotionally laden, handed over to the Community of Aperi the above mentioned certificate of honors and gave the following very moving speech:

*“Your Grace, honorable Prefect, honorable Eparch, community leaders, and dear fellow Karpathians. If you asked me what gave me the greatest satisfaction in my life after I returned to Karpathos, I will tell you that I was very moved when the boat tied up at the quay and I stepped on the holy grounds of our island. I was also very moved when I heard the leaders of our community here speaking in our immortal language, and when I saw that the hospital was open and functioning, when I saw the progress made in the roads to the upper villages and to our countryside, when I visited with my husband and my son the orphanage in Vatses, when after twenty-five years I met relatives and friends. Unfortunately, in life's journey, the twin sisters, joy and sadness, hold hands and follow us around. I felt much sadness because many of our beloved are not present here in this great day. May their memory be eternal. I was also moved when I visited the cemetery in Aperi, where many of our beloved and memorable relatives and friends are laid to rest. This public work is also due to the generosity of our ladies who live abroad*

*and belong to OMONIA, an organization which I am very honored to represent and be its president since its founding.*

*Dear beloved fellow villagers, I bring you the warmest greetings of the members and the governing board of OMONIA. Our Karpathian young people who left from here for a better life abroad, ask you now, young and old, to unite and work together, and our efforts will be more and more productive. By uniting and working together in harmony you will give the good example to us who live far from here so we can help you to make a better Aperi. Dear boys and girls, you are the future of tomorrow and must redouble your effort to decorate the cemetery with plants, greenery and flowers from your flower pots. Make the cemetery a real garden that will make the older people feel less pain for the separation of the elders who are about to leave this life.*

*And now, ladies and gentlemen, as president of the Women's Auxiliary of Omonia, I am deeply moved and very honored to hand over to you here in our beloved town, the Certificate from King Paul I of Greece in recognition of the efforts of the Auxiliary to do these public works in our community. With this certificate today, we the members of the Auxiliary feel great joy and satisfaction for the recognition of our efforts.*

*Let us all keep in mind that goodness and the progressive spirit of people are recognized when doing these works for the common good. Not only here in our birthplace, but everywhere in the world.*

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## **A DREAM SOCIETY**

A humanistic society, without national borders, with only two languages, the local and the international, and with a two-color flag. One color will symbolize that our blood is red and the other will symbolize the brotherly peace and will be white. A humanistic society without money! Money shall be replaced by a plastic card for everyone, with the picture of the bearer, the name, date of birth, and profession. These will suffice in the dream society.

The society will have no salesmen, no middlemen, no exploiters. There will be no soldiers, no fleet, no military aircraft, and no war machinery to kill each other off. There shall be no middlemen to exploit the sweat of others, without small businesses. Everything will belong to the people like the post office, the public schools, the churches and many hospitals are today.

This society shall have no jewelry, which today is worn to impress and to give false impressions to others.

With the plastic card we will be allowed to acquire all the necessities of life, and after 50 we will be allowed to travel throughout the world so we can get to know the world that we came to without being asked, and then have to leave it unwillingly. When we go from this world, the only thing we will take with us will be our plastic card. Nothing else.

This dream society will not be created in a few decades. The way things seem to be going though, I am afraid today's society will commit suicide in a nuclear conflagration.

--Lambros Stamatiades, 1980

## **A DESCRIPTION OF LAMBROS**

by Francisco Mantinaos

His face is light and suntanned with shallow wrinkles. He smiles as he recounts the hard days of labor we spent together in America many years ago. We were young kids then... white haired now... With bitterness he talks about the desertion of our hometown... He becomes angrily sad about the bad habits of our human race, about the exploitation of man by man, about the unequal distribution of public wealth. In his tired eyes we can see that there is no hatred but love for his fellow man, we can see the simplicity of his heart, his spiritual balance.

Patient, calm, an experienced conversationalist. He charms and captivates you, offers you his unconditional love. He asks for nothing in return but love.

His fingers move nervously and his face clouds over when he talks so convincingly about the sick society—as he likes to call it... These things are spoken over a small table in a small remote café in Othos, Karpathos, in August of 1977, where fate brought us together for a few moments after a separation of half a century.

I hope my good friend Lambros, who to me is closer than a brother, forgives me for this quick sketch of him. My intention and motive for this was to prove how high he stands as a human being, in all respects. And how much I love and esteem him and his family.

--Written by Franciscos Mantinaos

NOTE: My exceptional and unforgettable friend Francisco left this temporary world in 1978, only a few months after he wrote the above very complimentary words for me. As young kids we first met in New Castle, Pennsylvania. We worked very hard in the steel industry, or more precisely, we slaved in the labor camp of U.S. Steel. We became good and inseparable friends. It was our fate though to separate later on due to my search for a better job. After a separation of more than sixty years, we met again in his village, the picturesque Othos of Karpathos in the summer of 1977. We got the chance to reminisce

about our old friendship. But death did not allow him to see these writings... To his lifelong companion, Pothiti, and his only son, Kosta who now is a plastic surgeon in Thessaloniki, and to all his relatives, I sent my heartfelt condolences. I hope the soil above him is light in covering my friend, whose ideas were always congruent with mine.

-Lambros, December 1978

## FOR OUR FIFTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

By Spyros Alifantis, my good friend from Lefkada

1. *I am Spyro, your friend, and I offer the following words,  
hoping to sow the seeds of many flowers in your life's path.*
2. *The years we spent in a foreign land was like a dream  
but you never forgot Karpathos with its many nightingales.*
3. *Lambro, my friend, go back before the fateful end arrives,  
go reminisce of the times when you were a gallant man.*
4. *When you ran like a deer through the hills and mountains  
and were the pride of your parents and of all the villagers.*
5. *You sat on a rock next to the cold spring  
and drank its water and then took a deep breath.*
6. *The eleventh hour cometh, the nightingales are singing  
and the young maidens are harvesting grapes.*
7. *Give Lambro the best of the rosé grapes because he is a gallant  
man  
who is the lucky lady who will make a knight of him.*
8. *Girls of Karpathos, bashful and ripe,  
keep these gallant men to stay in Karpathos.*
9. *An only daughter, a beauty from Aperi,  
my friend Lambro chose her for his mate.*
10. *You lived fifty years together in love  
and have children and grandchildren and are very happy.*
11. *My wife and I shake your hand wishing you luck  
and hope you go to Karpathos, to beautiful Aperi.*

### RESPONSE BY LAMBROS:

12. *Dear friend, your song moved me very much,  
it brought back memories, and tears to my eyes.*
13. *Warm congratulations for your wise verses  
from your old pals, Marigo and Lambro.*

## FOR OUR FIFTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY, II

From Kalliopi and Niko Karakatsani from Aperi

1. *I think and think again, and try to think how to start out  
on your fifty years to offer you my best wishes.*
2. *Warm wishes from the heart we send you from afar  
to congratulate you on your fiftieth, dear cousins.*
3. *I am sure you have in your heart a lot of joy  
to see all around you children, grand and great-grand children.*
4. *All gathered together this precious day  
and the children are so happy to see their happy parents.*
5. *Here's wishing you a hundred more years  
to see your great-great-grandchildren*
6. *Antigone told me about the party  
how Marigo wanted her to be there too.*
7. *I also miss you and my mind plays tricks on me  
as though I was there with you sitting on your table.*
8. *To give you my best wishes in person  
it feels just like yesterday when we were together.*
9. *Even though I am far, my mind is with you  
and I give you a present for your fiftieth.*
10. *The kids should have given you a surprise  
and fly you all the way to Karpathos.*
11. *And have a party at Panayia  
together with Antigone and our good sport Elias.*
12. *Cousin and Marigo, contemplate  
that the Vasilakis couple is in Karpathos.*
13. *You come over too so we make three couples  
and have a great time together in the village.*
14. *We will sing all night and walk through the streets  
because you are safe there from any bad people.*
15. *Now I say goodbye and goodnight  
and just imagine that I came all the way from Brooklyn.*

## THOUGHTS ABOUT THE UNIVERSE AND SOCIETY

### Inroduction

On the first of May of 1971, I was at my country home next to the luscious and green sea shore of Long Island, New York, looking at the endless Atlantic, studying its clear, star studded sky and thinking about the innumerable man-made problems resulting from the fear and worry that enslave the human race for countless centuries. As I was sitting there, I was seized by intimate thoughts and ideas.

These thoughts and ideas found an outlet in the verses below, which were published for the first time on May 6, 1971, by the newspaper ATLANTIS of New York.

1. *As many as the granules of sand on the seashore  
that many are the questions humanity seeks to answer.*
2. *What is this vastness filled with an infinite number of planets  
which we so hopelessly search to find?*
3. *How is it that this earth, this huge globe,  
which, despite its immense weight, floats in the air?*
4. *With seas and lands extending everywhere  
with varieties of animal and plant life?*
5. *Our life starts from a drop of sperm,  
but without Mother Earth, Life is never ours.*
6. *The Earth is our mother, the Sun is our father,  
spinning around him night and day.*
7. *The Sun with its rays warms up our globe  
to grow life of every kind to inhabit it.*
8. *The Sun creates rain and wind  
and life grows night and day.*
9. *Plants and animals on land, fish under sea-water  
and up above, pairs of birds fly playfully on the air.*
10. *What is this power of such great forethought  
that flawlessly planned and arranged everything?*
11. *Where did all the materials come from, and the big hand,  
that made this vastness with its countless stars?*
12. *Why were all these made, what is their purpose,  
who is the designer, and who is their creator?*
13. *And who created the creator of all,  
and where can both be found? Everyone wants to know.*
14. *Many books have been written, filled with myths,  
but science still searches for the truth.*
15. *Science strives in the darkness of ignorance,  
to reveal the beginning of the Universe.*
16. *Compared to the eons since the beginning of the world  
the life of humankind is just one minute's breath.*
17. *We ask why do we get born without our permission  
and then leave for the unknown.*

18. *The worst enemy to our life is death,  
which fights life and always wins.*
19. *If humanity spent its time on science  
it might have defeated its worst enemy.*
20. *We have written down laws, if you commit a murder  
you will pay with your own life.*
21. *These same laws send you to fight wars  
and if you kill a lot you earn the medals.*
22. *And if you ever refuse to go fight for the war  
they take you out to the shooting range to block some bullets.*
23. *What anarchy is this, what hypocrisy,  
to write laws on paper that have no meaning.*
24. *The money we spend killing each other,  
why don't we spend it to improve people's lives.*
25. *To eliminate fear from our life's path,  
which forever tyrannizes humanity.*
26. *Plato wrote that Democracy  
leads to an imperfect society.*
27. *They accused Socrates of corrupting the youth  
and they convicted him to drink the poison from a glass.*
28. *Let the ant nest on the ground be our example  
as the ants gather provisions for their winter food.*
29. *It's time for humanity to realize  
it's destroying itself and all life in this world.*
30. *They burned Galileo at the stake in the plaza of Rome  
because he said the earth is not flat but round.*
31. *The Creator did not divide us up with boundaries and flags  
that separate us and fill us with hatred.*
32. *Moses preached: "Do not worship gold,"  
and gave us Ten Commandments to guide our life.*
33. *Solomon cried out, "Everything is in vain,"  
glory and gold do not cure the world's ills.*
34. *The carpenter of Nazareth fought against wealth,  
preaching that wealth belongs to everyone.*
35. *He broke the money-changer's table  
and with his whip he struck them.*
36. *That's why they crucified him on Calvary Hill  
but his ideas remain immortal in the world.*
37. *Whoever works in the Temple should lead a simple life  
and not in luxury, or strive for wealth.*
38. *We only have but one life on this earth  
and in the end, the worms will eat us all.*
39. *What the world needs is love and peace,  
a world with brotherhood and justice for all.*
40. *No more exploitation and no more injustice  
because these lead to war and suicide.*

41. *Let there be no poverty, no reason to have charity  
the wealthy skin the poor and then give them crumbs.*
42. *Karl the German wrote in his Manifesto  
"stop the exploitation," take it and read for yourself.*
43. *You have the right to disagree  
but if you think a little deeper, you might agree.*
44. *I believe in freedom which we all desire  
and hope that my poor verses make some sense to you.*

Dedicated to my Uncle Pothitos and Aunt Maroukla-Zanaki and Stamatis Katros.



Lambros with Evangelia, John, Anna, George and Fotini

## **A PRAYER**

### **Consider this “Uniquely Amazing Life”**

He was born in a stable in an obscure village, the child of peasant parents. He worked in a carpentry shop until the age of thirty, when he became an itinerant preacher. He didn't go to college. He never held an office. Never had a family or owned a home. He never visited a big city, never traveled more than 200 miles from where he was born. He did not do those things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself. He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away from him. One of them denied Him. He surrendered to His enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to the cross between two thieves. While dying, His executioners gambled away his garments, the only property He had on earth. When dead, He was buried in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Twenty centuries have come and gone and today He is the only Central Figure in the human race. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the squadrons of airplanes that flew, all the astronauts that traveled into space, all the parliaments that ever convened, all the religious leaders, all the emperors and kings that ever ruled, all of them combined have not affected humanity on the Earth as much as that ... “UNIQUELY AMAZING LIFE.”

But what a pity that humanity does not practice it, not even as much as a “Mustard Seed.”

## THE LOVE OF MOTHER

It was late in the Fall. My mother was busy clearing leaves fallen from the various trees and the grapevine that covered just about the entire large courtyard of our house in Valandou. Mother threw vine branches into the outdoor baking oven to fire it up in order to bake the week's wheat bread for our large family.

I must have been about eight. I was standing in front of the oven, and with childish innocence I was watching my mother throwing leaves into the oven trying to get the fire started by throwing in burning leaves. The smoke was so thick you could cut it with a knife. To me it meant that in a few minutes the oven would be hot enough to bake the delicious spanakopita which I had been waiting all week to eat.

Suddenly we hear our dog Kokkina barking in a strange way in the nearby vineyard. In seconds, she appeared, very angry as she jumped over the wall from the vineyard, and when she came near us, she pushed past mother as though she was telling her to move aside. Shocked, we saw her jump into the smoking oven. Immediately she reappeared carrying one of her little pups in her mouth. She went back into the oven three more times, while by now flames could be seen here and there, to save her little ones that had been recently born without us knowing where they were. We were shocked and concerned with this real drama in the struggle to survive, especially mother who did not want to express her emotions in my presence.

Hurriedly, we took some old clothing and threw it under the covered patio. The mother dog took her pups there gently with our help, and immediately started ministering to them like a doctor and a nurse, licking them and cleaning them and exhibiting motherly love and tenderness. For three continuous nights she stayed next to her pups. She tried in her own way to save her little ones. But the smoke and the flames were too toxic and harmful to the baby dogs. Their hair fell off and they were left with a very thin skin, and in some places no skin at all. The inevitable did not take long to happen, not only for the little ones but for their mother dog as well.

The real drama in this for the mother dog is that, in trying to save her four little ones from the smoke and flames in the oven, she did not discriminate but gave an example worthy for humans to follow, humans who have lost the inane instinct of goodness and pretend to be progressive but in reality have regressed.

Humans have adopted some habits in the name of being progressive, but really have kept some primeval bad habits. Living examples of these are the bad and unjustified habit of parents showing preferences for one or more of their children while rejecting others. In some cases the first born is better or worse than other children, or the one with a certain name from the father's side or mother's side, is better than another with a different name. Taking sides in this unjustified and bad way, we plant discontent and hatred between siblings, between children and parents, and this definitely contributes to the desertion of our island.

The Karpathian lands may not be very productive to bring wealth. However, they have been an insurance policy during times of crises, such as during the Asia Minor Disaster and during the last two World Wars, when many of our islanders found from them shelter, asylum and housing, and lives were saved during the duration of these man-made tsunamis.

The Karpathian properties of a family, when split up equally among all the siblings, regardless of sex, age and name, will be beneficial for the island. Each child, even if he or she owns only a small plot, will feel that it's a treasure given by the parents and will maintain it and plant useful trees and will feel proud to own it. There will be a competition that could change the appearance of the island from Afiarti to Diafani, and from Finika to Ahata. And, who knows, there may come a time that these lands would be life savers. It is unacceptable that these lands are left fallow by those select few who received it from their parents. It is interesting that nobody complains about this, but we have gotten used to this terrible tradition, I would call aberration, of giving land only to certain of the children and disown the rest.

Individual interests and egotism harden the heart and muddy the brain. How can we, the parents, look our kids in the eyes? How will we

justify this to our Creator for discriminating even between our own children? How can we be any less loving to our children than a bitch is to hers?

Here is Rhodes and here is the place to jump.

[The last line refers to an ancient saying regarding a Rhodian who always bragged about how much longer he jumped when he was in Rhodes but not so much when he was away from Rhodes. The reply of a bystander, was “Here is Rhodes and here is the place to jump.]

--Lambros.

## A HOMESICK KARPATHIAN

The unforgettable George Kontos from Lorous and I were classmates and always friends, both of us living away from our birthplace. After a very long stay in America, he returned home, close to his family and we often communicated with paper and pen. My verses below were sent to him but I have no way of knowing whether he received them before he departed for the other world.

1. *I ask you, dear friend, when you receive my letter,  
before you leave for afar, do me a big favor.*
2. *Take the uphill path and go up to the Fort,  
where you can see the sunset, the bright star above.*
3. *Look eastwards where the sun rises  
and hand to it some of the beauty to bring to us in the west.*
4. *Look at Valandou, at Morou, at Aperi  
the seashore of the island that's waiting for our return.*
5. *The vineyards with the walnut trees full of green fruit,  
remember when they yelled at us, "You little thieves?"*
6. *And the mulberry trees with their sweet black fruit  
we ate and painted our faces with them to look like Africans.*
7. *The countryside of our land, the pine forest  
which all our countrymen who left long to see again.*
8. *The cool springs spewing crystal clear water  
whoever tried it, cannot ever forget it.*
9. *The trees that have fruit as sweet as honey, nobody can forget,  
or the beautiful gardens that decorate Aperi.*
10. *Remember the sweet smelling wild flowers  
that are so beautiful in the spring, especially in May?*
11. *Did you see the almond trees, dressed all white,  
admire them again when they are full of ripe fruit.*
12. *Listen to the buzzing of the bees as they go from flower to flower  
to get the honey from down deep into the flowers.*
13. *Pass by the shepherd's hut where the thick yogurt is made  
and smell the aromatic butter, and all types of cheeses.*
14. *Look at the village homes, especially their rooftops  
where kids are playing with toys and running up and down.*
15. *Their mothers yell at them but they pay no attention  
they played and won and now want to divide the spoils.*
16. *Walk through the narrow village alleys  
remember when we ran through them as little children?*
17. *Look at the garden next to the school house  
where we first got our first pen and book.*
18. *To the village school teachers who taught me how to write,  
to them I owe the ability to write this very poem.*

19. *To my dear parents, to my brothers and sisters,  
give warm greetings, and to all my nephews and nieces.*
20. *To my friends and relatives and all those who ask for me,  
tell them on my behalf, never will I forget them.*
21. *And those who talk against us when our name comes up,  
tell them we'll forgive them from the bottom of our heart.*
22. *Whatever a person says or does during his life time,  
friends are to his benefit, but there will be some enemies.*
23. *Goodness is like an aromatic flower  
and appreciation is the water that gives it sustenance.*
24. *We are thousands of miles away in a foreign land  
but our mind is always in the land of our birth.*
25. *Dear Karpathos, famous Aperi  
I have you painted in my heart forever.*
26. *When you see the fog, the mist in Lasto,  
it's the pain of separation, the sadness of going away.*
27. *When the sky turns dark, when it rains and drizzles,  
it is Karpathos, friend, far away shedding its tears.*
28. *When the clouds groan and the waves splash,  
it's those in foreign lands who cry and have no solace.*
29. *And when the earthquake shakes our poor Aperi,  
it's one of its children kicking in a far- away land.*
30. *George, I took the liberty and wrote you too much  
and now I send you my greetings, your friend Lambros.*

NOTE: This poem is dedicated to my fellow students, and to my teachers.

--Lambros

## A SATISFACTION

My first son, John, was born on the first day of December 1935, in New York. He graduated from High School and from the School for Typography. In 1954 he volunteered for the U.S. Army. He needed my written permission because he was still a minor. After an honorable service of 18 years he retired. It was a gesture of protesting the unjustified, immoral, undeclared and criminal war in Indochina, and especially Viet Nam, thousands of miles away from his country.

He is now a professional printer and works as a manager of production in a large printing company in California. In the past he served as a radio announcer for the radio program of the Greek Community in Babylon, New York. He grew up in the United States and is very familiar with the songs and dances of Karpathos. He has two adult children, Lambros and Aglaia.

Here is a translated announcement about him.

### *Educational Progress of the Youth – OMONIA News Bulletin, August 1954*

*The Karpathian Community of New York is proud today to present to the student world of the United States of America a bright young man who has a bright future ahead. John L. Stamatiades, the beloved son of the progressive fellow Karpathians and Omonia members Lambros and Marigo Stamatiades. Marigo is the president of the Women's Auxiliary of Omonia. John is the President of the Graduating Class of the Vocational School of Typography of New York. He represented his class in a conference of thirty thousand students from various countries. In a speech competition on the subject of "The Greatest Threat of the Land is the Unlimited Spread of Nuclear Weapons," he received the first prize for his journalistic talent, and received other honors for his achievements by the Board of Education of New York City.*

*To this bright young man that we present among the eight prize winners representing various countries, we wish that after graduation and awarding of the Diploma in Typography, he visits and gets to know the beloved village of his dear parents, Aperi, which today is very proud of you, dear John. The OMONIA Bulletin congratulates you for all your exemplary achievements.*

## A MEETING WITH AN EXPATRIATE

A poem sent to me by my friend, Konstantinos I. Hapsis  
(at that time, an employee of the Forest Service)  
Karpathos 9/9/1970

1. *In our beautiful island this summer  
a lot of Karpathian expatriates visited from afar.*
2. *Many came as each ship arrived  
and most of them brought a car along.*
3. *The plane landed down at Afiarti  
five times a week and was always full.*
4. *Men, women and children, the streets are full of cars,  
never in the past have we seen so many.*
5. *The beach at Vronti was crowded with people  
there was song and noises and the place was abuzz.*
6. *Among the local residents and newcomers  
you could see hundreds of strangers everywhere.*
7. *Tourists, some were total strangers, bearded and goateed  
hippies with long and uncombed red-dyed hair.*
8. *None is embarrassed to look so strange, that's how these strangers are,  
they eat yogurt and bread and sleep on rooftops.*
9. *Of course others come, who are very proper,  
and go to eat and drink in restaurants.*
10. *So many newcomers arrived in Karpathos  
who had gone away to live for many years as immigrants.*
11. *They came to meet friends and relatives,  
to see brothers, sisters, their kids, and their elderly parents.*
12. *Many aliens were among them, some came from Athens  
to spend a pleasant month in Karpathos.*
13. *They came to drink the crystal clear water from the springs  
and enjoy the beautiful countryside.*
14. *To look from the mountaintops, to see the distant clouds  
blown by the easterlies, to drink, dance and enjoy the festivities.*
15. *Some become godparents, others find mates,  
and others just eat, drink and have fun.*
16. *Still others come to hunt partridge, quail, turtle doves,  
in places they had not seen for several decades.*
17. *But the time is nearing when they must leave again  
and that brings them great sadness.*
18. *Now, dear friends, I'll tell you what I saw one day in August,  
out in the country, towards the day's end.*
19. *As I was sitting there looking around at the wild nature  
I saw across from me a little country church.*
20. *Suddenly I heard the church's bell ringing sadly  
and went to see who was doing the ringing.*

21. *I went and found somebody I knew, inside praying,  
piously kissing the icon of the Virgin Mary.*
22. *Then he came out of the church and stood there  
tears rolling down on his pale cheeks.*
23. *He kept looking at the sea and up at the mountains  
and rhythmically moved his head from side to side.*
24. *He did this for a long time, speechless  
and occasionally I could hear him sigh.*
25. *Then I asked, what caused him to cry  
and he turned sadly and said:*
26. *Tomorrow, my friend, I've got to go  
my vacation is over and I have to say goodbye.*
27. *I wish I could stay a little more before I go  
so I can go to Vrisiani and to the Holy Cross.*
28. *The reason I came here is to light a candle,  
to see the shore, the mountains, and be alone to cry.*
29. *Tell me, I asked him, where are you going when you leave  
and when, God willing, will you get back?*
30. *I am going to America, he said, and I don't know if I'll be back again,  
it's possible that I could leave my skin out there.*
31. *Blessed man, I said, you are going to that land  
and you cry like a child instead of being happy?*
32. *You are going there to make money, to see skyscrapers,  
and we stay here to scrape-by all the time.*
33. *You, friend, are going to the land of paradise  
I am jealous of you and how I would like to come along.*
34. *But I stay in Karpathos, and it's such a shame  
because if I had come along I would bring bagfuls of money.*
35. *I would bring gold pounds, enough to buy my own car  
and in my old age I would have a good pension for my comfort.*
36. *Showing me a thistle and a dry thyme stalk,  
he said, this is the silver and this is the gold.*
37. *Because when you get old and you lose your strength.  
Gold, car and pension, what are they good for?*
38. *Then he cut off a piece of each plant so he can take them  
along and smell them when he's in the foreign land.*
39. *And he continued: America lifts you up  
but it saps your flesh and tears your body to pieces.*
40. *There you can find anything your heart desires  
but one thing you cannot: a cool breath of easterly winds.*
41. *Money in a foreign land comes with a lot of sweat  
and those who survive are the lucky ones.*
42. *His words were wise and made me sad enough to cry  
and this is the reason I am writing it here.*
43. *And just for him I went inside to the icon of the Virgin  
to pray on his behalf to keep him good and healthy.*

44. *And to come back for good, to light another candle,  
and have a good smile, and never be sad again.*
45. *To smell the sensor's incense, to hear it every day,  
and always breathe the cool and fresh air of our land.*
- .....

## **THE LOVE OF KARPATHIANS FOR THEIR ISLAND**

(From the Celebration of the Karapathian Union of Chicago, 11-20-1971)

*Karpathians here, Karpathians there, Karpathians all around  
and the Board deserves a thousand praises.*

*To say a bad thing about America, we will never do  
even though we work hard, we are still doing fine.*

*America has many good things, nobody doubts that  
but it's different when you are in your mother's bosom.*

*I want to be on a Karpathian mountain  
to have the pines and the mountain peaks all around me.*

*To see birds that sing in every mountain trail  
and nature smile back and exhume sweet aroma.*

*To see a very graceful seashore  
with rocks standing like heroes at the sea's edge.*

*To see nature smile back and grab me  
and hold me like a mother's hug.*

*We never forget our mother Karpathos  
we just wait for the right time to go see her.*

*We go to see relatives and neighbors,  
because we spent many years together.*

--SAKELLIS

\*\*\*\*\*

*There is no description of our joy and emotions  
because we were transported mentally to our lovely island.*

*It was truly a pilgrimage for all of us  
who are homesick for Karpathos when we are away.*

*The beautiful seashores and its cool spring water  
the green countryside and the tall mountains.*

*We went through all the villages in sequence  
Aperi, Arkasa, Menetes, Othos, and Volada.*

*From Posidi all of us boarded the ship  
for Diafani, Olymbos, Spoa and Mesohori.*

*In Mesohori each of us wants to stop awhile  
to pray at the Icon of the Virgin Mary.*

*Then we go on our way in a little boat  
to visit the sandy shore of Lefkou and its little green forest.*

*And we ended up at Stais, and took over the winery  
and drank till the end until we emptied all the jugs.*

-- VASO ORFANOU-CHRYSOU AND LAMBRININ TSETSOU  
(From the **Karpathian**, 1972)

## **MEMORIES FROM A SUMMER IN OLYMPOS, KARPATOS**

A letter from my friend, the late Konstantinos I. Hapsis, from Olympos

In Karpathos on 15 February 1972

Dear Mr. Stamatiades,

Greetings to you from me and my family. Please give my best wishes to your wife and to your family. My father, your old friend, also sends his best regards. Your relatives here are doing fine.

I received your later dated 2-2-72 and I am glad that all of you are doing well. I saw that you were sick and stayed two months in the hospital. I feel sincerely sorry for this and I wish you a speedy and full recovery.

Dear Mr. Stamatiades, I want to let you know that I got all the letters that you sent me and do not worry, none of them are missing. In your last letter I received your beautiful poem and I want to thank you very much and you deserve congratulations. This quality of work should not remain among a few people but should be published so that others can enjoy it. In my opinion, from what I have seen of your writings through our correspondence, I can characterize you as a very moral and good person, and a patriot who not only loves Karpathos but loves and adores it very much. A sign of his love is the poem for Karpathos and the beautiful Aperi.

I read your poem to your in-laws, Michael Spanomanoli and to some other friends who, like me, loved you poem. Now, I enclose a poem that I wrote which has the title "For our Airport" which was published in our local paper "THE VOICE OF OLYMPOS" in August of 1971. I hope you like it. Of course I have many other poems which I can send you in the future since you like this kind of poetry.

In your letter you said that you wanted the sizes of the members of my family so you can send some gifts, and I want to thank you for that. It is not necessary to go to all this trouble, but since you insist, and not to show disrespect in my part, here are the sizes: My son is 5-foot 5-inches with average breadth. The oldest daughter is 5-foot 4-inches and is average also. The young one is 4-foot 3-inches. My wife is 5-foot 5-inches with full breadth.

Dear friend, I remain and wish a happy Easter.

Your friend Konst. Hapsis

## MEMORIES FROM SUMMERS IN OLYMPOS

### KARPATOS

1. *'Tis mid-May and nearly wheat-reaping time  
and my mind goes to Olympos, my birthplace.*
2. *I was born there over half a century ago.  
It was wintertime of nineteen-twenty.*
3. *That's where I opened my eyes and saw daylight  
and it was in Olympos where I learned the first words I spoke.*
4. *That's where I took my first steps and walked the roads  
and wherever I turned I saw mountains all around.*
5. *That's where my eyes saw the first church  
which had all its walls lined with pews.*
6. *Sitting in each one of them I saw elders wearing vrakas  
but because I was too small I didn't really know them.*
7. *All wore cross-buttoned vests, girdles around the waist  
and in their hands they held a red fez and tassel.*
8. *I heard cantors singing together with priests  
and the church was full of flickering candles.*
9. *That's where I first attended my first school  
and learned that one plus one makes two.*
10. *Papa-Yannis, the priest, taught me to read and write  
he was then teaching and did it with a passion.*
11. *That's where I first sang about Lazarus and gave out laurels  
and sang the carols and they gave me raisins and nuts.*
12. *Olympos is where I spent my childhood years  
and these were years nobody can ever forget.*
13. *All day I spent going around its trails and byways  
and played with friends "stone-throwing" and "little slaves."*
14. *Sixteen years I worked here at local jobs  
digging, reaping, and olive picking.*
15. *I cleaned, threshed, and gathered grains  
alongside parents, siblings, and relatives.*
16. *Drinking water from the rock in the village spring  
and eating barley-bread made me grow to six-foot six.*
17. *I loved every season, but most of all in my heart  
I had a special place for the wheat-threshing season.*
18. *Everyone, young and old, went to the Thresher,  
and the only ones remaining in the village were priests and teachers.*
19. *And you could see at the Thresher a sea of people  
all gathering wheat and barley for weeks.*
20. *Women were reaping and men were packing  
and at the Thresher, that's where they unloaded.*

21. *Hundreds were going and countless returned  
mountains and roads were full of hardworking people.*
22. *Women and girls were dressed all in white,  
buttoned all up, all day they were reaping.*
23. *A handkerchief shaded each one's face  
and their aprons were red, and so were their dresses.*
24. *The men wore broad brim hats on their heads  
and the show offs attached feathers to the ribbon.*
25. *And the mules you would see in the roads and ditches  
had on their heads tassels and bridles.*
26. *And you were glad to find farmland to reap wheat  
especially if the stalks had vigorous growth to reap.*
27. *Then at noon you would lie down in the shade to rest,  
to eat whatever food was there and to tell some jokes.*
28. *To have a meal of some goat milk  
and dip pieces of country bread in the milk to eat.*
29. *To have some onions watered by the inner spring  
to cut and eat with barley bread to kill the heartache.*
30. *To cook freshly caught snails on the mountain  
to eat and enjoy them with wooden spoons.*
31. *And if the sea is nearby, to catch some fish  
and if you cook them on the grill, you'll never forget the taste.*
32. *To grab your skin water-bag and put it on your mouth  
to drink cool water to quench your thirst.*
33. *To cut off handfuls of wheat stalk and bunch them together  
and make a thick bedding for a mattress to sleep.*
34. *Then lie down to rest and sleep for the night  
to watch the stars and the heavens in the deep darkness.*
35. *And for a pillow, roll up a blanket  
and as you lie there, listen to the sounds of night birds.*
36. *You will hear the donkey braying  
and the owl's lullaby will soon put you to sleep.*
37. *To have the easterly wind brush over your face  
something others are longing-for in foreign lands.*
38. *This napping, down on the farmland, will be unforgettable  
a thousand times better than sleeping on an ordinary mattress.*
39. *And when the wheat-reaping season is over, threshing will begin  
to get the grain and put it in the storage bin.*
40. *All these events, and many others, I have lived first hand  
and I cannot get the memories erased from my head.*
41. *In the past, people dug and reaped in the summer  
and no land that could be stepped was ever left fallow.*
42. *Nowadays, most land lies fallow,  
there are only tumbleweeds and bush growing.*
43. *Now there's no more digging by young people  
all the farms have turned into ... forests and grazing fields.*

The above verses were published in the VOICE OF OLYMPOS in the May 1969 issue. As you can see [in the original Greek] I use a lot of words from the local dialect of our village. In my opinion, the local phrases give more value to the poem, but I am afraid that there may be words that the reader may not know or recognize.

Karpathos, 5-6-1969

K. I. Hapsis – Forest Service Officer

## RETURN OF THE EX-PATRIATE

by George Emm. Panagiotou

I include these moving verses that follow in memory of the very pleasant Captain Manolaki Mastropanagioti, father of the poet, who sent them to me.

1. *Many years passed, my hair is white and I got old  
living in a foreign land, poor me, and I'm a stranger and depressed.*
2. *I returned an old man, here to counsel you  
only a few words, dirges from the heart.*
3. *I remember well the life of previous generations  
people were happy, they were satisfied with a few things.*
4. *They wore homemade clothes, cheap hand-made shoes  
every day they worked, old and young, and even the children.*
5. *Sundays at church, that's when they danced  
they celebrated joyfully and had a happy time at festivals.*
6. *The women weaved and everything in the house  
passed through their hands, with no debts, and no stress.*
7. *The village smelled good, the store-rooms had everything,  
every house had a warehouse, even storage in its yard.*
8. *Now we've got wings and we fly far and wide like winged ants  
we fly in all directions the wind may blow us.*
9. *We fly to foreign lands, take bad turns  
sometimes we take roads that lead us off the cliff.*
10. *Oh, women, be smart, stop asking for luxury and gold  
our village is deserted, and it's bad for your own good.*
11. *Decorating your head with gold coins to show off  
requires sending your man, and all the good boys, away.*
12. *Life in a foreign land is like slavery and when the slave returns,  
an old, sick man, he will leave behind his memories of bad life.*
13. *The few remaining years will be full of misery  
and when he wants some sympathy, who will comfort him?*
14. *Who will console him, who will offer some love.  
Nobody loves an old man, give him some joy?*
15. *Oh, you women, be smart, be more humble,  
be good Christians and good homemakers.*
16. *Be like your grandmothers and mothers  
satisfy yourselves with less, stay happy with less.*

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This poem was published in the KARPATHIAN ECHO in 1972.

### WISE SAYINGS THAT I LIKE

- Kindness and gratefulness are twin sisters that seldom meet in life.
- The ungrateful discovered the “Do good and forget it.”
- The truth is bitter, not only for those who hear it and read about it, but for those who say it and write it.
- The overly proud has smoke in his head and his brain suffers, because he thinks he is exceedingly tall.
- Great and immortal is only whoever does the most good for humanity.
- Many are the flapping tongues, few are the thinking brains.
- Self criticism is the most noble feeling of a person.
- Greed poisons the heart and muddies the brain.
- Uncertainty for tomorrow is the root of anarchy in society.
- Sharing the wealth will save today’s society from suicide.
- Leaders come and go, people stay to solve the problems the leaders leave behind.
- Never belittle the lowest step because that’s the required first step to climb into the palace.
- Joy and sadness hold hands and follow us in our life’s journey.
- Nothing belongs to us. Not even this life, we simple use it.
- Immortals are only those of our fellow humans whose biography is taught in schools or churches.
- Study and discourse in a variety of subjects serves as fertilizer for the brain.

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## **WILL THE DREAM BECOME A REALITY?**

The distinguished commentator ROBERT TROUT, in one of his speeches on satellite TV from the French capital, Paris, among other things he spoke on the problem of the post-revolutionary France: that twenty-two thousand churches in the country remain closed and unused.

The authorities in the towns and cities, and the capital, after an extensive study, decided to put them up for auction.

After a second thought, they changed and started to use them for schools and teaching, not only for reading and writing, but for music, athletics, lectures, cinema, vocational schools, flower shops, fruit and vegetable markets, fish markets, meat markets, dancing studios, bathes, etc. These buildings became property of the community.

This enlightening comment by ROBERT TROUT started me thinking about the situation in our own poor island, where there is nothing produced for export in the last several years and, unjustifiably, we keep spending money and time, from four and up to thirty thousand dollars a year to build churches, small and big, so that for four hours a year as many as four dozen people attend services...more to socialize and show off than to learn a few things about the life of the church saints who gave their life, not for material things, but for the Christian ideology, for a cooperative, brotherly world, without war and poverty, a happier life from cradle to grave.

How more useful and God loving it would be if every church on each hilltop or mountaintop was a stable and on the mountainside were grazing thousands of sheep, with their pleasant sounding bells, bleating like praying to the Creator, and in the spring the place would be full of little lambs, jumping around innocently, gifts of the Creator, and the plentiful milk, and its byproducts of yogurt, cheeses, and the wool, would transform the economy into a viable one.

Oh, how much better it would be for the nearby little churches if they were farmer's stations to store their equipment like tractors, threshing machines, and other tools needed in the cultivation of Mother Earth and fertilizer to grow better trees for the export of fruit from our lands. The more central churches could be centers for educational purposes... for a better tomorrow.

A fair question is, where and how will we honor the memories of the saints of the Christian faith without these monasteries?" Ah, how more honorable and God loving it would be if the Cathedral church of the Metropolis was equipped with speakers on the outside, had an organ, a choir of many voices from young people of both sexes from the Junior and Senior High School, and then the people from the surrounding villages of PYLES, OTHOS, VOLADA, and APERI come and hear a well organized and up to date preacher to speak and explain the complications of life, the life and sacrifices of the saints for the ideals of Christianity that would be proper to imitate for a better society.

The same could be for ARKASA, POSIDION in the big church of MENETES, people coming from SPOA and MESOHORI, etc.

In this way, the churchgoers would be served much better and their morale and satisfaction would be boosted. The saints would be honored more properly for

their immense sacrifices against tyranny, and Christ's ideology and spirit would be received by a larger pool of people.

The objection that could be brought up is that this organization is not easy to do because of the distances involved.

Well and good. If for the Son of the Carpenter of Nazareth it was easy to whip the merchants, the Pharisees and all the other hypocrites, and the powerful, who decided to crucify him, and if for His followers, His disciples, it was easy to sacrifice every material good, even their life, for the brotherhood and the good of the world, and for us everything is hard and impossible, then we have to admit that we are hypocrites as well, who just mumble words, such as "Lord, Lord" out of habit. That means, in reality, our faith is no bigger than a mustard seed.

LAMBROS STAMATIADES, NEW YORK, 1972

## A FRIEND IN NEED

By John Alex. Alexiades

In the last one hundred years, under the Turkish occupation and the fascist yoke, Greek education in our island was suppressed. Aperi, with a lot of effort and sacrifices, was able to hold on to the lighted candle of Greek learning in Karpathos. Some of our earliest immigrants to the United States, who had always the goal in their heart to help those who were left behind, took the initiative to organize OMONIA. The goodwill of the early members of OMONIA was a big factor that helped decisively Aperi and Karpathos in general in this respect. The major contribution of this progressive and pro-educational organization was the establishment of a High School in Karpathos. Many of the graduates of this institution later immigrated to the United States and became successful in letters and sciences, businesses, etc.

To show his appreciation, one of those wrote a poem and sent to OMONIA from his hospital bed in Wheeling, West Virginia. Here, below, are the beautiful verses:

*As I was lying there sick I thought I sensed someone  
somebody approached me to help heal my pain.*

*With heavy eyelids I immediately turned to see  
and right away in my dizziness I recognized her.*

*It was OMONIA, it was my village,  
that came to offer me solace, to ease my suffering.*

*I see a beautiful flower arrangement  
made with aromatic roses.*

*The beautiful roses reminded me of Aperi  
and being homesick, tears filled my eyes.*

*It reminded me of my village, the beautiful landscapes,  
Aperi, Amorou, Valandou, and Vlia.*

*I thought I was transported to my dear village  
to the middle of Valandou, in my parental home.*

*I thank the Society for its philanthropic work  
it did many good deeds, including building schools.*

*Many thanks from my heart  
to the Ladies Guild and to our OMONIA.*

*To all the founders I wish many more years and hopefully  
the next generation will follow in their footsteps.*

Immensely grateful,  
John A. Alexiades, Wheeling, West Virginia

## **OUR SOCIAL SYSTEM AT THE CROSSROADS**

My dear readers,

For my limited education I do not blame my venerable parents or my teachers whose thinking and concern for me was the higher education imparted on me. Unfortunately, my youthful exuberance and desire for adventure across the Atlantic was so strong that it overruled their wise counsel. When I arrived in the Land of Columbus, I threw myself into the coal mines, steel factories and finally in the luxury hotels of New York City. In my life's journey, my motto of "what do you know? I know what I heard, what I saw, what I studied," helped me learn the few things that I know and now I dare put in writing my conclusions about the evolution of the old, sick and psychotic social system.

Science estimates that there have been several billion years ago when a part of our solar system coalesced and formed the planet Earth that we inhabit. Since then it took millions of years to establish life on Earth. We reached the Stone Age, when the humanoid animal, lived naked in caves and hollows of large trees. These beings communicated among themselves with sounds, gestures and facial expressions. Without wedding bonds, the female had to nurture the newborn, the male... he was here, now gone. Many died off before reaching adulthood due to killing each other off, lack of food and shelter, and the extreme living conditions. They ate raw meat until lightning started a fire in a forest where animals were and got cooked. They realized that cooked meat is better than raw. Gradually, they used their brains more, which helped to evolve into a more intelligent being. This gave the ability to use materials such as tree branches and mud to make huts and leave the caves and hollows of trees. They started to wrap themselves with animal skins obtained from animals killed for meat. The institution of marriage was not yet invented.

Man through the centuries of life had as his companion the fear of his existence. This shaped his selfish personality to look after his own personal interests and damn be to his fellow beings around him. This behavior became his second nature. The result is the destruction and killing between individuals and tribes. Now that he invented the ultimate weapon, there is the possibility of nuclear annihilation that can destroy the whole Earth, and himself included.

Some of our ancient ancestors, mainly Plato, investigated which form of government was better for the common good of society but ... it's mainly "a voice in the wilderness." Moses gave his Ten Commandments for a better and more secure society for its followers and condemned the gold calf as sinful. Two thousand years ago, the Carpenter of Nazareth went to the Temple of Solomon, at the age of twelve, and destroyed the merchants' tables of exploitation and a few years later was crucified by the hands of the exploiters of his time.

With the passage of time, the world made progress in the technical and scientific fields. We can travel easily with huge vehicles on land and large ships on the surface or the depths of the oceans, and in the air we surpassed even the birds. We can even travel to the Moon and other planets. The improvement of the machines has improved the means of production of items necessary for our sustenance. In every four of our fellow men, only one needs to work to sustain the others, two percent live in luxury, eight percent live in extreme poverty, and 90 percent struggle to stay alive. There is the sword of Damocles for the three classes of our society.

The world meanwhile spends time and billions for war machinery for land, sea, and sky. Millions work to produce these. Millions wear the khaki uniforms and exercise to use them to kill others off. In my eighty years of life, millions of fellow human beings were killed or maimed. Millions of women were made widows and had to provide for hungry children. Millions of traveling salesmen carry the bag of goods selling the products of others, chasing the mirage of becoming wealthy. Millions in apartment or home kitchens cook the toxic foodstuffs that slowly kill them, and have no knowledge how unhealthy these products are.

Millions of police, secret and in uniform, lawyers, and judges produce absolutely nothing useful for life, and a variety of broker-salesmen sell our Mother Earth that belongs to no one. Billions of hours are wasted to learn the thousands of languages when one would do, at most two, the mother tongue and an international one. Millions in banks and a variety of offices produce absolutely nothing useful. Millions of jails and philanthropic institutions do not help in the treatment of our sick society. Religious leaders bless the killing machines of war and pretend they do not see the destructive anarchy in our society...

Even the institution of marriage, the most significant one for the preservation of life on Earth, is suffering. Unfortunately, youth only cares about the sexual gratification which evaporates after the return from the honeymoon, or with the arrival of the firstborn. The mature in age decide for conjugal living based on the financial backing to guarantee the security of a viable future. The rest choose a mate without any meaningful criteria but glorification. In other words, they get married in order to fleece their unsuspecting spouse or for glorification, or sexual gratification or both, or all three of them together. To be objective and fair I must mention that there are exceptions. Millions produce tobacco, narcotic plants, and alcoholic beverages. Each of these, and especially the combination of all, destroys a person's health, family, happiness, and life.

Our society is still in turmoil, worry and impasse. We are now in the twentieth century. The wise leaders of the past, like Moses, Plato, Jesus Christ, gave us wise advice. Thousands of years later, the German Karl Marx gave us his Social Manifesto to end exploitation of humans by humans, with communal ownership, understanding, cooperation, for a society based on brotherhood, without war, and fear. After World War I, the people's leader Nikolai Lenin undertook the task of establishing the principles of the Social Manifesto, but unfortunately it came a violent revolution. Then, many capitalist governments, even little and poor Greece, sent their young men to fight on behalf of the capitalist Tsar of Russia. But Lenin's revolution won and stabilized itself. This was the first practical step to change the world's social system.

Later on, the people's leader of China, Mao Tse Tung, continued the efforts of Lenin for the socialist liberation of millions, not only of China but the whole of Asia. Fidel Castro, a lawyer from a wealthy family, with a group of supporters, took the initiative and established the People's Republic of Cuba, which became the lighthouse for the social liberation of Latin America. In France, Queen Antoinette came out on the palace balcony to tell the hungry and protesting public, "If you have no bread to eat, then eat cake." In Mussolini's Italy, the People's Party of Giolitti and Matteoti is nearing a majority in parliament. In Salazar's Portugal the Socialist Party won. Even in Franco's Spain, the Popular Movement has made big progress. In East Germany, Karl Marx's Manifesto has united the workers into one People's

Republic which is one of the most prosperous countries in the world. In Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania, the change is making progress.

Even in poor Greece, which for years was the servant to the capitalists of Europe and America, when they dethroned the royalty and the fascist junta, the popular movement is gaining strength. The educated youth is courageously marching ahead guided by the wisdom of our philosophers and hopefully will make our country into a Greek People's Republic.

In England and the U.S.A. there is progress in making social changes. The millions of workers, members of the labor unions, contribute to the increasingly popular involvement in legislative and executive governing bodies in both of these two capitalist countries.

All signs point to the fact that the present or future leadership of the capitalist world is approaching the CROSSROADS of our complete annihilation or a just and fair society through the method of communal ownership, without exploitation, fear, worry and war. Let us all do our duty, not for death, but for Life.

The peaceful application of the social code "the non-producer of necessities for living, will not consume," will hopefully lead to instituting the thirty-hour week of productive work and the extra hours will be spent on improving the quality of life, from cradle to grave.

The world will prefer the fulfillment of the above social dream instead of the destruction of the world. The thousands of large and small rivers that now are wasted by flowing out to sea can be connected to irrigate the huge, thirsty, and deserted areas of the world. Then, not only will we get increased production of food to feed the hungry, but our Earth will be more verdant and we will feel that we truly live in paradise instead of marching hopelessly to death.

--Lambros Stamatiades, 1977

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## ADAGES BY LAMBROS STAMATIADES

- Discussion facilitates education.
- Trend and logic rarely agree with one another.
- It is as difficult to choose a good watermelon as to choose a good mate.
- You have not made a single step if your steps are in the wrong direction.
- A fool is convinced about the superiority of his intelligence.
- Nobody is more backwards than the jealous person.
- He who wants to enslave others has no right to liberty.
- Those who declare war are rarely far from the firing range.
- Worst of all is the one who thinks that he is the best of all.
- We want winter when we sweat and summer when we are cold.
- The salesman praises the quality and the buyer blames the price.
- The greedy one is the poorest of all.
- We feel deprived today of what we rejected yesterday.
- Calm life, gentle life, giving soul, good soul.
- Disappointment often wears the mask of friendship or of concern.
- Honor, responsibility, and duty are co-travelers in the journey of life.
- The misery of so many of our fellow human beings is unjustified.
- To go down maintaining your prestige is preferred to climbing up without any prestige.
- Whoever bases her/his worth on clothes is spiritually naked.
- It is pleasing to be in the company of those who speak sincerely and fairly.

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## **A SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE OF LAMBROS STAMATIADES**

Lambros Stamatiades comes from the industrious parents, Ioannis Stamatiades and Evangeloula Alexakis. His father, Ioannis, was an excellent cultivator of the land and had planted many fruit trees on large land holdings that he owned in Karpathos. The primary fruit crop was almonds. He was a proponent of group planting of olive trees and almond trees, and for this reason he had the nickname of *amygdalas* (almond man).

Ioannis and Evangeloula had six children: Lambros, Michael, Stasia, Elias, Alekos, Pothitos, and Nikos. All the children got settled at a young age.

Lambros was born in Aperi, Karpathos in March of 1897. He studied at the schools of Aperi. In Elementary school he was taught by Kalliopi G. Logothetis, Anastasia Karatzas and in Junior High his teachers were Georgios Chazi Matsakis and Panagiotis Chrysoheris.

According to Lambros, it seems that his parents, as well as his childless uncle Pothitos and his wife Marigo Zasaki, were very concerned about the future of Lambros after his graduation from the Aperi schools. Lambros's parents and his uncles insisted that he should continue his studies because his high intellect was very evident. However, Lambros was of the opposite opinion because he loved adventure and traveling. The view of the ship *DIKELIS* was indelibly marked in his memory as it sailed from the harbor of Pigadia and its smokestack faded into the horizon. This image beckoned Lambros to travel to the big and hopeful land of America.

The decision of the parents and uncles was different. They decided to send him to Khartoum in the Sudan to work there alongside his father who was then employed as a builder in the construction of the big Anglican Church which resembled, according to Lambros, a fort with small windows rather than a house of God. Once the decision was made, Lambros left his village in the Spring of 1911 accompanied by Evangelos Zervoudakis and when he arrived in Khartoum was immediately assigned to the plumbing department of the Greek industrialist Konidaris. However, after eight months, the construction of the church was completed and his father, finding no other employment, decided to return with Lambros to their hometown in Karpathos.

Lambros insisted to immigrate to America. Faced with this determination, his parents and uncles relented and in the fall of 1912 he departed on the ocean liner *MARTHA WASHINGTON* of the Austrian Ship Line, chaperoned by Christos Kavallieros. From New York City, Lambros traveled to Bridgeport, Ohio to work in the coal mines where his fellow villagers and cousins, Alexis and Nikolaos Alexiades (Anastasi), were working. Lambros's parents depended on them to look after their sixteen year old son. Lambros was given the job of doorman in the coal mine and was paid three dollars per day for an eight-hour workday.

At that time there was an explosion in a coal mine in the state of Colorado and many miners were killed, among them were some miners from Karpathos. When his parents heard of this, they counseled Lambros to leave this kind of work in the coal mines. As a result he found a job working in a shoe factory shining shoes. This was in the town of Bell Air, Ohio, with a monthly salary of 30 dollars. Lambros found this job too boring for his adventurous soul. Therefore, he left it and was hired by a sheet metal factory in Kennisburgh where many other Karpathians worked, among them Georgios Papanikolaou from Pylles, who was a member of the Socialist Party and introduced Lambros to the labor movement and encouraged his involvement in the American labor unions. Lambros enthusiastically threw himself into studying the labore-employer relations and gradually became one of the most energetic members of the American Federation of Labor, constantly fighting for an "8-hour day" and better working conditions. He participated in many strikes involving coal miners and steel workers. Even today, he talks bitterly about many fellow Karpathians who insisted that "We didn't come to America to form unions and strikes. We came only to grab some money and go back..."

His curiosity prompted Lambros to work during the last 55 years of his life as a waiter in luxurious hotels of New York City. This gave him the opportunity to see with his own eyes the life of the rich and powerful in contrast to the life of the poor. His involvement in the labor unions resulted in his name to be included in the "black lists" of the hotel owners' organizations. This forced him to often change employment, and change his name to Louis Stamos. His struggles in the labor movement were recognized and appreciated by the labor union leadership. He was chosen to represent the 800 employees of Biltmore Hotel in general

assemblies and for many years he was a member of the Executive Committee of Local No. 6.

Doing this kind of union work for free, impressed the American Federation of Labor, and in recognition of his contributions, he was awarded an honorary certificate and the life-time right to dress as Santa Claus on Christmas for the children of the Federation.

These untiring efforts by Lambros to raise the level of workers did not stop him from dedicating a lot of his time to his home island of Karpathos. With his roommate in Brooklyn, New York, Polychronis Vasilakis, they struggled with other Aperians to establish **OMONIA, the Society of Aperians of Karpathos**. He remembers vividly that when he received a letter from his wife Marigo in Karpathos, which detailed the extensive earthquake damage of the local school buildings, the two of them immediately went to meet the brothers Emmanuel, Elias, and Nikos Papageorgiou, who agreed to conduct a fundraising campaign. They ended up that day at the store of Polychronis Papadakis, where they also met Demitrios Emmanuel Panagiotou, Emmanuel Georgiades, Emmanuel P. Vasiliou Petritis, Nikos P. Nisirios and Minas Lentis, who unanimously agreed to collect money for the reconstruction and completion of the school buildings in Aperi. All those present ended up contributing funds for this purpose. They also elected a fund committee which got in touch with the Aperians working in the interior cities of America such as those in Ohio, Chicago, and elsewhere. All of them gave promptly and generously. These efforts were the first reasons and the first seeds in establishing OMONIA in America. The Great Depression discouraged them in repeating the fund raising efforts to collect more money. Lambros Stamatiades and Andreas Nikitas Diakonis, active members in the Labor Union of Hotel Employees, had organizational experience in collective efforts and thought that, instead of repeating the fund raising, it would be much better to form a Society for Aperians which would organize activities to raise funds for the reconstruction of the Aperi schools. That was the beginning of the OMONIA Society. The people who were present, and were the beginning nucleus of the Society, were the following: P. Papadakis, Elias Papageorgiou, Elias Vasilakis, Em. Georgiades, Nik. El. Karakatsanis, Kostis Frangou, Andreas Diakonis, Andreas Lentis, and Polychronis M. Vasilakis.

Lambros proudly states that his efforts and those of the founders of the Society did not go in vain. The fact that OMONIA was twice honored by the Greek Government, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Academy of Athens, is a fine example worthy of imitating.

In the summer of 1921 Lambros returned to Karpathos and in September of that year he married the only daughter of Ioannis Skoulos and Anna, daughter of Papageorge Gergatsoulis. Marigo had been orphaned at the age of seven. Her father, after the death of Marigo's mother, married Despoina G. Michailidou-Nouarou.

In 1925 he returned to Yorkville, Ohio, to work in the sheet metal factories located in that city. In 1927, the American Federation of Labor started a vigorous campaign to organize the three thousand workers of the factory where Lambros worked. Being a member already, Lambros participated in the effort. The company's answer to this was to shut down the factory and once again Lambros found himself in the ranks of unemployed. He was forced to go back and work in the coal mines owned by the Konstantza brothers, across from the Ohio River in the town of Warwood. There he met Matheos Sagarakis from Pigadia. The Federation failed in its efforts and Lambros, being an active member of the Labor Federation, became unemployed again.

Lambros does not forget Karpathos. Temporarily disappointed, he returned to Karpathos in 1928 and dressed up in the traditional costume to celebrate *Kathara Deftera* by acting and reciting the well-known "*Fermani*" in the courtyard of the Tsagaris Café. In 1929, he said goodbye to his wife Marigo and to his three daughters and returned to New York to work from then on in luxurious hotels of the Big Apple, where he met politicians, educators, economists, and other big and famous personalities.

Lambros brought Marigo over to America, even though she had to abandon their large properties back home. She arrived on September 24, 1934, in New York, with her three daughters, Anna, Fotini, and Evangelia, for the purpose of raising their children together with Lambros. Later on, two boys were born, John and George. In 1960, Lambros and Marigo visited Aperi and were present in the opening ceremonies of the Chryson Building, where Marigo and Kalliopi Karakatsani spoke as representatives of the Women's Auxiliary of OMONIA.

Lambros, a pensioner since 1962, enjoys the fruits of his labor by helping his family and watching the labor struggles in its efforts to improve the working conditions and in raising the morale level of the workers.

Living in his own house in the Jackson Heights area of New York City, he visits his children's families and enjoys being with his grandchildren and great grandchildren in Merrick, Long Island, in West Hampstead in Astoria, in Washington and the city of Tarpon Springs, Florida. Living alone after the death of his wife, he still participates in all the social functions. He avidly watches TV, meets with compatriots, talks very seriously about the issues back home in Karpathos and Greece, and always contributes enthusiastically to community organizations. He spends the summers in his country home in the beautiful seashore town of Riverhead in Long Island, remembering sweetly the happy days he lived there with his beloved wife.

Lambros is an example par excellence of a community leader. His efforts remain a lighthouses for the younger generation to admire and imitate. He worked for the common good and for raising the standards of society. The following are a proof of his many contributions and speak for themselves.

1) *OMONIA Society of Aperi, Karpathos*

*To Mr. Lambros Statamatiades*

*In appreciation and recognition of your devoted and faithful service and for being a founder of our Society and for supporting its ideals.*

*October 1, 1978*

2) The following award was given to Mr. Lambros Stamatiades on November 6, 1963 by the Union of Hotel, Motel, and Club Employees, Local Section.

This Local has 25 thousand members. Lambros was one of the organizers of the Local, which belongs to the American Federation of Labor with a membership exceeding 30 million.

*Be it known to all that*

*LAMBROS STAMATIADES*

*Having devoted 25 years of worthy service as a member of the Union to raise the strength and the dignity and the happiness of the worker, is honored with the present certificate of appreciation.*

*Given on the year of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary*

*November 6, 1963*

*The General Secretary  
Treasurer-Organizer  
(stamp)*

*The President  
Secretary of Records*



L-R: John, Marigo, Lambros, Fotini, Stephanos, Evangelia, Annika,  
John M. Scoulos, George (ca. 1944)

**A SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE  
OF  
MARIGO STAMATIADES**

The parents of Marigo were Ioannis Skoullou and Anna Skoullou, daughter of priest George Gergatsoulis (she was the oldest daughter of the priest). Marigo was their only child, born on November 4, 1906 in Othos, Karpathos. She attended the local schools and in 1921, at the age of 14, married Lambros Stamatiades.

Lambros and Marigo had the following children:

Anna (Organotopoulos from Athens) Fotini (Katsaras from Symi), Evangelia (Pergantis from Asia Minor). The three girls were born in Aperi, Anna (1924), Fotini (1925), and Evangelia(1929). The two sons, John (1935) and George (1941) were born later in America.

Marigo came to America in 1934 and devoted herself to raising and educating her children. She raised 5 children and taught them the Greek culture. In her free time, she worked for charitable and social causes. She was a founding member of the Women's Auxiliary of OMONIA in 1942. This organization supported the educational center of Karpathos in Aperi, and other good causes in Greece, with large amounts of funds and materials. She served as president of the Women's Auxiliary of Omonia during the years of 1951-1952 and 1952-1956. She was a member of the Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Gerasimos in New York City and of Saint Constantine and Helen in Jackson Heights.

Marigo visited Karpathos in 1960 and 1977 and lived with Lambros for 66 years of a happy and exemplary life, with each helping the other during difficult times in their life.

Marigo died on February 21, 1987, in New York City and was buried in the Cemetery of Saint Michael in Astoria. Her funeral was attended by relatives, friends, and others who knew her, as well as many representatives of Karpathian organizations.

In the funeral home owned by her son, speeches were given by Zoe N. Konstantinides and Popi D. Nikolaidis. They spoke about Marigo's good character and her community service.

Marigo is an example of a Karpathian woman with noble and Greek upbringing which she passed on to her children. She is also known for her worthy

service to the Karpathian organizations, especially to OMONIA, which honored her in a special ceremony with a golden plaque, which had the following inscription:

DEDICATED TO  
**MARIGO STAMATIADES**  
IN RECOGNITION OF YOUR MANY YEARS OF FAITHFUL AND  
DEVOTED SERVICE AS PRESIDENT OF OUR ORGANIZATION.  
THE WOMEN'S AUXILIARY OF APERI, KARPATHOS  
OMONIA, 1973

Marigo's and Lambros's three girls, Anna, Fotini, and Evangelia, were born in Karpathos. In 1934, Marigo and her only sister-in-law Anastasia, decided to join their husbands in the USA. The story goes that since they were good friends and Marigo had three girls and her sister-in-law had 2 boys, they would come to the U.S. for Marigo to have a son and Anastasia to have a daughter. Marigo brought her 4 year old and youngest daughter Evangelia. A year later, both mothers got their wish and Marigo had her son John. Anastasia asked Marigo when she wanted to leave the U.S. for Karpathos. Marigo told her she was not going back because her place was with her husband. In January of 1940, Marigo and Lambros arranged for their 2 oldest daughters to join them in the U.S. Later, Marigo and Lambros had their youngest son, George.



**CORRESPONDENCE**

Lambros J. Stamatiades

**RECEIVED FROM FRIENDS  
&  
RELATIVES**

## LETTER FROM BROTHER POTHITOS STAMATIADES

*3 March 1964*

*My dear brother, Lambros, greetings to you.*

*I received your letter dated February 8, 1964, but due to being very busy with the election campaign I delayed in responding to you and for that I beg you to forgive me.*

*You wrote to me that you attended the engagement of the son of F. Panagiotou and had a good time. I wish the same to George and your grandson, or whatever else you wish in your life. However, up to the time I received your letter we had not been informed regarding this event.*

*The election win of the working people you must have heard and it's not necessary for me to repeat it. Unfortunately, our nephew did not win because our relatives did not vote for him, instead they sabotaged his campaign in the worst possible manner, including the leadership of the village, especially our cousin Christophoros, whom I publicly cursed inside the bus. I told him "Greetings fellow villager but this time you are a traitor of the village because you voted against Georgios." He got angry and threatened me that he will file criminal charges against me. Some opponents of Georgios are encouraging him on this, including F. Sakellarides, M. Saris, N. Papanikitas, Tsagaris, E. Lambros, and some others sons of bitches. But I have on my side the chief of police, and these guys see that and are scared. Christophoros told me, "In the memory of your parents and the reputation of your brother Lambros I will withdraw my charges." Maybe, when you receive my letter, you can encourage him to withdraw it but don't tell him I told you to do it. Tell him, it's not proper to be spending money in courts. You know better than me how to say it so it does not seem that I told you to do this. I have information that now with the new government about 17 to 18 officials in Pigadia and Aperi will be replaced. These guys are fascists and have been harassing followers of the Democratic Party for years. The list has been sent to Rodos. In the end, Georgios did not lose because he got 5,266 votes and will be appointed to some important job in Rodos, maybe Perfect of the Dodecanese. All the sharks of Rodos and Karpathos will be brought to justice and democracy and fairness will finally prevail. That's what [George] Papandreou proclaimed. The ambassadors approached him to buy him off on Cyprus but they did not achieve their devilish goals. They think that he is like Karamanlis but he is not, he does not sell off our country to get some dollars. He also said that a war with Turkey is insane. Only if Turkey does something really stupid we must respond in kind. However, Greece is preparing itself*

*for any eventuality. We have the support of Khrushchev. I suspect Papandreou will soon fly to Moscow for consultations. You are probably well informed on this so I will not write any more.*

*You asked me to send you a picture of the farm but did not say why you want this. My camera is not working right now, the button that turns the film seems to be broke and needs fixing. If you need the picture urgently, let me know so I can find a way to do it. It seems that my trip will be at the latest in September of 1964.*

*I have no other thing to write now. Many kisses to all and hope to meet you soon.*

*Your brother Pothitos*

LETTER NO. 2 FROM BROTHER POTHITOS STAMATIADES.

October 4, 1964

Dear Brother Lambros, greetings:

From your letter dated March 10, 1964 which I received today the April 4, 1964 I am happy that you are all well and all the good news. I did not respond right away to your first letter, first because I wrote a few words to Anika for her to tell you, and second that I learned you are going to Florida, the true Paradise. You wrote in both your letters that John had a baby girl and Evangelitsa a boy. Congratulations to both. It appears that Evangelitsa was already pregnant when I was there. Now you must be very happy!

You wrote that you received a letter from Christophoros and he writes all the details of the case. It appears that the case is now dormant. It appears that he gave a correct account of what happened but he was encouraged to file a suit by M. Saris and Fragios Iatros. The police chief heard that we are related. I'll tell you the details when I get there. This is the mess that the village big shots are causing. Karpathos is now very unpleasant to hear the few that remain here. It's sad that I am even writing about this.

About Vronti, I will try to do what you wish.

The case about Cyprus seems to be getting even more complicated by the devilish involvement of the British. It appears that everyone woke up and wants independence now and for the British to leave from the Bases which they occupy in partnership with America. You wrote that a lot of Karpathians are leaving for here and will be here soon. Vangelitsa and her husband will be in Athens tomorrow, Sunday, and in Rhodes on Monday where our sister went three days ago to meet them. How is Maya and George doing? Also, how is Spyros and Anika and the foursome?

I think you are doing the right thing to go to Florida. When I have a conversation about you, I always say that my brother Lambros really knows how to live compared to all the Karpathians. I consider you as one of the luckiest and happiest of men. When one's eyes close, no matter where he is, he cannot look back. A person is born to live the number of years God prescribed, and he better enjoy them... I will stop here. Give the best wishes for the newborn from all of us. Soon we will meet in Jackson Heights.

With love,

Your brother Pothitis

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*LETTER FROM COUSIN «Christophoros»*

*Karpathos, 6 March 1964*

*Dear cousin Lambro, to your dear wife and your children, I send my greetings.*

*Zoe left on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February for Athens for treatments and I am leaving by ship this Thursday for Athens, if the weather is good. I will stay there at least two months.*

*The purpose of this letter is to inform you about the following: You probably already know about an episode that occurred on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, the day after the elections. The cause of this was your brother Pothitis. It happened as follows. On that day I took the bus from Aperi to go to Pigadia. The bus stopped as usual at the Bridge in Aperi for more passengers to board. I was sitting on the first row when the door opened and Pothitis got in and started ranting and raving at me, saying such things as "You are a traitor of Karpathos." I was totally surprised at this kind of a greeting. He repeated these curses over and over again, and then exited the bus before I could say a single word, and the bus took off. Do you realize my condition? The next day, I reported the incident to the police at Pigadia, and decided to file a law suit for being insulted in the presence of many citizens. I did this on my own volition. Nobody else told me to do this.*

*A few days later, I got called by the pharmacist Nikos Nikolaidis at his pharmacy. I was going there, but when I saw Pothitis inside, I left and did not enter. The pharmacist saw me and ran after me and pulled me into the pharmacy. Then Pothitis attempted to explain his behavior that he did not intend to insult me but that he was influenced by various others and was angry that the failure of our nephew Georgios to win the election was due to my campaigning against him so his opponents won. I told him that I will consider whether or not I would rescind my suit, because that's what he was asking me to do. I asked him for a written apology but he did not want to do that. He seemed to have in his mind the stupid idea that I would use that apology to do harm him. Finally, I relented and, wishing to end this horrible incident, I promised that I would rescind my suit, more because of Yannis Katros and Vangeloula Katrou and Polychronis Katros and you, Lambros Stamatiades.*

*And now let me say something about the politics of the affair. Dear cousin, when Gen. Papagos came to politics, I went with him and have been supporting his successors ever since for philosophical reasons and not anything that has to do with me personally. When in the elections of last November our nephew Georgios Hiotakis became a candidate for the Dodecanese, your sister Stasia asked me and Zoe to vote for him. I told her that, even though I saw no prospect of a win, we would do support our relative although we are not of his party. And that's what we did. Not only did we vote for him, but we refrained from supporting his opponents who happened to be our friends of the party we have been voting for years.*

*After the election I told these things to Logothetis, Georgios's father. In the last elections of this February 16<sup>th</sup>, Zoe was in Athens, so she did not vote, and I voted my old party, not because I want to harm Georgios, but I had serious reasons to support my party and I declared my intentions ahead of time. Some sycophants spread rumors that I had gone to Volada to campaign for my political party. It happens that I had gone to Volada prior to the election to find workers to cultivate my vineyards in Pini, because I intended to leave for Athens. The sycophants insisted that I went there for political reasons. Note that prior to the last elections I became upset by your sister Stasia who met me one day and told me to my face that she had an inkling that I would defect as a relative and not vote for her son and that she had her doubts that I voted for him in the previous election. I have no idea who was telling her these things and I did not want to discuss it with her because the mood she was in was not conducive to a useful discussion. However, this is not the reason I did*

*not vote for Georgios in the last election. As I mentioned previously the reasons were different.*

*This is the truth of this affair. I am not a traitor now or never was one. I always did my best, now and during my professional life as teacher I did what was good for the country and for Karpathos. I worked for the good of Aperi and for the High School, and always helped anyone that needed my services without any personal compensation.*

*When many pretended to be patriots in words only, there were some who risked even their life, and the life of their family for the good of the country. However, when the danger ended, the fake "patriots" went to the front of the line to claim their bragging rights and demanding rewards. I think we talked about this somewhat during your last visit in Karpathos. I wish to state that my reference above to sycophants and fake patriots does not include any relative of yours.*

*I wanted to write this letter so you have a clear idea of the real facts. The episode with Pothitis I have forgotten already but it would be proper to suggest to him to be more careful because he has in the past been an actor of a similar episode involving the port authorities and he exposed himself to unnecessary risk.*

*If you write to me, please respond to my Athens address.*

*With special esteem and love,*

*Christophoros*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> LETTER FROM COUSIN CHRISTOPHOROS

*Athens, 24 March 1964*

*Dear Cousin Lambros,*

*I received your 2<sup>nd</sup> letter a few days ago and yesterday your letter dated the 10<sup>th</sup>, which went to Karpathos and was sent to me from there. After I read it, I tore it up for security reasons, even though it is not mentioning any names. The events that happened afterwards proved that you were right in evaluating the situation and we took your suggestion because we knew they were coming from a person, not only a relative, but one with morals and intelligence.*

*The episode with Pothitis, as I wrote previously, I consider it done with and the suit was rescinded before I received your letter. Of course, Pothitis went overboard but he was in a state of agitation which was fed by some "clever" individuals to have fun.*

*The failure of Georgios in his first attempt was expected as I foretold it to your sister Stasia because I could see it was not possible to compete with other candidates who had their support in Rhodes, Kos, Kalymnos which are bigger population centers while Georgios was supported mainly in Karpathos and Kasos where even if he had gathered all the votes they still would not be enough for him to win.*

*Zoe was released from the hospital a few days ago with her condition improved. We will stay here a while longer before returning to Karpathos. The policies of the new American president seem somewhat strange, based on what you wrote to me. It will take a lot longer time until the world succeeds in going forward on the road of real progress and civilization with one real goal: to eliminate disease, dying due to lack of medical care, and to educate people so they don't become objects of exploitation.*

*My regards to cousin Marigo and to all members of your family.*

*We read the letter by Hatzimanolis and were very moved. I return it by attaching it here.*

*With high esteem and special love,*

*Christophoros*

*P.S. I had written this letter by Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> and on that afternoon we received a call that gave us the sad news that my nephew Pericles Chrysoheris died suddenly from a heart attack. He was buried the following day, Tuesday the 24<sup>th</sup>, and was send off by huge crowd of friends and relatives. It is superfluous to say how sad his sudden death left all of us. It will take a long time for us to recover from this painful wound.*

LETTER FROM Alikoula

22 August 1956

Dear Mr. Stamatiades,

*How are you? I hope all of you are fine. I was a little sick but now I am little better.*

*I wanted to write to you from the day you left but we had some troubles and I put it off. But I don't want to think that I forgot you. That will not happen, ever, and I esteem you more than any other gentleman I have met up to now. You are really a gentleman with the full meaning of the word and I don't believe that I will ever get a chance to meet anybody to take your place.*

*I hope we will see you soon and if you like please write me once in a while because I love that a lot.*

*Everyone here sends their love.*

*With high esteem,*

*Alikoula*

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22 August 1956

Dear Mrs. Marigo,

*First I want to beg your pardon for being a little late in writing you because I had to finish my school. Luckily I got very good grades.*

*Do you know that we spent together three unforgettable days at the baptism? When you left I was crying like a little child because I miss your company so much. You know that I love you and I often say aunt Marigo promised me that she will come to see me again. Please come when you get a chance.*

*How is Eva? Tell her that I'm still waiting for the letter that she promised to write, and I thought she loves me and she is my little sister. Please give her a very sweet kiss from me. Do the same for Mr. Stamatiades.*

*Write to me a few sweet words when you get the chance.*

*Alikoula*

LETTER FROM FRIEND NIKO SAKELLARIDES

2306 JEFFERSON PARK AVE.  
CHARLOTTESVILLE,

VIRGINIA

NICK G. SAKELL  
BUILDING CONTRACTOR  
"CUSTOM BUILT HOMES"

Aug. 25, 1956

*My dear friend Mr. Stamatiades,*

*I received your letter a while ago, and also every issue of OMONIA, and I thank you very much for the beautiful feelings towards me and my family.*

*Please, forgive for not writing to you sooner.*

*You know very well how busy I am in my business, and that's the reason I don't get a chance to fulfill properly my social obligations, especially towards friends like you!*

*Recently, I have had a small operation in my right eye and suffered quite a lot. Now I am recuperating and I believe that I will get back to full active duty in my business.*

*Nonetheless, we will never forget you and will always remember your golden heart and your very pleasant company!!!*

*Please give my warmest greeting to your esteemed family. You have the best regards from my family.*

*Also, I enclose my subscription to the OMONIA which I forgot to give before you left for Virginia.*

*I send you my warmest greetings*

*Nikos Sakellarides*

THEANO MARGARI: Christmas and New Year Card

*Theano Papazoglou Margaris  
2224 North Mulligan Street  
Chicago 39, Illinois*

*Dec. 18, Chicago*

*Dear Mr. Stamatiades,*

*What a surprise, and a lot of joy, with your card and the few words you wrote. I am happy especially for the wonderful thoughts about the Universe and society. Well put together in verse.*

*I expect that by now all your children are now married off and have their own families.*

*When I went to Rhodes I remembered you but every time I get a letter from someone in the Dodecanese I remember you. From Karpathos, a reader, Mr. Skoulos who lives in Orange, NJ, bought my books and sent them to the municipal library of the town. Your islands are beautiful.*

*I wonder why you did not write earlier to me, years ago, since you remembered me. But, better late than never.*

*Please give my greeting and my wishes for the holidays and the New Year to all your loved ones, and especially to your wife.*

*Theano P. Margari*

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Another card from the above:

*Yes, above all there is need today for understanding, and this Cyrus Eaton is worthy of praises, who, even though he is a millionaire, and old, he sees and does with clear eyes and brain.*

*My regards to you and Mrs. Stamatiades and your daughter, if they remember me.*

*Sincerely,*

*Theano Margari*

LETTER FROM FRIEND AT THE GREEK MUSIC CONSERVATORY

EVRI VARIKA-MOSKOVI  
IOANNOU DROSOPOULOU 155  
THL. 873767  
ATHENS 805

Athens, 24 Dec. 1962

Dear Mr. Stamatiades,

*You can't imagine how much pleasure and how much emotion I felt when I received your sincere congratulations that you had the good grace to write to me for the high position to which I was elevated at the Greek Music Conservatory (Odeion) and for sending such warm expressions and compliments you sent me for my new book "The First Flutterings."*

*Believe me, I confess sincerely, that among the many congratulations by prominent others, and dear compatriots, which I have received, for my writing achievements or for my musical achievements, your sincere and spontaneous expression meant a lot to me, even though I did not have the good fortune to ever meet you personally, I esteem you highly for your contributions to patriotic activities in the hospitable continent where you live and for the writings that distinguish you from many of our compatriots. It is true that you deservingly represent our native island abroad, and for that you must be very proud. Because nowadays that materialism is worshipped above all, many of our noble and patriotic ideals are dying off.*

*I hope that one day, with the help of God, we meet and face-to-face so I can express personally my admiration and esteem.*

*On the occasion of the holy holidays and the rise of the new year 1963, I wish from my heart to you, and to all your family, the warmest of my wishes, health, joy, and happiness*

*Many sincere greetings from my husband to all your estimable family*

*Evri Varika-Moskovi*

*Professor of the Greek Music Conservative*

*Writer-Folklorist*

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR OF THE ALBUM

Shadyside, 17-12-74

Dear Mr. Stamatiades,,

*I wish you merry Christmas and a happy New Year 1975. I wish it will be full of health and happiness.*

*From the OMONIA news bulletin and the albums that I happened to have assembled, I think I have here about 90% of the information I need to write the history of Omonia and publish it in the KARPATHIAN.*

*What happened in my effort for this article is that I collected so much information so I can even write a book about OMONIA. Now I will go ahead to complete the article and we'll see about the book later.*

*And for the book of the Women's Auxiliary, now at the printer, we started out in the same way. I asked then for information to write an article for the activities of Aperians in Wheeling and then it became a whole book.*

*I enclose a photocopy of Omonia dated November 1951. Unfortunately there is no page 6 so I can see the whole article "Founding and the Activities of OMONIA." We now must find page 6. Please help, help.*

*The other article "The first steps of Omonia for the building of the school in the Municipality of Aperion" is complete. The declaration appears a bit modified because the copy sent to me by Mr. Hatzidimitriou indicates there is something changed.*

*They have changed something but, in any case, I have the names that are of interest to us. Keep this issue of the newspaper for your records.*

*Your idea to send the albums to the High School is a good one. Why not to the City Hall of Aperion? Don't be in a hurry.*

*I am asking for the names of the Board of Directors from 1952 – 1958. Help, please, help, help!!*

*In the next few days I will start writing the article "The History of Omonia of Aperion, Karpathos, in the U.S.A." It will be very good.*

*I need something else: In the newspaper of October-November 1958 FANARI states that the Connecticut chapter was established. I want to find out which other board of directors were elected since then. Were there others elected or not?*

*To avoid misunderstandings, G. Makris will probably know these. Please, please help!!*

*I am waiting for your letter with the information that I am asking. I am certain that it will come.*

*Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, Peace for 1975*

*Mihalakis*

LETTER FROM "Christakis"

*Chicago, 14 August 1970*

*Dear Cousin,*

*A few days ago we returned from New York where we stayed for 5 days and when we came here found your letter from the 5<sup>th</sup> of this month. I was very saddened that we did not get the chance to meet and talk about what happened in our past, and also to talk about the future of Karpathos, which I wish that it is good but the prospects look grim.*

*America is threatening to make a desert out of Karpathos, and like Circe has magically transformed passersby into animals (swine). America magically transforms people not into swine but, by giving them all the comforts and promise for a better tomorrow, albeit through very hard work and a lot of sweat, they forget their hometown and the relatives left behind.*

*After one week I will return to Greece.*

*I wish good luck to your granddaughter on her coming wedding and may she be happy forever.*

*My son George and his wife and their two children are doing well and send their greetings. They are expecting number 3.*

*To your dear family I send my utmost greetings.*

*With high esteem and lots of love always.*

*Christakis*

707 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
New York 36, N.Y.

September 24, 1963

Dear Brother Stamatiades

Many thanks for your expression of concern during my illness. It was greatly appreciated.

Fraternally yours,

*(signature)*

Jay Rubin

Mr. Lambros J. Stamatiades  
37-1779<sup>th</sup> Street  
Jackson Heights 72, L.I., N.Y.

F. Mantinaos  
Kariotaki 1  
Salonika

\*\*\*\*\*

Aperi of Karpathos, 5 August 1971

*My dear cousins, Lambros and Marigo, I send you many kisses.*

*We send you our warmest wishes, first for your name day and second for your 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. May you live a thousand years of happiness, health and much joy.*

*Many kisses to all your children and grandchildren.*

*With love,*

*Kalliopi and Nikos*

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## **LETTERS FROM FRIEND: Franciscos Mantinaos**

*Dear brother Lambros, I kiss you with the brotherly kiss of real and genuine love.*

*I am very moved and want to thank you for your Easter wishes, for the thank-you card and your kind words which touched my heart.*

*The holiday of the Great Revolutionary who tried with his teachings to fill people's hearts with joy, love and peace—but where are those three blessings today?*

*Until when will the powerful of the Earth bully the people? Until when will they adulterate the solidarity of the people? Until when will they be setting up Golgotha to crucify nations and people? Until when will they be building factories to transform human sweat into weapons of destruction? Until when will they be soaking the soil of the Earth with the blood of innocents?*

*Bitterness fills the heart of every peace loving person when we see that the way things are going now it leads towards the final holocaust. Progress took us to the moon, it helped us discover so many things that made life easier but it did not help us find and keep the real love and peace in today's World.*

*The deeds for solidarity desperately are dying off while our efforts for new means of mass extermination are multiplying where palaces for the relief of humans, especially elders, should be, there are factories for war materiel.*

*The human laboratories, instead of being focused on the improvement of human life, with devilish efficiency are speeding towards the goal of being first to make weapons of mass destruction to be used against other humans and civilizations.*

*These you know much better than me, brother Lambros. But I bring them up here so you can see that in my 82 years I have not deviated from the ideology of love and peace, not by one iota. The same goes for you, constant, steadfast fighter, humanist, philanthropist with a clear soul, without knots and modifications due to hatred, greed, racism, a crystal clear soul, a clear conscience. And the flower of love, irrigated with the cool water of love.*

*I am happy, dear brother, and feel proud because age and time did not separate our hearts and did not bring forgetfulness. Blessed be the moment I met you, and blessed by the moment that brought us together at the little café in my village to rejoin our bonds of friendship until death do us part.*

*I kiss you, your brother,*

*Francisco Mantinaos*

*P.S. The warmest wishes for your family.*

*Thessaloniki, November 1977*

*Dear and unforgettable brother and friend, Lambro, I kiss you and your esteemed wife, and children, grandchildren and the rest of your relatives. I was reduced to tears as I read your letter and now I am responding to it with the same emotion.*

*Our true friendship that was born under the same hard conditions at the slave labor camps of the United Steel Corporation in New Castle bonded the two of us so tightly that, even though a half century passed since then, it has not been forgotten, it has not been come loose. The spark was kept in my heart so that when we met again in my village that August evening it ignited the flame, and this is not a metaphor but reality. At least that's what I feel this rekindling, and there is no doubt that you feel the same.*

*Your letter reminded me of so many friends and fellow students in the village when I was going to school there and had as a teacher Mr. Chrysocheris, Vasilis Pyristakis, Leonidas Philippidis, Pachountino, Annika Pothitou, Evdoxia Mikropantremenou, and later Konomo Kon., Manolis Kila (Karakatsani), Socrates Eliades, G. Chrysiades, Elias Vasilakou, all of the brothers Vlastos, especially Chazis who now is a monk in Mount Athos and with whom I correspond regularly. Rev. Papanikola Panagiotou, and so many others who I love and esteem. Maybe you remember that years ago there was a movement to move the High School. I opposed that because I felt that my duty was to keep it at the beautiful village where I had such great experiences.*

*Years ago, when my daughter Annika, with my niece Kleopatra, lived in Chalandri, I wrote to them often. Please give to her and to your wife and other children my warmest wishes.*

*And regarding the subject of the candidacy of my nephew, G. Hiotakis, even though I do not vote, immediately after I received your letter I wrote to certain relatives and friends to support him. I did this only for you, because I respect your political beliefs.*

*Unfortunately, in this place, the progressive and real democrats are persecuted and are not supported. From the bottom of my heart I wish him success. I believe that you know that Themistocles Protosaltis is my brother-in-law. His wife and my wife are sisters. He has remained faithful to the Karpathian traditions and lives in a paradise-like world. His estate has every kind of tree, watered from a spring in the property. He has 500 orange trees, equal number of pear trees, walnut trees, almond trees, olive trees, vineyard, bee hives, and animals of all kinds. It's a shame that the island is otherwise becoming deserted.*

*I am writing to you from Thessaloniki because my son is here at the University of Thessaloniki. Despite its fame as its Byzantine traditions, for me it's simply a place for my exile. I am very lonely here. One gets lost in the massiveness of a big city. I love the island and the village where I was born, the quietness, the clean air, the crystal clear water from the springs, the friends and relatives. No matter how much one tries to make new friends, it's difficult to do. Only old friends with whom we have bonded and our philosophies are similar can maintain friendships. A proof of that is our friendship.*

*No matter how much I write to you, my train of thought does not end. But I must stop at some point and wish you, your wife and all your family to have a good winter. Have happy holidays, joy and happiness. I also want to meet you again so we can continue the discussion about the beautiful pastimes we have had.*

*Sincerely,*

*Francisco Mantinaos.*

3<sup>rd</sup> LETTER FROM FRIEND Francisco Mantinaos

Thessaloniki, 20 Dec. 1977

*Dearest friend, Lambro, greetings to you and your esteemed wife, to your children and grandchildren. I wish to you all in al sincerity that the New Year be for your family a year of joy, the year of happiness.*

*I received your letter and leave it up to you to imagine my joy because I truly needed it here in this lonely place, the hometown of Alexander the Great. I never imagined that in my old age I would come to this place, a foreign place for me. But that's how life is, unsettled, and indeterminate. It is true that, in our homesickness, we live dreaming about our village. I consider fortunate those of my age who live there.*

*Our meeting there in the summer was a fortunate coincidence. It was a short meeting but sufficient to rekindle the old bonds after so many years of separation. The old bonds united us during our first bitter experiences in a foreign land. We bonded in a brotherly way because in our heart, since then and up to now, our ideology was based on the idea and the creation of a better society for the world, belief in breaking the chains that bind people in ignorance, superstition, belief in slavery of every kind and ever taboo.*

*It may be that we never achieved these goals, but we are satisfied that we did our best, and most importantly we kept free both our mind and our soul. I share your satisfaction for what you achieved, who you are and what you believe. I am glad that our friendship did not get tarnished dud not get tarnished with over this long period of time and I hope we maintain it till our last breath on this stormy and so corrupt world.*

*I am glad, my dear Lambro, that my letter made a strong impression on you. You should have no doubt that yours did the same with me. My wife said to me, "Lambros's letter has really shaken you up." I told her, "My emotion is justified because this letter talked directly to my heart." It turned my mind to those old years.*

*You, dear Lambro, must have seen how much damage immigration did to our beautiful island, imagine how I feel. I do not cease writing in my letters to those in the village how happy they should be because they enjoy the natural life, breathe a 100% clean air, see the life-giving sun, and enjoy the calmness and peace because we have become nervous wrecks from the noise, smog, and the congestion.*

*My brother-in-law Th. Protosaltis discovered very early the meaning of living a natural life and zealously devoted himself to the task. So, according to my calculations, he is one of the happiest in our village. His gardens are indeed the Garden of Eden. He has at least 500 orange trees and thousands of other fruit trees, bees, animals, chickens, rabbits. He says that he is happy, and I believe him.*

*We had elections, unexpectedly. The right wing appeared aged but succeeded to dominate again. But now it will a strong opposition party to contend with, Andreas and Zigdis. I felt sorry that Hiotakis lost.. Let's hope he will succeed in the next elections. Congratulations for the success of your granddaughter in the beauty contest. I wish her success and in the competition at Dodecanese Federation. I hope you live long to enjoy the successes of your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. My nephew G. Skoulatos, in his letters mentions you often, and I believe that he holds you in high esteem. I correspond with him often. He was the one who sent me the information that I published about Karpathos.*

*In my loneliness here, many times I think of the life we lived in the slave market of New Castle, the beastly labor camps in the Tin Mill and our friends who died there and the*

*others who dispersed and we lost contact. How much times have changed? I remember the Italian women where we lived in their homes and how we courted their daughters, and it's a miracle we escaped. I remember that Italian lady with one eye who had a daughter that fell in love with George Kontos... I remember Elias Pahountis who became a priest for the Pentecostal Mission. George Vlastos, the Mikropantremenos brothers, and so many others. How those years passed? What remains are the mixed memories that accompany us even at this advanced age. We fought off the trend that attempted to pull us off, and I consider that a big achievement.*

*Now let's change the subject. I don't know if you have come across an article of a newspaper in Washington, DC, with the title An AWARD. I copy it here translated, because you will like it. The newspaper opened a competitive award with money for the best characterization of the various nationalities and their psychology. The competition involved 1,000,000 competitors and the unanimous decision of the 15 member judging committee consisting of various experts was announced by judge N. Kelly for the characterization of the Greek. It says the following:*

*History has shown that the Greek has always performed below expectations, although his intelligence was always first rate. The Greek is smart but complains a lot, energetic but without planning, honorable but superstitious and hot-headed, impatient but a good fighter. He built the Parthenon and got so drunk with its beauty to make it later the center of discord. He produced Socrates in order to poison him. He admired Themistocles in order to exile him. He served Aristotle in order to persecute him. He gave birth to Venizelos in order to assassinate him. He built Byzantium in order to give it to the Turks. He brought 1821 in order to ravish it. He created 1909 in order to forget it. He tripled Greece and almost buried it. He kills for the truth, and then hates whoever denies the lie. He is a strange creature, undisciplined, strange, pretends to know everything, has uncertain disposition, he is an egotist, a wise idiot. Feel sorry for him, admire him, and try to classify him.*

*Sincerely,*

*Francisco Mantinaos (your friend forever)*

*P.S. If you like the characterization of the Greek, copy it and pass it on to your friends. In my opinion, this judge has deep knowledge of our history. But he did not mention Kolokotronis who was practically killed. Also, he did not bring up Kapodistrias, and others. I also wonder what kind of people we are. Imagine where we would be if Byzantium had not fallen?*

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#### 4<sup>th</sup> LETTER FROM FRIEND Francisco Mantinao

*Thessaloniki, January 1978*

*My dear friend, brother, ideologue, Lambro:*

*Greetings to you and your esteemed wife, to your children and rest of your family. I hope you are always happy.*

*With joy and high emotion I read your friendly letter and I greedily read it, and reread it to give my soul the chance to absorb it, to enjoy it, to feel the feelings of joy and sadness. Joy because being psychologically buried with me you found the time and the disposition to communicate with me from the other end of the ocean. Sadness because, although our souls are bonded together with brotherly love, we live apart.*

*Let then my soulful emotion spread on this soulless paper to reach and greet the brotherly soul there in the distant land.*

*Dear Lambro, at this moment I talk to you with my mouth. I talk to you with my heart and my hand refuses to write anything different than my feelings dictate.*

*The mind and intellect run back to the old, youthful years. The times when, indignant about the injustice in society, we struggled to make it more just, more humane, and even now we serve this same ideology.*

*However, we have been overcome by old age, which took away our energy for the struggle. How fast time goes? I think that our life is not as much as we once thought. It's much shorter because, by the time you get the basics of knowledge in school in order to face life, if things go well, you end up at 35 years of age. What's left until 60-65? And at that point, we start having visits from all kinds of unwanted visitors. Eyesight deteriorates, teeth fall off, the hearing gets dull, and all kinds of other nuisance visit us. What extra years do we have to enjoy our remaining life? But that's what fate has given to us humans.*

*You wonder why the Highest Being gives so much misery to the world. I have this question, but religion tells us that we inherited this from Adam. But let's put this aside and live to the theologians.*

*Being at this place, I observe the situation and conclude that, the way we are headed as individuals and as a nation, we face the risk of a civil war and the risk of a war with Turkey, which could destroy us a nation.*

*Nobody has the energy to create a just nation. Our people are divided. Corruption is rampant. One steals from the other. The state from the citizen, the citizen, in order to survive, steals from the state. I don't think Greece ever had a more incompetent government as it does right now (with the exception of the junta years).*

*I was really surprised about what you mentioned regarding inviting me for souvlakia. I never even thought of something like that. Besides the fact that you were a guest of others, actually it was our turn to invite you. When you left we talked about having you over for dinner at our house, because it was not that late. But don't worry about such a thing, and hope that fate will help us to get together for a REUNION, all of us who became friends under the most difficult working conditions.*

*I was surprised by the letter from your cousin N. Konstantinidis, and am glad you correspond with him. He is a good, honorable and charitable friend, and it's worth to be*

*connected with him. I like him a lot, as a cousin but more as a human being. I also like Maritsa, his niece, her husband, and her daughters. As for my nephew Georgios, he is something very special. He will be in Karpathos this coming summer.*

*Thessaloniki this year is really suffering from a heavy winter. I believe you also have a similar problem.*

*We heard Carter give his State of the Union speech but I prefer not to comment on it. America no longer produces Jeffersons or Lincolns.*

*I sent my kisses and I always esteem you.*

*Francisco Mantinaos*

.....  
*Thessaloniki, April 1978*

*Dearest friend and brother, fighter for human rights, humanist and complete man, Lambro, I am sending you my warmest greetings from the other side of the ocean, and also to your family, which, if you allow me to tell you, like me honors you and respects you.*

*I admit that you took some time to respond and naturally I worried. Like the parched earth awaiting the rain to cool I have also been waiting for your letter because, in this lonely place, the only joy I find it in the correspondence of my many good friends. Even though I live in a historic city which holds many interests, I would not be sincere, nor really truthful, if say that I am happy. As you know, Alexander the Great was born here. The Apostle Paul passed through here, here is where the martyrs Demetrios, Minas, Theodora, and Gregory were sainted. Here were born the saints Cyril and Methodios who spread Christianity to the Slavs. The city is full of ruins and remains of all who passed through here. The Roman emperor Galerius, Turks left mosques and minarets, Slavs, Armenians, Jews, and now hundreds of thousands Pontians and Greeks from Asia Minor. When in 1492 Columbus left with his three ships from Spain to discover India, as you know 25 Jews were kicked out of Spain by the Inquisition. They sailed East and settled in Turkey, and most of them here in Thessaloniki, where they dominated it. Hitler took from here 65 thousand for the crematoria in Auschwitz. In Chalkidiki, near by here is Stagyra, where as you know was where Aristotle was born, one of the greatest minds of all time. Tradition says he came from another world, a distant planet. East of here, in Thrace, is where Democritos lived, the man who discovered the atom. With all these, I am homesick to sit down under a pine tree in my village. And other thinkers of similar persuasion dreamed a world more peaceful, more brotherly, without discrimination, without exploitation of man by man. We tried as much as we could to change things. If the world cannot eliminate its tyrants and do the right thing, the problem is the large interests, the exploiters, the merchants of war. I see our Prime Minister who is running around Europe like a beggar begging to have us admitted in the European Common Market to save our country! Carter remembered Venezuela, Nigeria, and Liberia. I wonder why. Is it because he wants to tell the Nigerians that from there the old feudalists of Florida took the first slaves? Or is he interested in the oil? If the Turks took 40% of Cyprus and created 200 thousand refugees inside their own country. If the Israelis conduct a genocide in Lebanon, that does not interest those in power. We know these things very well, so let's change the conversation.*



*Karpathos, 29 July 1978*

*My dear unforgettable, fellow thinker, humanist, and friend, Lambro, greetings.*

*Give my greetings to your wife and to your whole family. My wife sends her greetings.*

*With a lot of joy I received your friendly letter and today I am responding, first to thank you for the joy you provided to me with the excellent and philosophical letters. I consider it justified to be very proud to have you in my list of friends, especially you who are in a special place in my heart. I am very happy that you enjoy with your faithful mate the coolness under the sycamore trees at your country home. I wish you many years more of this happy life, to live just as pair of turtle doves. Knowing that makes me very happy.*

*I share with you, dear Lambro, the emotion because the same happens with me when I read like a glutton your letters. My reply, the past summer in the little and modest café in my village was a happy occurrence because it resulted in renewing our friendship and to bloom like a flower after getting irrigated with cool water. Even though it was a short get together, nevertheless it filled our hearts with genuine and innocent joy. I will never forget this random and quick get together.*

*Cleopatra came and is enjoying the visit with Vasili and Despoina. She told me that she also received your letter. How much our opinions overlap regarding the unsettled conditions that prevail in the whole world today. We got to the moon. What it's the use? The sweat and the energy of today's world is wasted not for the good of humanity but for its destruction. Unfortunately, the teachings of the Carpenter from Nazareth has not found fertile ground in the hearts of mankind. The bitterness is more intense in the hearts of those that love peace and equality the most.*

*As a true observer and follower of Christ, Buddha, Moses, and Mohamed, all and each in his own way, contributes to this painful situation. I am very afraid that before capitalism expires, it will destroy our planet called Earth.*

*As for the trials for some traitors in Russia, it is natural that those who pretend to care for human rights are disturbed. But what happens in the countries of those protesters? Are the human rights in our great country of 250 million are respected and inviolate? Are they respected in the Union of European Nations? But you and I and those who think like us are capable of giving the correct answer. We lived and tasted plenty of bitterness and disappointment and will leave this life with the bitterness and unfulfilled wish and our passion for good health and just society. What a shame!.*

*And now a few words about the tragedy of Thessaloniki where it appears we are the only Karpathians to happen to be in this disaster. My wife and I had left before the earthquake and did not experience the fear and terror. But our son was left behind and suffered so much that it is difficult to describe. It was not only the suffering, but the damages, which for us are total disaster. About a year ago we had paid 3 million to purchase a large, brand new apartment. It also had the necessary furnishings. The earthquake damaged it a lot and now it is declared a total loss, uninhabitable. Also, his medical office was totally destroyed, as were all the furnishings and medical tools, and the library. As if this was not enough, the hospital where he works was also destroyed. Thus, within a few seconds we lost our life's savings earned with hard labor of a lifetime. Now I have no idea where we will spend the winter.*

*What can we do, dear Lambro? Do not praise anyone before it's all over.*

*I did not to cause you any worry but I thought you should know about this.*

*We are facing a serious problem and hope there will be some kind of a solution for us. All our winter clothing was left there. We are now refugees.*

*I wish you and your family health and happiness. You daughter Annika has not come yet.*

*Sincerely,*

*Francisco*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Othos, Karpathos, 3 September 1978*

*Dear brother and friend Lambro, and also your esteemed wife, your children and grandchildren, I hope you are all well and wish you from the bottom of my heart the best always for you.*

*I received your letter, dear and unforgettable friend, and my emotions are very high. I thank you for your good words that you wrote to me which warmed my heart and intensified my love for you.*

*I will always remember the happy occasion of our random meeting which refueled our spark of friendship which was hidden in the ashes of the problems that were loaded on us by today's consumerist society. With sorrow and sadness I follow the human race which so foolishly ignores the big problems which are piling up. The Earth has been abandoned, the tree was cut and left burning. The youth is wasting in the cafés and money corrupts everyone, soul, body and conscience.*

*This season we had in the village over 650 visitors, besides the tourists who have discovered our still clean beaches and hundreds of them come every week. Cleopatra left. I did not see your daughter Annika, which I wanted to very much. The newspaper clipping, which you so graciously sent me, I read with great interest, especially the one written by Theano Margari about the early immigrants, the cemeteries of Chicago and the unfulfilled dreams of those who were buried there under the heavy dirt of America. For us who broke our bodies in the factories of the UNITED STEEL CORPORATION, you and I are not against religion, in the contrary, we follow the Great Revolutionary and his teachings, in other words, the love our fellow man and peace for the whole world. If religion has been commercialized by the representatives of God on Earth, we do not disagree with Christ who took the whip and chased the money changers from the house of God. We are for peace in world, and consider all humans equal, irrespective of color.*

*For you who has studied deeply today's society and its problems and for me who benefits reading your letters, I am not in a position to compare myself with you. I hope all your friends recognize your value, your knowledge and your high moral standards. I hope this is true!*

*As for the tragedy of Thessaloniki, it was our luck to be the only Karpathians in this holocaust and lose so much. I spent all my life working to save enough to buy one apartment, 80 thousand dollars, plus some more that my son paid for improvements and furniture. Estimated total is 7 million drachmas. It's a real tragedy because the earthquake destroyed my son's medical office, its furnishings, medical tools, and books, and, on top of that, the hospital where he works was also destroyed totally. This situation has damaged my son's morale, besides us, and resulting depression is destroying our health. We are afraid to go there because we have no way to spend the winter, no heating,*

*no winter clothing. Here we have the summer clothing, and there we have the winter clothing. We are at the mercy of fate. I mention these things, my dear Lambro, only reluctantly because I do not want to wound your tender heart. Please forgive me.*

*With these I will end it here with the assurance that I will hold inextinguishable the flame of love in my heart, the esteem I have for you and the memories of you.*

*Sincerely,*

*Franciso Mantinaos*

*P.S. If you send me a letter, please send it here in Karpathos.*

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**THE END**



Lambros Stamatiades (1897-1993) was born on the island of Karpathos, Greece, in the southeastern Aegean Sea, where he received his elementary education. Despite his gifted intelligence and his family's desire to further his education, Lambros was attracted to a life of adventure and travel to far away places beyond his small Dodecanese island.

At a very young age, he quit school and journeyed to Khartoum in the Sudan to join his father and other Karpathians who worked there. Lambros returned to Karpathos when his father's job ended, but was restless and immigrated to the United States while still a teenager. Arriving in Ohio, he joined many other Karpathians as a coal miner. The conditions in the mines were absolutely horrific and unparalleled in terms of dangers, including frequent deaths, worker protests, strikes and firings.

He became active in the labor unions to fight for improved conditions, and was subsequently jailed and barred from working in the coal mines. When released, he found employment in the steel mills where the conditions were also perilous.

Meanwhile, his parents entreated him to return to Karpathos to engage in running the family farm. He returned to Karpathos, married and had three children. Again, Lambros became anxious for adventure and ventured, once more came to America, arriving at the peak of the Great Depression. Despite the hardships, Lambros was able to find employment in a New York City luxury hotel where he worked for many years and met and befriended many famous personalities.

Besides providing for his family, he became involved in community affairs as an organizer, a motivational leader, a writer, and a poet.

His Greek manuscripts were recently found and translated into English. The Hellenic University Club has published his writings at [www.HUC.org](http://www.HUC.org) so others, especially Karpathians, may easily access them in both languages, and enjoy the beauty of his verse, which reminds us of the meter, rhythm, and intonation of ancient Greek poetry.

Lambros Stamatiades, whose life spanned practically all of the 20th Century as a Greek-American immigrant, has softly echoed an old poetic art form with insight and effortless wisdom..

Advance Praise for

**The Journey of my Life**  
by  
**Lambros J. Stamatiades**

**“Life is a journey. When it comes to Lambros Stamatiades, a bright magical journey!”**  
Zafiris Gourgouliatos,  
President of the Hellenic University Club  
of Southern California.

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