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Living in Exile: The Greek Refugee Community in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

On Sunday, November 15, 2026, Hellenic Link-Midwest will present Professor Constantine Danopoulos, in a lecture titled “*Living in Exile: The Greek Refugee Community in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.*” The event will take place at 3 pm, at Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, 10249 West Irving Park Road at Schiller Park, Illinois (southeast corner of Irving Park Road and Mannheim Road). Admission is free. This lecture is supported by Hellenic Foundation Chicago.

The bloody Greek Civil War (1946-49) between the US supported government forces and the Communist-led insurgents ended in August 1949 with the defeat of the left. As a result, anywhere between 56 to 100 thousand mostly uneducated Greek citizens were stripped of their citizenship rights and were forced to seek sanctuary in Eastern Bloc countries, including the USSR. The ranks of the refugees included fighters of the insurgent Democratic Army of Greece (DAG), leftist sympathizers, as well as unarmed and helpless civilians caught in the conflict. The largest group of them (about 12,000)—mainly DAG men and women soldiers—ended up in distant Tashkent. But as more refugees arrived, separated families were reunited, and children were born, the Tashkent refugee community eventually (mid-1970s) reached an estimated 35–40,000 souls. The Tashkent community emerged as the most important, most dynamic, and the locus of developments in the entire refugee population (or refugee land). In the relatively friendly but nevertheless totally foreign environment, the refugees faced a plethora of immense social, economic, language, psychological, adjustment, and other difficulties, not to mention the heavy hand of the beaten but still overbearing Greek Communist Party (KKE), which operated as nothing more than an appendage of the Soviet authorities. This talk will make an effort to provide a synoptic view of the life of the Greek refugee community in Tashkent, explore the issues they faced, assess the development of the community over the years, and discuss the state of what is left of the refugee land since repatriation began in the mid-1970s.

Dr. Constantine P. Danopoulos, a native of Greece, is Professor Emeritus at San Jose State University (SJSU). He received his primary and secondary education in Greece and his college education in the US. He taught at SJSU for more than 30 years, and was visiting professor in a number of countries, including France, S. Korea, Argentina, and Chile. Dr. Danopoulos served as chair of the Political Science department at SJSU. He has written or edited 11 books, dozens of articles and book chapters, as well as numerous conference papers. His publications deal with civil-military relations, national security, poverty, bureaucracy, democratization, and the quality of democracy. He served as election observer in Bosnia (1996) and editor of the *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*. In addition, he served as the West Coast associate editor of *Mediterranean Quarterly* as well as on the editorial board of *Armed Forces and Society*, *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, and the *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*. From 1993 to 1999 he served as president/chair of the Research Committee on Armed Forces and Society of the International Political Science Association, and Fulbright Scholar to Greece. He is the recipient of the coveted President’s Scholar Award, the Warburton Award of Excellence in Research, and trice Pi Sigma Alpha Professor of the year.

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