

terpart, General Ioannis Ntavos, paid a return visit to Canada in October. More important, Premier Bill Davis of Ontario, the country's largest province, headed to Greece in September 1979 on a mission organized by Dr. Leonidas Polymenakos, president of the Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto. The premier met the president, the prime minister, and the minister of co-ordination, Konstantinos Mitsotakis, to whom he pitched Ontario as a source of foreign investment and CANDU nuclear reactors.²³

The Essence of Life

Greece's restored democracy proved strong and robust. In 1981, the former dissident Andreas Papandreou took over the government of Greece at the helm of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK). Trudeau was delighted at his old friend's success, but officials in the Department of External Affairs looked on darkly. They worried about Papandreou's public rejection of the European Economic Community and NATO, his strong anti-American views, and the strain these might place on bilateral relations. Their fears were misplaced. On assuming power, Papandreou would temper his positions on these issues. More important, his personal affection for Canada reinforced relations between Canada and Greece.

That was made clear when Trudeau sent Governor General Edward Schreyer to Athens to wave the flag in May 1982. He was accompanied by Canadian Minister of State for External Affairs Pierre De Bané, who was happy to supply Greece with military hardware and technology to reduce their dependence on US supplies. Greece's new head of state, President Constantine Karamanlis, returned the visit in October, visiting Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto, and meeting Trudeau, as well as Premiers René Lévesque and Bill Davis.

In March 1983, Prime Minister Papandreou travelled to Canada, visiting Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, and Ottawa. He was showered with honours. In Quebec City, the Greek prime minister was awarded the Medal of the National Assembly. Toronto Mayor Art Eggleton welcomed Papandreou "on his triumphant return to his home away from home", and York University granted him an honorary doctorate for his accomplishments as a politician and educator. Tens of thousands of cheering Greek-Canadians gave the prime minister a hero's welcome. Papandreou's visit allowed him to reassure Trudeau about his NATO and European policies. Papandreou also shared the enthusiasm of Canadian officials who were keen on advancing

Canadian interests in Greece and determination to see Greece rolling up his sleeves, highlighting a closer economic relationship in the traditional commerce and industry of the technological sector.

In the coming years, Greece was to invest in growing Greek culture. The campaign for a number of large Canadian projects, including the land, and Bombardier, since the 1980s.²⁴ Denisson M towards petroleum exports. Other well-established Canadian Bank of Nova Scotia, and a cultural presence in Greece, and natural projects provided by

Closer political and cultural relations between Greece and Canada. Papandreou's emotional return to Greece. Committees of the House of Commons the Canada-Greece Parliamentary members of Parliament to advance relations between Greece and Canada. In 1987, the former actress visited Canada. In Ottawa exchanges, which "will capture the essence of life." In Toronto, happy to be in Toronto, "It's a city that I adore"

A Lifting of Barriers

Bilateral political relations in 1989 and the end of the Greek government in Athens built on the back of a visit by Joe Clark in May 1989 and his Greek counterpart



Canadian interests in Greece. Eager to demonstrate his strong leadership and determination to secure Greece's prosperity, Papandreu set to work. Rolling up his sleeves, he convinced Canada that the time was right for cultivating a closer economic partnership with Greece, not only through growth in the traditional commercial and tourism sectors, but also via the development of the technological sector.

In the coming years, Greece worked hard to entice Canadian companies to invest in growing Greek markets and the country's expanding infrastructure. The campaign for Canadian investment paid quick dividends, as a number of large Canadian companies, including Denison Mines, De Havilland, and Bombardier, successfully competed for Greek contracts throughout the 1980s.²⁴ Denison Mines alone invested hundreds of millions of dollars towards petroleum exploration in the North Aegean during this period. Other well-established Canadian companies such as Air Canada, CP Air, the Bank of Nova Scotia, and the Royal Bank's Roy-Mideast established a physical presence in Greece, alongside the investment funds for major infrastructural projects provided by large Canadian banks.

Closer political and cultural partnerships followed in the wake of Papandreu's emotional return to Canada. A joint meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committees of the House of Commons and Senate resulted in the creation of the Canada-Greece Parliamentary Friendship Association, which united members of Parliament and senators from across the political spectrum to advance relations between Canada and Greece. Four years later, in October 1987, the former actress and Greek Minister of Culture, Melina Mercouri, visited Canada. In Ottawa, she signed an agreement to promote cultural exchanges, which "will do very great things for peace, the quality of life and the essence of life." In Toronto, she touched Canadian hearts. "I am very happy to be in Toronto," she enthused, her dark eyes brimming with tears. "It's a city that I adore".²⁵

A Lifting of Barriers

Bilateral political relations intensified with the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the end of the cold war. The election of a new conservative Greek government in April 1990 was followed by more political dialogue built on the back of a visit to Athens by Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark in May 1990. Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and his Greek counterpart, Konstantinos Mitsotakis met too at the Paris

Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) Summit in November of that year. The two leaders were determined to support the spread of democratic values, personal freedoms, and free enterprise, all made possible by the end of East-West conflict. The growing crises in the former Yugoslavia and the Balkans also shaped relations through the 1990s. The two NATO allies regularly discussed stability in the Balkans, where Canada treasured Athens' knowledgeable perspective.

Greece backed the novel post-cold war human security agenda promoted by Canada's foreign minister, Lloyd Axworthy, whose policies favoured individual security over state sovereignty. In 2002, Athens contributed over \$100,000 to a Canadian initiative to destroy small arms stockpiles in Albania. The following year, it adopted the Ottawa Convention, which outlawed the use of anti-personnel mines. Occasionally, there were tensions. Greeks worried when Canada withdrew from the UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus in June 1993, after 29 years of critical service, and the countries differed over the name to be used in bilateral relations with Greece's Balkan neighbour

Former Governor
General of Canada
Michaëlle Jean with
President of the Hel-
lenic
Republic Karolos
Papoulias during
State Visit to Greece
(October 2009)

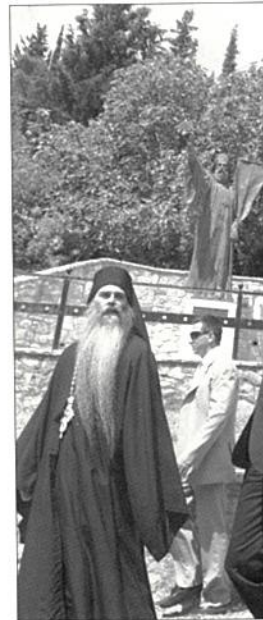


to the north in Skopje. Close political relations, however, meant that such disagreements were generally handled discreetly and sensibly.

Canada-Greece relations remained strong into the 21st century. As always, political and economic ties were buttressed by Canada's thriving Hellenic-Canadian community. By 1990, almost 70,000 Greek-born immigrants

had settled in Canada. By 2009 an estimated almost 50,000 Canadian ship with a deeply hun part of mainstream cul mid-1990s, three mem and Jim Karygiannis, cl Pappas Merchant and I and 2009 respectively, a tive member of Parliar almost a decade. Georg evision, hosting the ni Tonight".

Cultural ties flouris renamed the Canadian range of the Institute's tre for Canadian cultur in 1997, and Canada p Capital of Europe festi signed agreements for tion in 1998. A chair i of Athens in 2002, wh



had settled in Canada. Another 225,000 Canadians claimed Greek heritage.²⁶ By 2009 an estimated 20 to 25 thousand Canadians lived in Greece and almost 50,000 Canadians visited annually, providing the bilateral relationship with a deeply human dimension.²⁷ Greek-Canadians were increasingly part of mainstream culture in Canada, and never more successful. By the mid-1990s, three members of Parliament, Eleni Bakopanos, John Cannis, and Jim Karygiannis, claimed Greek origins. There were soon others. Pana Pappas Merchant and Leo Housakos were appointed to the Senate in 2002 and 2009 respectively, and in 2011, Costas Menegakis was elected Conservative member of Parliament for the Ontario riding of Richmond Hill. For almost a decade, George Stroumboulopoulos has been a fixture on CBC television, hosting the nightly “The Hour” and “George Stroumboulopoulos Tonight”.

Cultural ties flourished as well. The Canadian Archaeological Institute, renamed the Canadian Institute in Greece in 2005 to better reflect the full range of the Institute’s interests, continued to function as an unofficial centre for Canadian culture.²⁸ Athens and Montreal were declared sister cities in 1997, and Canada participated actively during the Thessaloniki Cultural Capital of Europe festivities in 1997. There was more. The two countries signed agreements for film co-production in 1997 and educational cooperation in 1998. A chair in Canadian Studies was established at the University of Athens in 2002, while centres for Hellenic Studies were opened in To-



Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper with former Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou at Kalavryta Massacre Memorial during official visit in May 2011

ronto, Montreal and Vancouver. “These centres”, Simon Fraser University President Andrew Petter insisted, will “truly connect education across continents”.²⁹

Trade and commercial relations kept pace as the two economies grew more complex and inter-connected during the first decade of the new millennium. In Ottawa, there was a fresh appreciation for Greece’s importance as a bridgehead to the large regional economy of south-eastern Europe. Though trade between the two countries fluctuated widely, its trend was slowly upwards. It was doubtless helped along the way by the work of the Canadian-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, established in 1996. Canadian exports grew from \$97 million in 1990 to \$120 million in 1996 to \$175 million in 2003. Greek exports to Canada, mostly preserved food, aluminum, and olive oil, mounted as well, totalling \$71 million in 1990, \$84 million in 1997, and \$113 million in 2003.³⁰ There were setbacks after 2005, when Greece restricted imports of Canadian wheat, and 2008, when the world economic crisis struck, drastically slowing the Greek economy. Clearly, more work was needed, and in 2009, Canada’s Conservative Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon headed to Athens to sign a new double taxation avoidance agreement. “The current global and financial downturn calls for the lifting of barriers on trade and investment,” the minister declared. “This tax treaty does just that, and will benefit both the Canadian and Greek economies”.³¹

There was better news elsewhere. Since the 1990s, Canadian trade officials had paid increased attention to the importance of trade in services, and when it came to Greece the numbers were good. In 2008, Canada exported services worth \$470 million, making Greece Canada’s 16th most important service export market in the world. Canada was even more important for Greece, which provided Canadians with \$1.3 billion dollars’ worth of serv-

ices, mostly shipping a investments too. The Pe couver-based Eldorado investment of \$200 mill investment in the projec largest investments in re of jobs and yield more sharp reminder of Gree



Photographs

- 1 Resolution signed by King George B' of Greece and cabinet members approving the establishment of a Greek Embassy in Ottawa, staffed by an ambassador, an administration officer and an assistant.
- 2 Letter from the office of the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs in Ottawa to George Depasta, Minister Plenipotentiary of Greece to Canada, proposing the appointment of Brigadier George P. Vanier as Canadian Minister to Greece, located at the Canadian High Commission in London.
- 3 Letter from Major-General George P. Vanier to Georges S. Depasta, first Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Greece to Canada, on the occasion of the former's visit to Ottawa.
- 4 Telegram announcing the appointment of Mr. George S. Depasta as the first Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Greece to Canada.
- 5 Farewell letter from Canada's first Ambassador Greece, Léo Richer Laflèche, to Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Constantine Tsaldaris, on the occasion of the conclusion of the latter's departure assignment in Greece.

Canadians have long On his visit to Kalavryti paid his respects to the ahead too. He met with heritage so closely ref dreou's grandfather led the decks of a Canadian dictatorship to democr temporary Greeks strugg tion of 2008, Harper n “Canada”, he assured h omy, which will event The two long-standing

ices, mostly shipping and tourism. There were significant new Canadian investments too. The Perama Hill Gold Mining project directed by the Vancouver-based Eldorado Gold Corporation, for instance, represented an initial investment of \$200 million. Further developments in 2012 bring the total investment in the project to a staggering 2.5 billion Euros, one of the single largest investments in recent years. The project, which will create hundreds of jobs and yield more than 100,000 ounces of gold annually, serves as a sharp reminder of Greece's potential.



Prime Minister
Antonis Samaras
meets with Speaker
of the Canadian
Senate Noël Kinsella
during latter's visit
to Greece
(September 2012)

Canadians have long known of Greece's capacity for rebirth and renewal. On his visit to Kalavryta, Prime Minister Stephen Harper looked back, and paid his respects to the Greek victims of fascism and tyranny. But he looked ahead too. He met with Prime Minister George Papandreou, whose family's heritage so closely reflects the long Canada-Greece relationship. Papandreou's grandfather led his country from war to peace in 1945, starting from the decks of a Canadian destroyer. His father helped bring his country from dictatorship to democracy in the 1970s from his base in Toronto. As contemporary Greeks struggled to right their economy, devastated by the recession of 2008, Harper made it clear that Canada remained nearby to help. "Canada", he assured his host, "wants to be part of the strong Greek economy, which will eventually emerge on the other side of this nightmare". The two long-standing allies were already moving forward together.

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- 4 See: John Hilliker (ed.), *Documents on Canadian External Relations, Volume 9: 1942-43* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1980), 1830-31.
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