

SPECIAL EDITION MARCH 2021

# 1821 2021

This selector's issue celebrating the 200 years since the commencement of the Greek war for its independence from Turkey was made possible by a generous grant from **Archon Michael Psaros and Family**



**The National Herald**  
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Welcome to The National Herald’s Special Edition dedicated to the 200th Anniversary of the commencement of the Greek struggle for independence.

Although we were not afforded the ideal conditions to celebrate this momentous occasion, the significance of the Bicentennial will not dissipate. Greece’s struggle for its independence was about perseverance, about defeating the odds, about determination. It was about the few leading the many, and the many making the sacrifices that helped realize the bold plans of the few – about how ordinary men and women became extraordinary heroes, about a dazzling idea that became a powerful movement. These ideas are not unfamiliar or distant to us given our recent past and the boldness, determination, and sacrifices of our immigrant forebears.

While we may have a basic understanding of the history of the War from our Greek School textbooks coupled with stories from our parents and grandparents, I can assure you that the curated texts in this edition will prove invaluable for a more holistic understanding of this momentous event in our history and how we may benefit from those experiences as we march towards the future.

In this edition, we examine a plethora of topics including the correlation between America’s abolitionist movement and the Greek



Revolution, Lord Byron and his contribution to the efforts of the Hellenes, the benefactions of lesser-known heroes of the War, the art that was inspired by the valor of the Greeks, the crucial initiatives of the Diaspora that led Greece to its victory, as well as many other fascinating topics that are as relevant today as ever. The revolutionary ideas that propelled the Greek heroes and heroines were not just pertinent for the time period; they are principles that are just as inspiring today as they were 200 years ago.

For all but 94 years after the commencement of the Greek War for Independence, the National Herald has been telling the story of the Diaspora. The fight for freedom did not end with the Ottomans; we fight for it every single day. We here at TNH fight daily to tell the stories that matter to you and we will continue to fight to keep our community united and our culture vibrant generation after generation.

Let the Hellenes of the Diaspora carry the spirit of 1821 into everything that we do and let us never allow the soul and ideas that fostered the Revolution to ever die.

**Ζήτω η Ελλάδα!**

**Vanessa Diamataris / Editor-Publisher**



# The Greek Revolution of 1821

By Alexander Kitroeff




The Greek revolution of 1821 was a remarkable event, for it led to the emergence of the first nation state in the domains of the Ottoman Empire that had ruled the lands of the Eastern Mediterranean for centuries from its capital Constantinople, captured from the Byzantines in 1453. The revolution was an occurrence that transcended the confines of the Ottoman Empire, it can be considered an event of global significance. The Greek rebels were inspired by the ideas of the European Enlightenment and the examples set by America’s proclamation of independence in 1776

and the French revolution of 1789.

The Greek rebels benefitted from the intellectual, political, and material assistance offered by the Greeks in the Diaspora. Among them were the intellectual Adamantios Korais, the visionary rebel Rigas Velestinlis and the Philiki Etaireia (Friendly Society) an organization of Diaspora merchants. Korais lived in Paris and his writings, reflecting the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution that he witnessed firsthand, called for the cultural regeneration of the Greeks. Korais met Thomas Jefferson in Paris and the two men kept up a correspondence in which Korais solicited the American founding father’s advice on the events in Greece. Rigas, better known as Rigas Fereos, was the most prominent among the activists who envisioned parallels between the French Revolution and a future Greek uprising. He imagined a Greek-led Balkan republic emerging on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. He also apparently made plans for an uprising but the Habsburg authorities arrested him and his co-conspirators in Vienna and handed them over to the Ottomans who executed them in Belgrade in 1798. The Philiki Etaireia, established in Odessa in Russia, worked directly to lay the ground work for the uprising.

The Greek revolution was global also because it resonated throughout Europe and the Americas. Its successful outcome would be determined by the intervention of the Great Powers – Britain, France and Russia – on the side of the Greeks. Prior to that, American and European philhellenes had offered substantial material and moral support to the revolutionaries. European philhellenes expressed their admiration for the Greeks, and those with literary and artistic talents were moved to shed light on the plight of the Greeks. They included the poets Percy Bysshe Shelley, who wrote “we are all Greeks” in the preface of his verse drama Hellas (1821), Lord George Byron, who had traveled to Greece to aid the uprising, and the French artist Eugène Delacroix whose oil painting The Massacre of Chios completed in 1824 provided immediate and dramatic publicity to the worst instance of atrocities committed by either side during the Greek revolt, this one being the destruction of the island of Chios and its inhabitants by the Ottoman fleet. The bravest philhellenes, about five hundred, formed a volunteer force to fight on the side of the Greeks, but their services



# Commemorating the Heroes of 1821 and 200 Years of Freedom

Sofia and Angelo K. Tsakopoulos  
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the ultimate sacrifice

**25 March 1821 - 25 March 2021**

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were short-lived as most of them perished in their first major battle at Peta, near Arta in western Greece in 1822. Finally, a philhellenic committee in London managed to arrange for the first of two loans to be made to the Greeks, but it was weighed down by huge commissions and a high interest rate. This contributed some material help next to the considerable morale boost the philhellenes provided, but ultimately the fate of the uprising would be decided by the foreign policies of the European Powers, not their intellectuals or public opinion.

In America, there was already a strong philhellenic movement because of the significance Americans attached to the legacy of Classical Greece. Its best expression was the proliferation of Greek Revival architecture along the East Coast. News of the Greek uprising galvanized Americans because they saw the Greek quest of freedom as a direct reflection of America's achievement of freedom in 1776. Americans also supported the Greek cause because they saw the Greeks as fellow Christians and also as human beings who were suffering under the Ottomans. Towards that purpose volunteers such as the physician Samuel Gridley Howe (1801-1876) traveled across the Atlantic to help the Greeks and prominent citizens of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia formed committees that raised funds for the Greeks and chartered ships that brought them arms and supplies.

The early proclamations of the leaders of the 1821 revolution combined invocations of the new ideas of nationhood with the Orthodox religious identity. The first uprisings took place in Peloponnese (known then as the Morea) in southern Greece and in the Danubian Principalities, where a Greek



force entered from Russia. The uprising in the principalities came to a heroic end very soon but not before its leader, Alexandros Ypsilantis (1792-1828), a Greek who had served in the Russian army, set the tone of the revolt with his proclamation issued on February 24, 1821 titled, significantly, Fight for Faith and Motherland. The text that followed called upon the 'Hellenes' to join the uprising in order to follow the example set by Europe – that was wondering at the inertia of the Greeks – and to gain freedom, to heed Divine Providence that called upon them to raise the cross, and finally, in order to emulate the heroic deeds of their ancestors

at Marathon and Thermopylae.

The rebels in Morea invoked a similar range of rallying cries to persuade the population to rise up against the Ottomans. It was there the rebellion took root while the uprising in the Principalities collapsed. Ypsilantis fled to the Habsburg lands where he remained until his death in 1828. In contrast, the rebels in Morea where the Philiki Etaireia had done some good preparatory work, scored some early successes, as did their comrades across the Gulf of Corinth in Mainland Greece (Rumeli). Their struggle against the Ottomans consisted of guerilla-style attacks on fortified towns, and in the case of

those that were ports they received support from vessels sent from the islands of Hydra and Spetses, off the Eastern coast of the Morea, that joined in the revolt. The leaders were the local notables and the heads of the local military bands who had been in touch with the Philiki Etaireia and had embraced the cause of a nationalist revolt against the Ottomans. Their proclamations echoed calls for political and religious freedom and they also called on the Greeks to prove themselves worthy ancestors of the heroic warriors of Ancient Greece.

The revolution began in March 1821, its symbolic moment coming when Greek Orthodox Bishop Germanos of Patra in Morea raised the flag of the revolt on March 25th, an important date in the Orthodox Christian calendar that marks the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary. In fact, the revolt had begun a few days earlier in the same region. With a large part of the Ottoman garrisons in Morea dispatched to the north to combat a local Ottoman warlord, Ali Pasha, the local Muslim population sought refuge in the walled towns and the Greek armed bands lay siege to them. There were bloody clashes between the two sides with the Muslims in Morea faring the worst. Indeed, the entire seven years the uprising lasted witnessed bloody battles and violence on combatants and civilians inflicted by both sides. There were Greek uprisings in many of the mainland regions and islands inhabited by Greeks, but the three areas where revolutionary activity was sustained and was ultimately successful were Morea, Rumeli (Central Greece) and the maritime islands of Hydra, Spetses and Psara whose merchant ships were transformed into a small but effective naval fleet. In a failed attempt



Greek  
Independence  
Day

The Daughters of Penelope salutes the Heroes of the Greek War of Independence – Hellenes and Philhellenes – and remembers and reflects upon their sacrifices.

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As we celebrate  
the Bicentennial  
of the Greek War for  
Independence  
1821-2021

# FREEDOM or DEATH

We must never forget  
the sacrifices and struggles  
the Greek people suffered for

## 400 years

## Ζήτω η Ελλάδα

Best Wishes

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to put down the Greek uprising, the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II ordered massacres of Greeks in the Aegean as well as in Smyrna and in Constantinople where the head of the Orthodox church, Patriarch Gregorios V was executed.

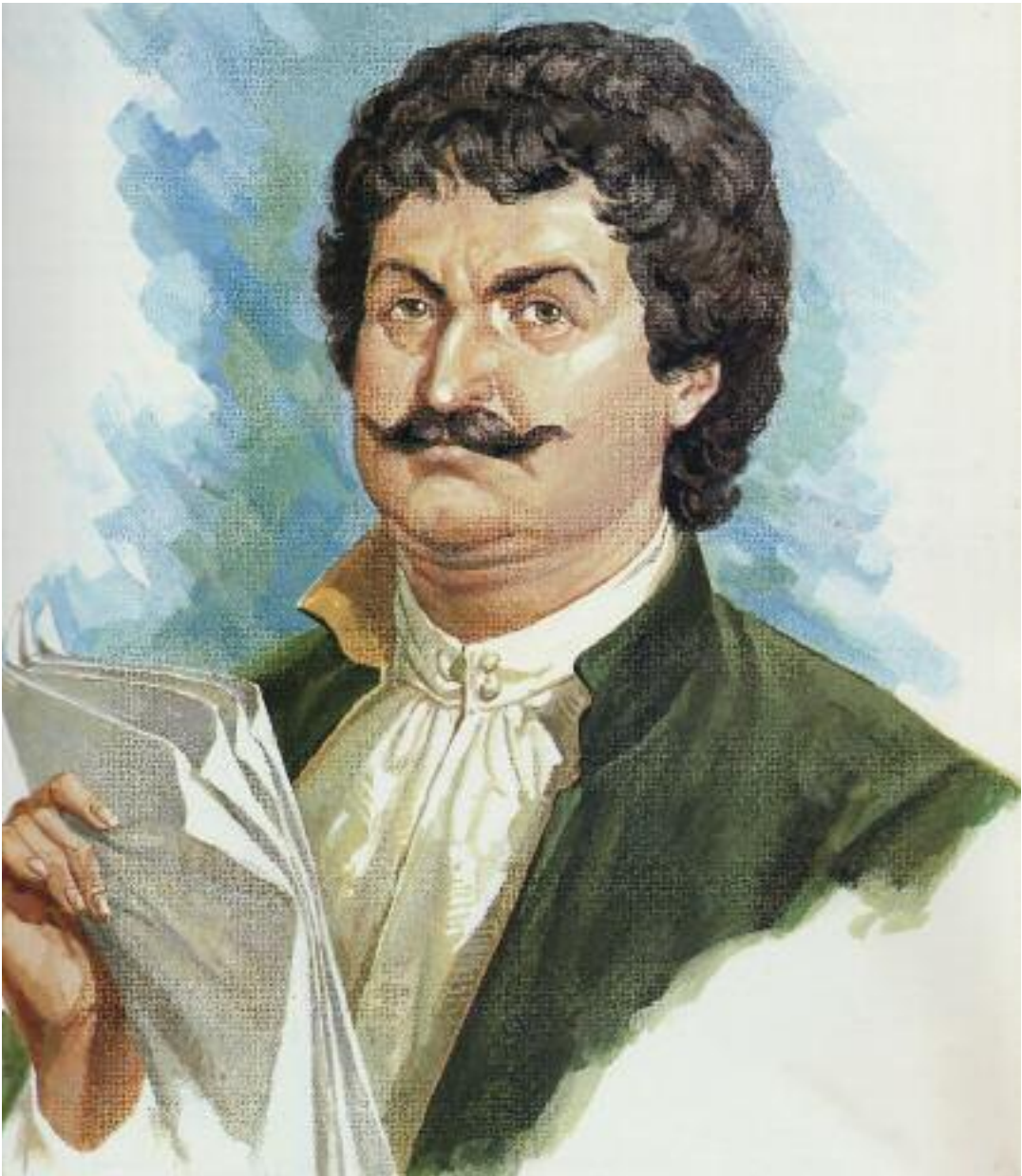
By the end of 1823 the Greeks had taken over major fortress towns in Rumeli such Mesolongi and they forced the Ottoman garrison in Athens to barricade itself on the Acropolis. Greek control of towns was even more extensive in Morea, and Nafplion emerged as the center of the Greek operations. One of the early major Greek victories came when a Greek force under Theodoros Kolokotronis (1770-1843) repulsed an Ottoman army that attempted to recapture the Morea at a fierce battle at Dervenakia.

Other significant clashes between the Ottoman forces and the Greek military bands took place in the regions of Roumeli and Epirus. One was at the Alamana Bridge near the town of Lamia in 1821, where the death of Athanasios Diakos (1788-1821) provided an example of heroic martyrdom and another was in 1823 at Peta in Epirus where the Greek forces led by Alexandros Mavrogordatos (1791-1865), a Constantinopolitan Greek and future prime minister of Greece, included many philhellenes from several European Countries. A battle near the town of Karpenisi in 1823 cost the life of Markos Botsaris (1788-1823), who was one of several leaders of military bands from Souli, the mountainous region of Epirus who played a significant role in the Greek uprising.

The rebels also benefitted from the skillful actions of the Greek navy that provided supplies and protection. The captain and merchant Andreas Miaoulis (1765-1835) who was from Hydra led the Greek naval operations. Konstantinos Kanaris (c. 1790-1877) a seaman from Psara, led several successful daring actions that involved setting fire and destroying Ottoman warships. After the end of the revolution he served in several government posts including prime minister in the 1840s.

In 1823, the Greek poet Dionysios Solomos, inspired by the heroism of the Greek rebels wrote The Hymn to Liberty that recounts the desolation of the Greeks under Ottoman rule, their hopes for freedom, and the early events of the revolution. Set to music three decades later it became the national anthem of Greece and later on of the Republic of Cyprus.

With the hostilities between the two sides at a stalemate, and infighting breaking out among the Greeks, the Ottoman Porte solicited the help of Egypt, a semi-independent province of the Empire in order to launch a counter offensive and quell the uprising. Sultan Mahmud II realized he would have to solicit the help of Mohamed Ali, the pasha of Egypt and pay the high price demanded: the annexation of the island of Crete to the pashalik of Egypt and the appointment of Ali's son Ibrahim as



pasha of the Morea. The Egyptian general landed his troops in February, 1825, on the southwestern tip of Morea at Methoni, one of the forts still under Ottoman control. On its way to Morea the Egyptian army quelled an ongoing Greek uprising on the island of Crete in a bloody manner, giving early notice of Ibrahim's belief in what Clausewitz would describe as the need to wage war in its totality.

Ibrahim's campaign was indeed a turning point, but, improbably, his victories, that almost extinguished the Greek revolt, jolted the European Powers into action in support of the Greeks. Within eighteen months of his landing, Ibrahim was in strategic control of almost the whole of Morea with the exception of the port town of Nafplio to the northwest and the plundering of the homes and livelihood of the local population gave rise to descriptions of smoking ruins and desperate escapes of villagers to the highlands with what livestock they could rescue. Ibrahim's forces had come close to taking Nafplio following the attack he unleashed in the first few months of their presence that saw

their conquest of the towns of Kalamata and Tripolitsa (present-day Tripolis), but his lighting progress through Morea had exhausted his supplies.

In early 1826 he turned his attention instead to mainland Greece and joined the Ottoman forces that had laid siege to the port town of Mesolongi on and off for over three years. This was where the philhellene poet Lord Byron had spent several months and had died in April 1824 when his health gave way. By that time the besieged had already become a cause célèbre among European philhellenes. They augmented that aura by attempting a desperate sortie out in late April 1826 only to be hacked down by the Ottoman forces who then plundered the city. Three decades later, the moment of the heroic exodus from the city's walls became the subject of one of the best-known Greek romantic era paintings by Theodoros Vryzakis. Ibrahim then continued his devastation of Morea and Tripolitsa. But Nafplio and a few other smaller towns were still in the hands of the Greeks.

Throughout the Greek revolt the Great Powers had stood by, weighing whether to intervene. The future of the Ottoman Empire, that appeared to be increasingly fragile, caused tension among the European powers, each of which feared that one of the others might benefit from any territorial changes of the status quo. In light of the Greek gains in July 1827 Britain France and Russia signed the Treaty of London, that reiterated the terms of and earlier agreement that recognized the existence of "Greek Provinces" and the islands that the Ottomans were unable to control and asserted that henceforth Greece would be a dependency of the sultan and pay tribute but choose their own authorities. Crucially, the Powers undertook to ensure the "pacification of Greece" and to guarantee the viability of the terms of their agreement. An autonomous Greece suddenly emerged, if only still on paper.

The theory would turn into practice within a few months in a most dramatic manner when the Porte ignored the Treaty of London. One of the reasons Sultan Mahmud II was disinclined to back down was that Ibrahim had strengthened his position in Morea even though there were defiant pockets of Greek resistance, most notably the forces under Kolokotronis. But Ibrahim's position was strengthened further thanks to the arrival of an augmented Egyptian and Ottoman fleet that anchored in the bay of Navarino, on the Southwestern Morea coastline.

The treaty of London had provided for the creation of a tripartite British, French, and Russian fleet for the purpose of enforcing a Greco-Ottoman armistice. A joint British, French, and Russian fleet duly arrived on the scene in September 1827, in order to blockade Ibrahim's fleet. The instructions issued to that fleet were imprecise and this became crucial when the tense stand-off between the three allies and the Ottoman Egyptian fleet escalated from an exchange of shots to a fully-fledged naval battle breaking out. At the end of that fateful day, October 20, 1827 the Egyptian/Ottoman fleet was completely destroyed and so were Ibrahim's hopes of maintaining control of Morea.

The outcome of the naval battle at Navarino tipped the diplomatic as well as the military advantage away from the Ottomans and pushed the Greek cause closer to success. The Greeks obtained control of Morea and continued to fight the Ottomans in Rumeli. The Sultan's retaliation against Russia, closing the Dardanelle Straits, the waterway between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, backfired when the war that broke out between the two Empires ended with an Ottoman collapse. In the ensuing treaty of Adrianople (Edirne) in 1829 the Sultan was forced to promise autonomy to Greece. The final step in the process that had been unleashed in 1821 was when the Great Powers agreed to the establishment of an independent Greek state in 1830.

# In Honor of Greeks Who Sacrificed For Freedom

**“Never Forget Where You Come From”**

**“Ποτε μη ξεχνάτε τις ρίζες σας”**

*— Late George Christopher, Champion Hellene and Former Mayor of San Francisco*

## Dance of Zalongo

Farewell poor world, farewell sweet life,  
And you, my oppressed homeland, farewell for ever.  
Farewell my springs, my valleys, mountains, and hills,  
Farewell my springs, and you, my women of Souli.  
Fish cannot live on the land, nor can the flower in sand,  
And the women of Souli, cannot live without freedom.  
Women of Souli, they know how to survive,  
And know how to die, to not be enslaved by others.  
Farewell my springs

**Freedom or Death**

## Χορός του Ζαλόγγου

Έχε γεια καημένε κόσμε, έχε γεια γλυκιά ζωή,  
Και 'συ δύστυχη πατρίδα, έχε γεια παντοτινή  
Έχετε γεια βρυσούλες, λόγγοι, βουνά, ραχούλες,  
Έχετε γεια βρυσούλες, και σεις Σουλιωτοπούλες  
Στη στεριά δε ζει το ψάρι, ούτ' ανθός στην αμμουδιά,  
Κι οι Σουλιώτισσες δεν ζούνε, δίχως την ελευθεριά.  
Οι Σουλιώτισσες δε μάθαν, για να ζούνε μοναχά,  
Ξέρουνε και να πεθαίνουν, να μη στέργουν στη σκλαβιά.  
Έχετε γεια βρυσούλες

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*May the Spirit of 1821 Guide Cyprus to Freedom*

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# Begun in Greece and Culminated in Our American Civil War: Abolitionism and the Greek Revolution

By Maureen Connors Santelli



Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, abolitionist and friend of Samuel Gridley Howe, offered an important reflection on the legacy of the Greek Revolution in the United States. Sanborn was a schoolteacher in Concord, Massachusetts in 1857 when he joined a radical abolitionist group devoted to raising funds in support of John Brown and other antislavery residents of Kansas. The radical group of abolitionists was small and included his friend Howe. Later renamed ‘The Secret Six,’ Sanborn and the other members of the group began to provide assistance in February 1858 for Brown’s next great effort to end slavery in the United States. Brown’s plan was to incite an armed slave insurrection,

which would begin at Harpers Ferry, Virginia the following year. Though Brown’s slave insurrection was suppressed almost immediately, the event further exacerbated sectional tensions between the North and South. Sanborn was forever associated with this climactic event, which ultimately paved the way toward civil war.

Decades later, Sanborn wrote the preface and notes for the collected letters and journals of his dear friend, Samuel Gridley Howe, a philanthropist and philhellene who had served in the Greek army. Sanborn praised his friend for his role in the emancipation of Greece and his support for the abolition of slavery within the United States. Howe was “a born philanthropist,” observed Sanborn, “and well aware that the service of mankind often requires political revolutions.” Sanborn went on to state that Howe’s devotion to the antislavery cause in the nineteenth century had “begun in Greece” and culminated “in our American Civil War.”

Reflecting on the legacy of the Greek Revolution and the aftermath of the Civil War from the vantage point of the early twentieth century, Sanborn viewed the progress toward abolition in the United States from a global perspective. To Sanborn at least, the abolition of slavery in the United States could not have been accomplished without the influence of the Greek Revolution

The Greek Revolution drew the attention of most early Amer-



Portrait of Samuel Gridley Howe at the National Historical Museum.

icans beginning in 1821. At first inspired by a transatlantic phenomenon known as the philhellenic movement, many Americans supported the prospect of a Greek nation. A dislike and mistrust for the Muslim world was already extant within the United States by the end of the eighteenth century but intensified through the Barbary Wars. Early Americans imagined themselves to be politically and ideologically connected with ancient Greece and wished to release the modern Greeks from the Ottoman Empire.

Philhellenes joined efforts with benevolence and missionary groups and together they pro-

moted humanitarianism, education reform, and evangelism. The redemption of the Greeks by various pro-Greek organizations assumed a “secularized missionary spirit,” which endeavored to spread an American understanding of freedom, liberty, and Christianity to all parts of the world. Greek relief efforts were led by the classical scholar and philanthropist Edward Everett and was supported by countless community groups throughout the country. Long after the Greek Revolution concluded, the ideas and tactics of the philhellenic movement contributed to the growing momentum of the American abolitionist movement.

Before abolitionism became a popular movement in the United States, many early Americans viewed slavery as it existed in the Muslim world to be abhorrent. African American publications referenced the Greek cause with frustration and appealed to their readers to recognize the similarities between the life of a Greek under Ottoman rule and the life of an African slave under a southern master’s rule. Several articles were published noting the similarity in the first African American newspaper, Freedom’s Journal, at the height of the Greek cause’s popularity. With reference to the Greek cause, one author pointed out “it would be instructive to take any of the addresses, speeches, or resolutions made on that occasion, and to see how many of the most odious features of Turkish slavery may be fairly matched in this free and enlightened country.” The authors continued with their own comparison between slavery in Greece and America and concluded that given the amount of support the Greeks had recently enjoyed, “what generous mind would not rather be the Greek than the black?”

Still another example of an African American abolitionist using the Greek cause as a rhetorical tool was David Walker. Printed in 1829, Walker’s radical pamphlet, Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World, rallied both free and enslaved African Americans to stand up to the institution of slavery. Walker observed that while reading a South Carolina newspaper he came across an article stating, “the Turks are the most barbarous people in the world – they treat the Greeks more like brutes than human beings.” Alongside this article was an advertisement that said, “Eight well-built Virginia and Maryland Negro fellows and four wenches will positively be sold this day to the highest bidder!” For Walker, the disconnect between condemning a foreign institution of slavery while supporting a domestic one was unpalatable. Walker concluded by directing his arguments toward white Americans and warned that they could not hide their hypocrisy from God even though “you can hide it from the rest of the world, by sending out missionaries, and by your charitable deeds to the Greeks.”

Contrasting popular interest in Greece with the lack of interest in the issue of American slavery proved to make for a powerful argument. If the Turks were indeed barbaric for holding slaves, what made American slaveholders different? For Walker and others, racial differences did not provide sufficient justification. If Americans could see the similarity between the Greeks and African slaves, then it would be clear that the institution itself was the problem, not the racial characteristics of the slaves.

Perhaps the most famous white abolitionist of the antebellum era almost made his humanitarian debut as an American philhellenic soldier. William Lloyd Garrison was just twenty years old when the Greek cause in America was at its height of popularity. Caught up in the midst of the pro-Greek fervor, Garrison, like many other youths of the time, aspired to defend the Greeks by joining the Greek army. Although the budding abolitionist ultimately decided not to join the Greek forces, philhellenic rhetoric, however, stayed with Garrison throughout his life.

For example, in 1831, Garrison openly accused his countrymen of being hypocrites for supporting the Greeks while forsaking African slaves. In a piece titled The Insurrection,

which was printed in Garrison’s publication The Liberator, Garrison reprimanded his contemporaries who feared slave insurrection and flatly stated that African slaves did not need to be pushed into insurrection by abolitionist influence. Instead they could find incentive “in their stripes – in their emaciated bodies – in their ceaseless toil.” Garrison continued his accusation of hypocrisy by pointing out that most Americans had applauded the Greek insurrection and observed that African slaves “deserve no more censure than the Greeks.” Garrison’s writing, especially his ‘Insurrection’ article, created controversy wherever it was reprinted, in both the North and South. One Portsmouth, Maine newspaper reported that North Carolinians were especially up in arms, demanding in 1831 that anyone who circulated The Liberator “ought to be barbecued.” The Portsmouth Journal made a similar historical connection as Garrison had with the Greek Revolution, pointing out that if The Liberator would incite insurrection in the South, then the North Carolina Free Press should also stop publishing pieces about liberty and equality and “rejoicing at the success of the Greeks.”

Something had changed. When the Greek Revolution first began in 1821, Americans had seldom connected the abolition of Greek slavery with the condition of slavery in the United States. Citizens of the American South rejected any link between the plight of the Greeks and that of their own slaves. The spreading desire for freedom would eventually come to the American South, predicted abolitionist newspapers, and African slaves would, like their Greek counterparts, revolt. The national consensus behind supporting the Greek cause was becoming a distant memory by the 1830s and was instead joining with the divisive political rhetoric of the antebellum era.

Throughout the antebellum era, to recall the tyranny of the Turks was to summon the ultimate definition of despotism in the contemporary world. The Greek cause became a part of a reformist legacy linking the progression of these antebellum reform movements to a global story rather than just a domestic one.

This legacy is evident in Senator Charles Sumner’s White Slavery in the Barbary States, published in 1853. While the title indicates the work was intended to be a history of slavery in the Barbary States, the antislavery sympathizer repeatedly used Turkish slavery as a comparison to slavery in the American South. By referring to the South as the Barbary States of America, Sumner offered a multitude of points of comparison to the Barbary States including that “Virginia, Carolina, Mississippi, and Texas should be the American complement to Morocco, Algiers, Tripoli, and Tunis.” With the slaves’ “long catalogue of humiliation and woes” not yet complete, Sumner’s history of the Barbary States illustrated that the system of slavery philhellenes had so reviled decades earlier was really not dissimilar to the system they themselves allowed to continue within their own borders.

Some refugees from Greece made the case themselves that Greek and African-American enslavement was the same issue, giving the American abolitionist movement an expanded international perspective. At least three active members of the abolitionist movement, Photius Fisk, John Zachos, and Joseph Stephanini were Greek youths rescued by American philhellenes and



## Honoring the Bicentennial of Hellenic Independence 1821



AHEPA DELPHI 25, CIRCA 1926



AHEPA DELPHI 25, CIRCA 1976

The Manhattan-based AHEPA Chapter, Delphi # 25, is the first Chapter organized in New York having been founded in 1923. Over the years it has had a gloried history with many esteemed past and current members including the late Fraklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), President of the USA. Currently the Delphi Chapter # 25 is one of the most prolific Chapters of The Order of AHEPA; following a dynamic revitalization, the Delphi Chapter currently is the largest Chapter in the entire AHEPA domain !"



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## 25 March | Greek Independence Day

Each year on March 25, Greeks across the world remember the heroism of those who fought to create the free and independent Hellenic Republic. This year is especially significant, as we mark the milestone of 200 years since that fight began: the struggle for a better future.

As Greek Americans, we are blessed by the legacy of two great nations, two pioneers in democracy. Inspired by that ideal, Greeks have built a thriving community in the United States enriched by deep roots in our beautiful homeland and, especially, by our treasured faith tradition.

As Orthodox Christians in the United States, the Greek community has long worked for the greater good. This philanthropy manifests in many forms, not least in the humanitarian agency International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), which serves people facing hardship in Greece, in the United States, and around the world.

While pandemic conditions have reshaped our world, IOCC has remained active, adjusting to ensure that this vital work continues. As Greek families confront economic impacts amid continued uncertainty, IOCC remains stalwart, offering emergency food assistance, supporting access to university education, and building up small-businesses that in turn invest in their communities. IOCC stands by families who face difficulty.

As we celebrate 200 years of Greek independence, I humbly encourage you to remember those who still seek a better tomorrow and to support the humanitarian efforts of this worthy Orthodox organization.

— John G. Rangos Sr., Co-Founder  
*International Orthodox Christian Charities*



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John Zachos

brought to the United States. Joseph Stephanini believed he had a unique perspective on slavery given that he had experienced Ottoman slavery firsthand. Ottoman soldiers captured Stephanini while his village was under attack early on in the war. For several years he lived as a captive, not knowing whether he would ever see his family again. Through a series of fortunate events, Stephanini managed to escape his captors and gained passage on an American ship bound for New York. Arriving in New York, Stephanini was taken under the wing of the New York Greek Committee. Stephanini remained for several years, visiting supporters of the Greek cause in Charleston, South Carolina. Newspapers reported on Stephanini’s travels. The Vermont Gazette printed that while unwilling to accept charity, Stephanini intended to publish a memoir that would help to raise ransom money to free his mother and sisters. The whole effort would be done in Charleston with the assistance of admirers and supporters including Thomas S. Grimké, a noted abolitionist. At the age of twenty-six, Stephanini’s memoir condemned American slavery and encouraged Americans to see the similarity between their institution of slavery and the conflict that persisted within the Ottoman Empire.

Other Greek refugees who arrived in the United States permanently claimed it as their new home. These Greek refugees were mere children when they came to the United States to receive an education sponsored by local Greek Committees. Though they became American citizens, Photius

Fisk and John Zachos carried their experiences from the Greek Revolution into adulthood.

Photius Fisk came to the United States under the sponsorship of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions as well as philhellenic Americans. With a brother in the Greek army, Fisk from an early age learned to detest “every form of slavery.” Fisk later became an ordained minister and was named a chaplain in the U.S. Navy in 1841.

Throughout his life’s work for the abolition of slavery and other philanthropic causes, admirers of Photius Fisk recognized the connection between his devotion to the antislavery movement and his experiences with “the wrongs imposed upon the people of his country by the Turkish tyrants.” Fisk became well acquainted with William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Frederick Douglass, and many other members of the antislavery movement. Perhaps the most noteworthy member of the abolitionist movement with whom Fisk became associated was John Brown. Garrison introduced Fisk to John Brown in Boston in 1859 while Brown was making secret arrangements for his raid on Harper’s Ferry. Holding Brown to be a “true friend of the anti-slavery cause,” Fisk contributed one hundred dollars to Brown’s mission.

John Zachos was another Greek-American abolitionist. Zachos was ten years old when he came to the United States under Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe’s care. American philhellenic patrons paid for the young boy’s education and living expenses until he graduated in 1840. He spent most of his life as an educator and school principal.

During the American Civil War, Zachos worked with the Educational Commission of Boston and New York, traveling to South Carolina in 1862 as part of the Union presence in the region. Zachos assisted with providing education to the newly freed slaves, a venture not dissimilar from the efforts made by benevolence groups for Greek education in the years that followed the Greek Revolution. A news report printed in a New York newspaper related the arrival of the Union forces as well as the presence of “three to four thousand” freed slaves who had assembled to celebrate Emancipation Day. The “plentiful supply of abolition speeches” included an ode written by John Zachos declaring the African slaves finally free.

Although the Greek cause initially aimed at helping the Greeks as an extension of philanthropic relief abroad, ironically, in the end, it transformed American society. Both the rhetoric of the Greek cause and participation in the movement influenced reformers and brought a global perspective to the abolitionist movement, inspiring early Americans to consider the domestic slave trade as no better than slavery within the hated Ottoman Empire. Though the consensus among philhellenic organizations of the early 1820s was short-lived, the memory of the Greek cause continued to play a pivotal role in American reform.

By Leonidas Petrakis

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the start of the Greek War of Independence. The Revolution lasted for nine years, a period marked by momentous developments (the Industrial Revolution, the Enlightenment, the geopolitical rivalries of the Great Powers), all of which influenced profoundly Greece’s path to modern nationhood.

The fall in 1453 of Constantinople marked the end of the Byzantine Empire, but not of Hellenism. During four centuries of Ottoman occupation the Greeks suffered greatly, but they did not lose essential elements – language, religion – of their national identity. There was great deprivation, but also remarkable strengths – thriving centers of learning, the Kleftes and Armatoloi and the seamen with exceptional military skills and thirst for independence, intellectuals who brought the ideals of the Enlightenment, merchants amassing through shipping and trading great fortunes, individuals and families that exercised political power in the international arena, the village priest.

**General Makriyannis**, one of the War’s protagonists, illiterate (Seferis’ ‘illiterate teacher’) into adulthood when he learned to write in order to pen his Memoirs, underlined the crucial role of the collective efforts for succeeding. He wrote, “This homeland we have all together; we served her all together (όλοι μαζί).” And the “all together” included most certainly the Dia-

# Bicentennial of Remembering

spora and Philhellenes.

It was in Odessa (Russia) that **The Filiki Etaireia** (the secret society for advancing the struggle) was established.

It was in Wallachia (Romania) and Vienna that **Rigas Velestinlis or Feraios** (born in Velesino, Thessaly’s ancient Ferai), worked for the coming Revolution. Rigas, inspired by the ideals of the Enlightenment and emboldened by

## “War Song” *Rigas Ferraios*

For how long, brave young men, shall we live in the narrows,  
isolated like lions, in the rocks and mountain spaces?  
Better it is to live for one hour in freedom  
than forty years, in slavery and prison.

Caves shall we inhabit, and branches regard,  
to leave the world, for bitter slavery?  
Better it is to live for one hour in freedom  
than forty years, in slavery and prison.

Shall we lose brothers and sisters, our homeland, our parents,  
our friends, our children, and all our relatives?  
Better it is to live for one hour in freedom  
than forty years, in slavery and prison.

Of what benefit is it to live, if you are in slavery?  
Reflect on how they grill you, each hour, in the fire.  
Vizier, dragoman, lord and if you stand up  
the tyrant will unjustly cause you to be lost.

(translation: Eva Johanos)

the French Revolution, dedicated his life to advancing the education and intellectual reawakening of the enslaved Greek people, prerequisites for becoming an independent nation. His Charta of Greece and other political and literary writings, together with his activism made him a national hero. His Thourios Hymn, a Greek Marseillaise, became the battle song of the War of Independence.

“Until when are we, oh brave young men, going to live in constraint/lonely like lions, on the ridges of the mountains?/Better have an hour of free life/than forty years of slavery and prison.”

Rigas envisioned a multi-ethnic Greece founded on Democracy and inclusion, separation of church and state, protection of ethnic minorities and women’s rights, universal free public education, and ‘seisachtheia’ (cancellation of all debts). He sought the participation of all subjugated peoples of the region in the struggle against the Ottoman oppressors. It is a historical irony that in the process he awakened other peoples’ nationalist aspirations that led to conflicts and a world of lingering lost dreams and bitter memories, poignantly explored by Theo Aggelopoulos in his Balkan Trilogy.

In 1797 on his way to Greece, Rigas, betrayed by a Greek businessman, was arrested in Trieste by Austrian authorities and handed over to the Ottoman Governor of Belgrade, who had him strangled and disposed in the Danube. His last words were, “I have sown a rich seed; the hour is coming when my country will reap its glorious fruits.”

**Adamantios Koraeas** (physician and distinguished classical scholar) lived in France, and it was from there that he sought to elevate the educational level of the Greeks. (He was especially influential in purging the language of foreign elements and creating and adopting the Katharevousa.) When the War of Independence broke out Koraeas was too old to return and fight, and as he mistrusted the European powers and especially England, he turned to the Americans. In his correspondence with **Thomas Jefferson** (whom he had befriended when Jefferson served as U.S. Ambassador to France) he sought (unsuccessfully in the face of Secretary of State John Quincy Adams’s pro-Turkish position) political and material support for the “Greek Cause.”

also held high positions in the Administration of the Ottoman Empire. The Sublime Porte used their education, facility with foreign languages, and cosmopolitan ties to Western Europe and appointed them Hospodars. The Grand Dragoman or Foreign Minister and Dragoman of the Navy were Phanariots also. Two rival Phanariot families, **Ypsilantis** and **Mavrokordatos**, played defining roles in the War of Independence.

**Prince Alexander Ypsilantis** (a senior officer of the Imperial Russian cavalry who lost an arm during the Napoleonic wars) as the leader of the Filiki Etaireia started the Revolution before it was declared in Greece proper. Falsely proclaiming Russian support he invaded Wallachia with the Sacred Band of students in the ill-fated campaign (denounced by the Czar, his Foreign Minister Kapodistrias, and the Patriarch) that ended in the disastrous defeat at Dragatsani. Alexander’s brother Dimitrios Ypsilantis, an Imperial Russian Army officer as well, participated in the Revolution mostly in the military campaigns in the Peloponnese, including the siege of Tripolis.

While the Ypsilantis brothers looked to Imperial Orthodox Russia as the stalwart of a free Greece and sought the military leadership of the Revolution, **Alexandros Mavrokordatos** looked to the West and especially England for support as he sought political control.

Born in Constantinople, Mavrokordatos served the Wallachia Hospodar (his uncle) as Great Postelniko (foreign minister). He fled to Pisa, established close ties with the poet Shelley and his wife Mary (teaching her ancient Greek), was initiated into the Filiki Etaireia, and was among the first Diaspora Greeks to join the Revolution in Greece.

The struggle for Independence, led by people of strong convictions but not free from human frailties, was marred by dissension, even civil wars. Mavrokordatos is the iconic example of those passionate but flawed protagonists. The brilliant, highly educated – fluent in seven languages – Phanariot aristocrat proved a visionary and effective administrator with many outstanding successes to his credit, but he was also arrogant, divisive, even reckless. He made Missolonghi his power base, organized its successful resistance to the first siege although he lacked military expertise, and used the Roumeli Armatoloi and the Hydra



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# the Greek War of Independence: the Diaspora and Philhellenes

navy in his struggles against the ‘Russian Party’ headed by Dimitrios Ypsilantis and Kolokotronis. He was personally responsible for the catastrophic defeat of the Greeks at Peta.

The United States of the Ionian Islands (a British protectorate at the time) produced two towering figures that established the identity of Modern Greece.

The Corfiot **Ioannis Kapodistrias** (with Padua University Medicine and Law degrees) as the Czar’s Foreign Minister proved a brilliant diplomat in European affairs. In 1827 he became the first Governor of Greece, and in the face of bankruptcy, corruption, and dynastic conflicts that plagued Greece, he succeeded in laying the foundations of the Modern Greek State. In 1831 the Mavromichalis brothers assassinated him as he was entering the church of Saint Spyridon in Nafplion.

**Dionysios Solomos**, born in Zakynthos the same day that Rigas Feraios was murdered in Belgrade, lived in Italy. He eventually moved to Kerkyra where he died with the island still under British occupation. As he was debating whether to write in Greek or Italian, Spyridon Trikoupis famously told him, “your poetical talent will secure for you a good position in the Italian Parnassus, but the front seats are occupied. Modern Greece’s Parnassus has not yet gained its Dante.” He opted for Greek, and his works became the gold standard of Modern Greek literature. He wrote his Hymn to Liberty (its first four stanzas, set to music by **Nikolaos Mantzarios**, became the Greek National Anthem) in the Spring of 1823 during the siege of Missolongi, and hearing the cannonades he would sigh, “hold on, hapless Missolongi.” His most notable works (often unfinished) include The Destruction of Psara, Dialogos (a defense of the Demotic language and rebuttal to Koræes and other proponents of the Katharevousa), the various versions of the lyrical The Free Besieged, and The Woman of Zakynthos.

The struggle for Independence was aided by strong philhellenic sentiments that produced material and political support from all over the world. Particularly important was the support of men of letters and artists, including **Goethe, Hugo, Chateaubriand, Pushkin, Lord Byron, and Delacroix**.

**Jefferson and Monroe** expressed sympathy, and many Americans joined the War effort, from the almost unknown African American **James Williams** from Baltimore to the famous **Samuel Gridley Howe**, who, inspired by Lord Byron, served as surgeon in Greece, did fund raising, and wrote a history of the Revolution.

**Byron** used his poetry and personal fortune to support the Greek Cause. His experiences during his first trip to Greece became part of his narrative poem, Childe Harold’s Journey, which established his fame and at the same time brought attention and sympathy to the Greek Revolution. In The Giaour, The Siege of Corinth, and other poems he highlighted the barbarity of the Turks. In 1823 he spent large sums of his own money to refit the Greek fleet and he chartered the Brig Hercules, which brought him to Missolonghi. There with Mavrokordatos he planned military operations against the Turkish naval forces, but he fell ill and died on April 19, 1824. In 1823 Lord Byron wrote to the bickering Greek politicians as they awaited the release of a loan



by the Europeans: “Greece is faced with three possibilities: to regain its freedom, or to become a vassal to European rulers, or to revert to being a Turkish province.”

Byron’s body is buried in England but his heart was interred at Missolonghi. **Eugène Delacroix** in his early twenties experienced a transfor-

Two hundred years ago the Diaspora provided crucial help to Greece in gaining independence from the Ottomans. Greece is now threatened by Turkey – led by a megalomaniac seeking to reestablish the Ottoman Empire. Is the Diaspora in America today ready to lend crucial support as the Diaspora did then?



mational event – the massacre of tens of thousands Greeks by Turkish troops on the island of Chios. The brutality of the Turks shocked Europe, and a horrified

Delacroix painted, in the heroic style of Géricault’s The Raft of the Medusa, The Massacre at Chios. The painting (displayed at the 1824 Salon and now in the

Louvre) raised immense sympathy for the Greeks throughout Europe. (An exact copy was shown in Chios in 2009, but it was removed when reportedly the Turkish government objected.) Delacroix advanced the Greek Cause with additional paintings – Greece on the Ruins of Missolongi (a tribute to that Greek holocaust and also homage to Lord Byron), Entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople (the 1204 catastrophe), Combat of the Giaour and the Pasha (based on Byron’s famous poem, which now hangs in Chicago’s Art Institute.)

Two hundred years ago the Diaspora provided crucial help to Greece in gaining independence from the Ottomans. Greece is now threatened by Turkey – led by a megalomaniac seeking to reestablish the Ottoman Empire. Is the Diaspora in America today ready to lend crucial support as the Diaspora did then?

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# What Lord Byron Really Did for Greece and Why it Still Matters

By Roderick Beaton\*



Byron's decision to involve himself in Greek affairs came surprisingly late. When news of the start of the revolution there began arriving in the West, during April 1821, he had been living in Italy, at Ravenna. The month before, he had been disillusioned by the failure of the Italian nationalist movement, the Carbonari, to put up a fight against the Austrians. So disgusted was Byron with his Italian friends that he seems not even to have noticed the new outbreak of revolution in a country that had meant so much to him during his youthful travels there, and would again. It wasn't until the spring of 1823 that Byron was ready to think about committing himself to the cause of Greece. He was now a very different man from the author of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage who had had himself painted at the age of twenty-five in the exotic local costume that he had purchased in Ioannina. Ten years later, Byron presented a very different appearance. He had aged. The decision was taken in June 1823. He had a military uniform made, and three ceremonial helmets for himself and his companions, in what passed at the time for Homeric style. He left Italy

for Greece the following month. Byron arrived in Cephalonia in August 1823. At the time the Ionian Islands were a British protectorate, and therefore officially neutral territory. From this vantage point he would spy out the land, before he committed himself further. Soon, he found that a stalemate had been reached in the war against the Turks; the Greek cause was threatening to fall apart in civil conflict. It has often been said that this was the worst possible time for Byron to arrive in Greece: the only thing left for him to do was to die, which he obligingly did. This is the story memorably told by the English diplomat and socialite Harold Nicolson, in a book written for the centenary of Byron's death. According to Nicolson's epigrammatic summing-up: "Lord Byron accomplished nothing at Missolonghi except his own suicide; but by that single act of heroism he secured the liberation of Greece..." In this way was born the legend of the flawed Romantic hero who finally gave his life for a noble cause. On this interpretation, it was the death of a celebrity that helped to focus worldwide attention on the struggle of Greece, and so contributed to eventual victory. It's true that this did happen afterwards. And it's for this that Byron is remembered and his contribution celebrated in Greece to this day. But that's only part of the story – the consequence of the tragic accident that was Byron's death at Missolonghi on 19 April 1824. What Byron actually set out to do, and the effect that his involvement had on the course of history while he was alive, are quite different. The real story is less heroic, to be sure, but scarcely less dramatic. And I believe it shows that Byron really did make a lasting contribution to the outcome of the Revolution – not in the sphere of military action against the Ottomans, but





in helping to resolve the internal, political conflict among the Greeks themselves, which was just as important in the long run. This was essentially a clash between rival political concepts of what it meant to be free. On one side were the warlords, who had so recently proved themselves in action. Freedom, for these men, meant absolute self-sufficiency, the refusal to acknowledge any authority other than their own. Among their ranks, the leader was the strongest and the most charismatic, and the leader's word was law. Ranged against the warlords were the modernizers. These were educated Greeks who had been brought up on the political theories of the European Enlightenment and took as their models the revolutionary constitutions of the United States and France. For our purposes, and for the time that Byron was in Greece, the chief

protagonist of the modernizers was Alexandros Mavrokordatos, a polymath and astute politician who was proficient in eight languages and the only prominent man in Greece at the time to wear a European frock-coat and thick rimless spectacles. The most powerful of the warlords was Theodoros Kolokotronis, nicknamed 'the Old Man of the Morea', and still commemorated today as the very epitome of the fighting spirit embodied in the Greek Revolution. On the day that Byron left Italy for Greece, 24 July 1823, in Tripolitsa (today's Tripoli in the Peloponnese) the Vice-President of the Executive (Kolokotronis) summoned the President of the Legislature (Mavrokordatos) and told him that unless he resigned his office at once he would mount him backwards on a donkey and have him chased out of the Peloponnese with whips. This was the

doctrine of the separation of powers reduced to absurdity. Mavrokordatos resigned in the face of this intimidation. The entire legislature panicked and fled the Peloponnese. For some months, it looked as though the Executive, dominated by Kolokotronis and the warlords, had triumphed over the modernizers led by Mavrokordatos. These were the months that Byron spent in Cephalonia. Some have criticized him (at the time and ever since) for idling, even vacillating. But Byron in Cephalonia was not idle. Diplomatic dispatches were carried across seas, rain-swept mountain passes, and swollen rivers. Letters took weeks to travel from one side of Greece to the other. But by December, Byron knew the score, and had made up his mind. It was no good trying to be even-handed between the Greek factions. At stake, as he explained on more than one occasion, was nothing less than the "regeneration of a nation." To this end, Byron threw in his lot with Mavrokordatos and the modernizers. By the end of 1823 Greece had in effect two governments, one based at Kranidi in the northeast Peloponnese and made up of modernizers and their sympathizers, and a rival dominated by Kolokotronis and Petrobey Mavromichalis at Tripolitsa. Mavrokordatos by this time had been given a mandate by the Kranidi government to return to his former power-base of Missolonghi in western Greece and to take charge of operations there. Mavrokordatos arrived at Missolonghi on 12 December and almost immediately sent a boat to Cephalonia to fetch Byron to join him. In the event, Byron arrived at Missolonghi on 4 January after a hair-raising voyage involving near-capture by the Turks and ship-

wreck. He stepped ashore the next day, in a scene later made famous by the painter Theodoros Vryzakis. During the same days, the Kranidi government formally stripped the members of the rival government of office, and was duly defied from Tripolitsa. The civil war had begun. Also in January 1824, a deputation from the Greek government, that had set out before the split, arrived in London. The purpose of the delegates was to raise a substantial loan from private British investors. A deal was concluded in February. On 22 March news reached Greece that the stupendous sum of 800,000 British pounds had been subscribed and would shortly be on its way. Byron was named as one of three commissioners responsible for its disbursement. Buoyed by this news, the Kranidi government went on the offensive against its rivals in the Peloponnese. During April 1824, while Byron was dying of fever at Missolonghi, the warlords holding Corinth and Tripolitsa surrendered to government forces. By early June, the first civil war was at an end. The government had come through this first, crucial round. Greece once again had a government. It would not all be plain sailing from there, far from it. But nowadays it's becoming possible to see those months while Byron had been in Greece as a turning point – in the internal, political struggle for dominance that would determine the shape of everything that has happened in that country since. When he made his decision in June 1823, Byron effectively gave up writing poetry. His great comic epic masterpiece, Don Juan, was left untouched, sixteen stanzas into its seventeenth canto. After that he wrote only one short poem that he completed, and a smaller number of drafts and fragments.



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Byron in Greece was no longer a poet, but a man of action. Remarkably, for someone of so changeable and inconstant a nature (a shortcoming of which he was well aware), Byron suddenly threw all his energies together behind a single purpose – and stuck to it too. Had he lived longer, all this might have turned out differently. But as it was, for the last ten months of his life Byron was more consistent and serious about the cause of Greece than he had ever been about anything. I believe that part of his purpose in going to Greece was to transform the impetus of Romantic poetry into political action, and thereby change the world.

During his hundred days in Missolonghi, in revolutionary Greece, Byron demonstrated his conviction that the Greek Revolution had the potential to bring into the world an entirely new kind of politics. He saw a free Greece as the first of a new kind of state in Europe, free of the old monarchical, feudal order, and based on the idea of the nation. As he explained it to his trusted lieutenant, the Italian count Pietro Gamba:

“those principles which are now in action in Greece will gradually produce their effect, both here and in other countries ... I cannot ... calculate to what a height Greece may rise. Hitherto it has been a subject for the hymns and elegies of fanatics and enthusiasts; but now it will draw the attention of the politician.”

The Greek Revolution, in Byron’s mind, was to be a testing ground for a new kind of politics – one that he intended others to emulate. The new country would not merely import a political system from somewhere else: it is the European politician whose attention is to be drawn to Greece, not the other way round. A new country, he told another of his confidants



at Missolonghi, the artilleryman William Parry, would require an entirely new system of government: “A system of government must and will arise suitable to the knowledge and the wants of the people ... I would not recommend them [the Greeks] to follow implicitly any system of government now established in the world, or to square their institutions by the theoretical forms of any constitution...”

So far as we can tell from his letters and records of his conversations while he was at Missolonghi with Mavrokordatos, Byron was working tirelessly to promote realistic and practical policies to achieve a viable independence for Greece. First of all, the new state must have a central government, legitimated by the rule of law. Economic support and development were essential. To that end, the government must secure and responsibly disburse the economic support from outside that a successful revolution would require.

And finally, the government must reach an accommodation through diplomacy with the Great Powers of the day. Without that, Byron believed, true independence would never be possible. Great Britain, in particular, must be persuaded that a free and strong Greece, with an economy based, like Britain’s, on maritime trade, would be a far more reliable bulwark against Russian expansionism than what he called the ‘putrifying’ Ottoman empire.

It was only the accident of his death from fever, on 19 April 1824, that prevented Byron from carrying out this programme at Missolonghi, in partnership with Mavrokordatos and the legitimate Greek government based at Kranidi. But for as long he was alive, his presence at Missolonghi, his alignment with Mavrokordatos, and his role in promoting the British loan, were all significant factors in the closely-fought struggle for dominance between the

modernizers and the warlords. If that struggle had gone to Kolokotronis and the warlords, then Greece, or more probably several separate regions, might have achieved the same kind of de facto independence as did Serbia from 1815 until 1878, or Samos until 1912 – but still remained nominally under Ottoman rule. As it was, Greece instead became the first new state in modern Europe to win full legal sovereignty. Victory for the modernizers in the internal struggle against the warlords would pave the way for Greece to be formally recognized as a sovereign nation-state, according to a diplomatic protocol signed in London by the foreign ministers of Great Britain, France and Russia on 3 February 1830.

Greece in this way would become the first of the modern type of nation-state that has since become the norm throughout the continent and much of the rest of the world – proving Byron’s

prophecy right after all. This is a process that is still going on. Montenegro became an independent nation-state (for the second time) in 2006. Most recent of all is Kosovo in 2008. The Greece that Byron fought for, the Greece that came into existence on that February day in 1830, is a cornerstone of today’s Europe of nation-states, with all its achievements – and also its problems.

For Greece itself, that achievement came at a price. The terms on which Greeks did finally become ‘free’ would set limits not just to the absolute self-sufficiency sought by the warlords, but also to the self-determination of the Greek state itself. In September 1823, Kolokotronis had told Byron’s emissaries that he was opposed to a foreign loan, because it would place the country in the future in the hands of foreigners. Without that support from abroad, both economic and political, the Greek state could surely never

have come into existence or have maintained itself for any length of time. But it came at a price – a price that is still being paid, as was very visibly demonstrated during the Greek ‘crisis’ of 2010-2019, when the country once again depended on foreign loans for its survival. The opposing mentalities from Byron’s time in Greece are still there, not far beneath the surface. Of these, one is political, statist, pragmatic and integrationist, outward-looking towards Europe and particularly the West. The other is traditionally nostalgic for the absolute freedom pursued by warlords such as Kolokotronis in the 1820s, and when it looks abroad at all, identifies more with the eastern Orthodox Church and particularly with Russia.

This is another reason why Byron’s contribution still matters today. The Greece that emerged as the first new nation-state in Europe in 1830 was the result of a terrible struggle, in which very many Greeks fought and died. But theirs was not a struggle for themselves only. It was one in which many Europeans, and others from as far away as the young United States of America, volunteered to fight alongside the revolutionaries. Many of those, too, lost their lives, just as Byron did. Byron’s contribution reminds us, in these days of recent bail-outs for Greece, of a ‘Grexit’ that didn’t happen and a ‘Brexiteer’ whose effects remain very much to be seen, that the Greek struggle for independence lies at the very foundation of modern Europe.

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# The U.S. and Greek Independence 1821-30



The Naval Battle of Navarino, Martin Verdier

By Stavros Stavridis\*

In 2021, we will be celebrating the 200th anniversary of Greece’s independence from Ottoman rule. Many American and European philhellenes offered their services to fight alongside the Greeks and raised funds for the Greek cause. Their contributions must never be forgotten. Notable American philhellene names such as Jonathan P. Miller (also known as the Dare Devil American), Samuel G. Howe, George Jarvis, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, William T. Washington, John Getty, and James Williams contributed to Greece’s eventual freedom in 1830. It will be noted that Washington and Jarvis fought at Messolonghi and died in 1827 and 1828 whereas Getty fought at Navarino and Crete. On the other hand, Williams was a sailor of the frigate Hellas with Andreas Miaoulis. Finally, Howe volunteered his services as a surgeon and was also a commander during the period 1825-27. Upon his return to America, he raised money to “alleviate the famine and suffering in Greece.” His humanitarianism was shown bringing back Greek refugee children to educate them in America.

This article will focus on the correspondence between Jonathan P. Miller and Prince Mavrokordatos published in the Phenix Gazette and Constitutional Whig on April 30 and May 6, 1825, respectively.

Jonathan P. Miller approached the Greek committee in Boston offering his services in July 1824. Miller was a non-commissioned

officer in the U.S. Army who fought in the 1812 war against the British. The committee gave him a small sum of money to be used for the Greek cause and he departed from Boston with testimonials and a letter of introduction to Alexandros Mavrokordatos in August 1824. He arrived in Malta, staying two months and meeting Rev. Daniel Temple, who actively supported the Greek struggle for independence. Temple printed pamphlets in Greek which Miller took with him to Greece to distribute among the Greeks. The Greeks read them with great interest.

Miller wrote back the committee with an account of his reception in Greece and included a letter from Mavrokordatos. His correspondence was written in Messolonghi dated December 11, 1824.

He said: “I have been here but a few minutes, when I saw a soldier enter the door hastily. He asked me if I was an American, I answered in the affirmative. He grasped my hand in ecstasy, exclaiming at the same time, that he also had the honor to belong to that country; that his name was George Jarvis; that he was a native of the state of New York, and being at Bordeaux in 1822, thence, by the approbation of his father came via Marseilles to Hydra, and engaged in the Greek navy, in their glorious struggle with the Turks. He made thirteen voyages with the Hydriots, and since that time he has been employed in the army, with the rank of Lt. Colonel. He has been in a number of engagements, and has distinguished himself as a brave officer. From him, I have learned much of the state of Greece,



Alexandros Mavrokordatos

Their success against the Turks, and the sacrifices which they have made this year for their liberty, are greater than any recorded of Greece in the days of her ancient glory. But what must be the feelings of a man, who looks with a philanthropic eye on the scenes of misfortune, to see soldiers who have been fighting the enemy all summer, now coming to their commander to beg bread to keep them alive.”

Miller and Jarvis became very good friends and respected each other. The latter taught Greek to Miller, who wore Greek costume with the Greeks coming to love and respect him. Miller, accompanied by Jarvis, interviewed Mavrokordatos. The former said: “The Prince received me with much politeness and expressed his satisfaction at the conduct of our government, in regard to the interest it takes in the sufferings of Greece. He asked me many questions, in reference to the views which were entertained by Americans of the character of the Greeks. To all his questions, I endeavored to give as correct answers as possible. I told him that all the exertions that the different committees were making in America, were for the liberty of Greece; and that in my opinion that nothing farther would be done by the Americans, if the Greeks consent to accept a foreign King. He replied that nothing but a foreign force would ever place them under a King. I told him I was willing to bear arms in Greece, so long as there was a prospect of being free, but no longer.”

Mavrokordatos’ reply: “You know Greece, but you know it as oppressed by the Turkish yoke. Everything is now changed. We too, in imitation of the Americans, have resolved to recover our liberty, and assume a place among civilized nations. God grant we may be as fortunate as you in the result. The success which the Greeks have obtained, both on land and at sea, in the campaign just closed, inspires us with confident hope – and there is now no one, as formerly, who will pretend to question our independence. As to Mr. Miller you must feel no concern. Your recommendation will not be without effect, and be assured I shall not forget. I doubt not that he who has already fought against your enemies of his own country, will be useful to our cause.”

Please to express to the Greek Committee of Boston my thanks for employing themselves on the subject of the Greeks, and taking an interest in their success; and accept the assurance of the esteem and high consideration.”

A brief analysis of the letters above highlights Miller’s determination to fight for Greece’s liberation and Mavrokordatos’ appreciation of American assistance to remove the Turkish yoke. Mavrokordatos knew the Americans recently gained their independence from Great Britain and should emulate America’s example in defeating the Turks. The mention of a King was abhorrent to Americans at this time, remembering the tyrannical rule of George III. Miller didn’t want to see the imposition of a monarch in Greece.

The Daredevil returned to America in the autumn of 1826, presenting lectures to attract American support on the Greek struggle for independence. In March 1827, the Greek Committee of New York appointed him as their agent in Greece. Leaving New York on board the Chancellor, his mission was to distribute food and clothing to “the necessitous inhabitants of Greece.” He also adopted a young Loukas Miltiades Miller, whom he found wandering with his sister in Poros. Loukas later served as a U.S. Congressman in 1891-93.

In 1828, Miller returned to America, publishing his book The Conditions of Greece in 1827 and 1828.

\* Stavros T. Stavridis is a historical author, history professor, and historical consultant.

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# Petrakis’ Novels Chronicle the Greek War of Independence

By Dan Georgakas\*

Harry Mark Petrakis is justly renowned for his writing about the Greeks of Chicago. He also has written two novels of equal authority and extraordinary power about the Greek War of Independence: *The Hour of the Bell* and *The Shepherds of Shadows*.

Although many Greek Americans enthusiastically celebrate the Greek War of Independence (1821-1833), many are not familiar with its particulars and indulge myths about its heroism while minimizing or ignoring its problems. In fact, the revolt involved bitter infighting among the revolutionaries, treason, assassinations, and other despicable behavior. The final outcome was not a democratic republic as envisioned by the most high-minded rebels but a mini-state headed by a Bavarian monarch imposed by what were then called The Great Powers. Some 800,000 Greeks would be citizens of the new state, but 2,500,000 other Greeks remained in various territories ruled by a foreign power. These territories included Crete, Greek Macedonia, the Pontos, Thrace, numerous islands, and the Aegean coastline of Asia Minor. It would take over a hundred years of additional struggles for Greece to achieve its current borders.

Petrakis’ historical research, which included on-site investigations in Greece, has made him familiar with the geography, tastes, and sounds of the early nineteenth century, allowing him to weave telling detail into every scene and character. At times the narratives become so engrossing that the books literally become page-turners as the reader simply must know, as soon as possible, the outcome of a momentous battle, an ideological conflict, or a romance. The individuals depicted, however legendary, remain recognizable human beings with shortcomings, not cardboard cutouts shaped to embody or create a myth. By daring to deal with the failings of the Greeks, refusing to glorify war and rejecting any endorsement of mindless vengeance, Petrakis succeeds in capturing the genuine valor and the incredible sacrifices of the Greek people as they struggled for national independence. By addressing these issues candidly, his novels are all the more powerful, fascinating, realistic, and inspirational.

A feature of both novels are accounts of the actions of the independent warrior bands known as

klefts who resided in mountain strongholds. The vast majority of them played a major role in achieving the ultimate Greek victory. He also shows that some were just self-serving thieves who only fought for Greece when paid and who sometimes fought for the Sultan.

Petrakis’ account goes beyond admiration of proverbial kleftic dancing and heroism to depict how these fierce warriors and others who take up armed struggle must commit acts and release emotions that would not normally be considered acceptable. When they return to civilian life, even though they may never speak of what they have done in the name of patriotism, the psychological costs can be bitter. Petrakis also goes against stereotyping by refusing to portray the villagers as docile sheep or ignorant peasants but as a cultural base that can create heroes.

When Petrakis first released *The Hour of the Bell*, he announced it would be part of a trilogy that would encompass the entire war. It is set in the early years of the revolt and features notable military victories. *The Shepherds of Shadows* carries the revolution into the troubled years of 1823-1825. The euphoria of open rebellion and initial victories has given way to a sense that the struggle is going to be very long and costly. The Sultan’s own forces have been defeated, but he has called upon Ibrahim Pasha to invade Greece with a fresh army of thousands of Egyptians. The outcome of the war is very much in doubt.

**The Hour of the Bell**

*The House of the Bell* explores the genesis of the revolt and captures the national jubilation at rebelling against the Ottoman oppressor. Petrakis chronicles how difficult it was for young men to leave their villages to go to battle and how priests fretted about the fate of their villages and the consequences of the revolution for a Church headquartered in the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

From the onset, Petrakis refuses to indulge in simple-minded nationalism. The novel’s most powerful passages involve the massive Greek victory at Tripoliza led by General Theodoros Kolokotronis. The Greek troops slaughter every fighter and civilian on the Ottoman side, including women and children. The battlefield itself is so strewn with bodies that one cannot see the ground. Rather than feeling jubilant about his victory, Kolokotronis is despondent. He walks among the dead and fears that by

making killing too satisfying and acceptable, the revolution risks destroying the very principles of human dignity it champions. With the enormous pain of the revolution visible everywhere, he is repelled by the murderous divisions within his own rebel forces and the indifference of third parties that seek their own national interests at the expense of Greece. He wonders what kind of nation can emerge from such passions.

Petrakis’ concerns are not just the usual predictable humanitarian laments for innocent dead civilians, what later militarists have labeled collateral damage, but weighty meditations on the costs of even a just military struggle.

*The Shepherds of Shadows*

In *The Shepherds of Shadows*, reflections of a similar kind will afflict Father Markos who mourns Turkish villagers indiscriminately slain by his own parishioners at the onset of the revolution.

Although frank about these terrible realities, Petrakis does not allow them to fatally mar the revolutionary vision of a better life that motivates the men and women of Greece. The romances featured at the opening and closing of the novel further affirm the positive values that revolution embodies.

The shepherds of shadows are Petrakis’ poetic image of the kleftic warriors that were such an essential military force in the war for independence. Contemporary military strategists might define the klefts as masters of asymmetrical warfare in which relatively small units of rebels in impregnable strongholds continuously jab at a nominally superior force until their foe is exhausted. Most of the klefts treat villagers as family, not subjects to be ruled by them instead of the Ottomans. Petrakis, however duly underscores that some of the klefts were professional thieves who would render service to the highest bidder. Some of them preyed on Greeks, poor and rich, as well as non-Greeks. Their number was less than the patriotic klefts but their presence was real and is duly recorded.

The first scenes of the novels are set in Kravasaras (today’s Vasilika), a village located ninety-six miles northwest of Athens. We are immediately made aware of the harsh conditions the revolt has spawned. Father Markos, the village priest, emerges as a gentle man worried about what these hardships are doing to the spirit of his parishioners. A crisis develops when Greeks from a distant village who have fled the Ottoman army arrive to ask for food and shelter that is simply not available. The desperate situation which was leading to an inter-Greek confrontation is only averted by the arrival of three klefts led by Manolis Kitsos, a youth reared in Kravasaras.

Manolis brings food with him and arranges for the displaced villagers to proceed to an area that can care for them. The villagers, however, insist

on leaving behind a young woman named Maria. They disdain her because the child she lovingly suckles is the consequence of a rape by a Turkish soldier. Father Markos gives Maria his personal protection, and Manolis soon finds himself attracted to her. Through the course of the novel, their relationship blossoms into genuine love.

Another major character is Xanthos, an intellectual who is serving as an emissary from General Kolokotronis. His mission is to persuade as many klefts as possible to leave the mountains to fight in the formal army led by Kolokotronis. Xanthos soon discovers he must be wary of those who are just brigands out for personal profit.

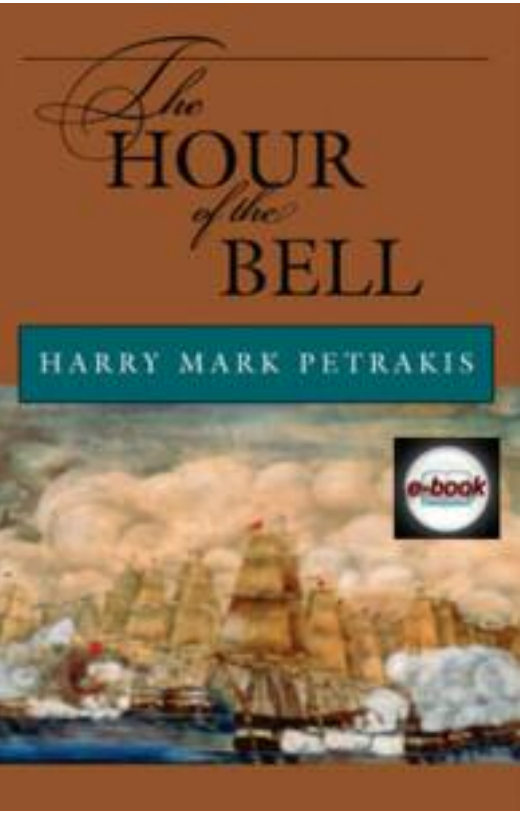
Divisions also exist in the ranks of the clergy. Most, like Father Markos, support the revolution and serve their villagers who are often on the verge of famine. Some priests have opted to become warriors themselves. One of them becomes so fierce that he intimidates ordinary villagers and sometimes even frightens his own men. In contrast, a considerable number of priests in Constantinople believed the Greek cause would be better served by gradually reforming the Ottoman Empire from within rather than supporting a risky armed rebellion. Some of them also feel in immediate personal danger as Sultan might choose to hold them responsible for the actions of their faithful over whom he had given authority.


Xanthos returns to Kolokotronis with numerous pledges of support by kleftic bands, but he finds the revolutionary leadership is not unified. Men such as Markos Bostaris and Alexander Mavrokordatos often seemed more concerned about their individual and regional ambitions than the broader revolution. Partly to combat the influence of such leaders, Xanthos is sent with a small delegation to meet with the newly arrived Lord Byron, who has pledged to do all in his power to aid the Greeks.

Numerous commentators have extolled Byron for lending his prestige to the Greek cause, raising money, and calling for Europeans to fight alongside the Greeks. That view considers Byron an irreplaceable personality whose death by malaria at Missolongi was a serious blow to the revolution. Many other writers consider Byron to be no more than a well-meaning but ineffectual, and foolish artist playing at being a revolutionary. He is seen as an impossibly stubborn, sexually conflicted, and foolish aristocrat whose reputation is based on his dramatic death in a site distant from his native England.

Petrakis offers a far more insightful portrait of Lord

Byron. He is candid about every fault in Byron, but remains impressed by Byron’s passionate dedication to the principle of individual liberty and the rebirth of classical Hellenic values. The sequences in which Petrakis depicts the death of Byron captures the full measure of a very complex man. I don’t know of any literary critic or historian who offers a more profound evaluation of this most famous of all phil-Hellenes.






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in praise of the Annunciation and in grateful thanksgiving  
for the heroes and the spirit of 1821.




The blessing of freedom, both spiritual and physical, is celebrated on March 25th, when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and told her she would be the mother of Jesus, the Son of God, and in 1821, the start of the Greek War of Independence, when Bishop Germanos of Patras raised the flag of revolution over the Monastery of Agia Lavra in the Peloponnese.

*In this Bicentennial Year of Greek Independence,  
may we all remember and be inspired by the faith which sustained  
the heroes of 1821 and led to the rebirth of a free Greece.*

May you have a happy and joyous March 25th!  
Long Live Hellas!

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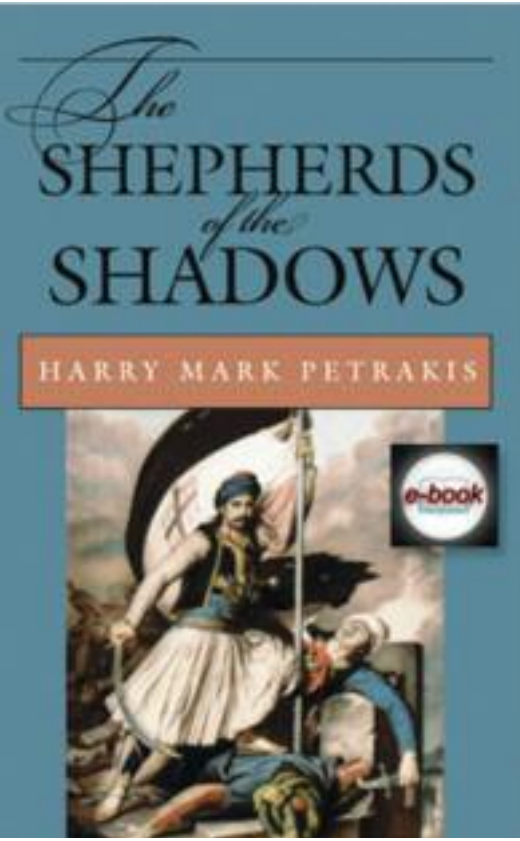
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A tragic high point of the novel involves the effort of Kontos and others from Psara to position themselves against the Ottoman forces threatening their native island. They arrive too late. The island which was home to seven thousand inhabitants has been devastated in the same manner the Ottomans had devastated Chios the preceding year. Most of the young women and children have been taken to be sold at slave markets in the Middle East. Everyone else has been murdered, often in a sadistic manner. Only a handful of Psarans have managed to survive by hiding in the mountains. The tales they tell of the massacre are as gruesome as those told by the survivors of Nazi concentration camps. One half-demented man wishes to die rather than live with the memory of the atrocities he has witnessed.

The Ottoman forces now plan a full-blown invasion of the Peloponnesus. The Greeks are in military and political disarray. At one point Kolokotronis is even jailed by his Greek rivals. Only a rag-tag army led by General Yannis Makriyannis is left to oppose the professional soldiers of the Egyptian army. Among the advisors of Makriyannis is Xanthos. As the battle for Nafplion takes shape, Xanthos is awed by how profoundly the illiterate Makriyannis understands the highest ideals of the revolution. Given the gravity of the threat to the revolution, Xanthos resolves that he too must become a warrior. He is given military training by a kleft with whom he has formed a friendship.

Petrakis builds up to the battle with incredible control. Once the fighting begins, we get a blow-by-blow account of combat that has enormous visual and emotional power. Peter Bien's foreword

to the novel captures the moment well. Ill-trained Greek farmers, armed with primitive rifles that need to be reloaded after each shot, face an army with professional cavalry, sophisticated weaponry, and infantry. Wielding their swords in brutal hand-to-hand fighting, the humble farmers miraculously prevail.

Xanthos survives the battle unharmed, but his closest comrade is severely wounded. Xanthos feels compelled to escort his friend back to his native village. Once among his family, his friend begins to heal while Xanthos falls in love with a humble village girl. Thus, the novel ends as it began, with the enduring values preserved in the traditional Greek villages of the nineteenth century.

The forces of Ibrahim Pasha are not totally routed, but the revolutionary capital of Nafplion has been saved. Pasha will still cause considerable damage throughout the Peloponnesos, but like the battle of Gettysburg, Nafplion has turned the tide of war. One year later, forces mainly composed of fighters from Mani will deliver a crushing defeat to Pasha at the Battle of Politsaravon. A year after that, Greece's European allies will destroy the Ottoman navy at the battle of Navarino.

The complexity of the novel's plot underscores its broad scope. Equal attention is given to both the glorious aspects of the struggle and its horrendous internal rivalries. By daring to deal with the failings of the Greeks, avoiding stereotypes, and refusing to glorify war or vengeance, Petrakis succeeds in capturing the genuine heroism and the incredible sacrifices of the Greek people.

The Petrakis who wrote The Shepherds of Shadows was an even wiser and more skillful artist than the author of the admirable The Hour of the Bell. A third, possibly even more spectacular third novel had been contemplated by Petrakis. For a number of reasons relating to aging and the time needed for reliable research, he was not been able to do so. What we have in hand, however, is quite marvelous, incomplete as the revolution itself, but quite marvelous. Harry Mark Petrakis has brought the Greek War of Independence to life in a manner unprecedented in American literature.

\* Dan Georgakas is Director of the Greek American Studies Project at Queens College (CUNY). He is available at his website: [dangeorgakas.agsites.com](http://dangeorgakas.agsites.com)

# 1821: An Authentic Revolution, for an Authentic Country

By Alexander Billinis

This month we celebrate the Bicentennial of the start of the Greek War of Independence. No question such a seminal event in a nation's history must be honored, and in this publication and others I have been very clear that we must honor the event and that the event belongs truly to the Greek people everywhere, and not to some sterile, state-sponsored committee.

A friend of mine, from a country neighboring Greece, once commented to me about the resilience- to this day – of our common Byzantine heritage. He said that the success of Byzantium, and its long life and continued relevance was because “Byzantium was authentic.” Perhaps the greatest compliment one can give to a civilization.

I think that, in retrospect of two hundred years of existence, Greece can be both praised and criticized for a plethora of virtues and vices, yet ultimately perhaps the best commentary I can give to my country, as she enters her third century, is that Greece is authentic.

Greece was “an idea whose time had come” to paraphrase the great Victor Hugo. Great ideas often take a leap of faith to become a reality, and certainly the ragtag crew of Diaspora merchants and intellectuals, island corsairs, and rugged mountain guerillas, took a jump into a new era, inspired by events across the Atlantic in 1776, and France in 1789.

Like most revolutions, the Greek one was often ugly, and heroism stood side by side with cowardice, and civic virtue all too often struggled with private vice. Yet it spoke to people, not just to a captive nation reawakening, but to a larger world that was inspired.

Greece survived, often in spite of herself, and the identity of Greeks today – a heritage of Byzantium and the Ottoman era returned to a Hellenic identity – has survived because it is authentic. Every nation has its mythologies and contradictions, and certainly a Hellas reborn has her share, yet paradoxically the Greek mosaic works. The various parts fuse to create a coherent picture that informs the identity of Greeks today.



Every nation has its mythologies and contradictions, and certainly a Hellas reborn has her share, yet paradoxically the Greek mosaic works.

The various parts fuse to create a coherent picture that informs the identity of Greeks today.

That's the good news. Greece is authentic. The bad news – the institutional failures of a state all too Ottoman in heritage, the divisiveness of the Greeks despite a powerful, passionate adherence to the Greek identity – these remain a work in process. We must turn the challenges of geography and history into opportunities.

As we honor the heroes of 1821, there is plenty of work to be done. The Greek Revolution requires a constant Greek Evolution. Let us do our part.

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# Chief and Leader of the Messinian Revolution, the Unknown Hero Giannakis Gritzalis

By Stavroula Tsoutsas



March 25th is a day of honor and pride for all Greeks and an opportunity to honor a hero of 1821 whose efforts had been ignored over the years or at least have not been recognized as much as they should be.

Giannakis Gritzalis was born in 1791 in Psari Trifylias. His father died early and Giannakis and his brother Dimitris were raised by their mother Areti, who was the sister of the well-known klefti Giannakis Meliou, leader of the Dredes\*. Before the revolution, Giannakis and his brother Dimitris lived in Constantinople and worked in the grain trade between Odessa and the Polis. In Odessa, the two brothers were probably initiated into the Filiki Eteria and Giannakis was probably a link between the city and the chiefs of the Peloponnese. As soon as the revolution broke

out, Giannakis was in the Peloponnese and his contribution in the first years of the struggle was significant. He fought with self-sacrifice in Valtetsi, in the battle for the Fall of Tripoli and at the age of 32 he deservedly received the title of Commander of a thousand troops.

He was a loyal friend and colleague of Kolokotronis and for this reason he was imprisoned along with him during the civil war in December 1824. The legendary fighter Mitropetrovas, Giannakis' father-in-law, was also imprisoned with him. The imprisonment of the fighters of 1821 left the way open for Ibrahim's landing in the Peloponnese with all the resulting painful consequences.

When the heroes, including Giannakis Gritzalis, were released at the end of May 1825, they fought with heroism and patriotism against Ibrahim's troops, proving once again their pure and unselfish love for their homeland.

The official state, however, punished them for their patriotism again and again.

When in 1833 the reins of the newly formed Greek state were taken over by Otto and the Regency, they tried to rule oligarchically, serving anything other than the interest of the Greek people who at that time lived financially impoverished, paying unbearable taxes. Only 1/6 of the Greeks had their own land and only 1/4 had their own animal. Those farmers who cultivated national land, paid so much taxes, that in the end they did not have even 30% of



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The hero in the face of death was not afraid for a moment. He asked not to be blindfolded and shouted vigorously in front of the executive branch: "Brothers, I am dying unjustly. I sought the rights of the Greeks."

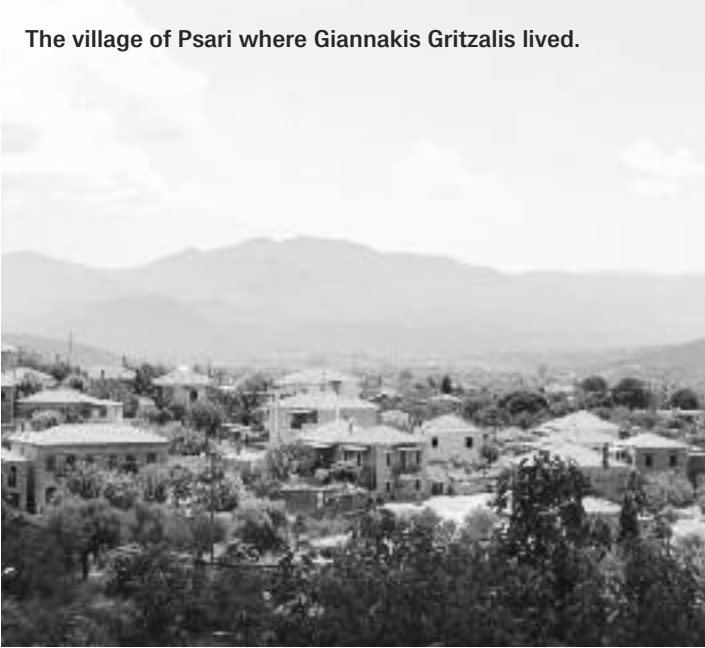
their production left.

As if this were not enough, the Regency took care to completely oust the old fighters from positions of power, while at the

same time trying to remove them from the middle because they were dangerous to their interests and aspirations. Thus, Kolokotronis and Plapoutas are put of trial and sentenced to death on the charge that they were preparing a revolution against the still minor king, Otto.

Giannakis Gritzalis, who at that time lived in Psari, could not remain a spectator in this great injustice. He became the leader of the Messinian Revolution of 1834, which, as it had demands regarding the taxation system and state institutions that were included in the declarations of the revolutionaries, is considered the first social Revolution in modern Greek history. The Messinian Revolution began with the sudden occupation of Kyparissia. Gritzalis with a well-planned operation and 500 men, mainly Sulimohorites-Dredes, surprised the authorities of the area, arrested the Prefect, the Military Commander, and the Public Treasurer, and imprisoned them while protecting them from the wrath of the revolutionaries because they supported the false trial of Kolokotronis.

He then set up a 'revolutionary committee' and issued two proclamations. The first addressed the Greek people and



DIMITRIS NASOPOULOS

mentioned the main purposes of the Revolution, which were the release of Kolokotronis and Plapoutas, the granting of a constitution, and the exemption of the citizens from heavy taxation. The second addressed Otto and informed him of the miserable government mechanisms that oppressed the people, the economic impoverishment of the rural population, and the abuses of executive and judicial power.

The Revolution, despite the reactions of the government, spread quickly to Messinia and Arcadia. For this reason and for the suppression of the rebellion, strong forces were deployed by the Kolettis government and chiefs were recruited from the Peloponnese.

Unfortunately, the rebels in the ensuing battles were defeated and disbanded, and its leaders were put on trial.

Giannakis Gritzalis courageously assumed all the responsibilities of the revolution and was sentenced to death by summary proceedings. Only two hours after his conviction (in order to prevent a pardon request), he was executed by firing squad on September 19, 1834.

The hero in the face of death was not afraid for a moment. He asked not to be blindfolded and

shouted vigorously in front of the executive branch: "Brothers, I am dying unjustly. I sought the rights of the Greeks."

His wife Giannoula was not allowed to take the body of her dead husband for burial, for fear that his funeral would cause a public disturbance. The unfortunate woman secretly collected her husband's body all alone.

The Messinian Revolution, which was in fact the forerunner of the Revolution of September 3, remained for many years in obscurity from the official historiography as a disobedience to the central government, along with the national struggles of the Dredes. The same goes for the story of Giannakis Gritzalis, a story that I had the honor to hear as a child, as a descendant of the hero on my grandmother, Stavroula Gritzali-Tsoutsas's side.

Long live the heroes of 1821. Long live Giannakis Gritzalis. Long live Greece.

**\* The Sulimohorites or Dredes: In 1380, on the plateau of Dorio, in Northwestern Messinia, forty Arvanite families including two hundred women and children (Christian Orthodox) came and settled to guard the border.**



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ΕΘΝΙΚΟΣ ΚΗΡΥΞ



# Dr. Alexander Kitroeff on Greece’s 1821 and Philhellenism in the United States

By Eleni Sakellis

The Consulate General of Greece in Boston and College Year in Athens (CYA) co-hosted a celebratory lecture on March 17, via Zoom, held under the auspices of the Greek Embassy in Washington, commemorating the bicentennial of the Greek War of Independence. The lecture, titled Greece’s 1821 & America: A Message of Freedom, featured guest speaker Dr. Alexander Kitroeff, Professor of History at Haverford College and a Member of CYA’s Academic Advisory Roundtable, discussing the American philhellenic movement during the Greek Revolution.

As Dr. Kitroeff explained, the wave of philhellenism that swept through the United States with the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821 included the establishment of ‘Greek committees’ in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia and the arrival of several American volunteers in Greece among them was Bostonian Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe. What facilitated the emergence of philhellenism was the growing American fascination with Classical Greece that was expressed through the growth of Greek Revival architecture and an interest in Greece itself and the first visits there by Americans, Edward Everett from Massachusetts and Nicholas Biddle from Pennsylvania. What was also remarkable was the growing interest in the Greek struggle for freedom throughout the United States during the 1820s.

The presentation offered an overall picture of the wide parameters of American philhellenism and explored the reasons for its depth and breadth during this period.

Consul General of Greece in Boston Stratos Efthymiou gave the welcoming remarks and introduced Ambassador of Greece to the United States Alexandra Papadopoulou who noted how Philhellenism was a major component of the success of the Greek Revolution.

CYA President Alexis Phylactopoulos also offered his greetings and introduced Dr. Kitroeff, a Professor of History at Haverford College, where he has been teaching since 1996. He was born in Athens and left Greece at age fourteen to join relatives in England where he finished his schooling and then went on to acquire a Bachelor’s Degree in Politics from Warwick University. He also received a Master’s Degree from Keele University and a doctorate in modern history from the University of Oxford. After doing his national service in Greece, in 1986, he began teaching at the Byzantine & Modern Greek Center at Queens College at the City University in New York. In 1990 he moved across town to the Onassis Center for Hellenic Studies at New York University. His next position was at the History Department at Haverford College on Philadelphia’s “Main Line.”

The presentation offered fascinating insights into Philhellenism in the United States, sparked by, among other things, the influence of classical education and travels to Europe and Greece in particular which opened the eyes of many to the plight of modern Greeks under Ottoman oppression. The fight for freedom from an oppressive empire was inspired in part by the American Revolution which was itself in-



Newspapers from Massachusetts to Alabama covered Greece and the Revolution with some devoting entire front pages to the fight for freedom as shown in the slide from Dr. Kitroeff’s presentation.



American poet, journalist and long-time editor of the New York Evening Post, William Cullen Bryant was among those writing Romantic Philhellenic poetry that further inspired support for the Greek Revolution.

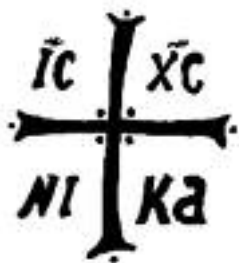
spired by ancient Greek philosophy and ideals of democracy espoused by the Founding Fathers. Heightening the sympathy for the Greek cause was the aspect of religious freedom with many eager to help their fellow Christians, though some Protestants may have had reservations about helping Orthodox Christians, they were still Christians. Kitroeff also noted the influence of Romantic Philhellenic poetry in building support for the Greek cause, from Lord Byron’s Childe Harold’s

Pilgrimage to the work of William Cullen Bryant, American poet, journalist, and long-time editor of the New York Evening Post. The newspaper coverage from all across the United States at the time concerning Greece and the Revolution was also impressive, and highlighted by a slide showing papers from Massachusetts to Alabama, some of which devoted entire front pages to Greece, Kitroeff noted in the presentation. The fact that Americans were so concerned about the freedom of Greece while slavery continued in many parts of the U.S. also led many Philhellenes to join the Abolitionist movement in America. As Kitroeff pointed out, the heirs of classical Greece fighting for freedom captured the imagination of the American people. A Q&A session followed, moderated by CYA President Phylactopoulos who read the questions submitted by the viewers. Ambassador Papadopoulou then gave the closing remarks, thanking Dr. Kitroeff and all those who participated and made the event possible.

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# On the Trail of the Greek Revolution 200 Years Later

By Ernest A. Kollitides, P.E. \*

During their long history, one of the worst disasters to befall the Greek people was their gradual loss of the Byzantine Empire and, finally, the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks, on May 29, 1453. A people whose civilization, from ancient times, had symbolized progress and enlightenment and whose sacrifices, from the dawn of history, had ennobled the very concepts of freedom and democracy, were suddenly enslaved by a people whose greatest achievement had been the ruthless destruction and plunder of the thriving civilizations of Asia Minor, the Middle East, and the Balkans. Taxed ruthlessly, their freedom stolen, their schools closed at whim, their churches defiled at will, their young boys abducted, Islamized and inducted into Janissary legions, their servile existence lasted four centuries while their periodic brave revolts were crushed in savage blood baths.

However, the gunshots of Concord, Massachusetts in 1775 and the storming of the Bastille in France in 1789 echoed loudly in the ears of some Greeks who had dreamed a free Greece. Notable among them was Rigas Feraios, a teacher who worked tirelessly organizing an uprising of the enslaved people of the Balkans. He labored in inspiring and motivating the declining Greek race to reach its former heights by raising its morale and education as essential to a successful revolution. He boldly published and distributed poems and practical books to that effect. Sadly, he was betrayed, arrested, and delivered to the Turks in Belgrade, who tortured and strangled him to death on June 24, 1798 at the age of 41. He was the spark of the revolution and its gallant protomartyr. But the Turks could not strangle Rigas' vision; it was embraced by Nikolaos Skoufas from Arta, Emmanuil Xanthos from Patmos, and Athanasios Tsakalov from Ioannina, three Diaspora Greek merchants. In 1814 in Odessa, Ukraine, they formed the Filiki Eteria, or the Society of Friends, a secret organization whose goal was the overthrow of Ottoman rule in Greece and the establishment of an independent Greek state – a mission impossible at the time, especially coming on the heels of the 1814-1815 Congress of Vienna with the great powers banning uprisings and revolts. Other Greek patriots embraced the same goals but felt it was too early. However, by the time of the Society's formation, the idea of freedom from the Ottoman Empire was stirring in the hearts of all Greeks whose sense of national pride had been kept alive by their Greek language, their Orthodox Church, and their ancient history, with reminders of their glorious past everywhere in glimpses of ruined temples with their time-darkened marbles and broken statues – often barely rising above the ground that had buried them for centuries. These too craved liberation!

Most of Filiki Eteria's recruits were Phanariot Greeks from Constantinople living in Russia, local chieftains in Greece, and Serbs. Prince Alexandros Ypsilantis and future leaders, such as Theodoros Kolokotronis, Odysseas Androutsos, bishop Germanos of Patras, and others, soon became prominent members of Filiki Eteria. Well-educated Ypsilantis spoke fluent Romanian, German, Russian, and French and in 1808 was invited to Russia by Tsar Alexander I, enlisted in the Imperial Russian Army, became general at 25, and fought Napoleon's Russian invasion, losing his right arm.

In 1818 the Filiki Eteria moved to Constantinople, amazingly under the Sultan's nose, and Patriarch Gregorios V became a secret member. In 1820 Ypsilantis became the society's leader and immediately began appealing to the Diaspora Greeks to contribute to the liberation struggle by any means possible. His stirring letters used phrases like, "Future generations will bless your names and they will praise you as precursors of their freedom and bliss." His grand strategy was to support a revolt of Montenegrins and Serbs, spark a revolt in the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (now Romania), provoke civil unrest in Constantinople, and burn the Ottoman fleet in its port, then go to Greece and start the revolution in the Peloponnese. Ypsilantis was betting that with renegade Ali Pasha of Ioannina fighting the Turks in Epirus, a revolt in the Balkans would stretch the Turkish army's capabilities and help the revolt in the Peloponnese. In October 1820 Ypsilantis declared that he would soon be starting a revolt against the Ottoman Empire. His declaration began by praising ancient Greece: "Aim your eyes toward the seas, which are covered by our seafaring cousins, ready to follow the example of Salamis. Look to the land, and everywhere you will see Leonidas at the head of the patriotic Spartans."

However, following the betrayal of the Society's activities to the Ottomans, he hastened the revolt in the Principalities, expecting more local fellow Orthodox recruits. On February 22, 1821 he and a company of about 500 men of Greek descent, which he named the 'Sacred Band', entered Iasi, the capital of Moldavia, and declared that they had a great power's support, ostensibly Russia, counting on Orthodox Tsar Alexander's support. But Alexander's commitment to the Congress of Vienna drove him to denounce the revolution and strip Ypsilantis of his rank.

Ypsilantis then marched to Bucharest, where he was disheartened to discover that, even though the Principalities shared the same Orthodox faith,



Athens fell in August 1826, followed by the Acropolis stronghold in June 1827. Messolongi, which had a number of philhellenes among its defenders – the most prominent had being Lord Byron, who died there in 1824 – became a symbol of the entire struggle and a political turning point, triggering strong emotional reactions in Europe and the United States, stronger than even the barbaric Turkish massacre of Chios.

they would not support him because, by then, they were more interested in Romanian nationalism. The Ottomans, emboldened by Ypsilantis' Russian rebuke, crossed the Danube with 30,000 trained troops in pursuit of the Sacred Band. Here Ypsilantis made a fatal tactical error; instead of moving to Braila to benefit from the treaty that forbade Ottoman armies in the demilitarized Principalities, and Tsar Alexander's possible acceptance of the fait accompli of his revolt, he retreated to Iasi where his small army fought against a far larger enemy and lost a series of major battles.

Finally, suffering a decisive defeat at Dragatsani on June 19, and losing many of his young recruits, instead of going to Greece as planned, he fled north where, after four months of intense campaigning, failed to stir sufficient support. He was eventually arrested by Austro-Hungarian agents and imprisoned in the present-day Czech Republic until 1827, when Tsar Nicholas I mediated his release. Sadly, by then, Ypsilantis was too sick and, two months later, died in Vienna in January, 1828, at 36, in object poverty. The last wish of this brave lover of liberty was to have his heart sent to Greece, where it has been entombed at a chapel near the Presidential Mansion, in Athens. In 1964 his remains were brought from Vienna to Athens and interned in the park of heroes, the 'Pedion tou Areos.'

Even though Ypsilantis' revolt had failed, the spark of his revolution had already touched every Greek town and the rallying cry, 'Freedom or Death' was on the lips of Greeks everywhere; the torch of revolution had already passed to the Greek rebels (armatoloi and klefts). The privately owned Greek merchant ships, which carried cannons to defend against pirates, answered the clarion call of the revolution and became its war navy. Against all odds, the ancient lands of Greece, and most Diaspora Greeks, had made the fateful decision to fight to death for liberty! March 25, 1821 is recognized as the official launching of the Revolution at the monastery of Aghia Lavra, in Peloponnese (Morea), where Bishop Germanos of Patra, and several rebel chieftains, raised the flag of the revolution and took the oath for 'Freedom or Death,' which became the battle cry of the struggle and, like the gunshots of the American and French revolutions, it was heard around the world! A small ethnic minority in the vast Ottoman Empire astonished the world with its determination to win its freedom with its blood! Now, the herculean struggle was on and the revolution entered its 'victory or death' stage. As the news of the uprising spread, so did the Turkish persecutions and atrocities against Greek cities throughout the Ottoman (previously Byzantine) Empire. Brutal reprisals began during Holy Week and on April 10, 1821 Patriarch Gregorios V was arrested, during his Easter service, and hanged in

the front gate of the Patriarchate, in his full vestments (this gate has remained locked shut ever since). After hanging for three days to the jeers of passing Turks, his body was dragged around the streets and thrown into the Bosphorus; it was recovered by a Greek seaman and secretly taken to Odessa and interned with honors at the Church of the Holy Trinity. Similar Turkish atrocities were committed in July 1821 in Cyprus where the archbishop and all of the high-ranking clergy were savagely murdered. Clearly the struggle was fought not only on national but also on religious grounds, i.e., a war between Turk-Muslims and Christians! Thus, the cross became the symbol of the revolution and later part of the flag of Greece and its coat of arms. Patriarch Gregorios' relics are now enshrined in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Athens. He and Rigas Feraios – their statues standing outside Athens University – are honored as great martyrs of the Revolution. The revolution went on for several years and produced great commanders, heroes, and heroines. Kolokotronis, who had served in the British and Russian land and sea forces, became the commanding general of the various rebel units and began to train them. Within the first year, the Greek rebels gained control of the Peloponnese, areas in Central Greece, and a few Aegean islands. In January 1822, they declared the independence of Greece. Between 1822 and 1824 the Turks made three major attempts to regain the liberated territories but failed. The usually smaller Greek armies engaged the larger Ottoman hordes and often inflicted heavy casualties on them. On other occasions the Ottomans had the upper hand and were ruthless against the vanquished, or any prisoners, subjecting them to most inhumane and cruel tortures before murdering them. Their terror tactics included the burning of entire villages, indiscriminate killing of helpless old folk, women, and children, and raping, plundering, and starving whole towns.

The Greek bands retaliated with ferocity against the Ottoman armies and, occasionally, against Turkish settlements in Greece. Following the Greek gains in Peloponnese and Central Greece, the uprising spread to several Aegean islands, with Hydra, Spetses, and Psara playing a leading role in the naval war. Rebellions also erupted in Epirus, Thessaly, western Macedonia, Thrace, and Chalkidiki; however, these isolated revolts were quickly crushed. Unfortunately, antagonism among the Greek leaders prevented them from consolidating and extending their gains and, sometimes, risked the revolution's outcome. In 1823 civil war broke out between Kolokotronis and Georgios Koundouriotis, President of the new government, forcing him to flee to Hydra. After a second civil war in 1824, Kountouriotis became the accepted Presi-

dent. In 1825 the revolution faced a new existential threat. Late in February of 1825, 17,000 Egyptian troops landed near Methoni in southwest Peloponnese, commanded by Ibrahim Pasha, son of the nominal viceroy of Egypt – then part of the Ottoman Empire – who was promised the Peloponnese and the island of Crete for his assistance. This French-trained, modern-equipped army became a major challenge to the Greeks, who began to lose territory and towns to Ibrahim as he crossed the Peloponnese. Failing to capture Corinth, he and his navy moved to join the Turks then besieging Messolongi, thus cutting off the city's supplies from land and sea and causing its extreme starvation. This third siege of the city began on April 15, 1825 and when, on April 10, 1826, the defendants launched a desperate exodus, most of them died gallantly fighting an uneven battle; those who had remained in the city blew themselves up rather than become Turkish prisoners. Athens fell in August 1826, followed by the Acropolis stronghold in June 1827.

Messolongi, which had a number of philhellenes among its defenders – the most prominent had being Lord Byron, who died there in 1824 – became a symbol of the entire struggle and a political turning point, triggering strong emotional reactions in Europe and the United States, stronger than even the barbaric Turkish massacre of Chios.

The public in Europe and the United States supported the Greek cause and helped it with supplies and volunteers. The Congress of Vienna protocols and their own political calculations had kept the governments from involvement, but after Messolongi, the great European powers began to think of helping the Greek revolutionaries. The Russian Empire's expansionist policy at the expense of the declining Ottoman Empire and Europe's concern over Russia's potential geostrategic threat, following the expected demise of the Ottoman Empire, were the catalysts for allied intervention. In this political climate, three important factors favored the Greek cause: a) The Russian-Greek Orthodox religious connection, b) The British public's strong support of the Greek cause, in spite of official British policy of preserving the Ottoman Empire, and c) The deep philhellenism of the French public, including Eugene Delacroix, Victor Hugo, Greek-born Colonel Joseph Balleste, who died heroically for Greece's liberation. Through the 1827 Treaty of London, Britain and France skillfully coopted Russia into an allied intervention to assure Greek autonomy, thus preventing a unilateral Russian action, while preserving the Ottoman Empire as a check on Russia. Clearly geopolitical considerations, rather than altruism or magnanimity were their drivers. To enforce their decision against an obstinate Sultan, the allies sent a naval squadron to the east Mediterranean which met the Turkish-Egyptian armada in the bay of Navarino. On October 20, 1827, whether by accident or design, a battle ensued and the allies destroyed the Ottoman fleet. The Russo-Turkish war of 1828-9, the dispatch of French troops to the Peloponnese, and the pressure of the Greek bands, forced the Ottoman troops out of central and southern Greece, thus securing Greece's independence!

In 1827 Ioannis Kapodistrias, former Foreign Secretary of Russia, was elected as the first head of independent Greece and is considered the architect of its independence and founder of the modern Greek state. The February 3, 1830 London Protocol imposed a settlement by the allies declaring Greece an independent monarchical state. In mid-1832 its northern border was along a line extending from south of Volos to south of Arta. In 1831 Kapodistrias' assassination shook the confidence and the outlook of Greece. On May 27, 1832 the Bavarian Prince Otto became king and with the July 1832 Treaty of Constantinople, the Sultan accepted the independence of Greece!

It took several more wars and many more sacrifices before Greece secured its present borders, however, it all started with Rigas' and Ypsilantis' rallying-cry of 'Freedom or Death!' The Greek Revolution of 1821 was the first national liberation movement in Europe and worldwide – after that of the United States – and played a crucial role in the subsequent creation of nation-states which redrew the map of Europe and, in time, the world. Thus, the Greek Revolution had a worldwide impact! It also signaled the beginning of the end of the oppressive and corrupt Ottoman Empire, which convulsed and expired in stages over the next 100 years. Though in the 1700's Western intellectuals had pondered the idea of nation-states, it was in Greece that this revolutionary concept first succeeded in Europe! Following the French revolution of 1789, and the rise and fall of Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna had established order in Europe by simply regressing to pre-1789 geopolitical paradigms of empires and autocratic rule. The Greek Revolution of 1821 changed all that and became the turning point for the creation of modern, autonomous nation-states. Perhaps this was history's manifestation of gratitude to the birthplace of democracy and Western civilization!

\* Ernest A. Kollitides is a Professional Engineer and Historian, was executive in two Fortune-500 international engineering firms, and President-CEO of an environmental engineering company.





# History Through Art: The Great Painters of the Hellenic War of Independence

By Anthé Mitrakos

With the Hellenic War of Independence commencing in 1821, the historical event preceded the invention of early photography by a few years. It was in the form of traditional artwork, lithographs, and oil paintings that the various scenes, from rural life under Ottoman rule, to fiery battles and the grand entrance of King Otto into Greece, were captured, a means by which history was preserved.

Created by Greek and foreign artists alike, these images were used to spread awareness and influence support on an international scale, for the war efforts in Greece, conveying the Greek spirit and struggle for freedom on an emotional level. The artwork of Carl Wilhelm von Heideck (1788-1861), Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863), Peter von Hess (1792-1871), and Theodoros Vryzakis (1814-1878), among others, painted a picture of early 19th century Greece and the fight for independence we celebrate this year especially.

Growing up during the years of the Hellenic War of Independence, Theodoros Vryzakis was directly influenced by the resistance, his father having been lynched by the Ottomans at the very start of the war in 1821. An orphan with artistic talent, he was discovered by scholar Friedrich Thiersch, who is said to have played a role in securing the throne of the Kingdom of Greece for the young Bavarian King Otto. Vryzakis attended the Athens School of Fine Arts and traveled to Munich on a scholarship to continue his studies. He was a student of both Carl Wilhelm von



## Staikos Staikopoulos Conquers Palamidi - Peter von Hess

Heideck and Peter von Hess, who were known for their illustration of several independence-related scenes.

**Vryzakis'** oil painting **The Exodus from Missolonghi** (1853) captures a scene during the third siege of Missolonghi in 1826, when the Greeks attempted a mass breakout in hopes of escaping famine after a nearly year-long blockade. Communicated through the work is drama, tragedy, and the sincere struggle by both Greek men and women to overcome their tyrant, while angels and Jesus Christ give blessings from the heavens. Romantic in spirit, the painting captures Greek heroism, and a willingness to risk one's life for freedom.

Painted the year of the siege, **La Grèce sur les ruines de Missolonghi**” by French painter **Delacroix** depicts the disaster that resulted when the Greeks revolted against the Ottomans. Now part of the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Bordeaux collection, this oil painting depicts a kneeling woman dressed in blue and white, symbolizing Greece. With her arms open amongst the rubble and death, she is overtaken by sadness as a man in Ottoman attire stands with an enemy flag in the background. Stretching more than four meters tall at the Musée du Louvre, another one of Delacroix’s masterpieces is that of the *Scènes des massacres de Scio* (1824) depicting the 1822 massacres on the island of Chios.





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# The Bicentennial of Greek Independence

By Eleni Sakellis

On this momentous 200th anniversary of Greek Independence, I felt compelled to share my thoughts not only as the Assistant Executive Editor at The National Herald, but also as the daughter of Greek immigrants who passed down to me this great and weighty heritage and history along with love and pride for the homeland. The fact that we live so far away only serves to make it dearer to us, and I cannot help but think of all those Greeks of the Diaspora from the time of the fall of Constantinople until 1821 and beyond who supported Greece and its freedom and fought in various ways to keep the language and the culture alive wherever they happened to reside.

The more I read and learn about the Greek Revolution, the more complicated it has become. The simple accounts from the history books do not do justice to the men and women who sacrificed so much for the cause of freedom. There is so much more still to learn about those Heroes of 1821 lined up in that poster on the wall in the Greek school classroom. And much more to learn about the heroes who started the struggle years before 1821 and those who continued the strug-

gle in the years after, through civil wars and reversals of fortune, to free the rest of Greece from the yoke of oppression.

The most famous heroes of the Greek War of Independence, Theodoros Kolokotronis, Georgios Karaiskakis, Yannis Makriyannis, Athanasios Diakos, Rigas Feraios, Papaflessas, Constantine Kanaris, Manto Mavrogenous, Andreas Miaoulis, Odysseas Androutsos, and Laskarina Bouboulina, still inspire us today with their remarkable stories.

We should also remember the countless, unnamed heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice in the struggle to breathe free, like the women and children of Souli, immortalized in the Dance of Zalongo and the famous song lyrics including the poignant stanza, Στη στεριά δε ζει το ψάρι/ ούτ’ ανθός στην αμμουδιά/ Κι οι Σουλιώτισσες δεν ζούνε/ δίχως την ελευθεριά. Translated into English, The fish cannot live on the land/ Nor the flower on the sand/ And the women of Souli/ Cannot live without freedom.

That this once-in-a-lifetime bicentennial is taking place during the COVID pandemic seems terribly unfair, but we should be thankful that we are here to celebrate even in a muted way because showing Greek pride is about more than parades and parties, it is about showing



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One narrative states the Greeks of Missolonghi had this laurel wreath made for Byron's coffin, not least because Byron had been something of a freedom fighter in Greece and was also a champion of preserving Greek monuments in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

our unity in the face of adversity, about doing what is right, and standing up for human rights and for freedom for all.

We would all love to be on that sacred ground where the Revolution first broke out, on or near March 25th, but even a pandemic cannot diminish the great spirit of Hellenism that is held within our hearts and shared wherever we happen to be

through our values and our philotimo.

On March 25, 1821, Bishop Germanos of Patras raised the flag of revolution over the Monastery of Agia Lavra in the Peloponnese. "Freedom or death" became the motto of the revolution. The date of March 25 is also a religious holiday, the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and told her she would be the mother of Jesus, the Son of God. The double celebration honors the Mother of God, the Theotokos, and the faith that sustained so many during the years of oppression, offering hope and a beacon of light in those dark times, and then through the brutal years of war in the fight for freedom. Very few holidays have such powerful connections in the minds and hearts of the people through faith and history.

Though many of us live far away, and the pandemic has kept us from traveling as freely as we would hope to, our love for our Greek heritage, language, and homeland remains steadfast.

For many Greeks, the struggle for freedom that began in 1821 lasted much longer. The territory of the Greek nation after the War of Independence included only part of what we call Greece today. The borders expanded and contracted

and expanded again, forged by war and the people's determination to uphold the ideals of Hellenism. The islands of the Dodecanese after millennia of upholding the Greek language, traditions, and faith, only became part of the Modern Greek nation in 1947. The emotion inspired by the unification is still powerful and within recent memory for those who lived through the years of the Italian occupation and then the German occupation in World War II. The historic struggle for freedom carries with it the tremendous responsibility to maintain that freedom in the face of all threats whether internal or external. In our interconnected world, it becomes even more important to stand up for freedom and the rights of the oppressed.

While the pandemic prevents us from gathering in large numbers in person and showing our Hellenic pride in parades across the globe, the virtual celebrations continue. We can remain dedicated to remembering and sharing the stories and struggles of the past and keep the flame of Hellenism burning for generations to come through our indomitable Hellenic spirit. And hopefully, sooner rather than later, we will all meet again in Greece for the celebration of a lifetime.

**ΖΗΤΩ Η ΕΛΛΑΣ!**  
**ΖΗΤΩ Η 25η Μαρτίου!**

## For Greece, the Motto of 1821 ‘Freedom or Death’ Is as Relevant Today as Ever

By Dimitris Eleas\*



The mini-war with Turkey is fast approaching if "Greece does not leave aside its begging syndrome," as Professor George Margaritis noted a few months ago. At the same time, Greece must stop invoking international law, as if it were Uncle Sam from America! Turkey is also invoking international law. Why do I say this?

Greece could invoke interna-

tional law on a daily basis since it has international law on its side, but because we know the deficits of international institutions and as we are constantly threatened militarily, if necessary, we will defend our freedom through arms to the extent required. For some analysts, asymmetric neo-Ottoman aggression is understood only through actions. And a shy Turkey has already aimed its barbs against Thucydides, Aristotle, and Sappho and their distant 'descendants': Constantine XI Palaiologos, Lela Karagianni, Maria Callas, Panagiotis Kondylis, Castoriadis, Stavros Lygeros, and so many others. It spits in the face of Hellenism! Is this not true?

Already, while you are reading this text, an escalating war with threats using NAVTEX warnings, war-mongering, and countless violations continue unabated. The 'travels' of the Oruc Reis research

vessel within the potential Greek continental shelf and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) has continued, as if nothing had happened! Why does Turkey behave as if they are seeking a mini-war in the Aegean? Why do they underestimate the military power of Greece?

No one can rule out that a mini-war that may start from the spark of a provocation or even an accident. We have already seen the ramming of a Turkish frigate by a Greek frigate. The Turks, perhaps more so because of psychological reasons, have always wanted to be seen as reacting, rather than starting a war. But under the boisterous Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Gray Wolf coalition partner Devlet Bahceli, Turkey almost fell into Thucydides' pernicious trap.

Maybe, they want to start a war and are looking for a reason, or

On the other side of the Aegean Sea, the rule has always been death marches and deportations for Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, and others. Greece must strengthen its power. Greece's power must never be subordinated to Turkey's military power.

maybe not. Will Turkey, which has exceeded all legal boundaries, want to challenge fate? We observe that Turkey is verbally using cultural and political insults. This has certainly been true for decades, but it has escalated. Is a mini-war with Turkey on the table? Clearly and yes, on the part of the Turks. Professor Panagiotis Hephaestus had said: "Erdogan thinks in terms of war."

So, should it be on our table too before it's too late? And if war is the continuation of politics by other means, we must have such politics and prioritized national interests. Well, is it not clear to the leaders of the Athenian elite that Turkey's hegemonic claims, as an unexplained syndrome, envision the change of borders, the abrogation of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, the usurpation of the Dodecanese, and also our national disappearance?

Are the massacre of Chios in 1822, the burning of Smyrna in 1922, and the invasion of Cyprus in 1974 a lie? The most glorious part of Turkey's modern history is precisely these atrocities. On the other side of the Aegean Sea, the rule has always been death marches and deportations for Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, and others. Greece must strengthen its power. Greece's power must never be subordinated to Turkey's military power.

The defence agreement with countries, such as France, is a one-way street and a power multiplier. So, should the issue of Belh@ra frigates be raised again?

It is obvious, then, that in order for Greece to avoid the Thucydides trap it needs very strong deterrent measures. Greece is defending the status quo. And there is a subtle connection between defending oneself, that is, waging war on an enemy if one is attacked – and the weighted estimates show that an attack is imminent. Therefore, we are entering into a counter-attack logic, which in Greece many peo-

ple deliberately ignore.

But as Erdogan's Turkey progresses, should there be a mini-war with it on the table? Perhaps "we should strike a first blow," capable of giving us the upper hand in the Aegean and serving as the crucial deterrent for decades. If the Greeks today are afraid to fight, then one day, Greece will be lost. If Greek territory continues to be turned into 'Swiss cheese' by Turkish planes, the future will be ominous for all of us. And if Hellenism retreats further, one day we will be uprooted like the Pontian Greeks. Cyprus was mutilated because Hellenism there also retreated, while the Greek Cypriots lost on their own.

"The Greeks are not joking" is the phrase that German Chancellor Angela Merkel allegedly said to the Turks on the night of Tuesday, July 22, 2020. This phrase is the right legacy for the future. At the same time, all Greeks, men and women, must re-evaluate what we have created in the two hundred years since the National Uprising of 1821. Then they will defend it better!


The Athenian elites (political and economic) were unlucky. However, they still have much to learn from the proud Greek people, the Unknown Soldier, and the National Benefactors. And without a second thought, Greeks must remain united like a steel fist! This place is our homeland and we only kneel in front of our dead, the Hundreds of Martyrs. The motto Freedom or Death is as relevant today as ever. Because only in this way will the case of Greece not be lost in 21st-century multi-polarity.


**Dimitris Eleas is a New York City-based writer, independent researcher, and political activist. His writings in the Greek language have appeared in books, journals, and newspapers. He can be contacted via e-mail: dimitris.eleas@gmail.com.**

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salutes the Greek-American community and Greek Independence Day.

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**Zoom Event:**  
**The Crucial Role of the Epirotans in the Greek Independence War of 1821**

TNH Staff

**NEW YORK** – The World Council of Epirotes Abroad and the Panepirotic Federation of America present The Crucial Role of the Epirotans in the Greek Independence War of 1821, a virtual event, Saturday, March 27, 1 PM EDT/7 PM Greece. The event features a lecture by Dr. Vaia Economidou, historian-archaeologist and Director of the Zosimaia Library in Ioannina. The Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary General for Public Diplomacy and Greeks Abroad, Ioannis Chrysoulakis, and Ambassador of Greece to the United States Alexandra Papadopoulou are also scheduled to offer their greetings at the event.  
**Zoom Meeting ID: 839 7271 7616 • Passcode: Greek**  
**More information is available online:**  
**https://panepirotic.org/events/.**



# Celebrating the Bicentennial of Greek Independence

TNH Staff

Although Greek Independence Day is usually associated with March 25, 1821, it was on January 27, 1822, that the Greek Declaration of Independence was formally issued in Epidaurus by the Greek National Assembly, declaring Greece a free and independent state. The War of Independence lasted until 1830.

Author Kostantinos Ganiias of Worcester, MA, submitted his thoughts on the Declaration in honor of the bicentennial of Greek Independence. The full text of the 1822 Declaration appears below and Ganiias’ article follows.

## THE GREEK DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (1822)

“We, descendants of the wise and noble peoples of Hellas, we who are the contemporaries of the enlightened and civilized nations of Europe, we who behold the advantages which they enjoy under the protection of the impenetrable aegis of the law, find it no longer possible to suffer without cowardice and self-contempt the cruel yoke of the Ottoman power which has weighed upon us for more than four centuries – a power which does not listen to reason and knows no other law than its own will, which orders and disposes everything despotically and according to its caprice. After this prolonged slavery we have determined to take arms to avenge ourselves and our country against a frightful tyranny, iniquitous in its very essence – an unexampled despotism to which no other rule can be compared.

The war which we are carrying on against the Turk is not that of a faction or the result of sedition. It is not aimed at the advantage of any single part of the Greek people; it is a national war, a holy war, a war the object of which is to reconquer the rights of individual liberty, of property and honor – rights

which the civilized people of Europe, our neighbors, enjoy to-day; rights of which the cruel and unheard-of tyranny of the Ottomans would deprive us – us alone – and the very memory of which they would stifle in our hearts.

Are we, then, less reasonable than other peoples, that we remain deprived of these rights? Are we of a nature so degraded and abject that we should be viewed as unworthy to enjoy them, condemned to remain crushed under a perpetual slavery and subjected, like beasts of burden or mere automations, to the absurd caprice of a cruel tyrant who, like an infamous brigand, has come from distant regions to invade our borders? Nature has deeply graven these rights in the hearts of all men; laws in harmony with nature have so completely consecrated them that neither three nor four centuries – nor thousands nor millions of centuries – can destroy them. Force and violence have been able to restrict and paralyze them for a season, but force may once more resuscitate them in all the vigor which they formerly enjoyed during many centuries; nor have we ever ceased in Hellas to defend these rights by arms whenever opportunity offered.

Building upon the foundation of our natural rights, and desiring to assimilate ourselves to the rest of the Christians of Europe, our brethren, we

have begun a war against the Turks, or rather, uniting all our isolated strength, we have formed ourselves into a single armed body, firmly resolved to attain our end, to govern ourselves by wise laws, or to be altogether annihilated, believing it to be unworthy of us, as descendants of the glorious peoples of Hellas, to live henceforth in a state of slavery fitted rather for unreasoning animals than for rational beings.

Ten months have elapsed since we began this national war; the all-powerful God has succored us; although we were not adequately prepared for so great an enterprise, our arms have everywhere been victorious, despite the powerful obstacles which we have encountered and still encounter everywhere. We have had to contend with a situation bristling with difficulties, and we are still engaged in our efforts to overcome them. It should not, therefore, appear astonishing that we were not able from the very first to proclaim our independence and take rank among the civilized peoples of the earth, marching forward side by side with them. It was impossible to occupy ourselves with our political existence before we had established our independence. We trust these reasons may justify, in the eyes of the nations, our delay, as well as console us for the anarchy in which we have found ourselves.

## Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of Greek Independence

By Konstantinos Ganiias\*

The above is the second Greek Declaration of Independence in Epidaurus, in January 15, 1822 only 10 months after the first Declaration which was on March 25, 1821.

This March 25th marks the 200th anniversary of Greek Independence. Celebrated in 2021, it will recall the Greek Fever that spread throughout Europe, mainly France, England, and in the United States, during the decade from 1821-1830, when the Greeks rose to free themselves from Ottoman rule.

These are but a few examples of how this second Declaration of Independence helped the Greek cause through Philhellenism.

France did help Greece by many ways. Rigas

Feraios – a notable Greek in Paris – who had studied the French Revolution, loved the ideas and the reasons for it. Therefore, through his writings in poems and letters, he transplanted the seed of freedom and the ideas of liberty to Greece whose people not only opened their hearts and minds to them but also took up arms and tried to copy the French. The French Revolution which preceded that of the Greek played an important part towards that of the newly awakened Greeks.

Lord Byron whose “my Greece I have given you everything – now I give you my life” had inspired not only learned men but even the most common people.

The ‘Greek Fever’ had spread to many other people – such as the Austrians, Hungarians, Poles, Russians and most importantly – the American people.

Thanks to some very influential people like Daniel Webster, President James Monroe, Henry Clay, President John Q. Adams, D. Cook, and most of all Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, the American people were well informed of the Greek Cause and their response was great.

The voice of the Greek Declaration was heard very well in the United States of America. U.S. cities were given Greek names, including Greece, Navarino, Ypsilanti, Athens, Troy, Solon, Sparta, Laconia, etc., among many other names.

Committees of every kind were formed. Some to collect money, some for clothing, medicine, ships, and volunteers to go and fight along with the Greek rebels.

Truly, the second Greek Declaration of Independence at Epidaurus of 1822 had more ‘punch’ behind it because a whole year had passed from

the first in 1821 and the Greek people had shown to the world that they finally had awakened to rid themselves of the “sick man of Europe,” the Ottoman Empire.

No other declaration has done so much to attract more aid, economical and psychological, and most of all to inspire Philhellenism.

The 200th anniversary of Greek Independence in 2021 recalls the words of James Monroe – the fifth President of the United States, who had retired in New York, and said “that Greece will become again an independent nation; that she may obtain that rank is the object of our most urgent wishes.”

**Konstantinos Ganiias is the author of *Kostas, My Story and Towards a New Life*. His books are available online.**



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*Celebrating 200 Years of Greek Independence.*

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