

Peter Kontos ^{9th grade}
American Philhellenism Essay Contest
Pythagoras Greek School (Elmhurst)
3/24/2021

American Philhellenism

The Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire was not only of, and for the people of Hellas. This struggle revived the spirit of Philhellenism throughout the world. James Monroe, the President of the United States along with his Administration, offered the Greeks material and psychological support, under the Monroe Doctrine. Emissaries traveled to Greece, individually and in groups, to support the Greeks in their mission.

One of the brightest and strongest supporters of the cause of freedom was George Jarvis. Born to a large and wealthy family, he was fortunate to meet Lord Byron in Denmark where Jarvis' father was serving as Ambassador to the United States. He asked his father for permission to go to Greece and contribute to the Greek Liberation efforts. Despite his parents' objections, he did go to Greece – to the triangle shaped area between Argos, Nafplion and Tripolis, which was the center of the fight for liberation. The Greek patriots there were fortunate to have him as an ally, along with other American volunteers, including among others, Doctor Samuel Gridley Howe (founder of the Nafplion hospital) and Jonathan P. Miller.

Edward Mead Earle, another excellent example of true philhellen, a 1927 quote said "When the Greeks of Morea (Peloponnese) rose in 1821 to throw off the Ottoman rule of four centuries, their cause promptly claimed the sympathy of Americans. With their own Revolution fresh in mind, Americans were not indifferent to the fate of another fresh in mind. Americans were not indifferent to the fate of other people struggling for emancipation from an oppressive imperialism." The clergy were shocked by the execution of Greek Patriarch Gregorios, who was hanged on Easter Sunday 1821. His body was dragged through the streets of Constantinople and thrown into Bosphorus. Americans were horrified when they learned of the devastation of the island of Chios. The Turks massacred about 30,000 Greeks. Many sold into slavery."

Miller was assigned to deliver letters to the local committees from the American government. He took part in many battles and he was never seeking payment for this services. Leaving Greece to return to America to relay information to the committees in favor of Greece he came across on many orphans left by the battles of war. He brought one of them , a 3 year old boy with him in America and later adopted him.

Mr. Zotos explained "Americans saw in the fighting Greeks of 1821, the descendants of the glorious Hellenes. They believed that the modern Greeks were entitled to the immediate assistance of the Western World, which owed so much to ancient Hellas. Philhellenism spread in the United States: mostly among the people.. Some officials worked hard to influence the administration into taking a more positive stance.

2021 is the 200th Anniversary of Greek Independence. Greece came about because of the Philhellenes in America and Europe. Philhellenes are the persons who have a love of Greek civilization that is in the heart of Western thought, art, and democracy. Philhellenism links persons of all backgrounds who love the Greek nation and culture. The late Stephanos Zotos, the scholar, published an extraordinary article with original newspaper and historical information in "American Philhellenism and the Greek War of Independence" Pilgrimage, March 1976.

In conclusion there's no doubt That Americans made an important mark in the Greek Revolution and the Greeks are forever thankful for this contribution; many lives were lost but even more were saved. Therefore the friendship and the strong bond that was strongly created back then last even till today the Greeks know that they are not alone, and that America will forever be their ally.