

THE ROAD TO FREEDOM in the Peloponnese Region

Some 400 following the Fall of Constantinople, in the most remote region of the Ottoman Empire at the southernmost edge of the Balkan peninsula, in the Morea, the great uprising occurred. This colossal effort was inextricably linked to a great figure – Rigas Velestinlis – who from very early on lit the spark of the struggle for freedom; a struggle that lasted nearly a decade. These ten years were marked by people and events that shaped the course of Greek history.

by Panagiotis Nikas
Regional Prefect of Peloponnese

From as early as 1814 in Odessa, Skoufas, Tsakalof and Xanthos proceeded to sow the seeds of revolution, linking their names to Hellenism's independence. They formed the Philiki Etaireia, a secret society that served as ground zero for the coordination of the revolution and enlisting of freedom fighters.

The desire for freedom spilled over and the spark was lit in the Morea, where it kindled into a blaze. This is where the Revolution of 1821 began, this is where the tree of freedom was watered, this is where the first great moments in the struggle occurred. The first victories, the major protagonists, the hallowed battle flags, the first free soil all have their place in the Peloponnese.

Theodoros Kolokotronis, known by the nickname "Geros tou Moria" or "Old Man of Morea," played the role of chieftain, field marshal and natural leader, and was one of the most characteristic figures of the Greek Revolution, embodying the gallantry, bravery, ingenuity, and military genius of our people.

The elders of Mani gathered together, along with armed revolutionaries led by Petrobey Mavromichalis, on March 17, 1821 in Tsimova – the headquarters of the Mavromichalis clan, known today as Areopoli. The Maniots raised the revolutionary standard and declared war against the mighty Ottoman Empire with the battle cry of "victory or death." The revolutionary turmoil that pervaded led to the liberation of Kalamata six days later.

The Messinian Senate was established during a meeting of the chieftains and began coordinating the revolution. It is considered the first political authority in revolutionary Greece. On March 23rd, Petrobey Mavromichalis and the Messinian Senate announced the start of the revolution to the free world through their declaration entitled "Warning to the European Courts." On March 25, 1821, Metropolitan Germanos of Patras blessed the revolutionaries' weapons at St. George Square in Patras, while legend has it that he raised the standard of the revolution at the Monastery of Agia Lavra.



Regional Prefect of Peloponnese Mr. Panayotis Nikas

The battles grew heated in the Morea, with the Greeks gaining victories at Levidi, Valtetsi, Doliaina, and Vervena. At the end of May 1821, political, ecclesiastical, and military leaders throughout the Peloponnese gathered at the Monastery of Kalteza, where they decided to form the first collective local revolutionary authority, the Peloponnesian Senate, with Petrobey Mavromichalis serving as president and Rigas Palamidis as secretary.

The revolution spread like wildfire, as Roumeli, Thessaly, and Macedonia rose up, while the islands armed their ships. On June 20, 1821, Demetrios Ypsilantis arrived in Greece bearing the flag of the Philiki Etaireia – the phoenix and the words Freedom or Death – authorization from his brother, according to which he was appointed as the plenipotentiary of the General Commissioner of the Authority – the title of the head of the Philiki Etaireia – 300,000 piastres and a printing press. This would later be used to print the first revolutionary-era newspaper, entitled "Salpinx I Elliniki", which translates to Hellenic Bugle in English, based in Kalamata.

The Greeks continued to organize and advance. On July 23, 1821, the Turks surrendered the Castle of Monemvasia, and two months later, on September 23, the revolutionaries entered Tripolitsa and liberated its castle, which was, until then, impregnable.

The road to independence made an important stop in old Epidavros, where the first National Assembly of all the Greek revolutionaries was convened with the aim of forming a unified national government. On January 1, 1822, the Provisional Regime of Greece was approved together with its first national symbol – the Greek flag.

Day by day, the Greeks came ever closer to accomplishing their long-awaited goal. On January 14, the Turks handed over the Castle of Corinth to Demetrios Ypsilantis during a capitulation, and one day later,

the National Assembly issued its declaration regarding the objectives of the Struggle, with Alexandros Mavrokordatos being elected as its president.

In early July 1822, the Revolution faced a new threat in the form of Mahmud Pasha, better known as Mahmud Dramali, who led his army south and prepared to take on the Greek revolutionaries. In one of the most important battles of the War of Inde-

pendence, where Theodoros Kolokotronis' military genius shined, Dramali suffered a defeat at the narrows of Dervenakia on July 26. On November 30, 1822, Nafplion came under Greek control for good. A small group of revolutionaries, led by Staikopoulos, laid siege to Palamidi and compelled the Turkish garrison to surrender. The Struggle continued, with the Morea at its epicenter, in the midst of unspeakable sacrifices, setbacks, and internal strife. However, the Greeks continued to fight and heroically withstood Ibrahim Pasha's attacks at Maniaki, Lerna Mills, Vergas, Polyaravos, and Diros.

In 1827, an allied fleet under the command of Admirals Codrington, De Rigny, and Hayden arrived outside of Navarino, where on October 20, the final act of this heroic drama was played out. The scales had tipped definitively in favor of independence for the Greek people. On January 18, 1829, Ioannis Kapodistrias arrived at Nafplion as the first governor of the long-suffering homeland that had just regained its freedom. Independence had been earned with blood. The Revolution of 1821 had ended triumphantly, and in 1830, by virtue of the three London Protocols, an independent, sovereign Greek state was established.

Despite the fact that the fateful assassination of Ioannis Kapodistrias in September 1831 cast a heavy shadow on the collective state of affairs and cut even deeper into the still open wounds of the newly founded state, the Greeks tried to keep marching steadily in a spirit of prudence, reconciliation, and optimism. The bloody battles fought by the Greeks had paid off. The War of Independence of 1821 was vindicated.

The sacrifices and scarlet blood shed by Hellenism were recognized through the prospects of the newly founded Greek state – a state that eagerly tried, amidst very unfavorable conditions, to reach the highest possible peaks ensuring the greatest degree of freedom for its people and most compassionate form of democracy.

PFA Holds Event Honoring Bicentennial of the Greek Revolution

By Revekka Papadopoulou

NEW YORK – The PFA organized a commemorative online event focusing on the Peloponnese's leading role in the Greek Revolution of 1821 and the contribution of American Philhellenes to Greece's Struggle for Independence on Saturday March 27, 2021 to honor the 200th anniversary of the Greek National Rebirth.

This event, which captured the interest of a large audience from all across the United States, Greece, and other parts of the world, was co-sponsored by the Greek Education Department of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, EMBCA, the Hellenic Cultural Center of the Southwest, and the Hellenic Congress of America.

Speaking from Chicago, PFA President Andreas Papantoniou spoke about the importance of the anniversary in his opening greeting and emphasized that the battle cry "Freedom or Death" was not one of desperation, but a way of life and a decision that reflected a conscious decision of the people.

In a pre-recorded message, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America noted that this occasion will continue to serve as a reference point for our decisions whenever necessary, and spoke about the Church's "united sacrificial participation" in the struggle for freedom.

Speaking from Athens, Deputy Foreign Minister responsible for issues of Hellenism Abroad Dr. Konstantinos Vlasis, who hails from Arcadia, pointed out that 1821 represents a seminal milestone in the indivisible continuation of the Greek Nation.

The President of the "Geros tou Moria" Society Evangelia Lampropoulou-Sarafoglou highlighted the contribution made by the Greeks of the Diaspora to the preparation and support of the Revolution, while the 3rd Vice-President of the PFA Evangelia Sourounis spoke about how the younger generations of Greek-Americans view this national holiday.

Dr. Manos Papadakis of the University of Houston spoke about the secret society Philiki Etaireia, which helped organize the revolution, while Dr. Anastasia Giannakidou of Katerini, Greece gave a presentation on Greek folk songs.

Another Arcadian, Demetrios Logothetis, co-chair of the National Committee for the Bicentennial of the Greek Revolution, and Hellenic Congress of America President Nicholas Apostolopoulos of Charlotte, NC both offered greetings.

During her 15-minute speech, Maria Efthimiou, Professor of History at the University of Athens, noted that "the Peloponnese was the flagship of the Revolution," while emphasizing the important role it played during both the preparations ahead of the Revolution, as well as after its commencement. According to her, the region "was politically and ideologically prepared by the Philiki Etaireia, possessed the ability to collaborate, was home to Mani, which was already prepared for war, and received support from veteran klephts."

She also pointed out that the Peloponnese played a key role in not only the military events, but also the political developments associated with the Revolution, considering that all three National Assemblies convened during the Revolution were held there (in Epidavros, Astros in Kynouria, and Troizena), while all the cities that served as capitals during the Revolution were also located in the Peloponnese (Corinth, Argos, Nafplion, and Kranidi and Tripoli during the civil war).

Prof. Alexander Kitroeff of Haverford University spoke about the American Philhellene movement prior to, during, and immediately following the Greek Revolution, as well as the legacy that it left behind, which, according to him, shaped American history and contributed to the abolition of slavery in the southern states of the Confederacy.

This event was moderated by past PFA President and journalist Demetris Filios from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America's Hellenic Cultural Center in Astoria, while the Archdiocese's Greek Education Director Dr. Anastasios Koularmanis was also on hand, alongside Mr. Filios. Dr. Koularmanis reiterated the need to support local parish communities and Greek Schools so that they may continue to impart the Greek language, religion and faith, on behalf of which the heroes of 1821 struggled, to younger generations of Greek-Americans.

Joining the aforementioned speakers at the Hellenic Cultural Center was another Arcadian, Ilias (Lou) Katsos, who offered a wider look back at the Revolution of 1821, in which his ancestors fought. He also made special mention of the contribution of Philhellenes. The President of the Archdiocese's High Council for Greek Education Athena Krommyda recited an anthology of texts dedicated to Theodoros Kolokotronis, whose portrait adorned the HCC hall, together with that of Laskarina Bouboulina.

The event was enriched by commemorative music videos, including the song "Epanastasi 1821 – Zito i Eleftheria" (Revolution of 1821-Long Live Liberty), which was composed especially for the

Bicentennial by Zoe Tiganouria featuring lyrics by Tasos Theodoropoulos, and performed by yet another Arcadian, Babis Tsertos.

NEWS & ACTIVITIES FROM THE PFA ADMINISTRATION

From the PFA press office

VISIT TO GREECE

A delegation of PFA Board members comprised of President Andreas Papantoniou, Board of Trustees Chairman George K. Sourounis, Treasurer John Vemis, and Director of the Midwest District Ted Stamison visited Arcadia, Greece last August.

During their stay in Arcadia, the PFA delegation held a series of meetings and collaborated with former Alternate Health Minister Vasilis Kontozamanis, former Deputy Foreign Minister responsible for matters of Hellenism Abroad Kostas Vlasis, Regional Governor of the Peloponnese Panagiotis Nikas, Lieutenant Regional Governor of Arcadia Christos Lambropoulos, Mayor of Tripolis Konstantinos Tzoumis, Hospital Director Anastasios Tzanis, University of the Peloponnese Rector Athanasios Katsis, PFA legal advisor Nikos Delphakis, and the PFA's spokesperson in Greece Demosthenes Sotiropoulos.

These meetings focused on various issues of interest to the PFA, with a special focus on the Panarcadian Hospital. Additionally, the delegation had the opportunity to be briefed on issues regarding development and other various projects taking place in Arcadia and the region of the Peloponnese in general.

The Mayor of Tripolis briefed the delegation on a series of projects being implemented in Tripolis, as well as the municipality in general, including the construction of the outdoor shopping center in Tripolis. The delegation also had an opportunity to implement all the necessary actions to resolve a series of issues relating to the Hospital, some of which date back years, including:

- Renewal of the contract between the PFA and the Hospital
- Delineation of the boundaries of the land parcel located behind the housing complex that was granted to the PFA with the National Land Registry
- Clearing out the areas occupied by the 6th Decentralized Administration
- Construction/financing by the PFA of the restaurant/snack bar located in the Panarcadian Hospital of Tripolis
- Development and concurrent upgrading of the Panarcadian Hospital to university hospital status

During the duration of the delegation's stay in the homeland, PFA President Andreas Papantoniou and Board of Trustees Chairperson George Sourounis attended a reception hosted by the officials from the prefecture and municipality, as well as other representatives from the Tripolis tourist booth.

Other News

The PFA Administration unanimously approved the following resolutions at a joint meeting of the Board of Directors and Board of Trustees held on August 28, 2021:

1. The postponement of the National Convention scheduled for October 15-17 in Chicago. The postponement was deemed necessary due to the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic to safeguard the best interests of everyone's health. The postponed 75th National Convention will be held in June 2022, as per the Administration's decision.
2. To stand in solidarity with the fire-stricken people of Arcadia, who were impacted by the recent wildfires. To facilitate this, the Administration sent a letter to the Mayor of Gortynia Eustathios Koulis and the Mayor of Megalopolis Athanasios Christogiannopoulos informing them of the PFA's intent to assist and requesting a report on the state of the fire-stricken victims so as to prioritize those requiring the greatest aid.
3. The construction of a cantina (restaurant/café) at the Panarcadian Hospital of Tripolis by the PFA.

DISTRICT NEWS

MIDWEST DISTRICT– Chicago, Illinois

By George K. Sourounis

29th District Convention



Convention Presidium. From left to right:
George K. Sourounis, Vice Chairperson,
Joanne Anagnost, Secretary, and
Dr. Panagiotis Evangelou, Chairperson



Past governor Dr. John K. Sarantopoulos
Governor Ted Stamison
and newly-elected Governor Konstantinos Lambrakis

The District held its convention at the Arcadian House on Saturday, May 29, 2021. Ten chapters participated, represented by 29 chapter delegates, 11 officials from the board of directors and board of trustees, and two former governors, for a total of 42 delegates.

The convention was brought to order by the District Governor Ted Stamison, after a quorum had been met. The presidium for this session of the convention was composed of the following individuals:

- Dr. Panagiotis Evangelou, Chairperson – Past PFA President
- George K. Sourounis, Vice-Chairperson – Board of Trustees Chairperson, Past PFA President
- Joanne Anagnost, Secretary

Afterward, Governor Stamison welcomed and greeted the delegates, wishing them an auspicious start to the convention.

George K. Sourounis spoke on behalf of PFA President Andreas Papantoniou, who was not in attendance due to work-related reasons.

According to the agenda, the outgoing administration presented its reports, including the Governor, who focused primarily on the extension and renovation of the building known as the Arcadian House.

Additionally, the various committees presented their reports and resolutions were adopted, including the 2021-2023 budget, amendments to the by-laws, and decisions regarding the Arcadian House:

Finally, the convention unanimously decided upon the following:

- A. The next PFA National Convention will be held in Chicago
- B. A letter will be sent to the PFA Administration proposing that an award be given to the outgoing Governor Ted Stamison at the 75th Convention for his longstanding and significant contribution to the PFA in the Midwest District, and especially for his key role in extending and modernizing the Arcadian House.

The convention ended with the election of the new administrative officers for the 2021-2023 term.



The new District Board of Directors, from l. to r.: Demetrios Rentoulis, John Cheilaris, Kiki Pilafas, Natasha Argyris, Demetrios Christodouloupoulos, Konstantinos Lambrakis, Andreas Karambetsos, Ted Stamison, Evangelos Paraskevopoulos, Evangelos Mitroucias, and Tryfon Megremis.



Chanters George K. Sourounis and Ted Stamison are seen here.



Seen here are Anna Kostaki, Kiki Pilafas, Christos Kostakis, and Vasilis Panagiotopoulos members of the Midwest District.

The District administration commemorated the feast of the patron saints of Tripolis Sts. Demetrios and Paul at the St. Demetrios Church in Chicago on May 23, 2021. It should be noted that the relics of these saints are housed at the St. Demetrios Church. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, a blessing of the loaves was held on behalf of the health of the members of the District and PFA in general. After the Divine Liturgy, the District administration offered a reception with sweets, refreshments, and coffee.

GOVERNOR'S REPORT

Dear readers – Arcadians and non-Arcadians alike –, I wish you good health! In our previous issue, we reported that there was a hiatus in our activity following the feast of the patron saints of Tripolis Sts. Demetrios and Paul the New Martyrs. Since then, the coronavirus pandemic left humanity in a state of disarray, with many illnesses, deaths, fear, psychological problems, major crisis, and economic collapse abounding.

We had a full schedule of events, and naturally, with all the experience that we had gained from the previous year 2019, everything would have been far better. Unfortunately, it was the will of Almighty God to punish us and reign us in.

The construction of our building began quite auspiciously and with eagerness. During the laying of the cornerstone, we conducted a blessing of the water service officiated by Fr. Andreas Georganas. Approximately 35 people were in attendance and a reception was offered afterward. As Governor, together with Dr. Panagiotis Evangelou who was responsible for overseeing the project, Christos Kostakis, Andreas Karametsos, his wife and son, and George Sourounis, we all worked intensively to oversee the rebuilding effort and keep the building clean inside and out.

Together with Dr. Evangelou and Mr. Kostakis, we made the long trip to visit the office of architect Mr. Skarlatis on many occasions, where together with his engineer Mr. George Papadopoulos, they provided us with information pertaining to the complex blueprints. We spent many hours in discussions with various contractors and craftsmen until we could decide on the best offer. Together with my wife and the Kostakises, we spent many evenings preparing a mailing campaign of 600-700 letters informing our members about the joyful news regarding the start of the rebuilding project, and requesting their financial support to cover the expenses associated with the building renovation.

In the previous issue, we had written that the cost would be \$475,000, however, it will ultimately amount to \$530,000, because we made certain modifications for the beautification of the building. I would like to

personally thank Mr. George Sourounis for his idea to use limestone and special lighting. This created an additional expense of \$33,000, and we also incurred unexpected costs totaling approximately \$22,000.

The project was successfully completed and the building is now fully equipped, beautiful, and quite impressive. All the contractors and craftsmen agreed that had we delayed, the cost of rebuilding would have been 30-35 percent higher. The building has three floors, and each floor has an area of 3500 square feet. We use the first floor together with the PFA, while the other two floors are still without tenants. There are two interested tenants looking to rent one of the floors, however, they are offering a very low rent. We are currently negotiating with them through our realtor. Through fundraisers, we collected \$170,000 and need another \$125,000 to pay off the debt. For this reason, we once again ask you to support this praiseworthy and necessary project, kindly appealing to your generosity. Please make your checks payable to "PFA-MW District" and mail them to 880 North York Street, Elmhurst, IL 60126.

On May 23, 2021, we celebrated the feast of the patron saints of Tripolis at the St. Demetrios Church in Chicago, where the relics of the saints are also housed. Many Arcadians attended the service, which was followed by a blessing of the loaves and procession of the icon of the saints outside the church. After the Divine Liturgy, sweets and coffee were offered.

The Midwest District, in conjunction with the PFA, will commemorate the fall of Tripolis, and afterward a meeting regarding preparations for the National Convention will be held. If all is well, we will subsequently hold our Christmas party.

As Governor, now that my term is coming to an end, I would like to express my warmest sentiments and send my heartfelt thanks to all those who helped me in every manner – financially, through the provision of manual labor, or by extending a kind word or lending a hand to aid me in the heavy burden I was shouldering for three years, without any revenue, because the building was vacant; and worst of all, the arrival of the coronavirus brought everything to a halt. I forgive two-three individuals who thoughtlessly, mindlessly, and self-servingly embittered me and upset me, and I await them to offer me an apology face-to-face. As for me, I ask forgiveness if I embittered, upset, or treated anyone unfairly.

In conclusion, in my old age, since I do not know if I will have another opportunity to do so, I offer you a piece of advice, an exhortation, a charge, a reminder: "Let us not forget our roots and where we come from, let us try to live lovingly and peacefully, and let us always work for good and progress, take all our vacations in our beautiful homeland of Greece, which has anything one could ask for, and let us always use only Greek products. This is the best way to help our beloved country."

With many thanks,

Ted Stamison
Midwest District Governor

P.S. I forgot to note above that we renovated the kitchen perfectly. The cost exceeded \$6,000, but I did not spend a dollar from the treasury. Some friends offered the money and their personal labor. I would also like you to know that I did not spend one dollar from the treasury for all of the following: lunches and dinners, sweets, coffee, liquor, water, stationary, trash bags, cleaning supplies, landscaping, blessing of loaves, phone calls, etc. I thank several compatriots and friends who helped me in this area. Finally, I deeply thank the well-known chef Vasilios Panagiotopoulos who so tirelessly and cheerfully cooked us so many delicious foods.

PAN ARCADIAN FEDERATION OF AMERICA

75th National Convention

The 75th National Convention of the Pan Arcadian Federation of America will be held in the Chicago suburb of Palatine, IL from June 9th to 12th 2022. This year's Convention is dedicated to the bicentennial of the Hellenic Revolution of 1821.

The Administration of the P.F.A., in conjunction with the Organizing Committee, aspires and works diligently toward the success of the 75th Convention, which, in addition to quality working sessions, will aim at entertaining the delegates and guests through the various events that have been scheduled.

Civic and Church leaders will be invited to attend, together with the Arcadian Members of Parliament, the Deputy Regional Governor of Arcadia, the Mayor of Tripolis, and the Administrator of the Pan-Arcadian Hospital.

We need everyone's active participation and help in this effort, including financial support from our chapters. Our goal is for all chapters to be represented at this Convention.

At this year's Convention, the Federation will honor all living Presidents with the *Alexandros Papanastasiou Award*, in recognition of their important contribution to our organization and the fact that they have maintained the P.F.A. as one of the largest existing Greek-American organizations.

The Governor of the Midwest District, Ted Stamison (Stamatopoulos), will also be honored with the *Vassilios Helis Award* for his significant contribution to the P.F.A. and the Midwest District - particularly for the renovation and modernization of the building known as the Arcadian House.

Finally, the Federation will honor Dimitrios and Eleni Bousis with its highest distinction, the *Theodoros Kolokotronis Award*, in recognition of their invaluable contribution to Hellenism and exemplary philanthropic work.

Another important goal of the Administration and Organizing Committee is for our Youth to participate in this year's Convention. To support this effort, the P.F.A. will cover the expenses of up to six young adults, ages 21-39, from each District. For the East and West Districts, the sum of \$200 per person will be donated toward airfare, while free hotel accommodations will be provided (two guests per room), along with free registration for the Convention and free admission to all events.

For the Midwest District, young adult participants will enjoy free registration for the Convention as well as free admission to all events.

ARCADIA AT THE EPICENTER

In light of the significance of the Bicentennial of the Greek War of Independence and the commemorative events that took place or will be held in the near future, and in an attempt to contribute to their general success – which, nevertheless, is taking place in the shadow of the coronavirus subjugation, as well as certain negative and disconcerting phenomena, which are trending toward becoming a political, etc. “coronavirus,” and which we are obliged to deter – it may prove helpful to point out certain things. It is my hope that these observations will be enriched by additional ones from experts on Hellenism from all around the world, and sent to the attention of the National Committee and other relevant institutions.

Naturally, it is logical for Arcadia to be at the center of the events honoring the Bicentennial, for the reasons cited below, which are just some among the many others:

1. Arcadia offered a major contribution to Greece’s National Liberation.
2. This is especially true in relation to the liberation of Tripolis, as well as the singular sacrifice of dozens of members of the Kolokotronis family in the sacred struggle for freedom.
3. The highly seminal victories at Dervenakia and Valtetsi, which, in fact, warrant a proposal to UNESCO asking that these areas be included on the list of protected historical sites.
4. Moreover, the contribution of General Panagiotis Kefalas in designing the first Greek flag together with Gregorios Dikaios (Papaflessas).

However, aside from the aforementioned seminal historical milestones, the following comprise a rare collage of global dimensions that showcases the uniqueness of Arcadia and is connected metaphorically and through allegories to the Bicentennial. Therefore, it is fitting that these aspects be promoted within the framework of this anniversary celebration:

1. The significance of Arcadia in Greek Mythology, and the ancient deities who were born or active in Arcadia. Zeus + Callisto = Arcas, Pan, Mount Lykaion, Pallantion, the Expedition of the Argonauts, etc.
2. The importance of Aristotle’s adage that “Arcadians are the defenders of justice.”
3. The timeless and historical/philosophical value and importance of the phrase “Et in Arcadia Ego!”
4. The Academy of Arcadia in Rome, which was established in 1690 by Queen Christina of Sweden, featuring internationally renowned figures like Goethe, etc. Unfortunately, however, the Greek state did not make the most of this opportunity.
5. Arcadians were the first settlers in Cyprus, etc.
6. The Arcadian Conference in Washington, D.C., held between Dec. 22 1941 - Jan. 14, 1942, where Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill discussed the measures required to combat the Axis forces.
7. The showcasing of Arcadians honoring Arcadia and Greece both domestically and internationally; i.e., Nicholas Christofilos, whose invention (Synchrotron or ARGUS detector) served as the basis of the United States’ antinuclear defense system. Also, the internationally acclaimed musician and conductor Dimitri Mitropoulos, as well as Arcadian benefactors and other figures who distinguished themselves in politics, the sciences, the arts, etc. Arcadian collective institutions can contribute to gathering relevant information.

Meanwhile, proper attention should be given to ensure that the events not be strictly limited to their official ceremonial capacity, but also their perpetuation, so that this Anniversary may represent an inspirational think tank giving rise to substantive events and achievements aimed at the development,

prosperity, and progress of Arcadia and Arcadians worldwide. Narcissism and introversion must come to an end. We must capitalize upon “political energy resources” all over the world. And we must put an end to the media subculture, etc. that corrupts the purity of our culture through rampant violence, unbridled sex, and a marketing “war” that is by nature excessive!

Most importantly: The Bicentennial should act as a springboard to cultivate a *paideia* (education) centered on the Greek nation (without overlooking the universal ideals of world peace, democracy, social justice, and transparency, which are being undermined by war-mongering, profiteering cartels) and a national strategy inspired by the invaluable legacy of Kapodistrias, Kolokotronis, etc. to combat the serious problems facing the homeland, primarily neo-Ottoman imperialism, the resolution of the Cyprus issue, the name issue with Skopje, the issue of Northern Epirus, the return of the Parthenon Marbles, etc. It goes without saying that under the present conditions – especially Turkish provocations, threats, etc. –, highly skillful diplomacy is needed, along with a very powerful military, because, as the ancient Latins used to say, “diplomacy without weapons is like an orchestra without instruments” and “when diplomacy goes silent, weapons do the talking.” Let the wise example/teaching set by Kolokotronis regarding the “maintenance of the face of battle” become our National Banner!

Yet another visionary proposal calls for the UN to declare Greece “an area free of wars and conflicts, and a Universal Center of Democracy and Culture.” This proposal has already been approved by the International Organizations Watch and the Society of Greek Writers.

Moreover, other serious problems must be handled, such as population decline, the strengthening of regional development, the establishment of agricultural cities, the bolstering of the primary production sector, the transfer of technical knowhow, the development of agricultural and religious tourism, agricultural cooperatives, agricultural roads, a healthy environment (as opposed to the preponderance of garbage), infrastructure projects and their strict oversight to safeguard against any unacceptable phenomena such as the collapse of roadways or their dangerous shortening, arbitrary and suspicious classification of agricultural plots as “forest land,” etc. for profiteering purposes, a crackdown on corruption, non-transparency, interventions to reform political parties, politically affiliated organizations, and unions, as well as the paraeducation sector (tutoring services), the prevention and deterrence of the brain drain effect and the creation of motives for the repatriation of professionals, etc. However, we must be on guard against the sudden appearance of parties and politically affiliated organizations, etc., including “hacks,” “self-proclaimed saviors” and “men on a mission” attempting to undertake suspicious initiatives to serve their own self-aggrandizement and profiteering regarding various projects for Arcadia on the occasion of the Bicentennial, which are unnecessary or of no use.

Finally, and most importantly, we must cultivate and institute a meritocracy, because without a meritocracy no genuine democracy can exist, but rather, a “demiocracy” (rule of executioners); a government of “executioners” who “behead” their betters (see Periander’s description of “halting the superior”), and this creates dissension, etc., which is responsible for causing countless tragedies. Due to their glorious history, Greeks in particular cannot tolerate social injustice and social exclusion, and they react negatively. Therefore, this is an opportunity, within the framework of the National Anniversary, to drive out the “ancient” passions and forge the singular Hellenic virtues that will enable us to look toward a brighter future with certainty!

P.I. Karafotias

The Speech

My children!

In this place, where I stand today, there once stood in the days of old, wise men who addressed the people; men with whom I am not worthy to be compared nor ascend to the heights to which they climbed. My children, I wished to see you here surrounded by the great glory of our forefathers, and I have come to tell you of all the things I personally observed during the revolution, as well as prior to and after it, and from these things to draw conclusions with you for the sake of your future happiness; although only God knows what the future holds. Your teachers and the learned men among us speak to you daily of the olden Greeks, the knowledge they possessed and the glory and honor they enjoyed among the other nations of their era, as well as their heroes, generals, and politicians. My words do not suffice. All I shall say is that they were wise, and that the other nations borrowed their wisdom and took it from this land.

Παιδιά μου!

Εις τον τόπο τούτο, οπού εγώ πατώ σήμερα, επατούσαν και εδημηγορούσαν τον παλαιό καιρό άνδρες σοφοί, και άνδρες με τους οποίους δεν είμαι άξιος να συγκριθώ και ούτε να φθάσω τα ίχνη των. Εγώ επιθυμούσα να σας ιδώ, παιδιά μου, εις την μεγάλη δόξα των προπατόρων μας, και έρχομαι να σας ειπώ, όσα εις τον καιρό του αγώνος και προ αυτού και ύστερα απ' αυτόν ο ίδιος παρατήρησα, και απ' αυτά να κάμωμε συμπερασμούς και δια την μέλλουσαν εντυχίαν σας, μολονότι ο Θεός μόνος ηξεύρει τα μέλλοντα. Και δια τους παλαιούς Έλληνας, οποίας γνώσεις είχαν και ποία δόξα και τιμήν έχαιραν κοντά εις τα άλλα έθνη του καιρού των, οποίους ήρωας, στρατηγούς, πολιτικούς είχαν, δια ταύτα σας λέγουν καθ' ημέραν οι διδάσκαλοί σας και οι πεπαιδευμένοι μας. Εγώ δεν είμαι αρκετός. Σας λέγω μόνον πως ήταν σοφοί, και από εδώ επήραν και εδανείσθησαν τα άλλα έθνη την σοφίαν των.

Your Eminence,
Honorable Consul General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to participate in this important event honoring the 200th anniversary of the Greek Revolution.

The Greek Revolution of 1821 was the result of the efforts of a people to lay claim to their freedom by establishing a nation state.

This undertaking was risky and extremely uncertain, especially considering that the enemy was an empire which possessed immense capabilities to impose its will.

Amid this negative climate, there were two elements that contributed to the preservation of the national identity and the desire for independence and freedom: The unbridled Hellenic spirit and the belief in the liberation of the people.

Over the past 200 years, this small country has grown in size and stature thanks to major sacrifices, it experienced triumphs as well as defeats, it joined powerful international organizations, the people's standard of living improved, and Greece is now a country that can safely navigate the open seas despite the tumults that may arise from time to time.

This bicentennial anniversary involves all Greeks, but the younger generation most importantly. This is the generation that will lead Greece into the third century of its modern journey. Thank you.



SPECIAL EVENT
Honoring the Bicentennial
of the
Greek Revolution of 1821



The celebration for the bicentennial of the Greek War of Independence of 1821, which was held on Sunday December 12th, was a great success. The event was co-sponsored by the Panarcadian Federation of America and the Federation of Hellenic American Organizations of Illinois (Enosis), in conjunction with the Hellenic Heartbeat TV/Radio station.

The first part of the event was held at the St. Nectarios Church, where the participants attended the Divine Liturgy, followed by a memorial service for the repose of the Greeks and Philhellenes who died heroically in the struggle for Independence, along with an artoklasia (blessing of the loaves) for the health of the Consul General of Greece in Chicago and Consulate staff, the officers and members of the PFA and Enosis along with their families, as well as Hellenes everywhere.

The second part of the event continued in the St. Nectarios community hall, with the rendition of the Greek and American national anthems, and the kontakion from the Akathist Hymn (O Champion General), performed by the talented Arcadian musician Mrs. Athanasia Reveliotis-Souflakis.

Afterward, the following speakers delivered presentations on the topics listed below:

- The Path to Freedom – Region of the Peloponnese
- Events from the Revolution of 1821 – Konstantinos Holevas – Historian
- 1820: Preparation for the Revolution – Dr. Demetrios Metallinos
- Thoughts on 1821 – Dr. George Sianis
- Arcadia and The Old Man of the Morea – Pride Dance Troupe
- Traditional Songs – Ted Stamison, Governor of the Midwest District

Consul General Manos Koumbarakis, PFA President Andreas Papantoniou, Enosis President Kostas Chaniotakis, and Regional Governor of the Peloponnese Panagiotis Nikas also addressed the audience.

During the event, Mr. George Mavropoulos was honored for his ongoing invaluable contribution to the Greek-American Community and the preservation of the history of Asia Minor and Pontus. The event ended with a luncheon that was served courtesy of the PFA and Enosis.

Over 300 guests were in attendance – the maximum number allowed by local Covid-19 restrictions – however, interest was so great that under ordinary conditions attendance would have reached 500-600 persons.

Warm congratulations are extended to the event organizers and all the contributors of this seminal event for Hellenism, as well as thanks to its supporters and the St. Nectarios parish community for its hospitality and significant contribution.

PFA Vice-President Evangelia G. Sourounis served as Mistress of Ceremonies, contributing to the success of the event through her commentary and introduction of the speakers, and we extend her our congratulations and thanks.

Taken from the PFA press release