

Archbishop's Encyclical on the occasion of the Anniversary of the War of Independence 1821

"Human soul cannot live without a homeland" K. Palamas

The Greek Revolution of 1821, the epic liberating struggle of the whole of Hellenism against the Ottoman Empire was one of the greatest events in Greek History and a particular landmark in the History of Modern Hellenism. It contributed to the constitution of the Greek State, by putting Greece, following an absence of many centuries, on the political map of the European Continent. At the same time, the Greek Revolution constituted a very significant political event for the History of the European Continent because its outbreak sparked the fascinating Philhellenic Movement, whose presence as a movement proclaiming the ideals of freedom and self-determination of the Greeks against their oppressors, stood critically steadfast against the regime of the Holy Alliance, projecting the significance of the principle of Nations. Many of the Philhellenes came to Greece and fought for the freedom of the Greeks. Prominent among those was Lord Byron, who helped the Revolution by offering his property, his name and his life at Mesologgi, while under siege by the Turks.

The Struggle for Independence was the cumulative effect of internal and external factors. It came about after a sequence of smaller-scale revolts, local uprisings and incessant guerrilla warfare against the Ottoman dynast. It required a long-term ideological preparation which creatively absorbed the revolutionary ideas of the time emanating from the most significant, previous two 18th century revolutions, the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789. The Neohellenic Enlightenment, part and parcel of the pantheon of European Enlightenment, shook the Greeks spiritually and intellectually and ignited glorious historical memories, creating the rudiments of national consciousness, thus facilitating the search for their Hellenic identity.

A fascinating synergy of ideological, spiritual, intellectual and socio-economic factors and revolutionary fervor, masterly prepared the idea and methodically created the conditions conducive to the outbreak of the Revolution. Having endured the Ottoman yoke for many centuries, the Greeks rallied under the banner of the Church, and socially attuned to their social system, they manifest profound progress in commerce, shipping, school-building and educational institutions of higher learning, publish books, under the guidance of the Educators of the Race. Although all those factors have played a significant role in the Resurrection of the Race, it was the Friendly Society that became the locomotive of the Revolution. Based in Odessa, the Society enforces the idea of the "brotherless" revolt. Acting, following the cloaked, clandestine ways of the "Spiritual Societies" in Europe at the time, the Friendly Society proselytizes and enlightens, organizes and coordinates both the eponymous and the anonymous People, Clergy and Officers, making them adhere to the idea of the Revolution and swearing them on the sacred duty of the Struggle for Liberation.

Although we celebrate the 25th of March 1821 as the date of the onset of the Greek Revolution and symbolically we associate it with the message of the Annunciation of the Mother of God by Archangel Gabriel for the salvation of the human Race and their liberation from the yoke of sin, we must nevertheless, being faithful to historical fact, to also accept 24th February 1821 as the primary date of the Greek Revolution. Its proclamation at Iasi of Moldova by the leader of the Friendly Society Alexander Hypsilantes and the sacred sacrifice of the members of the Sacred Company at Dragashani should direct us to the "General Plan" masterminded by the Friendly Society, suggesting that the Greek Revolution had been proclaimed as an all-out, generalized mobilization that addressed the whole of Hellenism, both within and without the Ottoman Empire proper. The Revolution actually completes itself on 3 February 1830 with the signing of the London Protocol, when the Risen Greek Nation creates officially and idiosyncratically its own State, thus setting the stage for subsequent successful or unsuccessful struggles, one of which is the Cypriot Struggle for

Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain

2017: 25th March 1821

Liberation, whose onset on 1st April 1955 we celebrate together with the anniversary of the Greek Revolution of 1821, because the fighters of the former followed in the wake of the latter.

Keeping all the above in mind, and drawing morals and messages not only from the result of the uprising of the people under foreign yoke but also from their petty wrangling, unacceptable internecine strife, their lack of courage but also from their unprecedented feats, their sacrifice and their blood shed for the sake of the Homeland, we call upon you all, individually and collectively acting, to bestow honor - through our participation in the official celebrations of the Greek Diaspora - to all those who rose against the Ottoman Oppressor, to succeed at a feat that up until then appeared unfeasible, and registering that feat as an exemplar inviting emulation.

The official Thanksgiving Ceremony for the National Rebirth will take place on Sunday, 26 March 2017 at the Cathedral of the Divine Wisdom, led by His Eminence Gregorios, Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, while the official address of the day will be delivered by His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece, Mr Demetrios Karamitsos-Tziras. Similar thanksgiving ceremonies will be held in every one of our Churches and the celebrations at our School will honor this magnificent anniversary and will commemorate the Heroes and the contributors to the Struggle for the Liberation of our Homeland. At 3:30 pm, the National Cypriot Federation in the UK, headed by our Greek Schools, will be organizing Celebrations for the commemoration of both anniversaries, 25 March 1821 and 1 April 1955 at Ashmole Academy (Cecil Road, Southgate, London N14 0GA). The official address of the day will be delivered by His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece, Mr Demetrios Karamitsos-Tziras.

Wishing you all health and a blessed Holy and Great Lent, I remain with warm wishes and blessings in the Lord and honor.

London, 25 March 2017

Archbishop Gregorios

of Thyateira and Great Britain