

American Philhellenes Society
Northeastern Illinois University
May 15, 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel especially honored to address such a distinguished audience here in Chicago. My warmest thanks to the Authorities of Northeastern University for hosting this event, and of course the American Philhellenes Society and its zealous President Mr Pete Nikolopoulos, who for years tirelessly has been working in promoting Greek-American friendship on the basis of common ideals for freedom and democracy that our two nations needed to fight to succeed their Independence. The same values that still tie them strongly after two World Wars and a Civil War in Greece, at the same side of Western Allies.

Going back, however, in late eighteenth, beginning of nineteenth century, we will trace those profound affiliations on which the Greek-American friendship edifice has been built up: America's founding fathers from one side, inspired by the glory of ancient Greece, turned against the British monarchy in 1776 and to protect their new and fragile democracy they articulated a stirring vision of Periclean Athens.

And so when the Greek people rose up to seek their freedom in 1821, Americans felt at once that they had a debt of gratitude to repay. In his long, memorable speech to the 18th Congress, as it was recorded in the minutes of its first Session on January 19, 1824 Daniel Webster, perhaps the most well-known Philhellene Congressman from Massachusetts, thanks to whom the Greek cause was introduced for debate for the first time in the American

Congress, started like this while addressing his fellows in the historical Capitol building, built in ancient Greek Ionian architecture:

“This magnificent edifice, these columns with their stately proportions, this fine architecture by which we are surrounded, what are these but so many witness of what Greece once was and what she was taught us to be?”

And he continued:

“Yet, Sir, I have not introduced the resolution, now on your table, with any view towards repaying aught of the debt which we, in common with the civilized world owe to that land of science, freedom, arts and arms. It is a debt that never can be paid whatever may be our feelings of gratitude for these gifts, we are constrained to act with a view alone to the present state of the world and of our relations to it. What I propose and what I shall say has reference to modern, not to ancient Greece, to the living, not to the dead...”

But let us see the state of affairs from their historical perspective:

The Greek Revolution exploded in March 1821, under the worst omens. It belongs to the same family of Enlightenment activism that commences with the American War of Independence and continues with the French Revolution. But what still no one ever doubted about is that: that Revolution, that war, the Greek War of Independence has been for centuries a political event of the greatest significance for Southeastern Europe. Why? Because it was a war of independence against an outdated regime which later, with the foundation of the Greek state inaugurated a long series of radical changes in the map of the Balkans. National

independence movements spread across the Ottoman Empire, ultimately fulfilling President Wilson's dream of states based on the national consciousness of their peoples. For those new states, the United States was, of course, a natural inspiration and ally.

In its long way to establish authority among other regimes in Europe, the Greek Revolution put faith rather to individuals, kindred souls like Lord Byron, Jean Eynard, and many others Philhellenes who rushed as the diplomatic environment at the time was not simply unfavourable, but frankly hostile, against the insurgents. At this point, it is worth only to remind you that at that time the Holy Alliance was hanging over Europe, an implacable arrangement of the Great Powers, France, Austria, Russia and Great Britain, ready to strangle in the cradle every revolutionary movement that could possibly threaten the status quo in Europe. It was, as you may easily presume, an act of remarkable audacity when the Greek Revolution broke out in March 1821, at the very moment when a Conference of the Holy Alliance was taking place in the city of Leibach (today Ljubljana, Slovenia). Who really knows what could possibly have happened if through newspapers or other mass media that happily were not existed then, the Greek rebels knew about this! They would have probably postponed their Revolution... You see, after all, that technology is not always a good sort of thing...

Coming back, however, to this key-point for Europe's future, Conference in Leibach, allow me to add more to your

historical background by saying that it was of such particular importance that the two most powerful men of that remote period, Czar Alexander of Russia and Austrian Emperor Francis II were participating in person, determined to consolidate a united front to suppress popular rebellions in Italy and elsewhere as six years after the Battle of Waterloo that had broken the power of Napoleon Bonaparte, Europe was shaken by revolutions against its restored monarchs. Nevertheless, however, the Holy Alliance reached a consensus in early May 1821 on military intervention to suppress the revolts in Italy, agreeing on a joint response to the Greek rebellion was more problematic. Public opinion, particularly in Russia, favoured the Greek cause. But Greek Independence might prompt the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and a potentially catastrophic change in the balance of power in Europe that nobody really wanted. Especially the governments of Austria, France and Great Britain saw the Greek uprising in a very different strategic light. Regardless of any sympathy their people might feel toward fellow Christians, weakening the Ottoman Empire would open the door to Russian expansion toward the Mediterranean with dangerous consequences for their own interests. Therefore, they greeted the news of the uprising with great suspicion. Under the pressure of the three, unprepared for war against the Sultan, Czar Alexander of Russia ordered his Foreign Minister Kapodistrias (later First Governor of Greece) to dismiss Ypsilantis, a high rank officer of Greek origin from the Imperial service, the one who dared to declare the Revolution in the region of Moldavia as heading to Greece. He also sent a message to the Ottoman Court firmly disavowing any Russian support for the rebellion. But, unlike in Italy, the Holy Alliance would not intervene to suppress the Greek rebels. Still it would not offer struggling Greece even a faint hope of assistance from the Great Powers in Europe. Particularly Austria's negative stance was scarcely a surprise. Its Minister of Foreign Affairs, Domestic and Foreign Policy, the notorious Metternich, called for drowning any idea of

liberalization. The Greek situation presented a dangerous example for insubordination for the restive nations under Austrian rule. Any Russian expansion to the south would pose a direct threat to Austria's Empire. Thus, assistance to the Greek rebels was out of the question. Metternich, the man German liberals mocked as "Mitternacht" ("midnight") brutally commented that "beyond our Eastern frontier three or four hundred thousand people hanged, strangled, or impaled is not such an important thing..."

As you may conclude, that's why turning to America for assistance was the only logical course when the Greeks threw off the Ottoman yoke. We, Greeks, Ladies and Gentlemen, we placed our hopes on the fact that you Americans shared the same Classical Greek ideals of equality, freedom and democracy with which the Greek rebels framed their own Independence struggle. Let me read to you just a few words from the appeal to the American People by the Messenian Senate in May 1821. This was the first effort to formalize a Greek state, created in Kalamata by the commanders of the armed forces of the Revolution in the Peloponnese:

It started like this:

"Citizens of America! [...] Though separated from you by mighty oceans, your character brings you near us. We esteem you nearer than the nations on our frontiers, and we possess in you, friends, fellow-citizens and brethren, because you are just, humane and generous; just because free, generous and liberal because Christian.[...] No, the fellow-citizens of Penn, of Washington, and of Franklin, will not refuse their aid to the descendants of Phocion and Thrasybulos, of Aratus and of Philopoemen."

It is true that the distance between the two countries was enormous, but the success of the American Revolution 40 years before was still fresh in Greek memories.

So, from the moment the first news of the Greek revolution appeared in the American press – in the Daily National Intelligence (Washington, DC) on May 18, 1821 – American public opinion was decidedly on the side of the fighting Greeks. Characteristic of this attitude was the lead article of the Boston Recorder on March 16, 1822. It enthusiastically greeted the Greek revolution and described the possible fall of the Ottoman Empire as a good omen for the political and religious interests of the civilized world.

But, President Monroe and Secretary of State Adams was forced to weigh carefully America's official response to the Greek appeal. As he would later write, "*the mention of Greece fills the mind with the most exalted sentiments, and arouses in our bosoms the best feelings, of which our nature is susceptible.*" But the United States was a country with limited resources by the time and with worldwide shipping interests, including commerce through Smyrna (Izmir) and other ports of the Ottoman Empire. Before taking any action, therefore more information about the conflict was needed.

To that helped, in 1822, Alexander Hill Everett, an American diplomat and the brother of another famous philhellene Edward Everett, who dispatched in 1822 from London an anonymous review of the international situation, giving an optimistic account of the Greek situation predicting in an uncertain and unstable yet situation the final victory of the most numerous and civilized portion of the Christian subjects of Turkey, Greeks, from the detestable Islamic yoke.

However, the United States government continued to wait. In 1823 the Greek revolutionary government ventured on a more specific test of America's willingness to help, in the

form of a letter from Greece's acting foreign minister Alexandros Mavrokordatos, conveyed to U.S. Ambassador Richard Rush in London by Greek envoy Andreas Louriotis along with a memorandum describing the situation of the Greek cause. It was just the time that the provisional Greek government asked for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States of America.

Louriotis's memorandum, transmitted to Washington, became the subject of a long but inconclusive cabinet debate on August 15, 1823. The American ambassador to France, Albert Gallatin, suggested half-seriously that the U.S. fleet in the Mediterranean sail to support the Greeks against the Turkish fleet. Another surprise came from the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of War, William Harris Crawford and John Caldwell Calhoun, who both sounded supportive of the idea.

Unfortunately, however, at the end, the more cautious views of Secretary of State John Quincy Adams prevailed. His letter, sent three days later after consulting with President Monroe, was a polite rejection of the Greek request.

In explaining to Ambassador Rush the U.S. response to Louriotis's memorandum, Secretary of State Adams wrote that the United States typically recognized the independence of foreign nations once their establishment could not be seriously questioned. In Washington's estimation, the situation in Greece at the time did not meet that criterion, and thus the Greek request must be denied.

From a legal standpoint, Adams was correct. The outcome of the Greek Revolution was far from settled in 1823. Moreover, the Sublime Porte would be justified in considering such recognition by the United States as a highly unfriendly act, with a serious risk of retaliation against U.S. commercial interests. Strict American neutrality might win from the Porte a commercial treaty allowing American ships access to the Black Sea and other markets.

Those who know history well understand that Adams had another pressing concern as well. The United States was then promoting the independence of the former Spanish colonies in South America and, the Monroe Doctrine, which would be formally announced in December 1823, made clear that the United States intended to resist efforts at intervention by the Holy Alliance in the affairs of the American continent. For the United States, consequently, to involve itself actively in a European affair such as Greece would undercut the logic and the justice of its stance at a crucial moment.

What followed later is that the Monroe Administration chose caution. The question of supporting the Greek cause was not dead, however. Congress would soon take up the issue, led by an ardent philhellenic Congressman from Massachusetts, the powerful orator Daniel Webster with whom I started earlier my presentation.

But despite the fact that the debates in Congress did not yield a favorable conclusion for the Greek cause, except for good wishes and expressions of support from all quarters of Congress, significant assistance did reach Greece. Americans from all walks of life, were able to mobilize support outside the political process. Supplies of all kinds including food, clothing, and cash were collected and sent. Many of these donations were raised from charities and dances organized by the philhellenic committees in large cities such as Washington, DC, New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. There was analogous activity in smaller cities, such as Wilmington, (Delaware), Bristol (Rhode Island), Hartford (Connecticut), Springfield (Massachusetts) and many others.

The first public fundraising appeal on behalf of the Greeks was carried out in 1823 by the Philhellenic Committee of New York, whose President was William Bayard, son of an immigrant tradesman from England and president of the Bayard, Leroy & Mc Evers Company. This appeal stressed the horrible conditions facing the elderly and women and children

in Greece. Cash donations were requested from the entire philanthropic community in the United States.

In September 1823, a huge cross appeared in Brooklyn Heights, raised by citizens at their own expense. It was “Sacred to the Greek Cause” and it carried the wish “May the Grecian Cross be planted from village to village and from steeple to steeple until it rests on the Dome of St. Sophia”.

A few weeks later, the Boston Committee, whose president was Thomas Lindall Winthrop (1766-1841), and secretary and attorney was Edward Everett, issued a new appeal, calling on Americans to remember their own revolutionary struggle – when Americans pleaded with the courts of France and Holland for money and soldiers to reinforce their struggle for Independence. At that historic December 19, 1823, meeting of the Philhellenic Committee, held in the Coffee Exchange building, Everett made a long political speech, refuting the arguments that American trade would be harmed in the Eastern Mediterranean. There had been a fear-mongering campaign against the philhellenic movement, but Everett addressed their points one by one. Later, Everett’s role proved to be truly historic in informing American public opinion. His speech created a sensation among the prominent of Boston’s high society. But three days later, on December 22, the Patriot newspaper warned that as soon as the money reached Greece, all American ships in the ports of the East would be seized and their crews would be massacred. The natural result would be a new war for America, this time for the sake of the Greeks – a scary prospect for Bostonians and all Americans.

Despite this, however, at the same time that the Boston Committee was founded, another committee was founded in Philadelphia, under the presidency of Bishop White, with a committee of thirteen individuals who were responsible for collecting funds and co-operating with the other philhellenic committees of the United States.

In the meantime, Yale students contributed to the effort at fundraisers, and collected 500 dollars that they forwarded

to the New York Committee. Students of the Theological Seminary of Andover, Massachusetts, a young women's organization of Carlisle in Pennsylvania, and the youth of Albany organized fundraising efforts as well.

The role of the clergy was also important. In many towns, after services, preachers made philhellenic speeches and called on the faithful to collect money for their brothers, the Greek Orthodox Christians.

Boston's preacher, Sereno Edwards Dwight, made a memorable speech on Sunday, April 1, 1824 at the Park Street Church, where he was serving as chaplain from 1817 to 1826, and another at the Old South Church, on the 14 of the same month, which resulted in the collection of 300 dollars. In the latter speech, Dwight made extensive reference to the classical civilization of Greece. Now its citizens -known for their skill as merchants, their zeal for letters and the arts, and their love of freedom- being Christians, suffered under a barbarian and non-Christian people. If the Greeks were defeated, as Everett had said, the hope for freedom for all of Europe would be lost, since the hated Holy Alliance would dominate the continent.

Others known for their philhellenic activities were the Reverends Anthon, Aikin and Pelk, leaders of various protestant groups (Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists) in the State of New York. In the same State, Reverend Ezekiel Gear stood out for his philhellenic eloquence, and in Philadelphia, the Reverend of the Church of Saint Andrew, Gregory Bendell was also prominent.

For the same cause, many dances and theatrical productions were held to raise funds for the revolutionary struggle. The most successful, was a dance on January 8, 1824, in New York, held in a hall provided for free by the theatrical agents Price and Simpson. More than 2,000 tickets were sold for 5 dollars apiece. The State of New York raised the greatest sums. At the end of April, 1824, the New York

Committee sent a bank check in the sum of 6,600 Pounds Sterling (or \$32,000) to the Greek Committee in London.

The initial enthusiasm of Americans observed during the first years after the Greek Revolution waned somewhat as word of discord among Greek leaders and incidents of piracy against American commercial ships, reached the United States. But the flame still burned in the hearts of those who –with boldness and sacrifice– came to the aid of powerless Greeks.

With the fall of Missolonghi, the Philhellenic feelings of Americans were awakened once again.

For those few who maybe do not know, Missolonghi became ever since the city-symbol of Greek heroism and bravery and at the same time of Turkish cruelty. Here is how things happened:

The Greek army, blocked in Missolonghi, decided on a heroic exodus following a blockade of four⁴⁵ months that prevented any replenishment of ammunition or food, forcing even young children to eat rats and snakes to survive. This decision was made on late Saturday night, on the holy observation of Lazarus Saturday, April 9, 1826. The next morning, as Palm Sunday dawned, the sunlight was muted by the smoke from fires everywhere and remnants of man-to-man combat. The city's chief dignitary, Christos Kapsalis, burned himself alive in his house, as the wounded and the elderly joined the women and frightened children gathered in his yard. They all sought deliverance in death. Everywhere, both inside and outside the walls, there were dead bodies and the smell of burned flesh and blood, as historians of that era bore witness.

I select only one paragraph from Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe's memoirs, an American philhellene and philanthropist from Boston who visited four times Greece during the War and lived for a quite long time period in our tiny country, to describe through his eyes what Missolonghi's fall meant not only for Greece, but for the humanity itself:

“I fear”, wrote Howe, “Christianity has fled from the world. [...] For ten months have the eyes of Christian Europe been turned upon Missolonghi. [...] All this have they seen, and not raised a finger for their defense, and at last they have seen the catastrophe. You may talk to me of national policy, and the necessity of neutrality, but I say, a curse upon such policy! It is contrary to Christianity and humanity; it is a disgrace to our age that millions of Christians should be left to sabre and yoke of the Turk.”

One month after the fall of Missolonghi became known in America (June 1826), General Theodore Kolocotronis wrote from Tripolitsa, Arcadia, to Edward Everett:

“...(T)hese supplies were to be distributed by your fellow-countryman, Dr. Howe, to the poor, the aged, the widows and orphans. The supplies benefited us most auspiciously for they arrived at a time when the destitute people of Greece were on the verge of starvation, deprived of their crust of bread by the daily depredations of their enemy who permits them no agricultural activity and no commerce, so that they must live on grass and the fruits of trees...”

And here is how the flame ignited again in the American hearts.

On the occasion of the letter received from Th. Kolocotronis in July of 1826, Everett addressed a letter to the Philhellene, Matthew Carey, in Philadelphia, which he immediately published in the press. In this letter, to support his calls for aid to the Greeks, Everett cited excerpts from Kolocotronis' letter and that of George Jarvis, this great man and great Philhellene from your State, the greatest of all, not only of the Americans, who threw away his western clothes, dressed the *Kleftic* Greek outfit with the characteristic *foustanella*, learned how to speak and write Greek, changed his name to “Captain Yorgis Zervis, the American” and shared the unhappy but glorious fate of Greeks, full of privation and hardship. When Missolonghi fell,

Jarvis was serving as advisor to Kolocotronis in Morea and had taken part in the battles around Tripolitsa. Shaken by the cruelty of the Turks in Missolonghi, he criticized the inexcusable indifference of Americans to the hardships of the Greeks and called for help in dispatching food and clothes to Greece, especially for the elderly, and the women and children.

Following those events, the first concern of Carey was to call a public meeting at the Court Room in Philadelphia, where together with two more Philhellenes, James C. Bid and Josiah Randall, they gave speeches and elected a twenty-member committee, chaired by Carey, whose purpose was to organize lectures and publications in order to inform the American people of the horrors taking place in Greece.

On December 30, 1826, the Philhellenic Committee of Philadelphia raised \$500 from the proceeds of a theatrical performance. A new appeal by the Committee on January 27, 1827, one month later, raised \$1500, contributed by workers in various factories of the industrial city of Pittsburgh, PA.

In the meantime, on March 23, 1827, the first dispatch of humanitarian aid sailed from the port of Philadelphia to faraway Greece, aboard the brig "Tontine" under Captain Harris. It carried 1,800 barrels of food, worth about \$13,856, into the port of Poros on May 19, a month and a half later.

The example of Philadelphia was followed by almost all of the New England States. Thus, on January 6, 1827, during the big meeting at the City Hotel of New York, in the course of which Judge Irving delivered a speech, it was decided to issue an executive committee resolution expressing the sympathy of the city's residents. That resolution was released on January 9 by its chairman, Stephen Allen.

One week earlier, on January 2, 1827, Louisiana Congressman, Edward Livingston, brought a motion to the Congress for the approval of \$50,000, which US President

John Quincy Adams, should dedicate to the purchase and dispatch of supplies to the suffering and embattled Greeks.

Although Livingston insisted in his appeal to the Congress that the money was not intended to buy munitions, but rather food and clothes for starving women and children, the majority of the Congress voted against Livingston's motion with 104 against and 54 positive votes, mainly out of fear of the consequences of involving the United States in European disputes.

But what happened was that, rather than dampening the spirit of Philhellene activists, the refusal of the Congress achieved the exact opposite result: the rekindling of the zeal of philhellenes in New York and other major American cities.

As a result, in only a few weeks, workers of the Brooklyn shipyards raised \$2,000, and two major events were organized for the same purpose: a theatrical performance in New York Theater on January 31, 1827, and a ball in Park Theater, decorated with the busts of Lord Byron and Marco Botsaris. The background, where the stage was situated, a large screen was put up showing the ancient Acropolis of Athens. Several guests came dressed in traditional Greek costume.

A ball was also held in New Haven, Connecticut, while on February 28, the New York Sacred Music Society gave a concert in support of the Greek struggle in Saint Paul's Cathedral.

During the same period, fundraising was also undertaken by the pupils of New York schools. The philanthropic activities of philhellenic committees had such an effect that even residents of smaller towns and rural areas rushed to donate out of their savings. Citizens raised \$600 in the rural town of Orange, New Jersey, \$1,000 in Newark, New Jersey, \$400 in Norwich, Connecticut, \$84 in Westfield, \$26 in Longmeadow, \$260 in Slomington, \$500 in Hartford, \$115 in Colchester and, in the small village of Charleston, 350 barrels of pork, 9 barrels of wheat, clothes and some money.

This humanitarian aid was forwarded to the New York Committee, with the request that it be dispatched to Greece. Naturally, the relevant publication in the press boosted the morale of the Americans, who watched with embarrassment the failure of the US Congress to openly side with the Greeks.

In the same year, the New York Committee, following the example of the Philadelphia contingent, sent two ships loaded with aid to Greece; it was the “Chancellor,” with Captain Barker at the helm, which arrived in Nafplio on May 23, with a cargo worth \$17,500; and “Six Brothers,” with Captain Lee, which sailed on May 13 and arrived in Nafplio with a cargo worth \$16,614 and several American volunteers.

Overall, eight ships had arrived to Greece by November of 1828 carrying humanitarian aid. The “Levant” led by Captain Osgood, sailed from Philadelphia on May 30, 1827, and arrived in Nafplio on August 25, carrying aid worth \$8,547, also Everett’s correspondence to Alexandros Mavrokordatos and other Greek captains.

The “Statesman” sailed on June 26, 1827, from the port of Boston and arrived in Hydra on September 9, carrying aid worth \$11,555. The brig “Jane” with Captain Proctor, sailed from Albany, New York, on September 12, 1827, and arrived in Nafplio on November 5, carrying aid worth \$8,900. The “Herald”, which carried Judge Samuel Woodruff and the fervent philhellene reverend, Jonas King as delegate of Boston ladies responsible for the educational matters of Greek children, left the American coasts on the May 28, 1828 and sailed via Tenaro and Kythira under the cover of the Mediterranean US squadron, for fear of pirate attacks. It anchored in Poros on July 26, and unloaded humanitarian aid worth \$49,800. The eighth and last ship, the “Suffolk,” sailed on September 13, 1828, and arrived in the island of Aegina on November 12, carrying aid worth \$12,000, under the personal supervision of Dr. Samuel Howe who returned

to Greece after a short stay in the United States, ecstatic after the destruction of the Ottoman fleet in the naval battle of Navarino. His efforts to encourage his fellow countrymen not to stop supporting the fight for Greek Independence were not without results.

Throughout 1828, the Philhellenic fever literally spread to all corners of America, mobilizing citizens of all walks of life in the effort to assist, by any available means, in the success of the Revolution and, above all, to help Greek civilians. Some ladies in Westerfield sewed 300 sets of clothes for all ages, while the philanthropic women's parish of Pearl Street, New York made another 733 sets, and that of Norwich 1000 sets, in addition to that of Providence which made clothes worth \$1500. Six hundred barrels of wheat were gathered in Baltimore, \$100 in cash in West Parish, New York and \$100 in various items, \$800 in Dorchester, \$600 in Leicester and \$400 in Millbury were raised. In the towns of Monroe County fund-raising produced \$5,800, while another \$2,700 were raised in smaller towns of the State of New York. Finally, in Albany, \$17,000 was raised in 1828 alone.

And as if it was not enough, army officers donated to the Greek cause the value of the alcoholic drinks they would otherwise consume. Distinguished actors had the idea to recite philhellenic slogans and verses during play intermissions, especially Halleck's *Ode*, dedicated to Marco Botsaris, while calling for contributions from the audience. Similarly, theater managers set aside percentages of their receipts, which they forwarded to Greek Committees of their States.

So, if we consolidate the numbers on the basis of the available data, the aid sent to Greece in cash or in kind was worth approximately \$80,000 in 1827 and \$60,000 in 1828 – substantial amounts for the time, which totally justify the expression of gratitude of the first Governor of Greece, Ioannis Kapodistrias, who thanked President Adams for the philanthropic feelings of the American people, citing among

other things: *“...I pray God, the Protector of America and Greece, to afford me in future other opportunities of witnessing the reciprocal sentiments of two nations, to one of which I belong, and offer to the other the sentiments of my admiration and the homage of my gratitude.”*

But apart of all has been so far mentioned, of special importance to the newly established Greek state was also the philanthropic activity of Americans who remained to Greece, encountered the dejected Greeks with great sympathy but without sentimentalism, focusing on immediately useful actions. Years later, travelers in Greece would find old Greeks still speaking with wonder of the generosity of the Americans in the year 1827, when the country was unable to stand on its own two feet. At this point, Ladies and Gentlemen, I just ask you to imagine how Greece looked at the time: The physical environment was totally destroyed, the houses were in ruins, the educational system was almost non-existent, and a handful of ill-equipped doctors struggled to treat the sick, the injured, the elderly and small children, all of them starving, subsisting on tortoises, snails, herbs, grass and anything green or living that they could grup up, the majority of them widows and orphans living in caves up in the mountains, huddling together for warmth...

I read an excerpt from St Clair’s book, with the title “That Greece might still be free”:

“Some of the miseries of war cannot be cured by charity. Everywhere the Americans were confronted with examples of the studied cruelty and the arbitrary disregard of fellow humans which marked the conflict. Some of the beggars had lost their ears or their hands, and one man came to the distribution point on his knees, having had both feet cut off. At Poros, Miller met an eleven-year-old girl whose nose and lips had been cut off close to her face so

that her gums and jaws were entirely exposed. She had lived in this state for over a year. In Laconia, Howe found a boy of about twelve leading his blind mother. She had been raped and then her eyes put out by her attackers. Her son was gathering herbs and grass and snails for her to eat”

In that horrible period, one can easily imagine how huge was the humanitarian assistance that the representatives of the philhellenic committees from all over America distributed with food and clothing. Among them, Jonathan Miller (who fought with Dimitrios Ypsilantis) and Henry Post, along with Boston’s John Demetrius Russ were responsible for overseeing the distribution of the shiploads from New York to Greece. They had received orders to strictly limit the distribution of aid to the unarmed, the elderly, women and children. Upon arriving in Greece, they also encountered George Jarvis, James R. Leib, from Harvard University, Samuel Woodruff, John R. Stuyvesant and Samuel Howe, for to mention only some of those brave men.

Another important activity of American philanthropists was the care for orphaned children was one of the highest priorities for the American missionaries, who visited Greece several times during the duration of the Revolution. Many Greek orphan children were saved and educated thanks to the charity kindness and support of the American people. For timesaving, I’ ll stand for a while in the case of two young boys, Fotis Karavassilis, fifteen-year-old and Anastasis Karavellas, eleven-year-old, who both survived the Massacre of Chios. Those two poor children, with the assistance of two missionaries, were taken to Malta and later on the brig “America” they were transported to Salem, Massachusetts. There they were handed over to Reverend Cornelius, who took responsibility for their upbringing as their guardian. Karavellas studied at Mount Pleasant Institute in Amherst. Upon graduating, he taught in the American school system before returning to Athens, where has studied law, became a

judge, and ultimately the Director of the Telegraph Office in Syros Island. Another very exceptional case was also Nikolaos Petrokokkinos, also Amherst alumni, from the island of Chios, who became the first Consul of the United States in his native place and died surrounded by fifteen children he had with the Chiot Harikleia Machairiadi, another survivor of the massacre.

Another case was that of Christos Evangelidis, a Greek Macedonian from Thessaloniki, adopted by the founders of Prime Ward and King Company, the famous Samuel Ward, studied in New York and later returned to Greece and served also as Consul of the United States in the island of Syros. For the services he offered both his countries, Greece and the United States of America, a Master of Arts degree was bestowed upon him by Columbia University in New York, in 1854.

I can't escape the temptation to read to you an excerpt of a letter he addressed to his American fellows, underscoring the passionate hope and love he felt for his two countries:

“Peaceful homes and flourishing villages were swept from the face of the earth by the Turks; prosperous and large towns were ruined and rendered useless. The Turks, having occupied these lands, destroyed whatever they found in their way and did not build anything in its place. Everything withers in their way. Schools, education, the arts and sciences, trade and civil rights –all disintegrate in their passing. Our land had been laid waste and where once the voice of prayer and gratefulness was heard now only the voices of the owl and the jackal is audible. Those are facts beknown to all of us. You can visit Naoussa, Veria, Cassandra in Macedonia and will find the stones stained, and should you ask how they were stained, the people will tell you that those are the bloodstains of myriads of women, children and

old men who were slaughtered by Pasha Abulubut of the city of Salonika. I have seen with my own eyes, my dear Americans, the ears of thousands of Greeks severed and carried in baskets to the dwelling of the Pasha in the city of Salonika, and I have also seen with my own eyes men's heads carried and heaped in piles before the Pasha and his entourage. Visit the island of Psarra and you can still see the marble floors stained with the blood of the people slaughtered there. [...] Americans! The person now addressing you in the name of thirteen million Christian Greeks is the only member of a large Macedonian family that survived, and was saved from the Turks by American aid. It is true that it was the noble sons of America who liberated me from death and brought me to New York and educated me about truth and freedom. Mr. P.H. Vandervoort, R.E. Glover, G. Whiting and D. Jeptson were those who brought me to the land of freedom. [...] When Macedonian men called the apostle Paul, he went at night to teach them the Bible. Now, the men of Macedonia have sent me to ask you, in the name of all that is sacred and dear, to help them in the defense of the sacred teachings of Apostle Paul. It is these same Macedonians who invite you to come to their help. We pleaded with the Christians of Europe but our pleas were neglected. They united their forces with our oppressors. [...]"

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As mention has been made of the American Philhellenes active in America, it isn't without reason why I left at the end of my presentation a special place to commemorate the names of ten Americans, who left families and friends behind and crossed the Atlantic to help the Greek people. At least three of them left their last breath in Greece. To all of them and their memory, I pay tribute with great respect from this floor.

The first American to establish himself as a volunteer in revolutionary Greece was George Jarvis, son of American diplomat from Illinois, who landed with the British Philhellene George Abney Hastings at the port of Hydra on April 3, 1822. Two years later, Jonathan P. Miller from Vermont, an officer of US Army who fought for two years in the British-American War of 1812, arrived as the official envoy of the Philhellenic Committee of Boston and head of philanthropic assistance. That same year, in December 1824, sailor John M. Allen arrived. He was followed in 1825 by Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, son of a prominent Boston family, sent by the Boston Committee as a doctor and relief worker. In June 1825 another soldier arrived, former army officer William Townshend Washington, a distant cousin of George Washington, tall, elegant and academically gifted. He died wounded in the thigh in the arms of Jonathan Miller on July 16, 1827. As he had declared prophetically “Greece is at war and to her belongs every drop of my blood”. Washington died for Greece. His monument in Nafplio reminds us of the impulsive, even paradoxical stand of the American who served the ideals of Hellenism.

The following month saw the arrival of Estwick Evans, a lawyer and politician from New Hampshire.

During the brief period between March and October 1827, when British Lord Cochrane arrived to lead the Greek fleet, three more American fighters arrived, Dr. John J. Getty, a surgeon in the camp of General Richard Church in Western Greece, who also died at Mytika in Roumeli, in August 1828, gunner George Wilson, from the city of Providence, Rhode Island, who remained in Greece for several years after the Revolution, bought a farm, married a Greek woman with a downy that included lames with many olive trees and additional income and was appointed by his compatriot, the missionary and schoolmaster John Hill as guardian and gardener of the cemetery for the Protestants, and Afro-American James Williams, a sailor from Baltimore and servant to Commander Stephen Decatur, who stayed in

the Mediterranean, joined Lord Cochrane and fought at the battle in the Gulf of Lepanto. He died in Greece.

I left at the end sailor Alexander Ross. It is not known exactly when he arrived. He is first attested in 1828. Because of his close ties with Hastings is referred in the official Greek documents of that period as the “Angloamerican”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding, I have to say that Greek interest in and appreciation for America’s help to the Greek’s Struggle for National Independence is a given. But the American interest for our beautiful alleways, sunshined country surrounded by blue seas and skies never ended. A century and a half later, 70 years only ago the American Congressmen and Senators took again a generous decision to support and reconstruct Europe’s economic edifice focusing particularly at Southeast, Greece, a country that suffered more than any other European country from World War II and later from a Civil War and the pressure by Tito’s Yugoslavia through Marshall Plan.

Today the situation has changed dramatically again. In this new and darker context our country is experiencing, slipped into economic and even political depression, those lessons from the past must not be lost, and America has everything to gain from teaching them. Most Greeks appreciate that the current U.S. Administration fully understands the economic interdependence of Europe and the United States. We are grateful for the support your

government has signaled for the Eurozone and Greece as a member of that union.

Going back, however, in the time of Greek Revolution, let me leave you with an incident that took place in the year 1822. George Jarvis was visiting Missolonghi with Jonathan Miller, another American Philhellene from Vermont, who had fought so bravely with Prince Demetrios Ypsilantis in the famous battle of Myloi that he earned the nickname “the American Dare Devil”. The two men called on Farmakis, a Greek *Kapetanios*. Because Farmakis was illiterate, he used as his scribe a monk called Manolis, who had left the monastery to join the *Kleftes*, the Greek freedom fighters. Introducing Manolis, Farmakis pointed out to his visitors that “*Every fighter needs his Homer*”.

Though no Homer, alas, I hope I have contributed in a small way to describe in my presentation today the Homeric exploits of the Americans who embraced the Greek cause as their own.

Thank you for your attention.