

# WHY A PARADE FOR GREEK INDEPENDENCE

## Ottoman Rule / Tourkokratia - Conditions for Greek Revolution (1453-1821)

A Summary by Peter N. Yiannos, PhD

*Time tends to fade the memory of events. Greek Independence was an historical event that defied its times. Despotic Europe with its Holy Alliance was dedicated and committed to the status quo. The US and the French revolutions were viewed liberal poison to be avoided. It is of interest to note that in a meeting by the Foreign Ministers of the Holy alliance, Capodistria, the foreign minister of Russia at that time, pleaded for mercy for the Greeks under the Ottoman Turks, only to get the response by Austria's Metternich that went something like this: let it be known that there is no such thing as Greeks but only Ottoman subjects ! Such were the conditions for the enslaved Greeks prior to the Greek revolution, who had no education, no identity and in many cases not even last names. They knew only Masters for whom they worked, obeyed and even their lives were owed to them. Their historic memory that their ancestors were once the pioneering light of civilization and leaders of the world had faded. Thus, the success of the Greek revolution was an improbable event, or at most highly premature. And yet it succeeded.*

*The write-up here attempts to provide a picture of the conditions that were created for the Greeks after the Fall of Hellas(Byzantium) to the Ottoman Turks, and how they were governed for almost 400 years. Once we understand what our ancestors went through, going to the Greek parade in Philadelphia or to the parade in any other city, is not only a duty but a privilege to express our respects to those Hellenes and Phil-Hellenes who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. It is these conditions that were no longer tolerable to the Greeks living in the space we call Greece and in Anatolia; the latter was never redeemed. This presentation does not discuss battles but only the rationale for the revolution.*

*The work here was part of a symposium The Second Millennium organized by the University Club of Wilmington and presented orally to various audiences in the year 2000. One can view it as an expanded outline of my part in that symposium. As you read through the text below, please try to visualize non-Muslims governed by Islamic Law. Its application to the Greeks at that time gives us a bit of insight.*

*The Hellenic-American Societies of Philadelphia and Greater Delaware Valley, known as the Federation Organization, through their president George Horiates and Vice President Demetrios Rozanitis are sponsoring the 2010 Parade in Philadelphia. They are assisted in this challenging task by co-chairs Stavros Antonakakis and Nick Yiantsos and their committee. They are to be commended for their persistent effort. The parade is scheduled for Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup> and no one who can be present should miss it.*

*It would be a real omission also if we did not cite our regional media, the Hellenic News of America and the Greek Spirit TV program, that make inter-communication possible for our communities in our region. Let us keep them going.*

### I. SURVIVAL MODE PERIOD

#### 1. Weakening and Fall of the Byzantine Empire( a few key historical items).

- ❖ The decline of the Byzantine Empire really started in 1071 when the Byzantine army was defeated in a decisive battle by Seljuk(not Ottoman) Turks at Manzikert in Armenia; the Empire never really recovered.
- ❖ Many battles with the enemy from the East followed, but the next major blow was the
- ❖ 4<sup>th</sup> Crusade in 1204. (Fourth Crusade captured and sacked Constantinople –Venetians and French captured the City and installed French Emperor, Count Baldwin of Flanders).
- ❖ Internal strife, neglect of people’s needs and heavy taxation on a shrinking population, made the very difficult job for Mohammed the Conqueror easier, and the empire was completely gone by 1453.
- ❖ The once one-million population city of Constantinople was down to about 100,000 or less at the time of the Fall in 1453. For over 200 years, the people (especially the intelligentsia and the merchants) were fleeing to both East and West. **Note:** *Byzantium’s loss was West’s gain in a number of ways. Neoplatonism never really died among Byzantine intellectuals. A key example is that of Plethon, a.k.a. George Gemistos of Mystras, who in 1430 A.D. inspired Cosimo di Medici to found Florence’s Platonic Academy in Italy. The rest of this story is that eventually it led to what is known as Renaissance.*
- ❖ During the first week of the Fall of Constantinople, the Conqueror Mohammed ordered the execution of at least 100 leaders and intellectuals of the city, thus securing himself from any liberal or revolutionary thinking at the leadership level of the Greek survivors’ community.

## 2. Survival Through Ottoman Millet System - Governing via Religious Leaders

The Choice of Gennadios by Mohammed as the first Patriarch after the Fall to lead the enslaved Greek Christians, as part of the Millet system, was a mixed blessing. He negotiated the best deal that he could get under the circumstances. He developed a reasonably good relationship with Conqueror Mohammed, but the agreements made with him received various interpretations by the Sultan successors. The result of all this was to make life very difficult for the Greeks. Since Patriarch Gennadios played a very important role as the first Christian leader under the Turks, here is a note on the biography of the man : (*NOTE:” 1405. Birth of George Scholarios, Byzantine scholar and the Patriarch Gennadios; trained as a lawyer, became a Judge-General in charge of the University. Learned Latin and was an admirer of Thomas Aquinas; wrote a number of philosophical works. Was a delegate to the Council of Florence and supported union with the Roman church, but on his return to Constantinople began to have doubts. Seems to have believed that the end of the world was at hand of the Greek people and the Church.); by Byzantine calculations the world would be 7000 years old by 1492, a turning point and certainly the Anti-Christ was at the gates. Therefore, it was more important to keep the Faith pure than preserve the worldly Empire, which he was instrumental in doing when he worked out a constitution with the Sultan that preserved the entity of the Greek people and the Church”). As we all know the key event in 1492 was not the end of the world but the *discovery of America!**

The Greek-speaking population, estimated to be as high as 12 million at the peak of the Byzantine empire’s history, was only about two million by liberation time in 1829, including the Hellenes remaining under Ottoman rule. Did we survive Turkokratia? Obviously, if the above figures have any validity, only 16% of our ancestors survived, instead of the normally expected increase in population.

## II. OTTOMAN ADMINISTRATION

The Ottoman rule operated in its ideal form by three principles: **Military, Dynastic and Islamic.**

### 1. The Military Principle

The early Ottoman military was tightly organized and controlled versus the feudal and divided European powers. The Ottomans exploited the strife and jealousy between Rome and Constantinople to the maximum advantage for their conquests and the demise of the Byzantine empire.

Constant reinforcement of troops took place by new waves of ghazi warriors from Central Asia, who were motivated by both religious fanaticism and the prospect of spoils.

In the early part of Ottoman History, some of the enslaved subjects found volunteering in the Ottoman military attractive, after they were officially Islamized. As for the rest of the population, the Turks kept revolts to a minimum by being ruthless and by a systematic Islamizing, cleansing or forcibly expelling the resisters. They practiced what is now known as ethnic cleansing, the technique that the modern Turks used in recent history, as they did in Cyprus in 1974.

The Ottoman Turks practiced Paidomazoma or collecting the healthiest male children of the Christian subjects in the form of a “human tax”, who were taken young and trained to be fearsome Turkish Janissaries. This was known as “*Devshirme*” or child contribution. The children were taught that their mother was Turkey and that the Sultan was their father! Each year, about a thousand from these collected children were selected in the early years for their overall potential, and they were trained to be candidates for future leadership positions in the Ottoman empire. The rest of them were trained to become Janissaries or soldiers. No Muslim children were taken for this purpose. The conqueror Mohammed, as mentioned sporadically here and there in historical interpretations, had doubts about the trust and capability of his Turks for the key positions of his empire, and wanted to upgrade them somehow. He, himself, was the product of a Turkish father and a Greek mother from his father’s harem. When his successors implemented the children tax program, they limit it to non-Muslims. It is of interest to note that Mohammed the Conqueror had the ambition to be the new Alexander the Great, but he had neither Alexander’s values nor the quality of Greek culture and Paedeia behind him to fulfill such an ambition..

In the latter years of the empire, the sourcing of fresh troops from Central Asia dried up, primarily because the empire’s resources to pay the mercenaries were reduced, since there were no new conquests to devour new wealth and have new spoils. The Ottomans themselves had very little know-how for the development of a good productive economy internally. As such, they were dependent on spoils and heavy taxation of the non-Muslim population!! They created very little on their own. They took and they adopted from the enslaved people, but after many generations the lemon was too dry and had no more juice, to squeeze out!.

At some point, the Janissaries were forced to do other things to supplement their living. At times, they revolted and finally they were abolished sometime in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### 2. The Dynastic Principle

Power at the highest level was inherited. There were many children since the Sultan had many wives, but the oldest son was the usual heir of the throne. In many cases, in order to avoid challenges and revolts, the new Sultan would have his brothers killed, so that there will not be any contest of this sort. This included Mohammed the Conqueror who had his brother killed and Suleiman the Magnificent who did the same to a number of his brothers. This system, in spite of its limitations, produced many talented Sultans, especially in the early years of the empire (1290-1556).

### 3. The Islamic Principle

Islam was the third key principle for Ottoman society. Political, cultural and legal forms followed Islamic law or "*shariat*". The Turks were Sunni Muslims. In contrast to Shiite Muslim societies, religious institutions served the "secular" state. The sultan was recognized as God's agent in the world. The state had three purposes:

**First**, the preservation and expansion of Islam; **second**, the defense and expansion of the ruler's power, wealth and possessions. Because the sultan was God's agent, his interests and those of Islam coincided, and these first two purposes acted in full agreement. **Third**, justice and security for the Sultan's subjects, formed foundations of the first two principles. The subjects corresponded to the flock ("rayah"), the Sultan to the shepherd. In a well-run Islamic state, all elements functioned in a smooth cycle: the government dispensed justice, safe and secure subjects prospered, taxation flowed from their wealth, the state and its military were sustained at necessary strength, and the good government was reserved to begin the cycle again. This was theoretical rather than real.

Reality for non-Muslims was often different and variable. Even though the ideal Ottoman government claims to have been a secular one, the application of Islamic principles to non-Muslim population left them at a great disadvantage. They could not serve in the military and bear arms of any sort; they could not inter-marry, unless they became Muslim first; Muslims who became Christians, or married Christians, received the usual death penalty; Non-Muslims could not operate or own property, they only worked the land for the Muslim masters. All property, in principle, was owned by the Sultan and local land lords used the land in the name of the Sultan, using slave workforce.

Under penalty of death, no Turk could be Christianized but many Christians, for their survival, converted to Islam. Thus, the probability that a significant part of today's Turks are descended from Christians is high. Some estimates point out that 25-30 million of today's Turkish population (about 30%) have such a background. The majority of them started as crypto-Christians, where they were Muslim in the day and practicing Christians in the night! With the passing of many generations, they tended to practice less and less of their Christian faith. Elements or memories of crypto-Christians are said to exist even today, or at least they remember that their grandparents were crypto-Christians.

The local Pashas or rulers exercised justice essentially at their will, with bribes being the rule rather than the exception. Thus, even non-Muslims, who met the expected bribe criteria, gained many privileges. However, for the ordinary poor Christians, even a crime of rape by a Turk, was stacked against them! However, if the proof was unavoidably clear, the Islamic law had to be applied on such crimes and the punishment was severe. Finding acceptable proof to the judge was another matter.

### **3. The Millet System for Governing the Enslaved Greeks**

Mohammed the Conqueror applied the system by allowing the religious leaders of non-Muslim population to manage their people, provided that they were responsible for obedience to the government and paid the required by law, or assessed taxes. The latter plus the necessary bribes at the various levels of the hierarchy often proved unbearable for the people, and led them to take up arms, etc. When that happened, the reprisals were severe. Whole villages or regions were wiped out and population movements to other areas of the empire were not unheard of. The only reason the enslaved people were not totally eliminated was that the local lords often petitioned the Sultan that they needed the “infidels” to work the land and pay taxes! The Church leadership paid the highest price with their lives numerous times, including the hanging of the Patriarch Gregorios VI in 1821, when the major revolution for independence started. Many Bishops were hanged during the 400 years of Turkish rule, and many genocides took place.

The Church leadership was often corrupt due to the Millet system. It came to be that the Patriarchs were often squeezed out, or outright fired by the Sultan, if they could not deliver on impossible requirements imposed upon them, or they could not pay the bribe to keep their jobs. At times the Porte of the Sultan, would promote a change if they had an indication that a potential successor Bishop would do better in complying with the desired payment!

The record of the Church hierarchy regarding the management of the Greeks is mixed, depending on who was the Sultan and who was the Patriarch. All Patriarchs officially had to support and implement the Sultan’s decisions, even if they disagreed with them. They often discouraged, even stopped, revolutions for the good of the people and especially themselves. By 1821, the suffering of the Greeks combined with the liberal thinking for freedom coming from France and America, made the revolt inevitable and no Patriarch could stop it. The other truth is that by then, the Ottoman empire had begun to suffer from age and its decline was starting. The Greek revolution gave it a major blow.

### **5. Education**

The Ottoman state has, at best, variable record in valuing education, especially for the Christians. The local Pasha or Beyh could allow or forbid the operation of schools. If there was a revolt of sorts, reprisals included the abolishing of schools. The backwardness of the Ottoman state in education is indicated by the fact that the first printing press was introduced in the empire sometime in the 1700’s, and this was done by much persuasive effort on the part of the progressive elements, including people close to the Patriarchate. As a matter of record, Greek communities abroad were using the printing press in the 1500s.

Because of the lower valuing of education, the culturally superior Hellenic world, as represented by the Byzantine Empire, even as late as in 1453, failed to civilize and assimilate this new conqueror as it had previously done with the Romans. The Muslim Turk adopted the material part of the Byzantines but not its Hellenic intellectual and cultural heritage.

For the first 300 years of *Tourkokratia*, especially after Patriarch Gennadios and Mohammed the Conqueror were gone, Greek education deteriorated to essentially nothing. The language had become simplistic in its use and the people often spoke a mixture of Turkish and very low Greek, and this with atrocious grammar and syntax. Some Crypto-Schools were operated by the Church but this was not general. It was sporadic, and the primary purpose of the school was to develop

people who would do the Church essentials -memorizing *troparia*, hymns, and do some rudimentary reading.

In the 1700s, thanks mostly to Greeks abroad, and some specific individuals like Kosmas the Aitolos, Regas Feraios, Adamndios Koraes, made the effort to restart the education of the vanishing Greeks in occupied Hellas. Some schools were started even though it took much bribing at the local level and much persuading by the Patriarch in Constantinople. The Patriarch argued correctly, and also used his argument as a ploy, that if the empire's subjects are not educated and learned commerce, the Western powers will overtake us, because we are not going to have enough trained people to handle the affairs of the state in the new environment. Out of this argument, came the *Phanariotai*, or well-educated Byzantine Greeks with genealogy claimed to go back to Byzantium ancestors, who rose to key posts in the empire. These Hellenes eventually helped considerably in the education and the liberation of the Greeks.

During the 50 or so years before the Greek Revolution, a real rebirth and interest in Greek letters took place that sparked the feeling and yearning for a dream to liberate Greece from the oppressive rule of almost four centuries. The Hellenes abroad prepared the people of Europe for a philhellenic sentiment that was to become a necessary prerequisite for a Greek rebirth. The previous Greek diaspora, before and after the Fall of Constantinople, had induced the European birth of civilization, or the renaissance of the ancient Hellenic civilization in the rest of Europe. The renewed interest in Greek letters prepared the ground for the coming revolution in Greece. This in spite of the "despotic" behavior of the European governments at that time and the Holy Alliance, which guaranteed the status quo of all big powers, including the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, many of the Greek revolutionaries identified more with the spirit of the French and American revolutions than the monarchic governments of the rest of Europe.

*(Note: As an example on how permits were given to some areas to build schools, there was a terrific school, which still exists in the island of Chios, that the Sultan himself authorized in exchange for more of the unique natural Masticha(chewing gum), from a tree that only grows in that island. The Sultan wanted to incentivize the Chians to increase masticha production, which he used for his harem, so they would have good breath!! The Sultan did not hesitate to eliminate about ¾ of the island's population(numbers range between 50,000 -100,0000) by direct killing and slave selling in the eastern slave markets, when the Chians joined the rest of the Greeks in the revolution).*

## **6. Commerce**

The valuing, inclination, training and capability of the Turks themselves for trade, languages, sea commerce, specialized skills and business in general were relatively low. As such, except for military matters, the empire came to depend to a considerable degree on the skills of the Greeks, Armenians, Jews and other minorities; who by heritage and self-discipline developed their talents to the maximum, even under the adverse conditions that they found themselves. Many Greeks, in spite of the severe constraints imposed on them by the Turkish state, through education abroad, travel and adopting to ways of taking advantage of possible opportunities within the Ottoman system, achieved wealth and came to control much of commerce and business activity. By and large, they operated by having one foot within the empire and one outside. In some ways they became almost indispensable to the survival of the Ottomans. The

Sultans and the Ottoman system recognized that they could only deal with the commercial people of Europe through the Greeks and other minorities.

The accomplishments of these privileged Greeks were destined to help the majority of the Greeks who had to live essentially as slaves to the Turks, when the time for revolution came.

By 1810, over 600 ships or about 131,000 ton ship capacity and more than 16,000 sailors aboard, a very significant volume for the times, was in Greek hands. All of these ships were heavily armed with cannon to face attacking pirates. Many of these ships were registered in Russia and European countries by a special agreement that the Sultan was coerced to sign (1774). Some of these ships, were donated for the Greek struggle when the time came.

## 7. *Klefts , Armatoloi and "Kotzabasides"*

Some of the Greeks at the local level found "freedom" by becoming *Klefts* or rebels, living in the mountains and carrying out raids on the Turks. Some romanticists refer to these rebels as the celebrated brigands who for centuries harassed the wealthy Turks in Robin Hood style. The demotic or *kleftica* songs are more revealing of the life in their time than history itself is. It is of interest to note that these strong holds of *klefts* increased in the decades before the revolution of 1821, but they existed from the time of the Fall of their area to the Turks. Some of them knew nothing else and their genealogical roots were lost in the past generations. They were the ones mainly responsible for the many revolts in the four centuries of occupation. For instance, the strategic and tactical brains of the revolution of 1821, General Theodore Kolokotronis, was the descendant of about 10 generations by that name who lived as rebels in the mountains of Peloponnesos fighting the occupying enemy. No fewer than 84 rebels by that name found violent death by the Turks between the years 1742-1829. In fact, Theodore's grandson, Colonel Kolokotronis, is recorded as the last Kolokotronis to fall for the freedom of Greece in the 1913 Balkan wars.

The areas of Souli and Mani never came under complete control of the Turks. The *Klefts* reigned supreme in these specific areas. *Klefts* from other areas, when vigorously pursued by the Turks, would find safety in these two areas as well as the Ionian Islands, which, more often than not, were under western rule.

Some Greeks gained the confidence of the Turks to be armed and used as sort of militia (*Armatoloi*) to protect the villages from the *Klefts* and other bandits. At times, these *Armatoloi* worked closely with the *klefts* for the survival of their species. Both the *Klefts* and the *Armatoloi* formed the main source of revolutionary soldiers when the time for revolution came.

With the passing of time, few local Greeks gained the confidence of the regional Turkish bosses and earned many privileges for themselves, in terms of "ownership", collecting taxes and penalties from the ordinary Greeks for the Turkish administration, and managing the affairs of the enslaved Greeks.. This often at the cost of the Greek people, who continued to work the land for the Turks and now for the in-between bosses also, known as the Greek *Kotzabasides*; who had become the haves, like the Turks. Thus, these *Kotzabasides* had reasons to oppose the revolution and any disturbance by the enslaved Greeks. The Turkish authorities had, through brutality, via these *Kotzabasides* and through their control of some of the Church leadership, a very asphyxiating control over the Greek population.

When the revolution broke out, the Turks lost all confidence on the *kotzabasides* and the clerics, a fact that eventually forced them to irreversibly join the struggle for independence. The revolutionary hero Papaflessas saw to it, prior to the revolution, that both the *kotzabasides* and

any hesitating clergymen had no other alternative any longer, except to join the *Klefts* and fight to the death. They were implicitly implicated by having a common Greek meeting in Arkadia with Papaflessas and other Kleft leaders, which the Turks found out and interpreted it as a collaboration, which was not exactly true. The Turks called the Greek leadership to a meeting of their own, but these Greeks knew what was coming to them and did not go, thus committing themselves to the side of the revolution.

All the items that were outlined above were critical for the eventual success of the revolution, However, without the **Education and Commerce factors**, the desire for freedom could not have been rekindled. They provided the opportunity to cultivate Phil-Hellenes, who proved pivotal after the battle at Navarino. The period of revival for Hellenic Paedeia and commerce reinvigorated the Greek communities throughout Europe and Russia. It was in these communities where the secret organization of Filiki Etairia was born and organized to have over 1000 sworn members by the time the revolution broke out in 1821.

Once the revolution started, Greek appeals to various nations and groups came asking for sympathy, help and recognition. Their appeal to President Monroe of USA, is shown here by their resolution and is, indeed, revealing of their commitment. **From The Resolution:**

*"Having formed the resolution to live or die for freedom, we are drawn to you since it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode and is respected by you as it was by our Fathers. Hence, in involving her name, we invoke yours, trusting that in emulating you, we shall emulate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling your achievement.*

*Though separated from you by mighty oceans, we consider you closer to us than the nations of our frontiers, and regard you as friends, fellow citizens and brothers, because you are free, generous, liberal, and a Christian people. Your liberty does not rest on the slavery of other nations, nor your prosperity on their calamities and sufferings.*

*On the contrary, free and prosperous yourselves, you are desirous that all men should share the same blessings; that all should enjoy these rights to which all by nature are equally entitled. It is you who(in our day) first proclaimed these rights and it is by your example that Europe receives lessons of justice and learns to renounce her absurd and bloody customs. This glory, Americans, is yours alone and raises you above all nations which have gained a name for liberty and law."* **General US Reaction and Response:**

Even though the official response was somewhat sympathetic to the Hellenic cause, there was very little direct governmental help. However, at the individual and private organization levels the response was very positive for the Hellenes. Who can forget who reciprocated to the Greek call, abandoning the safety and comfort of their homeland and journeyed to distant Greece to offer their services for the noble cause of the Greek war of Independence? John Allen, Samuel Gridley Howe, George Jarvis, Johnathan Miller, John Ross and William Washington are names among the many Americans who committed to the cause of Hellas. In support of the argument for helping Greece, US Representative of Massachusetts, Daniel Webster, known as the "Little Giant", gave a fiery speech in the House of Representatives, where, among other things, he stated: "The Turks came from the center of Asia, and now occupy the fairest portion of Christendom. and there they are: a huge, sullen heap of sterility, neither to be moved, nor to be cultivated." Representative Henry Clay of Kentucky spoke in an analogous manner.

In the same building, where now is the St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Philadelphia, PA (then a Protestant Church), the residents of that city collected both supplies and money for the Greek people. This scene was repeated in a number of places in the United States.



As an example of the type of education that the enslaved were receiving, one needs to read a bit of the contribution of Regas Feraios to begin to visualize the spirit of the times. Here is part of **The Patriotic Revolutionary Hymn of Regas Feraeos(1759 – 1798)**. Unfortunately, he was arrested for his revolutionary song by Austrian authorities, turned over to the Turks, tortured for days along with his friends and then killed by drowning in the river Danube. He did not live to see the revolution, but he sewed the seeds of freedom which grew in the hearts of Greeks and Phil-Hellenes alike. Here are a few lines from the preamble of the Patriotic Hymn of Regas Feraios, known as Thourios of Regas:

*Ως πότε, παλληκάρια, να ζούμε στα στενά,  
Μονάχοι, σαν λιοντάρια,στες ράχες, στα βουνά;  
Σπηλιές να κατοικούμεν, να βλέπωμεν κλαδιά,  
Να φεύγωμ' απ'τον κόσμον, για την πικρή  
σκλαβιά;  
Να χάνομεν αδέρφια, Πατρίδα και γονείς,  
Τους φίλους, τα παιδιά μας κι όλους τους  
συγγενείς;*

*Καλλιό 'ναι μιάς ώρας ελεύθερη ζωή,  
Παρά σαράντα χρόνοι σκλαβιά και φυλακή!*

*Τι σ'ωφελεί αν ζήσης και είσαι στη σκλαβιά;  
Στοχάσου πως σε ψένουν καθ' ώραν στη φωτιά.  
Βεζύρης, Δραγουμάνος, Αφέντης κι αν σταθής,  
Ο Τύραννος αδικώς σε κάμει να χαθής.  
Δουλεύεις όλ' ημέρα σε ό,τι κι αν σοί πή,  
Κι αυτός πασχίζει πάλιν το αίμα σου να πιή.  
Ο Σούτζος κι ο Μουρούζης, Πετράκης,  
Σκαναβής,  
Γκίκας και Μαυρογένης, καθρέπτης είν'να ιδής.  
Ανδρείοι καπετάνοι, παπάδες, λαϊκοί,  
Σκοτώθηκαν, κι αγάδες, με άδικον σπαθί.  
Κι αμέτρητ'άλλοι τόσοι, και Τούρκοι και Ρωμιοί,  
Ζωήν και πλούτον χάνουν, χωρίς καμμιά 'φορμή.  
Etc, etc*

Ο Θούριος του Ρήγα συνεχίζει και αποτελείται από 125 γραμμές. Ο δε όλος Πατριωτικός Ύμνος του Ρήγα αποτελείται από 39 πεντάγραμμους στίχους, και ο Ελληνικός λαός τον μάθαινε κρυφά για να εμψυχώνεται και να προετοιμασθεί για τον μεγάλο αγώνα. Είναι φανερό ότι ο Ρήγας πίστευε πως και πολλοί Τούρκοι εχρειάζοντο και ήθελαν την Βαλκανική ανεξαρτησία και ελευθερία που ονειρεύετο ο ίδιος, ως μιά βαλκανική κοινοπολιτεία με κοινή γλώσσα την Ελληνικήν.

A rough translation of the above initial lines of the war song is shown here, even though it does not do justice to the poetic and inspiring original Hellenic version:

*Young men, how long must we live in  
mountain passes, being lonely like lions on  
mountain ridges and the hills,*

*residing in caves, and watching the  
branches of the trees? How long must we  
stay away from the world because of bitter  
servitude, abandoning brothers, parents,  
friends, children, all our relatives and  
ourHomeland?*

*One hour of freedom is worth more than  
forty years of slavery and life in prison.  
What is the good of living, if you are a  
slave? Think how, hour by hour, they roast  
you on fire.*

*And even if you become a vizier or  
dragoman or ruler, the tyrant sees that you  
find an unjust end; you work all day at his  
command, while he seeks to drink your blood  
in return.*

*Men like Soutsos, Mourouzis, Petrakis,  
Skanavis, Gikas and Mavrogenis are  
mirrors where you can see all this.*

*Brave captains, priests and laity,  
and even Agas were killed, by the unjust  
sword; and countless many others, and  
Greeks and Turks, lose life and wealth,  
without any cause. etc, etc.*

This war song, a preamble to the 39 stanzas of the Patriotic Hymn, continues for 125 inflammatory, but true, penetrating lines. Many Greeks in the pre-revolutionary time

learned it by heart. Many, who were not able to read, would often seek a trusting literate person to read it for them and help them memorize it!!

It is well noted that Regas felt strongly that even many Turks needed and wanted freedom from the tyrannical Turkish system. He was envisioning an independent and free Balkan Federation with the Greek as common language.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY/ REFERENCES

1. The 1821 Greek War of Independence and America's Contributions to the Greek Cause by George Liber of the Order of Ahepa. Published on the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Greek Independence in 1971.
2. The Fall of Constantinople 1453 by Steven Runciman of Cambridge University Press (1965, 1994).
3. Byzantine Civilization by Steven Runciman of World Publishing Company (1933, 1967).
4. The Dark Angel by Mika Waltari; Werner Soderstrom Osakeyhtio, Porvoo-Helsinki. Translated by Naomi Walford (1989). First printed in English by G.P. Putman's Sons (1953)
5. Greece's Struggle for Independence. A comprehensive review article by the National Herald of New York, March 25-26, 2000.
6. O Geros Tou Moria, Fourth Edition, By Spyros. Melas, Biris Press, Athens, Greece (1952).
7. Encyclopedia Britannica-History of Greece During the Byzantine Period [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/history/images/creation\\_of\\_a\\_greek.htm](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/history/images/creation_of_a_greek.htm) <http://search.britannica.com/bcom/eb/article/8/0,5716,109178+2,00.html>
8. The Creation of a Greek-American Identity by Christos Yatrakis [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/history/images/creation\\_of\\_a\\_greek.htm](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/history/images/creation_of_a_greek.htm)
9. Twenty Five Lectures of Modern Balkan History <http://www.lib.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/ry>
10. ABC of History- A Beginner's guide to the Balkans [http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/balkans\\_content/balkans\\_timeline.html](http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/balkans_content/balkans_timeline.html)
11. Greek Revolution of 1821-1829 <http://www.nostos.com/greekrev/>
12. History of Greece: The War of Independence <http://www.vacation.net.gr/p/history15.html>
13. Greek General History <http://www.worldartgroup.com/greekhis.htm>
14. Greek History Primer <http://www.hri.org/GAFS/history.html>
15. \*From The Twin Meaning of 1776 & 1821 by Dr. Dean Lomis (1998).



*Scenes from The Massacre At Chios*

by Eugène Delacroix, first exhibited in 1824, two years after the massacre, and bought by King Charles X for The Louvre in Paris.



Initiation to Filiki Etairia Secret Organization -Liberty for Hellas or Death (painting by Tsokos)