

A [joint public action](#), a **historical tour** in Athens city centre, was co-organised by [EBCO](#), the [Association of Greek Conscientious Objectors](#) and [Amnesty International - Greek Section](#) on 21/04/2023, **anniversary of the launch of the Greek military dictatorship** (21 April 1967), highlighting the human rights violations and the struggle for freedom and justice. The tour included the following stops: 1) Museum of Anti-Dictatorship Democratic Resistance of the Association of Imprisoned & Exiled Resisters 1967-1974; 2) Grigoris Lambrakis; 3) War Museum; 4) (former) Medical Centre for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims; 5) Greek Section of Amnesty International; 6) Law School of the University of Athens; and 7) National Technical University of Athens.

1) SFEA



- 1) The maintenance of militancy and vigilance against any attempt or intrusion against the freedoms of the Greek People from wherever it comes from.
- 2) To assist the State with petitions, memos, communications and any other lawful action and vigilance for the prosecution of the crimes of the dictatorship, the cleansing of public life from dictatorial elements and situations, and the rehabilitation of the victims of the dictatorship.
- 3) Enlightenment about the causes and conditions that led to the dictatorship.
- 4) To contribute by any legal and appropriate means to the establishment and operation of popular sovereignty.
- 5) The preservation and further development of the spirit of unity, solidarity and the bonds created between the imprisoned and exiled by the dictatorship resisters for their resistance against the dictatorship in the period from 21.4.1967 to 23.7.1974.

6) The legislative recognition by the State of the anti-dictatorship action and its resisters and the rise of the resistance of the Greek people.

7) The establishment and operation of the Museum of Anti-Dictatorial Democratic Resistance, Archive, Library, Centre for the Study and Documentation of Historical Memory, in the designated monumental site of the former camp EAT-ESA (Special Investigative Department of the Greek Military Police).

Founding members of SFEA participated as prosecution witnesses in the trials against the coup plotters and torturers.

Also by its nature as a particularly sensitive body on issues of democracy, peace, human and socio-political rights, throughout its uninterrupted presence, it participated with announcements, interviews, public anniversary events, the organization of workshops, meetings-discussions on the phenomena of neo-Nazism and racism, exhibitions of resistance press, anti-human cartoons, memos, publications of resolutions of solidarity to struggling peoples - such as Chile, Nicaragua, Turkey -, to political prisoners of various countries even with the presence of observers, in similar trials in Istanbul and the militant presence of its members in Belgrade, which was bombed in 1999 by NATO, demonstrating in practice to the Yugoslavian people not only the human support of SFEA, but also carrying humanitarian aid.

Source: <https://sfea.gr/2015-03-17-21-13-44/sfea-1967-1974>

2) Grigoris Lambrakis



Grigoris Lambrakis was a physician, athlete and politician who was murdered by parastatals. His murder caused an international outcry for the authoritarian practices of the Karamanlis government and the Security Corps, which turned out to not only tolerate, but also to breed the rampant parastatal apparatus. The Lambrakis case reinvigorated George Papandreou's Undaunted Struggle and played perhaps the most important role in the fall of the Karamanlis government in the same year.

Grigoris Lambrakis was born in 1912 and was the 14th child of the 18 children his parents had. He studied medicine at the University of Athens and specialised in gynaecology. He was an athlete with many national and Balkan victories and held the national record in the long jump for 23 years (until 1959). During the occupation he organised competitions with other fellow athletes, donating the proceeds to people's soup kitchens.

In the October 1961 elections, Lambrakis was elected as a member of parliament for Piraeus, working with the United Democratic Left (EDA). He was a founding member and vice-president of the 'Hellenic Committee for International Recession and Peace'. On 21 April 1963, defying a police ban, he held the 1st Marathon Peace March. He walked most of the route alone, amidst threats, before finally being arrested and detained for a few hours.

He then went to London to support Greek, Cypriot and English protesters calling for the release of political prisoners in Greece. Almost a month later, on 22 May 1963, as he was leaving a meeting for peace and nuclear disarmament in Thessaloniki, he was assassinated by parastatals. He was severely wounded and died a few days later.

Source:

https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%93%CF%81%CE%B7%CE%B3%CF%8C%CF%81%CE%B7%CF%82_%CE%9B%CE%B1%CE%BC%CF%80%CF%81%CE%AC%CE%BA%CE%B7%CF%82

3) Medical Center for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims



The Medical Center for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims was founded in Athens in 1989 by Maria Piniu-Kalli and operated until 2008.

During the dictatorship, Maria Piniu-Kalli was arrested and exiled to Gyaros. She studied medicine with a specialization in dermatology. Her studies enabled her to examine torture victims when she was a member of the Greek section of Amnesty International and at the same time coordinator of its medical teams.

In 1993, as a member of the board of the International Council of Centers for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims, representing Greece and the Balkans in this board, she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1993 in the midst of wars in the Balkans she invited doctors from the warring countries to Greece and they organized the Balkan Network against Torture and War.

In an international meeting that she organized in Athens, the Network of Torture Victim Rehabilitation Centers of the Middle East and North Africa was created, based in Athens, of which she served as Secretary General. From 1998 to 2003 she was the first elected president of the International Council of Torture Victim Rehabilitation Centers, with consultative status to the United Nations and the European Union.

During her human rights work around the world she was arrested 5 times and the last time when she visited Arafat in the last few days and tried to examine victims of the Jenin massacre, at which point she was considered a person not wanted by Israel. She visited Nelson Mandela in prison.

Twice she was a candidate for the Committee of the International Convention for the Abolition of Torture, in the United Nations. She taught at the postgraduate course of the School of Medicine of the University of Athens on the subject of "dealing with international crises". She also participated in the conscientious objectors committee.

Source: <https://enallaktikos.gr/vinteo-maria-pinioy-kalli-mia-gynaik/>

4) Amnesty International



Amalia Koutsouri-Fleming, a doctor, actively participated in the National Resistance during the occupation. In fact, with the official help of the police, she produced fake IDs for Jews and others who had been targeted by the regime. She also managed to hide several hunted, thus saving their lives.

During the dictatorship of the colonels (1967-1974) she developed intense anti-dictatorship activity. She was arrested in 1971 on the charge of planning the escape of Alekos Panagoulis. After a 25-day interrogation, during which she was tortured, she was tried and sentenced by the emergency military court of Athens. The dictatorship, fearing the impact that her imprisonment would have on the international community, set her free and deported her, while also stripping her of her Greek citizenship. She returned after the fall of the dictatorship in Greece and testified as a witness at the trial of the ETA-ESA torturers, where she specifically referred to the use of hallucinogens and other substances during interrogations during the junta period.

Amalia Koutsouri-Fleming was a founding member and first president of the Greek Section of Amnesty International. Amnesty International immediately mobilized and rallied to the side of the political prisoners of the dictatorship. Already in 1967, an urgent mission is organized in Greece on December 30. Initially they are not given access to the detention facilities, but the two Amnesty International researchers spend 4 weeks collecting testimonies and evidence and publish a report with the cases of 48 people who were tortured and 22 different torture methods: phalanx, sexual torture of women, electric shocks and psychological torture. The report does not hesitate to name the alleged torturers. Kitty Arseni will later describe the meeting with the researchers: "[...] they informed me that they are in Greece, a mission has arrived from Amnesty International, where they are looking to find testimonies from people who were really tortured. And they told me do you want to, can you, can you afford to go? And I endured it and went. This was in the house of Amalia Fleming, who was also surrounded by security guards and surveillance."

The publication of the research raises an uproar throughout Europe, while similar complaints are published by the international press and other organizations. The organization persists and a researcher returns to Greece in March 1968. Under pressure from international public opinion, access to facilities and prisoners is given for the first time. The junta denies everything. The second Amnesty International report is published in April 1968 and consolidates the belief in international public opinion that torture takes place in Greece. Amnesty International's mobilization remains constant throughout the dictatorship. Continuous letters and "noise" so that the voice of the prisoners is not forgotten. "Adopting" hundreds of them as prisoners of conscience, many of whom are released. The organization also sends observers to mock trials and financially supports victims' families. The national offices of the organization in other countries take action: letters of support and protest and when in 1972 the then General Secretary of the organization makes an international appeal for the release of political prisoners, all the national offices simultaneously publish the names of 356 prisoners. Amnesty International's contribution to the expulsion of the country from the Council of Europe is decisive, especially with regard to torture. The organization's researchers will present their findings in detail directly to the Council of Europe. Greece is effectively expelled from the Council of Europe in December 1969. The organization, insisting on the vindication of the victims and the conviction of the torturers, again sends observers to the trials of the torturers that followed and calls on the authorities to try all the torturers and deconstruct the mechanism that led to this torture.

In 1975, 29 people, many of whom had been "adopted" by Amnesty International as prisoners of conscience during the dictatorship, founded the Hellenic Committee of Amnesty International.

Sources:

<https://www.amnesty.gr/elliniko-tmima-istoria-kai-simantikes-imerominies>
https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%91%CE%BC%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%AF%CE%B1_%CE%A6%CE%BB%CE%AD%CE%BC%CE%B9%CE%BD%CE%B3%CE%BA <https://www.mixanitouxronou.gr/amalia-flemingk-i-konstantinoupolitissa-pou-spoudase-giatros-meta-tin-leilasia-tis-klinikis-tou-patera-tis-apo-tous-tourkous-stin-katochi-ekrive-patriotes-ke-otan-pire-ipotrofia-sto-exoteriko-gnori/>

5) Law School



The occupation of the Athens Faculty of Law on February 21, 1973 was the first mass mobilization of students during the period of the Junta of the Colonels.

The junta, in its attempt to control every aspect of politics, had meddled with student unionism since 1967, banning university student elections, conscription of students, and imposing unelected student union leaders on the National Student Union of Greece (NSUG). These actions created strong anti-dictatorship sentiments among students, such as Geology major Costas Georgakis, who publicly set himself on fire in 1970 in Genoa, Italy in protest against the junta.

In Greece, student unrest began on February 5, 1973, when the students of the Polytechnic University decided to abstain from their classes. On February 13, a demonstration took place inside the Polytechnic and the junta breached the university asylum, ordering the police to intervene. Eleven students were arrested and put on trial.

On the occasion of these events, on February 21, approximately three to four thousand students of the Faculty of Law of the University of Athens and other faculties occupied the building of the Faculty of Law on Solonos Street, demanding the immediate revocation of Legislative Decree 1347 which imposed the conscription of "reactionary youth", as 88 of their fellow students had already been forcibly recruited.

They call on the people to support their struggle and indeed around the building of the Faculty of Law apart from the students, ordinary people also gather.

The students from the roof of the building recite the following oath: "We the students of the Higher Educational Institutions swear in the name of freedom to struggle to the end for the securing of: a) academic freedoms, b) university asylum, c) the revocation of all of oppressive laws and decrees'.

The rectory authorities did not react immediately, but proceeded to negotiations led by the rector. The next day, the students left the building, with the help of the people gathered around it, under the fear of intervention by the regime. During the withdrawal, clashes took place with the police and with executives of parastatal organizations as a result of which several were arrested and taken to the EAT-ESA.

A second occupation followed, and on March 20 of the same year, the students proceeded to a third occupation, but without the agreement of all the youth political organizations. With permission from the rector's office, the police invaded the school and, after beating them, arrested several students.

Sources: [https://el.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%9A%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%AC%CE%BB%CE%B7%CF%88%CE%B7_%CE%BD%CE%BF%CE%BC%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82_%CF%83%CF%87%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%AE%CF%82_\(1973\)](https://el.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%9A%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%AC%CE%BB%CE%B7%CF%88%CE%B7_%CE%BD%CE%BF%CE%BC%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82_%CF%83%CF%87%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%AE%CF%82_(1973))
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6) Polytechnic School



On 14 November 1973, students of the National Technical University of Athens decided to abstain from classes and started demonstrations against the brutal military regime. The students, who called themselves "Free Besieged", barricaded themselves inside the school building on Patision Street and started the operation of the independent radio station of the Polytechnic. The transmitter was constructed within a few hours in the workshops of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering. Their, now historic, message was: "This is Polytechnic! People of Greece, the Polytechnic is the flag bearer of our struggle, your struggle, our common struggle against dictatorship and for democracy."

On the first night of the squat of the Polytechnic, a group of about a hundred junta youths of Kostas Plevris' Party of August 4 (K4A), together with security guards and parastatals, decided to organise an invasion of the Polytechnic, but in the absence of planning and leadership they limited themselves to preventing the students from being fed by outside security groups.

Protests, rallies and demonstrations against the junta regime increased. Mainly in Athens, but also in parts of the province, conditions of revolt were created. From 14 to 17 November (and to a lesser extent until 18 November), barricades were erected and street fights were fought between insurgents and the police. The Polytechnic uprising escalated into a mass anti-dictatorial revolt in which citizens, workers, and protesting peasants were integrated.

On the night of 16 November, the same group of K4A youths who had gathered on the first night, among whom was allegedly the - years later - leader and founder of Golden Dawn, a 16-year-old teenager at the time, Nikos Michaloliakos - in addition to those who had decided to assist the repressive forces, such as Elias Tsiapouris, who along with other paramilitaries was accused of shooting protesters from the roof of the Ministry of Public Order - gathered outside the organisation's offices at the

intersection of Boumboulinas and Alexandra streets. They were dispersed, however, after being attacked by a squad of police officers who did not realize their identity.

At 3 a.m. on 17 November, while negotiations for the safe withdrawal of the students from the Polytechnic were in progress, the transitional government decided that the army should intervene and one of the three tanks that had been deployed outside the school demolished the main gate. During the entry of the tank, it is claimed, without being proven, that 2-3 students behind the gate were crushed (a fact "highly probable but unconfirmed" according to the conclusion of prosecutor Ceva). Also, the debris seriously injured student Pepi Rigopoulou, with crushing fractures to her legs. The Polytechnic station made appeals to the soldiers to defy the orders of their superiors and then the announcer recited the Greek National Anthem. The broadcast continued even after the tank entered the school grounds. The students who had remained in the Polytechnic gathered in the main courtyard, singing the national anthem. The fall of the gate was followed by the entry of a unit of armed soldiers of the LOK (Mountain Raiding Company) who led the students, without violence, out of the Polytechnic through the gate of Stournari Street. The police forces waiting on the two sidewalks of Stournari Street attacked the students, whose exit was decided (according to the conclusion of the prosecutor Ceva) to be guarded by some of the soldiers, who in some cases also intervened against the police officers who were violently attacking the students. Many students took refuge in neighbouring blocks of flats. Police snipers opened fire from neighbouring rooftops, while members of the Central Intelligence Service (CID) pursued the rioters. The announcers of the Polytechnic station remained at their posts and continued broadcasting for 40 minutes after the exit, at which point they were arrested.

Soldiers and policemen fired live fire at civilians until the next day, resulting in several deaths in the area around the Polytechnic and the rest of Athens. The first official record, in October 1974, by Prosecutor Tseva, identified 18 official or fully confirmed dead and 16 unknown "royally resulting" dead. A year later, Deputy Appeals Prosecutor Zaginis put the death toll at 23, with one more added during the subsequent trial. Early journalistic efforts to record the events spoke of 59 dead or even 79 victims, based on Georgoulas' list. According to research by the Director of Research of the National Research Foundation, Kallivrettakis, in 2003, the number of named dead was 24, while the number of unidentified dead was 16.

After the Polytechnic uprising, the junta reinstated the military law that banned gatherings and traffic in Athens and Thessaloniki.

On 30 December 1975, after a 2.5-month hearing and a six-day conference before the five-member Athens Court of Appeal, the court issued its decision, which declared 20 of the 32 defendants guilty and acquitted 12.

The student uprising was also significantly influenced by the youth movements of the 1960s, especially the events of May '68.

Source: https://el.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%95%CE%BE%CE%AD%CE%B3%CE%B5%CF%81%CF%83%CE%B7_%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85_%CE%A0%CE%BF%CE%BB%CF%85%CF%84%CE%B5%CF%87%CE%BD%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%BF%CF%85