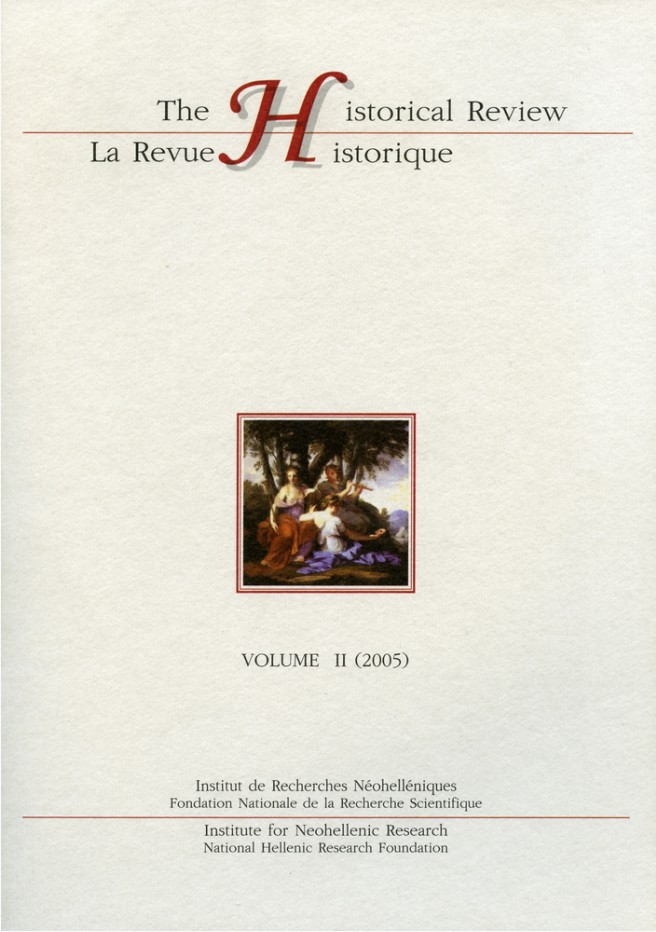
The Historical Review/La Revue Historique

Vol 2 (2005)

Vol 2, No (2005)



The Greek War of Independence from the Perspective of Historical Sociology

Padelis E. Lekas

doi: 10.12681/hr.188

THE GREEK WAR OF INDEPENDENCE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY*

Padelis E. Lekas

ABSTRACT: This is an attempt to place the Greek War of Independence in the wider context of the clash between Tradition and Modernity in the European periphery. It focuses on the ideology and the movement of nationalism – a phenomenon springing up in modernity and bringing forward the concept of the nation as the proper unit of state organisation. Being the undisputed offspring of nationalism (which is viewed here as both the product and the vehicle of modernisation), the Greek War of Independence is discussed not solely in its political dimensions but also in terms of its contribution to a much broader societal change. It is in this sense that the Greek struggle for independence may be interpreted as the specifically "Greek exit" from tradition – as an undoubtedly unique event of momentous importance *per se*, yet, on the other hand, as one more instance in a prolonged and very intricate process of societal transformations.

Introduction

The story, in its broad lines, is quite well known. By their active military intervention in 1827 and their diplomatic mediation in 1829 and again in 1832, the Powers finally sealed the independence of Greece from the Ottoman Empire, and the Kingdom of Greece came into being. Impoverished, weak and quite restricted in space, this new political entity was nonetheless a novel creation in the area. It was a modern nation-state through and through; the major aim of an ideology of national liberation; and the effective outcome of a popular movement of mass mobilisation, of the first truly "national" war of independence in the Balkans and the Near East.

The insurrection itself, which had broken out some years earlier, in 1821, had been no bloodless affair. Great upheavals, cruel hardships and stringent privations were showered upon the Southern Balkans because of it and because of the successive attempts by the Ottoman state to suppress it. What is more,

* A previous draft of this paper was delivered as the Keynote Address at the Conference *Insurrection and Resurrection: The Struggle for Greek Independence*, held at Haifa University in May 2005. Warm thanks are due to Professors P. M. Kitromilides and G. B. Leontaritis for their stout support to the original idea behind this paper. I also wish to express my thanks to several friends and colleagues who read the manuscript at various stages and offered invaluable help: N. Kotarides, C.V. Mavratsas, Ph. Papadopoulos, N. Theotokas, N. Vafeas, and, especially, H. Andriakaina, N. Rotzokos and D. Tzakis.

after it, nothing was to be quite the same again, not just for Greece but for the whole region.

That it was a story of heroic deeds, of self-sacrifice both individual and collective, of cultural and religious renaissance, of strong feelings of solidarity both within and outside Greece – of all these there can be no doubt; as there is no doubt either that it had also been a story of political upheaval and social discontent, of civil strife and factional passion. Yet, lofty ideas, hope and vision had been its driving forces; and success (however partial and however marred by the inevitable disillusionments that come after such strenuous struggles) was to be its culmination. And there is no question either that it did change radically the old ways of life, both for the citizens of the new state and for the remaining subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

One could not possibly underplay the reverberations of the Greek War of Independence across the nineteenth century. This, the first sustained and successful secessionist movement out of the old Empire, was to be a blueprint for several such movements that followed, not just in the immediate vicinity of Greece but also in the whole periphery of the European core. The Greek struggle rapidly became a point of reference in liberal and nationalist circles abroad, a model to be admired or imitated, an example to be emulated or in some cases antagonised. It was to prove a rich pool of experience for several subsequent nationalisms, in terms of state building, of the assertion of irredentist claims, of the mode of ideological rationalisation – but also in terms of sheer daring and of the power of convictions to change the world. It was quite like the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars that had spread the new ideas in Central Europe by bringing upheaval, causing havoc and thereby transforming local resistance into national feeling; so, *mutatis mutandis*, did the Greek War of Independence trigger a chain reaction of successive nationalist movements (Serb, Bulgarian, and later Albanian). And they, in turn, combined with Greek nationalism, were to precipitate the appearance of Turkish nationalism, the last such movement in the area.[1]

Ethnic Awakening and Ethnogenesis: Betwixt or Beyond?

In terms of the modern literature about nationalism, there is here, in this story of the Greek War of Independence, a very strong case for the ethnic awakening

[1] On the effects of the Greek War of Independence and of Greek nationalism in general, see H. Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*, Boulder 1977, esp. pp. 110-117; P. M. Kitromilides, *Η Γαλλική Επανάσταση και η Νοτιοανατολική Ευρώπη* [The French Revolution and Southeastern

thesis. All the required ingredients are present: a preceding movement of cultural renaissance; the massive and spontaneous appeal of the insurrection once it had broken out; the strong popular base that rapidly built up under it; and a robust national consciousness which, in spite of all discordances and disunions within, exhibited to the outside world a uniform picture of a people *willing* to be free.[2]

This last point merits special attention: the ethnic awakening thesis draws additional support from contemporary Western perceptions of the Greek revolt, as the fully legitimate outburst of an ancient and once-glorious people to assert their independence by shedding the yoke of barbarism to which historical fate had condemned them. Otherwise, without such a belief in the awakening of the Hellenes-of-old, that unprecedented phenomenon of Philhellenism, of the international movement in support of Greek

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Europe], Athens ²2000; and N. Todorov, *Η βαλκανική διάσταση της Επανάστασης του 1821* [The Balkan dimension of the 1821 Revolution], Athens 1982. For a more extensive comment on the temporal sequence of Balkan nationalisms, see P. Lekas, *Η εθνικιστική ιδεολογία: πέντε υποθέσεις εργασίας στην ιστορική κοινωνιολογία* [Nationalist ideology: five working hypotheses in historical sociology], Athens 1996, 2nd edn, pp. 93-96. On the relation between Turkish nationalism and its Balkan precedents, see D. Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism,* London 1977, and C. Keyder, "A History and Geography of Turkish Nationalism", in F. Birtek and Th. Dragonas (eds), *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey*, London and New York 2005, pp. 3-17.

[2] On the clash between ethnic awakening and ethnogenesis, see *inter alia*, A. D. Smith, "Gastronomy or Geology? The Role of Nationalism in the Reconstruction of Nations", *Nations and Nationalism* 1, 1 (1995), pp. 3-23; and J. Eller and R. Coughlin, "The Poverty of Primordialism: The Demystification of Ethnic Attachments", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16, 2 (1993), pp. 183-202. On the "necessary conditions" for ethnic awakening, see M. Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations,* Cambridge 1985; and M. Hroch, "From National Movement to the Fully-Fledged Nation", *New Left Review* 198 (1993), pp. 3-20. For an example (in English) of the ethnic awakening thesis in the Greek case, see D. A. Zakynthinos, *The Making of Modern Greece: From Byzantium to Independence,* Oxford 1976; and its critical review by P. M. Kitromilides, *Hellenica* 30 (1977-78), pp. 200-203. For recent appraisals of the doctrine of continuity permeating most of Greek historiography, see P. M. Kitromilides, "Η ιδέα του έθνους και της εθνικής κοινότητας στην ελληνική ιστοριογραφία" [*The idea of the nation and national community in Greek historiography*], in P. M. Kitromilides and T. E. Sklavenitis (eds), *Ιστοριογραφία της νεότερης και σύγχρονης Ελλάδας, 1833-2002* [The historiography of modern and contemporary Greece, 1833-2002], Vol. I, Athens 2004, pp. 37-52; and A. Liakos, "Το ζήτημα της 'συνέχειας' στη νεοελληνική ιστοριογραφία" [The question of "continuity" in modern Greek historiography], in *ibid*, pp. 53-65.

independence, makes no sense. Furthermore, this, the Philhellenic Movement, was in itself a prime manifestation of international popular feeling in the Age of Nationalism. To be sure, the Greek War of Independence was perceived in the broader framework of the struggle of Christianity against Islam; but the crucial element for the international support it drew was a conviction, which by that time had already begun to pervade the public sphere in Europe and America. And that conviction rested on the belief that national self-determination must constitute an inalienable right – even if such a right ran against established authority, and its realisation was certain to upset the delicate balance of power in the post-Napoleonic era. The Philhellenic Movement was not therefore merely a palpable proof of the influence that public opinion could by then exert upon international events; it ought also to be seen as a confirmation of the ascendancy of ideas that were simultaneously nationalist and liberal, of a new ideological discourse that had began to prevail in the West after the French Revolution.[3]

In the same context, though, that is in terms of the modern literature of nationalism, there is here an equally strong case for ethnogenesis too – for the "birth" and the "making" of the modern Greek nation. The indications, from this perspective, are also present. In our own days, we can revisit with some certainty the specific mechanics of the intellectual efforts that were needed in order to bring forth the distinctive elements of Greek culture. We can observe the process whereby the social construction of national space and national time was effected. We can locate, both before and after the foundation of the national state, the critical developments which drew into the political sphere language, religion, history, geography – and all other distinctive traits that could be adduced in support of the claim to self-determination, and be accepted as such. In some cases indeed, the Greek struggle for independence broke new ground in assigning political significance to the cultural past – and became, for that reason too, a pilot case for subsequent nationalist movements. And, lastly, we can revive some of the birth pangs caused by the attempts to compose a uniform picture of the national past, with the required unbroken

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[3] On the Greek Revolt's upsetting of the European Concert and balance of power, see C. W. Crawley, *The Question of Greek Independence, 1821-1833,* Cambridge 1930. On Philhellenism, cf. D. Dakin, *British and American Philhellenes during the War of Greek Independence, 1821-1833,* Thessaloniki 1955; C. Woodhouse, *The Philhellenes,* London 1969; F. Rosen, *Bentham, Byron and Greece: Constitutionalism, Nationalism, and Early Liberal Political Thought,* Oxford 1992; and F. Rosen, *Greek Nationalism and British Liberalism,* Athens 1997.

continuity from classical antiquity through Byzantine times to the modern era. So, Greek independence was also a matter of modern social engineering; of the nationalisation of society in the best European form as contemporary aspirations went; of the genesis of an unadulterated *national* state in the West European mould, of the "model kingdom" in the East.

The debate between the supporters of ethnic awakening and the adherents of ethnogenesis does not of course pertain to the Greek case alone. But it has certainly preoccupied recent Greek scholarship quite a lot, and the controversy rages to this day.[4] Still, this conflict between national awakening and ethnogenesis poses a dilemma, which, on some reflection, seems *generally* misplaced and false, somewhat of a blind alley – and therefore quite irrelevant to our understanding of the Greek case too. Its irremediable defect, I believe, is that it focuses on the nation, on its professed antiquity or modernity, and not on nationalism *per se*, on the intellectual and political movement that springs up in modernity and brings forward the concept of the supposedly antique nation as the only proper unit of state organisation. Hence, both theses succumb, each in its own way, to the dominance of the very ideology that makes such a big issue out of the purported antiquity of the nation. Thus posed, as a dilemma, the question can, of course, elicit only either "yeas" or "nays". With the "yeas" essentially accepting the antiquarian claims of nationalism, the awakening thesis inevitably follows. With the "nays" choosing to reject them *in toto*, ethnogenesis ensues, also inevitably. In a fundamentally uncritical way, then, both attitudes adopt the same loaded logic: a question posed by nationalism and yet concealing that it is the nationalist discourse itself which cries out for understanding.

In effect, then, both responses disregard the main point at issue: that it is nationalism itself which in modernity politicises culture directly and makes modern nations out of traditional *ethnie* – regardless of whether such raw material is compact or scanty, continuous or tenuous in time. The reasons for this development are varied, complex, and not all of them clear. Indeed, the most engaging of current theories of nationalism try to grapple precisely with this central problem – and not with the side issue of the nation's "age". They do so by emphasising, as the case may be, the functionality of politicised culture for modern society (Ernest Gellner's theory); or the hold of abstract ideas over experience in modernity (Elie Kedourie's approach); or the identification with

[4] Indeed, it lately sprang up again in the form of a rather bitter exchange of views in the Greek press between post-modernist and quasi-Marxist quasi-nationalist readings of modern Greek history – and of the Greek War of Independence in particular.

large and abstract entities in conditions of individuation (Benedict Anderson's conception of the nation as an "imagined community").[5]

Besides its faulty logic, there is an additional reason for eschewing altogether the dilemma between ethnic awakening and ethnogenesis. It seems, on most accounts, such a fruitless as well as a graceless exercise trying to determine the purported antiquity or modernity of this or the other nation, usually according to our own agenda or our current perceptions of what a nation "really is" or "ought to be". Ernest Renan's famous conceptualisation of the nation as a daily plebiscite stands true to this day: a nation "is", first and foremost, what its members believe it to be.[6] It may therefore prove more promising to keep our focus on the phenomenon of nationalism itself, and on its own undisputed modernity – and then try and contextualise it as a central manifestation of the decline of tradition and of the onset of the process of societal modernisation. And I submit that, in such a perspective, the Greek War of Independence ought to be viewed as the specifically "Greek exit" from traditionality – surely a unique event of momentous importance *per se*, but, on the other hand, yet one more instance in a much broader process of historic transformations that wrested mankind out of tradition and tossed it into modernity.[7]

It is this perspective, I believe, that can best capture and make something out of the disparate sensibilities of historical scholarship. Focusing on nationalism as both the product and the vehicle of modernisation, means, in effect, that a deeper understanding of the Greek War of Independence sets off with the intimations of modernity within Ottoman society itself. Furthermore, if nationalism is seen as encapsulating, in its own distinct and simplifying manner, the highly complex project of modernity, then surely the Greek War of Independence ought not to be seen solely in its political dimensions but in terms of its contribution to a much broader societal change.[8]

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[5] The argument about the need to move beyond the dilemma between ethnic awakening and ethnogenesis in the theory of nationalism is elaborated in P. E. Lekas, *Το παιχνίδι με τον χρόνο. Εθνικισμός και νεοτερικότητα* [Playing with time: nationalism and modernity], Athens 2001, pp. 9-12.

[6] On the idea of the nation as *un plebiscite de tous les jours* (in effect, the first "phenomenological reduction" in the theory of nationalism), see E. Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" [1882], *Œuvres complètes de Ernest Renan*, Tome I, Paris 1947, pp. 887-906.

[7] A similar conception of nationalism (as the main vehicle *qua* product of modernization) to the one proposed herein is expounded on a comparative level by L. Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity,* Cambridge, MA, and London 1992, esp. pp. 12-25 & 487-491.

[8] On the birth and development of Greek nationalism, see S. G. Xydis, "Modern Greek

From Tradition to Modernity

It goes without saying, of course, that the oncoming of the modern world was no simple process. Though quite a lot of it still escapes our full understanding, we do know that it was a prolonged and very intricate interweaving of a multiplicity of factors both objective and subjective: of major structural transformations on the one hand, and meaningful social action on the other. Now, if we were to try and break down this macro-change into its constituent parts we would have to consider, first and foremost, its significant economic and social dimensions: the expansion of commerce and of the market economy, and the retraction of the sphere of self-consumption; the phenomenon of urbanisation; the commodification of labour and the consolidation of capitalist relations of production; the explosive growth of technology and the presage of the much-desired "taming of Nature"; and (last but not least) the appearance or ascendancy of new and assertive social strata. Its political dimensions would have to be taken into account too: the organisation of states and administrative machineries along modern bureaucratic lines; the ever sharper delimitation of the political from the religious realm; the intimations of the democratisation of politics; and the radical transformations in the technology and the political economy of warfare. Finally, amongst its intellectual, spiritual and moral dimensions, we would also need to consider the spread of literacy; the secularisation of intellectual life and the relative retreat of religiosity and ecclesiastical authority (what the philosopher Eric Voegelin has described as the "Gnostic Revolt" of Modernity against Tradition); the advance of natural science and the consequent demystification of the world; the confidence drawn from the successes of applied knowledge and the growth of instrumental rationality; the overall appeal of the Enlightenment but also its fragmentation and curious intermingling with Romanticism and nationalism; and, finally, the unexpected ways in which the new ideas were absorbed by different social and cultural entities that were still suspended between tradition and modernity in the periphery of the European core.[9]

Nationalism", in: P. Sugar and I. Lederer (eds), *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, Seattle and London 1969; G. Augustinos, *Consciousness and History: Nationalist Critics of Greek Society, 1897-1914*, New York 1977, esp. pp. 1-39, 135-143; P. M. Kitromilides, "The Dialectic of Intolerance: Ideological Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 6, 4 (1979), pp. 5-30; and the collection of articles in M. Blinkhorn and Th. Veremis (eds), *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, Athens 1990. See also D. Dakin, "The Origins of the Greek Revolution of 1821", *History* 36 (1952); and R. Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821: A Collection of Documents*, London 1976.

[9] It is probably helpful to conceptualise the demise of tradition and the arrival of

Yet, all such categorisations, necessary as they may be, single out developments that unfolded neither in isolation from each other nor in any predetermined manner. They did combine unevenly, and in so many different ways, not only according to the peculiarities of each traditional social milieu but also according to the direct and indirect influences such milieus absorbed from their environs. And this last point means in effect that endogenous causalities simply do not suffice here and that the rugged terrain of exogeny has to be constantly explored. It is in this sense that it proves helpful to adopt and further develop Ernest Gellner's portrayal of modernity as a "tidal wave", first and foremost cultural and intellectual, spreading across the globe and influencing societies that may, in all other respects, political and economic, remain traditional. So, at least in the periphery of Europe, the explosive force of modernisation (a central facet of which was the demand for national self-determination) has to be sought in the unplanned chemistry that was generated by the infusion of novel practices and ways of thinking into receptive local realities still in the grip of tradition.[10]

This is where historical sociology comes in. Moving as it does at the intersections between historiography and social theory, and hammering as it tries analytical concepts into historical narratives, it stakes a great part of its propositions on a bi-polarity, an ideal type with two ends: tradition and modernity. It is through this analytical juxtaposition that historical sociology

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modernity in the manner that Anthony Giddens has suggested, that is as an "historic episode", a sequence of episodic changes which have specifiable openings, trends of events and outcomes, and which can be compared, in some degree, *in abstraction* from definite contexts. And I suggest that we need to broaden even further the heuristic scope of this useful concept so as to include as many of the multifarious aspects of modernisation as we can bring under our theoretical understanding. See A. Giddens, *The Constitution of Society,* Cambridge 1984, esp. p. 374. On modernity as a "Gnostic Revolt" against tradition, see E. Voegelin, "The Eclipse of Reality" [1969], in: Th. A. Hollweck and P. Caringella (eds), *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, Vol. 28, Baton Rouge and London 1990, pp. 111-162. On the overflowing of the Enlightenment ideas outside its West European core, see, *inter alia*, I. Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, London 1978; and I. Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, London 1990. On the fragmentation of the original Enlightenment Project, especially in the European periphery, see the collection of articles in P. Kitromilides (ed.), *From Republican Polity to National Community*: *Reconsiderations of Enlightenment Political Thought*, Oxford 2003.

[10] On the depiction of modernisation as a "tidal wave", see E. Gellner, *Thought and Change*, London 1964, p. 179. On the West bearing "arms and slogans" to the East, see the superb treatment in E. Kedourie, "Minorities", in *The Chatham House Version and Other Middle Eastern Studies*, London 1984 (2nd edn), pp. 286-316.

attempts to make sense of the key changes and contrasts brought about by the wave of modernisation; and it does so by focusing on the interplay of subjective actions and structural contexts, of ideational and material realities. It is in that spirit, as I understand it, that historical sociology aspires to draw as near as possible to the noble goal Max Weber has set for social thought: *verstehen*, the comprehension and interpretation of meaningful social action in its historical context.[11]

The Greek Entry into Modernity

So, how did the Greeks do it? How did they manage to be the first to secede and become independent, self-determined, modern? As I have tried to argue so far, the Greek War of Independence can really be made full sense of as a central instance in the modernisation process of the European periphery. The preconditions for such an occurrence seem, in retrospect, all too natural. These include several significant material developments that had been taking place in the wider region for some decades. First and foremost amongst these was the decline of the Ottoman Empire itself. There is probably no need to dwell on the multiple causes for the lagging behind of Ottoman society on almost all fronts – political, administrative, economic, technological and cultural. Suffice only to point out that such a lag is at all conceivable *because of* the inroads Western development had already made in the periphery.[12] The Ottoman East was feeling the effects of being really "too Eastern" in its productive capacity, its political cohesion and its intellectual stagnation. All its major attributes, the *chiflik* system of landholding, the atrophy of manufacture, the technological backwardness, the flabbiness of the *millet* system, the ineffective military apparatus, the non-interference (nay, the indifference) of the Ottoman state in matters of education or culture or welfare are to be understood *in comparison to* Western advances. So, perhaps the truism is not uncalled for here: it was certainly a lag, but a lag to be gauged primarily by Western standards. In short,

[11] For programmatic declarations on the scope and concerns of historical sociology, see Ph. Abrams, *Historical Sociology*, Ithaca, NY, 1982; and Th. Skocpol, "Sociology's Historical Imagination", in Th. Skocpol (ed.), *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, Cambridge 1984.

[12] On this point, cf. I. Wallerstein and R. Kasaba, "Incorporation into the World-Economy: Change in the Structure of the Ottoman Empire, 1750-1839", in J. Bacqué-Grammont and P. Dumont (eds), *Economie et sociétés dans l'Empire ottoman (fin du XVIIIe – début du XIXe siècle*, Paris 1983, pp. 335-354.

it was a traditional society that was being undermined by its very dissimilarity to the modernising world.[13]

In the early nineteenth century this lag had began to be sorely felt. New middle class elements and accompanying feelings of insecurity of life and property had appeared due to the expansion of commerce and maritime activity – which was itself the by-product in the Near East of Western political and economic developments. And that in effect means that great inroads had already been made in the erosion of the old ways of life despite the institutional inability to adjust to them. Price dislocations, the accumulated inequities of *chiflik* land-ownership, and the high incidence of peasant revolts and outlawed bands also fermented several other *loci* for social discontent.[14]

This was then the changing social environment and its ankylotic institutional framework out of which sprang the movement for Greek independence. Within it, ethnic Greeks enjoyed some palpable advantages vis-à-vis the other constituent elements of Ottoman society – and these advantages were to be fully utilised under the inspiration of the Greek nationalist movement.[15] By the 1820s, Greek merchant settlements were spread all along

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[13] On the decline of the Ottoman world, see B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey,* London 1961; P. F. Sugar, *South Eastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1453-1804,* Seattle 1977; S. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey,* Vol. I: *Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and the Decline of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge 1977; and H. Inalcik and D. Quataert (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914,* Cambridge 1994. For critical appraisals of the "decline approach" to Ottoman realities of the time, see K. Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralisation*, Ithaca, NY, and London 1994; and I. Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650*, New York 1983.

[14] The literature on the gradual opening up of Ottoman society (especially in the Balkans) to European influences is large and ever-growing. From a macro-sociological perspective, of particular interest are, *inter alia*, L. S. Stavrianos, "Antecedents to the Balkan Revolutions of the Nineteenth Century", *Journal of Modern History* 29 (1957), pp. 335-348; L. S. Stavrianos, "The Influence of the West in the Balkans", in B. and C. Jelavich (eds), *The Balkans in Transition*, Berkeley 1963, pp. 184-226; T. Stoianovich, "The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant", *Journal of Economic History* 20, 2 (1960), pp. 234-313; and F. M. Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*, New York and Oxford 1996.

[15] On ethnic Greeks in Late Ottoman society, see Sp. Vryonis, "The Greeks under Turkish Rule", in N. P. Diamandouros, J. P. Anton, J. A. Petropulos and P. Topping (eds), *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830): Continuity and Change*, Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1976, pp. 45-58; Y. Yannoulopoulos, "Greek Society on the Eve of Independence", in R. Clogg (ed.) *Balkan Society in the Age of Greek*

the littoral of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea as well as in the great commercial and financial hubs of Central and Western Europe. These merchant communities were by definition urban – and, thanks to their numerous contacts with the West, they also tended to be literate and imbued by liberal ideals. Their financial resources (which were to be the initial source of funding for the Greek nationalist movement before the foreign loans that were contracted during the War of Independence) were drawn from commercial activities not only in and around the decaying Ottoman Empire itself but, more importantly, between East and West. This is especially true during the years of upheaval caused by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, which provided a great boost to maritime commerce.[16] Herein rests also a factor that goes a long way to explain the numerical strength of the Greek navy during the years of the armed struggle. And this was to prove an unchallenged strategic advantage in the control of seaways in the region, giving repeated leases of life to the flagging fortunes of the fight on land.

Another relative advantage toward later secessionist nationalisms in the area should also be noted: the existence of a political elite of ethnic Greeks in Constantinople, high officials in various capacities at the service of the Porte – to wit, the Phanariots, and their political experience. This was something uniquely Greek in the region, something that other *ethnie* in the area (that is, other "potential nations", in Anthony Smith's apposite expression), such as the Armenians or the Arabs or the various ethnic groups of the Balkans (Bulgarians, Serbs, Albanians), certainly lacked. And of course, it was hardly accidental that the Greek insurrection began in February 1821, in Moldavia, which since the early eighteenth century had been ruled, in the Sultan's name, by such Phanariot princes.[17]

Independence, Totowa, NJ, 1981; A. Alexandris, "Οι Έλληνες στην υπηρεσία της Οθωμανικής Αυτοκρατορίας" [The Greeks in the service of the Ottoman Empire], *Bulletin of the Historical and Ethnological Association of Greece* 23 (1980), pp. 365-404; and the collection of articles in D. Gondicas and Ch. Issawi, *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism: Politics, Economy, and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton, NJ, 1999.

[16] On the Greek navy, cf. the pioneering study by G. B. Leon, "The Greek Merchant Marine (1453-1850)", in S. A. Papadopoulou (ed.), *The Greek Merchant Marine*, Athens 1972; and also E. Frangakis Syrett, "Greek Mercantile Activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1780-1820", *Balkan Studies* 28 (1987), pp. 73-86.

[17] On the Phanariot princes in general, cf. Nicolae Iorga, *Byzantium after Byzantium*, Oxford 2000; C. Mango, "The Phanariots and the Byzantine Tradition" *Byzantium and Its Image*, London 1984; as well as the proceedings of the Symposium *L'époque phanariote*,

Still, political elite or commercial diaspora notwithstanding, there was an altogether different material precondition that was also satisfied beforehand in the Greek case: the bulk of ethnic Greek settlement lied in the southernmost tip of the peninsula where the Greek nation-state was ultimately to be instituted – an advantage which subsequent secessionist nationalisms in either the Balkans themselves or in Asia Minor did not always enjoy. This area of course left outside the compact Greek communities of Crete, of several Aegean and of all the Ionian Islands, together with the extensive Greek and Greek-Orthodox communities of Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace, Asia Minor and the Black Sea that were to afford new leases of life to Greek irredentism for the next hundred years. But it was a firm foothold to refer to, and to start with.[18]

Cultural Renaissance and the Role of Intellectuals

As I suggested earlier on, however, economic and political developments both within and outside the Ottoman Empire would by no means suffice to explain either the outbreak of the Greek struggle for independence or its success, were it not for the effects of a concurrent and closely related intellectual revolution. Nowadays, we can safely say that we understand quite a lot about what has appropriately been termed the Neohellenic Enlightenment. Its roots and development have been meticulously documented, so that we can follow the various phases of the overflowing of Western ideas and their assimilation by Greek intellectuals – mainly ecclesiastics, and mainly in the diaspora. We know in detail how such people absorbed the ideas of the Enlightenment, we know the momentous impact of the French Revolution upon them, and we also know their critical role in reviving scholarly and political interest in Greek

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Thessaloniki 1974. On the Phanariot rule in the Danubian principalities, see the collection of articles in P. M. Kitromilidès and A. Tabaki (eds), *Relations Gréco-Roumaines. Interculturalité et identité nationale,* Athens 2004. On the concept of "intended nations" (potential or existent), see A. D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, London 1983 (2nd edn), p. 178. On the lack of political elites amongst the Arabs and the Armenians, cf. E. Kedourie, "Minorities", *op. cit.*

[18] On the Great Idea and post-independence Greek irredentism, see A. Bryer, "The Great Idea", *History Today* 15, 3 (1965), pp. 159-168; and J. Augustinos, "The Dynamics of Modern Greek Nationalism: The 'Great Idea' and the Macedonian Problem", *East European Quarterly* 4, 4 (1973), pp. 444-453. Cf. also H. Skopetea, *Το "πρότυπο βασίλειο" και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα* [The "model kingdom" and the Great Idea], Athens 1988, esp. pp. 161-162; and P. M. Kitromilides, "On the Intellectual Content of Greek Nationalism: Paparrigopoulos, Byzantium and the Great Idea", in D. Ricks and P. Magdalino (eds), *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, London 1998.

culture. What needs to be stressed, from our own perspective here, is that this renaissance was a precocious development in comparison to the other ethnic cultures in the region. Indeed, books in Greek had been published from quite early on outside the Ottoman Empire (in Vienna, Trieste, Odessa, Paris, London), often with the support of affluent Greek merchants abroad.[19]

At this juncture, the theoretical insight provided by Benedict Anderson's conceptualisation of the nation as an imagined community can prove truly helpful for comprehending the expansion, in connotative and emotive content, of the concept of Hellenism in modern times. In this endeavour of the literary and historical construction of the Greek nation and of its projection on both present and future, regional traditions were progressively superseded and a unitary cultural entity with political claims began to emerge in ever more convincing forms. Folklore, prayer, myths, oral tradition, prophecies, kinship, and all other attributes of traditionality (which were still dominant in the Greek-speaking and Greek-Orthodox ethnic communities of the Balkans and Asia Minor and which were to remain largely so amongst the rural strata of the Kingdom of Greece until well after the Revolution) – all such social practices and ideas had first to be "modernised", "de-regionalised" and "nationalised" by intellectuals abroad. And thus they became engulfed in a perception of a

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[19] On the Neohellenic Enlightenment, see C. Th. Dimaras, *Modern Greek Literature*, Oxford 1973; C. Th. Dimaras, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός* [Neohellenic Enlightenment], Athens 1977; C. Th. Dimaras, *La Grèce au temps des Lumières*, Geneva 1969; P. M. Kitromilides, *Tradition, Enlightenment and Revolution*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University 1978, further expanded in its Greek translation under the title *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός. Οι πολιτικές και κοινωνικές ιδέες* [Neohellenic Enlightenment: the political and social ideas], Athens 1996; and P. Kondylis, *Ο νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός. Οι φιλοσοφικές ιδέες* [The Neohellenic Enlightenment: the philosophical ideas], Athens 1988. On the Greek Enlightenment, see also R. Demos, "The Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment, 1750-1820", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 19 (1958), pp. 523-541; Ph. Sherrard, *The Greek East and the Latin West*, London 1959, esp. pp. 165-195; G. P. Henderson, *The Revival of Greek Thought, 1620-1830*, Edinburgh and London 1971; and V. Roudometof, "From Rum Millet to Greek Nation: Enlightenment, Secularization, and National Identity in Ottoman Balkan Society, 1453-1821", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 16, 1 (1998), pp. 11-48. On the repercussions of the French Revolution in the broader region, see B. Lewis, "The Impact of the French Revolution on Turkey", in G. S. Métraux and F. Crouzet (eds), *The New Asia: Readings in the History of Mankind*, New York 1965, pp. 31-59; and P. M. Kitromilides, *Η Γαλλική Επανάσταση και η Νοτιοανατολική Ευρώπη* [The French Revolution and Southeastern Europe], Athens 2000. On the Greek press, cf. C. Coumarianou, *Ο ελληνικός Προεπαναστατικός Τύπος, Βιέννη-Παρίσι (1784-1821)* [The Greek pre-Revolutionary press, Vienna-Paris (1784-1821)], Athens 1995.

national entity by all modern standards: a nation of ancient lineage, a nation in present wretchedness, and a nation with the promise of future glory.[20]

Let us dwell a little longer on the role of intellectuals. The diasporic communities of the nascent middle class were their main breeding ground – and this again is hardly accidental in terms of the modernisation process as a whole. There was, to be sure, a huge amount of conscientious scholarly work produced, with Coray playing the leading role. But let us not lose sight here of the non-scholarly type of intellectual either, for the new ideas were the worthy offspring of modernity in another sense too: they no longer appealed to reflection alone but were, above all else, calls for action. The all-important contribution of the Philiki Etaireia, the revolutionary organisation set up in Odessa along Masonic lines in 1814, is well known and needs no recounting. What needs to be stressed here, however, is that the origins of this 'Friendly Society' lie precisely in that segment of the intellectuals who managed to transmute scholarship into politics – and Elie Kedourie's pioneering work on the theory of nationalism sheds a dazzling explanatory light on this particular issue. These, the first revolutionaries, were men of the New Age in most respects: they were, above all else, dreamers and visionaries, and they were prepared to do something about it, to act upon their convictions. They had the daring to break with existing tradition (the Ottoman Empire) in order to revive a past tradition (the Hellenes-of-old). And they were able to do that because they were imbued by the spirit of modernity and could not see themselves ever coming to terms with the drab and known certainties of the old ways. These intellectuals, then, were the harbingers of new visions, of novel and this-worldly utopias, which became encapsulated in the Greek National Idea.[21]

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[20] On the popular beliefs that were assimilated or superseded by the break with tradition, see Sp. Vryonis Jr, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Centuries*, Berkeley and London 1971, pp. 408-438; R. Clogg, "Elite and Popular Culture in Greece under Turkish Rule", *Indiana Social Studies Quarterly* 32, 1 (1979), pp. 69-88; and C. Mango, "Byzantinism and Romantic Hellenism", *Byzantium and Its Image*, London 1984, esp. pp. 32-36. On the classical imaginings of Greek nationalism, see J. T. Kakridis, "The Ancient Greeks and the Greeks of the War of Independence", *Balkan Studies* 4 (1963), pp. 251-264; cf. also P. M. Kitromilides, "'Imagined Communities' and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans", in M. Blinkhorn and Th. Veremis (eds), *Modern Greece, op. cit.,* pp. 23-66.

[21] On the Greek intellectuals of the period, see P. Mackridge, "The Greek Intelligentsia, 1780-1830: A Balkan Perspective", in R. Clogg (ed.) *Balkan Society in the Age of Greek Independence*, London 1981. On the role of Coray in particular, see St. G. Chaconas, *Adamantios Korais: A Study in Greek Nationalism*, New York 1942; and C. Th. Dimaras,

Waging the War

As to the struggle for independence itself, I need to single out a few issues in support of my argument. The first has to do with the popular appeal of the Revolution. Important as merchants, Phanariots and intellectuals may have been, the whole story would have come to nought had it not been, first, for the mass mobilisation of the peasantry, and, second, for the alignment of traditional agrarian elites with the revolutionary cause. In spite of their innate conservatism then, both these strata were *de facto* radicalised too, under the force either of conviction or of circumstance. So, despite localised exceptions, despite the petty wrangles and the clash of vested interests, despite regressions in loyalty, despite the irresolution and the inconstancies during the struggle (all of them comprehensible in the light of what people in the areas of insurrection stood not only to gain but also to loose from it), the continuation (if not the ultimate success) of the Greek War of Independence hinged on *their* siding with the Revolution. When all is said and done, the critical decision was theirs. It was the "speechless masses" of illiterate peasants; of artisans; of the local clergy; and of the *klephts* ("traditional rebels" in the most precise of Eric Hobsbawm's meaning of the term); together with the local notables, the *chiflik*-owners of the Peloponnese (who were also dabbling extensively in local commerce); and of the shipping magnates of the islands of Hydra and Spetses – these were the people who undertook the risk of breaking with the past. They could not of course have fully realised what they were setting themselves on. But, by the same token, Greece could not have been brought out of tradition and into modernity proper without their will and determination, and their sacrifice of life and property.[22]

Ο Κοραής και η εποχή του [Coray and his age], Athens 1953. Coray is elevated into a model of the nationally inspired scholar both by H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, New York 1967, pp. 539-543 and by E. Kedourie, *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*, New York 1970, pp. 37-48. On the Philiki Etaireia, cf. G. D. Frangos, *The Philike Etaireia, 1814-1821: A Social and Historical Analysis*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University 1971; and G. D. Frangos, "The Philike Etaireia: A Premature National Coalition", in R. Clogg (ed.), *The Struggle for Greek Independence*, Basingstoke 1973, pp. 87-103.

[22] The most comprehensive historical account of the War in English remains that by D. Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence*, London 1973. See also the two collective volumes by R. Clogg (ed.), *The Struggle for Greek Independence*, London 1973; and by N. P. Diamandouros and J. Petropulos (eds), *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830): Continuity and Change*, Thessaloniki 1976; as well as D. Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence: The Struggle for Freedom from Ottoman Oppression and the Birth of the Modern Greek State*, Woodstock, NY, 2003. On the *klephts*, cf. D. N. Skiotis, *The Lion and*

This brings me to some counterfactual propositions. I have tried so far to argue that the Greek War of Independence ought to be seen as an instance of a much broader process of change. So, whether Greek independence would have been achieved without the overall effect of the West must remain conjectural, problematic and highly doubtful. Equally doubtful of course remains whether the War would have ended successfully without the active intervention of the Powers. But, given all that, it could not have been achieved by default either, that is without the conviction, commitment and perseverance of the newly-sprung leaders of the populations that were caught in it and waged it. And this can only mean that the erosion of tradition must have been well advanced also *in situ,* where it really mattered – otherwise, the populations immediately concerned would have understandably wavered before crossing the point of no return or would have strayed back *en masse* at some point or other.[23]

This advanced erosion of the old ways, then, is what can truly help us understand the stubborn refusal of the majority of the rebels to turn back the clock and arrive at a compromise along traditional lines. It can also explain the sustained effort in adversity, the momentous acts of heroism and the indomitable spirit of self-sacrifice that abounded during the course of the War – all such instances ought to be seen, I suggest, as indications of the inroads already made by modernity, as the force of conviction over reality, as the triumph (however transient) of ideal over material interests, of abstract ideals over concrete and tested experience. And, on a somewhat different note, this was probably what sustained Western sympathy with the Greek cause too – inspiring, incidentally, several superlative works in Romantic literature and visual art, in the philhellenic West.[24] For the purposes of the overall argument presented here, then, it may not be untoward to visualise Greece and ethnic Greeks as belonging, in many respects, not only to the outskirts of the Ottoman East but, simultaneously, to the fringe of the European West too.

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the Phoenix: Ali Pasha and the Greek Revolution, Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University 1971; and D. N. Skiotis, "Mountain Warriors and the Greek Revolution", in V. J. Parry and M. E. Yapp (eds), *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East,* Oxford 1975, pp. 308-329. See also J. Alexander, *Brigandage and Public Order in the Morea, 1685-1806*, Athens 1985.

[23] Especially during 1825-1827 when Ibrahim Pasha and his Egyptian troops applied a "scorched earth" tactics in the Peloponnese, while a policy of subjugation was also being effected in mainland Greece by Mehmet Reshit Pasha, the later Grand Vizier.

[24] On this point, cf., *inter alia,* N. M. Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *French Images from the Greek War of Independence, 1821-1830*, New Haven and London 1989; and M. B. Raizis and A. Papas, *American Poets and the Greek Revolution, 1821-1828: Study in Byronic Philhellenism*, New York and London 1972.

Nation and Class

Still, what was it precisely that the peasants who acceded to the national struggle and fought for it, expected out of it? Perhaps a definitive answer to this intriguing question will remain elusive. But the question does merit attention and brings us to a rather tricky issue – the "social content" of the struggle. This is indeed a crucial point for historical sociology, and we need only to recall the emphasis laid by Barrington Moore Jr on the determinate relationship between landed elites and peasantry for the specific routes modernisation followed in different countries.[25]

There can be no doubt that the rural strata did aspire (however inarticulately) not merely to national liberation but to a more equitable society too. As to the struggle of independence itself, there are unmistakable signs of internal social grievances and demands before, during and particularly after the War, when land distribution was to emerge as an issue of paramount importance.[26] The strong liberal tendencies of the revolutionary assemblies and the radicalisation of the armed masses during the course of the struggle speak out all too loudly. But it is certainly an oversimplification to argue (as much of revisionist Greek historiography has tried to do for quite some time) that the Greek struggle for independence was, after all, a class war.[27] Overplaying the

[25] Cf. B. Moore Jr, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy,* Boston 1966, pp. 486-505.

[26] The most articulate declaration of social and political discontent before the War of Independence was, of course, the radical political treatise *Ελληνική Νομαρχία* [Hellenic nomarchy], published anonymously in 1806. On land redistribution demands during the struggle for independence, see W. W. McGrew, *Land and Revolution in Modern Greece, 1800-1881: The Transition in the Tenure and Exploitation of Land from Ottoman Rule to Independence,* Kent, OH, 1985. On the socio-economic grievances and political factionalism leading to civil strife during the struggle for independence, see the as yet unsurpassable study by J. A. Petropulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece, 1833-1843*, Princeton 1968, esp. pp. 24-37 and 53-106; and N. P. Diamantouros, *Οι απαρχές της συγκρότησης σύγχρονου κράτους στην Ελλάδα, 1821-1828* [The origins of state-building in modern Greece, 1821-1828], Athens 2002. Cf. also the subtle argument (developed in the spirit of the present paper) by N. V. Rotzokos, *Επανάσταση και Εμφύλιος στο Εικοσιένα* [Revolution and civil war in the 1820s], Athens 1997.

[27] On revisionist Greek historiography, cf. V. Panayotopoulos, "Η αριστερή ιστοριογραφία για την ελληνική επανάσταση" [The Greek War of Independence in Greek leftist historiography], in P. M. Kitromilides and T. E. Sklavenitis (eds), *Ιστοριογραφία..., op. cit.,* Vol. I, pp. 568-576. On the subsequent wane of interest in the Greek War of Independence, cf. Ch. Loukos, "Η Επανάσταση του 1821. Από κυρίαρχο αντικείμενο έρευνας και διδα-

strictly *social* against the broadly *societal* character of the Greek War of Independence (a subtle but critical distinction) may well lead us into a "sociological trap" – and, consequently, to a teleological perversion of historical realities. This holds especially true for the slippery concept of "class" and its troublesome application to the understanding of traditional times. Quite often, such a practice leads to the artificial dismemberment of the unity of traditional society into modern categories, and their all-too-neat classification according to criteria which are evidently not applicable to it. But in almost all traditional societies, even when in transition, "class" (or, for that matter, "class consciousness") simply lacks the sharpness it assumes only in later times. This is why historical sociology takes special care to designate such historical entities as "class-divided" societies, and not as "class societies" proper.[28]

So we might have "too much of theory" too, especially slipshod social theory, in our attempt to squeeze the Greek War of Independence into pigeonholes that accord with our theoretical preconceptions or preferences. Such a practice results, ineluctably, in the arrogant fallacy of judging the past by our own standards, even of infusing the past with our own agenda – or, in the memorable distinction by the philosopher Michael Oakeshott, of letting the "historical past" become a "practical past", suddenly all lucid and tediously didactic.[29]

But there is another aspect to this problem. However important the "class key" may be for unlocking the secret of fully understanding the Greek War of Independence, it has to be forged with great caution and care, and moulded in the matrix provided by Benedict Anderson's concept of the nation as a form of "horizontal comradeship". In actual fact, of course, the idea of a "nation of equals" does not obliterate class or interest or material inequality – but it does transmute them into novel forms. For one, the traditional society of landed elites and peasants in mainland Greece was enriched and transformed, *thanks to* the struggle of independence, into a new and rapidly changing social world that also included members of the middle class, merchants, artisans, military officers, bureaucrats, intellectuals and politicians – a Babylon of roles

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σκαλίας, στην υποβάθμιση και σιωπή" [La Révolution de 1821. Un sujet predominant dans la recherche et l'enseignement aboutit à la depreciation et le silence], *ibid.,* pp. 579-594.

[28] On the distinction between "class-divided" and "class societies", cf. A. Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism,* Vol. I: *Power, Property and the State*, London and Basingstoke 1981, pp. 105-108.

[29] Cf. M. Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, London 1962, pp. 137-167.

unimaginable in traditional society proper. But at the same time, all members of such strata, old and new, avowed themselves, in common, members of the Greek nation, equal in worth. And, to be sure, individual members of these different social groupings invested kaleidoscopically their own meaning on this abstract, fleeting, evanescent national egalitarianism.[30]

I am referring here to the supra-class rhetoric of Greek nationalism, and to the consequent plasticity and interchangeability between the concepts of *nation* and *people*. Herein, however, lies also a point of broader theoretical significance, as the Greek case is by no means unique in this respect. Almost everywhere, the national communality creates this paradoxical (albeit genuine) sense of social equality, which seems to be an indispensable element for understanding the supreme loyalty it extracts. And in the long (arguably the longest in the region) historical trajectory of Greek nationalism, there is strong *prima facie* evidence to suggest that the nation has indeed been imagined in similar manner: that is, in terms of a socially inclusive and strongly egalitarian entity. No wonder, then, that the idea of the "Greek nation" and the idea of the "Greek people" did find themselves together in various forms of ideological admixture, as closely related or even identical concepts.[31]

For instance, the Hellenic Enlightenment, which in so many senses paved the way for the War of Independence, carried in its major manifestations a strong revolutionary resonance, replete with liberal and egalitarian overtones. By and large, the nation to be reborn was imagined as a socially homogenous entity which, by its liberation from the Ottoman yoke, would also shed off all the inequities of the past. As to the Revolutionary War itself, most social grievances that sprang up during its course were also couched in nationalist rhetoric. It is therefore quite reasonable to surmise that the appeal and legitimising force of Greek nationalism in checking old and new clashes of interest and power during the years of struggle owed much to its built-in "egalitarianism". This was also reflected in the anti-aristocratic drift of the various instances of constitution-making during the revolutionary period, a

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[30] On the "horizontal comradeship" of the nation, cf. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* London 1983, p. 16. I further elaborate this point in P. E. Lekas, "The Supra-Class Rhetoric of Nationalism", *East European Quarterly* 30, 3 (1996), pp. 271-282.

[31] See P. E. Lekas, "Nation and People: The Plasticity of a Relationship", in F. Birtek and Th. Dragonas (eds), *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey*, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-66.

feature that remained alive in the post-revolutionary years up to the mid-nineteenth century.[32]

The Response of Tradition

A point of particular interest has to do with the responses to the insurrection by the forces of tradition, be it the Porte and its loyal officials or, for that matter, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Constantinople. The Ottoman reaction was, quite understandably, one of condemning the rebellion as an act of insubordination and ingratitude, and castigating the leaders of the *Rum millet* for treachery. Traditional Oriental statecraft took care of the rest: primitive cunning diplomatically, brutal suppression militarily, even if the latter meant the humiliation of appealing for help to the Sultan's vassal, Muhammad Ali of Egypt.[33]

Likewise, the response of the Patriarchate was equally traditional in its own way. The Patriarch, recognised as an Ottoman official, the intermediary between the Imperial Government and its Orthodox Christian subjects, had to pay with his life at the hands of the mob. The lynching of Gregory V notwithstanding however, the Greek rebellion in the eyes of the Official Church in Constantinople could only be construed as a disorder caused by the overall decline of morality, by the very demise of tradition: the Church prelates were the first to be called to account for something most of them had neither involvement in nor understanding of.[34]

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[32] On the liberal and egalitarian overtones in the War of Independence, see P. N. Diamantouros, *Οι απαρχές της συγκρότησης σύγχρονου κράτους στην Ελλάδα, 1821-1828, op. cit.* On the "revolutionary constitutions", see N. Kaltchas, *Introduction to the Constitutional History of Modern Greece*, New York 1965, pp. 34-79.

[33] On the Ottoman reaction, see the recent article by H. Erdem, "'Do not think of the Greeks as agricultural labourers': Ottoman Responses to the Greek War of Independence", in F. Birtek and Th. Dragonas (eds), *Citizenship and the Nation-State, op. cit,* pp. 67-84.

[34] On the institutional status of the Orthodox church under Ottoman rule, see H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, London 1957, pp. 208-251; and S. Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, Cambridge 1968, pp. 165-207. Cf. also Halil Inalcik, "The Status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch under the Ottomans", *Tutcica* 21-23 (1991), pp. 407-436. On the Patriarchate's attitude toward modernising ideas, see R. Clogg, "The 'Dhidhaskalia Patriki' (1798): An Orthodox Reaction to French Revolutionary Propaganda", *Middle Eastern Studies* 5 (1969), pp. 87-115. On the role played by the Church during and after the Revolution, see C. A. Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821-1852*, Cambridge 1969. Cf. also the excellent analysis of the intricate relationship between the Ottoman state and the Patriarchate by P. Konortas, *Οθω-*

In a sense, both of these traditionalist reactions were expectable. They become fully understandable in the light of the disjunction between Tradition and Modernity, although such issues have only recently begun to attract theoretical interpretations. Let me stress, on my part here, that this was, amongst all else, also a clash of modern and traditional ways of thinking, of radically different modes of making sense of the world. If I may have recourse, once again, to Michael Oakeshott and his profound insights into the texture of tradition, I would say that this was a conflict which could perhaps be best described as one between self-consciousness (modernity) and unself-consciousness (tradition). To grasp fully this subtle point, of course, we need to hedge with a great many qualifications our ideas of tradition *in abstracto,* and eschew its conceptualisation as something that represents a supposedly fixed, rigid, immutable, frozen situation. Such a common mistake, generated by the very juxtaposition of Tradition and Modernity, leads inevitably to yet another oversimplification. As against it, however, tradition must be conceptualised much more flexibly and sensitively, as pre-eminently fluid, always moving, elastic, locally variable but unreflectively and imperceptibly so – hence its appearance of changelessness. Yet, for all its inherent strengths, and for all the resources it may master as the *status quo*, even for all the savagery it may resort to under threat, tradition is in the long run weak and virtually helpless against what is more or less consciously thought out, planned and executed. And this is so because the sole defence of every traditional order against the onrush of modernity is just what has grown up from time immemorial and has established itself *un*consciously. Tradition, therefore, was bound to pay, in the Greek case too, for its innate powerlessness against modernity and its ways.

μανικές θεωρήσεις για το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο, 17ος-αρχές 20ού αι. [Ottoman perceptions regarding the Ecumenical Patriarchate, from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries], Athens 1998; and P. Konortas, "From Târife to Millet: Ottoman Terms for the Ottoman Greek Orthodox Community", in D. Gondicas and Ch. Issawi (eds) *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism, op. cit.,* pp. 169–79. On the more general debate on the role of religion in the development of Greek nationalism, see G. G. Arnakis, "The Greek Church of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire", *The Journal of Modern History* 24, 3, (Sept., 1952), pp. 235-251; G. G. Arnakis, "The Role of Religion in the Development of Balkan Nationalism", in B. and C. Jelavich (eds), *The Balkans in Transition*, *op. cit*, pp. 115-144; and V. N. Makrides, "Εκκλησιαστική και θρησκευτική ιστορία της νεότερης και σύγχρονης Ελλάδας. Διαφορές, ιδιαιτερότητες και προβλήματα ανάπτυξης" [Ecclesiastical and religious history of modern and contemporary Greece: differences, idiosyncracies, and problems of development] in P. M. Kitromilides and T. E. Sklavenitis (eds), *Ιστοριογραφία...,* Vol. II, pp. 587-618.

Conclusion

To recapitulate, I believe that historical sociology, with its central focus turned on the contradistinction of Tradition versus Modernity, allows us to explore the manifold aspects of the Greek War of Independence in truly meaningful manners – to place the Greek struggle in comparative and theoretically informed perspectives, to contextualise its singularity, to comprehend its vicissitudes and its internal contradictions, to "make sense" of it. This then, the Greek War of Independence, was a modern revolution on a great many counts – and, quite understandably, historical sociology is especially sensitive to the historicity of the term *revolution*. It was not a traditional rebellion or a spontaneous insurrection. It had organisation, ideology, this-worldly goals – and it did realise those goals, however imperfectly, through both its own resources and the appeal it exerted to the West, which was all too ready to listen sympathetically to its anguish.[35]

That it was both a product of the era, of historical developments that superseded the comprehension of the human agents who were caught in them, and also, at the same time, a product of their active participation, is the crux of the matter. But we need to probe ever more deeply this point in order to discern the intricacies of the interplay between structure and agency as they happened to exemplify themselves in the Greek case. There is no doubt, for instance, that the unintended consequences of action had their say. Nothing came out exactly as planned. No aspiration (either collective or individual) was fully satisfied. There is no doubt either that the people who rebelled could not be fully conscious of the historic role they were assuming – a great many of them had no modernising intentions whatsoever, quite the contrary. Each one of them was a cog in a vehicle of change that transcended both their anticipations and their perceptions – but each one of them was also called upon to make some critical choices for or against the unknown "modern world".

With the end of the struggle, personal and collective disillusionments also set in. They were, in many respects, symptoms of the disenchantment over the never-accomplished eternity promised by a modern, and essentially secular, ideology: the people who rose in arms had set themselves to topple the only world they knew – and they had succeeded. This is reflected in the reminiscences of several Revolutionary leaders, of people who were born

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[35] See, in this context, the elaborate argument developed in N. Theotokas, "Παράδοση και νεοτερικότητα. Σχόλια για το Εικοσιένα" [Tradition and Modernity: comments on the Greek War of Independence], *Historica* 17 (1992), pp. 345-370; and also in N. Kotarides, *Παραδοσιακή επανάσταση και εικοσιένα* [Traditional revolution and 1821], Athens 1993.

"traditional" and in their old age had become "modern", thanks to their own actions. For instance, the celebrated memoirs of General Makrygiannis, who personally came out of the Revolution much better off financially and politically, are replete with lamentations against the "betrayal" of the struggle – a claim astonishing in itself, yet quite comprehensible once it is placed in the perspective proposed here. In the all-too-familiar guise of *homo nationalis*, Modern Man emerged triumphant, dynamic, politicised, free, self-determined and self-confident, yet permanently loosened from his old and known moorings, condemned to be forever restless and restive. A new subjectivity was indeed being born.[36]

So, the aftermath of the Greek War of Independence ought to be seen in that light too. The "ontological security" provided by the limited horizons of traditional society was burst asunder. A condition of "permanent liminality" set in – full of dynamism, of ideas for action, of new interests, of new life opportunities, of new social roles, of new conflicts, of politics-for-all, of a genuinely modern public sphere.[37] Social mobility, constant uncertainty, open ideological fermentation and politics – all the forces of modernity were fully unleashed. Tradition was doomed; modernity had arrived, though in several respects the national society that resulted out of the war was still suspended between its immediate past and its forcibly modernised present. For decades to come, local and clan loyalties did indeed linger, and internal rebellions kept breaking out – but they were remnants of an irrecoverable tradition sentenced to perish in the new society of the nation-state.[38] This was, after all, a product of modernisation generated as much from without as from within, and tradition had still a lot of sway inside it. But the struggle did set its seal for good: the Greek War of Independence had, indeed, brought about the exit of Greeks from tradition and their entry into modernity.

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

[36] Selections of Makrygiannis's memoirs have been translated in English, in I. Makrygiánnis, *The Memoirs of General Makrygiannis, 1797-1864,* Oxford 1966.

[37] On the concept of "ontological security", see A. Giddens, *Social Theory and Modern Sociology*, Cambridge 1987, p. 178. On modernity as a condition of "permanent liminality", cf. A. Szakolczai, *Reflexive Historical Sociology*, London and New York 2000, pp. 215-226.

[38] On the problem of brigandage in post-independence Greece, see J. A. Petropulos, *Politics and Statecraft,* pp. 322-343; and J. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece, 1821-1912*, Oxford 1987. On post-independence agrarian revolts, see K. Aroni-Tsihli, *Αγροτικές εξεγέρσεις στην Παλιά Ελλάδα* [Agrarian revolts in 'Old Greece'], Athens 1989.