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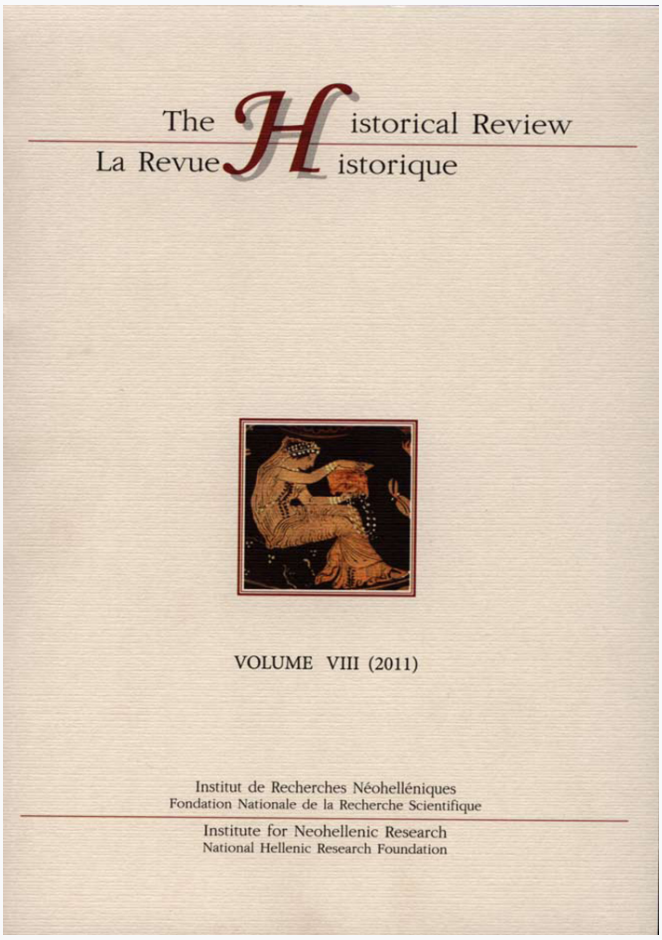

Nuances of Irredentism: The Epirote Society of Athens (1906-1912)

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NUANCES OF IRREDENTISM:
THE EPIROTE SOCIETY OF ATHENS (1906-1912)

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Abstract: The story of the Epirote Society, which was established in Athens in 1906, adds colour to the broader mosaic of irredentism. The account of the Society's past, especially of its Ioannina branch, given by one of its participants omits several inner aspects and does not offer a comparative perspective. The aim of this paper is to place the history of the Society in a more general context and offer a better understanding of the actions and practices of this particular agent of irredentism. The course that was followed by Greek irredentism in Ottoman Epirus was not an exception but rather a rule in the Balkans at the time. The paper examines critically the Society's agenda and illustrates certain issues, such as social banditry and the clash between communalism and nationalism, in the light of contemporary academic findings. The other-definition of the Greek nation-building process in the area towards the Albanian national "awakening" is also discussed, while emphasis is placed on the interconnection of these processes with the agrarian question.

The canonical annals of irredentism in the late Ottoman Balkans are certainly well-known. The main parameters and effects of post-state nationalism in the area have been extensively discussed and analysed. Yet numerous facets, inner agents and side-effects of the nationalist ideology are still waiting to be narrated and academically examined. Multiple nuances of irredentism can be traced in matters of social history and the locale. The course that Greek irredentism followed in Ottoman-ruled Epirus at the turn of the twentieth century was mostly the rule rather than the exception. However, subtle yet not unimportant differences which were related to particular local social, geographical, political, etc., circumstances existed. The examination of such nuances contributes to a better understanding of the general picture of irredentism. This paper aims specifically to revisit the history of the irredentist Epirote Society of Athens, to re-examine its agenda and practices in the light of contemporary academic findings, and thus to offer new insights into the course of Greek nation-building across the nation-state's borders, in Ottoman-ruled Epirus in particular. The main story of the Epirote Committee has been minutely narrated by Alexandros Livadeus

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(later a director of the National Bank of Greece),[1] one of its most energetic members in Epirus' capital during late Ottoman times. However, Livadeus' account admittedly omits several crucial inner aspects of the Society's past,[2] and, most important, he does not offer a comparative perspective. Here, the known story as well as the untold actions, intentions and opinions of the Society's cadres will be placed into a broader context. First and foremost, the Society's appeal to rural society and the interconnection of the struggle for national liberation with social banditry will be discussed. The background of the Society's leaders will be revisited. More light will be shed on the other-definition of the Greek nation-building process in Epirus towards the surging Albanian nationalism. Last but not least, the irredentist Society's influence on the Orthodox population of Ioannina and its drastic interference in communal affairs will be illustrated in the light of further research in primary sources.

The First Steps

The Epirote Society, alias the Epirote Committee, was officially founded in Athens on the Day of Greek Independence (25 March) in 1906.[3] The first initiation ceremony took place on 19 May, and the first individual who took an oath was the secondary school inspector Anastasios Sakellarios.[4] The Committee's members entirely originated from the region of Epirus, which at the time roughly coincided with the Ottoman vilayet of Ioannina (now Ioannina). The Society mostly drew its leading members from the educated middle classes (lawyers, doctors, school teachers, officers, journalists, graduates, as well as university students in law, medicine and the humanities, etc.), which by and large were the beacons of nationalism at the time. To a lesser extent, traders as well as members of the petit bourgeoisie (grocers, tobacco sellers, etc.) also filled in its ranks. At the same time, the professor in biblical theology at the University of Athens, Nikolaos Papagiannopoulos, the army colonel Panagiotis Daglis (lieutenant-commander of the Greek

[1] Alexandros D. Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον. Ο πρόδρομος της απελευθερώσεως της Ηπείρου* [The Epirote Committee: the forerunner of the liberation of Epirus], Athens 1964.

[2] In particular, Livadeus (*Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 8-9) admittedly does not publish the full text, but instead arbitrarily summarises the lengthy reports of Michael Landos, head of the Society's Directorate in Ioannina.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[4] Athens, Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece (HESG), Archive of Spyros Spyromilios (ASS), f. 1/1, minutes of the initiation ceremony of 19 May 1906.

General Staff and a protégé of Crown Prince Constantine at the time), the navy officer Vassileios Melas (son of the rentier Michael Melas and brother of Pavlos Melas, the epitome of the Greek national hero, who had been killed by Ottoman troops in Macedonia in October 1904), the industrialist Athanasios Douroutis and the general director of the Greek State Railways, Georgios Doumas, as well as dozens of other distinguished members of Athens' establishment, joined the Epirote Society.[5] For that matter, considering the social identity of its cadres, the Epirote Committee was not an exception among the nationalist societies in the late nineteenth-century Balkans.[6] Shortly after the establishment of its administrative council in Athens, branches of the Epirote Society opened in several towns of Greece (Arta, Corfu, Karditsa, Larissa, Patras, Piraeus, Trikala, Volos, Vonitsa, *et al.*) and of the European part of the Ottoman Empire (Serres, Thessaloniki, *et al.*), as well as in Alexandria in Egypt, wherever communities of the Epirote Greek diaspora existed.[7] The Society's actions in the "unredeemed" territories were directed by three undercover "provisional Directorates", which were based in the capitals of the sanjaks of Argyrokastro (Gjirokastër), Ioannina and Prevesa.[8] Practically though, the Society's underground activities never expanded north of the River Aoos (Vjosa), as admittedly little was achieved in the sanjak of Argyrokastro.[9]

The immediate aim of the Epirote Society was the "moral and material preparation of the people for the confrontation of alien propagandas",[10] that is, the proliferation of nationalist ideas to the "unredeemed" brethren and the counteraction against the infiltration of Albanian and Romanian nationalist ideas to the Albanian- and Vlach-speaking Orthodox populations of Ottoman-ruled Epirus. In other words, the Epirote Society intended to

[5] For the professional identity of the Committee's members and its branches, see HESG, ASS, f. 1, sub-files 1-12, where dozens of initiation minutes (πρακτικά μύησης), dating from the years 1906-1910, are found. See also Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 30.

[6] For instance, in Plovdiv, the second largest city of Bulgaria, Bulgarian nationalist societies drew their members from the pool of the free professions, public servants and state officials; see Spyridon G. Ploumidis, *Εθνοτική συμβίωση στα Βαλκάνια. Έλληνες και Βούλγαροι στη Φιλιππούπολη, 1878-1914* [Ethnic symbiosis in the Balkans: Greeks and Bulgarians in Philippoupolis, 1878-1914], Athens 2006, pp. 249, 256-258, 403-404.

[7] HESG, ASS, f. 1/1-12.

[8] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 32. See also HESG, ASS, f. 4, where the "Extraordinary External By-Law" of the Society is found.

[9] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 3, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 4 November 1909); Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 32, 138.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 96.

act as a channel through which the Orthodox populations of Epirus would be socialised into the values of Greek nationalism.[11] However, the long-run agenda of the Epirote Society of Athens was certainly not limited to this external dimension of nation-building. According to its statute (article 1), as well as to the standardised minutes of initiation into its semi-secret ranks, its final and foremost important "sacred" aim was the "liberation of our beloved homeland Epirus by any means".[12] This meant that armed violence, rather than literary propaganda, would be the primal method by which results were expected to be brought about.[13] Violent action was entrusted to the so-defined "Groups of Liberators".[14] The Society's most illustrious commander in the field was Ioannis Po[u]tetsis, alias "Kalamas" or "Voreas", an Arvanitis (Albanian-speaking Orthodox Christian) bandit who took an oath on 5 April 1907.[15] Poutetsis' profile and actions will be discussed below in more detail within the context of social banditry,[16] for they exceeded the scope of traditional brigandage. The Epirote Society's services to Greece's expansionist agenda and its direct challenge to the territorial integrity of the neighbouring Ottoman Empire obliged the Society to work underground, as a covert revolutionary committee. As such, it is no surprise that the Society was officially self-defined as "secret", while its administrative council was described in the statute as "unknown and invisible".[17] The Epirote Society/Committee thus followed the established practices of its sister Macedonian Committee (est. May 1904), that is, the infiltration of armed bands into the Ottoman territories for the protection of the Greek Orthodox population against rival nationalisms, as well as for the incitement of fellow-Greeks to

[11] Cf. Paschalis M. Kitromilides, "'Imagined Communities' and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans", *European History Quarterly* XIX/2 (1989), pp. 162, 167, 177 (reprinted in *id.*, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and the Political Thought of South-Eastern Europe*, Aldershot and London: Variorum, 1994).

[12] HESG, ASS, f. 1/5, minutes of initiation of Georgios D. Gekas (4 April 1910); HESG, ASS, f. 4, Statute of the Epirote Society, n.d.; Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 38.

[13] Cf. Athens, Historical Archives of the Benaki Museum (HABM), Panagiotis Daglis Archive (PDA), f. 21, K. Zikos to P. Daglis (Keratea, 15 September 1908).

[14] HESG, ASS, f. 4, Statute of the Epirote Society (art. 3).

[15] HESG, ASS, f. 1/2. Cf. Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 52.

[16] Social bandits are those who are not or not only regarded as simple criminals by public opinion. The point about social bandits is that they are peasant outlaws whom the lord and the state regard as criminals, but who remain within the peasant society, and are considered by their peoples as heroes, as champions, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps even leaders of liberation, and in any case as men to be admired, helped and supported; see Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, London 2007, pp. 19-20.

[17] HESG, ASS, f. 4, Statute of the Epirote Society (art. 1, 6).

defy the Ottoman authorities. The armament of the "enslaved" kinsmen was also a primary goal of the Society, since Epirus' Christian population had been systematically disarmed right after the abortive 1878 insurrection.[18] By mid-1909, the Society's underground committees had allegedly managed to channel 500 rifles to the sanjak of Ioannina, 800 to the sanjak of Prevesa and another 600 to the sanjak of Argyrokastro.[19] The majority of these weapons, around 1500, along with 150,000 rounds of ammunition, had been purposefully granted to the Epirote Society by the Greek Ministry of War.[20] Daglis claimed that, by 1912, 7100 arms in total were smuggled to Epirus.[21]

Hence, the future prospect of an armed uprising of the Christian population against the Ottoman rulers, irrespective of how distant this seemed to be before the Balkan Wars, was always within the agenda of the Epirote Society.[22] Drawing on a report of Michael Landos (alias "Ninyas"), a Greek national and a reservist officer who was placed in charge of the Society's clandestine Directorate in Ioannina from December 1908 until July 1909,[23] it becomes clear that the final objective of the Epirote Society was "the great dream of the Greek heart" – the Megali Idea. More particularly, the members of the Society shared "the hope that one day the national prayer will again greet the restoration of our racial unity under the domes of the church [i.e. Agia Sofia of Constantinople], at a short distance from which and outside the Romanos Gate lies the last emperor of the Greeks [i.e. Constantinos XI, the last emperor of Byzantium]". Landos explained that this romantic vision

[18] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 11, 78.

[19] HESG, ASS, f. 4, pp. 1-2, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 4 November 1909); this report is also found in HABM, PDA, f. 21. The Janniote scholar Dimitrios Salamagas claims that the number of fire arms (*gras* rifles) that were distributed to the Christian villagers in the period under consideration, along with around 100,000 rounds of ammunition, reached 2500; see D. Salamagas, *Καθώς χάραζε η λευτεριά. Από τα τελευταία χρόνια της Τουρκοκρατίας στα Γιάννινα* [At the dawn of liberation: from the last years of Turkish rule in Ioannina], Ioannina 1963, p. 95.

[20] HBM, PDA, f. 21, Daglis' notebook titled "Τα Ηπειρωτικά" [Epirote affairs], p. 1 (June 1908); Historical Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMFA), 1908, 1/2, Panhellenic Organisation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Athens, 12 September 1908).

[21] Xenophon Leukoparidis (ed.), *Στρατηγού Π. Γ. Δαγκλή αναμνήσεις – έγγραφα – αλληλογραφία. Το αρχείον του* [Memoirs, documents and letters of General P. G. Daglis: his archive], Vol. I, Athens 1965, p. 407.

[22] Cf. HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 3, The administrative council to the Sections of the Epirote Society in the [Greek] Diaspora as well as to those in the Interior (Athens, 5 January 1910, nos 730-733).

[23] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 74.

in practice meant "the dismemberment, when and if the time permits, of the existing state which had conquered lands that were alien to its own race and origin",[24] meaning the Ottoman Empire. In the event, the long-term political goal of the Epirote Society offered a wide range of public action to the military. It is therefore of no surprise that, in addition to Daglis, who held the chair throughout the period under consideration,[25] dozens of other officers became members of the clandestine Society, such as the sub-lieutenant of the gendarmerie, Spyros Spyromilios (Thebes 1864 – Athens 1927), the son of a Greek general who originated from Cheimarra (Himarë), in the north-western part of Epirus. Spyromilios had taken part in the Greco-Turkish War of 1897 as the leader of the Epirote Phalanx, a voluntary band of 515 men;[26] he was a member of the Athens-based Macedonian Committee, and in 1904-1905 he actively participated in the Macedonian Struggle (under the foster name "Bouas"), fighting against the Bulgarians.[27] Spyromilios was initiated into the Epirote Society in July 1908,[28] and thereafter he was, along with Daglis, the "soul" and operational mastermind of the Society.[29] The case of Spyromilios testifies that nationalist societies were in close contact, and were by and large staffed by the same individuals, a phenomenon that appears to have been common in the Balkans at the time.[30] Similarly, Daglis was also in charge of the Panhellenic Organisation, a short-lived covert society that was instituted in 1908 by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the coordination of irredentist activities in the Ottoman Empire.[31]

Between Greek and Albanian

Similarly to Greek irredentist policies in Macedonia, which came forth as a reaction to Bulgarian irredentism and were other-defined towards the Bulgarians (e.g. the Assistant Commission of the Macedonians, the

[24] HESG, ASS, f. 5, p. 5, "Ninyas" to the Panhellenic Organisation (Ioannina, 29 May 1909, no. 115); the same report is also found in HABM, PDA, f. 21.

[25] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 30-31.

[26] HESG, ASS, f. 3, Macedonian Struggle.

[27] Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913*, Thessaloniki 1966, pp. 201, 217, 221, 233-235.

[28] HESG, ASS, f. 4 (Athens, 29 July 1908).

[29] Salamagas, *Καθώς χάραζε η λευτεριά*, p. 124; Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 31.

[30] This phenomenon is clearly noted in the case of Bulgaria; see Ploumidis, *Εθνοτική συμβίωση*, pp. 258, 261-262.

[31] Leukoparidis (ed.), *Στρατηγού Π. Γ. Δαγκλή αναμνήσεις*, p. 353.

predecessor of Kalapothakis' Macedonian Committee, was established in Athens in August 1903, that is, in the immediate aftermath of the Ilinden uprising),[32] Greek irredentism in Epirus was naturally other-defined towards the expansion of the national movement of the Albanians. In fact, the foundation of the Epirote Society was a direct response to the re-establishment of the Albanian League (the so-called Committee for the Liberation of Albania) in Monastir (now Bitola) a few months earlier, in November 1905, with the purpose of uniting all Albanian-speakers into a single political movement.[33] By mid-1906 the Albanian League had expanded by establishing underground committees throughout the vilayets of Ioannina, Shkodër and Kosova.[34] Shortly after the Young Turk Revolution and the restitution of the 1876 Ottoman Constitution, overt branches of the Albanian League freely opened throughout the Western European provinces of the Ottoman Empire, e.g. in Argyrokastro, Berat, Durrës, Elbassan, Tepelenë, Valona, etc., as well as in Thessaloniki and in Constantinople.[35] By the end of 1908, the number of Albanian "clubs" had climbed to 66.[36] In Ioannina in particular, the Albanian club, named *Bashkimi* [Union], was established on 5/18 September 1908.[37] The expansion of the hubs of Albanian nationalism across Epirus (in addition to Ioannina and Argyrokastro, clubs were established in Delvinë, Filiates, Konitsa, Leskovik, Philippiada, Prevesa, *et al.*)[38] was arguably most alarming for the leaders of the Epirote Society. From 1878 onwards, Epirus (the vilayet of Ioannina) was officially included within the agenda of the Albanian League (back then, in the years 1878-1881, based

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[32] Philippos St. Dragoumis, "Ο Μακεδονικός Αγώνας (ανέκδοτα κρυπτογραφικά κείμενα)" [The Macedonian Struggle (unpublished cryptographic texts)], *Νέα Εστία* LXXII/850 (1 December 1962), p. 1875.

[33] Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, Vol. II: *Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 87; George Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians, 1874-1913*, London 2006, p. 147. See also Stavro Skendi (*The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912*, Princeton 1967, p. 207), who claims that the Albanian League was re-established in April 1906.

[34] Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle*, p. 147.

[35] Eleutheria I. Nikolaidou, *Η αλβανική κίνηση στο βιλαέτι Ιωαννίνων και η συμβολή των λεσχών στην ανάπτυξή της (1908-1912)* [The Albanian movement in the vilayet of Ioannina and the contribution of the clubs to its development (1908-1912)], Ioannina 1984, pp. 36-37, 117-129.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 18. A month earlier, i.e. in early August 1908, the town's Greek Orthodox had pre-emptively founded the "Greek Political Society" (*Ibid.*, p. 19, footnote 37).

[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37, 93, 97, 100.

in Prizren), which vehemently opposed the annexation of the area to Greece, and Albanian bands which served under the aegis of the League intended to disseminate their "resuscitated" nationality to the inhabitants.[39] What is more, before 1910 the Albanian national cause had enjoyed the support of the Young Turks.[40] Furthermore, both Greek and Albanian nationalism coveted a by and large common pool of populations, since the latter, basically following the German-inspired linguistic definition of nationality,[41] appealed to Albanian-speaking Christians and Muslims (Sunni and Bektashi) alike. The adherents of Albanianism hoped to inculcate a strong national identity and to foster unity in the Albanian-speaking community across religious, regional and tribal affiliations.[42] The acuteness of the expanding Greco-Albanian nationalist conflict was illustrated by the murder of the Bishop of Korytsa (Korcë), Photios, in September 1906 by Albanian irregulars "for his opposition to Albanian cultural activities".[43]

The Greco-Albanian antagonism expectedly extended to the field of education. In 1909, Landos, in his report to the Epirote Society's administrative council (in Athens), underlined the need for the expansion and upgrading of the Greek educational network in Epirus, especially in the countryside. In the event, any steps taken by the underground Society would address an issue that was allegedly never systematically or successively undertaken by Greek diplomats. The bone of contention between the Greeks and the Albanians were the Albanian-speaking Orthodox communities, especially those which were living in remote areas, had no permanent schools yet and thus had not been fully integrated into a national educational system. Any delay in the establishment of Greek schooling there and therefore in the linguistic Hellenisation of these rural communities would possibly lead to their falling into the hands of Albanian education and national ideas. Landos contended in mid-1909 that "Albanian [nationalist] propaganda" still lay in

[39] Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening*, pp. 69-74, 207; Constantine A. Chekrezi, *Albania Past and Present*, New York 1971, pp. 51-52; Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History*, London and New York 1995, pp. 37-39; Leften S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, London 2000 ([1]1958), pp. 502-503.

[40] Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening*, p. 351; Chekrezi, *Albania Past and Present*, p. 66; Joseph Swire, *Albania: The Rise of a Kingdom*, New York 1971, pp. 81, 99; Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, p. 88; Vickers, *The Albanians*, p. 63.

[41] Cf. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalisms since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002 ([2]1992), pp. 19, 21-22.

[42] Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle*, p. 104.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

an embryonic stage and did not constitute "a direct and imminent threat" to the Greek nation; however, he stressed that this "propaganda" should not be disregarded by "those who are safeguarding the rights and struggles of Hellenism". In his opinion, "the awakening of the national consciousness of the Albanians from the deep sleep" arguably forebode the coming of a "terrible thunderstorm".[44] Landos' reserved optimism can be explained by the fact that, according to the Ottoman census of 1908, the Albanian-speaking male Christians of the vilayet of Ioannina amounted to 43,717, that is, they accounted for 12% of the entire male population or slightly over 16% of the vilayet's Christian population.[45] By November 1909, the Epirote Society had seen to the appointment, by the Orthodox Elders of Prevesa, of Greek teachers in the Albanian-speaking Orthodox villages of that southern contested area.[46]

The Epirote Society oriented its (random) violent operations almost exclusively against Muslim Albanians. In the short-term, an uprising against the Ottoman status quo was categorically outside the Society's agenda. In late 1908, the council of the Society solemnly discouraged the Christian villagers from defying the Ottoman authorities and advised them to pay their taxes, as well as to abstain from any other "awkward action", pointing out that a revolution was not yet near.[47] Even on the eve of the Balkan Wars, the expectations of a war against the Ottoman Empire were not high, not least because the treaties of the Balkan alliance (between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia) had been kept secret by the governments. Therefore it is of no surprise that in July 1912 the council of the Epirote Society instructed Poutetsis that in the meantime the aim was "to safeguard the [Greek] nationality and the rights of our race in the [Ottoman] Empire under the same conditions as every other race [i.e. ethno-religious *millet*] which lives

[44] HESG, ASS, f. 4, pp. 5-6, Landos to the administrative council of the Epirote Society (Athens, 7 August 1909); the same report is also found in HABM, PDA, f. 21.

[45] HABM, PDA, f. 9, "Στατιστικός πίναξ εμφαίνων την κατάστασιν από απόψεως πληθυσμού, σχολείων και μονών των προτεινομένων υπό της Ελλάδος προς ενσωμάτωσιν περιοχών Ηπείρου και Κορυτσάς" [Statistical table indicating the situation, from the perspective of population, schools and monasteries, in the areas of Epirus and Korytsa, which are suggested for annexation to Greece]; Michalis Kokolakis, *Το ύστερο γιαννιώτικο πασαλίκι. Χώρος, διοίκηση και πληθυσμός στην Τουρκοκρατούμενη Ήπειρο (1820-1913)* [The late pashalik of Ioannina: space, administration and population in Turkish-ruled Epirus (1820-1913)], Athens 2003, pp. 276-277, 425, 509.

[46] HESG, ASS, f. 4, "Ionas" to the Centre (7 November 1909, no. 718).

[47] HESG, ASS, f. 5, The administrative council to all sections (2 December 1908, nos 317-318).

there does".[48] In times of peace, the imminent enemy was still the Albanian. To that effect, the Society's council gave clear orders to Poutetsis that any Albanian band should be exterminated as soon as it appeared.[49] The local élite of Albanianism constituted a target of prime importance. On 27 July 1912 (o.s.), the president of *Bashkimi*, Kadri bey Gjata, a landowner by trade, was murdered in the vicinity of Ioannina by an agent of the Epirote Society, reportedly a nephew of Poutetsis.[50] In addition to counteracting the spread of Albanian nationalism, the Society also fought against the dissemination of Romanian nationalist ideas and schooling in the Vlach-speaking villages of the Pindus Mountains.[51]

Nationalism obviously was the main driving ideological force behind the Greco-Albanian (and Greco-Romanian) controversy in Ottoman-ruled Epirus. Yet it was not the only one nor one-sided. The nationalist strife between Greeks and Albanians in Epirus was fuelled by and closely interconnected with the social conflict between peasants and landowners. As a matter of fact, the arable land in the fertile plains of Prevesa, Philippiada and Paramythia was exclusively in the hands of Muslim Albanians. The agricultural land, which was divided into private c*hiflik* plots, was mostly owned by Albanian lords (beys). In the unusual case when the *chifliks* belonged to a Christian, as was the case with Konstantinos Karapanos (1840-1914), a wealthy Constantinople rentier and banker who owned considerable pieces of land (13 *chifliks* in total) along the riverbed of the Louros, they were still rented to a Muslim (in the case of Karapanos' estates in particular, they were leased to Fuat bey Frashëri, a Bektashi and a forerunner of the Albanian "national awakening"). On the other hand, the cultivators of the *chifliks* were almost exclusively Orthodox Christians. Within the framework of the semi-feudal system of cultivation, the situation of the Christian tillers was

[48] HESG, ASS, f. 4, The administrative council to "Voreas" and to the sections in Epirus (Athens, 15 July 1912, nos 904-905); the same report also in f. 5.

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 134-136; Nikolaidou, *Η αλβανική κίνηση στο βιλαέτι Ιωαννίνων*, pp. 75-80.

[51] HESG, ASS, f. 5, "Arachthos" to [Spyromilios] (6 September 1908). In 1904, there were 93 Romanian primary schools throughout the Ottoman Balkans. A Romanian secondary school had been established in Ioannina in 1886, while the Porte recognised a Vlach *millet* on 22 May 1905; see Evangelos Averoff, *Η πολιτική πλευρά του κουτσοβλαχικού ζητήματος* [The political aspect of the Aromunian question], Athens 1948, pp. 31, 53-54; Max Demeter Peyfuss, *Die Aromunische Frage. Ihre Entwicklung von den Ursprüngen bis zum Frieden von Bukarest (1913) und die Haltung Österreich-Ungarns*, Vienna 1974, p. 84.

deplorable. The owner or the tenant of the *chiflik* often used his liberty to evict the serf from the land and saw to the latter's imprisonment for overdue debts. Class enmities were exacerbated by religious and ethnic cleavages. At the turn of the twentieth century, the agrarian question in Ottoman-ruled Epirus was practically turned into (or rather was disguised as) a nationalist issue. Social and religious divides turned into nationalist hatred became more acute with Frashëri's attempts to establish Albanian schools in the *chifliks*, which would expectedly disseminate Albanian national ideals among the Christian villagers.[52]

The Epirote Society craftily utilised the agrarian question for the materialisation of its goals. The historian Michalis Kokolakis rightfully points out that "the Greek or pro-Greek political current [in Epirus] often tended to assume the look of a social agenda".[53] The use of the agrarian question for the promotion of an irredentist agenda was actually a common practice in the Balkans. For instance, in Ottoman-ruled Macedonia the Bulgarian irredentist cause was closely interconnected with claims for the emancipation of the serfs.[54] The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO; est. 1893) rallied a considerable following in the vilayets of Monastir and Salonica by promises that, upon a successful revolt that would overthrow Ottoman rule, the *chifliks* would be expropriated and the land would be distributed to the tillers.[55] The same close connection was also the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina:

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[52] For the ethno-religious division in the tenure of agricultural land in Epirus in the late nineteenth century, see HESG, ASS, f. 4, [Bishop of Prevesa] to the Director of the Epirote Society (Prevesa, 11 March 1910, no. 25); Johann Strauss, "Das Vilayet Janina, 1881-1912. Wirtschaft and Gesellschaft in einer 'gereteten Provinz'", in Hans Georg Majer and Raoul Motika (eds), *Türkische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte von 1071 bis 1920*, Wiesbaden 1995, p. 312; Kostas Vakatsas, "Η Γενική Διοίκηση Ηπείρου. Η αγροτική ιδιοκτησία (1913-1918)" [The General Governorship of Ioannina: the landed property (1913-1918)], Ph.D. thesis, University of Ioannina 2001, pp. 5-6, 573-576; Kokolakis, *Το ύστερο γιαννιώτικο πασαλίκι*, pp. 66-71. For the semi-feudal farming system (*métayage*) in Ottoman-ruled Epirus, see also P. Rolley and M. de Visme, *La Macédoine et l'Épire (Vilayets de Monastir et de Janina). Études de géographie physique et d'agrologie*, Paris 1912, pp. 94-97; Vakatsas, "Η Γενική Διοίκηση Ηπείρου", pp. 1-11. For the Frashëri family, see Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, p. 505. For Karapanos' estates, see Vakatsas, "Η Γενική Διοίκηση Ηπείρου", pp. 572-573.

[53] Kokolakis, *Το ύστερο γιαννιώτικο πασαλίκι*, p. 82.

[54] Fikret Adanir, *Die makedonische Frage. Ihre Entstehung und Entwicklung bis 1908*, Wiesbaden 1979, p. 42.

[55] Basil C. Gounaris, "Εισαγωγή" [Introduction], in B. Gounaris, Anna A. Panagiotopoulou and Angelos A. Chotzidis (eds), *Τα γεγονότα του 1903 στη Μακεδονία μέσα από*

the Orthodox peasants there identified their forthcoming national liberation by the Serbs with emancipation from the Muslim landlords.[56] In Epirus, the arming of the Christian farmers by the Epirote Society and their incitement to defy their "alien" (Muslim Albanian) lords bore immediate fruits. Religious and ethnic dichotomies exacerbated social class conflicts. Upon the distribution of weapons to the Christian villagers, the spirit of the peasants improved dramatically and the friction between serfs and landlords soared. By the end of 1908 the farmers had ceased to pay the tithe and duties to their masters.[57] The Christian serfs along the Louros riverbed (in the sanjak of Prevesa) in particular were reportedly in a state of "effervescence".[58] The situation worsened in 1909. In June, the Muslim beys of Prevesa were allegedly living in constant fear of a "revolution of the Christians". In the interests of the safety of the landowners who resided in the town, Ottoman troops increased their patrolling, in attendance of an incursion of guerrillas or, less likely, of an uprising of the Christian villagers.[59] The withdrawal of the Epirote Society's agents from Epirus in early July 1909[60] must have eased the tension. However, in early 1910 the leaders of the Epirote Society boasted that "the simple farmer is now persuaded that he can rely only on his own strength in the hope of

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την ευρωπαϊκή διπλωματική αλληλογραφία [The events of 1903 in Macedonia through the European diplomatic correspondence], Thessaloniki 1993, p. 15; A. Panagiotopoulou, "Από τη Θεσσαλονίκη στο Κρούσοβο. Ιδεολογία, οργάνωση και δράση της Ε.Μ.Ε.Ο. (1893-1903)" [From Thessaloniki to Krushevo: ideology, organisation and action of IMRO (1893-1903)], MA thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 1993, p. 87.

[56] Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: From the End of Byzantium to the Present Day*, London 2001, p. 107.

[57] Salamagas, *Καθώς χάραζε η λευτεριά*, pp. 85, 94.

[58] HABM, PDA, f. 21, Georgios D. "Stamatis" (Zaglis) to P. Daglis (Kalarrytes, 2 March 1909).

[59] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 5, "Eumenis" to the administrative council of the Epirote Society (8 June 1909, no. 91).

[60] The evacuation came as a result of the decision of the Rallis government to withdraw all the Greek officers who served undercover in Special (Operations) Offices within the Greek consulates across the Ottoman realm; see Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 108; Victor S. Papacosma, *Ο στρατός στην πολιτική ζωή της Ελλάδος. Το πραξικόπημα του 1909 και οι επιπτώσεις του μέχρι σήμερα* [The military in Greek politics: the *coup d'état* of 1909 and its consequences until today], transl. Alexandra Phiada, Athens 1981, pp. 94-96; Basil C. Gounaris, "Από τη Μακεδονία στο Γουδί: Δραστηριότητες των Μακεδονομάχων στρατιωτικών (1908-1909)" [From Macedonia to Goudi: activities of the veterans of the Macedonian Struggle (1908-1909)], *Δελτίον της Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας της Ελλάδος* XXIX (1986), pp. 221-225.

overthrowing the centuries-old slavery".[61] In addition to incitement to a peasant uprising, the Society utilised the agrarian question for its nationalist purposes in more subtle ways. By means of death threats, the Society forced Christian landowners to dismiss their Muslim Albanian haywards.[62] In April, Karapanos was "persuaded" to rent his *chifliks* provisionally to a Christian (Ioannis Paschalis) instead of to Frashëri.[63] Nevertheless, Karapanos, who obviously had been pressurised to become a member of the Epirote Society in 1907,[64] did not prolong his lease to Paschalis; by June 1910 he had had second thoughts, and he was reportedly inclined to rent his plots again to Frashëri.[65] Karapanos' mercenary obstinacy towards the national cause was coupled with the peasants' support of social banditry.

Social Banditry

The Epirote Society recruited its "liberators" from among the military class of Christian irregulars and/or bandits who had repeatedly in the recent past (1854, 1878) been employed by the Greek State for irredentist forays across the border, and/or whose forefathers in the more remote past had occasionally served as militiamen under the auspices of the Ottoman authorities.[66] The passage from the status of a bandit (namely a *klepht*) to that of a national hero required a pertinent rite. Livadeus comments on the initiation of chieftain Spyros Krommydas, which took place in Ioannina in the summer of 1908, that:

> It seemed like a miracle: the man who for a long period of years had been roaming like a savage in the mountains, robbing and slaughtering […] the former robber of his own brethren had changed into a formidable avenger for the sake of his own race [i.e. nation]. He [henceforward] fought the conqueror [i.e. the Ottoman rulers] like a lion; he saw himself the dream of so many generations [i.e. the liberation of Epirus by the Greek army] become true; and he died like an honest Greek in his home village.[67]

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[61] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 2, The administrative council to the sections of the Epirote Society in the [Greek] Diaspora as well as to those in the Interior (Athens, 5 January 1910, nos 730-733).

[62] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 83.

[63] HESG, ASS, f. 4, "Idas" to Ph. N. (8 April 1910, no. 805).

[64] HESG, ASS, f. 4 (Athens, 3 April 1907).

[65] HESG, ASS, f. 4, The administrative council to the Second Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Athens, 11 June 1910).

[66] Cf. John S. Koliopoulos, "Brigandage and Irredentism in Nineteenth-century Greece", in Martin Blinkhorn and Thanos Veremis (eds), *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, Athens 1990, pp. 3, 68.

[67] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 57.

The nationalist guerrilla warfare in Epirus never reached the proportions or the time span of the Macedonian Struggle (1904-1908). The irregulars that were recruited by or acted in the name of the Epirote Society were never more than 100 at a time.[68] Nevertheless, qualitative similarities by far exceeded quantitative differences between the cases of Ottoman-ruled Macedonia and Epirus.

Clandestine military operations in Epirus were initiated in the wake of the Young Turk Revolution. Poutetsis took up arms in September 1908.[69] In "special instructions" to Poutetsis, the council of the Epirote Society clarified that his mission, in charge of a band of about 43 men, was "the safeguarding of the agrarian populations of Epirus from any Albanian influence which might be exerted either by threats or through armed violence" and "defense" of these populations against "any Albanian idea".[70] The outlaws of the Epirote Society, who may be historically defined as "social bandits" with a nationalist cause, were also supposed to fight against common brigands and criminals who traditionally ravaged Epirus' countryside.[71] According to Landos, Poutetsis executed only "traitors and bandits".[72] In practice though, the thin line that separated social banditry from common crime was extremely difficult to draw or discern. Reportedly, the agenda of the Epirote Society provided several predatory irregulars with an opportunity to rob with impunity. In other words, the resurgent (since the Eastern Crisis of 1878) Greek irredentism in Epirus provided the necessary ideological cover for plundering raids issuing from the frontier, since the Greek border authorities turned once again a blind eye to these activities.[73] *Φωνή της Ηπείρου* [Voice of Epirus], a newspaper published by an Epirote (Georgios Gagaris) in Athens, reported that the establishment of the Epirote Committee rekindled banditry: several thieves, who before 1906 had remained idle in Athens, promptly declared themselves as "liberators" and started ravaging the peaceful villagers in the name of the Epirote Society and of the "forthcoming freedom". These self-styled "national heroes", who appeared in public dressed as guerrillas, were, according to this report, "pseudo-patriots" and nothing more than mere "scum of society".[74]

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[68] Salamagas, *Καθώς χάραζε η λευτεριά*, pp. 72-73.

[69] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 58.

[70] HESG, ASS, f. 5, The administrative council to "Vorias", n.d.

[71] Cf. HESG, ASS, f. 5, p. 7, "Ninyas" to P.O., i.e. the Special Office of the General Consulate in Ioannina (29 May 1909, no. 115).

[72] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 3, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 4 November 1909).

[73] Koliopoulos, "Brigandage and Irredentism", pp. 3, 92.

[74] *Φωνή της Ηπείρου* 759 (30 May 1908), p. 2. Cf. *Φωνή της Ηπείρου* 733 (16 November

In early 1909, the newspaper openly identified Poutetsis and his crony Spyros Krommydas as "brigands" (ληστές).[75] These reports, cross-referred with Livadeus' testimonies on Krommydas, corroborate Hobsbawm's argument that pure banditry was rare.[76] Livadeus, though, insists that Poutetsis was a "pure ideologist" and a "guileless patriot".[77] This brilliant exception, as he may have been, does not yet turn the tables in the universal phenomenon of social banditry.

Albanian lords and haywards, "traitors" and brigands were not the only victims of Poutetsis' and Krommydas' forays. On 17 June 1909, the bandits Georgios and Konstantinos Botasis (alias "Skoubraioi"), two Vlach-speaking Greek nationals from Thessaly who apparently were on the payroll of the Romanian nationalist propaganda, were murdered on the lake of Ioannina by agents of the Epirote Society.[78] Last but not least, Jews, especially money-lenders, were also a prime target of the Society's "Liberators". Jews were an object of disdain for the peasant revolutionaries, and their image was mainly based on the common and popular Christian prejudices, which depicted them as evildoers and certainly aliens.[79] At Christmas of 1908 Poutetsis and Krommydas executed six Jews on charges of being "spies" of the Turks.[80] The actual reason for their murder apparently was their profession as tax collectors in the service of the Ottoman treasury. Shortly after the event, another seven or eight Ioannina Jews were also assassinated as soon as they left the relative security of the town in order to search for their missing relatives.[81] This was not the last instance of anti-Semitic violence. In August 1910, Poutetsis' band murdered another two Jewish "usurers" while they were collecting interest from Christian villagers in the south-eastern corner of the Ioannina vilayet.[82] *Φωνή της Ηπείρου* repeatedly condemned Poutetsis'

1907), pp. 1-2.

[75] *Φωνή της Ηπείρου* 782 (16 January 1909), p. 2.

[76] Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, p. 81.

[77] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 139-140.

[78] HESG, ASS, f. 5, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 15 July 1909); Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 101-106.

[79] Cf. Maria Efthymiou, "Official Ideology and Lay Mentality during the Greek Revolution: Attitudes towards the Jews", in Minna Rozen (ed.), *The Late Ottoman Century and Beyond: The Jews in Turkey and the Balkans, 1808-1945*, Tel Aviv 2002, pp. 39, 41-42.

[80] *Φωνή της Ηπείρου* 783 (23 January1909), p. 1.

[81] Alexandros Livadeus, "Ο Πουτέτσης" [Poutetsis], *Ηπειρωτική Εστία* X (February 1953), pp. 156-157; *id.*, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 63-65.

[82] HESG, ASS, f. 5, [Landos?] to the administrative council (3 September 1910, nos 868-870).

murderous actions for being disastrous for the Greek patriotic cause.[83] On the other hand though, according to the reports of the Epirote Society, Poutetsis was literally worshipped by the Christian villagers. For, in addition to "taming" the Muslim landowners, he also settled differences of all kinds among the peasants, thus freeing them from the exigency to have recourse to the Ottoman state courts, while at the same time he reduced animal stealing by an "incredible extent".[84] Poutetsis' imposition on the Muslim landlords was literally met with awe and reverence by the Christian tillers. In a thankful return for his services, the villagers referred to him as "Papagiannis" or "Saint Kosmas" (Aetolos, i.e. a local Christian martyr who was hanged by the Ottomans in 1779).[85] These clashing opinions of Poutetsis are actually not contradictory, but they simply illustrate the multi-faceted phenomenon of social banditry at the time. Historically, Poutetsis appears to have been a somewhat rare figure that can be typified somewhere between the category of, in Hobsbawm's terms, a noble robber (a modern "Robin Hood") and the type of a *haiduk* or *klepht* (i.e. a primitive freedom fighter and a permanent focus of peasant insurrection).[86] As a matter of fact, brigands were allowed a place in national life in times of irredentist upheavals.[87] All in all, according to Hobsbawm, the definition of the *haiduk* as a heroic "liberator" was fundamentally political.[88]

It should also be taken into account that the negative personal perspective that Gagaris (the director of *Φωνή της Ηπείρου*) had of Poutetsis was tantamount to his moderate political beliefs on the national issue, since he openly stood against the confrontation between the Greeks and the Albanians. Along with the novelist Christos Christovassilis (1862-1937) and several other Epirote reputable intellectuals who rallied round the Epirote Brotherhood of Athens (εν Αθήναις Ηπειρωτική Αδελφότης) and Neoklis Kazazis' Hellinismos Society, Gagaris vehemently supported the strategy of a Greco-Albanian rapprochement, which could possibly lead to a union of the two Balkan nations and the creation of a common dual state.[89] Gagaris' and

[83] *Φωνή της Ηπείρου* 783 (23 January 1909), p. 1; 787 (20 February 1909), p. 1.

[84] HESG, ASS, f. 5, pp. 3-4, [Landos?] to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ioannina, 19 August 1911, no. 986); Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 61.

[85] Livadeus, "Ο Πουτέτσης", p. 155; *id*., *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 61.

[86] Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, pp. 23, 46, 77-79.

[87] Koliopoulos, "Brigandage and Irredentism", p. 95.

[88] Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, p. 81.

[89] *Φωνή της Ηπείρου* 801 (5 November 1910), pp. 2-3; Basil C. Gounaris, *Τα Βαλκάνια των Ελλήνων. Από το Διαφωτισμό έως τον Α΄ Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο* [The Balkans of the

Christovassilis' opinion was completely out of line with the Epirote Society; Landos repudiated any "full cooperation" with the Albanians as "a mere utopia".[90] Similar minority opinions existed also, at the turn of the twentieth century, among Greek nationalist activists and intellectuals who were engaged in irredentist agitation for "unredeemed" Macedonia. For instance, the Central Macedonian Society of Athens (est. 1903), which was chaired by a certain Theocharis Gerogiannis (a doctor, by trade, from Halkidiki), favoured a Greco-Bulgarian entente and seconded IMRO's platform for an "autonomous Macedonia" under a Christian governor.[91]

Despite the support from and the positive opinions of the Epirote Society, Poutetsis' career as a "Liberator" did not last long. Nearly four months after his entry into action, the attitude of the Ottoman authorities towards the Christians stiffened and hundreds of "suspects" ended up in prison. This embarrassing situation left the Epirote Society's Directorate in Ioannina with no other choice but to order Poutetsis to leave Epirus.[92] In late 1908, Poutetsis' band grudgingly withdrew to the remote border village of Pramanda (on the south-eastern mountainous tip of Epirus),[93] yet he and his comrades were arguably reluctant to leave the area. Livadeus (the general secretary of the Epirote Society's underground "provisional Directorate" in Ioannina at the time) testifies that the ceasefire placed the bandits' livelihood at stake, since their return to Athens would most certainly condemn them to a life of poverty

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Greeks: from the Enlightenment to World War I], Thessaloniki 2007, pp. 307-319. Christos Christovassilis (*Ήπειρος και Αλβανία. Πολιτική πραγματεία* [Epirus and Albania: a political treatise], Athens 1904, pp. 11, 16) openly opposed the annexation of "southern Albania", which he identified as *Toshkeri*, to Greece. In 1908, he was the "director" of the Hellinismos Society; see AMFA, 1908, 4.2, Chr. Christovassilis to [Skouzes] (Athens, 2 September 1908). In 1908, the diplomat and romantic nationalist intellectual Ion Dragoumis (1878-1920) had also envisaged "a great Hellenism that would include the Albanian soul and its language, which was related [to the Greek]"; see Ion Dragoumis, *1. Ο ελληνισμός μου και οι Έλληνες (1903-1909). 2. Ελληνικός πολιτισμός (1913)* [1. My Hellenism and the Greeks (1903-1909); 2. Greek civilisation (1913)], Athens 1927, p. 140.

[90] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 16, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 7 August 1909).

[91] Liakos P. [Elias] Nikolaidis, *Γλωσσικά στατιστικά και εθνολογικά Μακεδονίας* [Linguistic and ethnological statistics of Macedonia], Chania 1908, pp. 12-14. Cf. *Κανονισμός του εν Αθήναις Κεντρικού Μακεδονικού Συλλόγου* [Statute of the Athens Central Macedonian Society], Athens 1903, p. 10. See also Gounaris, *Τα Βαλκάνια των Ελλήνων*, pp. 537, 561.

[92] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 66.

[93] HESG, ASS, f. 5, "The Carvassaras" patriots to Spyromilios (Karvassaras, 29 November 1909).

and misery.[94] Furthermore, a court decision against Poutetsis was pending in Greece.[95] Poutetsis did not cross the border until the Ioannina Directorate solemnly promised to intervene for the lifting of the penal charges against him and remunerated him with 10 golden Turkish liras for his services; 20 more liras were promised to him as soon as he reached Arta along with his men.[96] Landos remarked that, unless somebody cared for the employment of the discharged men, the danger of banditry would recur in Epirus.[97] The two chieftains (Poutetsis and Krommydas) eventually stepped onto Greek soil and reached Arta in early February 1909.[98] Cognisant of their precarious situation, the council of the Epirote Society took immediate steps for the relief of the demobilised guerrillas. The majority of Poutetsis' comrades were employed by the Athens tramway company.[99] The remuneration of Poutetsis was not, by any means, an exceptional case. Similar claims for material rewards were commonly raised by "social bandits" upon their retirement from active service. For instance, in 1928 the Greek veterans of the Macedonian Struggle officially laid forward collective demands for pensions, state employment, military awards and the allotment of plots of land.[100] However, the evacuation of Epirus by Poutetsis' band did not put an end to social banditry. Secret reports issued in early March 1909 from the Greco-Ottoman border stated that "self-styled national pseudo-patriots" still roamed in the Epirote countryside, and the Christians continued to suffer from ravaging gangs who disguised themselves as guerrillas.[101] Nor was Poutetsis fully discharged by the Epirote Society, but he was technically placed in reserve in view of future irredentist forays.[102] A life of peace and inertia was foreign to Poutetsis' heart. In the "long" nineteenth-century Balkans, *haiduk* banditry was in every respect a permanent and formalised social situation.[103] Nevertheless, *haiduks* were traditionally fighting against heavy odds. Drawing on John

[94] Livadeus, "Ο Πουτέτσης", p. 157.

[95] HABM, PDA, f. 21, Stamatis to Daglis (Kalarrytes, 26 January 1909).

[96] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 66.

[97] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 4, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 4 November 1909).

[98] HABM, PDA, f. 21, Stamatis to Daglis (Kalarrytes, 30 January and 2 February 1909).

[99] Livadeus, "Ο Πουτέτσης", p. 158.

[100] Basil C. Gounaris, "Βουλευτές και καπεταναίοι. Πελατειακές σχέσεις στη μεσοπολεμική Μακεδονία" [Members of Parliament and chieftains: clientelist relations in interwar Macedonia], *Ελληνικά* XLI/2 (1990), pp. 322-323, 327.

[101] HABM, PDA, f. 21, Stamatis to Daglis (Kalarrytes, 2 March 1909; Arta, 13 May 1909).

[102] Cf. HABM, PDA, f. 21, Stamatis to Daglis (Kalarrytes, 30 January 1909).

[103] Cf. Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, p. 83.

Koliopoulos' argument, "the majority of the bandits never survived or stayed with a band to make a name. For them banditry was a transitory phase in their lives or ended, along with their lives, not long after they took to it."[104] Poutetsis crossed once again the border to Epirus in early August 1912, on the eve of the Balkan Wars, with orders to organise the Greek "defence" against the Albanians in the sanjak of Argyrokastro, which was *per se* a highly risky task.[105] This was destined to be the last enterprise of the Epirote hero. On 26 September 1912, he met his death in a skirmish with an Albanian band in the area of Delvinë.[106]

State, Private and Communal Politics

The early death of Poutetsis confirms that the integration of the Greek-speaking and Albanian-speaking Orthodox communities of Ottoman Epirus into an "imagined community" epicentred in Athens was a long-term and painstaking process rather than a concrete reality. In January 1910, the administrative council of the Epirote Society reported that the number of the Society's members in "the Enslaved Homeland" (i.e. in Ottoman Epirus) had hardly reached 3000.[107] In 1907, Gagaris, who in 1906 had taken a "vow of secrecy" but henceforward abstained from any further involvement in the activities of the Epirote Society,[108] castigated the upper and educated classes of Ioannina for being "morally indifferent" towards the national cause. He further rebuked them as "Turk-worshippers" (Τουρκολάτρες) for behaving towards their Ottoman rulers in the manner of "the most ignoble *raya*" (i.e. slave), thus giving the worst possible example to the lower classes of the native Orthodox population.[109] Livadeus testifies with emphasis that the majority of the members of the upper classes of Epirus' capital did not believe in the purpose of the national struggle.[110] In August 1908, Daglis reported similarly to the Greek government that "regarding the [national]

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[104] John S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece, 1821-1912*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 239.

[105] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 136-138.

[106] *Id.*, "Ο Πουτέτσης", p. 161; *id.*, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 139-140.

[107] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 3, The administrative council to the Sections of the Epirote Society in the [Greek] Diaspora as well as to those in the Interior (Athens, 5 January 1910, nos 730-733).

[108] HESG, ASS, f. 1/2, minutes of initiation of G. K. Gagaris (21 May 1906); Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 30.

[109] *Φωνή της Ηπείρου* 730 (26 October 1907), p. 1.

[110] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 84, 100.

spirit of the fellow-Greeks in Epirus, the situation is certainly not flourishing, yet not desperate".[111] In September 1908, Landos, upon his arrival in Epirus, admitted that:

> […] the national sentiment in Ioannina is not as thriving as somebody who lives far away may imagine. As far as the majority of the individuals who belong to the upper classes are concerned, this sentiment exists only when it is possibly combined with other aspirations or other interests. In no case is it distinguished by that noble unselfishness and the willingness for self-sacrifice, which in past times was the main or the most brilliant virtue of the Epirote populations.[112]

In August 1909, he asserted that the education that was provided by the Greek schools in the sanjak of Ioannina had not brought about the expected results, because the teaching staff did not correspond to their "mission". He further argued that the teachers:

> […] unfortunately did not come up to the expectations of the Greek Homeland, which desires the education of its children in the foremost Greek manner, so that the inextinguishable holy fire, which had illuminated the power and grandeur of Hellenism during the long centuries of slavery, remains alight in their hearts.

For that matter, Landos suggested the replacement of the director of the Zosimas High School, Georgios Kaloudis (1864/5-1952). Landos vilified Kaloudis, claiming that he was of an "immoral and abject character". At the same time, he accused the majority of the teachers as "lacking the education as well as the [correct] perception of even the most trivial of their duties". He thus came to the conclusion that the education which was provided by the Zosimas School – the "highest national altar of the still enslaved Epirus" – was "imperfect" and therefore the school itself was "superfluous, if not dangerous". Landos based his criticism on the fact that the school's headmaster and the teaching staff did not report or refer for instructions to the consul-generals of Greece (of the "free Homeland"). He also maintained that the Greek consuls had repeatedly reported the contempt with which they were treated by the teachers of the Zosimas School and deplored the fact that no measures were yet taken to put an end to this "wickedness" and to redirect the school "back into line" with Greece's irredentist policies.[113] The

[111] Leukoparidis (ed.), *Στρατηγού Π. Γ. Δαγκλή αναμνήσεις*, p. 397.

[112] HESG, ASS, f. 5, p. 2, Landos to the administrative council (Ioannina, 24 September1908).

[113] HESG, ASS, f. 4, pp. 2-3, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 7 August 1909).

last comment reflected the fact that Kaloudis, and apparently most teachers of the Zosimas School, refused to become members of the underground Epirote Society.[114] For Landos, the establishment of schools was supposed to serve "all those needs which contributed to the success of the national struggle".[115] According to Livadeus, Landos demanded that the Zosimas School should eventually live up to "the modern needs of the nation". To that end, he expected that its graduates would ideally become "not only excellent teachers, but also fervent servants of the National Idea" and that they would "discard the *raya*, timid and servile attitude" (towards the ruling Ottoman Turks).[116] Landos' reports were enough to carry the leaders of the Epirote Society. In May 1910, the Society's council pleaded with the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the removal of Kaloudis, on the grounds that his behaviour had become "anti-national".[117] The Society's pleas were effective. A few months later, in September, the educational committee of the Greek Orthodox community, following orders from the Greek consul-general, removed Kaloudis from office.[118] Landos, "thanks to his intense and effective intervention", had managed to secure (in May 1909) the participation of "noble and honest patriots" in the community's educational committee (σχολική εφορεία).[119]

Landos' comments and suggestions were in fact a direct interference in the educational affairs of Ioannina's Orthodox community. His complaints had no other purpose than to underline the need for fostering national identities and subsequently for integrating the religious/ethnic community of Ioannina into the national community epicentred in Athens. The case of the Epirote Society corroborates previous academic findings: that the spread of Greek nationalism in the Ottoman Empire was as much the result of a consciously planned and executed state policy as an outcome of individual initiatives and voluntary organisations; and that semi-official irredentist societies, clubs and associations which were established in Athens were, along with teachers, diplomats, Greek citizens and graduates of the University

[114] Spyros Ergolavos, *Γεώργιος Καλούδης. Ο γυμνασιάρχης της Απελευθερώσεως, ο πολιτικός, ο πνευματικός άνθρωπος* [Georgios Kaloudis: the high school master of the liberation, the politician, the intellectual], Ioannina 2004, p. 97.

[115] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 8, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 7 August 1909).

[116] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 96-97.

[117] HESG, ASS, f. 4 (Athens, 27 May 1910).

[118] Ergolavos, *Γεώργιος Καλούδης*, pp. 105, 222.

[119] HESG, ASS, f. 4, pp. 3-4, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 7 August 1909); Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, pp. 98-99.

of Athens, pioneering conveyors of nationalist ideas to the local Orthodox communities of the Ottoman Empire.[120] Landos' criticism was not limited to educational affairs, but entailed also the Elders of the Orthodox community, especially the member of parliament for Ioannina in the Ottoman parliament, Dimitrios Kigos. Landos described the communal leaders as "contemptible flatterers [of the *Cemiyet*, i.e. of the Ottoman secular authorities] and obscene pseudo-patriots".[121] In his reports to the Epirote Society, Landos reproached them for "not fully realising their mission and not being conscious of their duties and obligations towards their enslaved homeland as well as towards the free Nation, an integral part of which Epirus will also become in a more fortunate future time".[122] The inherent tendency to autonomy of the local communities, which can be attributed to the five-century-long experience of the Ottoman *millet* system,[123] was obviously an anathema to the cadres of the Epirote Society. The contrast between irredentism and communalism is clearly illustrated by the different perspectives from which the two sides identified the notions of homeland and Hellenism. Whereas the leaders of the Epirote Society perceived the Neohellenic state within its geographical boundaries as the "motherland" of every Greek and the quintessence of Greek nationhood, the communal élites of Ioannina, Prevesa and Philippiada, as well as other urban centres, villages and settlements in Epirus, considered their community as their own homeland, a communalist perception that the Epirote Society's leaders, along with the diplomats, pejoratively identified as "localism" (τοπικισμός).[124] The detestation of communalism felt by nationalist-minded agitators tended to get out of proportion and have serious consequences. In the by-laws of the Epirote Society, the death penalty was allowed not just for "traitors" but also for "indifferent" and "self-interested" individuals.[125] This extreme provision was rather a threat and a desperate

[120] Cf. Kitromilides, "'Imagined Communities'", pp. 170-172; Ploumidis, *Εθνοτική συμβίωση*, pp. 305-306.

[121] HESG, ASS, f. 4, pp. 2-3, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 7 August 1909).

[122] *Ibid.*

[123] Cf. Sia Anagnostopoulou, *Μικρά Ασία, 19ος αι.-1919. Οι ελληνορθόδοξες κοινότητες. Από το μιλλέτ των Ρωμιών στο ελληνικό έθνος* [Asia Minor, nineteenth century – 1919: the Greek Orthodox communities: from the Rum *millet* to the Greek nation], Athens 1997, pp. 438-439.

[124] HESG, ASS, f. 4, "Leosthenis" to the administrative council (20 September 1909, no. 677; 14 October 1909, nos 706-707; 18 February 1910, nos 748-749). Cf. Ploumidis, *Εθνοτική συμβίωση*, p. 177.

[125] HESG, ASS, f. 5, pp. 3-4, The administrative council to "Ninyas" (17 January 1909, nos 374-377).

response to the continuing incomplete integration of the "unredeemed" Orthodox communities into Greece's irredentist policies. In late August 1912, the Janniote Elders Kigos and Athanassios Stoupis were secretly condemned to death by Daglis, yet this penalty was never carried out and there is no further evidence that the underground Society ever went so far in order to meet its ends within the urban community of Ioannina.[126] Nevertheless, these extremities suggest that the process of transmission of Greek nationalist ideas and values unfolded in Epirus, like in Pontus and Cappadocia (in inner Asia Minor), with considerable time-lags.[127] This suggestion confirms Donald Horowitz's argument that irredentism and secession are two closely related, yet distinct phenomena. In the case of Epirus, secessionist tendencies among the Orthodox population, that is, its movements to withdraw with their home territory from the authority of a larger state (the Ottoman Empire) of which they were part, were feebler than irredentist attempts by Greek nationals to retrieve their kinsmen across borders.[128]

In addition to the interference in the secular affairs of the community of Ioannina, the underground network of the Epirote Society also infiltrated into the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church. The Bishop of Paramythia, Filiates, and Gyromero Ierotheos, as well as Spyridon (Vlachos), the Bishop of Vella and Konitsa (a future Archbishop of Greece, 1949-1956), secretly swore an oath in September 1908.[129] Their initiation certifies that by the time of the Young Turk Revolution, Greek nationalism had sprawled out into the élite of the Greek Orthodox *millet* in Ottoman Epirus. The overwhelming majority of the Orthodox senior clergymen, however, similarly to the Elders, did not respond enthusiastically to Landos' demands for their complete alignment with Greek irredentist policies. Landos deplored the fact that Bishop Spyridon "disobeyed the appeals of the Greek consul to afford his support to the election of a particular candidate" in the Ottoman parliament. He further lamented that Bishop Spyridon, despite his oath to the Epirote Society, neglected the organisation of his "section" (i.e. the nucleus of members of the Epirote Society in his area), and he never made any use of the agents that were assigned to him by the Society's clandestine Ioannina Directorate. Landos further remarked that "the bishoprics are not always governed by bishops

[126] Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 100.

[127] Cf. Kitromilides, "'Imagined Communities'", p. 174.

[128] Cf. Donald L. Horowitz, "Irredentas and Secessions: Adjacent Phenomena, Neglected Connections", in Naomi Chazan (ed.), *Irredentism and International Politics*, Boulder and London 1991, pp. 9-10.

[129] HESG, ASS, f. 1/27 and 36.

who are worthy of their great national mission"; such bishops, according to him, did not "contribute anything to the consolidation and encouragement of the national ideals". Landos praised merely Bishop Ierotheos for his collaboration with the Epirote Committee, whereas he enumerated Bishop Spyridon and the Bishop of Ioannina, Gerasimos (Tantalidis, 1906-1910), among those who did not "promote our national work" and "our aspirations on these enslaved populations". To this effect, he demanded Gerasimos' replacement (by intervention of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople).[130] This negative opinion of Gerasimos was also held by the Epirote Committee's agent in Konitsa, who accordingly maintained that the Bishop of Ioannina was "void of even the faintest patriotism".[131] In the event, the Epirote Society's judgment on Gerasimos was, most importantly, shared by the Greek Foreign Ministry, which had already suggested to Patriarch Ioakeim III that Gerasimos should be superseded by another hierarch who would be willing to serve aptly the Greek "national interests" in Epirus.[132] In September 1909, the Society's council expressed similar doubts about the loyalties of the Bishop of Prevesa, Nathaniel, who reportedly hindered the progress of the "national work" in his diocese, as well as of the Bishop of Velegrada (Berat), Dorotheos, whom they suspected of leaning towards Albanianism. For that matter, the Society appealed to the Greek premier (Kyriakoulis Mavromichalis), requesting his mediation to the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the replacement of the aforementioned clerics.[133] The Society's intervention was successful in the case of Gerasimos: in June 1910, Gerasimos, like Kaloudis, was removed from

[130] HESG, ASS, f. 4, pp. 8-10, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 7 August 1909); f. 5, [Landos?] to the administrative council (26 August 1910, nos 868-870). The Epirote Society's agent in the border village of Kallarytes opined that Bishop Gerasimos was "not destined for national work"; see HABM, PDA, f. 21, Stamatis to Daglis (Kalarrytes, 22 May 1909).

[131] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 5, Report of Ioannis Kentros ("Titan") (Athens, 9 September 1909).

[132] AMFA, 1908, 19/1, Ioannis Gryparis to Georgios Baltatzis (Constantinople, 5 September 1908, no. 893).

[133] HESG, ASS, f. 4 (11 September 1909). Similarly, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs considered Dorotheos as a "traitor" and requested the Ecumenical Patriarchate to replace him, yet to no avail; see Eleutheria I. Nikolaidou, *Ξένες προπαγάνδες και εθνική αλβανική κίνηση στις μητροπολιτικές επαρχίες Δυρραχίου και Βελεγράδων κατά τα τέλη του 19ου και τις αρχές του 20ού αιώνα* [Alien propagandas and the national Albanian movement in the episcopal provinces of Durrës and Velegrada in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century], Ioannina 1978, pp. 388-389.

his see and was succeeded by Bishop Gervasios (Orologas, 1910-1916), who played an "important role in the struggle for the liberation of Ioannina".[134]

The concurrence of views on the national loyalties of certain hierarchs was rather incidental and does not, by any means, certify any full concord or unanimity of opinions between the diplomats and the Epirote Society. Landos theoretically recognised the "right" of the Greek consuls to "give orders to the children of the enslaved Homeland", that is, to the Greek irredenta within the Ottoman Empire.[135] However, in practice he considered his position superior to that of the diplomats. In May 1909, the Epirote Society received suggestions that its Directorate in Ioannina should be transferred from the consulate to the bishopric, for the consulate's staff did not "fully cooperate" with Landos.[136] Two months later, Landos personally asked for the "immediate deportation" from Ioannina of Consul-General Nikolaos Agonakis on the grounds that he did not have a "perfect knowledge of Epirote affairs" and that he "always placed substantial obstacles [in the way of] our work".[137] In fact, in December Agonakis was replaced by Consul Angelos Forestis, who was purposefully relocated from Prevesa to Ioannina. Landos concurred in that Forestis' "efforts [in Prevesa] are congruous and fully compatible with the opinions of the Epirote Society".[138] In spite of its friction with diplomats, the Society appears to have been on fairly good terms with and to have offered its counselling on affairs in Epirus to the government of Georgios Theotokis. In early 1908, the Society's council reported that it was "in direct communication" with the government.[139] As a matter of fact, the unreserved political and material support of the Theotokis government to the Epirote Society was not, by any means, clashing with the former's parallel attempts for a Greco-Albanian rapprochement or with the secret agreement that it signed with the Valona notable Ismail Kemal bey in January 1907. This solemn agreement, which envisaged a Greco-Albanian entente, stipulated that the frontiers of a future independent Albanian

[134] Photios G. Oikonomou, *Η εν Ιωαννίνοις Εκκλησία από της ιδρύσεώς της μέχρι των καθ' ημάς χρόνων* [The Church of Ioannina from its establishment to our times], Athens 1966, pp. 49-50; Ergolavos, *Γεώργιος Καλούδης*, p. 105.

[135] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 11, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 7 August 1909).

[136] HABM, PDA, f. 21, Stamatis to Daglis (Kalarrytes, 22 May 1909).

[137] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 13, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 7 August 1909).

[138] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 5, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 4 November 1909); Livadeus, *Το Ηπειρωτικόν Κομιτάτον*, p. 41.

[139] HESG, ASS, f. 5, The administrative council to all the Sections (Athens, 15 January 1908, no. 75).

national state would run north of the Akrokeraunia (Llogara) Mountains, that is, they would not include any historical part of Epirus.[140] Tables were turned after the resignation of the Theotokis government in early July 1909 and the ultimatum that was sent by the Sublime Porte to the Dimitrios Rallis government to put a definite end to every irredentist activity within the realm of the Empire.[141] The Epirote Society strongly disagreed with Rallis' decision to recall all the agents of the Society (Landos included), along with every other Greek officer, from the coveted Ottoman territories.[142] The president of the Society's council denounced the government's decision as "imprudent" and a "merciless abandonment of the enslaved brothers, who thus are left unprotected and at the mercy of the bloodthirsty, criminal and revengeful instincts of the occupiers".[143]

The governmental decision did not bring the covert activities of the Society to a halt. The statute of the Epirote Society clearly stated that the Society would pursue its goal ("the liberation of Enslaved Epirus") "parallel to the aspirations and the actions of the State".[144] For that matter, the agenda of the Epirote Society was not always identical with the policies of the responsible Greek government, but repeatedly overrode and surpassed official state policies in nationalist agitation. In his report of August 1909, upon his arrival in Athens, Landos insisted that "the Epirote Society should continue its struggle at any price and regardless of any initiative of official Greece".[145] In early 1910, the Society's council argued that "we should not expect everything from the Free State, for the latter has many national wounds to heal, and is engaged in many worries".[146] In other words, it suggested that

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[140] Cf. Christina Pitouli-Kitsou, *Οι ελληνοαλβανικές σχέσεις και το Βορειοηπειρωτικό Ζήτημα κατά την περίοδο 1907-1914* [Greco-Albanian relations and the Northern Epirus Question in the years 1907-1914], Athens 1997, pp. 51-56.

[141] Athanassios Souliotis-Nikolaidis, *Οργάνωσις Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* [The Constantinople organisation], ed. Thanos Veremis and Katerina Boura, Athens and Ioannina 1984, pp. 37, 103-105.

[142] This decision was also opposed by the veterans of the Macedonian Struggle and the members of the Military League of Athens, who eventually staged the coup of 15 August 1909; see Thanos Veremis, "Το στρατιωτικό κίνημα του 1909" [The military movement of 1909], *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους* [History of the Greek nation], Vol. XIV, Athens 1977, p. 260.

[143] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 1, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 7 August 1909). Cf. HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 1, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 4 November 1909).

[144] HESG, ASS, f. 4, Statute of the Epirote Society (art. 1).

[145] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 17, Landos to the administrative council (Athens, 7 August 1909).

[146] HESG, ASS, f. 4, p. 5, The administrative council to the Sections of the Epirote

the initiative should pass into private hands. Yet at the same time it called for massive support for the irredentist movement, reasoning that "indifference means treason".[147] The disobedience of the Epirote Society to governmental policies may be interpreted, in John Koliopoulos' terms, as an instance of "pallikarism": this may be defined as a certain pattern of political behaviour in the pursuit of foreign policies which, in addition to its fascination with brigands and the employment of irregulars to fight the nation's wars, is defiant to official policies, yet lacks clear and realistic priorities and/or is unable to place them in a wider perspective. In any case, "pallikarism" constitutes a home-grown version of populism.[148] Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that this version of populist politics did not grow exclusively in Greece in the period under consideration, but it also flourished widely in the neighbouring Balkan countries. For instance, the suppression of Macedonian activism by Stambolov's regime (1887-1894) and the suspension of Macedonian committees by the Danev government in 1903[149] certify that "pallikarism" was also deeply rooted in Bulgarian society and posed a serious challenge to Bulgaria's international position. Furthermore, I am inclined to suggest that in the "long" nineteenth-century Balkans upheavals of "pallikarist" maximalism were also a recurrent characteristic of official state policies. In Athens, the "umbilical cord" between the Epirote Society and the Greek government was never severed completely. The overthrow of the Rallis government by the Military League (15 August 1909) and the ascension of Eleftherios Venizelos to power (in November 1910) seems to have restored the accordance between state and private irredentist policies towards the Ottoman Empire. This renewal of "pallikarism" is corroborated by Poutetsis' new foray into enemy territory (into the sanjak of Argyrokastro), and by the fact that in early September 1912 the Society's Directorate in Ioannina received from the Consulate General 2000 drachmas to use for "national activities".[150]

Society in the [Greek] Diaspora as well as to those in the Interior (Athens, 5 January 1910, nos 730-733).

[147] *Ibid.*

[148] Cf. Koliopoulos, "Brigandage and Irredentism", pp. 95-96.

[149] Richard J. Crampton, *Bulgaria*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 134-135, 150, 166.

[150] HESG, ASS, f. 5, Receipt of 2000 drachmas issued in the name of Dionysios Tzimis (Ioannina, 4 September 1912).

Conclusions

Upon the declaration of the First Balkan War in early October 1912, the Epirote Society recruited a native force ("phalanx") of 3500 "fellow-Greek" volunteers, who fought aside the Greek army against the Ottomans.[151] The size of this force roughly coincides with the number of the Society's members in early 1910 and provides a hint for the historical assessment of the appeal of Greek nationalist ideals to the male Orthodox population of Ottoman Epirus at the turn of the twentieth century. By the time Epirus' capital was captured by the Greek army (21 February 1913, o.s.), the incorporation of the local Orthodox communities into the Greek nation was certainly far from complete. This long integrationist process came to be consolidated within the structures of the nation-state, by means of (in Hobsbawm's terms) "state-invented traditions",[152] public schooling, military service, state employment, and various other socialising processes and ideological functions. In 1913, the colours of irredentism had changed into national integration and/or assimilation (for the Muslims, this eventually meant expulsion). This integrationist process brought about the violent disruption of the social fabric and communal institutions in the "unredeemed" territories; this disturbance illustrated the irreconcilable adversity of nationalism towards communalism. In the "long" nineteenth-century Balkans, the passage from a traditional to a modern society necessitated also allusions to the solution of the agrarian question. The Greco-Albanian conflict in Epirus (1906-1912) plainly indicates that the national movements were social movements as well; the agrarian legislation, which broke up the large estates and distributed the land to small farmers across Eastern Europe in the aftermath of World War I, advanced along ethnic boundaries.[153] In Epirus, the sequestration of the *chifliks* and the distribution of the confiscated land to the tillers were directly connected to the irredentist struggle. In 1914, Muslim landlords in Prevesa reported to the Greek authorities that their serfs, having the impression that the "change in national authority revoked the institution of ownership and the ever-existing practices" (in feudal tenure), had rebelled again and refused to pay

[151] Apostolos P. Papatheodorou, *Μνήμη των πρωτεργατών για την άλωση των Ιωαννίνων* [Memory of the pioneers in the capture of Ioannina], Ioannina 1983, p. 97.

[152] Cf. Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions", in E. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 ([1]1983), pp. 4-12.

[153] Frank B. Tipton and Robert Aldrich, *An Economic and Social History of Europe, 1890-1939*, London 1988, p. 183.

their land tax. Many of these share-croppers simply continued the social-cum-national rebellion that they had initiated in 1908. However, the Greek authorities crushed the resurrection and brought the rebellious peasants to justice.[154] In March 1920, the veterans (-cum-social bandits) of the Epirote Society solemnly requested from Daglis (who was in the top echelon of the governing Liberal Party at the time) to be given priority over the announced distribution of private- and state-owned arable land on the grounds of their services to the nation.[155] In a public speech to his electorate in Ioannina on 3 October 1920 (in view of the parliamentary elections), Daglis stressed that "the most important benefaction" of the Liberal government to the newly liberated lands (*Νέες Χώρες*) was the passing of the 1917 agrarian law, which "liberated" the farmers of the *chifliks* from the "slavery" of their lords, to the effect that every tiller became master of the plot that he was individually ploughing.[156] Therefore, the "peasantist" element in nationalist rivalries over territory was a noticeable (yet shady) nuance of irredentism, as well as a (rather reputable) gauge of social progress.

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[154] Vakatsas, "Η Γενική Διοίκηση Ηπείρου", pp. 13-15, 451.

[155] HABM, PDA, f. 40 (Ioannina, 1 March 1920).

[156] HABM, PDA, f. 40, *Πατρίς* 273 (7 October 1920), p. 3. See also in f. 40 a political pamphlet of the Liberal Party's Ioannina branch, explaining the party's "whole programme to the Epirote people"; the pamphlet, which was published during the national election campaign of 1920, placed emphasis on the settlement of the agrarian question by the Liberals.