

The Historical Review/La Revue Historique

Vol 15 (2018)



Reassessing the Greek National Schism of World War I: The Ideological Parameters

Basil C. Gounaris, Marianna D. Christopoulos

doi: [10.12681/hr.20451](https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.20451)

Copyright © 2019, Basil C. Gounaris, Marianna D. Christopoulos



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

To cite this article:

Gounaris, B. C., & Christopoulos, M. D. (2019). Reassessing the Greek National Schism of World War I: The Ideological Parameters. *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique*, 15, 237–270. <https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.20451>

REASSESSING THE GREEK NATIONAL SCHISM OF WORLD WAR I:
THE IDEOLOGICAL PARAMETERS

Basil C. Gounaris and Marianna D. Christopoulos

ABSTRACT: The National Schism that erupted in Greece during World War I has already been thoroughly analysed in the bibliography as a crisis of national unification, defined by geographical, political and socio-economic criteria. The aim of this article is to move a step forward, to support that the National Schism might also be considered as an act in the broader and much older Greek ideological drama, that of the tantalising and incomplete “return” to the East via the European West. It is argued that the Schism, far from being a bipolar confrontation between supporters and opponents of Europe, did select from the East–West debate whatever arguments were necessary to invest military and political choices with a “deeper” meaning. Our approach focuses mostly on the rhetoric produced by the two opposing camps, the Venizelists and the anti-Venizelist block, from 1914 to 1922. It is, however, complemented by a retrospective presentation of the nineteenth-century debate over the Enlightenment and liberalism, on the one hand, and German idealism, on the other.

The National Schism that erupted in Greece during the Great War was studied extensively by historians in the 1970s, when all the primary sources became available and their analysis was enriched by political scientists, and seemed to have been completed in the 1980s. By that time, after the abolition of the monarchy in 1974, the supremacy of the Venizelist political heritage seemed too strong to be challenged, as the principles of democracy and modernisation dominated Greek politics. Venizelos’ legacy has been systematically exploited to make the arguments in favour of westernisation more credible. Few historians have returned to this topic since. This tendency did not change even during the current (2015–18) centenary celebrations of World War I.¹

The idea for this article was originally formulated by Basil C. Gounaris in his “Unwanted Legacies: Greece and the Great War”, in *Balkan Legacies of the Great War: The Past Is Never Dead*, ed. Othon Anastasakis, David Madden and Elizabeth Roberts, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 66–80. Research for the 1910–1922 period was accomplished by Dr Marianna D. Christopoulos, during a postdoctoral scholarship from the Research Committee of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, in the 2016–17 academic year. The present text was drafted by Basil C. Gounaris and revised by Marianna Christopoulos. Both authors are indebted to Assistant Professor Dimitris Livanios for his enlightening observations and comments.

¹ This became crystal clear after the publication of George Mavrogordatos’ recent books:

What has encouraged the present reassessment of the National Schism is the recent Greek financial and political crisis. Oddly enough, the crisis has renewed the question of Greece's position within Europe and its proper orientation. Following the 2015 referendum, it has gradually assumed the proportions of a schism. Obviously, the question for the average Greek family is how to make ends meet and not European high politics. Nevertheless, a disproportionate part of the current public political debate revolves around the essence of our relationship with Western Europe (in particular with the member states of the European Union), compared to our "traditional" bonds with the Orthodox East. This discussion is enriched and stimulated by various stereotypical generalisations and selective historical accounts. Apparently, it is more politically convenient to analyse politics in terms of friendships or enmities and then to put the blame on foreigners, rather than pursue self-criticism and reform.

Underlying this modern debate on Europe is the public acknowledgement that determining the position of Greece between East and West is not a simple matter of foreign policy. It is the heated core of the Greek identity question and the precondition for the making of a cohesive modern Greek national ideology. Therefore, this identity dilemma is instrumental in creating deep and widespread polarisation whatever the real matter under discussion is. It interests everyone deeply. Observing the dubious benefits of rephrasing a complicated or undesirable political question into an easily recognised dilemma, in order to secure the desirable social backing or votes, has renewed our research interest in the National Schism of 1915. As always, present problems and future concerns stimulate our conversation with the past.

The debate over Greece's participation in World War I was one of both a diplomatic and military nature, but primarily it was a question of national strategy. At a second stage, following the domestic developments in 1915, the clash between the king and the prime minister also digressed into a confrontation over constitutional legalities. The initial debate was over the military fronts,

1915: Ο εθνικός διχασμός [1915: the National Schism], Athens: Patakis, 2015 and *Μετά το 1922: Η παράταση του Διχασμού* [After 1922: the prolongation of the schism], Athens: Patakis, 2018. They constitute lucid synopses – but not revisions – of his detailed and illuminating analysis of the National Schism on the basis of composite social, economic and geographical characteristics. His theory on the nature of the National Schism was presented in his *Μελέτες και κείμενα για την περίοδο 1909–1940* [Studies and texts for the 1909–1940 period], Athens: Sakkoulas, 1982; *The Stillborn Republic Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922–1936*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, and *Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος: Η ύστατη κοινοβουλευτική μάχη του 1915* [Eleftherios Venizelos: the ultimate parliamentary battle of 1915], Athens: Foundation of the Greek Parliament, 2015.

the course of the battles and the campaigns, and the long-range plan for the Greek armed forces, given the country's alliances and ambitions for territorial expansion.² The dilemma which was put to the public – neutrality with King Constantine I or war with Premier Eleftherios Venizelos on the side of the Entente – was of high risk since no one could safely predict the outcome of the war. It was a question for specialists and prophets, not for the common people. The stakes were great and the arguments between the two opposing Greek camps, including accusations of treason and mutual demonisation, were bitter.

However, much like today, out of the black propaganda and the conflicting arguments of the two sides, a parallel conversation emerged: Given its culture, which was the real position of Greece between the two European alliances? Apparently, the dilemma was not “East or West”. It couldn't be put this way, for Russia in the East was an important ally of Western Europe, while the opposite pole was not the initially neutral Ottoman Empire but the Central European empires. Nevertheless, the question of Greece's relation to Europe and to the West, indirectly yet consistently, pressed for suitable cultural arguments. Deciding which alliance was more “natural” on cultural grounds presupposed definite clear answers to a series of relevant questions beyond strategy and the balance of power: Which was the true cultural identity of Greece? Who were its “natural” and “true” allies? What was its due future course, its mission in the world and the most suitable state model for excellence? These questions were asked anew during the Asia Minor campaign in the context of the dramatic shift of the Great Powers' policy towards Greece. The answers given over a whole decade reintroduced through the back door, but in a full-blown way, the eternal question of “East or West?” adapted to the Great War scheme and necessities. The opposing Greek views – those in favour of the Central Powers and the Entente, respectively – will be presented as mirror images, each one for and against the two alliances.

Anti-Venizelist Rhetoric

The supporters of the Central Powers, that is, the Germanophiles, were far from a uniform political group, but all belonged to the anti-Venizelist camp, a casual alliance of all Venizelos' political opponents that was without an indisputable leader. In terms of Germanophilia, they could be classified roughly into three sub-groups: The first group was headed by Ion Dragoumis, a career diplomat

² For the diplomatic and political developments in Greece concerning its alignment with one of the two opposing World War I alliances, see especially George Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers, 1914–1917*, Thessaloniki: Institute of Balkan Studies, 1974; Leon, *Η Ελλάδα στον Πρώτο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο 1917–1918* [Greece during World War I, 1917–1918], Athens: MIET, 2000.

and scion of an illustrious family. It was the most coherent of the three groups, eloquent, articulate and well-known for its Oriental vision, which will be presented briefly later on. Among Dragoumis' associates were his close friend Athanassios Souliotis-Nikolaïdis, an army officer and veteran spy, and S.K. Sokolis, a deputy from Corfu.³ The second group was the most numerous. It contained Germanophile and mostly Slavophobic politicians of the first class, most of whom had a German education. Among them were Georgios Streit, Dimitrios Gounaris, Georgios Theotokis, Ioannis Metaxas, Constantinos Gioldasis⁴ and others, who felt a deeper cultural affinity with Germany and saw in it a victor, a superpower and, according to George Mavrogordatos, a model for their own domestic "hegemony".⁵ The third group consisted mostly of ex-Venizelists, such as Nikolaos Dimitrakopoulos, Nikolaos Stratos, Constantinos Foumis⁶ and Georgios Pop,⁷ who had shifted their allegiance for various reasons. For them Germanophilia was an inescapable choice, a reaction to the power policy exercised by Britain and France against Greece.

The anti-European sentiments of these three groups, to the extent they existed, fluctuated according to the specific views of each group towards Germany. It should also be noted that their anti-European arguments were not the product of a purely Greek critique. They were rooted in the West, where the

³ For this group's perception of the West, its ideas on the mission of the Greek nation and the prospect of an Eastern empire, see Effi Gazi, "Αγγλοι, Γάλλοι και Σενεγαλέζοι: αντιλήψεις για το ελληνικό έθνος, τη φυλή και τις αυτοκρατορίες στην Ελλάδα κατά τον Α΄ Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο" [English, French and Senegalese: perceptions of the Greek nation, race and the empires in Greece during World War I], in *Φυλετικές θεωρίες στην Ελλάδα: Προσλήψεις και χρήσεις στις επιστήμες, την πολιτική, τη λογοτεχνία και την ιστορία της τέχνης κατά τον 19ο αιώνα* [Racial theories in Greece: uptake and uses in science, politics, literature and art history in the 19th century], ed. Efi Avdela, Dimitris Arvanitakis, Eliza-Anna Delveroudi, Evgenios Matthiopoulos, Socrates Petmezas, Tassos Sakellaropoulos, Heraklion: Crete University Press, 2017, pp. 253–272.

⁴ Constantinos Gioldasis, publisher of the anti-Venizelist newspaper *Αστραπή*, was also an MP for Attica and Boeotia, elected in December 1915 for Dimitrios Gounaris' party.

⁵ Mavrogordatos, 1915: *Ο Εθνικός Διχασμός* [1915: the National Schism], pp. 246–247. This acute view, that the anti-Venizelists and, especially, the king were inspired by the Prussian model for the establishment of their monarchical, military and bureaucratic regime in Greece, is not analysed in his work nor connected to the Greek contemporary cultural debate.

⁶ Constantinos Foumis was a lawyer, editor and Venizelos' former collaborator in Crete. During World War I, however, he shifted to the anti-Venizelist camp and was elected for the first time in the December 1915 elections for Gounaris' party. In 1916 he opposed the National Defence Movement. He returned to the Venizelist camp in the 1920s.

⁷ Georgios Pop, an independent supporter of Venizelos in 1910, defected to the opposition, disappointed at not having been included in Venizelos' two first cabinets. He returned to the Venizelist camp in December 1915.

majority of these anti-Venizelists had been educated or had other connections.⁸ They were the product of the wider European criticism of French positivism and the principles of liberalism,⁹ as well as of the admiration for the “deep and genuine” German *Kultur*, over the “superficial” French *civilisation*.¹⁰

To the dedicated Greek Germanophiles, Germany stood for a high imperial culture enriched with high humanist ideals,¹¹ which had been forged through the deep and long contact of the Germans with ancient Greek civilisation. Germanism, like Hellenism, was the outcome of large-scale cultural dissemination. Unlike British culture, it was not focused on the individual but on the whole nation.¹² This ideological affinity, the product of German elementary education, was the deeper source of their philhellenism, at least until the days of Bavarian rule in Greece. German philhellenism constituted a deep spiritual relationship, motivated neither by philanthropy nor diplomacy. The Greek struggle for independence was their own struggle: They had always been ready to sacrifice themselves for the Greek cause.¹³

⁸ Paschalis M. Kitromilides, “Οι δυτικές πηγές των αντιδυτικών επιχειρηματολογιών στην ελληνική παιδεία” [The western sources of the anti-western arguments in Greek culture], *Ευρώπη και νέος Ελληνισμός* [Europe and modern Hellenism], Athens: Society for the Study of Modern Greek Civilisation and General Culture, 2001, pp. 61–67.

⁹ Ion Dragoumis was obviously inspired by the nationalistic, anti-parliamentary and radical movement Action Française, in particular by Auguste-Maurice Barrès, who, from the end of the nineteenth century, challenged the ideals of the French Revolution. See John A. Mazis, *A Man for All Seasons: The Uncompromising Life of Ion Dragoumis*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 2014, pp. 316–322 (n. 11).

¹⁰ John Rundell and Stephen Mennel (eds.), *Classical Readings in Culture and Civilization*, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 7, 16–19, 130. An indicative example is Thomas Mann’s work *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Berlin: S. Fischer, 1918.

¹¹ For example, the anti-Venizelist Sokolis, who did not belong to the hardcore Germanophiles, stressed in his treatise those “unifying” features of the German Empire which bore resemblance to the Greek/Byzantine ones, upon which the new Eastern Empire was to be built. See S.K. Sokolis, *Αυτοκρατορία* [Empire], Athens: Logotechniki Vivliothiki Agkira, 1915, pp. 84–86.

¹² Vlassis Gavriilidis, *Δύο πολιτισμοί* [Two civilisations], Athens: Katastimata Akropoleos, 1917, pp. 70, 128. [This work was published serially in *Ακρόπολις* in 1917]. See also *Η αγγλική πολιτική και ο Ελληνισμός υπό πρώην διπλωμάτου: Τι διδάσκει η Ιστορία. Εκατονταετής δυσμένεια και αντίδρασις της Αγγλίας κατά της Ελλάδος* [British politics and Greece written by a former diplomat: what does history teach? The 100-year disfavour and hostility of Britain against Greece], Athens: s.n., 1917.

¹³ Pavlos Karolidis, *Ο γερμανικός φιλελληνισμός* [German philhellenism], Athens: s.n., 1917, p. 50.

In addition, there were serious strategic arguments favouring an alliance with the Central Powers, which by then had become the natural rulers of the Near East.¹⁴ Austria-Hungary might have opposed Greek interests in 1913 during the Bucharest settlement, but had done so only because Vienna thought that Greece had come under Russian influence. Germany, on the other hand, had unreservedly supported ceding Kavala, a port on the eastern Macedonian coast, to Greece.¹⁵ In other words, strategists claimed that Austria and Germany were not, nor would easily become, Greece's antagonists in the region. Young Germany, the impressive product of the 1871 unification, had become a model of accelerating progress and power politics for Greece. "Germany is carrying the new man, the new order, that is, progress,"¹⁶ reported Michail Sakellariou, a Germanophile newspaper editor. Expansionism was inevitable¹⁷ and victory foreseeable.¹⁸ Greece was similar to Germany; a young and vibrant nation, suffocating under the pressure of the old and jealous European nations. Wasn't it obvious on which side it should stand?

In terms of culture, the Greek deconstruction of British civilisation and culture was an easy task and a definite priority, compared to France. It was a retail culture, with a selfish view of what was right or wrong; a nation that had betrayed God for Mammon and constantly employed the methods of pirates and privateers. Its constitutional regime was nothing but a myth. Britain was governed by a minority of aristocrats, "materialists on the whole, egoists, exclusivists, against the people and for the monopolies", who had deprived "the English nation of spiritual ideals, which the humanist-inspired spiritual aristocracy of Germany had cherished for the German people and had made the Germans what they were".¹⁹ The hegemony of Europe could not be claimed by a "complex Anglo-Saxon nation" with so profound ideological and moral contradictions, the result of blending the "cheap blood" of the local islanders with the "noble blood" of the Germans, Danes and Norwegians.²⁰ The "allegedly"

¹⁴ *Νέα Ημέρα* (7 November 1916).

¹⁵ Menelaos Panas, *Σλαβισμός ή Παγγερμανισμός*; [Slavism or Pangermanism?], Athens: Athinaiko Typografeio, 1915, p. 89.

¹⁶ *Πελοπόννησος* (1 January 1917).

¹⁷ Anonymous, *Η εν Ανατολή γερμανική πολιτική* [German politics in the east], Athens: Anatyposis ek Estias, 1915, pp. 16–17.

¹⁸ See for example the front-page article "Ντουτσαντ υπερ αλλες! Η κατάκτησις των θαλασσών υποβρύχιως" [Deutschland über alles! The conquest of the seas by submarines], *Αστραπή* (29 June 1916).

¹⁹ Gavriilidis, *Δύο πολιτισμοί* [Two civilisations], p. 17.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

liberal English were the true friends of the Bulgarians and the Turks, “blunt and suppressive tyrants of their own subordinate small nations”. Britain hated kings Otto and Constantine of Greece alike because they both refused to become the instruments of London like the Indian maharajas.²¹ There had never been genuine philhellenism in that country, unless its interests coincided with those of Greece. Greece had never been more than an expendable scout for Britain in its overseas operations.²²

On the contrary, the deconstruction of the image of France, the defender of human and civil liberties for Western civilisation, was not direct, at least not from the start. It was publicly and openly acknowledged, even by the anti-Venizelist Premier Georgios Theotokis on the outbreak of war, that France held a special position in every Greek heart. Yet even this statement was used after 1915 to emphasise the treason of the French against their old Greek friends.²³ Naturally, there were direct blows as well. Some said that France was not the traditional friend of Greece but of the Ottoman Empire. French Turcophilia and their “mob-controlled regime” had undermined an essential bond with Greece.²⁴ “The French have always been the same: arrogant in their successes, scared in their failures, barbarians and savages, with a polish of civilisation.”²⁵ The further deconstruction of the French image was accomplished in 1921–22 after French diplomacy began openly to favour Kemal Atatürk. Now France was not only a traitor to Greece, but it had also violated the promises it had made in the past to all Christian nations subject to the Ottomans. It was a betrayer of Christians. “Had France been a Christian and a civilised nation, it would have covered her face in shame with her own hands.”²⁶ It did not, because France no longer possessed the essential dignity and nobility. “France is indifferent to the France of earlier years, when it had earned the trust of the nations. Its only concern is money. Christian blood, the peace of the world and the prosperity of the East are values excluded from the stock market of French political morals. French conscience is sensitive only to gold; as Judas Iscariot, it is concerned only

²¹ Menalaos Panas, *Φιλελεύθεροι τύραννοι! Ήτοι περιληπτική ιστορική μελέτη περί Αγγλίας* [Liberal tyrants! A brief history of England], Athens: Typografeio A. Papakonstantinou, 1916, p. 19.

²² *Η αγγλική πολιτική και ο Ελληνισμός*, pp. 3–4, 79–80.

²³ See Georgios Pop’s parliamentary speech in *Εφημερίς των Συζητήσεων της Βουλής* [Parliamentary debates gazette] [ΕΣΒ], 1915, 1st session, 6th meeting (22 August 1915), p. 100 and Theotokis’ speech, 1st session, 9th meeting (21 September 1915), p. 156.

²⁴ *Πελοπόννησος* (18 February 1916 and 18 January 1917).

²⁵ *Πελοπόννησος* (13 February 1917).

²⁶ *Καθημερινή* (12 January 1922).

with the 30 silver coins of the French capitalists.”²⁷ By the early 1920s, as the Asia Minor campaign was turning into a major disaster, this view was shared not only by Greek Germanophiles but by all Greeks.²⁸

With a critique based on cultural characteristics, the case of Russia was not easier than that of France. The deep-rooted image of Mother Russia as the age-old co-religionist protector of all the Orthodox Christians in the East could not be revised by the anti-Venizelists. They did stress, however, that Russian foreign policy, whether of Peter the Great or Catherine the Great, of Alexander I or Nicholas II, was, in fact, contradictory to the Greek *Megali Idea* (“Great Idea”). Without exception, all Russian rulers wanted to keep Constantinople for themselves. It was for this very reason that they had worked so intensely to undermine King Otto’s popularity with his Greek subjects, for he was a true and keen supporter of the *Megali Idea*.²⁹ Pro-German politicians also made use of the extensive arsenal of arguments against the evil Panslavism before an audience highly sensitive to whatever posed a Slavic threat to Greek Macedonia.³⁰ In the same manner, Italy, which eventually sided with the Entente, was exposed for its plans to occupy Corfu and to manipulate the Greek vision of an eastern federation in the Balkans to forward its own interests.³¹

Although there were leaflets and articles targeting each of the Entente allies, it was much more convenient and frequent to blend all kinds of accusations, allegations and negative stereotypes together. The study of such texts reveals a series of assumptions born of a varied, yet overall anti-European reasoning. The first assumption was the negation of philhellenism, a common denominator

²⁷ *Καθημερινή* (13 January 1922).

²⁸ *Καθημερινή* (20, 22 January 1922 and 2 April 1922).

²⁹ Panas, *Σλαβισμός ή Παγγερμανισμός*, p. 13.

³⁰ Karolidis, *Ο γερμανικός φιλελληνισμός* [German philhellenism], pp. 51–52; Phokion Panas, “Ποίος ο πραγματικός Βενιζέλος” (1928) [Who the real Venizelos is], in *Αντιβενιζελικοί λίβελοι* [Anti-Venizelist libels], ed. Giorgos Anastasiadis, Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 2011, p. 372. See also Gounaris’ views on the danger of the “Russian serpent” in *Αι απολογίαι των θυμάτων της 15ης Νοεμβρίου 1922, μετά εισαγωγής υπό Χ. Βοζίκη* [The defence statements in the court of the victims of 15 November 1922, with an introduction by C. Vozikis], Athens: Typois P.G. Makri, 1926, pp. 21–22. The fear of Panslavic intrigues in the Balkans had been flared up due to the Russian claims over Mount Athos during the peace settlements of the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), see Erre Gikas, “Και θα ζήσωμεν και θα τα διατηρήσωμεν”: *Κωνσταντίνος Βασιλεύς* [“We shall live and preserve them”: King Constantine], Athens: s.n., 1913, pp. 1, 4–5.

³¹ Antonios Kartalis, *Η ιταλική πολιτική εν Αλβανία και τοις Βαλκανίοις* [Italian politics in Albania and the Balkans], Athens: Typografeion tou Empros, 1914, pp. 138–141; *ΕΣΒ*, 21st session, 7th meeting (2 February 1916), pp. 97–98.

in Greece's relationship with three Entente powers, in order to eradicate any relevant moral obligations and to project in its place "pure Greek interest" as the guiding line of Greek foreign policy.

Since the establishment of the Greek kingdom, it was argued, philhellenism had been taken for granted. It was a dogma that had nurtured generations of Greeks and was an integral part of private and public education. It was a dogma extremely convenient to Venizelos; but it was a fraud, his opponents argued. It was not love for present-day Greece and its revival but a retrospective love for the tombs and ruins of the past.³² Even if there had been true philhellenes in the past, the occupation of Greek territory by the Entente armies had cancelled their glorious deeds. They warned the Venizelists that there was no gratitude among nations, only self-interest.³³ The Greek national interest was, above all, the sentiments of gratitude, stressed Gounaris.³⁴ Stratos was moderate in his views. He did not overlook the moral obligations to and cultural bonds with Western Europe but acknowledged that the Powers had spheres of interest and satellites. In his view, France would assign to Greece the mere supervision of its interests.³⁵ "A nation which mixes politics with sentiments and sacrifices its own interests is destined to disappear from the world scene,"³⁶ Sakellariou pointed out in March 1916.³⁷ Venizelos, supposedly, was fighting against this line of reasoning, against

³² *Αστραπή* (4 November 1915).

³³ *ΕΣΒ*, 1915, 20th session, 6th meeting (22 August 1915), p. 100.

³⁴ *ΕΣΒ*, 1915, 20th session, 9th meeting (21 September 1915), p. 164. Gounaris had accused the Venizelists of advocating a "European" patriotism. See his speeches in *Αστραπή* (16 August 1916) and *Νέα Ημέρα* (28 May 1915).

³⁵ *ΕΣΒ*, 1917, 20th session, 18th meeting (10 August 1917), pp. 171–173. Four years later, under completely different circumstances, Stratos declared that the disagreements between Greeks and foreigners did not nullify the deep gratitude of the Greeks for the nations that supported them during the 1821 Revolution. He acknowledged that the basic issue was that modern Greeks had resurrected Byzantium, while the philhellenes admired the ancient Greeks, their culture and their language. See *Πολιτικόν Μνημόσυνον προς τιμήν των κατά την Ελληνικήν Επανάστασιν αγωνισθέντων υπέρ αυτής Φιλελλήνων: Λόγος εκφωνηθείς υπό Νικολάου Στράτου* [Political requiem for the philhellenes of the Greek Revolution: Speech delivered by Nikolaos Stratos], Athens: s.n., 1921, p. 17.

³⁶ *Πελοπόννησος* (3 March 1916).

³⁷ Michail Sakellariou was a staunch adherent of anti-Venizelism and a dedicated Germanophile. In June 1917 he was exiled, together with the rest of the "dangerous" anti-Venizelists, to Corsica by the Entente. See *Η Ελλάδα του Γεωργίου Α': Πολιτική κριτική του Μιχαήλ Γ. Σακελλαρίου στην κραυγή του εκπνέοντος Ελληνισμού των Πατρών (1910–1911)* [The Greece of King George I: Michail Sakellariou's political criticism], intro. M. B. Sakellariou, Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2009, pp. 13–47.

the profound lessons of history and geography, when he claimed that Greece could not exist without Britain and France.³⁸ Even if France was guided by the ideals of liberty and supported the rights of small nations, in the present war, argued Theotokis, France was obliged to defend its own interests.³⁹

The second assumption identified the “protection question” with subordination to the Western Powers. This debate was triggered in June 1916 when Britain and France, making reference to their protection rights, demanded the demobilisation of the Greek Army, the resignation of the Skouloudis government and new elections. The public debate was intensified when Venizelos agreed that their rights of protection were legal according to the treaties of 1827 and 1830.⁴⁰ In this context, anti-Venizelism was portrayed as the pure patriotic party defending Greek independence. Venizelists were accused of being traitors and the Powers were severely castigated for the pressure they had exerted: For eight years their “protection” had been nothing more than a millstone around the neck of Greece. The Powers had forgotten, asserted Dimitrios Rallis, that with their signatures they had turned Greece into an independent and sovereign state, not subject to any protection.⁴¹ Yet a review of history would clearly show that whenever Greece exercised its rights as an independent state in domestic or foreign affairs to further its national goals, it was blackmailed, invaded, humiliated, blocked or violated. All these actions constituted the real “chain of protection” with which Greece was kept on a leash.⁴² Only a party of traitors could accept compliance with such “protectionist” policies.⁴³ Greeks had shed their blood to liberate themselves from their tyrants, not to deliver themselves to “protectors”.⁴⁴

³⁸ *Πελοπόννησος* (18 February 1916 and 3 March 1916). See also *Νέα Ημέρα* (2 October 1916) and *Εσπερινόν Νέον Άστυ* (13 September 1916).

³⁹ *ΕΣΒ*, 1915, 20th session, 9th meeting (21 September 1915), p. 156.

⁴⁰ That statement is considered to be one of Venizelos’ most unfortunate political moves. See Constantinos Zavitsianos, *Αι Αναμνήσεις του εκ της ιστορικής διαφωνίας του Βασιλέως Κωνσταντίνου και Ελευθερίου Βενιζέλου 1914–1922* [Memories of the historical disagreement between King Constantine and Eleftherios Venizelos], vol. 1, Athens: Typois Rodi, 1946, pp. 147–148; Mavrogordatos, *1915: Ο Εθνικός Διχασμός* [1915: the National Schism], p. 84.

⁴¹ *ΕΣΒ*, 1917, 20th session, 20th meeting (12 August 1917), pp. 206–261. Rallis had made similar comments in the past, describing the Entente’s attitude towards Greece as “hubris” and a “blow to her pride and sovereignty”. *ΕΣΒ*, 1915, 20th session, 9th meeting (21 September 1915), p. 143.

⁴² *Νέα Ημέρα* (21 December 1916).

⁴³ *Νέα Ημέρα* (6 and 7 October 1916); *Εσπερινόν Νέον Άστυ* (30 September 1916).

⁴⁴ *Σκριπ* (11 November 1916).

The unjustifiable policy of the “protectors” reflected the true character of these nations. The British soul was inhuman and the French were ruffians.⁴⁵ They tortured Greece like the Jews had tortured Christ. It was a historical irony that Jews were called a rotten nation and the British a noble and enlightened one.⁴⁶ The “Jewishness” of the British will be touched on again below, but here let it suffice to say that the connection between profit and protection was further strengthened after the end of the war, when it became clear that financial interests dominated British and French policy in the Near East. Greek newspapers stated that the protectors of Kemal were the great capitalists and creditors of Turkey. They exploited the resources of a rich land that was periodically drenched with Armenian or Greek blood.⁴⁷ All these great capitalists of Europe expected from Kemalist Turkey favourable capitulations of the Ottoman style.⁴⁸ They watched the Greek-Turkish War as if it were a bullfight,⁴⁹ and placed their bets on Turkey or Greece only according to the expected profits. Unfortunately, Greece did not possess coal or oil, nor was it inhabited by Indians.⁵⁰

What kind of culture was reflected in Europe’s cynical foreign policy? It was a rhetorical question. The profound answer given by the Germanophiles was that the European allies of Greece were not civilised but barbarians.⁵¹ The words “barbarians” and “barbarity” are found in abundance in the texts of this war decade and they deliberately negate European culture and civilisation. For the anti-Venizelists this was a contradiction in terms.⁵² It was a civilisation that wore white gloves, sneered Pop, but one that had also left Greek civilians to starve to death.⁵³ Those who had slaughtered humans and liberties alike had no right to be called civilised and liberators, wrote a deputy from Arcadia in the Peloponnese, blaming both the British and the French.⁵⁴ How did these Westerners dare destroy the Greek state and nation by claiming as their own the

⁴⁵ *Πελοπόννησος* (10 February 1917).

⁴⁶ *Πελοπόννησος* (6 January 1917).

⁴⁷ *Καθημερινή* (10 February 1921).

⁴⁸ *Καθημερινή* (23 January 1922).

⁴⁹ *Καθημερινή* (17 March 1922).

⁵⁰ *Καθημερινή* (28 September 1922).

⁵¹ *Σκριπ* (11 November 1916).

⁵² *Σκριπ* (23 December 1916).

⁵³ *ΕΣΒ*, 1916, 21st session, 3rd meeting (27 January 1916), p. 16.

⁵⁴ *Σκριπ* (30 December 1916), untitled article written by Panagiotis Spyarakis, MP for Arcadia.

torches of civilisation that had been handed over to them by Greece?⁵⁵ The use of brutal violence against Greece was a disgrace to modern culture.⁵⁶

What was Europe after all? For the Greeks, Europe once was the British fleet, French chivalry, the Russian mass. Italy in those days was no more than “a bunch of tenors”, Germany “a vulgar crowd of scholastics and German Jews” and Austria-Hungary “a mosaic of discontented nationalities”. But things had changed since then, argued the opponents of Venizelos. There was another Europe rising in the new Germany. The events in the Balkans (1912–16) clearly proved this change and demanded that Greek politicians and Greek society as a whole comprehend it:⁵⁷ “A French and British victory would signify the triumph of the old spirit and the regression of humanity.”⁵⁸

Venizelist Rhetoric

For the supporters of Premier Venizelos, the reflection of Europe was reversed but no less disfigured. Their arguments were mostly historical. Orthodox Russia, noble France, affectionate Britain, “the liberal and mighty ruler of the waves”, had taken good care to reinstate the Greek nation and had never abandoned it. The cessation of the Ionian Islands to Greece in 1864, of Epirus and Thessaly in 1881, their favourable policy in 1866 during the Cretan revolt and in 1897 during the Greek-Ottoman War, and, finally, the support of the Venizelist coup in 1916 in Thessaloniki were all evidence of their selfless philhellenism.⁵⁹ The noble British philhellenes, among them Byron, Church and Gladstone, were the antecedents of those that the Germanophiles called, without any respect, “bloody Franks”. Yet, what the Philhellenes had done for Greece was more important than the contribution of the ancient Greeks to Western civilisation. The naval battle of Navarino was more important a lesson for Greek children than that of Salamis.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ *ΕΣΒ*, 1916, 21st session, 55th meeting (25 May 1916), p. 1022: parliamentary speech of the anti-Venizelist MP for Lesbos, Lazaros Stamatiadis.

⁵⁶ *ΕΣΒ*, 1916, 21st session, 55th meeting, p. 1025: parliamentary speech of the anti-Venizelist MP from Achaia-Illida, Angelos Angelopoulos. See also newspaper *Νέα Ημέρα* (14 December 1916) and the anti-Venizelist newspaper *Πολιτεία* (19 November 1920).

⁵⁷ *Νέα Ημέρα* (2 October 1916).

⁵⁸ *Πελοπόννησος* (1 January 1917).

⁵⁹ Costas Trikoglidis, *Η ιστορία του αγγλικού φιλελληνισμού* [The history of British philhellenism], Athens: Typographeion P.A. Petrakou, 1917, pp. iii–iv, vi–vii.

⁶⁰ Stefanos Krateros, *Μορφώσατε τον λαόν... πολιτικοκοινωνική μελέτη* [Educate the people... A socio-political study], Athens: Typographeion P.A. Petrakou, 1917, pp. 9, 27.

For France Venizelists reserved even warmer feelings, not only due to what Fabvier and Maison had done for the Greeks or what the French Revolution had contributed to the Greek enlightenment.⁶¹ It was far more than that. Venizelists pompously claimed that the two peoples shared ideas, feelings and flaws, and on this ground feelings of affection had been rooted. Paris and Athens were two centres of light; the former for the whole globe and the latter for the East. The Greeks adored the French language as no other language in the world and French law had inspired Greek legislators.⁶² The brave sons of chivalrous and most friendly France, who had been raised on odes to the Greek heroes of independence, had come to Macedonia in 1915 to maintain the great traditions of their country and to sacrifice themselves in the defence of Greek rights.⁶³

Even if the allies had violated Greek neutrality, argued the distinguished lawyer and Venizelist deputy Georgios Philaretos, they had done so because international law had been breached. After all, they once guaranteed their support of a liberal constitution and the integrity of Greek territory.⁶⁴ Emmanouil Repoulis added that, even if there was no treaty to force their intervention, they had a moral obligation, because of the solidarity between free nations.⁶⁵ They would have intervened simply out of goodwill, claimed Venizelos, to defend the liberties of the Greek people when threatened by a tyrant.⁶⁶ Yet, Venizelos was more of a realist: Greece should not simply demand and cajole the friendship of foreigners. Instead, it should seek comrades who shared common interests.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Emmanouil Repoulis, *Ομιλία περί της εν Αθήναις τυραννίας και του αγώνος της Εθνικής Αμύνης* [Speech on the tyranny in Athens and the struggle of the National Defence], n.p.: s.n., 1916, pp. 5, 12–13.

⁶² Georgios Philaretos, *Εν πολεμική θεομηνία: Κωνσταντίνος ο Μικρός 1914–1917* [In the midst of the turbulence of war: Constantine the Small, 1914–1917], Athens: Typografeion P.A. Petrakou, 1918, p. 65.

⁶³ *ΕΣΒ*, 1915, 20th session, 26th meeting (21 October 1915), p. 569 and 9th meeting (21 September 1915), p. 149.

⁶⁴ Philaretos, *Εν πολεμική θεομηνία* [In the midst], pp. 41–42. It should be stressed, however, that two years later Philaretos accused the Great Powers of becoming the guardians of the weaker states without their consent. See Georgios Philaretos, *Μετά την νίκη* [After the victory], Athens: Typografeion P.A. Petrakou, 1919, pp. 64–68.

⁶⁵ *ΕΣΒ*, 1917, 20th session, 20th meeting (12 August 1917), p. 128.

⁶⁶ *ΕΣΒ*, 1917, 20th session, 21st meeting (13 August 1917), p. 294. In its editorial titled “Redemption”, the Venizelist *Εστία* expressed both its grief for the country’s plight and its relief for the renewal of the “protection rights” of the Great Powers a century after Greece’s liberation. *Εστία* (9 June 1916).

⁶⁷ *ΕΣΒ*, 1915, 20th session, 9th meeting (21 September 1915), p. 157. The Venizelist press repeatedly accused the anti-Venizelist governments of handling foreign affairs with arrogance

Fighting Germany and beating it and its two clients, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, its own traditional enemies, would help Greece to restore its honour, protect its interests and eventually gain a place within the family of free nations.⁶⁸

According to Philaretos, the final victory of the Entente would be followed by a European federation, the United States of Europe, an old French idea of King Henry IV.⁶⁹ This federation would guarantee religious tolerance, civil and national rights. A no less ideal form of international governance was the fresh model of the British Commonwealth, then under consideration, which provided for the political independence of its member states along with the obligation to support their metropolis.⁷⁰ This implied that the victory of the Entente would not carry as much of a threat for the small nations as wholesale German rule over Europe. In the event of large-scale German rule, the equality of the nation-states would be abolished as in the days of the Roman Empire. “The soul of Europe and indeed of the whole world is disgusted by military satrapism,” remarked Philaretos.⁷¹ “The most typical imperialism of our times is the German one,” wrote George Papandreou, because it combined the tradition of Prussian feudalism with the vertigo that German modern progress had unleashed. “It was characterised by discontent, impatience, passion, brutality, arrogance, an overestimation of quantity, an underestimation of individuals, a love of violence, a relentless desire for power, greed to dominate the world.”⁷² The German view that “power is the

and no pragmatism. See, for example, *Εστία*, which 10 days after the imposition of a naval blockade on Greece by the Entente cried out for realism on the part of the anti-Venizelist government, advising it to resign instead of provoking the Great Powers. *Εστία* (5 June 1916).

⁶⁸ ΕΣΒ, 1917, 20th session, 21st meeting (13 August 1917), p. 302.

⁶⁹ Philaretos, *Εν πολεμική θεομηνία* [In the midst], p. 102. The prospect of a united Europe was acknowledged as a possible postwar scenario by the anti-Venizelists, too. See, for example, the view of an anti-Venizelist MP, Constantine Foumis, in ΕΣΒ, 21st session, 55th meeting (25 May 1916), p. 1024.

⁷⁰ Alfred Eckhard Zimmern, *Η γερμανική κουλτούρα και η βρεταννική δημοκρατία: Τα ιδεώδη του βρεταννικού πολιτισμού* [German Kultur and British democracy: the ideals of British culture], trans. C. S. Chourmouziou, Athens: Typografeion P.A. Petrakou, 1917, p. 5.

⁷¹ Philaretos, *Εν πολεμική θεομηνία* [In the midst], p. 101.

⁷² Georgios Papandreou, “Η Ευρώπη προ του πολέμου” [Europe on the eve of the war], *Επιθεώρησις των κοινωνικών και πολιτικών επιστημών* 1/1–2 (September–December 1916), pp. 46–70. A Venizelist MP from Lesbos, Christos Vasilakakis, in his book, expressed similar views, underlying that the deeds of the Hohenzollerns justified Honoré Mirabeau’s comment that war was Prussia’s national industry. *Ο Παγγερμανισμός: Μελέτη πολιτικό-ιστορική* [Pangermanism: A political and historical study], Athens: Typografika Katastimmata El. Papapavlou, 1917, p. 13. See also D.F.P., *Η κατά του Ελληνισμού συνωμοσία του Γερμανισμού* [German intrigue against Greece], Athens: Typografeion P.A. Petrakou, 1916, passim. Others emphasised the “sacred” nature of the war due to the adulation of Kaiser Wilhelm II. See K.T.,

ultimate right” for humans and nations was a clear sign that they intended to abolish the sovereignty of weaker nations. This view showed the difference between the global character of the British political ideal and the “narrow egoism of the German soul.”⁷³ Contrary to Panslavism, Pangermanism was not a future threat for the Balkans and Asia Minor but a present one.⁷⁴ This threat was not only national, argued the Socialist deputy Aristotelis Sideris. This war was a fight for democratic principles, which were defended by the great nations of the West: “If we are against the subordination of individuals to one social class, we are even more so against the subordination of entire nations to one dynastic and military class, like that of Germany.”⁷⁵ German militarism would be the darkest future, for which the Greek people had absolutely no desire,⁷⁶ added Albert Couriel, a Jewish Socialist deputy from Thessaloniki. Yet this threat was overlooked by the “German Greeks”, who had either been bribed or simply hated Venizelos. It was also overlooked by those who could not see that the German culture they loved cultivated the principles of absolutism and subordination to one superman tyrant.⁷⁷

In reading the above-mentioned arguments and counter-arguments, it is clear that the Venizelists did not support their options by referencing their allies’ ideological, political and economic characteristics. Apparently, none of them (certainly not Venizelos) disregarded the virtues of Western parliamentarianism and liberalism,⁷⁸ and such remarks can easily be traced in their speeches.⁷⁹

Η διανοητικότητα των Γερμανών και ο πόλεμος [German apprehension and the war], Athens: Typografeion P.A. Petrakou, 1916, pp. 17–18.

⁷³ Zimmern, *Η γερμανική κουλτούρα* [German Kultur], p. 4.

⁷⁴ Philaretos, *Εν πολεμική θεομηνία* [In the midst], pp. 9, 14, 24.

⁷⁵ *ΕΣΒ*, 1917, 20th session, 21st meeting (13 August 1917), p. 304. See also his article “Το δημοκρατικόν πνεύμα και ο Ελληνισμός” [The spirit of democracy and Hellenism], *Ριζοσπάστης* (26 July 1917).

⁷⁶ *ΕΣΒ*, 1917, 20th session, 20th meeting (12 August 1917), p. 245. For an analysis of the influences and the Greek Socialists’ stance towards the war, see Kostas Paloukis, “Οι Έλληνες Σοσιαλιστές, ο εθνικός διχασμός και ο Α΄ Παγκόσμιος Πόλεμος” [Greek Socialists, the National Schism and World War I], *Μαρξιστική Σκέψη* 21 (October–December 2016), pp. 191–202.

⁷⁷ Dimitris Tagkopoulos, *Οι Γερμανοέλληνες (Απόσπασμα από την πολιτική μελέτη: Ο Ψυχάρης και η πολιτική)* [The Germano-Greeks. Excerpt from the political study: Psycharis and politics], Athens: Typografeion P.A. Petrakou, 1918, pp. 4–5.

⁷⁸ In a pamphlet, published in 1918, Philaretos tried to prove the “democratic” nature of the Greeks who supported their liberal allies in their struggle “against German militarism and in favour of democracy”. See Georgios N. Philaretos, *Δημοκρατισμός του Έλληνας* [The democratic nature of the Greeks], Athens: s.n., 1918, p. 1.

⁷⁹ See for example *ΕΣΒ*, 20th session, 21st meeting (13 August 1917), p. 302 and meeting 35 (23 November 1918), p. 459. See also Marianna D. Christopoulos, “Ο ονειροπόλος πραγματοποιός: Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα, 1909–1923” [“The visionary

They were all fully aware of the immense socio-economic and political benefits that an Entente victory would have for Greece, the Liberal Party and its entrepreneurial clientele.⁸⁰ Yet for Venizelist rhetoric, philhellenism, as the other side of protectionism, was the key argument for supporting an alliance with the Entente.⁸¹ Western liberalism, the ideals of the democratic nations and the noble ideals of the Americans were only vaguely presented notions; the European federal future was hazy and democratic principles were more interesting for the still few enemies of the monarchy and the even fewer socialists. The “world ideal” of the British and the French was not elucidated because advocating for colonialism was a demanding and undesirable task. The cultures of the Western powers were the “relatives” of Greek culture by virtue of their “Greek-Latin nature”; therefore Greece’s position on the side of the Entente was predestined.⁸²

In terms of communication and given the fierce political controversy, the projection of the dark side of German ideology was much more useful for the Venizelist camp. The most solid ideological argument of those who supported participation in the war alongside the Entente was the condemnation of the militaristic, greedy and arrogant model of progress, with relevant references to the threat it posed for the small nations. In other words, they stressed similar negative characteristics to those attributed by the Germanophiles to the Anglo-French and their capitalist Western civilisation. This view was shared by all the Entente states: German civilisation was the archetypical enemy of liberal democracy.⁸³

The Germanophiles, on the other hand, found it difficult to cancel the memory of philhellenism purely on the grounds of anti-Slavic arguments, which also contradicted the tradition that saw Russia as the Orthodox protector of Greece. They also had difficulties in offering a political vision. What exactly would happen if the Central Powers won the war and the Western “chain of protection” was broken? This is why, we argue, their line of argumentation

pragmatist”: Eleftherios Venizelos and the Great Idea, 1909–1923], in *Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος: Η διαμόρφωση της πολιτικής σκέψης του. Ιδεολογικές αφετηρίες και επιδράσεις* [Eleftherios Venizelos: the formation of his political thought. Ideological starting points and effects], ed. Nikolaos Papadakis, Athens: Foundation of the Greek Parliament and Venizelos Foundation, 2014, p. 263.

⁸⁰ Mavrogordatos, 1915: *Ο Εθνικός Διχασμός* [1915: the National Schism], p. 243.

⁸¹ *Πατρίς* (28 June 1916). See also Venizelos’ speech in Athens, *Πατρίς* (11 June 1917).

⁸² Despina Papadimitriou, “Ο Τύπος και ο Διχασμός 1914–1917” [The press and the schism, 1914–1917], PhD diss., National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, 1990, pp. 264–267.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 260–264.

focused on the prospects of Greek civilisation. For them, the German Empire – even if it was part of the West – was the best model on which to build a vibrant and independent nation-state or establish an Eastern Greek empire.

The ‘Anti-western’ Vision of an Eastern Empire

The specialist in this theoretical field of Germanophilia, or rather of anti-Westernism, was Dragoumis, an anti-Venizelist hardliner and leader of a group which evangelised for the creation of an eastern empire.⁸⁴ In his published and unpublished writings, an anti-Western model theory was adapted to the political and military developments of the time.⁸⁵ This standardised theory was used selectively by other pro-German writers and journalists.⁸⁶ For Dragoumis, the spirit of modern European civilisation and culture was “mostly Jewish”. “The societies of Europe,” he wrote, “have been administered since 1914 by the philistines of science and a bourgeois class with Jewish ideals.”⁸⁷ The societies of France and Britain were characterised by a “moral confusion” that testified to a “shortage of racial ideals”. The Russians were saved because they possessed “an Eastern soul”; thus they were more religious, rougher, younger, future-oriented and “fitter to accomplish their Eastern mission”.⁸⁸ The spirit of the

⁸⁴ The published literature on Ion Dragoumis’ life and ideas is thorough, rich and varied. To cite but few, in addition to Mazis’ book (see n. 9): John A. Mazis, “The Challenge of the West and Challenging the West: Ion Dragoumis and the Place of Modern Greece in the East-West Cultural Continuum”, *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 26–27 (2010–2011), pp. 57–70; Michalis Kaliakatsos, “Ion Dragoumis and ‘Machiavelli’: Armed Struggle, Propaganda and Hellenization in Macedonia and Thrace (1903–1908)”, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 31 (2013), pp. 53–84; Michalis Kaliakatsos, “Dragoumis, Macedonia and the Ottoman Empire (1903–1913): The Great Idea, Nationalism and Greek-Ottomanism”, PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2008; Rena Stavridi-Patrikiou, “Ιων Δραγούμης: Πηγές και στόχοι του εθνικισμού” [Ion Dragoumis: sources and goals of nationalism], in *Η Ελλάδα των Βαλκανικών Πολέμων* [Greece in the Balkan Wars], Athens: ELLA, 1993, pp. 243–252; A. J. Panayotopoulos, “The ‘Great Idea’ and the Vision of Eastern Federation: A Propos of the Views of I. Dragoumis and A. Souliotis-Nikolaïdis”, *Balkan Studies* 21/2 (1980), pp. 331–365.

⁸⁵ Gazi, “Άγγλοι, Γάλλοι και Σενεγαλέζοι” [English, French and Senegalese], pp. 255–271.

⁸⁶ Mazis, “The Challenge of the West”, pp. 57–70.

⁸⁷ Ion Dragoumis, *Φύλλα ημερολογίου Ε’ (1913–1917)* [Pages from a Diary, vol. 5, 1913–1917], ed. Theodoros N. Sotiropoulos, Athens: Ermis, 1986, p. 54. He called Venizelos Jewish, too. See Thanassis Bohotis, “Εσωτερική Πολιτική 1900–1922” [Domestic politics, 1900–1922], in *Ιστορία της Ελλάδας του 20ού αιώνα: Όψεις πολιτικής και οικονομικής ιστορίας 1900–1940* [History of Greece in the twentieth century: aspects of political and economic history, 1900–1940], ed. Christos Hadziiossif, Athens: Vivliorama, 2009, p. 97.

⁸⁸ Dragoumis, *Φύλλα ημερολογίου Ε’* [Pages from a diary, vol. 5], p. 85.

West was “extremely despotic and absolute”, and Romanism was the incarnation of absolutism, wrote Sokolis.⁸⁹ Dragoumis and Sokolis were not alone. Their anti-Western scepticism was used widely by the anti-Venizelists, though mostly at face value. The civilisation of Britain and France was phony, added Vlassis Gavriilidis, the editor of *Ακρόπολις*:

These false ideals [liberty, equality, fraternity], which, in the case of France and Britain, hide nothing else but individual arbitrariness, governmental violence and moral chaos, direct like the beacons of hell the governing classes of France and Britain. This is why we have two States of Violence, two States of Lawlessness, two States of Bare Individualism, two Commercial Republics like those of Genoa and Venice. Mechanism, Individualism, Mammonism, Soullessness, Capitalism – these are the demons governing these two nations. If they are not beheaded by Germany, they will be beheaded by the ongoing progress of their own peoples, that is, if the world goes on progressing. The same demons are now dragging to the dance of hell the great American Republic; the same disease, the same symptoms.⁹⁰

The problem was not Western culture in itself but, most importantly, its imitation, its adulterated copy, Venizelism. It was a true disease, which was described by Spyridon Melas in *Νέον Άστυ*:

Venizelism is nothing else but Frankism [the imitation of the “Franks”] in politics. Under the healthy surface there was the most dangerous disease. On the pretext of realism, [Venizelism] traded Greece as if it was a boat full of onions. Under the sign of progress, it excited individualism and mass arrivisme. Under the pretext of renaissance, it tried to achieve the negation of tradition. Under the pretext of alliances, it sought to settle the Frank in the heart of the country.⁹¹

The imitation of the “Franks” is a central issue in Dragoumis’ thoughts, treasured in his diaries. The words “civilisation” and “progress” misled all the witless, those ignorant of history and philosophy, “Frank”-educated scientists and those who had been “sprinkled” with foreign education who had forgotten that a civilisation might also regress.⁹² The “xenomania” – French-mania and English-mania – of Venizelist politics led to subordination to the “Franks”. It was a “servile

⁸⁹ Sokolis, *Αυτοκρατορία* [Empire], pp. 22, 113.

⁹⁰ Gavriilidis, *Δύο πολιτισμοί* [Two civilisations], p. 70.

⁹¹ Bohotis, “Εσωτερική Πολιτική” [Domestic politics], p. 96.

⁹² Dragoumis, *Φύλλα Ημερολογίου Ε'* [Pages from a diary, vol. 5], p. 85.

xenomania”, for its purpose was to serve the will of the foreigners.⁹³ “We are intimidated by the Franks [...] we tend to forget our interest in exchange for a good word by the Franks.”⁹⁴ Greece, guided by Venizelos, who had matured politically in Crete, then controlled by foreign consuls, has regressed to the days of Kolettis and Mavrokordatos (the 1840s and 1850s), when the Greek parties had foreign patrons.⁹⁵ His men had become the “ruffians of the foreigners”.⁹⁶ As Dragoumis concluded in a 1919 text:

What is it in Venizelism that I despise? Venizelism is *possibilisme*, materialism, earthly, success with magic tricks, resourcefulness, skilfulness, arrivisme, demagogy. Venizelism is tangled with the modern, superficial, seemingly scientific ideas of Europe; it is a European, Frankish shining polish, a rough plaster to cover a badly built wall or the repulsive make-up of a beautiful woman.⁹⁷

All these morbid features of Venizelism (arrivisme, adventurism, etc.) were repeated by Christos Christoulakis, the director of the journal *Πολιτική Επιθεώρησις*, to conclude with the worst of all, Franco-Levantinism, which Venizelos had brought from his own past in Chania, where “social life [...] contained many Levantine features”.⁹⁸ He believed that European culture was superior and that he had run to catch up with it; he wanted to show that he was thinking the European way, to be justified and appreciated by the Europeans.⁹⁹ Corrupt from demagogy and Levantinism, he had made a cult out of the “humble worship of the foreign”, explained Souliotis-Nikolaidis. For his xenomania and servility, he was the suitable politician to place Greece at the disposal of foreigners.¹⁰⁰ Costas Karavidas, a foe of katharevousa and defender of communalism, later wrote that, after all, the role of the Franco-Levantine usurers has always been to exercise pressure on behalf of the great Western Powers on the

⁹³ Ibid., p. 116.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 117.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 121.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 167.

⁹⁷ Ion Dragoumis, *Φύλλα Ημερολογίου Στ' (1918–1920)* [Pages from a diary, vol. 6 (1918–1920)], ed. Theodoros N. Sotiropoulos, Athens: Ermis, 1987, p. 34.

⁹⁸ Christos Christoulakis, *Ποίος πραγματικώς είναι ο Βενιζέλος: Ψυχολογική και πολιτική κριτική* [Who Venizelos really is: a psychological and political review], Athens: Ekdosis Politikis Epitheoriseos, 1916, pp. 21–22.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 51–52.

¹⁰⁰ See Athanassios Souliotis-Nikolaidis' article titled “Το καθήκον” [The duty] in *Νέα Ημέρα* (25 August 1916).

chest of the Orient.¹⁰¹ It was ironic that these accusations of xenomania coming from the demoticists were aligned with those of their enemies, the supporters of katharevousa, when the demotic language was introduced to Greek elementary education in 1917. For different reasons, both groups thought that Venizelos was deliberately being carried away from Greek tradition. To make his decision even more suspicious, this breach of tradition was always correlated with the threat it posed to the Orthodox Church.¹⁰²

The offence against Franco-Levantinism, which was not the exclusive task of Dragoumis' group, also extended to Venizelos' officials. They had been educated in foreign universities but, instead of becoming the "juice of life", they aspired to become civil servants.¹⁰³ A Ioannina deputy, Constantinos Kazantzis, openly accused the functionaries of the foreign ministry of not being Greek but semi-French, as their partiality for the "Franks" was overwhelming.¹⁰⁴ Also condemned in the same manner were the Frenchified Greeks of the diaspora, supporters of the Liberals in their majority, who had "forgotten their language and shaved off their moustache".¹⁰⁵ Some were even accused of pressuring Greece to enter the war as a way to serve their own financial interests.¹⁰⁶

Which was the proper ideal for Greece as it was threatened by the Levant and how was it to be pursued? In Dragoumis' view, this ideal was situated in the East. It was an "Eastern federation", an "East for the Easterners", where Hellenism would occupy the key position.¹⁰⁷ Returning to Greece's roots, to tradition, to folk life and to the demotic vernacular would create a "new Greek civilisation", different from the ancient, the Byzantine and the modern European. It would be more perfect, free from sterile archaisms with many eastern elements, more eastern than western but "different from both of them".¹⁰⁸ Inescapably it

¹⁰¹ C. D. Karavidas, "Ρήγας Φερραίος και η πολιτική οργάνωσις της Ανατολής" [Rhigas Feraios and the political organisation of the East], *Πολιτική Επιθεώρησις* 1/41 (20 March 1921), p. 660. See also "Η κατάρπτωσις της Αντάντ" [The Entente's decadence], *Πολιτική Επιθεώρησις* 1/52 (24 December 1916), pp. 1730.

¹⁰² Panas, "Ποίος ο πραγματικός Βενιζέλος" [Who Venizelos really is], p. 374. See also Pezonautis-Dikaiokritis, "Τα πολιτικά παράσημα του κ. Βενιζέλου" (1920) [Mr. Venizelos' political decorations], in Anastasiadis, *Αντιβενιζελικοί λίβελαι* [Anti-Venizelist libels], p. 105.

¹⁰³ *Σκριπ* (14 October 1916).

¹⁰⁴ *Νέα Ημέρα* (3 December 1916).

¹⁰⁵ *ΕΣΒ*, 21st session, 17th meeting (13 February 1916), pp. 316–317.

¹⁰⁶ *Εσπερινόν Νέον Άστυ* (10 October 1916).

¹⁰⁷ Ion Dragoumis, "Αυτοκρατορία και Ανατολή" [Empire and the East], *Πολιτική Επιθεώρησις* 1/32 (6 August 1916), p. 1087.

¹⁰⁸ *Έρευνα για τις μελλοντικές κατευθύνσεις της φυλής μας* [Survey on the future goals of our race], Alexandria: Ekdosi Grammaton, 1919, p. 50.

would be different from the model pursued by the Greek state. “Those dressed in the Frankish way, low and vulgar state,” wrote Dragoumis, had tried to give to the Greeks “an alternative ideal, that of a grocery – to become a bourgeois Belgium, a neutral, eunuch, milk-producing Switzerland – and to take them off their course”.¹⁰⁹ It was an unsuited alien civilisation that looked down on Easterners, because it could not comprehend their “sensuality” and their “delicate intelligence”, added Christoulakis.¹¹⁰ The East was the due destination for Greece, chosen by Rhigas Feraios and by Alexandros Ypsilantis, but changes had happened. Economic interests, according to Karavidas, had turned those who were better off into “materialist and vulgar” people and had reduced the ability of the lower classes to seek radical solutions. The catalyst which had diverted the eastern course of Greece were the Franco-Levantines, who had added “lines of demarcation” and “poisonous shadows”. These were the lines of nationalism and statehood, the products of Western civilisation and diplomatic tools of the Powers, used to manipulate not only the Christians of the East but also the Turks. Young Turkism and its chauvinistic violence were the products of Western manipulation.¹¹¹ The same was true for intra-Orthodox strife. It would lead them all, after their economic and political subjugation, to religious subordination to the pope, who also was a part of the Western system.¹¹²

The ideal of an eastern federation as the Greek destiny was also served by the pro-German side under a different mantle, that of the empire. In Sokolis’ book *Αυτοκρατορία*, the narration is the same as that of Dragoumis. The Greek medieval empire had fallen because it had been struck by the “Franks”, who also changed its name from Roman to Byzantine to cut it loose from both ancient

¹⁰⁹ Idas, “Ο νεοελληνικός πολιτισμός” [Modern Greek civilisation], *Πολιτική Επιθεώρησης* 1/23 (7 November 1920), p. 375; Ion Dragoumis, *Προγραμματικοί πολιτικοί στοχασμοί* [Political reflections], Athens: Τυπογραφείον P.A. Petrakou, 1916, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ Christoulakis, *Ποίος πραγματικώς είνε ο Βενιζέλος* [Who Venizelos really is], p. 51.

¹¹¹ Karavidas, “Ρήγας Φερραίος” [Rhigas Feraios], pp. 659–660; E. Loukaras, “Ανατολή και Δύσις” [The East and the West], *Πολιτική Επιθεώρησης* 1/32 (16 January 1921), p. 524.

¹¹² Loukaras, “Ανατολή και Δύσις” [The East and the West], pp. 509–511. The danger of the “Westernisation” of the Orthodox Church due to the influences of the Uniate and papism had been a key issue in the ideological ferment of the nineteenth century, which surfaced not only during the schism but also later during the calendar reform of 1924. For the latter, see especially Dimitris Malessis, “Το παλαιοημερολογιτικό ζήτημα (1924–1952): Οφειτης πολιτικής και πολιτισμικής σύγκρουσης στο Μεσοπόλεμο και στη μεταπολεμική περίοδο” [The calendar question: aspects of a political and cultural clash in the interwar and postwar period (1924–1952)], *Μνήμων* 22 (2000), pp. 135–169; Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic*, pp. 269–270.

Greece and Rome.¹¹³ Feraios had wished to revive this empire, but the zeal of the nationalist Italians derailed the Greeks who had studied in the West. Only those who were resistant to foreign ideas did not fall into the Frankish trap of nationalism, “this alien principle of nationality”. Greece buried the empire, when, impressed by the materialistic progress of the Westerners, they introduced their ideas, which were, albeit, incompatible with its own.¹¹⁴ Eventually, nationalism led the Easterners to a fratricidal struggle and patriotism turned into a “commercial enterprise”. Greeks left the interpretation of their history to the West, they neglected (unlike the Germans) the importance of the spiritual bonds between them and they assigned unification to a single mighty state, indeed an impossible mission. The deeper essence of the empire to which he aspired was the prevalence of the Greek spirit and the brotherhood of the eastern peoples;¹¹⁵ because the medieval Eastern Empire – not the West – was the true cradle of liberty, fraternity, cosmopolitanism, altruism, piety, parliamentarianism and even socialism. When Loukas Notaras said that the Turkish turban was preferable to the papist tiara, he was afraid that these virtues would be lost if the Greek were assimilated by the Western spirit of selfishness and by Roman Catholicism. They had all been lost when the independent Greek kingdom came into being and the imitation of the West was initiated. These virtues would only be recovered through the imperial ideal.¹¹⁶

Sokolis was an extremely interesting, yet isolated, case. He believed that the imperial idea should be promoted through education, the army and the church. But Pavlos Karolidis, professor of history at the University of Athens and a native of Cappadocia, had a more handy and suitable solution in mind. King Constantine I personified, in the best possible way, the ideal of “Greek kingship”, which was adaptable to Sokolis’ imperial ideal. For Karolidis, kingship was not a European custom but had developed institutionally and philosophically in the Greek context from ancient to medieval times. Kingship in the days of Byzantium had been connected to the nation and had advanced the idea of national unity; and it was this idea – the legend of the marbled last king to be revived by the angel of God, a legend that was also shared by the German people – that had actually revived the Greek state. After the Greek kingdom was established, however, its kingship was implemented in the European fashion. As a result, the reigns of both Otto and George I were tormented by these two different perceptions of

¹¹³ Sokolis, *Αυτοκρατορία* [Empire], p. 18. See also Dragoumis’ resume and comments on Sokolis’ *Αυτοκρατορία* in “Αυτοκρατορία και Ανατολή” [Empire and the East], pp. 1083–1091.

¹¹⁴ Sokolis, *Αυτοκρατορία* [Empire], pp. 29, 33, 40.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 62–86.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 109–136.

kingship, the European and the Greek. Constantine, inspired by history, felt he had the strength and the will to be the incarnation of the Greek model. But there was a problem; Greece was already in the third stage of its history. In the previous two it had been the creator, teacher and legislator of Europe. In this third stage it compared unfavourably to Europe. It needed European support to develop effectively as a nation-state. But in this need for capital and material support from Europe, Greece should not lose its spirit, literature, language, art and, least of all, its theory of kingship. It should not distance itself from this great and glorious “royal way”, illumined by the ample light of history. This royal or imperial road was the way to salvation and to the glory of the Greek nation, provided it resisted the corrupt influence of Western culture.¹¹⁷ All in all, if the salvation for the Greeks was an empire or federation united by its eastern culture and by the Byzantine imperial legacy, then the Germans had already provided them with a model to challenge Western European individualism and nationalism. Greeks should follow them.

The Roots of the Debate

These views of Dragoumis, Karolidis, Sokolis and others were not new, and here lies the main argument of this article. To be precise, these men did not reintroduce a debate from the past, because this debate was not yet over. They simply rekindled it. Although the context and the intensity of this debate had changed through a decade of war, it was in direct contact with all the previous stages, to the extent that these stages could offer simple and comprehensible arguments to the present. Indeed, the debate on the real position of Greece between the East and the West, Europe and Asia, was age-old, older than the Greek state itself. Its various philosophical connotations and nuances are not our concern here. What we will present next is the exploitation or the reflection on the politics of this old tug-of-war between the Enlightenment and liberalism, on the one hand, and German idealism, on the other, during the nineteenth century. The stakes were high: to shape a policy and an identity that would unite the state in a modern version of Hellenism after its gradual deliverance from the Ottomans. This is a very broad topic with an extensive literature, dominated by

¹¹⁷ Pavlos Karolidis, *Η ελληνική βασιλεία ως εθνική ιδέα: Λόγος εκφωνηθείς υπό Π. Καρολίδου κατ’ εντολήν του Δ. Συμβουλίου της Εταιρείας Φίλωντου Λαού κατά την ονομαστικήν εορτήν της Α.Μ. του Βασιλέως Κωνσταντίνου τη 21 Μαΐου 1916* [Greek kingship as a national idea: A speech delivered on the name day of His Majesty King Constantine], Athens: P. Leonis, 1916, pp. 5–6, 38–45.

the works of Dimaras¹¹⁸ and Skopetea,¹¹⁹ and important reviews by Kitromilides,¹²⁰ Varouxakis,¹²¹ Katsiardi,¹²² Koliopoulos,¹²³ Velkova,¹²⁴ Moutafidou,¹²⁵ as well as the recent doctoral dissertation by Apostolos Charissis.¹²⁶

¹¹⁸ C. Th. Dimaras, “Η φωτισμένη Ευρώπη” [The enlightened Europe], *Νέα Εστία* 51/591 (15 February 1952), pp. 225–230 and 51/592 (1 March 1952), pp. 306–311. This paper was republished in Dimaras, *Φροντισματά* [Treatises], Athens: Boukouri, 1962, pp. 3–23 and *Ιστορικά Φροντισματά, Α΄: Ο Διαφωτισμός και το κορύφωμά του* [Historic Treatises, 1: the enlightenment and its peak], Athens: Poria, 1992, pp. 115–129 and 279–281. See also Dimaras, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός* [Modern Greek Enlightenment], 1977; Athens: Ermis, 1989.

¹¹⁹ Elli Skopetea, *Το “πρότυπο βασίλειο” και η μεγάλη ιδέα: όψεις του εθνικού προβλήματος στην Ελλάδα (1830–1880)* [The “model kingdom” and the Great Idea: aspects of the national question in Greece (1830–1880)], Athens: Polytypo, 1988; Skopetea, *Φαλμεράνερ: τεχνάσματα του αντιπάλου δέους* [Fallmerayer: devices of the opposition], Athens: Themelio, 1999; Skopetea, “The Balkans and the Notion of the ‘Crossroads between East and West’”, in *Greece and the Balkans, Identities, Perceptions and Cultural Encounters since the Enlightenment*, ed. Dimitris Tziouvas, Ashgate: Routledge, 2003, pp. 171–178.

¹²⁰ Paschalis Kitromilides, “Europe and the Dilemmas of Greek Conscience”, in *Greece and Europe in the Modern Period: Aspects of a Troubled Relationship*, ed. Philip Carabott, London: Centre for Hellenic Studies, 1995, pp. 1–15. See also the significant observations in Kitromilides, *Νεοελληνικός διαφωτισμός: οι πολιτικές και κοινωνικές ιδέες* [Modern Greek Enlightenment: political and social ideas], trans. Stella Nikoloudi, Athens: MIET, 2000.

¹²¹ Georgios Varouxakis, “The Idea of ‘Europe’ in Nineteenth-Century Greek Political Thought”, in Carabott, *Greece and Europe in the Modern Period*, pp. 16–37.

¹²² Olga Katsiardi-Hering, “Identitätssuche und Europa-Bild der Neugriechen vom 17. bis zum Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts”, in *Die Griechen und Europa: Außen- und Innensichten im Wandel der Zeit*, ed. Harald Heppner and Olga Katsiardi-Hering, Vienna: Böhlau, 1998, pp. 31–68. In the same volume, see also Effi Gazi, “‘Europe’: Writing an Ambivalent Concept in 19th Century Greek Historical Culture”, pp. 103–124.

¹²³ Ioannis S. Koliopoulos, *Δυτικά της Εδέμ: η ανακαίνιση του ελληνικού έθνους και η νοσταλγία του ‘Ανατολικού παρελθόντος’: Δοκίμια της περιόδου 1989–2004* [West of Eden: the renovation of the Greek nation and the nostalgia for its eastern past], Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2010.

¹²⁴ Sanya Velkova, “The Megali Idea and National Identity in the Period between the Two World Wars (Conditions and Development of the Problem)”, *Études balkaniques* 3–4 (1996), pp. 19–34.

¹²⁵ Ariadni Moutafidou, “Το ‘πνεύμα του πολιτισμού’ και η ‘υπερήφανος Δύσις’: η πρόσληψη της Δύσης στον ελληνικό Τύπο κατά τη μεταβατική περίοδο 1843–1866” [The “spirit of civilisation” and the “proud West”: the perception of the West in the Greek press during the transition years, 1843–1866], *Τα Ιστορικά* 28/55 (December 2011), pp. 443–462.

¹²⁶ Apostolos Charissis, “Η σχέση Ανατολής–Δύσης ως φιλοσοφικοϊστορικό πρόβλημα στην ελληνική και τη ρωσική κοινωνική σκέψη: Συγκριτική προσέγγιση” [The East–West relation as a philosophical and historical problem in Greek and Russian social thought: a comparative approach], PhD diss., Panteion University, 2015.

It is worth mentioning at the beginning of this brief retrospective Georgios Kozakis-Typaldos' 1839 work *A philosophical essay on the progress and fall of old Greece*.¹²⁷ In this book, Hellenism, because of the region's climate, the physical environment and geographical position, bridged the East with the West. It was a concept based on ancient writers, yet easy to associate with the actual position of the Greeks as a financial and social go-between in the region in the early years of the nineteenth century.¹²⁸ The role of Greece in history was depicted more clearly a year later in an article by Markos Renieris (1840) under the title "On the law of human history".¹²⁹ In this he assigned to the Greek nation the romantic mission of solving the question of mutual understanding between the East and the West, as well as the political question of the East, that is, the Eastern Question.¹³⁰ The basic work of Renieris on this matter is his *What is Greece? East or West?* (1842).¹³¹ His conclusion was that by accepting the West, Greece was accomplishing its own nationalism (*εθνισμός*) and it had taken over the mission of leading the West to "morally conquest" and to "rejuvenate" the East.

This mission took the shape of a real policy with Kolettis' well-known speech in the Greek National Assembly in 1844:

In its geographical position, Greece is the centre of Europe; having on her right the East and on her left the West, she was destined by her fall to illuminate the West and, by her renaissance, the East. The former task was accomplished by our forefathers; the latter has been assigned to us. In the spirit of this oath and of this *Megali Idea*, I saw the nation's deputies coming to decide not only the fate of Greece but of the whole Greek race.¹³²

In other words, the Great Idea of Hellenism was not, as it is usually thought, only the liberation of the Greeks but also the revival of the East itself. The Great Idea of Greece was placed in the East, without denouncing its role as mediator. This

¹²⁷ Georgios Kozakis-Typaldos, *Φιλοσοφικόν δοκίμιον περί της προόδου και της πτώσεως της παλαιάς Ελλάδος* [A philosophical essay on the progress and fall of old Greece], Athens: Ek tis Typografias P. Mantzaraki, 1839.

¹²⁸ Charissis, *Η σχέση Ανατολής-Δύσης* [The East-West relationship], pp. 199–202.

¹²⁹ M.R., "Περί του νόμου της ιστορίας της ανθρωπότητας [On the law of human history]", *Ευρωπαϊκός Εραμιστής* 4 (1840), pp. 315–327.

¹³⁰ Charissis, *Η σχέση Ανατολής-Δύσης* [The East-West relationship], pp. 202–207.

¹³¹ Markos Renieris, "Τι είναι η Ελλάς; Ανατολή ή Δύσις;" [What is Greece? East or West?], *Εραμιστής* 2/3 (1842), pp. 189–215.

¹³² See the extract from Kolettis' speech in the national assembly on 14 January 1844 in C. Th. Dimaras, *Ελληνικός ρομαντισμός* [Greek Romanticism], Athens: Ermis, 1982, pp. 405–406.

is the so-called “tripartite scheme”, a term coined by Dimaras. The integration of the East into Greek history and its univocal acceptance by the adherents of tradition, as well by the modernisers, was accomplished, as it is also known, through the notion of Helleno-Christianity and the hellenisation of Byzantine history. The Eastern Roman Empire was, for Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, a Greek state. But even if Greece was an independent cultural pole in the threesome, still the specific features of the Greek character had to be defined and identified as Eastern or Western in nature.¹³³ Spyridon Zambelios wrote on this dilemma that the Orthodox Greeks could not abandon “that Eastern character that binds us to the Byzantine Middle Ages”.¹³⁴ In any case, through the hellenisation of Byzantium, King Otto assumed a special role as the instrument of the Great Idea and representative of the Greeks inside and outside Greece. He was, in theory, a challenger to the Byzantine throne and, in practice, a challenger to the Ottoman provinces. “Greek Empire” was the slogan of those who supported participation in the Crimean War;¹³⁵ but this did not imply that they also renounced the importance of the West, if we may judge from Petros Vrailas-Armenis’ work *East and West* (1854).¹³⁶

In the second half of the nineteenth century, during the reign of King George I and even earlier, the debate on the Great Idea developed into a negotiation of the best method to reach Constantinople, the undisputed national goal. The methods chosen by the politicians varied and occasionally contradicted each other: Sometimes it was war and irredentism, others domestic modernisation. A compromise was not easy. Therefore “Greece, which the European world had dreamed of becoming the epicentre of the union of the East with Western culture, ended up being considered an impediment to the future of the East.”¹³⁷ For decades this talk about the mockery, sneering and scorn exhibited by the West for the miserable Greece reflected Greece’s problems with the emerging

¹³³ C. Th. Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος* [Constantinos Paparrigopoulos], Athens: Ermis, 1986, pp. 66–68.

¹³⁴ Charissis, *Η σχέση Ανατολής–Δύσης* [The East–West relationship], p. 214.

¹³⁵ Skopetea, *Το “πρότυπο βασίλειο”* [The “model kingdom”], p. 277.

¹³⁶ Petros Vrailas-Armenis, “Ανατολή και Δύσις” [East and West], in *Φιλοσοφικά Έργα* [Philosophical works], ed. Evangelos Moutsopoulos and Athanasia Glycofrydi-Leontsini, vol 4B, Athens: Academy of Athens, 1974, pp. 325–336. See also Glycofrydi-Leontsini’s views in “Ανατολή και Δύσις”: Ταυτότητα και ετερότητα στο νεοελληνικό στοχασμό του 18ου και 19ου αι. [“East and West”: identity and otherness in 18th- and 19th-century modern Greek thought], in *Ταυτότητες στον ελληνικό κόσμο (από το 1204 έως σήμερα)* [Identities in the Greek world: from 1204 to the present day], ed. Konstantinos A. Dimadis, Athens: European Society of Modern Greek Studies, 2011, vol. 5, pp. 94–106.

¹³⁷ Skopetea, *Το “πρότυπο βασίλειο”* [The “model kingdom”], p. 241.

Balkan states as well as with the capitalist and technological paradigm of the West that had led to the replacement of age-old philhellenism with economic interests. It also reflected the social repercussions of Greek modernisation.¹³⁸ Liberal intellectuals and politicians emphasised the preparation of the Greek nation-state institutionally, military and financially. They were guided by rationalism but also by elitism, and their recipe was not without serious and articulated critique.¹³⁹ The vision of the Eastern Empire had been undermined by nationalisms forged in the West, the Uniate Church of Rome, useless parliamentary debates and the lack of strength and inspiration. In 1875 Dimitrios Vernadakis wrote against the European institutions that had been introduced by King Otto as well as against all other Western influences. Western civilisation had been influenced by classical letters, yet, in essence, it was Roman and German, unsuitable for the Greek nation. It had been shaped by developments of which Greece was not a part.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, the West, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, was in crisis itself and remitted its problems to the East. The critique of Professor Georgios Mistriotis (1891) is typical of this view:

It was bad fortune for the small Greek kingdom that it was established with the valuable contribution of the great European ideologists. No sooner had it begun to develop than a vulgar materialism suddenly prevailed, which is now ravaging Europe, and the relevant rapacity, which not only impeded the rebirth [of Greece] is also threatening the security of most of the Greek lands.¹⁴¹

All in all, Greece had rushed to change its national costume with Frankish dress, but now it was sitting powerless and swinging between East and West, unable to steer a proper course.

¹³⁸ “Old philhellenism sank in the Suez Canal and was crushed under the wheels of the railways constructed by British capital in Turkey” (*Ελπίς*, 18 July 1867), cited by Skopetea, *Το “πρότυπο βασίλειο”* [The “model kingdom”], pp. 166, 241–242.

¹³⁹ Paschalis Kitromilides, “Η συμβολή της ευρωπαϊκής πολιτικής σκέψης στη δημιουργία του ελληνικού φιλελευθερισμού: Η δεύτερη Εθνοσυνέλευση του 1862–1864 και η υποδοχή των ιδεών του Τζων Στούαρτ Μίλλ στην Ελλάδα” [The contribution of European political thought in the creation of Greek liberalism: The second national assembly of 1862–64 and the reception of John Stuart Mill’s ideas in Greece], in *Ο Φιλελευθερισμός στην Ελλάδα: Φιλελεύθερη θεωρία και πρακτική στην πολιτική και στην κοινωνία της Ελλάδος* [Liberalism in Greece: liberal theory and practice in Greece’s politics and society], ed. E. Arabatzis et. al., Athens: Estia, 1991, pp. 49–73.

¹⁴⁰ Varouxakis, “The Idea of ‘Europe’”, p. 26.

¹⁴¹ Roxani D. Argyropoulos (ed.), *Η φιλοσοφική σκέψη στην Ελλάδα από το 1828 ως το 1922* [Philosophical thought in Greece from 1828 to 1922], vol. 2, Athens: Gnosi, 1998, p. 600.

The modernisers supported Trikoupis' Modern Party (Νεωτερικό Κόμμα). The former Russophiles (embarrassed at the growing antislavism) and the Francophile radicals (descendants of Kolettis' irredentism) together supported Deliyannis' National Party (Εθνικόν Κόμμα). It was a party explicitly opposed to Trikoupis' vehement and Western-oriented reformist programme. In 1893 Deliyannis stated in Parliament that "the interest of our fatherland demands [...] to venture to suspend the force with which our society is adapting morals not of our land and alien habits improper to our traditions".¹⁴² Behind the formation of the National Party and social group of anti-modernisers lay a parallel ideological development of paramount importance: the emphasis on folk character and of the people as the agent of Greek purity, as opposed to the educated elite. As early as 1864, Alexander Goudas insisted that, "In other parts of the world the blossom of society is exclusively the upper class. On the contrary, in the East whatever is worthwhile by its nature [...] is to be found in the middle and lower classes."¹⁴³ Apparently, this shift was related to the emphasis placed by the Romantics on the vivid experience of the Greek Middle Ages without, however, renouncing or reducing the worship for antiquity. It also affected the literate paradigm and was related to the rising study of folklife (*λαογραφία*) and *demoticism*, since the supporters of the demotic vernacular held Europe responsible for the degradation of the people's language and culture. The Language Question led back to the delicate debate on the most effective way to assimilate the non-Greek-speaking Orthodox of Greek extraction, in other words, which form of the Greek language was the most appropriate for its Eastern mission. The emphasis on the "people", as has already been mentioned, was a German-inspired alternative to the social impasse, which represented for Eastern societies the impeccable example of the West.¹⁴⁴ As a result of that example

A specific social class was constructed within the nation, in the character of which neither the Greek nor the foreign element can clearly be distinguished; it is an indistinct mixture of national purity and European make-up. This class, supported by its wealth and under state protection, enlarged its circle and in an astonishing way destroyed the internal coherence and the uniformity of the nation; suddenly two kinds of people [*laoi*] were shaped, fighting against each other.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Gunnar Hering, *Τα πολιτικά κόμματα στην Ελλάδα 1821-1936* [The political parties in Greece, 1821-1936], trans. Thodoros Paraskevopoulos, Athens: MIET, 2006, vol. 1, p. 591, n. 167.

¹⁴³ Charissis, *Η σχέση Ανατολής-Δύσης* [The East-West relationship], p. 235.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 235-236.

¹⁴⁵ Skopetea, *Το "πρότυπο βασίλειο"* [The "model kingdom"], p. 242.

But all these “golden flies” and the “caviar-eating” stock market investors, the by-products of bourgeois financial liberalism, were not pure members of Greek society.¹⁴⁶ As the press pointed out, they molested Greece. Angelos Vlachos and Aristotelis Valaoritis argued that Greece was not related to this continent torn apart by financial interest, “to this aged Europe inflamed with monetary questions”.¹⁴⁷ Comments like the above had an alternative meaning. Alongside romantic nationalism was the growth of socialist ideology, identified on the one hand with *demoticism* and on the other with an Eastern federation. It was a new imperial idea, adapted to democratic and federal European standards, which also reintroduced (from the left) the convenient political vision of Feraios.

In the two decades preceding the Great War, Greece was troubled by a deep crisis.¹⁴⁸ Instead of rejuvenating the East, it had languished: bankruptcy, defeat, perverse parliamentarianism, political instability, fierce confrontation in Ottoman Macedonia against Bulgaria and Romania, the loss again of the Powers’ favour and the international Public Debt Administration (PDA). Irredentism seemed to be doomed because of the state’s failure to respond to modernisation. This line of critique – irredentism conditioned by modernisation – represented a quality transformation of Greek nationalism and was relentless.¹⁴⁹ Not even King George was untouchable. Greece needed

¹⁴⁶ It is worth mentioning that Deliyannis’ supporters had indicted Trikoupis as an *apatris* (lacking devotion to the nation) and as an agent of the foreigners. See Hering, *Τα πολιτικά κόμματα στην Ελλάδα* [The political parties], p. 589, n. 157. The chasm between the Greeks within the national borders, adherents of an agrarian and comprador economy, with those in the diaspora, mediators between the European capital and the Greek economy, is analysed from a Marxist viewpoint in the works of Costis Moskov, Constantine Tsoucalas and Costas Vergopoulos. See Costis Moskov, *Η εθνική και κοινωνική συνείδηση στην Ελλάδα 1830–1909: Ιδεολογία του μεταπρατικού χώρου* [National and social consciousness in Greece, 1830–1909], Athens: Olkos, 1974; Costas Vergopoulos, *Εθνισμός και οικονομική ανάπτυξη* [Nationalism and economic development], Athens: Exantas, 1978; Vergopoulos, *Κράτος και οικονομική πολιτική στον 19ο αιώνα. (Η ελληνική κοινωνία (1880–1895))* [State and economic policy in the nineteenth century: Greek society, 1880–1895], Athens: Exantas, 1978; Constantine Tsoucalas, *Εξάρτηση και αναπαραγωγή: Ο κοινωνικός ρόλος των εκπαιδευτικών μηχανισμών στην Ελλάδα (1830–1922)* [Dependence and reproduction: the social role of education in Greece], Athens: Themelio, 1985.

¹⁴⁷ Varouxakis, “The Idea of ‘Europe’”, p. 27; Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος* [Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos], p. 67.

¹⁴⁸ The ideological ferment of the period is thoroughly examined in Gerasimos Augustinos’ monograph, *Consciousness and History: Nationalist Critics of Greek Society, 1897–1914*, New York: East European Quarterly, 1977.

¹⁴⁹ For an analysis of the 1897 generation’s ideology, see George Leontaritis, “Εθνικισμός και Διεθνισμός: Πολιτική Ιδεολογία” [Nationalism and internationalism: political ideology], in

deeds, action, strength, resilience, true heroes; like Second Lieutenant Pavlos Melas, recently killed in action in Macedonia, and the newly “discovered” Makrygiannis, the pure 1821 revolutionary. It needed projects, targets, a challenging future, strong executives, a strong king; not talk, theories, past glories and politicians. In November 1905 Neoklis Kazazis mentioned in one of his many lectures that:

All of the peoples of the Ottoman Empire would follow a vigorous Greek endeavour under the leadership of a reigning king who descended from the Marbled King, the armed prophet of the national right [...] We are in need of an armed king, we are in need of a monarch who will tell us: Forward!¹⁵⁰

The Greeks should return to their roots, rediscover anew their own power and own resources, disassociate themselves from the PDA, be armed, passionately hate their enemies, not expect the least from Europe, fight against xenomania, subordination and servility to the West, against the materialism of a comfortable lifestyle, the “Jewish-style cosmopolitanism”. These were the combined arguments of the demoticists but also of the anti-liberal nationalists of the National Society (Εθνική Εταιρεία); they were the words of Periklis Yannopoulos and of Dragoumis, very pleasant music to the ears of a wider audience, encompassing much more than the supporters of Deliyannis.¹⁵¹ Yannopoulos explained:

The creation of Greek life is impossible to start as long as all the substance of life, from the first shred of the cradle to the last shred of the grave, are alien. Striking xenomania should be the first initiative, the first fight of those who wish to struggle for a Greek start. Xenomania is vulgar. It is cheap. It is nonsense. It is an absence of honour. It is an absence of patriotism. It is vanity. It is ignorance.¹⁵²

This allegation, of the Greek soul turning Frankish, was much older and very widespread as an expression of contempt and shame. It was worse than imitation; in reality, it was submission. Kostis Palamas tried to distinguish “Frankism

Ελληνισμός και ελληνικότητα: Ιδεολογικοί και βιωματικοί άξονες της νεοελληνικής κοινωνίας [Hellenism and hellenicity: ideological and experiential axis of the Greek Society], ed. D. G. Tsaoussis, Athens: Estia, 1983, pp. 27–35.

¹⁵⁰ Thanassis Bohotis, *Η ριζοσπαστική δεξιά: Αντικοινοβουλευτισμός, συντηρητισμός και ανολοκλήρωτος φασισμός στην Ελλάδα 1864–1911: Έρευνες για σύγχρονες πολιτικές ιδεολογίες* [The radical right: anti-parliamentarism, conservatism and incomplete fascism in Greece, 1864–1911: Studies in modern political ideologies], Athens: Vivliorama, 2003, p. 451.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 407–494.

¹⁵² Periklis Yannopoulos, “Η ξενομανία” [Xenomania], *Ο Νουμάς* 1/5 (1903), p. 4.

(Francophilia)” from “Europeanism”, the former being a pejorative term and the latter an ingredient of Hellenism. But this was not an easy venture.¹⁵³

In the same years, Dragoumis, a close friend of Yannopoulos, through his Macedonian experience, created a self-contained and uncultivated Greek cultural model, not to Europeanise the East, but to integrate it into a Greek Eastern empire. He rejected the West and the Greek state as a Western creation, built on classicism and *katharevousa*, forced to live a borrowed and false life.¹⁵⁴ Dragoumis’ vision was by definition opposed to that of Venizelos’ Liberals and, occasionally, also to that of the Socialists, although he shared with them their contempt of German militarism. It was only natural that the nationalist demoticists and the romantic nationalists alike joined the People’s Party (Λαϊκόν Κόμμα) against (what seemed to them) a revival of the elitist and plutocratic Trikoupiism, surfacing anew under Venizelos’ leadership.

This conclusion does not imply that the People’s Party was truly anti-Western in its majority (despite the anti-Western rockets launched occasionally by a few of its leaders), or that it shared Dragoumis’ vision for the East. It focused on the promotion of Greekness as a value and the traditions of “small but honourable Greece”, investing this quest with a strong, easily retrievable, and handy anti-Western rhetoric that was adaptable to circumstance. Their arsenal of arguments, however, contained more than strictly anti-Western arguments. By that time, the struggle for Macedonia and the events of the Balkan Wars had created a common asset of popular and national achievements as well as stereotypes, accessible to all: the triumphs of the Greek brigands in Macedonia in spite of the state’s “impeccable stance”, which was a synonym for national humiliation; the triumph of the war option in 1912 against the will of the Powers; the glory of the kilt-wearing soldier (*evzone*), who was the humble but robust popular avenger of the nation’s enemies; the heart and the honour (*φιλότιμο*) of the Greek fighter – sometimes a man with a pious soul, at other times a bloodthirsty superman; the Balkan alliance refashioned conveniently on the vision of Rhigas; King Constantine XII (not I), the soldier king and future emperor confronting age-old enemies. The same achievements, seen from a different angle, constituted the triumph of urban rationalism, which had set up the state, military and diplomatic requirements for Greek expansion.

After the Balkan Wars, both sides, the modernisers and the anti-Westerners, felt (and perhaps they were) historically justified and ready for another round

¹⁵³ Varouxakis, “The Idea of ‘Europe’”, p. 28; Dimaras, *Κωνσταντίνος Παπαρρηγόπουλος* [Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos], p. 67.

¹⁵⁴ Varouxakis, “The Idea of ‘Europe’”, p. 29.

of eastern glories, yet not regardless of the risk, the method and the allies. They were both inspired by a common urban nationalism, that of the Great Idea, but they had not reached a common view on the proper course; because planning that course presupposed the conclusion of the “metaphysical” negotiation of the Greek position between the East and the West.¹⁵⁵ In the early twentieth century, many ideas, not too dissimilar from each other, had been coined and laid on the table: For some, the image of Europe was identified with cultural decadence; for others it was an image of superiority. A few supported the idea that European superiority was to be attributed to Greek origins; therefore Greece was the appropriate commissioner of the West in the East. Others claimed the same role on behalf of a distinct and self-contained Greek culture, not of the European kind.¹⁵⁶ A revealing initiative of the progressive magazine *Γράμματα* addressed an open question to educated Greeks concerning the new targets of the state and its relation to Europe.¹⁵⁷ The variety of responses proved that this national debate had not been settled. Most responses were in favour of differentiating from or, at least, having only selective contact with the European model. In their view, the Greek nation could be self-contained. “We will borrow whatever we need but we will be free debtors, not the slaves of a foreign culture,” asserted the radical scholar and demoticist Petros Vlastos.¹⁵⁸ Grigorios Papamichail, professor of theology at the University of Athens, responded: “It would not be fit to use the European standard to measure our own matters.”¹⁵⁹

It is well known that this debate did not cease either at the end of the Great War or after the disaster. In the early interwar years, the memory of the National

¹⁵⁵ Rena Stavridi-Patrikiou suggests that the Balkan Wars constitute a landmark in the history of anti-Westernism in Greece. The annexation of the New Territories and the revivification of the Byzantium legacy rekindled the question of Greece’s relation to the West. Rena Stavridi-Patrikiou, “Ο φόβος της Δύσης [The fear of the West]”, *Ευρώπη και νέος Ελληνισμός* [Europe and modern Hellenism], Athens: Society for the Study of Modern Greek Civilisation and General Culture, 2001, pp. 131–139.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32. The argument of Greece’s mission to civilise the East and its role as a scout of the West was used both by the Venizelists and important anti-Venizelists during the Asia Minor campaign. See Spyros G. Ploumidis, *Τα μυστήρια της Αιγίδος: Το μικρασιατικό ζήτημα στην ελληνική πολιτική (1821–1922)* [The secrets of the Aigeis: The Asia Minor question in Greek politics (1821–1922)], Athens: Estia, 2016, pp. 202–207.

¹⁵⁷ *Ερευνα για τις μελλοντικές κατευθύνσεις της φυλής* [Survey on the future goals of our race]. According to the introduction, *Γράμματα* addressed the question in the summer of 1913. Various answers it received were occasionally published in the following years, only to circulate them as a whole in 1919 in the pamphlet in question.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

Schism was preserved and – selectively and in times of political tension – charged the judgments of the present, with varying degrees of sentiment. Yet Greece’s relations with the foreign West were not affected. This time realism prevailed.¹⁶⁰ The question of “East or West” was not obliterated but was transformed. There was no choice: The dissolution of the empires, the rise of Turkish nationalism, and the Greek defeat in Asia Minor cancelled in the most definite and dramatic way all ideas for the restitution of an Eastern Empire. The presence, however, of one-and-a-half million refugees strengthened the memory of the “eastern part” (to cite Elytis) of Hellenism. The question of Greece’s due future and its cultural relations with the West was rephrased within a context, more extroverted and dynamic. Various groups of scholars, writers and artists defended a new national ideal, rediscovered the “native” as well as the “oriental” elements of modern Greek civilisation, and assumed a critical stance vis-à-vis the “decaying” Western culture. In general, the Generation of the Thirties did not reject European culture but competed with it. It was no longer a relation between the underage apprentice and its mature master. This was a competition between equal partners, to say the least.¹⁶¹

More than 30 years ago, George Mavrogordatos presented the National Schism as a crisis of national unification, defined by geographical, political, economic and social criteria.¹⁶² At the level of ideology, he combined anti-Venizelism with “the introverted patriotism of Old Greece and the romantic nostalgia for a mythical past”, whose geographic frontiers to the south of Olympus had secured unity before the cataclysmic state unification masterminded by Venizelos. We may move a step forward. The National Schism might also be considered as an episode of the broader and much older Greek ideological drama,

¹⁶⁰ Despina Papadimitriou, *Από τον λαό των νομιμοφρόνων στο έθνος των εθνικοφρόνων: Η συντηρητική σκέψη στην Ελλάδα 1922–1967* [From the law-abiding people to the nation of the nationally minded: conservative thought in Greece, 1922–1967], Athens: Savalas, 2006, pp. 62–64.

¹⁶¹ Dimitris Tziouvas, *Ο μύθος της γενιάς του Τριάντα: Νεωτερικότητα, ελληνικότητα και πολιτισμική ιδεολογία* [The myth of the Generation of the Thirties: modernity, Greekness and cultural ideology], Athens: Polis, 2011, pp. 256–269. See also Katerina Papari’s observations in *Ελληνικότητα και αστική διανοήση στον Μεσοπόλεμο: Το πολιτικό πρόγραμμα των Π. Κανελλόπουλου, Ι. Θεοδωρακόπουλου και Κ. Τσάτσου* [Greekness and bourgeois intelligentsia in the interwar period: the political programme of P. Kanellopoulos, I. Theodorakopoulos and K. Tsatsos], Athens: Asini, 2017, pp. 105–106.

¹⁶² George Mavrogordatos, “Ο Διχασμός ως κρίση εθνικής ολοκλήρωσης” [The National Schism as a crisis of national integration], in *Ελληνισμός και Ελληνικότητα: Ιδεολογικοί και βιωματικοί άξονες της νεοελληνικής κοινωνίας* [Hellenism and Hellenicity: ideological and experiential axes of modern Greek society], ed. Dimitrios G. Tsaoussis, Athens: Estia, 1988, pp. 69–78. See also Bohotis’ approach, “Εσωτερική Πολιτική” [Domestic politics], pp. 93–100.

that of the tantalising and incomplete “return” to the East via the European West. It goes without saying that the National Schism during World War I was not caused by the controversy between romantic and liberal nationalisms. It would also be a mistake to equate all the royalist enemies of Venizelos with the enemies of Europe and the Venizelists with its defenders. This was made clear in the first part of this article as well as in the second, where the making of the ideologies was described. Strictly speaking, it was not a bipolar confrontation, because there was more than one version of the West and the supporters of the East employed occidental arguments.¹⁶³

Europe, be it western, central or eastern, could not be erased wholesale from the Greek imagination, no matter how intensively Greek interests were invoked. However, the Schism did select from the East–West debate whatever arguments were necessary to invest military and political choices with a “deeper” meaning. These arguments included: Greek kingship or imperium; federalism; the rhetoric against Western culture (of either the imperialists or the militarists); the decay of philhellenism; the negation of the subordination to the Powers; the importance or the burden of cultural relations with the East; condemning the imitation of the West; Levantinism as a sickness; the importance of folk culture; the critique of capitalism and of Greek plutocrats. All the aforementioned were the terms of an ongoing debate between nationalists, socialists and demoticists, which, of course, had to be adapted, sometimes improperly, to the current military alliances and their reshuffling after World War I at the expense of Greece. This not unknown debate was much more essential in our view for the making of the Schism. It is not speculative to argue that, with all of its intensity and simplicity, it subdued and assimilated in the East–West scheme the diplomatic and political war dilemmas of Greece and strengthened the anti-Western critique at a time when liberalism seemed to triumph. It bequeathed to the Greek national imagination experiences and arguments which affected, to a certain degree, the interwar debate on what it meant to be Greek and European. In 1937, Panagiotis Kanellopoulos recognised Yannopoulos as the forerunner and most important defender of Greek civilisation but remarked that the latter’s mistake was that “he had cursed Europe”. For Kanellopoulos, the spiritual rejuvenation of Greece could not be accomplished outside Europe: “We will not be reborn except inside Europe,” he stressed, before adding as a fleeting comment, “to save her”.¹⁶⁴

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

¹⁶³ Kitromilides, “Europe and the Dilemmas of Greek Conscience”, pp. 11–13.

¹⁶⁴ Papari, *Ελληνικότητα και αστική διανόηση* [Greekness and bourgeois intelligentsia], p. 106.