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THE CRISIS OF THE LONG 1850s AND REGIME CHANGE IN THE IONIAN STATE AND THE KINGDOM OF GREECE

Sakis Gekas

Abstract: The overthrow of King Othon in 1862 and the decolonization of the Ionian Islands led to the unification of the Ionian State with the Kingdom of Greece. This article argues that the multifaceted crisis of the long 1850s (1847-1862) created a crisis of legitimacy for both the British Protectorate and the Othonian regime. The change of regime represents a case where an economic, social and political crisis set in motion a process of democratization and not the rise of an authoritarian regime (as in the 1930s). The argument balances socio-economic structuralist factors with the contingency of political action that determined the union of the two states; this regime change was the optimal and favoured solution and the way out of the legitimacy crisis for all actors involved.

Introduction

From the late 1840s to the early 1860s commercial downturn, financial instability, foreign occupation, cholera outbreaks and food riots engulfed the Ionian State and the Kingdom of Greece. The political events of the period are well known but they are rarely seen as the consequences of this multifaceted crisis; in Greece, the revolution against King Othon forced him to abdicate in 1862, while in the Ionian Islands the struggle against "xenocracy" intensified and culminated in the first territorial expansion. This article argues that the Ionian State and the Greek Kingdom suffered from a legitimacy crisis that explains the disillusionment of many Ionians with British protection and the discontent of many more Greeks with their first king. The food shortages and the cholera outbreak brought in by the foreign troops eroded the popularity of Othon and his regime. In the urban centres of the Kingdom, politicians, military officers, civil servants and journalists, merchants and shipowners were equally disappointed with the reckless miscalculations of the erratic king during the Crimean War; the support Othon offered to Russia not only infuriated British and French policy-makers but also harmed trade as much as it dampened national ambitions. The change of regime signifies the emergence of a middle class of merchants, lawyers, military and civil officers, journalists and young politicians; it was this crisis that produced the first recognisable middle class in Greek society, with a presence in the public sphere. Similarly, the multiple crises in the Ionian Islands and an

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escalating challenge to the Protectorate by the radical unionists convinced the British to abandon that "anomalous state",[1] especially since the 1862 revolution in Greece forced British foreign policy to find a new dynasty for Greece. The economic and social crisis accelerated the political crisis and triggered a transition to a more democratic regime in the unified state. This article focuses on developments in Greek and Ionian societies because the international dimension of the issue and the importance of British influence are fairly well known.[2]

The consequences of prolonged and multifaceted crises always play out in the political field, which serves as the field of last resort in our attempts to understand crises and navigate through the maze of events, sources and interpretations; we desperately try to order the factors that "produce" crises, past and present. There are several ways to approach the historical experience of (economic) crises: one is to seek for advice on policies, the most common characteristic of studies on the 1929 crash and the 1930s Depression;[3] the second is path dependence, trying to understand the historical evolution and trajectory of our current predicament; and a third – the most imaginative one – is challenging conventional views and providing alternative interpretations, the favoured approach in this article. While it is far too early to discern the impact of the 2010s crisis on historiography, it may be as ground-breaking as

[1] In one of the few arguments that go beyond the standard interpretations, the support for the unionist cause is directly associated with the failings of the Protectorate: "The swelling support amongst Ionians for union with Greece occurred during the difficult years marked by the failure of the olive crop, the impact of the currant blight and further deprivations caused by the effects upon the Islands by the Crimean War. […] Economic collapse during the mid-1850s caused by natural events led to a deterioration of the Island's infrastructure – the suspension of public works, the deterioration of roads and the decline of schooling." P. L. Cottrell, *The Ionian Bank: An Imperial Institution, 1839-1864*, Athens: Alpha Bank Historical Archives, 2007, p. 319.

[2] Robert Holland and D. Markides, *The British and the Hellenes: Struggles for Mastery in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1850-1960*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. The authors point to the similarities: "King Otho's problems were similar to that of Henry Storks: the desertion of fair-weather friends to add to the challenge of incorrigible enemies" and that "it was the interaction of British dilemmas in the Protectorate and the Greek Kingdom which thereafter shaped events", p. 53.

[3] Following the Depression of the 1930s, for instance, interpretations about the role of economic policies and their consequences inform arguments about policy response to the present crisis. The world is divided between Keynesians and Freedmanites who still argue about how that crisis was handled by the US government and how European economies reacted as the disease spread.

the "historiography of dissent", triggered by the crisis in Greek society and national consciousness of the interwar period and reflected in the work of Yannis Kordatos.[4]

The notion of clientelism, criticized for ignoring the impact of universal suffrage that weakened dependency relationships,[5] has determined the political history of the nineteenth century,[6] but we still know very little about some key moments in Greek history, such as the admittedly important change of regime that took place in the 1860s and paved the way for the union of the Ionian State and the Greek Kingdom. The integration of the Ionian State into the Greek Kingdom meant the end of colonization (even in the form of the Protectorate) and the adoption of the Greek constitution of 1864, a result of the anti-Othon revolution of 1862, and therefore a much broader franchise than the narrow one existing according to the Ionian State electoral law. This change of electoral regime probably made a bigger impact in Ionian societies than in the Greek Kingdom, but we still lack detailed studies that trace the consequences of this transition. The 1864 constitution amounted to a change of regime, what contemporaries of the opposition to Othon called "the system", and substituted it with one of the most democratic constitutions in the world.[7] Regime change is defined as the transformation in the *de jure* political institutions that determined the distribution of political power in the united state. Advanced capitalist institutions were absent from nineteenth-century Greek and Ionian economies; the crisis we are concerned with was not a bubble generated out of financial speculation only to burst with devastating and rapid consequences for many more outside the finance ring. This does not mean that the Greek and Ionian economies were isolated and immune to fluctuations in the international economy; on the contrary, with a very small domestic market and subsistence depending on cash crops exported and the import of grain, the two economies were sensitive to international

[4] Paschalis M. Kitromilides, "Historiographical Interpretations of Modern Greek Reality: An Exploratory Essay", in A. Lily Macrakis and P. Nikiforos Diamandouros (eds), *New Trends in Modern Greek Historiography*, Occasional Papers, 1, Hanover, NH: MGSA, 1982, p. 9.

[5] Yannis Yannitsiotis, "Social History in Greece: New Perspectives", *East Central Europe / ECE* 34-35 (2007-2008), parts 1-2, pp. 101-130.

[6] John Anthony Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece, 1833-1843*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

[7] Christos Hadziiossif, "Class Structure and Class Antagonism in Late Nineteenth-century Greece", in Philip Carabott (ed.), *Greek Society in the Making, 1863-1913*, Aldershot: Ashgate, Variorum, 1997, pp. 3-18.

developments, especially in commerce and shipping. The crisis of the 1850s shares similarities with the pre-industrial food crises, but was the first crisis that erupted within Greek states whose governments faced them; for the first time there were national political consequences, not local or regional ones.

Foreign interference as the determining factor in Greek politics is an established view in Greek historiography, coined in phrases such as "European tutelage".[8] Other interpretations attribute the deposition of Othon to irredentism or the frustration thereof; officers, intellectuals, pundit-journalists and "the people" were fed up with Othon's incompetence, indecisiveness and lack of judgement, as much as they were angry at his lack of an Orthodox heir; Othon managed to alienate everyone, including both radical and moderate irredentists in Greek politics.[9] There have been few attempts and even fewer recent ones to go beyond the politics of the monarchy and the king's authoritarianism and disrespect for parliamentary democracy.[10] While it is difficult to gauge public support, frustration or hostility towards the first king, it is important to move beyond diplomatic and political history and explore the agency of the various interest groups. The decision of Britain to cede the Ionian Islands to Greece is often seen as an international relations act of politics, on the occasion of the new dynasty installed in the country under the auspices and the blessing of the most influential of the "protecting powers", or as a failure of British imperial administration.[11] "English diplomacy" played a part in the revolution of 1862 that split some of the radicals into monarchists and anti-royalists;[12] however, contemporaries denied that this was a "foreign scheme". A comparison between the conditions and outcome of the crisis as it unfolded in the Ionian State (under British protection) and the Greek Kingdom (under tripartite "tutelage") and the groups that sought to change the existing regime can provide answers to new as well as old questions and challenge existing interpretations about a period that is probably the least explored in Greek historiography.

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[8] T. A. Couloumbis, J. A. Petropoulos and H. J. Psomiades, *Foreign Interference in Greek Politics: An Historical Perspective*, New York: Pella Publishing Company, 1976. Jon V. Kofas, *Financial Relations of Greece and the Great Powers, 1832-1862*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.

[9] Couloumbis, Petropoulos and Psomiades, *Foreign Interference*, p. 26.

[10] Dakin only briefly outlined the role of the "trading, commercial and professional classes" and the "growing intelligentsia"; Douglas Dakin, *The Unification of Greece, 1770-1923*, London: Ernest Benn Ltd, 1972, pp. 86, 93.

[11] Bruce Knox, "British Policy and the Ionian Islands, 1847-1864: Nationalism and Imperial Administration", *English Historical Review* XCIX/392 (1984), pp. 503-529.

[12] Georgios G. Alisandratos, *Κείμενα για τον επτανησιακό ριζοσπαστισμό* [Documents on Eptanesian radicalism], Athens: Benaki Museum, 2008, p. 303; there are no sources provided that support the claim that the 1862 uprising was motivated by English diplomacy.

It was not always the case. In the 1970s and 1980s approaches favourite to political science or sociology directed the research agenda but also the findings; macro-historical explanations resulted from less than satisfactory empirical studies.[13] Beyond the established political history approaches and interpretations, a comparison of the crises of the 1850s in the Greek Kingdom and the Ionian State suggests that the responses of various urban groups determined, on the domestic field at least, the convergence of the historical trajectories of the two states. Historians have laboured on the historical construction of national identities, but not on the process of state formation that involved merging various administrative traditions into a "nation-state".[14] The creation of a national economy has recently been explored in several economic histories of the Greek State.[15] Only one study has dealt exclusively with how the Greek economy faired during its first decades, when it lived in a state of almost permanent crisis,[16] and we are still far from understanding the process of integration of various economies and societies in nineteenth-century Greece. Instead of taking the "nation-state" character of the Greek State for granted and imposing interpretations that raise questions and hide contradictions,[17] this article compares the crisis dynamics and its political consequences in the two Greek states before they amalgamated in 1864 to address issues of regime change following multiple crises such as those of the long 1850s.

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[13] The 1844 and 1862 turning points in the constitutional-political and social history of the country cannot be summarily dismissed as "simply the attempts of the various local oligarchies to undermine the absolutist inclinations of the Bavarian oligarchy", without an explanation of the success or failure of these attempts. Nicos P. Mouzelis, *Modern Greece: Facets of Underdevelopment*, New York: Holmes & Meier, 1978, p. 17.

[14] For the same argument, see Tassos Anastassiadis and Nathalie Clayer (eds), *Society, Politics and State Formation in Southeastern Europe during the 19th Century*, Athens: Alpha Bank Historical Archives, 2011, p. 13; Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft*; Kostas P. Kostis, "The Formation of the Greek State", in Faruk Birtek and Thalia Dragonas (eds), *Citizenship and the Nation-state in Greece and Turkey*, New York: Routledge, 2005, pp. 18-36.

[15] G. V. Dertilis, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Κράτους, 1830-1920* [History of the Greek State, 1830-1920], 2 vols, Athens: Estia, 2005; Thanasis Kalafatis and Evangelos Prontzas (eds), *Οικονομική ιστορία του Ελληνικού Κράτους* [Economic history of the Greek State], Athens: Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, 2011.

[16] Theodoros Sakellaropoulos, *Οι κρίσεις στην Ελλάδα. Οικονομικές, κοινωνικές και πολιτικές όψεις* [The crises in Greece: economic, social and political aspects], 2 vols, Athens: Kritiki, 1994.

[17] Kostis, "The Formation of the Greek State".

Greece: Debt Colony since 1832

Greek foreign debt played a significant role in Othon's fall from the throne, because of British intransigence on the issue. The state of Greek finances for the period 1844-1869, when the Greek Kingdom could not borrow from any bankers abroad, determined the country's economic development.[18] The 1832 treaty between the Great Powers and Bavaria gave to the new state of Greece a king and a loan of 60,000,000 French francs at 5% interest. The loan arrived reduced by commissions, advance debt servicing, the cost of transport of foreign troops to Greece, and by an enormous indemnity to the Ottoman Empire worth 11,220,598 francs. Very little of the original amount remained for the urgent infrastructure needs of the Greek State. The lack of funds weighed heavily in subsequent years since the government generated meagre revenues and external borrowing was not available. The heavy financial burden placed on Othon's regime diminished any capacity to rebuild the economy with state intervention and begin to repay the debt.[19] In 1844 the government of Ioannis Kolettes, Othon's favourite to re-establish his authoritarian rule after the constitutional concession, suspended payments. For 15 years Greece paid almost nothing and was unable to borrow from foreign banks, being in a state of a permanent debt and therefore liquidity crisis. In 1859 the British-French-Russian Financial Commission forced the country to pay 900,000 francs every year, an amount that was supposed to increase when revenues allowed.[20] The decision was imposed on the country, and Othon simply refused to comply, continuing to ignore the obligation to pay any instalment of the debt, as if this was still the 1840s. By summer 1861 Othon had lost diplomatic support from all three powers in the Financial Commission and was essentially isolated domestically and abroad. When the anti-monarchist revolt broke out in 1862, Othon was left with no support and no financial aid, and faced obstacles in borrowing even from inside the country he ruled.[21] The leverage of British power prevented Othon from borrowing from the National Bank and deprived him of any financial assistance to deal

[18] P. E. Petrakis, "The Borrowing Requirements of the Greek Public Sector, 1844-1869", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 12 (1985), pp. 35-46.

[19] William W. McGrew, *Land and Revolution in Modern Greece, 1800-1881: The Transition in the Tenure and Exploitation of Land from Ottoman Rule to Independence*, Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1985, p. 97.

[20] Constantinos Tsoukalas, *Κράτος και κοινωνική ανάπτυξη. Η συγκρότηση του δημόσιου χώρου στην Ελλάδα* [Social development and state: the formation of the public sector in Greece], Athens: Themelio, [6]1999, pp. 62-63.

[21] Kofas, *Financial Relations,* pp. viii, 125.

with the revolution of 1862. The retired officers who resented Othon were the instigators of the revolution, but with significant financial support Othon might have overcome resistance and pulled through, especially after the Nafplio uprising was suppressed.[22] Financial pressure on Othon accelerated both the political crisis and the dethronement, but this does not explain or account for the domestic/endogenous factors of the revolution.

Since foreign borrowing was not available, an efficient taxation system was more than necessary. Reform on taxation, however, dragged on for decades. The constitution of 1844 ended several centuries of heavy taxation on peasants that went back to the centuries of Ottoman rule and had worsened in the few decades before the revolution.[23] These reforms essentially released peasants, the most populous voting group, from the pressure of direct taxation and burdened instead middle- and lower-class groups through customs revenues. Similarly, the Ionian State taxed only goods exported and imported, burdening mostly agricultural producers and the urban poor, and privileging imported goods to secure revenues and please British commercial policy. Merchants saw transit trade increase significantly during the period, especially on Corfu. The Greek Kingdom followed a trade policy that protected whatever local production existed, especially in industry, but overall Greece was a very open economy. In the Ionian Islands, on the other hand, British-Ionian governments followed a regime of high tariffs on all goods exported within the islands as well (given that they were in theory provincial states united under the Protectorate). The main similarity in the economies of the two states is the constant trade deficit. In both the Ionian case but especially in the Greek case the deficit was sustained only and partly with invisible incomes, profits from shipping and commerce generated abroad.[24] Also similar was the "currants for wheat" balance of trade in which Greek and Ionian economies exported currants in return for the ability to buy the necessary grain.

The crisis was no less severe in the agricultural economies of the Kingdom and the Protectorate, with intense swings in production and therefore in export levels. In 1848 the foundations of the overproduction cycles were laid, and by 1851 currants represented 68% of total exports.[25] In 1852 and for the

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[22] *Ibid*., p. 127.

[23] Dertilis, *Ιστορία*, Vol. II, p. 707.

[24] Socrates D. Petmezas, "Foreign Trade and Capital Flows in Nineteenth-century Greece", in Edhem Eldem and Socrates Petmezas (eds), *The Economic Development of Southeastern Europe in the 19th Century*, Athens: Alpha Bank Historical Archives, 2011, pp. 447-491.

[25] Alexis Franghiadis, *Ελληνική οικονομία, 19ος-20ός αιώνας. Από τον αγώνα της Ανεξαρ-*

next five years crops were almost completely destroyed by the phylloxera of the early 1850s, but by the end of the decade production had recovered to unprecedented levels. By then currants had become one of the most significant export items of the Greek economy with the share of exports to the total of Greek exports fluctuating around 50%. This is where the beginnings of the deficiency and vulnerability of the Greek economy in the 1870s lay, when the share of currants reached above 70% of total exports. The two regions were competing for the same markets, especially England, a competition that contributed to the overproduction and the "monoculture" economy of the later decades. The disease of the vines probably delayed the currant bubble that appeared a few years later.[26] Volatility of production and the reduction of revenues harmed Ionian State finances, since its income derived solely from the export and import duties. Reduced revenues affected the ability of Ionian and Greek governments to manage crises or prevent them with much-needed infrastructure works that depended on the fiscal capabilities of the two states. The same period saw the most serious famine that, together with the crop destruction, squeezed profit margins of growers in the currant-producing regions and deprived many more from the subsistence grain that Greece imported. Grain prices doubled especially during 1854-1856, the period of the Crimean War, when Russia prohibited grain exports and caused the spike in grain prices in international as well as domestic markets.[27]

The commercial downturn meant that both states, collecting reduced revenues, had to borrow to fill the financing gap. The Ionian Bank and the National Bank of Greece operated as semi-central banks as well as commercial banks with note-issuing privileges. Understandably, their managers were reluctant to lend to governments fairly fragile and with scant resources, especially when they faced their own challenges. In 1848 a liquidity crisis erupted when currant importers in London were unable to buy currants from the Peloponnese with cash and asked for three months' credit; currant prices dropped exactly when they were being agreed. Hundreds of merchants suffered, and the National Bank faced its own crisis when debtors delayed or

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τησίας στην οικονομική και νομισματική ένωση της Ευρώπης [Greek economy, nineteenth-twentieth century: from the War of Independence to the economic and monetary union of Europe], Athens: Nefeli, 2007, p. 75.

[26] Elena Frangakis-Syrett, "Monoculture in Nineteenth-century Greece and the Port City of Patras", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 20 (1994), pp. 9-34.

[27] Sakellaropoulos, *Οι κρίσεις στην Ελλάδα*, Vol. I, pp. 81-86.

stopped their payments for servicing their loans.[28] This was a brief liquidity and currency crisis, a prelude to the long-lasting one of 1854-1857.

From the 1840s onwards the Ionian State government ran budget deficits and was forced to fund public works with increased borrowing from the Ionian Bank, established in 1839, and to accumulate debt. The building of hospitals, piers, prisons, roads and drainage projects was all financed with loans from the bank.[29] From its earliest days the Ionian Bank lent to the Ionian government with rates up to 6% for short-term loans (three months) and 5% for longer terms (seven months to two years).[30] The bank's performance during the 1840s was impressive and several Lord High Commissioners asked for and received loans, despite the reluctance of the bank's board of directors to lend to the Ionian State, which was forced to borrow from the bank to pay salaries. From the early 1850s public finances deteriorated, as is reflected in the levels of state borrowing; between March and September 1852 the Ionian government borrowed £31,000.[31] The destruction of the currant crop in Kefalonia and Zakynthos (Zante) in 1853 and poor olive crops in the early 1850s on Corfu led to reduced revenues from export and compelled the government to take out another loan of £8000, which Lord High Commissioner Sir Henry George Ward announced in his opening speech at the Ionian Assembly; while another application for an even bigger loan was rejected.[32] The period 1851-1857 – the "locust years" – saw a credit bubble in Zakynthos, a failed olive crop on Corfu and the currant disease that lasted until the 1856 harvest. The economic downturn registered with the bank's profits, deposits and salaries to its employees.[33] The debt that the Ionian State incurred from loans contracted with the Ionian Bank was one of the major issues in the smoothing of the succession from British protection to Greek sovereignty. By 1860 the Ionian government faced chronic problems of tax collection with

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[28] Dertilis, *Ιστορία*, Vol. I, p. 186.

[29] Cottrell, *The Ionian Bank*, p. 200.

[30] See also: "Letter of 25th November from the Manager Zante, transmitting a request from the Lord High Commissioner for a Loan for £10,000 to the Ionian Government for 3 years at 6 per cent per annum", 14 December 1840, 3/1 Minute Books and Corporate Records, London School of Economics, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, Ionian Bank Archive.

[31] Cottrell, *The Ionian Bank*, p. 268.

[32] A. Apostolides and A. Gekas, "Banking Expansion, Success and Failure in the British Mediterranean: The Ionian Bank, 1840s-1920s", in John A. Consiglio *et al.* (eds), *Banking in the Mediterranean: A Historical Perspective*, Farnham: Ashgate 2012, pp. 175-196.

[33] Cottrell, *The Ionian Bank*, pp. 251-252.

the sole exception of the customs offices, which sustained the state.[34] In the last 20 years of the Protectorate revenue ranged at £170,000, well above the average for the whole period, but Ionian governments continued to spend a lot more. By the end of the period, permanent deficits from year to year led the Ionian State to a total debt that, according to different estimates, in 1863 stood at £232,506 or at £220,070.[35] Even according to the most conservative estimates, the debt was well above 150% of the average revenues of the Ionian State; the amount explains why £90,000 was cancelled by Great Britain in a "haircut" of Ionian debt that the Greek Kingdom inherited together with the new territory.

Until 1849 and the devolution of control over finances to the Ionian Assembly, the Lord High Commissioner in office was solely responsible for the monetary resources of the region and the appointment of Ionian employees. Before 1817 there were 467 employees on the islands, mostly on Corfu, who received a salary of more than 100 tallers, while the total cost of the civil list was £22,687. In 1819, less than two years later, the number of civil servants jumped to 570 (1/7 increase), while the total cost for their salaries more than doubled to almost £50,000. Until 1817 the president of the senate, the head of state, received 1515 tallers and the Senators 909 tallers; after 1817 their salaries more than quadrupled to 6222 and 3110 tallers respectively.[36] In 1835 the Ionian State paid £25,513 – or 45% of the total spending – for salaries of judges, registrars, assistants and messengers.[37] In 1820 there were 43 people from Corfu employed in the central ("general") government, while in 1862 there were 156, a five-fold increase that explains the effective bureaucracy that the Ionian government maintained as well as the financial burden and the allocation of resources. By 1860 there were many more public employees and salaries were more proportionally allocated; in 1820, 9 government functionaries received 40% of the total civil list amount, while in 1860, 14 employees received 13%, but in 1855 there were still 2200 government employees out of a total population of about 240,000, a high number for

[34] David Thomas Ansted, *The Ionian Islands in the Year 1863*, London 1863.

[35] Viscount Kirkwall, *Four Years in the Ionian Islands: Their Political and Social Condition*, Vol. II, London: 1864, pp. 335-336; for a different estimate, see G. V. Dertilis, *Ατελέσφοροι ή τελέσφόροι. Φόροι και εξουσία στο Νεοελληνικό Κράτος* [Ineffective or effective?: taxes and power in the modern Greek State], Athens: Alexandria, 1993, p. 128. Dertilis is based on Andreas Andreadis, *Η Ένωση της Επτανήσου και η διοίκησις της Προστασίας* [The union of the Ionian Islands and the administration of the Protectorate], Athens 1907.

[36] Andreadis, *Η Ένωση της Επτανήσου*, p. 12.

[37] Resolution, Second Session of the Fourth Parliament, 5 June 1835.

such a small state.[38] In 1857, £66,251 was spent on salaries, while the amount increased to £71,000 by 1863. That year, the last of the Protectorate, a different calculation brings the total number of state employees to 1551, perhaps on the low side; only 26 of those were British, but they earned far higher salaries than Ionians.[39] State employment, however, could not buy off popular sentiment, as can be seen by people who petitioned the government seeking employment, and, instead, requests for favour decreased and complaints increased.[40] No matter how much money the Ionian Protectorate spent on salaries its popularity seemed to decline, also because there were always more Ionians available and qualified than the fiscal abilities allowed or the needs of the state required.

The argument on the bloated and inefficient Greek State concerns primarily the period after 1860s; the far from comprehensive data indicate nevertheless that the state spent disproportionately more for salaries compared to other countries and compared to what it collected.[41] However, the scant financial resources of the Greek Kingdom meant that there were limits to Othon's ability to build an efficient state administration and use appointments in public service to placate the new and growing groups of ambitious and educated Greeks who had been born in post-revolution Greece. Both the agricultural population and the civil servants, however, groups that depended on the king for the distribution of land and appointments respectively, were highly divided towards the monarchy. The ousting of Othon was the result of an alliance forged between the disenchanted notables and politicians and the agricultural population;[42] some of the factors explaining the failures of the Protectorate and the Othonian regime to maintain the support of the urban population are discussed in the remainder of the article.

The Human Cost of the Crises of the 1850s

In the early 1850s successive crop failures in both Ionian and Greek fields brought famine and poverty. It was particularly devastating in the country, where some villagers could only find fruit and vegetables and no bread to eat during the spring and summer. In winter they were forced to go to the

[38] G. Progoulakis, *Ανάμεσα στην τιμή και το χρήμα* [Between value and money], Athens 2003, p. 78.

[39] Kirkwall, *Four Years in the Ionian Islands*, p. 306.

[40] British National Archives, Kew, Richmond, CO 136 / 1053.

[41] Tsoukalas, *Κράτος και κοινωνική ανάπτυξη*.

[42] Dertilis, *Ιστορία*, Vol. I, pp. 147, 155.

towns and beg; those who did not receive charity fainted from hunger and others died of starvation. Bread riots broke out in Zakynthos, people looted bakeries, harassed merchants and retailers and the police forced bakers to distribute free bread to the people. Children were particularly vulnerable as they wandered in the squares: "Young men in lust stripping homeless, starving girls for the price of three *oboli* of their virgin shame. The police arrested many of the girls and put them either in monasteries or in prison, where they could find bread."[43] While in Zakynthos poverty disrupted the social fabric, damaged morals and corrupted young girls, on Corfu similar descriptions appeared in a newspaper, accompanied by a very interesting and British-inspired proposal-solution to the problem of vagrancy and begging, increasingly visible in the town: the "Workshop" or Poverty House. The lead article accused both reformists and radicals in the Ionian public sphere that "while they wanted to reform the state, they did not say a word about reforming the vices of the vagabond youngsters", aged 6-14 years old, who were going around the town "dressed in rags or semi-naked, uttering the worse blasphemies and the most vulgar expressions".[44]

The crisis was causing a moral panic. In the next few years, when the crisis peaked, the authorities took measures; in 1853, the police ordered the registration of everyone "unemployed, wandering in the town or countryside with suspicious intent". In June the same year, a police report identified the problem and attempted to explain the increase of the poor in Corfu Town, the "mendacious vagrants". The reason was that the poor of the country had been deprived of any income and were unable to feed their families and therefore entered the town with their children to beg, dressed in rags and barefoot, sleeping rough, at the mercy of older vagrants. The officer produced as list of 22 males and 3 females, between 5 and 14 years old; there were many more, but the list included only the most vulnerable.[45]

Authorities decided to move towards a more coercive direction with the Municipal Regulation of March 1855 that prohibited vagrancy and begging, because it caused "social and moral damage" and "jeopardised the moral condition of children"; while the law was right to protect the most vulnerable, it failed to address the economic origins of their miserable position.[46] Towards

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[43] P. Hiotis, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἰονίου Κράτους* [History of the Ionian State], Vol. II, Zakynthos: Eptanisos Printing, 1877, pp. 350-351. All translations are my own.

[44] *Ἡ Φωνὴ τοῦ Λαοῦ* newspaper, 24 (4 November 1850), Historical Archive of Corfu, Dafni Archive.

[45] Corfu, 17 June 1853, Executive Police 1749, Historical Archive of Corfu.

[46] *Ionian Islands Government Gazette* 175 (5-17 March 1855).

the end of the period, a new category was added to the Blue Books, the annual returns of colonial statistics: the number of "paupers".[47] The figures from Corfu show that the number of paupers rose significantly over the period 1855-1863 from 250 to 458.[48] The number of those imprisoned in the Corfu "maximum security" prison for much more grave crimes than begging and vagrancy tells a similar story; in 1857 there were 210 prisoners, 109 from Corfu and the rest from the other islands. Between 1857 and 1860, the Corfu prison population numbered 507 inmates. Most people were imprisoned for offences against the person (70%) and against property. The average age of inmates was 26 years old, while most of them were illiterate, came from the country and were workers or peasants.[49] It is difficult to associate crime with poverty and the crisis years but the assumption could be confirmed by looking at individual cases in court and police records.

Poverty elicited some modernizing responses from the Ionian government and the urban élite, such as confinement in "correction" facilities, but for the poorest Ionians the cholera outbreaks in the 1850s made a miserable and dangerous life even more precarious. The disease made its frightening appearance on Kefalonia in August 1850; the local and central governments reacted slowly, inefficiently and half-heartedly. Initial negligence to uphold strict quarantine measures for ships from Malta was probably responsible for the outbreak, while reactions of the local government bespeak of panic and lack of direction in tackling the disease; in 1723 confirmed cases, there were 839 deaths, probably the second most lethal outbreak, following the one on Zakynthos in 1855 that claimed more than a thousand people, in a population of about 40,000.[50] Some Zakynthos residents denied to accept that the cause

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[47] The category is used in inverted commas because historians have demonstrated that the definition of the condition of a pauper is subject to a change of attitudes to the poor over time, rendering thus the condition of poverty as much a social construct as a real hardship. S. Woolf, *The Poor in Western Europe in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, London and New York: Methuen, 1986, p. 39. In early modern Europe, for instance, the poor themselves hardly ever defined poverty. See R. Jutte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

[48] Blue Books of Statistics, CO 136/1419-1427, The National Archives, UK.

[49] Giovanni Cozziri, *Statistica del Penitenziario di Corfu per gli anni 1857, 1858, 1859*, Corfu 1861.

[50] A.-D. Debonos, "Η χολέρα του 1850 στην Κεφαλονιά. Οι πολιτικές προεκτάσεις των υγειονομικών και διοικητικών μέτρων" [The 1850 cholera in Kefalonia: the political consequences of the sanitary and administrative measures], *Στ΄ Διεθνές Πανιόνιο Συνέδριο. Πρακτικά* [Sixth International Panionion Conference: Proceedings], Vol. II, Athens: KME and the Society for Zakynthian Studies, 2001, pp. 423-436.

of so many deaths in late September 1856 was cholera and blamed the government; on the contrary, when the cholera first broke out on Kefalonia some radical politicians accused the government of frightening the people by taking extreme measures. In the 1850s no opportunity to criticize the Ionian government was missed. Cholera broke out in the Corfu orphanage in the suburb of Mandouki, and from late September 1855 until early January 1856, 884 people were diagnosed and 489 died of cholera.[51] This type of crisis, like any health crisis, tested social cohesion and state institutions, the means of social control used to maintain stability.[52] The residents of Mandouki refused to accept the measures suggested to them, a quarantine of the whole city similar to Argostoli in 1850. The residents of Mandouki had reasons to be upset; when Lord High Commissioner Ward visited the suburb in 1851, they warned him in writing about the health hazards and continued to complain about the lack of latrines in the suburb and "the great inconvenience they are put to of this great deficiency".[53] Discontent was spreading from the aisles of the Ionian Assembly to the streets and alleys of Mandouki. By the late 1850s it was becoming clear to Ionian government officials as well as to the Ionian public, élite as well as subaltern, that sanitary conditions were essential in winning the hearts and minds of Ionians; this, however, was becoming very difficult in the face of budget deficits and dwindling spending for public works.

Athens was also a place full of beggars and poor and hungry people even before the cholera outbreak of 1854, due to failed harvests, rising prices and dearth of grain that pushed people to the capital in search of their daily bread. The disaster of that year in Athens and Piraeus transformed poverty and its visibility from a social reality to a political and social issue that required immediate government intervention.[54] The cholera outbreak that lasted from June 1854 to January 1855 in Athens and Piraeus was brought and transmitted

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[51] Typaldos Pretenteris, *Περὶ τῆς ἐν Κερκύρᾳ χολέρας ἐν ἔτει 1855* [On the Corfu cholera during 1855], Corfu: Government Printing Office, 1856, pp. 4-5; S. Gekas, "Θεσμοί και εξουσία στην πόλη της Κέρκυρας στα μέσα του 19ου αιώνα" [Institutions and power in Corfu Town in the 19th century], *Ἱστωρ* 15 (2009), pp. 107-144.

[52] Hiotis stated that "no age or class of people escaped the disease", mentioning members of "noble" families who contracted the disease; Hiotis, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἰονίου Κράτους*, Vol. II, p. 365.

[53] Petition 71, Register of Petitions 1859, CO 136 / 1053, The National Archives, UK.

[54] Maria Korasidou, *Οι άθλιοι των Αθηνών και οι θεραπευτές τους. Φτώχεια και φιλανθρωπία στην ελληνική πρωτεύουσα τον 19ο αιώνα* [The miserables of Athens and their healers: poverty and philanthropy in the Greek capital in the 19th century], Athens: Centre for Neohellenic Research / NHRF, 1995, p. 58.

by the French and British occupation forces and caused the death of 3000 people within five months. In Athens, where about 20,000 people lived, one-third of the population abandoned the city, while more than 1000 perished. The committee formed to deal with the outbreak proved totally inadequate to respond, especially since most of its members were amongst the first to leave.[55] Disease attacked first the poorest refugees from the Ottoman Empire in the cities' outskirts and the famine made the disease even more lethal.[56] The almost simultaneous outbreak of cholera in Ermoupolis on Syros sent shockwaves, but officials and the business and social élite reacted very differently from authorities in the capital and did not abandon the city to save themselves.[57]

Newspaper reports from early July 1854 read today as naively optimistic; from the confident and reassuring statements that one or two incidents amongst French soldiers did not represent a threat for the population at large, within a month there were reports that in Piraeus there were only sixty families, the ones in absolute poverty, left in the city, besides the occupying army. Prospects were grim: "Unfortunately and despite all expectations, cholera has intensified since the last few days in Piraeus and as a result the people are under great fear, which has spread to Athens. May the Divine Providence guard us and in the future prevent this great social accident."[58] The cholera outbreak provoked extreme reactions in the population, suffering such a disaster for the first time. Superstition and divine providence became the last resort: the response of the authorities and medical services was dismal, since most of the officials fled the city, but in the press anger at the government's response quickly substituted disbelief and prayers. In Athens and Piraeus the disease exposed the dangers from the lack of policy towards the poor and the most vulnerable that in times of political crisis could destabilize the state even further.

Failing States: Institutional Impasse, Political Crisis and Regime Change

The affirmation of the constitutional liberties forced in 1843 upon the young king and the change of dynasty were the institutional consequences of the 1862 revolution; this perhaps was not a change of regime, since the foundations of

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[55] *Ibid*., p. 60.

[56] Sakellaropoulos, *Οι κρίσεις στην Ελλάδα*, Vol. II, pp. 159-161.

[57] For the Ermoupolis cholera, see Christos Loukos, "Επιδημία και κοινωνία. Η χολέρα στην Ερμούπολη της Σύρου (1854)" [Disease and society: the cholera in Ermoupoli of Syros (1854)], *Μνήμων* 14 (1992), pp. 49-69.

[58] *Ἀθηνά* newspaper, 2141 (4 August 1854).

the constitutional monarchy that lasted for more than a century were laid during Othon's rule.[59] The outcome, however, should not cloud the potential and dynamic of the historical contingency. The major struggle in the history of political institutions in nineteenth-century Greece – and for a good part of the twentieth – was between the king and liberals or radicals striving for a constitutional arrangement that would constrain the monarchy; in the Ionian Islands the political struggle raged between the British Lord High Commissioner – representative of colonial power – and the Ionians who tried to expand their constitutional liberties. Written (formal) institutions, such as the constitutional charter of 1817 in the Ionian Islands or the constitution of 1843 in the Greek Kingdom did not and could not (automatically) guarantee and facilitate a society under the rule of law. This is why the change of regime in both states focused and was expressed ultimately in the field of political institutions, the condemnation of the Protectorate in the Ionian Assembly and the abolition of Othon's "system", as contemporaries called it.[60]

The Ionian State became more ungovernable during the 1850s especially following the fruitless mission of William Gladstone as extraordinary Lord High Commissioner in 1859, which was the last card of British foreign policy on the issue. In successive elections "radicals" and "reformists", liberal deputies opposing vehemently or moderately the continuation of British rule, won the majority and made life very hard for the Commissioner, who could barely pass a law in the Assembly. Neither the parliament nor the Commissioner could pull the Ionian polity out of the impasse and end the crisis of legitimacy. Social groups, such as merchants, lawyers, civil servants and the Ionian bourgeoisie, felt increasingly disenchanted towards the British Protectorate and by the late 1850s were preparing for an integration of business and political activities with their like-minded compatriots in the Greek Kingdom. Merchants in Ionian and Greek ports were amongst the first to promote business integration and collaborated with merchants in Patras

[59] Dertilis, *Ιστορία*, Vol. I, p. 158.

[60] *De jure* and *de facto* political power represents formal and informal political institutions that determine the constraints and shape the incentives of key actors in the political sphere. The "tzakia", for instance, relate to social norms and represent informal political power that is nevertheless reproduced through the election of the local élite into parliament and in positions of senior management of political institutions. For the tzakia informal institution, see Christos Lyrintzis, *Το τέλος των τζακιών. Κοινωνία και πολιτική στην Αχαΐα του 19ου αιώνα* [The end of the tzakia: society and politics in 19th-century Achaia], Athens: Themelio, 1991.

and Ermoupolis, issues of competition amongst the ports notwithstanding.[61] Business and politics, however, remained distinct. The business élite of the Greek ports, especially in Ermoupolis, faced a stark dilemma, whether to support or undermine the uprising against Othon, in a way that Corfu and other Ionian merchants never did.[62]

For Ionians, the failing of the Protectorate was prolonged and resembled the frustration of élite groups in Greek cities. The successive crises of the 1850s convinced disenchanted groups to withdraw whatever support or tolerance they had offered in previous decades to the Protectorate. In 1859 Sir Henry Knight Storks, the last Lord High Commissioner, toured the islands to show that he intended to crack down on corruption and allow more reforms, but such initiatives came too little, too late; when one Colonial Office minister wondered whether the Protectorate had any friends on whom Storks could rely, no one from Corfu could provide him with a reassuring answer.[63] The two states became more entangled during the 1850s as a result of Othon's nationalism campaign. The uprising in Western Macedonia, Thessaly and Epirus during the first weeks of the Crimean War brought together many Greeks and Ionians in a common struggle for the first time since the revolution. The campaign of 1854 electrified an already charged atmosphere and sent enthusiastic shockwaves to Greeks and Ionians; several thousands of them went to fight in Epirus. Intellectuals published polemic pieces, on the "rights of the second Greek war in the name of faith and freedom of our nation".[64] This was the first attempt to realize the vision of the Megali Idea, a few years after Kolettis burst it out to the world. Newspapers published correspondence from the front, celebrating the siege and capture of Arta, the mobilization of Ottoman forces in Ioannina and the turmoil in the embattled region of southern Epirus.

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[61] Some merchants had already established business networks with others in Greek ports before the political decision to cede the Ionian Islands to the Greek Kingdom was taken. In 1857 the Greek consul reported that merchants were considering merging Ionian marine insurance companies with companies based in Greece, under the name "Greek Insurance"; Athanasios (Sakis) Gekas, "A Sector 'Most Beneficial to Commerce': Marine Insurance Companies in Nineteenth-century Greek Port Cities", *Entrepreneurial History Discussion Papers* 001 (2008), http://www.ehdp.net./p001.html.

[62] See the paper of Christos Loukos from the 2012 conference on the Nafplio revolution: http://nafpliakiepanastasi.com/2013/01/30/symposium/.

[63] Robert Holland, *Blue-water Empire: The British in the Mediterranean since 1800*, London: Penguin, 2012, p. 97.

[64] *Αἰών* newspaper, 1432 (3 February 1854).

The "Ionian Greek People", according to a newspaper, mobilized for the Epirus-Thessaly uprising, especially from Zakynthos, where the police issued 1000 passports in just five days. Emotions ran high and famine only made things worse; during the uprising a Turkish boat carrying 6000 kilos of wheat was sacked at Kefalonia. In a separate incident, up to 3000 villagers of the Lixuri district descended (unarmed) to town, broke into grain warehouses and took whatever they could. Interestingly, the newspaper connected the famine incidents with the enthusiastic participation of many Ionians in the Epirus revolution. "Capitalists" deposited money to buy extra quantities of grain; for some contemporaries, supporting the uprising and helping each other during the famine were both equally noble causes. After the events in Lixuri, the British governor imposed order, imprisoned the instigators of the food riot and placed heavy guns at the entrance of Argostoli to prevent villagers from entering the capital;[65] given the island's rowdy past he clearly did not want to take any chances and wisely so. A food crisis and riot could quickly couple with national issues at a time when the first uprising since 1821 had broken out in the Ottoman mainland across the Ionian Sea.

The period of crisis was a turning point for Ionian politics especially after the 1848 and 1849 uprisings on Kefalonia, which affected power relations between Ionians and local and central government. Lord High Commissioner Ward (in office from 1849 to 1855) revoked the Seaton reforms of the 1840s, which had significantly restrained freedom of the press by exiling many of the journalists and publishers who dared challenge the regime but did not abolish it. Newspapers now provided a public space where ideas between reformers, radicals and supporters of the regime clashed. Similarly, Ionians had a range of opinions to choose from as a "public opinion" emerged for the first time since freedom of press was granted in 1848 during the crisis. Twenty to twenty-five Ionians from Kefalonia were active, especially in Lixuri, where the war spirit resonated much more strongly than in Argostoli.[66] The press was sentimental, seeking to raise national consciousness, and connected the uprising in Epirus with the enthusiastic reception and reaction of Ionians who formed an armed group and crossed to the mainland, risking the severe penalties and threats of the Ionian government.[67] Public displays of patriotism continued with

[65] *Αἰών* newspaper, 1431 (30 January 1854).

[66] Georgios N. Moschopoulos, "Για την απήχηση του Κριμαϊκού Πολέμου και της Επανάστασης του 1854 στα Επτάνησα" [On the repercussions of the Crimean War and the 1854 revolution in the Ionian Islands], *Κεφαλληνιακά Χρονικά* 7 (1995-1998), pp. 41-67.

[67] "Ὁ ἐθνικὸς ἀγὼν καὶ ἡ Ἑπτάνησος" [The national struggle and the Ionian Islands], *Αἰὼν* newspaper, 1441 (6 March 1854).

every given opportunity, blending anti-foreign (anti-British specifically) with patriotic cries; during the Good Friday procession on Zakynthos people sang the national anthem outside the Greek consulate and demonstrated similar feelings outside the Russian consulate; "Here is how the sacred struggle of Greeks and Russians merges into a common spirit [*φρόνημα*]. May next year our Greek Orthodox troops follow the procession."[68] The radical unionists in the Ionian Islands grasped the opportunity to galvanize their fellow Ionians against *ξενοκρατία* (xenocracy). The outbreak of the Greek uprising built on existing discontent; on Kefalonia the fraudulent elections of 1853 continued the political crisis that had begun with the 1848 and 1849 uprisings and deepened in the following years.[69] Othon made several similar vain attempts in 1860 to suppress dissatisfaction with his regime and hang on to power by rigging elections and packing the parliament with his supporters and eliminating the main opposition figures, such as Epameinondas Deliyorgis and Georgios Koundouriotis. Such tactics resembled the summary arrest and exile of Zervos Iakovatos, a leading radical, to the rock of Antikythera for most of the 1850s, which exposed the brutality of Ward and his supporters. In Athens students and young politicians, unfettered by the burdensome glory of the revolutionary achievements, mounted opposition and were far more outspoken than the older generation that was loyal to Othon. Deliyorgis, young and dynamic, led the rising opposition to the monarch who was falling out of favour.

The demobilization of several thousands of soldiers who fought in Thessaly and Epirus in 1854 followed more bandits, theft and crime in the border zone between Greece and the Ottoman Empire. The lawlessness that plagued many parts of the country and the despicable economic situation was one of the reasons and at the same time the pretext for the extension of occupation by the British and French troops, continuing thus to exert pressure on Othon. The occupation force was even popular in some circles amongst Athenian society and politicians.[70] The crisis had already led to a rise in crime, in the country as well as in the cities. Newspapers in the 1850s abound with cases of brigands, usually shepherds, who found refuge near their villages and occasionally collaborated with the local police, until they were caught, tried and imprisoned.[71] Figures from the period show a surge in

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[68] *Αἰών* newspaper, 1451 (15 April 1854).

[69] A.-D. Debonos, "Τα πλαίσια της 'Δεκακαλπίας'" [The context of the "Dekakalpia"], *Κεφαλληνιακά Χρονικά* 7 (1995-1998), pp. 339-389.

[70] Dakin, *The Unification of Greece*, p. 84.

[71] *Αἰών* newspaper, 1146 (21 March 1851).

crime; within a year death penalties increased from 30 in 1851 to more than 100 in 1852. The operation of a complex web of corrupt officials, complicit local law-enforcement agents and deputies who turned a blind eye to the large numbers of armed men, migratory shepherds, unemployed irregulars or common outlaws has been explained.[72] While there is an argument on the national and political dimensions of the increase in crime and robberies, the consequences of the crisis that hit Ionian and Greek economies so hard in the early 1850s remain rather unexplored.

In the 1850s the debt came back to haunt Othon's regime. The blockade of 1850 and the 1854-1857 occupation show that the issue of foreign loans had lingered since 1833, when the three protective powers guaranteed the repayment of the loans and in return Greece promised to prioritize the payment of instalments plus interest from customs revenues. In the 1850s the loans became a medium of political control.[73] The heavy terms contracted ensured ambiguity and allowed interference in case the agreement was not honoured; the 1843 constitutional reform persuaded British foreign policy that the goal of restricting Othon's power had been achieved and allowed the Greek State to effectively default. Pressure was reserved for the time when Greece would present an obstacle to British foreign policy in the region.[74] The condition for the lifting of the blockade and the departure of the British and French armies from Piraeus was the first international financial control imposed on the country; the report of the committee in 1859 targeted Othon, castigated the previous financial administration for mismanagement and excessive war expenses and suggested measures that would limit the ability of the king to draft foreign policy and his power to rule in financial as well as constitutional terms. Othon's refusal to implement the changes demanded by the representatives of the foreign powers contributed to his fall, as is clear in

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[72] John S. Koliopoulos, "'Enemy of the Nation': Attitudes towards Brigandage in Nineteenth-century Greece", in Macrakis and Diamandouros (eds), *New Trends in Modern Greek Historiography*, pp. 39-51; *id.*, *Ληστές. Η κεντρική Ελλάδα στα μέσα του 19ου αιώνα* [Bandits: Central Greece in the mid-nineteenth century], Athens: Ermis, 1979.

[73] G. Dertilis, "Διεθνείς οικονομικές σχέσεις και πολιτική εξάρτηση. Η ελληνική περίπτωση, 1824-1878" [International economic relations and political dependence: the Greek case, 1824-1878], in G. Dertilis and K. Kostis (eds), *Θέματα Νεοελληνικής Ιστορίας (18ος-20ός αιώνας)* [Topics in Modern Greek History (eighteenth-twentieth century)], Athens and Komotini: Sakkoula, 1991, p. 167.

[74] Kostas Kostis, *"Τα κακομαθημένα παιδιά της ιστορίας". Η διαμόρφωση του Νεοελληνικού Κράτους, 18ος-21ος αιώνας* ["History's spoiled children": the formation of the Neohellenic State, eighteenth – twenty-first century], Athens: Polis, 2013, pp. 264-265.

the writings of Spyridon Trikoupis through the account of N. Dragoumis.[75] There is very little written, however, on the social and economic reasons for the loss of popularity of the battered king, besides his documented inability to stand up to the foreign intervention and the loss of national sovereignty.

The conclusion of the 1859 report reiterated the harsh and rigid terms of the 1833 loan agreement; Greek governments would have to honour the annual payment obligations first before spending for other purposes. It was, however, the crisis of legitimacy that brought the Othonian regime down in an increasingly violent setting. The struggle against the first monarch lasted for almost three years, from 1859 to 1862. The issue of succession loomed large, since, according to the 1832 London Protocol, if Othon died heirless Bavarian princes would succeed him only if they complied with article 40 of the constitution, which stated that the heir to the throne had to be Orthodox. Political upheaval spread in early 1859 when satirist Alexandros Soutsos was jailed for defamation of the king after castigating the absolutist regime of Othon and the absence of constitutional liberties. Secret organizations were formed in support of the rebellions against Austrian rule over Trieste and the declared neutrality of the Greek government. In May 1859 the "Skiadika" riots broke out when high school and university students supported domestic production of hats, sporting the traditional Sifnos straw hats, the "skiadia". When hat importers mocked them and riots broke out, police director Demetriadis was particularly harsh towards the students, beating and arresting many of them. The next day protest continued outside the Ministry of the Interior, demanding Demetriadis' resignation. When the government evaded the issue, the protest moved to the palace; Othon denounced the demonstrators and refused to see them, so the students returned to the university but were subsequently dispersed by the military. The next day Demetriadis was sacked and the arrested students were released. The case is typical of a relatively unimportant or seemingly mundane issue becoming the pinnacle of public demonstration of discontent and escalating to a conflict against authority (in this case Othon). The victory achieved by the students and others in the opposition did not quench the thirst of reformers but whetted their appetite for the next opportunity to struggle against the king's authority.

Far from the conflict over domestic or imported hats, publications in support of the government in the newspaper *Ελπίς* outraged students and opposition supporters, who in early June 1859 burned copies of the newspaper; for this they were brutally attacked by government-sent thugs, according to

[75] Dertilis, "Διεθνείς οικονομικές σχέσεις και πολιτική εξάρτηση", p. 177.

an opposition newspaper journalist who happened to be present in the hub of public opinion in Athens, the Oraia Ellas coffee shop. The attack not only did not intimidate but led to a large demonstration the next day outside the houses of the Ministers of the Interior and the Military, which forced them to spend the night in the parliament;[76] the anti-government opposition was not only becoming more vocal but it provoked a violent response from security forces and armed men were recruited ready to break any opposition rally that expressed anti-government sentiments.

1860 was another year of political instability when the appointed government under Athanasios Miaoulis lost its cohesion and the opposition gained strength, empowered by the young and inspiring Epameinondas Deliyorgis. When Miaoulis resigned, following several of his ministers, Othon committed a grave mistake and refused to accept it but dissolved the parliament instead. The elections in December 1860 were rigged, opposition supporters and candidates were threatened and imprisoned and Miaoulis won, while significant opposition figures such as Alexandros Koumoundouros, Deliyorgis and Thrasyvoulos Zaimis did not get elected. The offices of newspapers became hubs of the anti-Othon struggle. The role of the press in the regime change that took place in Greece and the Ionian Islands was unprecedented. In Athens there were 20 newspapers in 1863 and a number of other publications that transformed the role of public debate and shaped a public sphere.[77] The opposition was mostly an affair of the city; young urbanites, university students and army officers saw Othon more as a liability than an asset and by then his reign was almost a generation old, 30 years; little had been achieved while the multiple crises of the 1850s made for a poor record, save for the popular decision of Othon and Amalia to stay in the capital during the epidemic and even tour the streets. Amongst the demands of officers was the creation of a militia, which meant, however, arming the population, unthinkable for a government that had gone to great lengths to achieve the disarmament of the former revolutionary fighters and prevent them from the temptation to form bands and earn a living as brigands.

The escalating violence in the capital shows that Othon was forced to abandon the throne not only because of external, foreign, intervention but also to avoid descent into overwhelming civil strife. Political crisis deepened after the elections in January 1861. The opposition demanded several key reforms from the government that indicate the frustration of the insurgents.

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[76] *Ἀθηνά* newspaper, 2775 (6 June 1859).

[77] Dakin, *The Unification of Greece*, p. 95.

One article addressed to the government points to the "domestic" roots of discontent:

> What the nation and the people want, you heard it a long time ago and the other day you saw it in the programme of the opposition. They ask for free elections, which you do not allow. They ask for reform of the taxation system, fiscal discipline, public works, agricultural banks, simplification of the administrative machine and at last general armament.[78]

Serious clashes between supporters of the government and the opposition broke out on election day in January 1861. Mounted soldiers charged with bayonets, killing at least two people, while protesters responded with a barrage of sticks and stones, injuring seriously at least one soldier while "we do not know the number of heads broken".[79] Similar clashes took place in other cities, Patras, Hydra and Amfissa, where fifteen soldiers were presumed killed, but information was not confirmed, on 12 January. Political instability was the result of the wide-ranging repression of dissenting voices, candidates of the opposition, as, for example, Dimitrios Boudouris in Hydra, who was humiliated and subsequently jailed for no apparent reason, while similar harassment took place in Messolonghi, where newspapers were confiscated.[80] The newspaper *Ἀθηνά* accused the government openly of rigging the elections a couple of weeks later when the results were announced and the government candidates had won.[81]

Such a crisis of legitimacy explains much better the fertile ground for the outbreak of the Nafplio revolution of February 1862. The combination of army officers, young educated professionals, most of them lawyers, and a woman, whose house was the meeting place, hint that the Nafplio uprising that targeted directly the regime of Othon was a revolution of liberals. The outright rebellion against the king and the brief civil conflict that followed during the siege of Nafplio widened the cleavage between supporters of the king and the opposition that had now passed another milestone, a failed armed uprising. While this uprising was suppressed in a few months the "October

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[78] *Ἀθηνά* newspaper, 2945 (14 January 1861).

[79] *Ἀθηνά* newspaper, 2943 (9 January 1861).

[80] *Ἀθηνά* newspaper, 2946 (18 January 1861).

[81] *Ἀθηνά* newspaper, 2950 (2 February 1861). The reports talk about bribing before the elections in Eyalia; the mere fact that in early February the elections were still taking place since November and were expected to continue for the next two months indicates the travesty of fair political process, since according to the electoral law of the time elections had to take place over eight days, but the law did not specify which eight days.

revolution" of 1862 spread to other parts of the country and the islands; given the appeal of the movement and the social groups that championed its cause to bring down the king, it is surprising it has not received more attention by historians.[82] It is clear, however, that increasing isolation of the regime from the middle class of professionals, army officers and the people, in the case of Syros, was met with a fierce clampdown. The report that the feared Minister of the Interior, Haralambos Hristopoulos, drafted after the rebellion shows that people demanded constraints on the king's power, free elections, parliamentary and local, an Orthodox heir to the throne and expansion of borders; in the 1860s the last demand was probably the least feasible of all and characterized the term of the next king, George, and Greek history for another 60 years. In one word they were against the "system", which was essentially Othon's regime of corrupt, undemocratic and appointed governments, which deprived the people from their inalienable rights to liberty and political representation.

The end of the British Protectorate of the Ionian Islands was effectively one of the first instances of anti-colonialism, what Ionians called the struggle against xenocracy.[83] The social groups that contributed to the end of the institutional impasse in the Ionian Islands were very different from the Greek Kingdom, where the army played a leading role; there was no Ionian army and no need for one, under British protection, although the idea of a militia was entertained in 1817, but was quickly abandoned after the outbreak of the Greek Revolution. Instead, grain merchants, lawyers and civil servants were only some of the fervent supporters of liberal ideas and laissez-faire liberalism that in the 1860s supported (especially in the southern Ionian Islands) the unification project. Ionians structured their ideas and arguments for reform and later abolition of British rule based on political principles that were prominent in Italy and especially France and other centres of European liberalism. Ionian Greeks were certainly part of the "liberal international" and shared much of the anti-imperial discourse that spread like wildfire in the Italian peninsula, joining the armed struggle there as well as in Epirus.[84]

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[82] A notable exception is the recent conference that took place on the occasion of the 150 years since the Nafplio revolution in October 2012, http://nafpliakiepanastasi.com/2013/01/30/symposium/.

[83] In India, for example, it is difficult to find anti-colonial positions amongst Indian intellectuals before the 1870s; C. A. Bayly, *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 14.

[84] Maurizio Isabella, *The Risorgimento in Exile: Italian Emigres and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Order*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009; Antonis Liakos,

Ionian radicalism grew through political clubs that took after the Italian secret societies and connected to the "political committees" in the Greek Kingdom, such as the "Sacred Struggle" that demonised British protection, and were held responsible for destabilising affairs in South-East Europe.[85]

Lawyers were one of the most distinguished occupational, social and status group in Ionian society; similarly to the anti-Othon opposition they were central in challenging the regime of the Protectorate. A law degree qualified for political participation, and in 1849 out of 663 electors on Corfu, 131 were law graduates. Their conduct troubled some British writers who for cultural as well as political reasons believed that idleness breads discontent: "For want of employment, they lounge about the streets, in a perfect state of moral, industrial, and professional idleness and vacancy, smoking their cigarettes, and discussing politics, of which they do not so much as understand the terms."[86] Despite the widely known uprisings-rebellions of villagers in Kefalonia in 1848 and 1849, it was Ionian lawyers who posed a serious challenge to British rule and were amongst the most ardent reformers, politicians and activists during the 1840s and 1850s when Ionian nationalism took shape and resistance to British rule spread.

The circulation of newspapers in Ionian cities came after decades of slow but steady emergence of a civil society. The political and national developments on the islands, in neighbouring Italy and the Greek Kingdom, as well as all over Europe following the "Spring of Nations" in 1848, shaped the debates and the spirit that drove Ionians to become journalists, political commentators and – some of them – radical nationalists and to demand union with Greece. The return of many Ionians from Italian, French, German and English universities infused with liberal ideas unsettled the much desired but always elusive "tranquility" that the British so often tried to secure.[87] It was this new generation of Ionians who came of age in the 1840s and was ready to challenge British and aristocratic Ionian social and political order by using the new medium of the printed newspaper. The volume and content of these newspapers are impressive and their publishers exposed and criticized the contradictions of British protection on the islands and encapsulated the

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"Το κίνημα του Γαριβάλδι και τα Επτάνησα (1860-1862)" [The movement of Garibaldi and the Ionian Islands (1860-1862)], *Δ΄ Πανιόνιο Συνέδριο*, *Πρακτικά* [4th Panionian Conference, Acts] (*Κερκυραϊκά Χρονικά* 23), Corfu 1980, Vol. I, pp. 207-215.

[85] Holland and Markides, *The British and the Hellenes*, p. 47.

[86] H. White-Jervis, *History of the Island of Corfu and of the Republic of the Ionian Islands*, London 1852, p. 238.

[87] Holland and Markides, *The British and the Hellenes*, p. 47.

struggle against xenocracy. Just like the opposition to the regime in Greece, a younger generation of lawyers, refusing to settle in a compromising position for personal or short-term social gain, became more involved and more vocal to the opposition against the British Protectorate; in doing so they accelerated the exit from the institutional impasse and removed the institutional constraints that had engulfed the islands as well as the Greek Kingdom. British protection was no longer desirable or indeed necessary for anyone involved.

Conclusion

The Ionian and Greek economies pulled out of their distinct but interrelated crises in the late 1850s, but this recovery coincided with escalating political crises; in Athens, Othon was left with very few choices of whom to appoint prime minister and dissolved the parliament; on Corfu not even the young and upcoming Gladstone during his three-month visit to the islands could cajole reformist Ionians into continuing their tacit support for the Protectorate, let alone convince the radicalized Ionians to accept what they considered trivial and secondary reforms. Instead of a return to pre-crisis political order of the late 1840s, when both regimes seemed stable, economic recovery and the rise of a new generation of politicians accelerated political change.

The Crimean War debacle exacerbated the impact of the cholera and poverty and the consequences for Othon's regime. Many of the regime's supporters gradually or rather more quickly during the Crimean War lost faith in the regime's ability to compromise their various and often conflicting interests; other groups, in opposition, whether for constitutional reasons or due to more individualistic motives of personal gain and influence, including some army officers, became more outspoken and in 1862 brave enough to take up arms against "the system". Ionian opposition, whether in its mild, reformist, version or the more radicalized and non-negotiating one of the unionists, was marked by differences but not as stark; in both cases, however, established institutions, the army in the Greek Kingdom and the Assembly in the Ionian State, became the ground where opposition fermented. In both cases, the press, with the various opposition newspapers, except from one or two government-backing publications, voiced all the demands, sentiments and accusations of the main opposition figures. Social demands, whether through reform or abolition of the Protectorate regime, emerged prominently, but gradually converged into the unequivocal and unconditional demand of union with Greece. The period from 1848 to 1862 that started with harvest and banking crises climaxed to the anti-colonial

struggle or rather more accurately the movement against xenocracy in the Ionian Islands and combined with the ousting of the first king of Greece in the Kingdom, before the two states converged in 1864.

Public fury might have come earlier had the International Financial Commission published its findings, after two years of deliberations, showing the inefficiency, corruption and financial abuse of Othon's government.[88] Suppression of public debate, through selective suspension of the right to the freedom of press, intimidation and widespread electoral fraud, only increased popular discontent, added ammunition to the opposition front and provided further arguments against the two regimes of British protection and Othon's government. The suppression of newspapers and the exile of elected deputies on the Ionian Islands was also very bad publicity for the governments that towards the late 1850s were running out of alternatives. The revolution of 1862 and the British decision to cede the islands to Greece diffused social and economic pressures mounting for more than a decade; unification was a significant success for the project of national aggrandizement, especially following the failed uprising of 1854 in Epirus. Unification, however, came at the expense of the radical demands and reforms that were clearly part of the Ionian liberal agenda since the 1850s and were gradually sidelined after the split in the radicals' camp. Sustainable agricultural production and the creation of agricultural credit that would incite villagers to diversify away from the currant bubble, social welfare for the most vulnerable especially at times of famine and disease, and improved sanitary conditions in the new and older cities of the unified Greek State were relegated and even forgotten because they could not generate the same enthusiasm and lacked the verve that the national issue possessed. Still, the multifaceted crisis of the 1850s in the Ionian Islands and Greece became the catalyst for the changes that led to the unification of the two regions into a single state. An assertive and for the first time so confident – although not really coherent – bourgeoisie, amongst other urban classes, rejected the failing regimes in the Ionian Islands and Greece in the early 1860s partly because of the decade-long economic, social and political crisis. Some merchants (belatedly), lawyers and officers (civil and military in the Ionian and the Greek states respectively) formed the groups that took the initiative in the political field to mount an effective opposition to what were essentially failing states in urgent need of reform.

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[88] John V. Kofas, *Financial Relations of Greece and the Great Powers, 1832-1864*, Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1981, p. 114.

The collapse of the Weimar Republic, following the destructive conditions for the German economy in the early 1920s and the period of instability that followed, cast a long shadow over debates on the political consequences of economic crises. The 1929-1932 crisis had no less significant consequences for the Greek economy and political system; by 1936, when Ioannis Metaxas came to power, Greece, as it slid into authoritarianism, had been forced to reorientate its productive capabilities, the king was back, and the country was a lot less dependent economically on the outside world.[89] This article shows that in the nineteenth century political consequences of a severe, long-lasting and multifaceted crisis went the other way; the crisis of the long 1850s accelerated the conditions for the integration of the two states, the Ionian polity and the Greek Kingdom, and advanced democratization as more people were eligible to vote than before both in the country as a whole and in the area of the Ionian Islands. The significance of this event has been underestimated because of the conceptual hegemony of the clientelism notion; the culmination of this democratization process turned a page with the right of the majority party to form a government, a major concession by the monarchy in 1875. We know that with the survival of politicians such as Dimitrios Voulgaris and their continuing influence even after the 1862 revolution the democratic potential was suppressed at least until Trikoupis, who limited the king's powers; however, this should not obscure the fact that in the early 1860s the people who promoted regime change were genuinely striving for a more democratic, more constitutional and better-administered country and in some ways they achieved it with the constitution of 1864.

There were other, unexpected consequences. During the 1850s famine, disease, mobilization for war in 1854 and foreign occupation exacerbated existing tensions in both states. If we were to believe the newspapers of the time, the crises and the demand for regime change drew Ionian Greeks and Greeks of the Kingdom closer, forging a national identity before the institutions of state-building and identity formation, the school, the Church, the army, began their work. Therefore we need to think beyond the established criteria for understanding the process of national identity and state formation (language, schooling, religion, Romantic nationalism before, during and after the revolution) and see the crises of the 1850s as the event that ushered in a change of regime that blended the Ottoman and Venetian pasts into a common Greek future.

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[89] Mark Mazower, *Greece and the Inter-war Economic Crisis*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.