

1821-31: The transition from Pre-Modernity to the Modern Nation State

Following the publication of a steady flow of memoirs by protagonists and secondary players in the seminal events that took place during this period, the history of the subject has become increasingly diverse. Along with the wealth of information comes a reassessment of the major questions posed by later generations of historians.

Apart from Greek primary sources, archival material from British, French, Russian and Ottoman public records is now more widely available to researchers. The Ph.D thesis of Sukru Ilicak, under the supervision of Professor Cemal Kafadar of Harvard, has produced the hitherto unknown official Ottoman view of the Greek "disturbances" (1821-1830), otherwise known as the "Rum Fessadi". The Grande Porte considered the disorder as the work of Russian spies, as well as the ambitious aim of the Czar to dismember the empire of the Ottoman Muslims.

1. Segmentary Communities

In the past, historians have stressed the extraordinary aspects of this war - focusing mainly on the attributes of the heroes who brought it about. Marxists have tried to identify the clash of social classes in the strife between warriors and notables. The focus of our attempt to reassess this period will be directed towards the nature of the "segmentary communities" that made the uprising possible. If the Marxist view of society is one of horizontal class division, our view of the segmented society is based on the vertical divisions that preserved the societal hierarchy in homogenous networks, inimical to each other, for the control of the emerging state. In such segmentary societies or communities, it is clientelism that becomes the necessary mechanism for connecting each segment with the central government. - whenever there is a central gov.

2. The War in Outline

The War broke ^{out} in March 1821 and, almost simultaneously, in Romania under the command of an officer of the Russian army, Alexander Ypsilantis, as well as in the Moreas-Southern Greece.

Whereas the Romanian campaign was suppressed by Ottoman forces, the war in the Peloponnese was crowned by success. In the battle of Dervenakia (1822)

the Greek commander, Theodore Kolokotronis, defeated an Ottoman army of 30,000 men. Meanwhile, the fleet, comprising ships from the islands of Hydra, Spetses and Psara, successfully patrolled the Aegean, thereby preventing the landing of Ottoman forces in the Moreas. At the same time, the rough terrain of the hinterland was ideally suited to the guerrilla warfare tactics of the insurgents. Following the success of the first two years, however, the Greeks turned against each other as segmentary communities. The Civil wars (1823-25) allowed the Ottomans to invite Egyptian forces into the Peloponnese who, in turn, successfully regained control of most of the territories that had risen up against the Sultan. The naval battle of Navarino (Ancient Pylos) in October 1827 ended in the destruction of the joint Turkish-Egyptian fleet by a combined English, French and Russian naval squadron. The sea battle was declared by British officials as an "untoward event". Be that as it may, it heralded the dawn of Greek independence.

Count Ioannis Kapodistrias, erstwhile Foreign Minister of the Czar of Russia, provided Greece with its first, and possibly best, head of State.

3 Establishing State Institutions

The transition of Ottoman despotism into a unitary state, based on the prototype of post-revolutionary France, started during the initial years of the Greek revolution. The first National Assembly in Epidaurus (1822) produced a constitution that established the principles of the representative democracy that was to emerge in the future. Public administration was founded entirely on the French model of governance.

4. A Nation-State named Hellas

The designation "Hellas" that emerged during the War of Independence, revealed the self-chosen identity of a Christian Orthodox community, with a linguistic tradition that spanned millennia. The term Hellas had never been used before to signify a single political entity. The spread of Christianity owed much to the Greek language and the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople adopted it as an instrument of religious education. Although the political identity of the Greeks, inherited by the Byzantine Empire, was Roman (Rum millet for the Ottomans), their language was Greek. The new state not only chose to Hellenise its name, it also based its national education system on the ancient heritage of Hellenism.

5. The Economy and Reconstruction

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As in most regions of the Eastern Mediterranean at the beginning of the 19th century, the Greek economy in 1830 was predominantly agrarian. According to the statistics of Thiersch and Strong, 65% of Greek families were engaged in farming. Land produce was the largest component of the annual national income and land constituted the major portion of capital wealth. The bifurcation of the economy into a subsistence and a market sector, was yet another property of production. Reconstruction was mainly based on these constituents of the economy. For future reference, a commercial and merchant marine class also emerged.

6. Shaping a New Nation

Various historians have associated the new state with the attributes and shortcomings of political personalities, the designs of the ruling classes, as well as foreign arbiters with their own agendas. The final outcome bears the imprint of its users: Those who administer its institutions and the multitude of subjects who adapt their lives accordingly. Did the insurgent state fulfil the expectations of its founding fathers? We will address the outcome in this chapter.

The year 1821 does not only signify the beginning of the Greek nation-state, it also constitutes a reservoir of heroic action and behaviour that inspired subsequent generations. Throughout the two centuries that have elapsed, the great event became an idealised rendition of the early history of the Greek state. The pre-modern society of the War of Independence was eventually ushered into modernisation. The route to this transformation went through the avenues of commerce between east and west – The “Conquering Orthodox Balkan merchant”¹, was not only a radical but also a reformer.

Within a decade of war, social entities of pre-modernity, segmented by familial institutions, client-based networks and ties of loyalty, started to acquire a modern identity. Instead of an exclusive loyalty, hitherto reserved for the family, village or place of birth, modern identity turns to the abstraction of an imagined community – that of the nation²

¹ Traian Stoianovich, *The Balkan Worlds: The First & Last Europe*, Abingdon: Routledge, 1994

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso, 1983

Embracing modernity involves an expansion of cognition to accept the reality of concepts that are not subject to tactile confirmation. Undoubtedly, the nation is such an abstract subject because it pre-supposes acceptance without empirical evidence of existence or belonging, other than flag and anthem.

The first civil war which occurred within the War of Independence, (autumn 1823- summer 1824) was waged between primates and warlords, whereas the second (July 1824-January 1825) was a clash between the insurgents of Roumeli (central Greece), with aid from the island of Hydra- against the representatives of the Peloponnese (southern Greece). The landing of the regular Egyptian forces under Ibrahim – son of Mohammed Ali, hegemon of Egypt- and the resulting devastation in the Peloponnese, effectively put an end to the war among Greek factions.

The appointment, by the National Assembly of Troezina, of the former Foreign Affairs Minister of Russia, Ioannis Kapodistrias, as the first head of government and State, was the starting point of a generally accepted leadership for the Revolution and the establishment of a unitary state authority.

Among the many authors of memoirs during the War of Independence, few were intellectuals of any calibre and most display varying degrees of literary skill. Fotakos (Fotios Chrysanthopoulos) was a self-taught chronicle writer, whose working experience in Odessa, as a small- scale merchant and member of the “Filiki Etairia”, exposed him to the ideas of the Enlightenment.³

The same is true for Nikolaos Kasomoulis and Spyro Milios, who were both men at arms with a flair for storytelling. The siege of Missolonghi of 1825-26 owes much to these two writers and their sharp pens and swords.

George Tertsetis, a literary figure who tutored Dionysios Solomos in the Greek language, will also be remembered for scripting the memoirs of Theodore Kolokotronis. The “Old Man” of Moreas gave a full account of his exploits to the poet from Zante. Although the description of his key triumph at the battle of Dervenakia is somewhat terse, Kolokotronis devotes pages to describing details of secondary importance that, nevertheless, provide ample information about the times. In contrast, the most traumatic incident of his son’s death during the civil war is described in a few lines.⁴

³ Fotakos, Απομνημονεύματα περι της ελληνικής επανάστασεως, τομοι Α+Β, Φιλολογικά Χρονικά, Αθήνα: 1960

⁴ Γεωργίου Τερτσέτη, Κολοκοτρώνη απομνημονεύματα, Αθήνα: Τόμος Τρίτος, Εκδ. Γρ. Γιοβανη, 1967

The Memoirs of Nikolaos Speliadis reappeared in 2007, published in a new edition in six volumes by Panayiotis Christopoulos. The author relied mainly on his school education in order to master his formal Greek. He describes the disaster of the defeat of the philhellenes at the battle of Peta in north western Greece in skilful detail. In contrast to the more spontaneous accounts of Fotakos and Kasomoulis, Speliadis often reminds his readers of school teachers, who revert to exclamatory remarks when recalling the bravery of the philhellenes or the savage behaviour of the Turks. Yet, he provides valuable information about the administration of the state in its early years.⁵

Meanwhile, the un-lettered Ioannis Makryannis was the most celebrated figure among the warrior-historians. Lauded by such prominent Greek literary figures as Giorgos Seferis and Theotokas for his primitive style of expression, Makryannis appeals to a contemporary reading public, irrespective of their right or left-leaning political views. His constant grievances against those in power have a positive effect on a readership that ^{shares} participates in his culture of the under-dog. Furthermore, Makryannis's concept of reality is divided between the times he describes and the later period when he committed his thoughts to paper. Thus, when he summons his compatriots to abandon their selfish aims in favour of a united brotherhood, historically, he is writing in the midst of a civil war, during which he was an unabashed defender of one side against the other. Makryannis is undeniably a talented story-teller but he is also completely incapable of taking an objective view. He praises Gogos Bakolas, who joined the Turks after his ignominious escape from the battle of Peta and decries Kolokotronis and his family for their ^{alleged} self-seeking motives. Throughout his work he acts according to the values of pre-modernity whilst, at the same time, declaring his support for values of a later vintage. His negative view of human nature is primordial, while his call for the cooperation of all insurgents belongs to a later form of enlightenment. / shares

Deciphering pre-modernity from modernity in the writings of Makryannis will become the task of many future historians.⁶

80 The works of Christopher Perraivos offer an important supplement to the better-known memoirs previously mentioned. A native of Thessaly, Perraivos collaborated with Rhigas and was already an elderly man (54 years old) when

⁵ Νικολαου Σπηλιαδη, Απομνημονεύματα, Αθηναι:Ινστιτουτο Αναπτυξης Χαριλαος Τρικουπησ,2007, 6 τομοι

⁶ Απομνημονεύματα Μακρυγιαννη, Προλογος-Επιμελεια, Γιαννι Βλαχογιαννη, Αθηναι, Έκδ Χ.Κοσμαδακη, 1907

Kapodistrias came to Greece. His early radicalism with the Carbonari in Italy and later with Rhigas in Vienna; his work as an agent of the Filiki Etairia, as well as his skill as a warrior with the Souliotes, qualify him as a first-hand witness to Greek history in the making. The recent publication of his writings includes a second part of the events between 1820-1829 in Central Greece⁷. A short biography of Karaiskakis' early years, followed by his death in Phaliron, is another valuable account in the memoirs of Perraios. An index, compiled by the editor, of the many names that appear in the text is also an important advantage of this new edition.⁸

Yannis Vlachoyannis offers information about possible ghost writers in formal Greek of the Memoirs of Fotakos and Spyro Milios. He refers to this in his introduction to the Makryannis Memoirs, which he regards as one of the few, unadulterated texts on the War of Independence – yet only one page of the original Makryannis script survives to support his theory. Some even believe that Vlachoyannis wrote part of the work himself. Perhaps time will tell.

Having discussed works by native authors with regard to the War of Independence between 1821-1831, it is necessary to consider their views in perspective. It becomes increasingly clear that the identification of most writers with their birth place, family bonds and religious affiliations, constitutes the main sources of their loyalty. Until the new born nation-state acquired a firm base in society- thanks to the revolutionary agents of the diaspora, premodernity would reign unopposed in most institutions of a segmented society⁹.

The civil war waged between the Greek factions allowed Ibrahim to prepare his assault against the Revolution, in exchange for Crete and, in time, the Peloponnese. This predicament compelled the revolutionaries to seek a centralised authority that would bring unity to their cause. The absence of a generally accepted leadership was a shortcoming of the Revolution from the very beginning. It appeared that the transition of Greece to modernity required a considerable degree of centralization. Thus, the unification of a segmented effort was secured and the new state could henceforth advance towards a liberal stage of its development.

⁷ Χριστοφορος Περραιβος, Απομνημονεύματα πολεμικά, Εισαγωγή-Επιστημονική Έπιμέλεια-Σχολία. Στεφανος Παπαγεωργίου, Athens: Foundation of the Greek Parliament, 2019. The editor, a Professor Emeritus at Pantion University is the author of many books on 1821.

⁸ Op.cit, pp. 229-81, 355-58

⁹ Ernest Gellner, Conditions of Liberty. Civil Society and its Rivals, London: Hamish Hamilton.1994, pp1-14

Ernest Gellner achieved not only the best definition of nationalism - for which he is remembered- but also the formulation of pre-modern politics in segmented societies, which he analysed in such compelling terms: "Traditional man can sometimes escape the tyranny of kings, but only at the cost of falling under the tyranny of cousins, and of ritual. The kin defined and virtually orchestrated, severely demanding and life pervading systems (...) may indeed succeed – at least for a time – in avoiding tyrannical centralization, but only at the cost of a most demanding culture, one which modern man would find intolerably stifling". The segmentary community we have already described, might avoid central tyranny by "turning the individual into an integral part of the social sub-unit".¹⁰

Segmentary communities may describe the preponderance of members' loyalty to the family and their birthplace, rather than to the state that collected their taxes. In such communities, identity was not chosen by the individual but ascribed to it by others – mainly the family. When referring to traditional Greek "individualism" it would be wiser to insert the pre-fix "collective". Despite all the changes that have taken place in Greek society, collective individualism persists to this day.

The relocation of the Greek population from the unhealthy lowlands up to the mountain communities, during the late 18th century, brought many Christians out of Ottoman control. These communities took to animal husbandry, while the consolidation of property in the lowlands led to the formation of large estates.

Mountain populations functioned outside the easy reach of the law and, as a result, banditry spiralled out of control. These predatory country men were responsible for the creation of the *armatoles*, who checked the activities of the brigands. Each *armatole* captain would run the territory under his control as a family fiefdom.¹¹

In 1820, The rebellion of Ali Pasha against the Sultan rendered the Greek warlords valuable to both sides of the conflict. As captain of Aspropotamos, Nicholas Stornaris, controlled at least 120 villages with an average of seventy family inhabitants in each, as well as owning seven to eight thousand head of

¹⁰ Gellner, op-cit- pp. 7-8

¹¹ D. N. Skiotis, "Mountain Warriors and the Greek Revolution", in V. J. Parry & M-E Yapp (ed) War, Technology and Society in the Middle East, London, 1975 pp. 308-329

cattle, sheep, goats and horses. He fought on the side of the besieged Greeks of Missolonghi. *and died in the exodus.*

ox In his valuable research on the most prominent warlords of Roumeli and Olympus, Yannis Koliopoulos, has unearthed information concerning families such as the Boukouvalas, Stratos, Vlahavas, Kontoyannis, Varnakiotis, Diamantis, Botsaris, Tsongas, Iskos and even the Bakolas turncoat family, who remained in Turkish employment after Gogos Bakolas bolted from the Greek camp, following the battle of Peta in 1822.¹² With regard to the “kapakia” (change of camp) of Siafakas, Tsongas and Iskos, Koliopoulos notes: “In more than one sense, submission and collaboration grew out of the traditional exchange of roles between outlaws (klefts) and armatoles, familiar since before the war, though such behaviour now occurred in a new context, a fact that raised the stakes dramatically through the emergence of an alternate central authority”.¹³

ox When discussing the psyche of the modern Greek, Patrick Leigh Fermor juxtaposed pairs of characteristics that allegedly co-habit in disharmony within every Greek. The search for self-gratification, as opposed to an ideal world of collective cooperation. Such concepts as concrete, real ambition of self-promotion, improvisation and empiricism, are juxtaposed with such terms as abstract, wider aspiration, systemic action and principle. The list of pairs is long in Fermor’s book and their meaning is best rendered in his own words: “The cornerstone of the Romaic, as opposed to the Hellenic, interpretation is that inside every Greek dwell two figures in opposition. Sometimes one is the ascendant, sometimes the other; occasionally they are in concord.”¹⁴

Fermor’s theory would become relevant if pre-modernity could merge with modernity in a troubled symbiosis, as in the characters of Karaiskakis, Makryannis, Androutsos and many others of 1821. In fact, in historical terms, different mindsets have always coincided within protagonists of human endeavour. Although Fermor is attempting to describe the mentality of a contemporary Greek, he also succeeds in sketching elements of pre-modernity and modernity, as they coincide in one person.

¹² Yannis Koliopoulos, “Military Entrepreneurship in Central Greece etc. Journal of Modern Greek Studies, volume iii, No2, 1984, pp 163-175.

¹³ Ibid. page 175.

¹⁴ Patrick Leigh Fermor, Roumeli: Travels in Northern Greece, London: John Murray, 1966, pp 106-107

Before Greek society acquired the cultural homogeneity ascribed to it by historian Constantine Papprigopoulos, its uniformity as a nation-state, administered by King Otto under the revolutionary banner, was at the very least questionable. This is not to say that only the *armatoles*, primates and the clergy were not of one mind, but that each one of these groups possessed a plethora of blueprints for the revolution and its outcome. The message of the Filiki Etairia promising freedom from tyrannical rule, was deliberately vague so that each recipient of its promise could add his own version to the bottom line.

According to Perraivos, the Souliotes, who formed an insular confederation of villages consisting of mercenary warriors, aspired to freedom from central Ottoman rule and its pasha overlords. The freedom to establish the price of their mercenary services was mainly determined by Ali Pasha, the Albanian warlord of Jannina. The dispersion of the Souliotes and their family-based communities rendered them champions of the Greek cause and, ultimately, suppliers of officers for the regular forces of Greece.¹⁵

The Souliotes entered the war eight months before the uprising of the Moreas. They were initially recruited by Ismail Paso Bey to fight Ali Pasha and then they turned against the Sultan. After returning to their villages in Souli from exile in Corfu, they realised that the Albanian allies of the Grande Porte considered them equally as their enemies. Therefore, they decided to join their traditional foe, Ali Pasha, because he promised them their homeland and also paid their wages.

Perraivos entered the ranks of the Souliotes as an agent of the Filiki Etairia and the cause of Greek Independence. He fought on their side against the Sultan, without encouraging them to show the colours of the Greek cause, given that their allies were mostly Albanian Muslims. However, this did not prevent a gradual change of heart and camp by the Albanian allies of Ali Pasha, who were informed by the Porte that the Christian Souliotes were fighting on the side of the Greek insurgents. Chieftain, Tachir Abatzi, an ally of Ali, had visited Missolonghi to discuss with Alexander Mavrokordatos a possible alliance between the Greeks and the Pasha of Yannina. Abatzi was appalled by the sight of destroyed Muslim mosques and the wretched condition of the enslaved Turks and, instead, decided to join the forces of the Sultan.

¹⁵ Perraivos, *op.cit.* pp 97-201

The Souliotes persisted to the very frontiers of Souli in launching many operations against the army of the Porte, whilst carrying out acts of valour in the field. Thanks to Perraivos there is full documentation of the above¹⁶.

Those insurgents who were still in touch with the Filiki Etairia had a head start in formulating a view of their expanded homeland. The societal elite that had been initiated into the teachings of the Etairia understood the content of their extended homeland and the nature of the nation to which they belonged.

When did Kolokotronis start to use the term "Ellines" in his speeches, instead of "Christianoï" (Christians)? His memoirs, dictated to Tertsetis, included the ancient designation of "Ellines", resurrected by Korais. Did Kolokotronis actually use this term when addressing his assortment of troops before the battle of Dervenakia? What is certain is that by the time his memoirs were published everyone in the Kingdom used the ancient designation when describing his or her ethnicity.¹⁷ Furthermore, the Christian Albanians, the Vlachs and the Balkan volunteers who fought for the Greek cause, were already assimilated into the new nation under a name that had never been used before - "Hellas".

Between the times of the actual events and the changes that followed during the reign of King Otto, confusion prevails in the scripted memoirs of Makryannis. Whereas, Fotakos, Perraivos, Kasomoulis and, more so, Speliadis are to a greater degree in control of the time warp that bedevils other chronicles of the period.

Before the initial outbreak of hostilities between the Greeks and Turks, both Rhigas and Korais believed that coexistence between the two peoples was desirable and possible. However, by October 1828, the President of Greece, Kapodistrias, informed the European Powers that "Turks and Greeks can no longer share a common space because they have fought too long over the status of vital territory". Before the Revolution there were approximately 40,000 Muslims in the Morea – few of whom survived after the war. Most left their homes and moved to Thessaly and a smaller number perished during the battles of the Revolution. The Greek population in 1830 numbered around 191,000 in the Peloponnese alone.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid, pp 113-170, 205-230

¹⁷ Tertsetis, op-cit. p 114 In this page Kolokotronis makes constant use of the term "Ellines".

¹⁸ Γκεοργκ Λουτβιχ Μαουρερ, Ο Ελληνικός Λαός, Χαϊδελεβεργη 1835, Εκδ. Αφων Τολιδη, 1976, p.65

We find evidence of the view of Kapodistrias, as to the nature of the Greek nation, in his correspondence prior to his return to Greece in October 1827. "The Greek nation consists of people who have continued to practice their faith and speak its language since the fall of Constantinople." This cultural approach combines religion and language and, at the same time, gives credit to both paragons of Greek identity for keeping the Greeks aware of their history and foundations.¹⁹ Kapodistrias was a political conservative who accepted aspects of the Enlightenment concerning the formation of a unitary state.

Greek nationalism was developed as a concept by historian, Constantine Paparrigopoulos, several years after the end of the War of Independence. Whereas, Korais attributed the origins of the nation entirely to antiquity and its renaissance, after centuries of Medieval slumber, Paparrigopoulos, sought the historic continuity between ancient, medieval and modern Greece. His was an ideology of unity, based entirely on cultural rather than racial elements.

Meanwhile, progress in the natural sciences in the west was indirectly responsible for the racial theories of J.P. Fallmerayer and Robert Roesler. Thus, the search began for purity in the blood of nations as the primary element in determining their behaviour and worth. Paparrigopoulos contested their view, in six volumes on the History of the Hellenic Nation, in order to prove the futility of racism. He believed that all his contemporary European nations were composed of hybrid collections of people and looked for their cultural characteristics to define their unique position in history. According to Paparrigopoulos, a nation is a society of people, bound together by ties of religion and language, who become citizens of a state to which they owe their foremost loyalty and allegiance. As a legitimiser of state authority, the nation became a decisive and primary unit in world affairs.²⁰

The constitution of the two first National Assemblies was inspired by the unitary state of the French Revolution, particularly the French constitutions of 1793 and 1795. There is no mention of a royal head of State in the Greek constitution, nor are there any provisions (except age requirement) concerning income or even place of birth, to qualify for the right to vote within or without the theatres of the war.

¹⁹ Θανος Μ. Βερεμης & Ιακωβος Δ. Μιχαηλιδης, Ιωαννης Καποδιστριας. Ο «αμνος» τις Παλιγγενεσις των Ελληνων. Αθηνα Μεταίχμιο, 2020, p. 95

²⁰ John Breuilly, Nationalism and the State, Manchester Univ-Press, 1993

The executive branch representing the central authority had limited power which, in turn, led to numerous confrontations with the equally powerful legislature. Their terms of office were both of one -year duration which left little time for decision making. Be that as it may, the decisions of the National Assembly were rarely observed during the war.

After the turbulent years of 1825, and especially 1826, the third National Assembly sought a central authority and found it in the person of Ioannis Kapodistrias, former Foreign Minister of Russia. Kapodistrias was recognised as the sole representative of the executive power (in place of the pre-existing five members) and was granted a seven-year term in office. Thus, President Kapodistrias was able to put his reforms into effect.

Meanwhile, Sultan Mahmoud had already promulgated a policy of centralizing his authority in the disintegrating periphery of his failing empire.²¹

The open-ended nation of the Greeks allowed for a variety of Balkan peoples to take part in its formation. This element saved the Greek state from subsequent civil wars, such as the one we witnessed during the break-down of Yugoslavia.

The multi-lingual society of the Greek state also facilitated the inter-mingling of different peoples, whereas the temporal messages of the western enlightenment allowed for communication between western revolutionaries and the Greek insurgents.

The formation of a Greek identity was an on-going process, with new elements entering into the fray, following every innovative development during the war. Since most memoirs were published several decades after the events they describe, it is hard to tell when each hero enters modernity and starts to make use of its vocabulary. Kolokotronis was aware of developments in European affairs, on account of his service in the British unit at Zante, as well as his participatory role in the Filiki Eteraia. His comparison of western revolutions with that of the Greeks' contains a degree of truth: "Our own revolution is different from those in Europe. The European revolutions against their administrations are, in fact, civil wars. Our war is one that is waged

²¹ Κατερίνα Γαρδικά, Δανεισμός και φορολογία στα χρόνια της Καποδιστριας, 1817-1821 in Δελτίο του Κέντρου Έρευνας τις Ιστορίας του Νεώτερου Ελληνισμού, Ακαδημία Αθηνών, Τομ-Α' 1998, p.69

between two nations, because we deny the heathen right to treat us as slaves".²²

The National Assemblies were an invention of two westernised Phanariots, Alexander Mavrocordatos and Theodoros Negris, who represented central Greece. Membership of these bodies had been determined through an Ottoman system of communal representation. The delegates of the Assemblies comprised landowners, church leaders and a few merchants and intellectuals from the diaspora. Although the Assemblies - especially the first - were inspired by the institutions of the French Revolution, they clearly promoted factional interests. The legislative body, elected annually, would check the power of the Executive.

The first Assembly in Piada, a village near Epidaurus (December 1821, Jan, 1822), produced a provisional Greek government, giving the impressions of unity. In reality it reproduced factionalism.

The entire exercise of Mavrocordatos was in fact a ploy to exclude strong men, such as Dimitrios Ypsilantis and Theodoros Kolotronis, from the implementation of policy. The latter - (along with the warlords of Roumeli) - constituted a new class - wielding armed power, who emerged from the victories in the field by Greek irregulars.

Kolokotronis and his new-found popularity displeased both the primates of Moreas as well as Mavrocordatos in Roumeli. But, whereas the first relied on meagre fighting forces to combat the "Old Man of Moreas", Mavrocordatos was able to recruit his formidable armatoles of western Roumeli to invade the Peloponnese.

The Second National Assembly at Astros made the cleavage between the executive and legislative branches unbridgeable and facilitated civil strife.

Unlike the primates of the Moreas, who had to maintain their forces, Mavrocordatos did not have to provide for his autonomous warlords of western Roumeli. He could, however, entice them with the promise of Peloponnesian booty. The Roumeliots invaded the Moreas and fought his war with abandon. The irregulars of Kolokotronis fled to the mountains and the common cause for Independence collapsed.

²² Θανος Μ. Βερεμης, 21 Ερωτήσεις & Απαντήσεις για το '21, Αθήνα. Μεταίχμιο, 2020, p.31

In the meantime, Ibrahim made his winter crossing from Crete and landed his regular troops in Modon in February 1825.

The Third National Assembly of Troezina in March 1827 was convened under the shadow of widespread enemy triumphs. Historian, Constantine Paparrigopoulos, points out the failure of previous Assemblies to issue formal directives for effectively administering the war effort. His appraisal of Troezina is valid: "The regime of the Third Assembly was less certainly anarchic than the First and Second because instead of dividing executive power, it centralised it in the person of one President (...) and increased the duration of his term to seven years."²³

The views nurtured by different segments of society concerning their place and role in the War of Independence were never uniform or static. Furthermore, the transition from pre-modernity to the modern nation state is laden with obstacles. We have discussed memoirs that generate conflicting perceptions between past and present time. As is often the case in history, exceptional periods accelerate developments and confuse the perceptions of the on-looker. It is especially difficult for contemporary witnesses of the events to understand the process of change. Neither intellectuals such as Korais, who looked for the resurrection of Antiquity, nor artful politicians such as Mavrocordatos, could evaluate their negative and positive actions vis a vis the seminal events that took place during the Revolution.

However, the decade of upheaval produced individuals who understood, at a certain point in time, the significance of their contribution. Kolokotronis during the first years of the Revolution and Karaiskakis and Kapodistrias towards its end.²⁴

The threat of impending doom in the person of Ibrahim became a recurring reminder of the mistakes committed by the protagonists of the revolution. Kolokotronis, partially responsible for the civil strife, paid the highest price with the loss of his son Panos; Karaiskakis, after a spate of victories in the field, missed his chance of regaining the Acropolis by a random shot.²⁵ Kapodistrias was penalised by an expiring pre-modernity while anchoring his state to safety. Even Mavrocordatos, responsible for the intrigues that almost destroyed the

²³ Παπαρρηγοπούλος op.cit.vol.6 Athens, 1925,p.45 For Constitutional issues see N. Αλιβιζατος, Το συνταγμα και οι εχθροί του, Πόλις, 2013 pp. 60-68

²⁴ Θ Βερεμης, Ι. Κολιοπούλος, Ι. Μιχαηλίδης, 1821. Η Δημιουργία ενός εθνός-κρατους, Αθήνα: Μεταίχμιο,2018

²⁵ Δημητρίος Αινιαν, Ο Καριασκάκις, Edited by Ι.Κ. Μαζαρακίης-Αινιαν, Ερμής, 1974, pp.108-113

revolution, lost three young children to typhus fever. Lesser figures in the war for independence also suffered great personal losses. Kasomoulis lost most of his family and Nikitaras, the hero of Doliana and Dervenakia, died in abject poverty. Makryannis wrote a second text which, according to Vlachoyannis contained the “ravings of a mad man”. He intimated this to Theotokas, who was anxious to read it. The second manuscript, which was published as recently as 2002 contains the author’s visions of saints and his rambling discourses²⁶ with them.

The war for Independence brought misfortune to almost every protagonist – regardless of their contribution. More so, to the nameless multitude who died during the ravages of the war – or were sold as prisoners in the slave markets of the east.

The search for the foundations of modernity deserves a further look at the heroes of the war and their motivation, as well as its unsuspecting victims.

²⁶ This second, untitled, manuscript was published by the Foundation of the National Bank of Greece (Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα της Εθνικής τραπεζικής) with the title: Οραµατα και Θαµατα ΜΙΕΤ, 2002, with the introduction by Λινος Πολιτης.

Thanos Veremis, Professor Emeritus, Athens University. Vice-President of ELIAMEP.