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## **Greek-Orthodox, Ottoman Greeks or just Greeks?**

### **Theories of Coexistence in the Aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution.**

#### **i) The historical background**

In the history of the Ottoman Empire, the period between 1839 and 1876 is known as the period of the *Tanzimat*. The term *Tanzimat-i Hayriye* (Beneficial Reforms) had first been used, in 1838, in an imperial order by the Sultan Mahmut II, whose main concern was to reorganise central power and regenerate the Empire. The reforms were inaugurated in 1839, with the *Gülhane Hatt-ı Humayunu* (Noble Edict of the Rose Garden), which had been prepared by the leading reformer Reşit Pasha and was promulgated in the name of the new Sultan Abdülmecit. The edict, among other things, established guarantees for the life, honor and property of the Sultan's subjects and equality before the law of everybody, regardless of their religion. This was a response to the demands of the Ottoman officials, who, until then, were subject to the Sultan's arbitrary decisions. It was also a decision dictated by European powers eager to safeguard the status of their subjects and protégés within the Empire. Mahmut II's successor, Abdülmecit, however, did not manage to maintain their control over the modernised bureaucracy their predecessor had established, and thus, the power shifted from the palace to the Sublime Porte. This procedure culminated in 1856, after the end of the Crimean war, to a new reform decree, the *Islahat Fermanı* (Reform Edict), which enhanced the promises made in 1839 and was again largely dictated by European powers, as a result of the peace treaty in Paris<sup>1</sup>.

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However, the rule of Abdülmecit's successor, Abdülaziz, brought a setback in the reforms. This instigated the prompt reaction of the Sublime Porte officials and eventually led to the promulgation of the constitution and the first Ottoman parliament, in 1876-78. Within huge political and financial hardships, on May 30th 1876, a group of leading Ottoman politicians, carried out a coup d' état against the Sultan. The mastermind of this initiative was the prominent administrator and reformer Midhat Pasha. A crucial role in the intellectual preparation of these events, however, was played by a group of bureaucrats and journalists, known as Young Ottomans, among whom Namık Kemal was the leading figure. Young Ottomans introduced new terms in political life and contributed to the reconsideration of the reforms. They opted for liberal ideas, urging at the same time for the re-appropriation of the Islamic values, which, they argued, would safeguard the sovereignty of the people. Consequently, they criticized the agents of the *Tanzimat*, for introducing reforms, which, in the long run, would lead to the disintegration of the Ottoman society<sup>2</sup>.

As a result of the coup d' état, Abdülaziz was deposed. However, the new Sultan Murat V, symbol of the liberals but also of precarious mental condition, was soon replaced by his brother Abdülhamit II. The promulgation of the constitution took place, in 1876, in Istanbul, in the opening session of a peace conference, after one more Balkan war, where the Ottomans were asked to introduce a large reform project for the non-Muslim populations of the Empire. The constitution, from the Ottoman point of view, made all discussions of reforms redundant, since all subjects were granted equal civic rights<sup>3</sup>. However, the conference failed, and under the threat of a Russian invasion, the constitution was suspended and the parliament was finally closed down by the Sultan.

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Izmir at the end of the Empire a non-Muslim Ottoman Community between autonomy and Patriotism', which I eventually defended at Leiden University in 2005. The relevant research was made possible partly thanks to a scholarship I was granted by the Hellenic World Foundation. Moreover, I would like to express my compliments to Antonis Liakos,,Charis Exertzoglou, Edhem Eldem. Antony Gorman for their stimulating remarks on issues both of the content and the form.

<sup>1</sup> Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey, A Modern History*, I.B.Taurs, London, 2004, 52-54.

<sup>2</sup> On the Young Ottomans see Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of the Young Ottoman thought. A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*, Princeton U.P., Princeton, 1962.

<sup>3</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 77-78.

Thirty three years of Sultan Abdülhamit's reign which followed that period, marked an ambivalent development of state modernisation together with an ongoing suppression of any political opposition.<sup>4</sup>

New generations, educated in the schools like *Mülkiye* (Civil Servants Academy) and *Harbiye* (Military Academy) established by Abdülhamit himself, were inspired by the liberal and constitutional ideas and the Ottoman patriotism of the Young Ottomans. However, they rejected Islamic religion as a means to modernization. From the 1890s onwards, these young officers and officials, generally known as Young Turks (Jön Türkler), in contact with Western ideas and modes of social behavior, could not tolerate what they perceived as the decay of the Empire. Thus, the most radical individuals in the army and the administration gradually joined the *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress). This title had been used already, for more than fifteen years, by the group of Ottoman dissidents who had found refuge in Paris and had been propagating against the Hamidian Regime. However, the organization took a new turn when, in September 1907, the Paris group merged with the *Osmanlı Hürriyet Cemiyeti* (Ottoman Freedom Society), which had been established in Salonica, in 1906. This provided the movement with a new impetus within the Empire<sup>5</sup>. In June 1908, the Russian Tsar and the King of Britain met at Reval, in the Baltic Sea. Among other things, they discussed a proposal for the resolution of the 'Macedonian Question', based on foreign control, which would allow the Sultan only a formal suzerainty. On July 23th 1908, following these unexpected developments, but also as a result of widespread social unrest, the Young Turks organized an uprising in Rezna and Manastir and threatened to march to Istanbul. Thus, Sultan Abdülhamit was forced to re-establish the constitution of 1876 and proclaim elections<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> On the *Tanzimat* see also the seminal works by R.H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-76*, Princeton, 1963, and Halil İnalcık, 'The application of the Tanzimat and its social effects', *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 5 (1973), 97-128; but also the recent study by Yonca Köksal, 'Imperial center and local groups: Tanzimat reforms in the provinces of Edirne and Ankara', *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 27, Fall 2002, 107-138.

<sup>5</sup> For the reorganization of CUP see Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, Brill, Leiden, 1984, 37-42.

<sup>6</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 94.

At the same time, within the Empire, the ‘long’ 19th century had been heavily marked by the struggle in Macedonia. Greek, Bulgarian but also self-proclaiming Macedonian groups fought against one another in a determined attempt to attract the allegiance of the Christian populations. Under these circumstances, Greek officers and diplomats took initiatives in organising networks supporting the ‘national struggle’. Lieutenant Athanasios Souliotis-Nicolaidis, who, in 1906, had already founded the *Οργάνωσις Θεσσαλονίκης* (Society of Salonika), two years later, established together with the diplomat and prominent intellectual Ion Dragoumis the *Οργάνωσις Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* (Society of Constantinople).

Initially, the primary concern of the *Society* had been to fight against the Bulgarian threat, even by seeking the support of the Ottoman authorities<sup>7</sup>. However, the Young Turk Movement altered the political environment dramatically and the *Society* gave itself a new role. The elections proclaimed by the Sultan provided all ethnicities with the right of representation in the new Ottoman parliament. Furthermore, *müsavat* / *ἰσοπολιτεία* (equality before the law) was once again officially introduced. This was part of a political project aimed at demolishing the old distinctions among *millet* (ethnoreligious communities) and bringing all Ottoman subjects under a common political umbrella by offering them Ottoman citizenship whatever their religion or culture. The project was certainly not a novelty. It had been initiated already, as we saw, through the *Tanzimat*, as a policy instigated largely ‘from above’ and it had then contributed to the emergence of dynamic middle and upper bourgeois groups, mainly but not exclusively among the non-Muslim communities<sup>8</sup>. However, in terms of political culture, especially after the dissolution of the first Parliament, in 1878, and the establishment of the absolutist Hamidian regime, the Ottomanist project had never been consolidated among the non-Muslim communities. The re-emergence of this project, this

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<sup>7</sup> See Thanos Veremis-Caterina Boura (eds.), *Αθανάσιος Σουλιώτης-Νικολαΐδης, Οργάνωσις Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* (Athanasios Souliotis-Nicolaidis, Society of Constantinople), Dodoni, Athens, 1984, 9-23.

<sup>8</sup> As for the Greek-Orthodox communities, see ‘Bureaucratic Reform and Economic Change’, 57-74 and ‘Challenge and accommodation: The Rum Millet Reorganizes’, 122-144, in Gerasimos, Augustinos, *The Greeks of Asia Minor*, Kent: Kent State University Press, 1992.

time as a widespread claim, and the formation of a political modernisation agenda provided the Greek-Orthodox communities, especially in the cities, with a unique opportunity, it was presumed, to translate their social and economic influence into political authority.

The ‘Society of Constantinople’ worked towards this aim. Yet, despite some limited support from the Hellenic state, it did not really represent its official policy. The Hellenic state had initially discouraged any involvement in Unionist activities, demonstrating its preference for the absolutist regime not so much as a matter of principle but out of fear that any change would put in danger the ‘privileges’ of the Patriarchate and the Greek-Orthodox communities<sup>9</sup>. What’s more, the Greek defeat in the 1897 war had instigated in Athens an atmosphere of cautious friendship vis a vis the Ottoman Empire, since the supporters of irredentism had lost their political moment, at least temporarily. The impact of the defeat, the interests of the *homogenis* (Greeks living outside the Hellenic state) but also the Bulgarian threat had resulted in this favorable attitude towards the Ottomans. The Empire, from number one enemy of the nation, had turned to a ‘necessary evil’. It is important to stress, however, that, at the same time, especially as a result of the imposition of an internationally inspected regime on public finance, the Hellenic state had recovered impressively. Inflation and public debt had been successfully suppressed. Moreover, many Greek-Orthodox communities of the Empire were strongly attached to the Hellenic state through bank branches in several urban centers of the Empire<sup>10</sup>. However, the economic development does not seem to have reversed the widespread fear for the Empire, at least until the outbreak of the Young Turk Revolution.

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<sup>9</sup> A.J. Panayotopoulos, ‘Early Relations Between the Greeks and the Young Turks’, *Balkan Studies*, 21 (1980), 87-95 and ‘Negotiations between the CUP and the Greek Organizations’, in M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution, The Young Turks*, Oxford UP, 2001, 249-253.

<sup>10</sup> See Christos Hadjiiosif, ‘Issues of management, control and sovereignty in transnational banking in the Eastern Mediterranean before the First World War’ in Kostas Kostis (ed.), *Modern Banking in the Balkans and West-European Capital in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Aldershot, 1999 and ‘Η εξωστρέφεια της ελληνικής οικονομίας στις αρχές του 20ου αι. και οι συνέπειες της στην εξωτερική πολιτική’ (The extroversion of the Greek economy at the turn of the 20th c. and its repercussions in foreign policy) in the volume *Η Ελλάδα των Βαλκανικών πολέμων* (Greece during the Balkan Wars), E.L.I.A., Athens, 1993.

After the successful outcome of the Revolution, the official attitude of the Hellenic state towards the Unionists became friendlier. This did not last for long, though, as the policy of the Unionists became authoritarian over time and both the Hellenic state and the ‘Society of Constantinople’ provided their support to the opposition liberal party. Moreover, the lack of a concrete state policy, according to Caterina Boura<sup>11</sup>, resulted in the division in the views of the twenty-four Greek-Orthodox parliamentary deputies. Sixteen among them formed the *Ελληνικός Πολιτικός Σύνδεσμος* (Greek Political League), an alter ego of the *Society of Constantinople*, also directed by Souliotis-Nicolaidis, while the remaining eight deputies, more friendly disposed towards the CUP, supported them on many issues<sup>12</sup>.

## ii) Defining the terms and the participants in the discussion

It is often more fruitful, in order to deconstruct the meaning of certain terms which describe collective identities or historical procedures, to examine their symbolic dynamics or communicative efficiency in a moment of crisis. In our case, the issue to be tackled is the use of the terms ‘nation’ and consequently ‘Greek’, ‘Ottoman’ and ‘Turkish’ nation as they are reconstructed within the context already described. As a starting point, while the term ‘Greek-Orthodox’ describes *stricto sensu* the communities of the Ottoman Empire (it is generally accepted as the most accurate translation of the

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<sup>11</sup> See Caterina Boura, ‘Οι βουλευτικές εκλογές στην Οθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία. Οι Έλληνες βουλευτές 1908-1918, (Parliamentary elections in the Ottoman Empire. The Greek delegates)’ *Δελτίο του Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών* (Bulletin of the Center of Asia Minor Studies), 4, Athens, 69-85 and ‘The Greek Millet in Turkish Politics: Greeks in the Ottoman Parliament (1908-1918)’, in D. Gondicas & C. Issawi, *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism*, Princeton U.P., Princeton, 1999, 193-206.

<sup>12</sup> On the Hellenic state policy see also Th. Veremis, ‘The Hellenic Kingdom and the Ottoman Greeks: The Experiment of the ‘Society of Constantinople’’ in D. Gondicas & C. Issawi, 181-191. Boura considers such a policy ‘non-existent’. However, one could argue that, in the course of events, and at least until the Balkan wars, the Hellenic authorities managed to keep a channel of communication open both with the liberal opposition (through the Political League) and the Unionist circles (through Pavlos Carolidis). Moreover, during the years 1909-10, the military movement organised in Goudi by the *Στρατιωτικός Σύνδεσμος* (Military League) and the invitation to Eleftherios Venizelos to take over as a prime minister constituted a turning point in Greek politics. Thus, domestic developments affected policies vis a vis the Empire as much as the international conditions did.

term *Rum* used by the Ottoman administration), we are using the term ‘Greek’ here in a broader sense, not necessarily in reference to the Greek state only. Having said that, we intend to avoid drawing a line between ‘Hellenic Greeks’ and ‘Ottoman Greeks’, so to speak, since such a distinction, even if accurate in administrative terms, does not allow any free space for this critical overlapping of identities we witness during that period. In terms both of economic activity and of national self-identification, at the turn of the century we can see already strong bonds between the two sides of the borders. Certainly, the vocabulary and the repertoire involved differ in practice. We will return to this later, though. For the time being, accordingly to the terms mentioned above, we will try to investigate the historical preconditions of ‘coexistence’ (συνύπαρξη) and ‘equality before the law’ (ισοπολιτεία) and the narratives in which they are inscribed. It is through the texts of prominent intellectuals and agitators of this period that continuities and discontinuities in the use of these and other related terms will be traced.

However, let us not consider intellectuals as only a public voice for social groups or classes. The concepts and narratives they used marked the emergence of nationalist ideology and its different manifestations in South-Eastern Europe for over a century. Thus, the proliferation of their ideas should not be traced only through their commitment to institutions and the systematic formation of political claims or their personal impact and the particular circumstances. Such an approach would be mechanistic. On the contrary, we do not necessarily intend to interpret the concepts and narratives of the texts in their relation to a reality that exists outside the text. Following La Capra’s understanding of ‘inter-textual reading’,<sup>13</sup> that is a reading which introduces relations between texts, as well as between a text and its context and thus prevents the imposition of the context as ‘a fully unified or dominant structure saturating the text with a certain meaning’,<sup>14</sup> we will seek to pinpoint the ambiguous links between texts belonging to otherwise divergent intellectual traditions.

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<sup>13</sup> See D.LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language*. Ithaca, New York, 1983, *History and Criticism*, Ithaca, New York, 1985 & with S.L.Kaplan: *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives*. Ithaca, NY. 1982.

<sup>14</sup> LaCapra 1982, 117.

Starting with Dragoumis and Souliotis-Nicolaidis, we should stress their role both as activists and as intellectuals. Dragoumis, in particular, was born in 1878, into a prominent family of Athens. His father Stefanos was the head of the last government before Venizelos took over, in 1910. His sister Natalia was married to Pavlos Melas, the foremost Greek hero of the Macedonian Struggle. After completing secondary education, Ion studied law in Athens. In 1899, however, he began his career as a diplomat and in 1902, he was appointed at several consulates in Macedonia and Thrace, where he actively participated in the struggle against Bulgarian and Macedonian groups. In 1907-1908, he served as a secretary at the Hellenic embassy in Constantinople where he worked jointly with Souliotis-Nicolaidis. The two friends, far from representing the official policy of the Hellenic state, though, they had often been a headache for the Hellenic Foreign Minister who did not always approve their initiatives. However, among the Istanbul circles, they were considered, at the same time, as mediators of the views of the Hellenic state. The leading groups of the Greek-Orthodox did not necessarily share those views but they certainly respected them. Consequently, the two figures were usually treated by the Greek-Orthodox elites in an ambivalent way. Even if those elites supported them, at the same time they treated them as outsiders promoting the interests of the Hellenic state.

Apart from Souliotis-Nicolaidis and Dragoumis, we will bring into the discussion Pavlos Carolidis, another prominent figure of this period. Carolidis was born in a village near Kayseri (Kaisaria), in Cappadocia, in 1849. He spent his school years in Izmir, studying at the famous *Evangelical School* (Ευαγγελική Σχολή), from where he graduated in 1867. He then studied History at the Universities of Athens and Tübingen. After concluding his studies, he taught History and Latin in Istanbul and in Izmir, until, in 1886, he was appointed professor of History at the University of Athens. Although a Hellenic Greek, in 1908, he was elected as a deputy for Izmir at the Ottoman Parliament. Despite all legal complications, the professor embarked on his new career full of hopes. It was his strong belief that the new regime would open the ground for a sincere understanding between the Greek and the Turkish element, which, however, should aim at their joint action against what Carolidis considered as the fatal danger for both, the Slavic threat in Macedonia<sup>15</sup>. It was this concern that urged Carolidis to try to convince

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<sup>15</sup> Pavlos Caolidis, *Λόγοι και Υπομνήματα* (Speeches and Memoranda), Athens, 1913, 15-16.



the Ottoman public opinion about the sincerity of his intentions, even if he considered it absolutely reasonable that the Muslims would be extremely suspicious at someone who, having defended the Hellenic rights, would now be assigned the task of protecting the Ottoman ones. First of all, he would try to convince them that he was not acting as a spy under any circumstances, but as ‘a representative of Hellenic Smyrna and Hellenism and the Hellenic mind and science and the Hellenic national interests, but also political correctness and enlightened patriotism’<sup>16</sup>. However, Carolidis’ effort to remain loyal to ‘political correctness and ‘enlightened patriotism’ that did not always coincide with the ‘Hellenic national interests’ would eventually make him unpopular among many Greeks.

Similar patterns connecting intellectual and political activity could be attributed to Georgios Skliros and Dimitrios Glinos. They were part of a group of intellectuals who tried to introduce Marxist methodology in social and historical analysis during a period of profound criticism and demands for social change<sup>17</sup>. They were also of Ottoman origin and closely followed the events of the 1908 Revolution. Georgios Constantinidis, as it was Skliros’ real name, was born in 1878, in Sohum, in Russia. He spent his childhood in Russia where he studied medicine. There, he came into contact with socialist ideas, especially by Plehanof. In 1905, he participated in the workers’ uprising, in St Petersburg. In 1906, he moved to Jena, in Germany, for graduate studies. There, during 1907-1911, he came into contact with many young Greek intellectuals also studying there. His seminal work *Το κοινωνικό μας ζήτημα* (Our Social Question) and the debates which this instigated in the journal *Noumas* were influential for their contemporary Greek intellectuals. Dimitrios Glinos was born in Izmir, in 1882. He was member of the circle of Jena where he studied sociology, and later on, he worked as a teacher at the Hellenic-German Lyceum in Izmir (1906-8). The ideas of the two socialist intellectuals, amongst which the confederation among the Balkan states was a prominent one, were influential for the choices of the first Venizelos’ cabinets. All these figures, even if they did not share the same views, had a lot in common. Firstly, their writings and political activity revolved around the ‘national question’. Secondly, they did not stand as spokespersons of

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, 16.

<sup>17</sup> See Rena Stavridou-Patrikiou (ed.), *Δημοτικισμός και κοινωνικό πρόβλημα* (Dimoticism and the Social Question), Ermis, Athens, 1976.

the state, in so far as they were not involved in official policy-making. Nevertheless, they contributed, in one way or another, to the elaboration of ideas which seemed to be plausible alternatives in the political arena. Drawing on their writings, we will try to elucidate the discourses they develop<sup>18</sup>.

### iii) Negotiating the nation

In Athens, the happy news was welcomed with enthusiasm. In September, a group of journalists and politicians organized a visit to Istanbul in order to communicate to the Ottoman government their support and spirit of cooperation. Carolidis, who was among them, was warmly welcomed by many Ottoman officials, who aware, though, that he was going to be a candidate for the elections. The atmosphere of an enthusiasm based on reckless misconceptions can be duly described by the following incident. During a dinner given in the visitors' honour by Muhiyeddin bey, a Unionist figure of this early period, the host refers to Greeks as the 'older brothers' (πρεσβύτεροι αδερφοί) of Turks in their struggle towards freedom. Carolidis assumed that his interlocutor had obviously confused the national character of the Greek Revolution with the social character of the Turkish one and he answered: 'The Greek Revolution has been the passage to freedom not only for the Greek nation, but for the whole East, even for the Turkish nation'<sup>19</sup>.

In this exchange, the ambivalence in the references of both figures is obvious. Certainly, we are in the course of a revolutionary period, which motivated everybody to express himself with little reserve. Yet, points like that are still important, even if their connotations are not very clear. The reference to 'older brothers' should be read together with the statement by George Boussios, deputy for Service (Servia) at the Ottoman parliament and head of the 'Greek Political League' since 1911, who, describing his loyalty to the Ottoman state, he declared that: 'The Ottoman state is our mother. Greece

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<sup>18</sup> On Georgios Skliros, see Loukas Axelos (ed.), *Γ. Σκληρός, Έργα* (G. Skliros, Works), Epikairoitita, Athens, 1976; for Dimitrios Glinos, see Filippos Iliou (ed.), *Δημητρίου Γληνού, Άπαντα* (Complete works), v.1 1898-1910, v.2 1910-1914, Themelio, Athens, 1983, and Panagiotis Noutsos, *Η σοσιαλιστική σκέψη στην Ελλάδα* (Socialist Thought in Greece), v.2 (1907-1925), 49-57 & 193-212, Gnosi, Athens, 1993.

<sup>19</sup> Carolidis, *Speeches*, 18-21.

is our sister'<sup>20</sup>. The attribution of family terms to cultural or national bonds is not a novelty. In the Jewish tradition, the notion of 'older brother' was often used in an ambivalent way. As Carlo Ginsburg has suggested, the passage from the Jewish to the Christian tradition marked the first perception of modernity, since it presupposed a disruption between the Old and the New. As part of this disruption, Jews were often called 'older brothers' in Christian texts. However, this description carried negative connotations, since it was the younger brother who was given prominence for the honor of the family<sup>21</sup>.

The heritage of the Ottoman tradition was a more complicated affair. As a consequence of the *Tanzimat* and up to the turn of the century, there had been a gradual transformation concerning the discourse adopted by the Greek-Orthodox communities of the Empire<sup>22</sup>. This development affected the balance of meaning between 'Ottoman' and 'Greek' as identity markers. In their vocabulary, the two terms could very well coexist without any concern that this could lead to confusion. Yet, the confusion was still there.

Let's start by suggesting what these terms did not mean. 'Greek' was not identified any more with the Christian. Other Christian nationalisms, in the Balkans and elsewhere, had developed their own discourse of irredentism during the second half of the 19th c. Bulgarians, Serbs, Romanians; but also Armenians and Christian Arabs had dismantled a single Christian identity<sup>23</sup>. On the other hand, Greeks did not identify with the citizens of the Greek state. Certainly, after the foundation of the Greek state and the emergence of the Greek *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* (Great Idea) in the 1840s, a major task of this state had been to implement any possible measure for 'the liberation of the enslaved brothers'. However, at the turn of the 20th century, things had considerably changed. The Greek state, despite its expansion through state agreements, namely the annexation of the Ionian

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<sup>20</sup> Veremis-Boura, *Society*, 110

<sup>21</sup> Carlo Ginsburg, *Occhiacci di legno*, Torino, Feltrinelli, 1998, 210-215.

<sup>22</sup> Thanos Veremis, 'From the National State to the Stateless Nation 1821-1910', 9-22 in M. Blinkhorn and Th Veremis (eds), *Modern Greece: Nationalism & Nationality*, SAGE-ELIAMEP, Athens, 1990.

<sup>23</sup> A very thorough account of the period can be found in Elli Skopetea, *Η Δύση της Ανατολής* (The Sunset of the East), Themelio, Athens, 1992.

Islands in 1864 and of Thessaly in 1881, seemed incapable of carrying out an aggressive policy against the Empire<sup>24</sup>.

An interesting distinction is the one drawn between the *Εθνικόν Κέντρο* (National Centre) and the *Ελληνικό Έθνος* (Greek Nation) in an anonymous text of the newspaper *Isopolitia* (Equality before the law) after the new regime had been established. Instead of Greece, the title of ‘National Center’ was attributed to the Patriarchate: ‘The National Centre is the old-aged guard of national rights....of whatever the political changes did not eliminate’<sup>25</sup>.

The ‘Greek Nation’, on the other hand, was ‘a political factor of the State’. In this discourse, an ongoing controversy among the religious and the secular element of the Greek-Orthodox communities can be traced. But at the same time, as Skopetea has pointed out, the very presence of the Patriarchate and its cultural hegemony compelled the adherents of the secular discourse to follow a similar path. ‘The inconsistency lies at the very position of the Greeks who, on the one hand, saw the (Young Turk) Revolution as the peak of the Reform movement in the Empire, movement which had begun since the 19th c. and had been perceived as the great chance for Hellenism. On the other hand, they could not use western means for their participation in the reform- an essentially western- movement. The widely accepted demarcations of identity - religion, education- lied within the domain of the Patriarchate, which was neither a western, nor a reformed institution’<sup>26</sup>.

The developments mentioned above led certain Greek intellectuals reconsider the conceptual preconditions of the ‘Great Idea’, the nationalist ideology which heralded the incorporation of all unredeemed brethren to the Greek state. Dragoumis accused the Greeks of the State of having become ‘Helladites’ (the citizens of Hellas)<sup>27</sup>. Yet, that was not only a critique of state nationalism, something fashionable in those days. The notion

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<sup>24</sup> See Giannis Giannouloupoulos, *Η ευγενής μας τύφλωσις* (Our noble blindness), Vivliorama, Athens, 1999.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Τα πράγματα εις την θέσιν των’, *Isopolitia*, 18.7.1910. cited in Elli Skopetea, *Οι Έλληνες και οι εχθροί τους* (Greeks and their enemies), 10-35 in *Ιστορία της Ελλάδος του 20υ αι.* (History of Greece in 20th c.), Vivliorama, Athens, 1999, 26-27.

<sup>26</sup> Skopetea, *Greeks*, 27.

<sup>27</sup> Ion Dragoumis, *Όσοι ζωντανοί* (Whosoever Is Living), Athens, 1911, 2.

of 'Hellenism' for Dragoumis did not correspond to a modern European nation. He believed that Greeks had their own culture and tradition and could therefore create their own Neo-Hellenic civilization, without any need to imitate the West. However, this could happen only beyond the limits of the Greek state, in the area where 'Hellenism' has been historically active, that is, in the territories of the Empire. He admitted that the fate of the nation was to coexist with other ethnicities, as had been the case for centuries. Yet, he clearly suggested that, in this interrelation with other ethnicities, Greeks would play the leading role. Dragoumis, as Augustinos has pointed out, was heavily attracted by social Darwinism, and supported the idea of 'natural' competition among nations in which only a few could survive<sup>28</sup>. The Greeks would surely win this competition.

By contrast, Souliotis-Nicolaidis did not necessarily give a priority to the Greek element. He seemed so much charmed by the colors of multi-communal society that the only real project for him was its preservation. Ethnicities would be 'amalgamated' into a new nation, which would emerge as a result of the Eastern peoples' will<sup>29</sup>. In fact, Souliotis-Nicolaidis demonstrated a genuine confidence in the Eastern peoples but did not conceive of an 'Eastern' nation only in terms of 'racial amalgamation'. He also called for a political unity, which necessitated the creation of an 'Eastern' State: 'The new regime was a chance. Its promulgation created an atmosphere of fraternity among the nations of Turkey, that is all of the Eastern nations,....the constitutional liberties permitted the Hellenism of Turkey to articulate and openly follow a political program, a political program whose eventual purpose will be the federation of the nations and the states of the East<sup>30</sup>. Therefore, for instance, he declared having waged a war against the Bulgarians who wanted to destroy this unity. What is interesting is that, according to Dragoumis' words, he could see: 'the creation of a new race out of all the ethnicities of Turkey as a hope for all humanity'<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Gerasimos Augustinos, *Consciousness and History: Nationalist Critics of Greek Society 1897-1914*, New York, 1977, 88-89.

<sup>29</sup> A. Panayotopoulos, "'The Great Idea'" and the vision of Eastern Federation: A propos of the views of I. Dragoumis and A. Souliotis-Nicolaidis', *Balkan Studies* 21, (1980), 363. The same article also provides information on the 'League for the Balkan Federation' founded in Paris.

<sup>30</sup> Veremis- Boura, *Society*, 63

<sup>31</sup> Dragoumis, *Whosoever Is Living*, 116-117.

At the same time, he also seemed very confident regarding the salvation of 'Hellenism'. However, he attributed to this a much broader definition. The political character of 'Hellenism', according to Souliotis-Nicolaidis did not derive from the Western republican ideology but from the ancient Greek tradition of democracy. He thus declared in agony: 'If only I could put that in everybody's consciousness...they would turn there and would find at the end a political system that would unite them, a political system which would not imitate the well-known European ones'.<sup>32</sup>

Dragoumis, in his turn, declared that: 'I see within Greeks the hidden vigor (which will allow them), while searching for new formulas, to build in the East an Eastern State or an Eastern Federation out of nation states in each of which the foreign eastern communities could live as autonomous'<sup>33</sup>. Apparently, both Dragoumis and Souliotis-Nicolaidis separated the nation from the state, advocating what Veremis has called an 'imaginary stateless nation'<sup>34</sup>. As a matter of fact, it was not the nation-state to which our intellectuals objected. What they mainly rejected was the western identification of the nation with the state. Yet, it is not the first time that this concept of a nation beyond state came forth. The attribution to Hellenism of a cultural dynamism and integrative force, which could incorporate and assimilate diverse elements without really referring to a political unity, had been a recurring theme since the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> c. when European Enlightenment ideas had made their way through the Ottoman lands<sup>35</sup>. Certainly, among other things, two important differences between the two discourses regard, firstly, the fact that at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. there was already a political entity, which defined the framework and secondly the strongly anti-Western taint. At the same time, the obvious reshuffling of power relations in the area opened the ground for the creation of utopias which, under the prevailing enthusiasm and belief to the possibility of change, did not look as utopias at all, at least to their inspirers.

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<sup>32</sup> Veremis- Boura, *Society*, 62.

<sup>33</sup> Ion Dragoumis, *Φύλλα Ημερολογίου, Στ'* (Diary, 6th v.), (1918-1920), edited by Thodoros Sotiropoulos, Ermis, Athens, 1986, 169.

<sup>34</sup> Veremis, *National state*, 17-18.

<sup>35</sup> see Paschalis Kitromilidis, *The Enlightenment as Social Criticism- Iosipos Moisioudax and Greek Culture in the 18th c.*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1992.

Interestingly, we can find the same anti-western discourse in a treatise written by Pavlos Carolidis on the ‘principle of nationalities’ with the title *Εθνη και Φυλαί* (Nations and Races), already in 1907. His aim was double: ‘On the one hand to preserve the internal direct connection of Greek history with the Western one, and on the other hand to prove that, nevertheless, the western principle of nationalities should not be applied in the ‘Greek’ East...the basic criterion is the ‘national consciousness’<sup>36</sup>.

The argumentation was essentially based on the distinction between ‘nation’ and ‘race’. The Western nations should remember their multiracial origin in order to understand the multiracial character of the Greek nation itself, and not to argue on the existence of non-existing nations. The peculiarity of the Greek case is that the races have derived from the nation and not the opposite, as it is the case with the Western ones. It is also interesting that the only ‘national consciousness’ that Carolidis recognised apart from the Greek was the Turkish one. It is worth remembering here that the features attributed to proto-national populations, as described by Hobsbawm, are language, religion, relationship and consciousness. For Carolidis, two out of these were enough. However, since religion as an organising category referred to pre-modern societies, it was consciousness, as Exertzoglou has shown, which was used as the ‘key-category in the construction of the symbolic realm of national identity’<sup>37</sup>.

During a discussion in the parliament, concerning the relations of the Patriarchate with the non-Greek speaking Orthodox populations, Carolidis defended the Greek language in the religious ceremonies of those populations. He explained: ‘It is not surprising that a population can use in its external relations a different language, which prevailed through temporary traditions and have another language, in which to be educated culturally and nationally’. And he concluded: ‘History testifies that the Orthodox populations of Macedonia are Greek. But even if there was no evidence, and it was supposed that they belonged to a race different from the Greek one, they are still

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<sup>36</sup> Skopetea, *Greeks*, 12.

<sup>37</sup> Haris Exertzoglou, ‘Shifting boundaries: language, community and the “non-Greek-speaking Greeks”’, *Historein* 1 (1999), 81.

Greek, because they have such a national consciousness. We should, therefore, differentiate between race and nationality’<sup>38</sup>.

In this outburst of nationalist self-confidence in the Ottoman Parliament, Carolidis was selective as far as the elements of national identification were concerned. Eventually, in his argument, he would take a step backwards and, while using a modern vocabulary, he would promote the old-fashioned concept of *γένος* (millet). An interesting example of this inconsistency is the conduct of the ‘Greek Political Association’, which, even if it formulated its program in terms of political liberalism, did not proceed to elaborate ideas for the new political circumstances<sup>39</sup>. On the contrary, it was trying to improve the position of the Greek-Orthodox community. Yet, it seems reasonable, as we have already seen in this transitional period, that the actors use new terms in order to express old meanings. In this case, political liberalism was used in order to express the integrity of the ‘millet’. Skopetea has rightly suggested that despite the mentality of the ‘millet’, which persists, and the ‘cosmopolitanism’ of the developing middle bourgeois class of the urban centers, nationalism had a very strong impact on the Greeks of the Empire<sup>40</sup>.

Such discourses, however, do not necessarily imply, in cultural terms, priority of the identity proliferated by the Greek state at the expense of their Ottoman identity. In order to understand what the field of definition is for the Ottoman identification of the Greeks of the Empire let us follow the words of Souliotis-Nicolaidis. After the counterrevolution of 31st March 1909, the ‘Greek Political Association’ which had

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<sup>38</sup> Carolidis, *Speeches*, 80.

<sup>39</sup> Stavros Anestidis, “Οθωμανικός Πολιτικός Σύνδεσμος και Αρμενικό Φιλοσυνταγματικό και Φιλοδημοκρατικό Κόμμα: Εθνοκεντρικά αιτήματα και Πολιτικός Φιλελευθερισμός” (The Ottoman Political Association and the Armenian Constitutional and Democratic Party: Ethnocentric Claims and Political Liberalism), *Δελτίο του Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών* (Bulletin of the Center of Asia Minor Studies) 12, 1997, 189-201.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 27. However, Skopetea concludes that: ‘What initially can be considered as a huge misunderstanding (modernisation with an anachronistic view), reveals the only shape that Greek nationalism could take within the Ottoman state’. This approach is highly deterministic and does not allow any space for alternative ideological configurations which have been developed among the Ottoman Greeks. In other words, it takes for granted that there was no ideological alternative which would perceive ‘national interests’ as a matter of negotiation within the new political environment.



supported it, faced with the imminent attack of the Unionist troops on Istanbul, declared that: ‘In the name of the Greek nation, the political life of which has been for centuries a struggle in favor of human freedom and against any tyranny, the *Association...* recommends that our compatriots (ομογενείς) be loyal to the army, which fights only for the good of our Motherland’<sup>41</sup>.

Certainly, it is within an atmosphere of terror that such an appeal was made but this makes the reference to the Greek nation even more bizarre. Yet, it is clear that the Ottoman ‘motherland’ and the Greek ‘nation’ could coexist on one ground only: political identification. Anagnostopoulou has described how the Greek-Orthodox, especially through the theory of *Ελληνοθωμανισμός* (Helleno-Ottomanism), achieved a beneficial compromise. In political terms, they identified themselves with the Ottoman state, while culturally they promoted the hellenisation of their *millet*. Their cultural hegemony over their own community enabled them to achieve political recognition within the Ottoman society, whereas their high rank there, in its turn, reinforced their position among their coreligionists. The nation, within this framework, was initially treated as a historical and not a political category<sup>42</sup>. It was under the pressure of the Young Turks who politicised ethnic categories through the elections that the *hellenisation* of the millet developed into the *hellenisation* of the Empire. Even then, however, the project of the *Οθωμανικός Πολιτικός Σύνδεσμος* (Ottoman Political League), which succeeded the ‘Greek Political League’, gathering deputies from different non-Muslim communities, still sought to preserve the Ottoman state: Boussios, head of the League stated that: ‘we have persuaded the government that the only way for its survival is to accept the existence of the ethnicities and their equal rights. If the state is not destroyed, our project will succeed beyond any doubt. If the state is not destroyed, our ethnicity will thus be saved’<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> Veremis- Boura, *Society*, 102.

<sup>42</sup> Sia Anagnostopoulou, *Μικρά Ασία, 19ος αι. –1919, Οι Ελληνορθόδοξες κοινότητες, Από το Μιλλέτ των Ρωμιών στο Ελληνικό Έθνος* (Asia Minor 19th c.-1919, Greek-Orthodox communities. From the Millet of the Rum to the Greek Nation). Ellinika Grammata, Athens, 1997, 303-308.

<sup>43</sup> Georgios Boussios, *Το Πολιτικόν Πρόγραμμα του Ελληνισμού εν Τουρκία* (The Political Program of Hellenism in Turkey), Constantinople, 1912, 24-25.

This conception of the Ottoman state as being a political unity can be traced in the writings of many Greek intellectuals of the time. Neoklis Kazazis, publisher of the review *Ελληνισμός* (Ellinismos), was one of the figures who introduced social Darwinism and racial nationalism in Greek thought. A close friend and colleague of Carolidis at the University, he frequently hosted the latter's articles in his review. Like Carolidis or Dragoumis, Kazazis saw in the new regime the great chance for the eventual domination of the Greek element in the Empire. Thus, writing about the Young Turk Revolution, he maintained that: 'Turkey is a government, not a nation. She cannot aspire to constitute a national mass, as the founders of the new regime would wish to see'<sup>44</sup>.

Skopetea has suggested that, eventually, the Greeks of the Empire relied their future on the future of the Empire, and made their own agenda public by declaring that their own interests are identical with the interests of the Empire<sup>45</sup>. In all above-mentioned examples, the support for the Empire coexists with the claim for national autonomy and eventually national domination of the Greek-Orthodox. Thus, the boundaries between the Ottomanist (empire oriented) and nationalist (nation-state oriented) discourses are always difficult to discern. Yet, we will return to this later.

#### **iv) A bizarre family affair**

In Carolidis' narrative, it is no longer difficult to understand why the Turks are described as the 'younger brothers' of the already politically 'mature' Greeks, in Mühiyeddin's terms, or how Greeks through their own Revolution are said to have liberated the Turks. At the same time, the only possible solution for 'Hellenism' seemed to be 'Ottomanism' which did not belong to the political repertoire of the West. This outcome looks more reasonable if we bear in mind two interesting elements of the period. First of all, Turks could not be considered as a concrete 'other' for the Greek nation, not

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<sup>44</sup> Neocles Kasasis, *Les grecs sous le Nouveau Regime Ottoman*, (extrait de l' *Hellenisme*, 15 Août-1er Septembre, Paris), 1908, 24. For Kazazis see, Giorgos Kokkinos, *Ο πολιτικός ανορθολογισμός στην Ελλάδα. Το έργο και η σκέψη του Νεοκλή Καζάζη (1849-1936)*. (The political irrationalism in Greece. The work and thought of Neoklis Kazazis) Trochalia, Athens, 1996.

<sup>45</sup> Skopetea, *Greeks*, 28.

at least until the 1908 Revolution<sup>46</sup>. The same could not be said for the Bulgarians who had challenged Greek hegemony on Christian populations and questioned the core of Greek national identity. Secondly, the Greeks had been hugely disappointed by the attitude of the West on the ‘Macedonian Question’. As we saw, Carolidis warns that it would be disastrous to apply the Western ‘principle of nationalities’ in the *Ελληνική Ανατολή* (Greek East)<sup>47</sup>. And elsewhere: ‘We, the nations of the Greek and Ottoman East were considered to form an issue of political force and expansion as if the peoples of the East had been of a different nature and even inferior to the European peoples’<sup>48</sup>.

The traumatic relation with the West opened the way for this ambivalent attitude of rejection and imitation. The Bulgarian nation seemed to be closer to the West in this competition, while the Turkish did not. In fact, this identity discourse, even if it claimed equality with western ‘modern’ nations, at the same time manifested its difference. By that means, it could both deal with Turkish nationalism and at the same time compensate for the Western reluctance to support the Greeks.

This was not the only paradox in the ideological atmosphere of that era. Another one concerned the relation between ‘Ottoman’ and ‘Turkish’ identification. Turkish identity was constructed in contrast to the Ottoman one. Ziya Gökalp, prolific writer and ideologue, delegate at the Ottoman Parliament, was one of the founding figures of Turkish nationalism. Largely influenced by French sociology and especially the Durkheimian theory about an organic society where religion plays an important role, he defined the Turkish element as the simple and original culture of the nation which created its own identity through its inherent morality. On the other hand, the Ottoman element was described as a mixed and pretentious culture of the upper class, which distorted the character of the nation. Moreover, Ottoman culture was considered not only alien to the Turkish culture but also strongly influenced by the ancient Greek, the Arabic and the Byzantine cultures. The social and intellectual elite (*seçkinler*) should turn to the ‘people’ in order both to become familiar with the national ‘culture’ (*hars*) and communicate universal ‘civilisation’ (*medeniyet*) to the people.

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, 14.

<sup>47</sup> Pavlos Carolidis, *Αθηνών Παράρτημα*, (Athenian Index) November 1<sup>st</sup> 1907, 17-24.

<sup>48</sup> Carolidis, *Speeches*, 21.

Gökalp made this distinction between ‘civilisation’ and ‘culture’ where the former referred to any technological and social achievement related to logic, and the latter to any group developments based on personal experience. As a matter of fact, he attributed to ‘civilisation’ the character of the West. And it was the duty of Turkish nationalism, in Gökalp’s terms, to combine the Turco-Islamic popular culture with the West. ‘Turkism’ and ‘Ottomanism’ clearly opposed each other at this point<sup>49</sup>. It seems as though, at this turning point of national ideologies in the Empire, in the Greek-Ottoman discourse as articulated by Souliotis-Nicolaidis and Dragoumis, Greek national identification came closer to the Ottoman element than the Turkish one did. Yet, in this case, the identification refers more to political and less to cultural terms. Turks recognised the Greeks as their older brothers, while Greeks seemed to recognise as their motherland the Ottoman state. On the other hand, Turkish nationalists which took a clear distance from the Ottoman culture, would never quit from claiming and protecting this same Ottoman state as their own motherland. A rather bizarre family affair.

#### **v) The socialist view**

At the same time, Greek socialist intellectuals who, like Carolidis, were of Ottoman origin had already attributed to Turkish nationalism a progressive bourgeois character. They neither shared the anti-Bulgarian sentiments nor wished to be identified with ‘Hellenism’<sup>50</sup>. As Panagiotis Noutsos has pointed out, after the Goudi Movement in

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<sup>49</sup> Niyazi Berkes (ed.), *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp*, New York, 1959, 89-109. On Ziya Gökalp, see also Ziya Gökalp, *The Principles of Turkism* (transl. R. Devereux), Leiden, 1968 and Taha Parla, *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp 1876-1924*, Leiden, 1985.

<sup>50</sup> Theodoros Bathrakoulis in his article ‘Les deux courants dans la réalisation de la ‘grand idée’ grecque. L’opposition entre ‘turcophiles’ et ‘slavophiles’, *Mesogeios*, 17-18 (2002), 51-67, using as a stepping point certain theories put forth by Dimitris Kitsikis about political ‘helleno-turcism’ and the existence of a ‘Helleno-Turkish space’, proposes a different approach to these groups of intellectuals. In his view, Dragoumis and Souliotis-Nicolaidis belong to the ‘oriental party’, which he identifies as ‘turcophile’, while Skliros and Glinos, as opposed to them are identified as ‘pro-Russian’, ‘anti-Turkish’ and eventually as ‘slavophile’. Apart from the fact that it looks really bizarre to label Dragoumis as ‘turcophile’ and Glinos as ‘slavophile’, the author seems to confuse the conceptual affiliations of the abovementioned intellectuals, that is, their deliberation for the ‘eastern’ or ‘western’ concept of the nation for their political affiliations.

1909 and during the Balkan wars, those socialists who could be involved in domestic political affairs, following the predicament of social democracy in Central Europe, were reconsidering the relationship between the national and the social question<sup>51</sup>. Thus, according to the socialist Georgios Skliros: ‘as soon as Hellenism decided to hold a hostile attitude towards the ‘national trends’ of the new neighbours, based on ‘historical rights’, it took on a backward (πισοδρομική), conservative character (ψυχολογία)’<sup>52</sup>.

The passage from feudalism to a bourgeois regime and a constitutional government was for him an ‘inevitable historical procedure’. The Young Turks, which for Greeks had been ‘only a surprise, not a lesson’ were welcomed as a historically inevitable, constitutional change. However, as Noutsos has mentioned, socialist intellectuals such as Skliros foresaw, within the Empire, the rise of ‘bourgeois patriotism’. He thus attributed to Turkish nationalism a chauvinist, aggressive character. As a reaction to that, he advocated the urgency for a ‘political coalition’ of the non-Turkish elements of the Empire and at the same time, he proclaimed the need for ‘coexistence’ and ‘alliance’. This appeal, though, unlike what we have seen in the Ottomanist discourse, was addressing mainly the Bulgarians. For Skliros, ‘coexistence’ and ‘alliance’ referred both to the communities of the Empire and to all Balkan nations which were organised in nation-states. Such a prospect would, thus, definitely exclude the Turkish nation.

In this argumentation, we come across the concept of a ‘Balkan’ federation which is based, like the ‘Eastern’ one advocated by Souliotis-Nicolaidis, on liberalism and ‘equality before the law’ (ισοπολιτεία). This discourse also traces its origins back to the turn of the 19th century and the development of secular liberal ideas instigated by European Enlightenment.<sup>53</sup> Rigas Velestinlis (1757-1798) had demonstrated the need

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<sup>51</sup> Panagiotis Noutsos, ‘The Role of the Greek Community in the Genesis and Development of the Socialist Movement in the Ottoman Empire: 1876-1925’, in Mete Tuncay, Erik Jan Zürcher (eds), *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1923*, London, 1994, 82.

<sup>52</sup> Georgios Skliros, *To ζήτημα της Ανατολής* (The Eastern Question), *Noumas* (Athens, 1909), n. 360-364, October 4<sup>th</sup> -25<sup>th</sup>, 1909.

<sup>53</sup> See Paschalis M. Kitromilidis: ‘‘Imagined Communities’ and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans’, in Veremis-Blinkhorn, *Modern Greece*, 23-67; and ‘The Enlightenment East and West: A Comparative Perspective on the Origins of the Balkan Political Traditions’, *Canadian Review of Studies on*

firstly for the liberation of the Balkans from Ottoman domination and then for the creation of a Balkan federation, based on equal rights, in which all ethnicities would participate. Inspired by the French Revolution, he did not perceive ethnicities as nations, though. He was referring to Christian populations and he found reasonable that *Γραικοί* (Greeks) would have a leading role in the new era, not only because he was Greek himself, but also since the heritage of civic rights, as had been proclaimed by European Enlightenment, had its origin in ancient Greece. On the other hand, since, in his discourse, Balkan federation as a political concept does not refer to states but only to ethnicities, Rigas Velestinlis can stand as a point of reference also for the Greek version of Ottomanism. Dragoumis' hero is supposed to comment: 'And then he remembered Rigas who reflected and sung for the rebirth of the Eastern Empire made up from the brotherly nations of Turkey, which would abolish tyranny, and he led his thought even further, together with the Young Turks, to a more general co-operation of the nations which would end up as an integration for all of them in order for a new race to be created, by an Eastern and not by a Turkish state....He did not know and could not admit that his enthusiasm was really national'.<sup>54</sup> It is, certainly, more likely that Dragoumis conceived Rigas' project in his own terms, promoting the national character of the Balkan federation. In this case, old terms were attributed a new meaning.

Dimitrios Glinos, in his turn, provided us with a description of the Greek nation, which seemed to combine Rigas' vision with the nationalist view of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.: 'The Greeks, under the yoke of slavery, having kept their ideology free, firstly in their church, and then enhancing it by their commercial and naval development, through their

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*Nationalism*, v.10, No 1 (Spring 1983, 51-70); Socrates Petmezas, 'The formation of early Hellenic nationalism and the special symbolic and material interests of the new radical republican intelligentsia (ca 1790-1830)', *Historiein*, 1 (1999), 51-74. According to these works, the term 'Balkan Enlightenment' is deemed more appropriate to describe the phenomenon than the term 'Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment' introduced by C. Th. Dimaras and perpetuated by his students, see C. Th. Dimaras, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός* (Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment), Ermis, Athens, 1977.

<sup>54</sup> Dragoumis, *Whosoever Is Living*, 106.

vehemently bourgeois communal institutions, are the most developed, in social terms, element in Turkey'<sup>55</sup>.

He praised the Young Turks, but, at the same time, criticized them for choosing to impose their Turkish identity on everyone, even if they could respect the other nationalities. In his view, the term 'Ottoman' was only an invention of the Turks, who tried to hide their real aim to create a unified Turkish nation. Like Skliros, in order to prevent the danger of turcification of the nationalities, he urged the ethnicities of the Empire to take upon themselves the initiative for the formation of the alliance of 'Christian states' of the Balkans.

It is necessary, however, to make the connection between these views and the particular international conjuncture. The Young Turk Revolution, as George Leontaritis has described<sup>56</sup>, was initially supported by the International Socialist Bureau (ISB) and the majority of the socialists in the Balkans. The majority among them believed that the radical reforms in the Empire would preserve the *status quo* in the Balkans and would contribute to the preservation of peace. They also hoped that a liberal regime would make democratic development in the region possible and would lead to the creation of a future Balkan Federation, with the participation of a European Turkey. Thus, they considered this movement a step towards the solution of the problem of ethnicities.

However, the initial enthusiasm was replaced by disappointment, since the Young Turks were proved to be equally suppressive towards ethnicities and young socialist and

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<sup>55</sup> Dimitrios Glinos, 'Η τουρκική μεταπολίτευσις και οι συνέπειες αυτής' (The Turkish Political Change and its Impact), *Ελληνισμός* (Hellenism), Sept-Oct 1909. The articles by Glinos and Skliros together with some extracts from Dragoumis' writings are included in Glinos-Skliros-Dragoumis, *The Left and the Eastern Question*. This publication, interesting as it is for bringing together important texts, espouses an allegedly leftist view on the Greek-Turkish relations, which is deeply a-historical and nationalistic.

<sup>56</sup> George Leontaritis, *Το Ελληνικό Σοσιαλιστικό Κίνημα κατά τον πρώτο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο*, Μετάφραση: Σαράντης Αντίοχος, (Greek translation of George B. Leon *The Greek Socialist Movement and the WWI: The Road to Unity*, New York: East European Quarterly, 1976), Exantas, Athens, 1978, 36-38. See also Georges Haupt, *Socialism and the Great War. The collapse of the Second International*, Oxford, 1972, and George Haupt, Paul Dumont (haz.), *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda sosyalist hareketler*; Türkçesi Tuğrul Artunkal, İstanbul : Gözlem Yayınları, 1977, and Antonis Liakos, *Η σοσιαλιστική εργατική ομοσπονδία Θεσσαλονίκης (Φεντερασίων) και η σοσιαλιστική νεολαία*, (The Socialist Worker's Association of Salonica (Federacion) and the socialist Youth), Paratiritis, Thessaloniki, 1985.

workers movements. However, as Leontaritis concludes<sup>57</sup>, in the long run, the policy of the ISB was determined by the need for the maintenance of peace, even if that would result in the preservation of *status quo* in the Balkans and would sacrifice the autonomy of the ethnicities in the name of peace.

In the cases of Skliros and Glinos, we can clearly see that they distanced themselves from the official socialist directives. They initially recognised the 1908 Revolution as a national bourgeois movement, something inevitable and positive. Yet, on the other hand, they called on all other nations to fight against it. Interestingly, there was a point in their approach- and we can also find this in Souliotis-Nicolaidis which brought Ottomanism and nation-state discourses very close to each other, as far as political formation was concerned. It did not refer to a nation-state. It referred to another Empire, that of the Habsburgs. ‘The Austrian example apparently shows us the path to development and the only possible way of peaceful coexistence of different ethnicities within the country’<sup>58</sup>. As a matter of fact, the debate that brought forward the dilemma among socialism and nationalism as political projects would not leave Greek socialists unaffected. This hybrid combination between a nation-state and a multiethnic state seemed, temporarily, to work, even if, in a few years, it would fall apart<sup>59</sup>.

Apart from the above-mentioned socialist figures, which are influential in Greek state political affairs, there is a group of intellectuals who are not related with the Greek state, but their activity was still particularly important within the environment we have

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<sup>57</sup> *ibid*, 36.

<sup>58</sup> Dimitrios Glinos, ‘The Turkish Political Change’, 119; and Souliotis-Nicolaidis’ Letters to Ion Dragoumis, ‘Κωνσταντινούπολις, 14 Αυγούστου 1910’ (Constantinople, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1910) in Veremis-Boura, *Society*, 19.

<sup>59</sup> The model of Austro-Hungarian Empire is not only used by the socialists. It is a widespread claim of many intellectuals of the period, see for instance Kasasis, *Les grecs sous le Nouveau Regime Ottoman*, 27. The issue of the conflict among socialists as far as the Ottoman Empire is concerned and the comparison with the Austro-Hungarian one is so broad that we could only hint it here. The dilemma between the priority of ethnicities or the federalist solution offered by Austromarxists forms the core of the debate, see Helmut Konrad, ‘Between ‘Little International’ and Great Powers Politics: Austro-Marxism and Stalinism on the National Question’, 269-294, in Richard Rudolph, David F. Good (eds.), *Nationalism and Empire, The Habsburg Empire and the Soviet Union*, St. Martins press and Center for Austrian Studies, University of Minnesota, 1992.



already described. This group, under the influence of the Bulgarian Workers Social Democratic Party, was created by Stefanos Papadopoulos, Zacharias Vezestenis, V. Kontouris and Nikos Yiannios. Yiannios, the most prominent figure of this group and editor of the newspaper *Laos* (People), published by advocates of the demotic language who had gathered under the Fraternity of the National language in Istanbul, in a letter to the socialist author Konstantinos Hadzopoulos, who lived in Germany, informs him that he was member of: ‘an international organisation of workers in Istanbul and had managed to persuade two or three other Greeks with the help of foreigners, to bring out in demotic a newspaper they had been planning to publish in the formal language’<sup>60</sup>.

This newspaper was *Ergatis* (Worker). Its task was clearly stated from the very beginning: ‘The newspaper is published so as to bring together the socialists of the Ottoman Empire and form an international socialist party here and become its mouthpiece: an ‘international party’, because in the Ottoman Empire no other kind of socialism is possible. As a result, we will not exclude from our band any Turk, Bulgarian or Jew who comes to join us as long as he is a socialist. But, as it is only natural, Greeks will make up two-thirds of our band, since they are the largest group of the population of Istanbul. The Greeks produce *Ergatis* and control it through its editorial board’<sup>61</sup>.

We can, again, trace here a certain ambivalence concerning the ethnic character of the group and the newspaper, which claims to be international, but at the same time, appears predominantly Greek. As Noutsos points out, the group extended its activities into the working class, by founding organizations ‘without the discrimination on the basis of religion or nationality’, in the spirit ‘of the socialist idea which will be our salvation’<sup>62</sup>. The character of the group was undoubtedly ‘social’ but the defense of ‘nationalities’ never ceased to be in the core of its discourse. Eventually, after his newspaper was closed down for criticising the government and he, himself, was deported to Greece in December 1910, Yiannios introduced a nationalistic vocabulary and supported the expulsion of Turkey from the Balkans only<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Noutsos, 85.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*, 85.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid*, 85.

<sup>63</sup> Hatzopoulos to Yiannios, 9 January 1911, quoted in Leontaritis, *The Greek Socialist Movement*, 55-56.

In any case, the discourse of Balkan ‘coexistence’, as expressed in most Greek socialists’ views, not only opposed Turkish nationalism but also disconnected Greek identity from the Ottoman one. The Greeks of the Empire were identified with those of the Greek state, all of them seeming to conform to a ‘bourgeois’ period of history. The clash between modernity and pre-modern values was depicted in this case, on the one hand, in the common interests between the ‘modern’ national Balkan states and, on the other hand, in the vigor of the allegedly ‘modern’ Turkish bourgeois movement. In other words, the political priorities of modernization during the time were expressed by the dynamic development of the nation-state rather than by social revolution. Few years later, the Balkan wars and the WWI proved to be the culmination of this program, which led to the dissolution of the Empire but also the dislocation of large masses of population who had to abandon their birthplaces and find shelter within not very hospitable nation-states. Dragoumis, who has experienced very deeply the ambiguity and interrelation of the two views for the future of Hellenism, in September 1912, that is at the end of this period, could not but confess that the *τουρκομερίτικη* (Turkish oriented) view, as he calls the ‘empire oriented’, should be sacrificed in favor of the *ελλαδική* (Greek state oriented) one, as he calls the ‘nation state oriented’. Despite the fact that he himself had espoused the former, he ended up by recognizing that the later should prevail<sup>64</sup>. In 1919, however, and after the calamities of war had fallen upon the region, he still wondered: ‘Hellenism could follow two paths. Why was it one that prevailed and not the other?’<sup>65</sup> Certainly, it was not within the aims of this paper to touch upon this question.

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<sup>64</sup> Ion Dragoumis, *Φύλλα Ημερολογίου, Δ'* (Diary, 4<sup>th</sup>), (1908-1912), edited by G. Koliopoulos, Ermis, Athens, 1986, September 1912, quoted in Skopetea, *Greeks*, 31. Skopetea however, considered the ‘Greek-state oriented’ view as the ‘originally nationalist, namely closer to the Dragoumis’ preferences’. The fact, however, that he does not hesitate to shift from one option to the other, no matter how sinful this ‘nation-state oriented’ view might have seemed to him, should not only be attributed to the political and international developments. In other words, I argue, both options were ‘originally nationalist’. They just considered the interests of Hellenism differently.

<sup>65</sup> Ion Dragoumis, *Φύλλα Ημερολογίου, Στ'* (Diary, 6<sup>th</sup> v.), (1918-1920), edited by Thodoros Sotiropoulos, Ermis, Athens, 1986, May 21<sup>st</sup> 1919.

#### **vi) The shifting boundaries of nationalism**

By way of concluding, we would suggest a combined reading of the overlapping national discourses of the time. We described two major trends. The one, what we would call 'nation-state oriented', perceived political reality in modern terms, that is, in terms of identification of the state with the boundaries of the national entity. The other, which we would call 'empire oriented', perceived political development as an antagonism among ethnicities within a state, which did not necessarily need to be a nation-state. The different claims made by Greek intellectuals in the aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution, illustrated the diversity in the perception of the 'Great Idea' and revealed a horizon of expectations as intricate as one should expect from a revolutionary course.

The expansionism of the Greek state, immediately after that period, was ascribed to the discourse of nation-state irredentism, which sought the fulfillment of its project through the liberation of Constantinople and the creation of a 'Greece in two Continents and five seas'. Thus, eventually, it was this side, irrespectively of political identification, which was held responsible for the Asia Minor catastrophe. On the other hand, Greek-Ottomanism was related to the imperial discourse of 'ethnic coexistence'. Whether this scheme is valid or not, it is clear that intellectuals of the period often used a new vocabulary while referring to old concepts. 'Coexistence' and 'political identification' were used by both discourses, yet certainly under different meanings. 'Balkan coexistence' identified the nation with the state, 'Greek-Ottoman coexistence' did not. 'Political identification' in the first case claimed western modernity, in the second case it was selective and promoted either ancient Greek 'citizenship' or the flexibility of the 'millet'. Hence, we could suggest that even if after the Balkan wars and the gradual expansion of the Greek state, the 'Great Idea' may have been part of the nation-state rhetoric, it was not the one it used to be. The consolidation of the nation-state as well as joint action with the other Balkan states against the Ottoman Empire, which seemed to be an anachronistic institution, did not look like a claim for Greek predominance in the East. On the other hand, the 'coexistence' of ethnicities within the Ottoman Empire, even by claiming political unity and liberal rights, could be considered as an implicit starting point for the creation of a 'Greek' Empire. Whether, the members of the community identified themselves as Greek-Orthodox, Ottoman Greeks or just Greeks, cannot be a

valid question, unless we are able to define what we mean by those terms in each of the cases. In such a volatile period of conflicting aspirations, the 'shifting boundaries' of nationalism cannot be disregarded.