



THESES FOR THE DISSERTATION

of

Csaba Surányi

entitled:

**THE INTERNAIONAL BACKGROUND OF GREEK
NATION BUILDING**

From the Massacre of Chios until the Tragedy of Smyrna

Supervisor:

Dr. Zsolt Rostoványi DSc
University professor

Budapest, 2018

Institute of International Relations

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I. RESEARCH PRECEDENTS AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE THEME

1.1 Introduction

Greek hopes and doubts: from the Chios massacre to the Smyrna tragedy

On the 14th of September the Greeks around the world commemorate the day of the Big Catastrophe¹, when the groups of Kemal Pasha arrived at the Smyrna bay and began the revenge.² The quarters of the Christians in the city were set on fire – around 44 thousand houses were burnt to the ground, the Armenians were driven to the sea and slaughtered. Only a few thousand Greek inhabitants could run away of the 60,000. The delegates of the allies watched the horrible incidence indifferent and uninterested. This day was the Greek history's biggest tragedy in the 20th century.

At the beginning of the 20th century Smyrna was the third biggest city in the world, where Greeks lived.³ There were 250,000 inhabitants in the city: Greeks, Armenians and Jews. There lived 60,000 Greeks, from them were 25,000 Greeks murdered by the Turkish⁴ Army after its invasion.

¹ Η Μεγάλη Καταστροφή

² On the 30th of August the Greek army collapsed in Anatolia and on the 9th of September the Turkish army arrived in Smyrna.

³ Constantinople and Alexandria preceded it alone, so the 3 largest Greek cities were outside the Kingdom.

⁴ The Turkish word didn't mean an ethnic Turk, but any Muslim.

Four countries' consulates were in action in the city. It was the biggest commercial port in the Eastern Mediterranean, a prosperous, rich commercial city, where according to the legend Homer was born. The decay of the city meant the end of the 3,000 years old Greek culture in Anatolia. It happened despite the 27 ships of the allies, which were anchored in the harbour, from them were 3 American destroyers. The captains and the crew of the ships watched idly the awful tragedy in the port, they did not interfere with this. The only thing they were interested in: the defence of their consulates. Many believe it had a big impact in the existence of this dreadful tragedy.

1.2 Outline of the theme and purpose of the thesis

It was a tragical endpoint in the process of the Greek State-building, which is known as Great Idea (Megali Idea)⁵. It was the peak level of the migratory wave, when in the aftermath of the Greek Army the Pontic and Ionic Greeks had to get to the territory of the Kingdom of Greece. The war was sealed up with the Treaty of Lausanne, which contains an obligatory population exchange. That is why 1.5 million

(Garde 2008:212)

⁵ Η Μεγάλη Ιδέα

Greeks had to leave their home and wealth for ever. Kingdom of Greece was already making war for 10 years, which exhausted it to the extremes. The Greek society split along a deep fault line, what the new huge burden only aggravated, and it defined the nation's political life for the entire 20th century.

Kingdom of Greece was born in 1832 after 10 years of independence war against the Ottoman Empire. This war was cruel, like every war in the Balkan. The civilians received most of the suffering and the most intense cruelty. On the following day, after the proclamation of the uprising on 6th of April 1821 executed the Porte as a retaliation the Patriarch of Constantinople and the most talented Greek citizens in a cruel way in the capital.⁶ The massacre followed: in May the Exarch of Thessaloniki and all the Greeks in the city, in June the Exarch of Crete and 5 bishops, in July the Cyprian Archbishop in Nicosia, in October the Archbishop of Larnaca and 5 bishops, 36 priests and most of the Greek Cypriots were slaughtered.

⁶ Grigorios V (Gregory) Patriarch of Constantinople was brutally executed with many Greek religious and civil leaders together, including Konstantinos Mourouzis, Great Dragoman. The hanging of the Patriarch the Christian European public opinion and helped to generate compassion for the rising Greeks. (Clogg 1992.11)

However, the biggest tragedy of the War of Greek Independence⁷ and of the 19th century is the Chios massacre⁸ in April 1822. Chios was the richest island of the Mediterranean in this age. Its prosperous economy supplied the beauty salons in Paris with anise and mastic (μαστιχα). The island is located within eyeshot of the Smyrna bay, about 6 kilometres far from it. Kara Ali arrived on the 11th of April 1822, before Easter with the Turkish fleet. His 15,000 soldiers slaughtered 25,000 Chios citizens and other 25,000 people were sold as slaves: boys between 3-12 years and women between 3-40 years.⁹

The Chios massacre astonished the European public opinion. The attention of the great powers turned to the War of Greek Independence and first England's and Russia's then France's way of thinking turned from the initial rejection to a positive direction.

The Kingdom of Greece was the first independent state on the Balkan peninsula, but in fact its political system, the

⁷ Ελληνική Επανάσταση

⁸ Η σφαγή της Χίου

⁹ According to Turkish data this number was smaller, but according to other dates it's 33 000, according to French data 45 000 is the number of victims. The island's population before the tragedy was over 120 000: 120 000 Christian, 1100 Turkish and 70 Jews lived on the island. (Kómis 1993:6-7)

bases of its domestic and foreign policy were defined in the 19th century by three "Defence powers" - Great Britain, France and Russia - and it won the war with their military intervention (1821-1832).

The political life of the country was dominated by the Great Idea, so the expansion of the state borders and the liberation of the Greek brothers, who lived mainly in the Ottoman Empire and who were more than three times more than the citizens of the new kingdom (800 000). The big cultural, religious and economic centres were outside the kingdom, it doesn't have any big cities. The population of the first capitals (Aegina, Nafplio even Athens) did not exceed 5,000. The Greek patriots were very disappointed. Nevertheless, they have constantly tried to increase the country's territory. (Contogeorgis 1992:352; Dalègre, 2002)

The Greek State-building began in 1821 in the War of Greek Independence and continued according to the 20th century Western prototypes: the French administration, the German legal system and the British parliamentary practices.

The new state accepted the principles of the Western governance, which are contrary to the national political practices. (Koliopoulos – Veremis, 2010:1-2)

II. STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE PAPER, MAIN ISSUE AREAS OF THE RESEARCH

2.1 Methodology

In writing the dissertation, I applied the method of comparative qualitative analysis. It was based upon a diachronic system. The latter complements the primary methodology, and availed itself to be applied necessarily, when, (in our case, also because of the Greek and Turkish parallelisms), we have conducted the comparative analysis of the diverse international relations, diplomatic history, and of the social and economic history.

We have followed this analytical method in the first two chapters of the dissertation, where we progressed from the general to the individual and concrete cases and phenomena. (The phenomenology of the Balkans, the relationship of the Balkans and Southeast-Europe, demokid systems, social space theory, etc.) As the foregoing reveal, the theme we are facing is very complex. The purpose of the dissertation is to shed light on the interrelatedness between the events outlined in the above introductory thoughts and on their inherent controversies through identifying structures hidden at their depth.

Although the two crucial points in the title, the „Massacre of Chios” and the “Great Catastrophy” (the Tragedy of Smyrna) can be connected to a specific location and time each, yet I think that these are symbolic events – phenomena, which can be viewed as historic axons, which are focal points of modern history in that of the history of the nineteenth century (Chios) and that of the twentieth century (Smyrna) on the one hand, on the other hand, of the pattern of Balkans and of South-East Europe, as the political-historic spaces. It aggregates all that was ever said or written of this part of Europe, ever since the notion „Balkans” emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century, and what has coated it during the past more than two centuries.

As it can be seen from the foregoing, our most important task is to clarify concepts, what is the meaning and connotation of the words Balkans, Southeast-Europe, Rumeli, Anatolia, Ionia, Pontos, the Archipelago, furthermore the Megali Idea, the Eastern Question, the Tanzimat, the democide and demokid systems, the Macedonian fight, the Goudi coup, Venizelism, the National Schism, the Old Kingdom (Old Greece), the Mudros capitulation, National Accords, the Trial of the Six, the Canak crisis.

Without deeper knowledge of the listed concepts, it would be impossible or hard to understand the subsequent parts of the dissertation. Therefore, we have drafted a Glossary at the beginning of the dissertation, so that the reader can find a short description of the each notion occurring in the text later on. For the same reason, we placed the most important maps and illustrations at the beginning of the dissertation. These are eight maps, one cartoon, and a few photographs. Getting familiar with these, will make it easier for the reader to embark on the path towards the unknown world of each chapter.

2.2 The hypotheses

The initial successes of the Greek liberation war (the seizure of Tripolitsa in September of 1821) were followed by a mighty retaliation by the Ottoman Authorities (Constantinople, Saloniki, Crete, Cyprus, and at particularly sweeping scales on the Aegean islands – Chios, Psara, Kasos), yet these were unable to stop the unfolding uprising. The Ottoman Empire was compelled to turn to Egypt for help. This help however, had a high price: to hand Peloponnesus (Morea) to Egypt later on. However, with the help of the European powers, that were mobilized to a great extent (also) by the above described

counterproductive Ottoman methods, the Greek fight for independence came to a successful end, and after 400 years of Ottoman rule, the first nation state emerged on the Balkans.

Thus the basic hypothesis of the dissertation is as follows:

From the onset of the Greek revolution, at the formation of the Greek Kingdom, and later on in the course of integrating additional areas of Greek population until the occurrence of the Asia Minor tragedy, this process transpired mostly as a variable of international (diplomatic, military and particularly sensitively of economic) relations

The second hypothesis is that during the dramatic anagnorisis (1921-22), in the crucial period – this section of the thesis is discussed in the most detail – as a result of the more successful Turkish diplomacy (predominantly military and economic), the concept of Greek nation building known as Megali Idea was severely defeated.

2.3 Structure of the Dissertation

The theme of the first chapter of the paper is “Phenomenology of the Balkans”.¹⁰ Here, we define Balkans

¹⁰ The expression "phenomenology" comes from the composition of the

vis- à-vis South-East Europe. What is the geographic span of the Balkans? Is it a Peninsula in Southeast-Europe? Or it is a metaphor of a certain civilization? Numerous sensitive questions are to be answered.

Geographically, Greece is at once a Balkan and a Mediterranean country. Its access to the sea has given rise to greater contacts with the West than its land-locked Balkan neighbours. It was, indeed, in the eighteenth century that the foundations were laid of a mercantile marine that in the second half of the twentieth century had emerged as the largest in the world, even if a sizeable proportion of it sailed under flags of convenience. (Clogg 1992:6)

The Greek culture has a three thousand year long history in Ionia (Western-Anatolia) and in the coastal area of the Black Sea, in the Pontus. Early in the twentieth century about 2.5 million Greek lived in these areas, on the coast of the Sea of Marmara and in Asia Minor. As a result of the war and forced exchange of population, this number went below 100,000. (Today, altogether four thousand Greeks live in the entire territory of Turkey.) In the second half of the paper, we

Greek words "phenomenon" ("phenomen", the appearing), and "logos" (tenet). The appearance is not the reality itself, while the phenomenon is a real thing. Getting to know the phenomenon renders the real knowledge. (Kant)

examine the circumstances of the birth of a modern Greek state and internal societal adversities in the early stages of becoming a nation. Such examination, however, was not pursued in a diachronic manner. The parallel viewpoint is held more important. Simultaneously examining the similar processes transpiring in the Greek Kingdom and Ottoman Empire on their separate ways, because the majority of the Greek still lived on Ottoman territories until the second-third decade of the twentieth century. Naturally, we have to do this while keeping an eye on the force field of the great powers, whilst the most important moves of both the Greek and Ottoman state could not disregard the will of the great powers during the entire nineteenth century, just like during the first quarter of the twentieth century, until when the dissertation analyses the events.

The third part is about the effect and result of the Balkan Wars, which lead to the doubling of the Old Kingdom's territory, which brought a complete restructuring of the social scene.

In this third part of the study, we explore the political schism following the territorial expansion, the subsequent ethnical heterogeneity and political transformation, the process of the total splitting of the Greek society and the consequences

thereof. All this happened while the Great War was fought. The fact that Greece joined the War at its last stage, and yet ended up on the side of the winners with minimal losses, is partly due to the schism.

In the closing part, we examine what led to the Great Tragedy that is how the tragedy of Smyrna transpired. While drawing a multi-layered complex map of the causes, we point to the internal tensions of both of the Greek and Ottoman society, particularities of their respective political systems, the determining events of the rivalry of the Great Powers, but – as Braudel pointed to it in his high-impact book entitled “The Mediterranean Sea and the Mediterranean world – we outline the determining circumstances – which have determined the final outcome.

III. THE MOST IMPORTANT RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

We hope that this dissertation does not only help to understand modern Greece, but also bears a significant added value in a comparative and interdisciplinary understanding of the complex relationship of the Greek with their Balkans neighbors. Also, it helps to understand the historic roots of the Greek-Turkish opposition dating back at least two centuries (to

the beginning of the Greek revolution): the genocides of hundreds of thousands, in which the Greek suffered the greatest losses.

It makes us aware of the least known fact that the Greek, throughout their 3,000 year long history – up until 1922 - had three main settlement areas: besides the European Mainland (Attica, Peloponnesus), the archipelago from Corfu, or even from Sicily through Crete to Lesbos-Samos-Rhodes and Cyprus, and the Asia Minor Peninsula, which throughout centuries – especially during the time of the Roman Empire – was the most significant and the wealthiest of all three. It is enough just to refer to the fact that the three Christian congregations mentioned in the Apocrypha of the New Testament were all located in Asia Minor, the most known of them Smyrna (today Izmir) and Efézus/Efezos.

Thus it would have been justified historically and ethnically to create a Greek state territory in West-Anatolia with the center Smyrna (in the territory of Asia Minor – including Pontus – up until the Tragedy of Smyrna, approximately two and a half million Greek lived!), as well as a Kurdistan in the Southeast and a Big(ger) Armenia in the Northwest. All this was outlined in the Treaty of Sevres similar to our Trianon, but at that time the English-French-Italian

accord and support of the Great Powers (still present in 1918-19) was lacking. By 1920-22, the winning armies were demobilized (Bring our boys home), and the pacifist-communist, even Soviet friendly forces became strong thus any military intervention was out of question: this, besides the Soviets, made the victory of the Kemal-lead Nationalist Turks possible

The reasons for the victory of the Turks and defeat of the Greek are clearly articulated in the paper. Unlike the situation in Hungary, the Turks had only one serious enemy to defeat, the Greek (and not three like us). Neither of the insignificant troupes and naval forces of three states present in the area (Dardanelles, Asia-Minor, and the later Syria and Iraq) have not stepped up against Ankara National Assembly - opposition government, the reorganizing army lead by Kemal that openly breached the peace treaty, and defied demobilization and to punish war criminals. Moreover, the French and Italians not only withdrew their forces, but handed over their modern military equipment to the Turks, from the small arms to airplanes and communication equipment. It was, however, the strengthening Soviet neighbor that rendered the most significant support – both military and financial. After having settled the territorial issues, neither Iran has attacked (the

Turkey-Persia border has been stable since the mid-seventeenth century), hence Kemal was able to deploy the entirety of his army against the Greek approaching their capital. The Greek society and government was divided: rather than reinforcing Smyrna and its surroundings of a majority Greek population, they did not do it, not allowing that population of Smyrna to defend themselves in case the Greek army withdraws. While their strategic goal was to occupy Konstantinople, with that they alienated their only serious ally, Lloyd George's Great Britain.

IV. KEY FINDINGS

All significant political conflicts of the period – the Asia Minor tragedy in 1922, toppling the Monarchy and the subsequent declaration of the Republic in 1924, the attempted attack on Venizelos in 1933, as well as the attempted coup by his faithful, and ultimate restoration of the monarchy thereafter, have all strengthened, aggravated and conserved the opposition and national chasm in the Greek society. (Fokasz 1991:104)

The biggest achievement of the various governments during the two decades that past between the subsequent

revolutions and coups d'état was to settle down the refugees from Asia Minor and the returning Greeks as a result of exchanging the Balkans minorities. (Horváth 1943:14)

The half-millennium long Ottoman rule left the legacy in that fatalism, the behavior toward power (humble, but trying to evade it), as well as the search for loopholes penetrated the political culture and became part of everyday life, making it difficult to adopt modern institutions, and hallmarked the later history of Southeast-European states. (Hornyák 2009)

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