Notes on Nationalism and Human Rights in Greece

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IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA, THE WORLD ORDER IS COMPOSED of sovereign nation-states. The latters' legitimacy in turn is derived from the principle of nationality. In other words, political authority is grounded in the shared belief that because of commonalities, including a common historical legacy, the rulers and the ruled are the same, and therefore, their presumed common interests can only be furthered through the nation-state within which group identity is coterminous with autonomous political rule. By definition, the interests of other nationalities are competing and conflicting. Nationality, nationalist ideology and, by extension, the nation-state, are the primary reference groups and, therefore, constitute the source of values and behavior transcending and/or notions of universal human rights.

Nationalism and nationality are relatively recent phenomena in world history. Neither the Greek city-states nor ancient Israel were nation-states claiming nationality as the justification for self-rule. In Europe, it was the French Revolution of 1789 and, more dramatically, Napoleon's rhetoric, which mobilized the masses throughout Europe, including Greeks, to demand their independence. Greece was one of the earliest countries in the periphery to espouse nationalism as the vehicle for pursuing two contradictory goals — preserving and enhancing its ancient heritage and asserting itself as a modern, European state.

It is an inherent characteristic of nationalism and the modern nation-state that the claims of the latter have primacy over claims to individual human rights, regardless of the principles of governance, be they democratic or authoritarian. Nevertheless, many, although not all, "democratic" societies are rooted in conceptions of individual rights which the state can not violate or must protect.[1] Loyalty to the nation-state, however, is the highest value and under conditions in which its survival

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[1] There are two dominant philosophic traditions pertaining to human rights, the Anglo-Saxon tradition stemming from natural law doctrine which views human rights as inherent in the individual and inalienable and the positivist continental European tradition which considers the state as the source of rights.

is seen as threatened, state interests have priority over the rights of its citizens.[2] An inevitable consequence in democratic societies is the ongoing tension and contradiction between individual rights and state sovereignty.

Restrictions on rights inherent in state sovereignty are compounded further, however, in peripheral countries such as Greece.[3] In marked contrast to Western Europe, no significant socioeconomic transformation accompanied the rise of nationalism and the formation of the nation-state in Greece. Traditional authoritarian modes of relating persisted, the economy was primarily agricultural, values and identity were communal, and nothing comparable to the "modernization" of the West had taken place. Moreover, the Greek nationalist ideology itself projected an organic unity of the nation, thus further constricting the prospects for the rise of notions of individual human rights. Neither the philosophic dimensions of Greek nationalism, nor the socioeconomic realities, were receptive to the concept of individual freedom. In the ensuing centuries since Greek independence in 1830, nationalist ideology has spread from the European continent throughout the world. All modern states claim legitimacy on the grounds that they incorporate within their boundaries peoples of the same nationality. While the cry for freedom has resonated throughout the world, its meaning, particularly as it refers to the often competing claims of nationalism vs. individual rights, needs further probing. It is this issue of nationalism vs. individual freedom as it pertains to Greece that will be discussed here.

The Dynamics of the Megali Idea

Modern Greek nationalism emerged relatively early. Spurred ideologically by the role ascribed to ancient Greece by the Renaissance, by the end of the eighteenth century nationalist ideologies, such as Rhigas Pheraios and, shortly thereafter, Adamantios Koraes, had embarked on the task of setting forth the foundations of Greek nationality and Greek nationalism. Ironically, in their articulation of contradictory conceptions as to the source and nature of Greek nationality, they set the stage for the tension that has characterized Greek nationalism ever since. Although making a populist appeal, Pheraios found "Greekness" in the Byzantine Empire. Hence, a modern Greek state necessitated the

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[2]For a discussion of restrictions on human rights stemming from state sovereignty, see Richard Falk, *Human Rights and State Sovereignty* (New York, 1981).

[3]Tom Nairn, "The Modern Janus," *New Left Review* (#94, Nov.-Dec., 1975) 329-63. The author argues that the emergence of nationalism in the periphery is a response to exploitation and domination by the center. In the case of Greece, it seems to have been more a question of a new class, the commercial bourgeoisie, demanding greater power and freedom, who were joined by all discontent groups.

reconstitution of the Empire with its mystical and spiritual qualities, its religiosity, and its geographic expanse. Koraes, by contrast, reflected the rationalist, secular historical legacy of ancient Greece which a modern Greek state should embody. Consequently, the revival of a modern Greek nationality necessitated a return to the classics, a purification of the language, and the spread of education in order to recapture the intellectual primacy of ancient Greece. While these two elements, albeit contradictory, were incorporated as essential ingredients of Greek nationalist ideology, the revival of Byzantium overwhelmed the rational, secular elements.

The diverse strains of intellectual thought that went into the formulation of Greek nationalist ideology, which crystallized after independence into the Megali Idea, did not include philosophic concerns as to the underlying principles and doctrines of the new Greek polity. The rise of the nation-state in Western Europe, particularly in England and France, coincided not only with the rise of industrial capitalism, but with the emergence of the modern political philosophers who spoke of man in the state of nature, who spoke of the emergence of civil society, and who espoused theories of the rights of man. Greek intellectuals and nationalist leaders, although largely imitative of Western models and intellectual trends, did this selectively, modifying them in terms of their own social realities and their goals. During the struggle for national liberation and in the formation of the Greek nationalist ideology, notions of individual rights or of civil society were not included. They were of little relevance and had little meaning. An exception was Koraes' advocacy of the right of private property which he considered essential for a free market economy which would serve the interests of the Greek commercial bourgeoisie prominent in the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, Koraes was concerned about the formal structure of the new Greek state, regarding which he corresponded extensively with Thomas Jefferson.[4] But beyond the form of government and laissez faire economic principles, even for Koraes the "westernization" of modern Greece did not extend to the panoply of liberal doctrines symbolized in "the rights of man and citizen" which became the rallying cry of the French Revolution.[5]

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[4]See Samuel J. Raphalides, "United States Policy toward the Greek War of Independence," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Graduate Faculty, New School for Social Research, New York, 1974).

[5]For a discussion of the absence of the philosophy of liberalism in Greek intellectual thought, see Paschalis M. Kitromelidis, "The Dialectic of Intolerance: Ideological Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict," in Peter Worsely and Paschalis Kitromelides, eds., *Small States in the Modern World: the Conditions of Survival*, rev. ed. (Nikosia, 1979), pp. 147-54: The author argues that the ideas of the Enlightenment were significant for the rise of nationalism in Greece but that this incipient liberalism did not take root.

While the ideological parameters of Greek nationality and nationalism were being articulated by the intellectuals, the Greek revolution for independence from Ottoman rule which erupted in 1821 was precipitated by the concrete grievances of various social classes within the Ottoman Empire: the commercial bourgeoisie chafing under restrictions on freedom of trade imposed by the Ottomans, and the peasantry increasingly impoverished as a result of disastrous exploitation by tax gatherers and the Ottoman authorities. In time, they were joined by village elders and others who envisaged greater power for themselves if Ottoman rule were to be overthrown. The various social groups coalesced under the abstract slogan of freedom. The meaning ascribed to freedom was "freedom" from the Ottoman "yoke" through the formation of a Greek state. It did not connote individual freedom and equal rights for all Greeks but a future millenium whereby the formation of a Greek state in itself would redress all grievances by eliminating the injustice of alien rule.

The new Greek state of 1830 was born out of revolutionary struggle but became a reality as a result of a decision taken by the then great powers, Great Britain, France, and Russia, who delineated its boundaries, imposed an absolute monarchy, and arrogated to themselves extensive powers over the Greek state.[6] Nevertheless, the establishment of a "sovereign" Greek state signified, on the one hand, the reintegration of Greece into the West as a modern state and, on the other hand, a return to traditionalism unencumbered by the constraints, interference, and political control exercised by Ottoman authorities. Greece, or, more accurately, the Greeks and Greek society in the Ottoman Empire, had not experienced the rise of industrial capitalism with the resultant social dislocations, new social formations, new ideologies, and values of Western Europe. The emergent Greek commercial bourgeoisie, although critical to the rise of the nationalist movement, lived and worked in areas which were not incorporated into the Greek state of 1830. They remained in the diaspora and, while significantly influential on developments in the modern Greek state[7], they did not structure the nature of the Greek state and society or the dominant values and ideology. Their role in fact diverged in important ways from that of the bourgeoisie's in Western Europe. In the latter case, more than a century earlier, it was the emerging industrial bourgeoisie that had

demanded civil and political rights as a means of restraining the power of the absolutist state and as a mechanism for attaining political power. In the new Greek state, there was no class vying for political power comparable to the Western bourgeoisie; the intense political conflicts for control of the new state structures were personal and regional struggles among traditional local elites.

Compounding the absence of a domestic bourgeoisie, and partly a consequence of its absence, was the empirical fact that there was no counterpart in Greece to the structurally and later psychologically atomized individual which resulted from the destruction of traditional feudal communal moorings as industrialization took place in the West. If anything, traditional communalism, embodied in the extended family and the village and devoid of individualism, was transposed to the newly formed Greek state.[8] In other words, the traditional organic conception of society persevered. The emergence of nationalism in Greece, therefore, was not accompanied by a set of liberal principles inclusive of doctrines of individual rights and freedoms as it was in the West. A society in which its citizens had an inherent right to be protected against arbitrary state power had no meaning in a society in which, culturally, the cognitive framework precluded individualism and understood the social order as one of integral groups. The definition of self was in terms of one's prescriptive status and role in his/her membership group which in turn also determined the unequal rights and obligations of its members. The only reference group that extended beyond the confines of the village was religion, more specifically, the Greek Orthodox Church. Greek Orthodoxy, in fact, became a critical element of Greek nationality, while the Church's doctrines of submission and deference to authority contributed to the notions of integral nationalism. The conceptualization of the social order as an organic entity, historically rooted in multiple facets of Greek life, persisted and became the definer of the Greek nation.

As stated earlier, of the contradictory elements that constituted the substance of Greek nationalist ideology, it was Byzantium with its critical consequences for the historical evolution of the modern state that emerged triumphant. The abstract ideas and rhetorical slogans of the revolutionary years were concretized with the establishment of the modern Greek state. In 1840, King Otho, perhaps in a move to assert

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[6]For an overview of the role of foreign powers in Greece, see Theodore A. Couloumbis, J. A. Petropoulos, and Harry J. Psomiades, *Foreign Interference in Greek Politics* (New York, 1976).

[7]See Constantine Tsoucalas, Ἐξάρτηση καὶ ἀναπαραγωγή· Ὁ κοινωνικὸς ρόλος τῶν ἐκπαιδευτικῶν Μηχανισμῶν στὴν Ἑλλάδα, 1830-1922 (Athens, 1977), Chapter 3, pp. 267-378.

[8]Beginning with the pioneering work of Ernestine Friedl, *Vasilika: A Village in Modern Greece* (New York, 1962), there has been a plethora of anthropological studies on the Greek village: For a discussion of the implications of traditonal patterns on Greek politics, see Adamantia Pollis, "The Impact of Traditional Greek Culture on Politics," in *The Greek Review of Social Research* (Athens: National Center of Social Research, #29-30, Fall, 1977).

his commitment to Greekness, pronounced the Megali Idea as the national goal of his rule. This objective, the resurrection of the Byzantine Empire, became for the remainder of the nineteenth century until its collapse as a viable option with the Asia Minor defeat in 1922 the driving force of Greek politics. Premised on the need to fulfill the Greek nation (*ethnos*), it structured the foreign policy of Greece for nearly a century; it provided the framework within which specific foreign policy goals were formulated and implemented. Thus, the main preoccupation of successive generations of political leaders, and the criteria by which they were judged by the people, was irredentism. Just as during the revolutionary years independence was seen as the means for resolving grievances, so in the post-independence decades, the fruition of the Greek *ethnos* in its geographic totality was seen as a prerequisite for the welfare of Greeks. It should be emphasized that the Megali Idea, aside from the national goals that inhered within it, was predicated on a view of the *ethnos* as an organic whole whose viability was contingent on materialization of the nation in its fullness. This conception of the *ethnos* was not limited to the political elites in Greece, nor was it solely a strategy for achieving national goals. It was assimilated with ease into the prevailing world view that society was composed of organic groups. Hence, pursuit of the Megali Idea was also a popular struggle for the attainment of wholeness.

An obvious question that can be posed is of what significance was the Megali Idea whose pursuit involved irredentist foreign policy goals — the expansion of Greece's boundaries to incorporate Thessaly, Macedonia, Crete, the Ionian Islands, the Dodecanese, and, ultimately, Constantinople — to the rights and freedoms of the Greek citizens. Both analytically and psychologically, the organic unity of the Greek *ethnos* embodied in Greek nationalism precluded dissent from the prevailing consensus defining the nature of this *ethnos* in any given historical period. During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, although the *ethnos* was understood in terms of the Megali Idea, this did not preclude political competition and conflict in the domestic realm. The Megali Idea itself, however, was unchallenged and unchallengeable, for to do so was seen not only as a betrayal of the Greek nation but as a threat to the very essence of the *ethnos*. Charilaos Tricoupis, Prime Minister at the end of the nineteenth century and a man with impeccable credentials as an ardent nationalist, was resoundingly repudiated when he questioned the advisability of attacking Turkey in 1897 in order to further irredentist goals. The consequences on individual freedoms of an organic conception of the nation, as will be discussed later, were far more devastating after the demise of the Megali Idea and society's turning inwards in the search for articulating new parameters

for the Greek *ethnos*.

There is no question but that the emerging national level of Greek political elites, beginning shortly after the foundation of the modern state, demanded the establishment of some form of democratic polity and the abolition of the absolute monarchy installed by the foreign powers.[9] The pressure for constitutionalism, in conjunction with the great powers' disaffection with King Otho, succeeded in 1844 in bringing about Greece's first constitution and the establishment of parliamentarism. It must be noted, however, that these moves did not imply or reflect the existence of an underlying democratic ethos. The demands for representative government emanated from the traditional Greek political elites, who had been excluded by King Otho and his entourage from access to political power. A parliamentary system, with the advantage of symbolizing "westernization," would provide an arena for competition among conflicting political elites. As one scholar has noted, the nineteenth century can be characterized as one of oligarchic parliamentarism.[10] This nineteenth-century Greek political pluralism operated within a traditional agricultural society with little change in the social formation from that which had existed under Ottoman rule. Patrons, the locally based elites, retained, in fact strengthened, their role with the expulsion of the Ottomans, forming clientelist networks vying for control of the state apparatus. Such a political configuration, while it could operate effectively within a parliamentary system, cannot be equated with a modern democratic polity.

As stated above, the political elites of the nineteenth century, while intensely competitive among themselves, concurred on the primacy of the national goals contained in the Megali Idea. Political dialogue, in fact, was carried out in the name of this goal with each political leader claiming his superior ability, usually because of an alleged commitment by his foreign patron to successively further irredentism. Nationalist goals thus overshadowed Greek internal politics and served as a symbol which unified a highly fragmented society, but one fragmented not in terms of class divisions or ethnic diversity, but in terms of traditional localized loyalties. Nevertheless, even though the Megali Idea encompassed the drive for "completion" of the Greek *ethnos*, it did not succeed in preventing schism and polarization over the issue of the strategy to be pursued. The success of the Balkan Wars in extending Greece's territory was followed by World War I which precipitated a major

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[9] John A. Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece* (Princeton, NJ., 1968).

[10] Nicos P. Mouzelis, *Politics in the Semi-Periphery: Early Parliamentarim in the Balkans and Latin America* (London, 1986), pp. 39-50.

internal crisis threatening to the Greek state. Underlying the contentious issue of entry into the war on the side of the Allied powers advocated by Venizelos, versus neutrality advocated by the king, was the burning issue of which strategy would further the goals of the Megali Idea, which at this time were Smyrna and the "recapturing" of Constantinople. The intense dispute was resolved by Venizelos' patrons, the Allied powers, who gave massive military and political support to Venizelos and forced the king's abdication.[11] Subsequent events, more particularly Greece's landing of troops in Smyrna and their military campaign into the interior of Asia Minor, led to their disastrous defeat by Kemal Ataturk's revolutionary Turkish forces and the final demise of the Megali Idea.

The collapse of the Megali Idea signified the end of an era and in time the recasting of nationalist ideology within the boundaries of the Greek state. The relatively static quality of Greek society in the nineteenth century and the projection externally of the goals necessary to fulfill the Greek *ethnos* had not only deflected from potentially acute domestic problems but had enabled the avoidance of consideration of the principles Greek nationality other than those embodied in the Megali Idea. Concurrently, the issue of rights, other than legal ones such as the right to vote essential for a parliamentary system, were of little meaning or relevance in a society which, on the one hand, was preoccupied with the Megali Idea and, on the other, in which social change was minimal.

The Consolidation of the Organic National State

Inevitably, the demise of the Megali Idea ushered in a period of turmoil and reassessment. Devastated by the collapse of the very foundations of Greek nationalist ideology, intellectuals and politicians initially raised the question, "What went wrong?," and went on to struggle for a definition of a new reality and a search for a new rationale legitimizing the Greek state. The new ideology that evolved, while abandoning the Megali Idea and the perception of the *ethnos* in terms of the territorial dimensions of the Byzantine Empire, nevertheless drew upon traditional belief systems and values on which to ground a new nationalist ideology. The perception of the integrated "fulfilled" nation as a future Byzantium shifted inwardly within the confines of the existing boundaries of the Greek state. Religion — Greek Orthodoxy — always central to Greekness, assumed even greater importance as an

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[11]For a fascinating account attempting to justify Venizelos' policies, see El. K. Venizelos, *Greece in her True Light: Her Position in the World-Wide War,* trans. Socrates A. Xanthaky and Nicholas G. Sakellarios (New York, 1916).

integrative mechanism. The gradual process of equating religion, the nation, and the state, with the latter seen as the embodiment of the Greek *ethnos,* became the new integral national identity. Although Greece experienced several different regimes with varying political ideologies in the decades since the 1920s, this underlying conception of the state as nation persisted. Once consolidated as a given, it formed the philosophic and ideological underpinnings of Greek nationalism.

The ramifications of an organic world view of society manifest in the nation qua state on adherence to individual rights and freedoms have been devastating. The presuppositions for political authoritarianism are in place. Dissent, pressures for changes or modifications in the status quo, or demands for even minimal reforms can all be seen as threats to the integrity of the state (*ethnos*). Within this context, claims to individual rights and freedoms are of dubious validity and can be easily denied, not solely on the grounds of the priority of national interest, but, more fundamentally, on the grounds of their destructiveness to the cohesiveness of the national identity. Clearly, such a conceptualization of social reality creates conditions conducive to authoritarianism and repression.

Following the disarray and the floundering of the 1920s in the search for a new identity, Metaxas was the first political leader to recast Greek nationality and nationalism, locating it within the boundaries of the state. Functionally, the Metaxas rule muted the post World War I legacy of the schism between the Venizelists and the Royalists by articulating a new hegemonic ideology. In an attempt to legitimate his rule, Metaxas, in 1935, differentiated between *ethnos* and *laos* (people), arguing that the interests of the *ethnos* transcended those of the people.[12] His distinction between *ethnos* and people highlighted the organic nature of the nation in which persons were elements or particles inextricably meshed into this integral group. Metaxas was a dictator whose rule was modelled on the European fascism of the 1930s but his rationale, his ideological justification for political repression was the life of the *ethnos*. Within this conceptual and institutional framework, inevitably, the autonomous self remained psychologically and ideologically an alien concept as it had been in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the *ethnos* has persisted as an integrative mechanism in subsequent regimes, both parliamentary and military, thus facilitating and legitimating both the neglect of and the violation of rights and freedoms by the state. Both the post World War II 1952 constitution and, significantly, the 1975

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[12]See Nicos Alivizatos, "῎Εθνος κατὰ λαοῦ μετὰ τὸ 1940," in D. Tsoucalas (ed.), Ἑλληνισμός-Ἑλληνικότητα καὶ βιωματικοὶ ἄξωνες στὴν Νεοελληνικὴ κοινωνία (Athens, 1983), pp. 5-14.

constitition have retained the notion of *ethnos* as a reality qualitatively different from and superior to the people who compose it.

Thus, the *ethnos,* as embodied in the state, evolved into a fundamental tenet of Greek nationality, one which has been used extensively by leaders of all political persuasions to rationalize and legitimatize arbitrary and repressive actions. This ideology of the integral nation has taken diverse forms expressed in different symbolism in different decades. For Metaxas, his vision was the building of the "Third Greek civilization," a civilization grounded in the *ethnos* which would rival ancient Greece and Byzantium in its greatness and in its glory. For the military dictatorship (1967-74), Papadopoulos' image was that of "Greece of Christian Greeks." Papadopoulos argued that the Greek state was an organ with "cancerous growths that were threatening to life" and, therefore, as he put it, in need of amputation of the sick cells in order the restore the body's health.[13] It can be argued that neither Metaxas nor Papadopoulos are typical, given their dictatorial principles. But their regimes were built on deeply rooted tenets of Greek social existence, which becomes evident when one looks at the era of parliamentarism. There is little question but that the post World War II era and the 1952 constitution, which established a parliamentary regime, is most revealing of the epistemological foundations of the Greek state and society.

The most striking feature of the decades of the 1950s and 60s is the continuity of the world view of an organic *ethnos*. A multitude of explanations have been given and analyses provided to account for the authoritarianism of the Greek polity of the 1950s and 60s. The aftermath of the Greek civil war, the shift of Greece's patron from Great Britain to the United States, and the outbreak of the Cold War with its fanatic anti-Communism indisputably were all contributing factors to the erosion of the parliamentary regime established by the constitution of 1952. Para-state and para-military structures buttressed a para-constitution consisting of repressive emergency and executive decrees in violation of the constitutional provisions guaranteeing a range of civil and political rights. Moreover, suppression of dissent, restriction on freedom of speech, concentration camps, and political prisoners were all "legalized" by the decisions of the Council of State and the Supreme Court.[14] A multitude of explanations, principally United States'

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[13]George Papadopoulos, *Τὸ πιστεύω μας* (Athens, 1968), 1, p. 11.

[14]In recent years, much has been written regarding the massive emergency decrees which contradicted constitutional guarantees of civil and political rights and court decisions upholding them. See Nicos C. Alivizatos, *Οἱ πολιτικοὶ θεσμοὶ σὲ κρίσι* (Athens, 1983); see also Adamantia Pollis, "The State, the Law and Human Rights in Modern Greece," in *Human Rights Quarterly,* 9, No. 4 (November, 1987).

penetration and control of Greek polity in the context of its security considerations with the outbreak of the Cold War,[15] have been given to account for the prevalence of widespread repression. The fact remains, however, that state violations of rights were widely accepted because they were justified in the context of the prevailing nationalist ideology. The well being, in fact the very survival, of the *ethnos* mandated repression of those who had placed themselves "outside" this body. The legitimatizing function of this ideology has been minimized by most analysts.

The parliamentary decades, in fact, crystallized and clarified the integrative nationalism which has structured the Greek *ethnos* subsequent to the collapse of the Megali Idea. The centrality of the *ethnos* was not clearly apparent in Metaxas' Third Greek Civilization since this was understood as the Greek variant of fascism and not as an outgrowth of integral nationalism. By the post civil war era, however, with the emergence of *Ethnikofrosini* (national mindedness) as the measure of "Greekness," the consolidation of the view of the *ethnos* as an organic entity which was manifest in diverse forms in different epochs, was becoming apparent. In a parliamentary system with democratic pretensions, it is difficult to create a consensus on arbitrary repression. Even virulent anti-Communism was insufficient to justify the massive restrictions on and violations of the individual freedoms and rights of Greeks, which, moreover, were "legalized" in the para-constitution. The concept of *ethnikofron,* despite, or perhaps because of its vagueness, became an effective tool and an ideological precept legitimatizing repression.[16] All those who did not possess this quality of *ethnikofrosini* did not constitute part of the *ethnos* and, therefore, could be expunged, both psychologically and politically, with impunity. In practice, this meant that to be designated as an *ethnikofron,* uncritical acceptance of the status quo, compliance with the policies, beliefs, and views of the then conservative government was mandatory. As was evident during the parliamentary decades, a nationalist ideology embedded in *ethnikofrosini* was, in many fundamental respects, contradictory to and incompatible with the notion of a state protective of the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

The prevalent integrative Greek nationalism has resulted not only in the curtailment of individual freedoms, provided the justification for the imprisonment of dissidents and political opponents, but it has

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[15]For the role of the United States in the immediate postwar years, see Lawrence S. Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece, 1884-1949* (New York, 1982); see also John O. Iatrides, ed., *Greece in the 1940s: A Nation in Crisis* (Hanover, NH., 1981).

[16]Constantine Tsoucalas, "The Ideological Impact of the Civil War," in Iatrides, ibid. pp. 329-39.

contributed to the constriction of civil society and the absorption or cooptation of potentially autonomous voluntary associations or interest group organizations into the state apparatus. While all authoritarian regimes attempt to narrowly delimit civil society and to transform autonomous groups — labor unions, youth organizations, cultural groups — into state organs, the impediments to the emergence of a civil society in Greece has had a profound impact on the functioning of its polity. The failure of a vibrant and viable civil society to develop is attributable to several factors. Greece's philosophic tradition which has been devoid of theories of social contract or compact, its nationalist ideology of an organic Greek nation, concurrent with the absence of a significant industrial sector, have precluded the creation of conditions conducive to the rise of civil society. The latter, by its very nature, is in the private realm often in a conflictual relationship with the state. Additional barriers to the emergence of a civil society have been the authoritarian political ideologies of diverse regimes, from Metaxas' fascism in the 1930s to military rule in the late 60s and early 70s, which dominated, controlled, and restricted autonomous groups. Thus, integral nationalist doctrines in conjunction with authoritarian ideologies reinforced each other to the detriment of both individual and group rights.

The continuity of the organic conception of the Greek nation does not signify that Greek society remained static in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In fact, quite the contrary. Beginning in the later years of the nineteenth century, Greece underwent widespread socioeconomic transformations. As a consequence, the leaders of various political regimes were confronted with demands and pressures from the new incipient bourgeoisie, the workers, and the refugees who arrived after the exchange of populations following Greece's defeat in Asia Minor. Workers, albeit mostly in the public sector, began to organize and to strike while "alien" ideologies, in particular various Socialist doctrines, were disseminated, and a Communist party was formed.[17] The pace of social change accelerated immeasurably after World War II with massive urbanization, an inordinate growth of the petty bourgeoisie and the service sector, and a geometric expansion of the bureaucracy.[18] The dislocations, new class formations, and the breakdown of traditional belief systems accompanying social change in Greece, it can be argued, could have established the necessary conditions for the emergence of civil society. Such an eventuality, however,

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[17]For a discussion of the Socialist movement in Greece, see G. B. Leon, *The Greek Socialist Movement and the First World War: The Road to Unity* (New York, 1976).

[18]For a discussion of the emergence of a new bourgeoisie during the civil war years, see Kostas Vergopoulos, "The Emergence of the New Bourgeoisie," in Iatrides, ibid. pp. 298-318.

did not materialize, largely due to the conjunction of ideology and class interests. The potential for the rise of social conflict as a result of social change was perceived repeatedly as threatening to the political elites who were determined to maintain the status quo by thwarting or subverting threats from below, thus enabling it to retain political power. In order to contain explosive issues, including class conflict, the ideology of integral nationalism, of the *ethnos,* became the higher value transcending politics, in whose name repression was justified. Simultaneously, the massive and expanding bureaucracy served as the state's oppressive arm.

The upheaval accompanying social change in Greece was becoming apparent as early as the Venizelist era despite the preoccupation with the Megali Idea. The reaction to social discontent was restrictions on freedom. It was this liberal statesman who introduced the earliest repressive legislation directed mostly against labor organizations, concurrent with some restrictions on freedom of speech. The process of stifling the emergence of civil society was underway and was consolidated several years later by the Metaxas regime in which all private organizations came under state control. It is symptomatic of the centrality of the state in Greece and of the notion of an integrated nation that Metaxas' labor legislation persisted through the parliamentary period into the years of rule by the military junta and, except for a qualified recognition of the right to strike, remained in force after 1974.[19] All associations, in fact, continue to be regulated and controlled by the state; their organizational structure and their sphere of activity is circumscribed by a multitude of state regulations including judicial review of their purpose and their bylaws. It must be recognized that, particularly since 1974, there has been a proliferation of interest groups which have become battlefields for control by one or another political party but this has not resulted in the emergence of autonomous associations.[20] The absence of the concept of a civil society is revealed in the fact that there is no equivalent term in the Greek language, and only recently has the Greek term, a "society of citizens," been developed by scholars to convey the notion of civil society.

The potency of the ingrained concept of the integrated nation has

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[19]For a comprehensive study of Greek trade unions, see Theodore K. Katsanevas, *Trade Unions in Greece* (Athens, 1984).

[20]Nor does the increased activism of interest groups signify the development of a civil society. On the one hand, they continue to be heavily regulated by the state and, on the other, they are frequently factionalized with each faction under the control of a political party. See Rossetos Fakiolas, "Interest Groups — An Overview," in Kevin Featherstone and Dimitrios K. Katsoudas, eds., *Political Change in Greece: Before and After the Colonels* (New York, 1987).

been evident even after the collapse of the military junta in 1974 and the political democratization of Greek politics and the adoption of the constitution of 1975. Retention of the distinction between *ethnos* and *laos,* detailed state regulation and control of "private" associations, statements by political leaders, such as "a minority cannot disrupt the cohesion of the whole,"[21] and strikers cannot "undermine the nation,"[22] are indicative of the persistence of the underlying world view of the *ethnos* as an integrated entity embodied in the state. Thus the contradiction between autonomous individuals and/or groups and integral nationalism remains difficult to reconcile, despite political democratization and the existing multitude of constitutional and legal guarantees of rights.

Conclusion

It was argued at the beginning that, by definition, state sovereignty and the primacy of national interests inherently impede adherence to human rights. It was argued further that in some societies, such as Greece, their very nationalist ideology further compounds the difficulties in implementing rights and freedoms. The interconnection between tendencies towards repression, even in ostensibly democratic societies, and integral nationalist doctrines has not been analyzed in depth. Greece's experience, particularly after the demise of the Megali Idea and, hence, the abandonment of a territorially defined nationalism in terms of Byzantium, exacerbated the contradiction and intensified the tension between rights and freedoms and the protection of the integrity of the nation. The organic conception of the nation, the *ethnos,* operative as of the Metaxas era, is fundamentally incompatible and irreconcilable with a philosophy of inviolable basic individual rights. One of the challenges facing Greece since 1974 with the establishment of the most democratic regime it has had in the twentieth century, is the extent to which the prevailing doctrine of integral nationalism can be moderated and a recognition of rights, both for individuals and for private associations, can be recognized and accepted as the hallmark of a democratic society. Ferment for the institutionalization of rights and their unimpeded exercise is widespread, but the answer to these conflictual pressures is still an open question.

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[21]Constantine Karamanlis, "Λόγος στὴν Βουλή," *Πρακτικὰ τῆς Βουλῆς* (Athens, 23 August, 1977).

[22]Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou's statement at a Cabinet meeting, Press Release 14 March, 1986 as reported in daily newspaper, *Ἐλευθεροτυπία,* 14 March, 1986.

Why Greek? A Case for Hellenism*

ANNE FARMAKIDES

DEAR GRADUATES: IN THE FIFTEEN MINUTES ALLOTED TO THE Constantinos Paparrigopoulos Lecture which I have the honour to deliver this year, I should like to repay a debt, by attempting to offer an answer to the now often unanswerable question, "Why Greek?" I am grateful to Professor Harry Psomiades whose invitation gives me the rare opportunity to do so, on this appropriate occasion of your graduation from this Queens College Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, and in the presence of His Excellency the Greek Ambassador Mr. George Papoulias.

Mr. Chairman, dear Parents and honoured Guests, dear Colleagues, Mr. Dean, Mme President, Your Excellency, Πανιερώτατε.

Last year, when Archbishop Iakovos asked me what I would say to our young undergraduates of Greek descent to convince them that they should include Greek in their program of study, I answered that I could convince no one with words. Only in action, in the classroom, where students could see for themselves how valid their choice had been.

His Eminence knew of course that the question, "Why Greek?" is unaswerable if you are not a convinced humanist, and redundant if you are. His worry was about declining interest in the subject if this trend were to continue for another decade. The consequences are easy to guess, not for modern Greek Studies alone, but through them, for North Americans of Greek descent, for Greek Orthodoxy on this continent, and, eventually, for Hellenism itself. It is in this light that I invite you to look at the question, "Why Greek?"

Characteristically enough, Modern Greek Studies experience an erosion of their territory while they score remarkable scholarly achievements. One wonders why? Did they overshoot their target by growing beyond the immediate needs of their public? If the answer is yes, this disparity reflects a far wider trend, one which has

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*A convocation address at the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Queens College (CUNY).