

ON THE LIFE IN RUSSIA
OF THE GREEK PATRIOTIC FAMILY OF YPSILANTI

In the hard times of Osman domination many thousands of Greeks found refuge in Russia. There were among them peasants, artisans, politicians, and scholars. Some of the emigrants were prominent in the social, administrative, and cultural life of Russia. Simultaneously, they continued to show interest in the destinies of their far-off homeland and tried, as far as they could, to contribute to its liberation. The names of such outstanding Greek patriots, who lived in Russia, as Evgenios Voulgaris, Nikiphoros Theotokis, and Ioann Capodistria are widely known. Their residence in Russia and their national-patriotic activities are reflected in literature¹. Of great importance for the cause of national liberation of Greece was the stay in Russia of the Ypsilanti family. Alexander Ypsilanti, a general in the Russian service and Greek patriot, became head of the secret patriotic organization Philiki Etaireia, which inspired in 1821 the Greek people to the national-liberation revolution. His brothers: Dimitrios, Georgios and Nicholas, also officers of the Russian army, likewise took an active part in the struggle for the national liberation of Greece. The purpose of this communication is to present, on the basis of documents of the Soviet archives and other materials, the main data concerning the residence of this Greek patriotic family in Russia, constituting one of the most significant and, at the same time, least known pages in the history of Russo-Greek relations². The appearance of the Ypsilanti family in Russia was connected

1. See, for example: Arš G. L., *I. Kapodistriya i grecheskoye natsionalno-osvoboditelnoye dvizheniye (1809-1822)*, Moscow, 1976; Κούκκου Έ., *Νικηφόρος Θεοτόκης (1731-1800)*, Έν Άθήναις, 1973; Μουρούτη-Γκενάκου Ζ., *Ό Νικηφόρος Θεοτόκης και ή συμβολή αυτού εις την παιδείαν του Έθνους*, Άθήναι, 1979; Batalden S., *Catherine II's Greek Prelate: Evgenios Voulgaris in Russia, 1771-1806*, New York, 1982.

2. The biographies of Alexander, Georgios and Nicholas Ypsilanti are included in the collected biographies of officers of the Household Cavalry Regiment in which they served. See: *Sbornik biografii kavalergardov*, St. Petersburg, 1906 (vol. 3), pp. 194-201, 282-283. But the information contained here is too brief and not quite accurate. Whereas in the Greek biographies of Alexander Ypsilanti, as a rule in the nature of fictitious literature, the period of his stay in Russia is almost unrecorded. See, for example: Γατοπούλου Δ., *Άλέξανδρος*

with the peripeteia of the political career of its head, Phanariote Constantine Ypsilanti. The Greek financial and commercial aristocracy of Phanar (a district in Constantinople) had from the end of the 17th century acquired a great political influence in the Osman empire. Several of the Phanariote families received the preferential right of holding important governmental offices as dragomans of the Porte and hospodars of the Danubian principalities. This privileged circle included the Ypsilanti family. Just as his father Alexander, Constantine Ypsilanti served both as the Porte's dragoman and as hospodar of Moldavia and Wallachia (1796-1806). The Phanariote hospodars tried to use their usually brief rule for the quickest enrichment through feudal exploitation of the principalities' population. The Ypsilanti rulers, who were no exception in this respect, acquired in the Danubian principalities estates providing to them a considerable income.

The Greek aristocracy of Phanar, closely knit with the ruling upper class of the Osman empire, was one of the pillars of the conquerers' sway over the Balkan peoples. At the same time, the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, marked with an acute internal crisis of the Osman state and the growing influence of foreign forces on its policies, saw the appearance among the Phanariotes of groupings oriented to one of the great powers or another. The Ypsilanti family belonged to the pro-Russian grouping. C. Ypsilanti, when he was the Porte's dragoman, was also a friend of the Russian envoys V. P. Kochubei and V. S. Tomara. Contemporaries believed him to be one of the main architects of the Russo-Turkish treaty of 1799, which for the first time brought the two powers into alliance. During his rule in the Danubian principalities, too, C. Ypsilanti rendered important services to the Russian government. Thus through the mediation of the Wallachian hospodar, Russia maintained in 1804-1806 secret contacts with the insurgent Serbia³.

In its turn, the St. Petersburg cabinet patronized the Phanariote politician. In August 1806, the Porte removed, at the instigation of the French ambassador Sébastiani, C. Ypsilanti and the Moldavian hospodar A. Moruzi. That was a gross violation of the Russo-Turkish agreement of 1802, establishing a seven-year term of rule for hospodars of the Danubian principalities, and Russian diplomats energetically demanded their reinstatement. Meanwhile, C.

³Υψηλάντης, Ἐν Ἀθήναις, [χ.χ.]; Καλαντζή Κ., Ἀλέξανδρος Ὑψηλάντης, Ἀθήνα, 1941; Μωραϊτίνης-Πατριαρχέας Ἐ., Ἀλέξανδρος Ὑψηλάντης, Ἀθήνα, 1978. Very little was likewise written about the residence in Russia of Constantine Ypsilanti, who played a considerable part in his sons' patriotic education.

3. See: Semyonova L. E., "Constantine Ypsilanti i pervoye serbskoye vosstaniye 1804-avgust 1807 gg.," In: *Balkanskiye issledovaniya*, Moscow, 1984, part 9.

Ypsilanti, having found out that the Porte had already sent executioners to Bucharest to kill him, escaped with his family to Russia. In November 1806, the black-listed hospodar arrived in St. Petersburg. In December of the same year C. Ypsilanti returned to Wallachia, where Russian troops had already entered. Another Russo-Turkish war began. In August 1807, the Phanariote hospodar left the principalities for ever and settled in Kiev with his family. His eldest son A. Ypsilanti had left to St. Petersburg with the purpose of education during his first visit to Russia. Thus, the fourteen-year-old Alexander Ypsilanti, born on the shore of the Bosphorus, found himself on the banks of the Neva.

The government of Russia showed much attention to the son of a friendly hospodar. On November 24 (December 6), 1806, Foreign Minister A. Y. Budberg sent a special letter to the warden of the St. Petersburg education area, N. N. Novosiltsev, on behalf of the young Greek. The letter said: "His Majesty the Emperor kindly chose to approve the wish expressed by the Wallachian hospodar Prince Ypsilanti: in order to complete the education of his son to leave him here in St. Petersburg and for that purpose to put him to the Pedagogical School. In token of his special favour to the above-mentioned hospodar, His Majesty wishes that his son, while at school in your charge, should enjoy Your Excellency's special supervision and care both as regards education proper and with respect to his maintenance, in a word, everything that he may need. To defray the expenses required, His Imperial Majesty deigned to grant 12,000 roubles per annum, which will be delivered to you from the finance minister a year in advance"⁴. A. Ypsilanti was a student of the Pedagogical Institute—the predecessor of the St. Petersburg University founded in 1819—for a little more than a year. After the arrival of his family in Kiev, Alexander decided to visit his relatives. On his return to St. Petersburg in March 1808, he brought with him his father's petition to Alexander I asking to take his sons into Russian military service. In accordance with the petition, A. Ypsilanti was enlisted on April 12 (24), 1808 as a cornet⁵ in the Household Cavalry Regiment. The tsar promised that he would do the same for his brothers "as they will attain their majority and will be presented to me after the completion of their education"⁶.

4. Arš G. L., "Materialy k istorii russko-grecheskikh svyazei nachala XIX v.", In: *Balkanskiye issledovaniya*, Moscow, 1982, part 8, p. 56.

5. The rank of cornet in cavalry corresponded to the rank of ensign in infantry.

6. Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossii (further referred to as AVPR), fund Kantselyariya, 1808, file 5170, sheet 2. Alexander I to C. Ypsilanti, April 9 (21) 1808.

Among the Imperial Guards Regiments the Household Cavalry Regiment was regarded as the most aristocratic one. Until 1800, only noblemen could serve in it, even as private soldiers. Monarchic sentiments and personal devotion to the tsar and the members of the royal family were especially cultivated in the regiment, which did not prevent, however, M. F. Orlov, M. S. Lunin, S. G. Volkonsky and some other former Household Cavalry officers from becoming active participants in the Decembrist Movement. The regiment's traditions included a high sense of soldier's duty and selflessness in discharging it. The great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy in his "War and Peace" described with an almost documentary precision the famous attack of the Household Cavalry near Austerlitz⁷, in which the regiment lost almost half of its personnel.

The service of the fifteen-year-old Alexander Ypsilanti in the Household Cavalry Regiment started soon after its return from that memorable foreign campaign. The young Greek aristocrat, according to his contemporaries' recollections, a person of a cheerful and sociable disposition, soon felt at ease in the Russian military circles and found friends. The friends' communication was not hampered by the language barrier—A. Ypsilanti had already learned a little Russian and knew well French, which was fluently spoken by all his comrades, the Household Cavalry officers⁸.

When Napoleon invaded Russia, the regiment was awaiting with impatience another encounter with the enemy. Alexander fully shared the sentiments of his comrades-in-arms. Soon after the beginning of the Patriotic War of 1812, Constantine Ypsilanti wrote to one of his relatives about his eldest son: "He has courage and is burning with the desire to show it, and I am sure that if opportunity offers, he will not miss it"⁹. These words were fully justified. From July 1812, Lieutenant A. Ypsilanti with his squadron fought in P. H. Witgenstein's corps. In his biographer's words, "during the war with Napoleon, Ypsilanti took part in many battles, displaying great courage bordering sometimes on recklessness". For his first battle near Polotsk (August 6 (18), 1812), where Ypsilanti was "in the convoy" accompanying Witgenstein, taking part "also in recapturing our guns from the enemy", he received the Order of St. Vladimir, Fourth Class, and for the second (October 6 (18), 1812), a,

7. Tolstoy L. N., *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii*, Moscow, 1937, vol. 9, p. 346-347.

8. Later on A. Ypsilanti mastered the Russian language sufficiently well, but in his private correspondence used French as many Russian aristocrats of that time.

9. Institute of Russian Literature, USSR Academy of Sciences, manuscripts department, fund 288, register 2, file 62, sheet I. C. Ypsilanti to R. Sturdza, September 1 (13) 1812.

gold sabre with the inscription "For Valour"¹⁰. During the 1813 campaign he took part in the battle of Bautzen, for which he was awarded the Order of St. Anna, Second Class. The brave officer's promotion to higher ranks was considerably accelerated. In July 1813, as a lieutenant-colonel already, he was transferred to the Grodno Hussar Regiment. In it A. Ypsilanti participated in the battle of Dresden (August 14-15 (26-27), 1813) where his right arm was torn off by a cannonball.

The serious injury made Ypsilanti incapable of active military service. Despite the suffering caused by his wound, he remained in a cheerful, even gay, mood. His youth, sociability, romantic appearance and honourable mutilation won for Alexander general interest and sympathy. The tsar, too, favoured him with his attention. On January 1 (13), 1816, Colonel A. Ypsilanti was "graced" with the title of adjutant to the emperor¹¹. Whereas for Alexander Ypsilanti the completion of the Napoleonic wars coincided with the end of his active service in the Russian army, for his brothers such service was then only beginning. Through the solicitation of Constantine Ypsilanti, who had arrived in St. Petersburg at the beginning of 1815, Alexander I agreed to accept his sons—Dimitrios, Nicholas and Georgios—for service in the Imperial Guards.

On June 4 (16), 1816, "Prince Georgii, the son of Constantine Ypsilanti", born 1795, and his brother Nicholas, born a year later, were enrolled as cornets in the Household Cavalry Regiment. By the tradition of the old Russian army, officers with the same family name had an ordinal number added to it. Georgios Ypsilanti was entered in the regimental lists as "Ypsilanti I" and his brother as "Ypsilanti II".

In 1815, service in the Russian army started for Dimitrios Ypsilanti, subsequently one of the prominent Greek military leaders during the war of independence. Dimitrios Ypsilanti was but a year younger than Alexander, but owing to certain circumstances had considerably fallen behind his brother in his military career: when Alexander was already colonel, Dimitrios was only enlisted as a cornet in the Household Troops Hussar Regiment. In accordance to his desire, D. Ypsilanti was appointed aide-de-camp to General N. N. Rayevsky. This service lasted more than five years¹² and benefited the future Greek military leader a great deal both from the professional and the human

10. *Sbornik biografii...*, (vol. 3), p. 194.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

12. For two years he served together with his brother Nicholas, who in 1818 was also appointed, at his request, aide-de-camp to Rayevsky.

point of view. General N. N. Rayevsky was an outstanding military leader, a hero of the 1812 war, and a nobleman; the younger generation of that family was distinguished for its freedom-loving views¹³. Contact with the remarkable Russian family undoubtedly helped D. Ypsilanti to develop the strength of mind and courage, characteristic of that outwardly frail man. The Russian writer A. F. Weltman recalled his meeting with Dimitrios Ypsilanti at the end of 1820 at one of the balls in Kishinev: "The lean aide-de-camp stood pensively, leaning against the table... His narrow face, a somewhat aquiline nose, not more than a foot across the shoulders, legs like flutes in breeches with stripes, not in the least betokened the future military commander of Greece Dimitrios Ypsilanti"¹⁴.

During his stay in St. Petersburg in 1815-1816, Constantine Ypsilanti was also making efforts to put in order his property affairs. They were, in essence, as follows. In 1807, in revenge for the Wallachian hospodar's flight to Russia, the Porte executed his 80-year-old father and confiscated all of the Ypsilanti family property in Constantinople. C. Ypsilanti asked the Russian government's assistance for the recovery of that property as well as compensation for the considerable expenses he made in 1807 from his own funds towards the maintenance of Russian troops in the Danubian principalities. C. Ypsilanti's requests were met favourably. The Russian envoy to the Porte G. A. Stroganov was given instructions to seek either the return to C. Ypsilanti of his family property or compensation for it¹⁵. Moreover, the tsar decided to double the maintenance money—20,000 roubles in currency bills—which the Ypsilanti family was receiving from the Russian government.

Constantine Ypsilanti concerned himself not only with having his sons accepted for military service in Russia, but also with the material well-being of his family. As is justly pointed out by the Greek historians, he had a great spiritual influence on his sons and helped in shaping their patriotic convictions. No attention is paid, however, to the substantial changes in the views of C. Ypsilanti himself during his residence in Russia.

Initially, when the Wallachian hospodar had fallen into disgrace with the Porte, he had not yet become a convinced opponent of the sultan's empire. Ascribing his misfortunes to the intrigues of his enemies from among the

13. Rayevsky's two sons were involved in the case of the Decembrists, and his two daughters were married to the Decembrists S. G. Volkonsky and M. F. Orlov.

14. Quoted from: Maikov L., *Pushkin. Biograficheskiye materialy i istoriko-literaturnye ocherki*, St. Petersburg, 1899, p. 116.

15. AVPR, fund Kantselyariya, 1816, file 2309, sheet 280-281. State Secretary I. A. Capodistria to G. A. Stroganov, June 30 (July 12), 1816.

Phanariotes and the Turkish high officials, he did not lose hope of reascending some day to the hospodar's throne in Jassy or Bucharest. But the years of his life in Russia were passing by, spent in his care for the education of his children and in intellectual pursuits and reflections. Out of a Phanariote politician there was being formed a convinced Greek patriot. Of no little importance in this respect was also the social environment in which C. Ypsilanti found himself in Russia—the environment where philhellenic and anti-Osmanic feelings were quite strong. Evidence of C. Ypsilanti's patriotic views in the last years of his life was his memorandum "Survey of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire" presented to Alexander I in the spring of 1816¹⁶.

In his memorandum, the former dragoman of the Porte, resolutely denounced the whole of the social and state system of the Osman empire founded on coercion and arbitrary rule. Especially sad was the plight of the numerous Christian subjects of the sultan. "Neither their property, nor their person, nor their wives, nor their children are in safety". "To strike a dog in the streets of Constantinople is a sin", continued C. Ypsilanti, "to kill it is a crime, but to strike a Christian matters nothing, to kill him matters even less".

The author of the memorandum stressed that the existence of the sultan's tyrannical regime was to a considerable extent the result of the policies of the European powers, Britain above all. While seeking to abolish, allegedly out of humane consideration, the traffic of African Negroes, said that power is doing nothing to "alleviate the great number of whites and Christians, subjects of the Ottoman empire, who are treated worse than the Negroes in the colonies". In the opinion of C. Ypsilanti, the rivalry and interests of the European powers, though they prolonged the existence of the Osman empire, could not save it from downfall.

The degradation and decay of the Osman state contrasts with the energy and vital force of the Greek nation. "Those who think make a gross mistake", said the memorandum, "that the Greek nation, oppressed and humiliated by the slavery, has degenerated to such an extent that it has lost love of freedom and the memory of what it was. All those who know it well admit that there is no nation which has so much preserved its character as the Greek. The intentions they show in all circumstances, even least favourable, and their readiness to sacrifice all for a tiny ray of hope, prove what they are capable of".

At the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, C. Ypsilanti's memorandum was with every reason qualified as a statement of the Greek point of view.

16. AVPR, fund Kantselyariya, 1816, file 2309, sheets 145-159. Aperçu sur l'état actuel de l'Empire Ottoman, le 2 (14) avril 1816.

Naturally, in a memorandum addressed to the government of a foreign power, although friendly to Greece, the Greek patriot could not fully disclose his views. According to his Greek biographer, on the eve of his departure from St. Petersburg in June 1816, C. Ypsilanti, when parting with his eldest son Alexander, said to him: “My son, never forget that the Greeks, to obtain their freedom, must rely on themselves alone”¹⁷. These words were in a way C. Ypsilanti’s political testament.

He died on June 27 (July 9), 1816 in Kiev, a few hours after his return from St. Petersburg, and was buried in St. George Church. Later on, a splendid monument was put up on the grave, whose creator was believed to be the famous Italian sculptor Canova. It was a statue representing a woman in an antique attire, made of white marble. The high pedestal of red granite was ornamented with a marble bas-relief portrait of C. Ypsilanti in the form of a medallion with a bronze wreath, antique urns and the coat of arms of the deceased. The epitaph in verse, written in Russian and Greek, said:

Τῶδε πολυκκλύτω τύμβῳ ἐνί, κυδαλίμοιο
 Κεῖται Ἀλεξάνδρου Κωνσταντίνος ὄρχαμος ἀνδρῶν
 Ὑψηλάντης κῦδος Ἀχάϊων πατρίδος αἴης
 Ἑλλάδος ἐλπορῆ ἧς δουλείης ὑπάλυξιν
 Ἔϊναι. Ὅς ἦνασσε θνητοῖσιν ὄσις Δακίητε,
 Μολδάβι ἐντὸς ἔχει, φρέσιν αἰσιμα εἰδώς
 Ἀθάνατος δεπχετ ἐπέρ ἔτη μερόπον ἀριθμοῖτο
 Πλήθει ὧν ἀρετῶν ἦδε πραξήσι φαειναῖς¹⁸.

The epitaph is quite noteworthy. We find in it an important confirmation of the Greek patriotic feelings prevailing in the family of the former hospodar. The same is evidenced by the antique style of the monument, in harmony with the cult of ancient Greece, which was characteristic of the patriotic part of Greek society on the eve of the 1821 revolution.

Despite the sudden death of C. Ypsilanti, his efforts to provide for the material well-being of his family were not wasted. By the tsar’s edict of July 13 (25), 1816, C. Ypsilanti’s heirs were granted, for a term of 50 years (1817-

17. Φιλῆμονος Ἰ., *Δοκίμιον ἱστορικὸν περὶ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ἐπαναστάσεως*, Ἀθῆναι, 1859, τ. 2, σ. 73.

18. Zakrevsky N., *Opisanie Kiiva*, Moscow, 1868, vol. I, p. 268; *Kiiv providnik*, Kiev, 1930, p. 293. The monument from C. Ypsilanti’s grave, which was damaged during the nazi invasion, is now stored in the Kievo-Pecherskaya lavra museum (information provided by A. A. Beletsky).

1867), a lease from the state-owned property, several villages in the Baltski and Yampolski districts, Podolski Province, with a total annual income of 10,117 roubles in silver¹⁹. Besides this “rented property”, the Ypsilanti family had also in Russia its own estate, purchased during the lifetime of C. Ypsilanti, which was in the Novozybkovski district, Chernigovski Province, and included the villages of Khoromna, Solovyovka and Kirilovka²⁰. The heirs of the former hospodar also received his sizable land-property in Moldavia and Wallachia, which was under the protection of the Russian consuls of the principalities. All admitted that the Ypsilanti family became even richer than it was before it had come to live in Russia: it now owned lands and peasants in two countries, having an annual income of 120,000 roubles. A considerable part of it, however, was spent in paying the earlier incurred debts²¹.

After the death of C. Ypsilanti, his eldest son Alexander became head of the Greek aristocratic family. In the lists of officers serving in the army, he was still successfully ascending the official army rank. On December 12 (24), 1817, A Ypsilanti was promoted to the rank of major-general and appointed commander of the First Brigade, First Hussar Division²². He received the rank of general at the age of 25, becoming one of the youngest generals of the Russian army. His title of prince²³, connections at the court and a substantial land-property made him equal with the Russian nobility, opening to him the doors of high society. The young Greek aristocrat was by no means indifferent to titles and ranks, to his social position in Russia, nevertheless other aspirations and aims determined his spiritual make-up and illumined his way in life.

Since his youth A. Ypsilanti was an ardent Greek patriot and in St. Petersburg, back in the pre-war years, he made the acquaintance of another Greek patriot, Ioann Capodistria, former secretary of state of the Ionian Re-

19. The Central State Historical Archives of the USSR, fund 1152, register 1, file 84, sheet 2. One rouble in silver was then worth four roubles in paper money.

20. The Central State Historical Archives of the UkSSR (further TSGIA UkSSR), fund 490, register 4, file 182, sheet 120.

21. Arš G. L., “Materialy...”, p. 66.

22. *Sbornik biografii...*, vol. 3, p. 195. In foreign historians' works it is asserted, as a rule, that in 1820—the time he assumed the leadership of Philiki Etairia—Alexander Ypsilanti was adjutant to Alexander I. Some of the historians used this assertion to support their view that A. Ypsilanti allegedly became head of the Greek secret society with the “knowledge” and “encouragement” of the tsar. Actually, A. Ypsilanti acted as the tsar's adjutant only in 1816-1817.

23. The title of prince was due to the hospodars (princes) of the Danubian principalities and the members of their families.

public, who had taken up Russian service. The officer of the Guards and the diplomat, meeting at the home of Ypsilanti's relative, Roksandra Sturdza, not infrequently turned to the destinies of Greece. "The hope that the Greek people will some day be free appeared to us as a radiant dream", said R. Sturdza (Edling), recalling these talks²⁴. The shaping of the patriotic convictions of Alexander and his brothers, as has already been said, was greatly influenced by their father. Subsequently, A. Ypsilanti would mention the "last will" of his deceased father among the main motives that had impelled him to place himself at the head of the Greek uprising²⁵. The Ypsilanti brothers' world outlook was also determined by the general feeling of the Greek society.

The end of the 18th century saw the emergence of the Greek national liberation movement associated with the name of the revolutionary democrat and poet Rhigas Velestinlis (around 1757-1798). Rhigas' liberation plans were discovered by the Austrian police, who delivered him to the Turks. The hand of an executioner cut the short life of the patriot and fighter. The liberating ideas of Rhigas and his martyr's death made an enormous impression on the whole Greek world and inspired hundreds of new fighters to struggle. When Rhigas' conspiracy was discovered, Constantine Ypsilanti was the Porte's dragoman, and the history of life and death of the Greek revolutionary was well known to his family. The passionate "Military Hymn" of the revolutionary poet became the favourite song of A. Ypsilanti²⁶.

Speaking of the development of the Ypsilanti brothers, especially Alexander, one should not ignore, in part, the spiritual atmosphere in which they were growing and maturing in Russia. Alexander Ypsilanti could not use the benefits of life in Russia undisturbed, knowing at the same time that his compatriots were oppressed and suffering. Among his Russian friends, the officers, there were quite a few rich aristocrats who did not suffer from any social disparity but were ready to sacrifice their career, wealth, even life to free their country from autocracy and serfdom. They were the future Decembrists. A. Ypsilanti, no doubt, had an intellectual kinship with them. Figuratively speaking, they were made of the same human material, and the mould was the same one that was determined by the year 1812. With many of the Decembrists A. Ypsilanti was associated personally as well. In 1816, he was member of the «Three Virtues» masonic lodge, which included P. I. Pestel, S. G. Vol-

24. "Iz zapisok grafini Edling", *Russki arkhiv*, 1887, vol. I, No. 2, p. 206.

25. Prokesch-Osten A., *Geschichte des Abfalls der Griechen vom Türkischen Reiche im Jahre 1821 und der Gründung des Hellenischen Königreiches*, Wien, 1867, Bd. 3, S. 61.

26. See: Arš G. L., *Eteristskoye dvizhenie v Rossii*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 116, 117, 239.

konsky, S. P. Trubetskoi, M. I. and S. I. Muravyov-Apostol brothers, and N. M. Muravyov²⁷. Among his closest friends was the outstanding Decembrist M. F. Orlov. As Alexander Ypsilanti recalled shortly before his death, he, too, had been proposed to join one of the secret Decembrists' organizations²⁸. But he did not accept the offer. Believing that he had already discharged his duty to his second motherland, Russia, the young general was awaiting the moment when his prestige, military experience and dedicated patriotism would be needed by Greece, which he considered to be his real motherland. And the moment came.

After the tragic death of Rhigas Velestinlis, the national-liberation movement in Greece and the Greek colonies abroad continued gaining strength. In the second decade of the 19th century a new and important support in the struggle to liberate Greece was given by the Greek communities of Southern Russia. The Greek communities in Odessa, Taganrog, Ismail, Kerch and other Black Sea cities were then living a period of prosperity and cultural heyday, furthered by the official policy of "patronage" to the Christian population of the Osman empire and by Russian society's sympathy for the oppressed Balkan peoples. The Greek settlers in Russia maintained close contacts with their native country and cherished the same hopes and aspirations as their compatriots. It was in their midst that there arose the secret national-liberation organization which was to act as "midwife" to the 1821 revolution

Philiki Etaireia (Friendly Society) was founded in Odessa in 1814. Its founders were representatives of the Greek "third estate": a small trader N. Skuphas, a student A. Tsakalov and a shop-assistant E. Xanthos. The liberation of Greece through an armed revolt was the main aim of the secret society. While relying on the liberation efforts of their own forces above all, the leaders of the Greek society also hoped for a certain aid on the part of Russia. Even more important was the psychological factor: the Greeks' deep-rooted belief that salvation from the Osman slavery would be brought by the co-religionist Russia. The Etaireists not only did not ignore this important fact of social consciousness, but they tried, moreover, to use it to enhance their organization's prestige. The structure of the secret society—Philiki Etaireia was a profoundly conspiratorial organization—served the same purpose. Its

27. Pypin A. N., *Obshchestvennoye dvizhenie v Rossii pri Alexandre I.*, St. Petersburg, 1900, p. 320. See also: Nicolopoulos J., "Quelques renseignements sur l'activité maçonnique des frères Ypsilanti", *Ο' Εργαστήρις*, Αθήνα, 1964, τεύχ. 8. The article of J. Nicolopoulos is, as we know, the only study in Greek literature specially examining the Ypsilanti brothers' social contacts in Russia.

28. Thürheim L., *Mein Leben*, München, 1914, Bd. IV, S. 205.

directing committee—Archi (Power)—was surrounded with a special aura of secrecy. No one, except its members themselves, knew either the composition or the whereabouts of the “Invisible Supreme Power”, as that body was called by the rank-and-file members of Philiki Etaireia. All that provided ground for the widespread belief that behind the Archi there was the government of Russia and tsar Alexander himself.

Active in its initial years exclusively in Russia, Philiki Etaireia in 1817-1819 extended its activity in Greece proper and in other places where Greeks resided. The liberation organization won its followers in all sections of Greek society, including the upper circles. But that created for Philiki Etaireia serious problems as well. The Greek upper circles, fearing a popular rising, preferred to liberate Greece from “above” with the help of the tsar. These circles made persistent efforts to clarify the real nature of Philiki Etaireia’s relations with the Russian government. Every secret becomes known some time or other, and even secret societies are no exception in this respect. Should it have become clear that Archi consisted of obscure traders, that in actual fact that body had nothing to do with Russia, the forces of Greek society most powerful at that time would have antagonized against Philiki Etaireia. In order to avert the impending serious crisis of the liberation organization, its leaders decided to include in the leadership one of the Greek dignitaries, if possible, one connected with Russia. They decided on Ioann Capodistria, at that time one of the influential ministers of Alexander I. In January 1820, one of the Philiki Etaireia leaders, Emmanuel Xanthos, arrived in St. Petersburg for talks with Capodistria. His high position in the Russian government did not prevent Capodistria to remain a convinced and active Greek patriot. But Capodistria, just as some other prominent Greeks, was at that time against an armed rising and in principle against secret societies²⁹. He therefore refused to cooperate in any form with Philiki Etaireia. Then Xanthos turned to Alexander Ypsilanti, who was then in St. Petersburg, and the latter unhesitatingly decided to link his destiny with the Greek national-liberation organization. On April 12 (24), an act was signed in St. Petersburg on the appointment “of the Most High Prince Monsieur Ypsilanti as Inspector General of the Greek Society”³⁰.

29. More details about I. Capodistria’s views and his national patriotic activities in Russia can be found in: Arš G. L., *I. Kapodistriya i grecheskoye natsionalno-osvoboditelnoye dvizheniye (1809-1822)*.

30. The trip of E. Xanthos to St. Petersburg and his negotiations with I. Capodistria and A. Ypsilanti are described in all accounts of Philiki Etaireia and the Greek revolution of 1821-1829, in the biographies of the two outstanding leaders of the national-liberation struggle,

The assumption of Philiki Etaireia's leadership by A. Ypsilanti was the victory of the radical wing of the Greek national-liberation movement, the confirmation of its course for freeing Greece through a general revolt of the people. When A. Ypsilanti became the leader, Archi, as a group of really existing persons, ceased to exist. But it remained as the symbol of the "powerful force secretly guiding" the activity of the Greek society. In instructions which A. Ypsilanti, after entering upon his duties, sent from St. Petersburg to prominent Etaireists in Greece, he officially called himself only as "general representative of Archi". A. Ypsilanti was known in Greece to be a general in the Russian service closely connected with the court. That was why the current opinion in Greek society that Philiki Etaireia was backed by Russia was considerably strengthened. In the words of the Greek historian I. Philimon, "the triad: Archi, Ypsilanti, St. Petersburg had the greatest magical power. Beyond it the Greek sought nothing"³¹.

In the final count the Greeks' hopes for assistance from Russia, founded on historical experience, proved well justified. The Russo-Turkish war of 1828-1829 ensured the successful outcome of the Greek national-liberation revolution. The military interference of Russia, however, took place after the heroic struggle of the Greek people had led to irreversible changes in the international situation, and the Eastern question had risen again on the political scene in all its magnitude. But in 1815-1820 the tsarist government pursued a policy of preserving status quo in the Balkans and normalizing and improving relations with the Porte. It goes without saying that Russia did not intend to relinquish its right of "protection" of the sultan's Christian subjects. Yet the St. Petersburg cabinet was not going to patronize the Balkan revolutionaries. One could not therefore expect that the official St. Petersburg would give support to the Etaireists in preparing an insurrection in Greece³².

Alexander Ypsilanti largely shared his compatriots' hopes for the aid

and the general works on the history of New Greece. Quite a substantial treatment of the question, with the use of a wide range of sources and important literature, Soviet included, is contained in the capital work of the prominent Greek historian A. Vacalopoulos, "A History of New Hellenism" (Βακαλοπούλου 'Α., *Ιστορία του Νέου Έλληνισμού*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1980, τ. Ε', σ. 90-111). See also: Arš G. L., *Eteristskoye dvizheniye...*, pp. 223-224; the same author, *I. Kapodistriya...*, pp. 201-208. But some of the important circumstances of E. Xanthos' mission have not yet been sufficiently clarified.

31. Φιλήμονος 'Ι., *Δοκίμιον...*, τ. 1, σ. 36.

32. For more detailed information on Russia's policy towards Greece and other Balkan countries on the eve of 1821 see: *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya na Balkanakh. 1815-1830*, Moscow, 1983, pp. 65-126.

of Russia in the liberation of Greece. But guided by the vital interests of the Greek people, the leader of Philiki Etaireia decided to begin the liberation revolt in any case—whether such aid was coming or not. To devote himself wholly to the preparation of the revolt, the Greek patriot took an indefinite leave from service on the plea of the need to go abroad for treatment (his health was indeed poor).

The list of foreign passports issued in 1820 by the Main Headquarters, in the Archives of the Foreign Policy of Russia, mentions the passport issued on June 23 (July 5) to “Prince Ypsilanti, Major-General, granted a holiday abroad for treatment with mineral waters until the healing of his wounds”³³. On the following day A. Ypsilanti left St. Petersburg, intending, before his travel abroad, to visit the Greek communities of Southern Russia. In the summer and autumn of 1820, during his stay in Odessa, Ismail and Kishinev, the head of Philiki Etaireia was making money collections, sending his emissaries to Greece and other Balkan countries, and arranging secret conferences to discuss the plans of a liberation uprising. There can be no doubt that some of the liberation plans of Alexander Ypsilanti became known to the local authorities. Governor-General of Novorossiisk A. F. Langeron, who after the beginning of the Greek uprising had to make excuses to the government for his inactivity, wrote in May 1821 in an official report: “Monsieur Prince Alexander Ypsilanti, just as Prince Georgios Kantakusen³⁴, spent here (in Odessa—G.A.) last summer, and I often met them, they talked to me a great deal about their desire to see the revival of former Greece”³⁵. But neither A. F. Langeron nor I. N. Inzov, Viceregent of Bessarabia, broadly interpreting the official policy of “protecting” the sultan’s Orthodox Christian subjects and being probably misled by the official standing of Alexander Ypsilanti, had done anything to interfere with his liberation efforts, for which both of them were later on severely reprimanded by the tsar³⁶.

In Kishinev Alexander Ypsilanti met his old friend, Decembrist M. F. Orlov, commander of the 16th division quartered in Bessarabia. The leader of Philiki Etaireia informed the head of the Bessarabian cell of the Decembrists’ League of Prosperity about the liberation action he was preparing and discussed with him the possibility of the division under M. F. Orlov coming

33. AVPR, fund Administrativnye dela, 11-23, 1820, file I, part I, sheet 80.

34. G. M. Kantakusen was a retired colonel of the Russian army, an active Etaireist.

35. Foreign Policy of Russia in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries (in Russian) (further FPR), Moscow, 1980, series II, vol. IV (XII), p. 131.

36. See: Arš G. L., *Eteristskoye dvizheniye...*, pp. 261, 295.

into operation to support it. Although their discussions did not lead to concrete results, they provided a moral support to the leader of the Etaireists at the time of his taking the momentous decision³⁷.

M. F. Orlov's home in Kishinev was also visited by A. S. Pushkin, exiled from St. Petersburg for his freedom-loving poems. Here at the beginning of November 1820 he met at one of the balls Alexander Ypsilanti. The great Russian bard's poetic recollection of the stormy autumn of 1820 were the lines from the 10th chapter of "Yevgeny Onegin":

Ἐτρεμαν φοβερὰ τὰ Πυρρηναῖα,
τῆς Νάπολης τὸ ἠφαιστειο φλογιζόταν
ὁ κουλοχέρης πρίγκηπας ἔγνεφε κιόλας
ἀπ' τὸ Κισνιὸφ στοὺς φίλους τοῦ Μορία³⁸.

The alarming news of the Porte's discovering the projects of the Greek revolutionaries impelled to act without delay. On February 21 (March 5), 1821, Alexander Ypsilanti left Kishinev. Having crossed the Russo-Turkish frontier with the help of his foreign passport, he arrived on the following day, together with his brothers Georgios and Nicholas, in Jassy. Here on February 24 (March 8), 1821, the head of Philiki Etaireia published an appeal to the Greek people to rise in arms and to throw off the Osman yoke. The appeal found the widest response. Volunteers began gathering under the Etaireia banners from all parts of the Danubian principalities. The voice of Alexander Ypsilanti was heard in Greece as well. At the end of March 1821 the revolt broke out in Peloponnesus and then quickly spread to other regions of Greece. The Greek national-liberation revolution started.

Alexander I, on learning of Ypsilanti's action at the Holy Alliance congress in Laibach (Ljubljana), sharply denounced it. It was announced that the tsar would not give Ypsilanti any support—either direct or indirect. The Ypsilanti brothers were discharged from the Russian service and were forbidden to return to Russia³⁹.

As to the reaction of Russian society to Ypsilanti's action, amazingly unanimous, it could be expressed in two words: approval and admiration. A. S. Pushkin, who was near the scene of the events, most precisely expressed these

37. For more detailed account see: Arš G. L., *Eteristskoye dvizheniye...*, pp. 279-283.

38. Pushkin A. S., *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii v desyati tomakh*, Leningrad, 1978, vol. 5, p. 181.

39. Prokesch-Osten A., *Geschichte...*, Bd. 3, S. 65-67; FPR, series II, vol. IV (XII), pp. 228-229.

feelings: “The first step of Alexander Ypsilanti is sublime and brilliant. He has started happily and —dead man or victor— he henceforth belongs to history, 28-year-old, an arm torn off, a magnanimous aim!”⁴⁰. Equally enthusiastic was the reaction of the great poet’s friends and those who shared his views. The well-known public figure A. I. Turgenev wrote on March 23 (April 4), 1821, from St. Petersburg to poet P. A. Vyazemsky: “Ypsilanti’s proclamation, which you probably already have, is being read in Moscow and here. What a splendid immortality, if it is fated to be his!”. In his turn, P. A. Vyazemsky, who was in Warsaw at that time, asked his friend: “What do they say there about the hero Ypsilanti?”⁴¹.

Ypsilanti’s effort evoked sympathy not only among the progressive people in Russia. His actions were approved, owing to certain traditions of the official policy of Russia, by conservatives, including some of the generals. Thus one of the private letters of those days written by General P. D. Kiselev, Chief of Staff of the Second Army and subsequently a prominent figure of tsar Nicholas’ era, contained this: “Ypsilanti, by crossing the border, has already handed his name on to posterity... God help him in the sacred cause; I wish I could add Russia as well”⁴².

Ypsilanti’s four-months campaign in the Danubian principalities, which was one of the episodes in the long and stubborn war waged by Greece for independence, ended unsuccessfully. The Etaireian army was defeated in an unequal struggle. Alexander Ypsilanti himself and his brothers Georgios and Nicholas were decoyed to cross the frontier into Austria, where they were thrown into a fortress and remained imprisoned there up to the end of 1827. Alexander Ypsilanti died in Vienna on January 31, 1828, soon after his release from the Austrian prison. What was the subsequent fate of Georgios and Nicholas Ypsilanti, the brothers and fellow-fighters of the head of Philiki Etaireia? No definite answer is given to this question either by scientific literature or by reference books. Thus, the biographical notes on Nicholas and Georgios Ypsilanti to be found in Greek encyclopaedias have no dates of their births and deaths and no information of what happened to them after their release from prison⁴³. The search we have made in various archives

40. Pushkin A. S., *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii v desyati tomakh*, vol. 10, p. 22.

41. *Ostafeyevsky arkhiv knyazei Vyazemskikh*, St. Petersburg, 1899, vol. II, pp. 181, 183.

42. Letters of P. D. Kiselev to A. A. Zakrevsky, *Sbornik russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva*, St. Petersburg, 1891, vol. 78, p. 64. See also: Narochnitsky A. L., *The Greek National Liberation Movement and Russia (1801-1831)*, In: *Balkanskiye issledovaniya*, Moscow, 1982, part 7, pp. 124-127.

43. See, for example: Ἐλευθερουδάκη, Ἑγκυκλοπαιδικὸν Λεξικόν, Ἐν Ἀθήναις,

of the USSR make it possible to clarify this question.

In April 1828, tsar Nicholas I allowed Georgios and Nicholas Ypsilanti to return to Russia, where their mother, sisters and youngest brother were still living⁴⁴. Obviously that decision, cancelling the corresponding measure of Alexander I, was more of a political than humanitarian nature. The struggle for the independence of Greece was approaching to its successful end, and the powers, including tsarist Russia, were eagerly vying with each other for influence on the new state. Having permitted the return of the Ypsilanti brothers, the tsar simultaneously gave orders to put them under police surveillance.

Little is known about the last years of life of the Etaireist brothers spent in Russia. Apparently after their return, they lived at first in the family estate of Kosnitsa, Rodolski Province. Later on (judging from police reports, in the second half of 1831), N. Ypsilanti went to live in Odessa. In a report of the local police dated in the beginning of 1833, the following is said about him: "He lives with his relative Monsieur Negri, Councillor of State, and is of noble conduct"⁴⁵. Nicholas Ypsilanti died in Odessa on April 3 (15), 1833⁴⁶.

In 1842 a partition of the family property was made between Georgios Ypsilanti, on the one hand, and the young children and the widow of his brother Grigorios, who had died in 1835, on the other. Georgios Ypsilanti received the rented estates in Podolski Province and part of the hereditary lands in Wallachia. But the Podolsk landowner "Prince Yegor, the son of Constantine Ypsilanti, Captain of the Guards (Cavalry)", as he titled himself when signing official papers, did not at all forget the different period of his life. In 1843 he visited Greece⁴⁷. Georgios Ypsilanti died in Bucharest on February 11 (23), 1846⁴⁸.

The mother of the Ypsilanti brothers, Elizabeth Ypsilanti, had the bad luck to outlive all her sons. She died in Odessa at the age of 96, in September 20 (October 2), 1866⁴⁹. That was the year of a great revolt on the island of

1931, τ. 12, σ. 518; *Μεγάλη Ἑλληνική Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια*. 2η ἔκδ., Ἐν Ἀθῆναις, [X.X.], τ. 23, σ. 762-763.

44. The eldest (after Alexander) of the Ypsilanti brothers, Dimitrios, in 1821 secretly went to Greece, where he became one of the leaders of the liberative struggle. He died in 1832 in Navplia.

45. State Archives of the Odessa Region (further OOGA), fund I, register 249, file 754, sheet 240.

46. AVPR, fund Glavny arkhiv, III-I, 1829, file 26, sheet 40.

47. AVPR, fund Glavny arkhiv, II-6, 1844, file 3.

48. TSGIA UkSSR, fund 490, register 4, file 182, sheet 51.

49. OOGA, fund 37, register 6, file 27, sheet 124.

Crete, still remaining under the yoke of the Osman empire. The struggle to liberate all Greek lands from foreign oppression, begun by Alexander Ypsilanti, continued...

In the era of the national liberation of Greece, not only political, economic and cultural, but also human links between the peoples of our two countries had grown considerably stronger. The symbol of these links was the striking and noble personality of Alexander Ypsilanti, the national hero of Greece and hero of the Patriotic War of 1812, the leader of the Greek fighters against foreign oppression, the Etaireists, and a friend of the Russian fighters against the autocracy, the Decembrists.