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THE "GREAT IDEA" AND THE VISION OF EASTERN FEDERATION:
A PROPOS OF THE VIEWS OF I. DRAGOUMIS AND A. SOULIOTIS-
NICOLAÏDIS*

Ion Dragoumis was undoubtedly a leading figure of Greek irredentism. His volatile presence in the political and intellectual life of Athens as well as his untimely and tragic end made him the centre of the political and ideological struggle over national issues. If Dragoumis has been considered as one of the main, if not the main exponent of the national integration policy, its basic vehicle Athanasios Souliotis, better known by his "nom de guerre" Nicolaïdis, remained comparatively in the shadows, considering the importance and the volume of his contribution to this struggle¹.

During the four years from 1908 to the 1st Balkan War, Dragoumis and especially Souliotis organized and directed, the "Constantinople Organization" modelled after the similar "Salonica Organization"². These two men, "fellows and colleagues", strove to emancipate the Hellenism of the Ottoman Empire and to establish relations with the other nationalities within the Empire to enable them all to claim more efficiently their national and political rights. Dragoumis was a theorist, while Souliotis was "stronger in political action"; they both complemented each other to a certain extent³,

* I am indebted to Mr M. Dragoumis and especially to Mrs Sophia Souliotis for permitting me to consult the unpublished archive of Ion Dragoumis and A. Souliotis-Nicolaïdis.

1. Only certain fragments from Souliotis' work have been published so far. For other references to his personality and political work, see D. Xanalatos, "The Greeks and the Turks on the eve of the Balkan Wars: a frustrated plan" in *Balkan Studies*, 1962/2, and D. Kitsikis, *Comparative History of Greece and Turkey in the 20th Century*, Athens 1978, esp. pp. 85-99.

2. A. Souliotis-Nicolaïdis, *The Salonica Organization*, pub. by "I.M.X.A.", Thessaloniki, 1959.

3. I. Dragoumis also referred to the "Constantinople Organization" in "Those alive", 2nd ed. Athens 1926, ed. by his brother Philip Dragoumis. In this book, first published in autumn 1911, Dragoumis described his experiences when he was living in the Ottoman capital and the activity of the "Organization", notwithstanding he was not able to speak explicitly for security reasons. These same reasons as well as the literary style of writing hindered Dragoumis from giving the full width and depth of these historic experiences. "Constantinople Organization" is also an unpublished manuscript by Souliotis, hereafter referred as "C.O. text".

because Souliotis was not only engaged in finding solutions to organizational problems, but he also developed a certain theory which allows us to-day to distinguish the views of Dragoumis from those of Souliotis. This distinction, is necessary for better understanding the national Schism in Greek political life in those years, and for delineating two periods in the process of their views.

In the first stage, they both moved within the limits of the traditional "Gread Idea" and they made efforts to define it. Here Dragoumis' influence over Souliotis is evident. In the second period Souliotis' views prevailed. He lived in Constantinople and closely followed the developments there. It is through his eyes that Dragoumis was able to follow the events as is shown by their correspondence. However, it would be a mistake if we tried to divide these periods chronologically, as it would also be a mistake to pinpoint a systematic and decisive process from one complex of ideas to another. The critical and unstable period to which these ideas and writing correspond, did not permit the luxury of elaborate and comprehensive studies.

This paper aims at following the development of Dragoumis and Souliotis' ideas during the period from 1908 to 1922, and at showing the main points of their orientation. References to Souliotis's writings are more abundant because his unpublished archive was available⁴ and because he was the main exponent of the policy for an Eastern Federation.

I.

The idea of an Eastern Federation⁷ was linked with the Eastern question and especially with the struggle over Macedonia. Souliotis mentions several attempts made to make this idea reality during Trikoupis' government, but the scope of their interest was restricted to the Balcan peninsula and their aims were turned against Turkey. These plans did not materialise⁵.

In 1894, the Eastern Federation question was discussed among Greek circles in Paris. L. S. Stavrianos mentions the Greek socialist P. Argyriades, president of the "League for Balkan Confederation" founded under the auspices of the "International League for Peace and Liberty", who promoted the solution of a Near Eastern Federation. Argyriades explained, during the

4. Unfortunately, only Souliotis' letters to Dragoumis were available and not vice versa. Hereafter, the place from which they have been sent will be mentioned if it is other than Constantinople.

5. In 1891 an "Eastern Federation Society" had been founded, presided over by Leonidas Meletopoulos. The Society and the policy for an Entente between the Balkan States failed, according to Souliotis, because they had not been prepared by a previous rapprochement between the various races; see, C.O. text.

organizational meeting of the "League" that this federation would consist of the following countries: 1. Greece and the isle of Crete, 2. Bulgaria, 3. Rumania, 4. Serbia, 5. Bosnia - Herzegovina, 6. Montenegro, 7. Macedonia and Albania, 8. Thrace with Constantinople as a free city and the centre of the confederation, 9. Armenia, 10. Asia Minor coastal regions. According to Argyriades "each one of these states will have complete autonomy: each one will be administered internally according to its own will. But the general interests of the confederated states will be regulated by their delegates meeting at Constantinople, by all the measures destined to assure the maintenance of a federative pact, to prevent or settle conflicts among them and, finally, above all, to place all the strength of the confederation at the disposal of any state whose independence or integrity is attacked from without"⁶.

Stavrianos concludes, correctly, that these opinions did not exert any influence, but they are important as being representative of the attitude of pacifists and radicals towards the Eastern Question. Similar attitude was held, however, by Dragoumis and particularly Souliotis, who were not pacifists or radicals. There is no evidence whatsoever that they knew of the resolutions of the "League for Balkan Federation". Moreover Souliotis, when referring to the "Eastern Federation", did never give account of a systematic and detailed plan. To begin with, its geographical description was limited to the term "our East" ("καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἀνατολή"), i.e. the Balkan and Asia Minor peoples: by Balkan peoples Souliotis means the Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs and Albanians. For Rumania we have a hint only, namely that Greece should never participate in a "Balkan Confederation unless the Rumanians also take part"⁷. He does not explain, however, who are the Asia Minor peoples that would belong to the federation. From a historic example only that he mentions we may deduce that Syria and Mesopotamia would not belong to it, for the same reasons that Hungary and Wallachia were kept out: that the state of Alexander the Great, the Byzantine state and the Turkish state had been abolished more easily in those areas than in others⁸.

Souliotis assumed that the unity of a nation is natural, irrespective of state boundaries; instead the unity of a state is accomplished with laws which

6. Quoted in L. S. Stavrianos, *Balkan Federation. A history of the movement toward Balkan unity in modern times*, Northampton, Mass., 1944, pp. 150-151.

7. A. Souliotis-Nicolaïdis, *Diary of the first Balkan War*, publ. by "I.M.X.A." Thessaloniki 1962, note on 9 Nov. 1912, p. 18.

8. A. Souliotis-Nicolaïdis, "Notes", unpubl. manscr. According to the filing of the archive, they had been written in 1931 or 1932.

administer the coexistence of several nationalities⁹. This assumption might have reflected the state of affairs existing in south-eastern Europe at the time, but not Souliotis's political action whose primary concern was to emancipate the Hellenes of the Empire and to give them a national identity.

If we said that he *requested* a national identity for them, we would be more precise. Because both Souliotis and Dragoumis were soon convinced that the Hellenes of the Empire, the "Rum milleti", definitely did not have a Hellenic consciousness. Their struggle was to set up a new imperial consciousness, an eastern national consciousness deriving from the mixture of all nationalities living in the Ottoman Empire.

II.

Souliotis was allowed to settle in Constantinople in April 1908. His secret activities in Salonica and his friendship with Dragoumis, who was already established there as secretary of the Greek Embassy, caused many delays to his arrival at the Ottoman Capital. The Bulgarian activities in the Adrianople region served as an excuse to the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Theotokis for permitting Souliotis's departure. "The combat against Bulgarianism was something concrete and for that reason would excuse to me and to the Greek Government the setting up of an Organization in Constantinople"¹⁰. As a matter of fact, in the beginning, the Bulgarian presence in Thrace and Constantinople had been combated. But the Young Turkish revolution very soon changed the political centre of gravity and the Organization chose as its ideal "the mutual understanding and the cooperation of the peoples of the East, e.g. of the Balkan peninsula and Asia Minor"¹¹.

In Salonica, the centre of the Macedonian struggle, the political horizon was narrow. The every-day cruelty of a struggle which measured bit by bit its victories and defeats and did not show its outcome clearly, necessarily restricted Dragoumis and Souliotis's ideas. At the same time, however, it gave them the impetus to exceed the objects of the Macedonian struggle. Dragoumis wanted to change this struggle from defensive anti-bulgarian one into a positive

9. Ibid.

10. C.O. text. Xanatalos, *op. cit.*, maintains that the C.O. pursued a Greek-Turkish alliance against panslavism: "They (Souliotis and Dragoumis) thought that they should change the role of the Turkish state from that of a 'bridge and a fence' into a fence only against the Slavs". This view does not seem to be well founded. A full account of the policy and the activities of the C.O. is given in my doctoral thesis on the Hellenes of the Ottoman Empire, still to be completed.

11. C.O. text.

one which would lead to a union of the Greek race in one big state. Souliotis did not disagree with it but he really wished for "a wider goal, less petty than the Greek policy and more humane than the Macedonian struggle"¹².

Thus the activity of the C.O. was oriented around these three points: a positive and wide goal, a change of the nebulous Greek policy into another more concrete than that of the "Great Idea" and thirdly, that this policy should not only be an offensive policy but also a policy of coexistence and friendship. These thoughts started to take shape during the years of the Macedonian struggle; in the beginning it was just an attempt to re-consider the "Great Idea" but eventually it grew to be an open challenge to it.

The "Great Idea" was still at that time for Souliotis linked with the very existence of the Greek Nation, and at the same time it was the "goal to which the nation was turned". Manifestations and partial materialization of the "Great Idea" was Rigas's view, the national-liberation revolution of 1821 and the establishment of the Greek Kingdom in a part of the Balkan peninsula. This process towards the national integration showed, according to Souliotis, "that there was something which was not empty talk, something which may be called Greek Spirit". This civilizing "Spirit" was deeply rooted in this part of the world. To illustrate his point Souliotis gives the example of the Roman Empire which had been "conquered" by the "civilizing power of Hellenism". That is the reason why he felt assured that Hellenic civilization would eventually dominate the East "in all domains, commerce, industry, culture, sciences". However for the time being Hellenism was compelled not to fight against the conquerors but against the thieves, as he called the Bulgarians who also had claims on Macedonia; and definitely against the powerful foreigners who interfered with Eastern affairs for their own interests¹³.

It was within this framework that Souliotis approached the "Great Idea". The traditional beliefs in the merits of Hellenism were taken for granted, though Souliotis did not close his eyes to the difficulties arising from the contemporary political reality. Nonetheless, he did not tell us what precisely were the Greek claims and aspirations.

On the contrary, Dragoumis is more precise. He considered that the isle of Crete, Epirus and Macedonia, Thrace, a part of Asia Minor as well as all the islands of the Aegean and Marmara Sea belonged rightfully to the Greek Kingdom¹⁴. Slavs were also for him the most dangerous enemies,

12. Ibid.

13. A. Souliotis-Nicolaïdis, *The Great Idea*, Athens, 1908 (brochure).

14. I. Dragoumis, *Declaration to the enslaved and to the liberated Greeks*, Athens (?), 1908. Cyprus was not mentioned in it.

but he did not overlook the perils from the Great Powers, from Austria which persecuted Hellenism “secretly and more skillfully” and from Germany who instigated “Rumania’s claims on Wallachs”. Dragoumis went still further. He suggested ways in which disputed areas would take on a Greek character¹⁵, demanded an ideal to be imposed on the nation in order to strengthen it. And this ideal would be “first to make our nation, because without it, we will always be tormented”¹⁶. To make the nation did not mean for Dragoumis, at least then, to create a bigger state. Yet, Dragoumis made use of another term, the “unity of the nation”; the scope of this term was wider than that of the state aggrandisement; the state is merely a starting point. That is why we may conclude that, with seeking the making of the nation, Dragoumis expected the Greek nation to attain a sense of self. “In Macedonia, I realized that Greece is not trying to achieve anything”, he noted in his diary in 1906. “But if Greece does not, I believe that Hellenism, the whole nation, should want to combat for its union. The union must become programme, goal, banner, weapon, instrument, everything; and it must be thundered out”. This ideal, though temporary—in the long run is the “liberation of the ‘free’ and the ‘enslaved’ Greeks”—Greece forgot to promote it. Instead, “she makes a policy” he argued, “directed by the King at his whim. And the King is not Greek”¹⁷.

“Imposing an ideal”, “must want” are peculiar terms for showing the inner inclinations of a nation. Dragoumis’s imperative tone is due rather to the pusillanimity of the Greek Governments over the national questions and to the “lack” of “national” consciousness showed by the whole nation; because the unredeemed Hellenes as well, who expected everything from Greece, had their share in the responsibilities that Dragoumis attributed to the Greeks and the Hellenes alike¹⁸. Dragoumis’s participation in the shaping of the national policy made him stern towards persons. Being well aware of the existing situation he reached the conclusion that “both ideals are unnatural, false: Neither ancient Greece nor the Byzantine empire is the model for modern Greece, but the model should be a state whose boundaries are the Greek race. We are

15. *Ibid.*; Dragoumis suggests to the rich Greeks to buy real estates and set up enterprises in the occupied territories, with Greeks in their service; Greek schools in Turkey, not in Greece, should be reinforced. In Greece they should finance public works, aqueducts, bridges, roads and railways, but also military camps and warehouses.

16. I. Dragoumis, *My hellenism and the Hellenes*, fragments from diary notes, edit. by Philip Dragoumis, Athens 1927; entry: Alexandria 1905, p. 71, and Dedeagats 1906, pp. 87-88.

17. *Ibid.*, see also pp. 90-91 and 111.

18. It should be recalled that these thoughts are from his diary and reflect his views before 1908.

moving towards this goal"¹⁹. Nonetheless, the boundaries of the Greek nation were so difficult to define, as to provoke strong reactions. Dragoumis' assertion that the Greeks never engaged in aggressive wars, and that the Hellenic way of thinking had been adopted "by the supreme human races", has obviously to be faced with scepticism²⁰.

Dragoumis felt that he was walking alone, still then, on the path of national aspirations and for that reason he was cautious not to be carried far away. The "hellenic ethnism", with which Dragoumis wanted the Greeks to be inspired, did not belong to the present moment, which dealt with "the struggle for life". Later on when time will be opportune for the "struggle for victory"²¹ a period of time to be always aimed at, "hellenic ethnism, which is not wasted in narrow national works" could again "attend freely to humanism and every human idealism"²². Thus, "hellenic ethnism" is not simply the national consciousness of hellenism pointing to materialization, but a sort of supra-national humanitarian value, imposing itself even on the conquerors. Souliotis had already called it "Hellenic Spirit". Both terms suggested that Hellenism is not a vehicle promoting state policy or military power, but a factor of civilization for a whole region, the East; and for that reason accepted by all peoples and nations²³.

The new conditions in the Ottoman Empire stirred up new ideas: "The Great Idea is finally abolished", Dragoumis noted. "The political orientation of Hellenism is now the union of the nation in a state more confined than the byzantine"²⁴. Dragoumis published his new opinions, in an article entitled "Army and other topics". In this article he considered the question of whether the idea that the Greek state should be expanded is the "Great Idea". His answer was negative. Because "Great Idea" was the historic memory of the Hellenic dominance over the multinational Eastern state, with Constantinople as its capital. When the Greeks after four hundred years rose against the Ottoman rule they had not the "moral authority" to undertake the hegemony in the East. It was the European civilization which was then predominant: and to this fact may be due Dragoumis's and Souliotis's "anti-europeanism". Some Greeks believed that, with the Young Turks in power and the "few crumbs of equality" which they had given to the other nationals, political

19. *Ibid.*, Athens 1907, p. 118.

20. *Ibid.*, Constantinople, 1907, p. 119.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 126, the original in English.

22. *Ibid.*, also Constantinople 1908, p. 132.

23. "The Great Idea", *op. cit.*

24. *Op. cit.*, "My Hellenism", Rome 1909, p. 144.

power would take again a Greek character and the Ottoman State become Greek. However "now, not a single eastern people believes in the superiority of the Greeks", Dragoumis argues. "We are all swept away before the Europeans. Why then, should the Greeks take the lead, when moreover they are detested... for their past political and religious dominance? Do they have bayonets... to impose their state? Do they have any other authority? Nothing. They are only good entrepreneurs. And this is one more reason why the others might wish to abolish them... Consequently", he concluded, "the Turkish State will never become a Byzantine Empire"²⁵.

Thus, Dragoumis bravely rejected the dreams which had gradually replaced reality. One may debate of course his conclusion, for neither the Ottoman state was exclusively Turkish nor the Byzantine Empire exclusively Greek. But one may not deny his sincerity in seeking for new ideals. Neither Constantinople (ἡ Πόλις), nor Saint Sophia (Ayia Sofia) and Kokkini Milia would do; these ideals belonged to the past as well as the ideal of the "marbled King" who will stay marbled forever²⁶. However decisively Dragoumis may have rejected the old ideals, he was not immune to the enchantments of Constantinople which bewitched the Greeks for generations. But he strongly doubted whether the Helladic politicians could bear the burden of the imperial capital, whether "this band could take back Constantinople"²⁷. It is this doubt which rendered Dragoumis a realist.

Whenever the nation become able, he argued, the whole of the East would belong to it. In the present state of affairs the goal that should be aimed at, was the dismemberment of Turkey "at least in Europe and in the islands, since the Greek state would increase to the detriment of the Turkish State", with or without the collaboration of the other peoples of the East and the annexation of Macedonia, Epirus, the Aegean islands and Cyprus²⁸.

III.

A picture of what Dragoumis and Souliotis discussed when they first met

25. This article, written in Rome in 1909, was published in "Noumas" No. 361/11 Oct. 1909.

26. According to the Greek popular tradition, Constantine Paleologue, the last Byzantine Emperor was not killed but turned into marble. Some day he will wake up and chase the Turks as far as Kokkini Milia (red apple tree). This place is obviously legendary existing only in Greek tradition. It should be mentioned, however, that the Turks as well with "red apple" meant any big and strong city.

27. *Op. cit.*, "Those alive", pp. 2-4.

28. *Op. cit.*, "Army and other topics".

in Constantinople, and how the former arrived at the above mentioned thoughts, we have in the novel "Those alive". According to this source the "Great Idea" was, for Dragoumis, too old and could not touch the people who greatly suffered in its name. The "big State" or the "political union of the race" made an easier and more convenient ideal, which could move the Hellenic masses, in Greece and Turkey. Instead for Souliotis, the "Great Idea", conceived in its traditional frame was still active²⁹.

Nonetheless both of them wanted the Greeks of the kingdom and the Empire to be the centre of all developments. Dragoumis aspired at a big Greek State with Athens as its capital, following a hellenic policy, while Souliotis foresaw an Eastern State, like the Byzantine, governed by the able Hellenes. Dragoumis reproached him for caring for the grandeur of his idea rather than for the grandeur of the nation, but nevertheless he still found in Souliotis the enthusiast with whom he could share something in common. After all Dragoumis did not care whether "the Hellenes would build an Eastern Empire or would unite their race in a big Helladic State; it was enough to get mobilized nationally, to have their blood stirred, to start striving, combating, growing big"³⁰. For it is the national struggle which will render the Greek, both the "enslaved" and the "liberated" free, i.e. "anthropos", and thus Hellenism will again apply itself to humanism in accord with its proper nature³¹.

The successful Young Turkish pronunciamiento changed the political scene of the Empire. The stress was now laid on legal action and on the parliamentary and massive presence of the Ottoman Greeks. Dragoumis, as a diplomat, could not be involved with such activities. Thus, the whole burden rested with Souliotis, who, in the guise of an Insurance company employee, organized the C.O. and through it mobilized the Greeks in the Ottoman capital.

Souliotis everyday became more aware of the need for a broader goal. He discussed the matter with Dragoumis many times but they did not manage at the time to agree on a concrete plan: The difficulty did not lie with them of course, but rather with the historical conditions within which they lived; namely an Empire in decline, apple of discord for the Great Powers and scene of the racial clash, but still strong enough to cause respect. The Young Turks succeeded in resuming power without difficulty, and it is significant the joy and relief with which the people, particularly in Macedonia, reacted to the new

29. *Op. cit.*, pp. 74-85, pp. 78-83.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

31. *Op. cit.*, "My Hellenism", pp. 90, 126.

regime. Even the armed bands of Greeks and Bulgarians shared these feelings, at least in the beginning, and for that reason they ceased the warfare.

One should not overestimate the value of the Young Turkish constitutional declarations and of the demonstration of fraternity among the various races of the Empire; but it would be equally mistaken to underestimate their spontaneous character. The reservation with which Dragoumis and Souliotis saw the new regime, could not dampen their pleasant surprise at the spectacle of the people "hand in hand, in the same streets" enjoying their newly granted freedom. It is this spectacle which confirmed Souliotis's deepest expectations.

The constitutional regime, moreover, diminished the persuasiveness of the armed struggle. This fact which depressed the heads of the Macedonian struggle in Salonica³², stirred Souliotis and Dragoumis to reconsider the aims of the combat ahead. Anti-bulgarianism was not sufficient, limiting Hellenism's action only to Macedonia and its importance in narrow nationalism. Instead, the main bulk of the Ottoman Greeks lived in Asia Minor: if the Greek policy did not change, they were condemned to passively watching others making decisions for them. Thus the question on what policy should the Ottoman Greeks follow needed urgently to be answered.

The new constitutional conditions seemed to favour Souliotis's eastern idea. Dragoumis remained hesitant. However, the critical developments that occurred during this period, his contacts with Hellenism and the head of the Christian Orthodoxy, the Patriarch Joachim III who was a "Byzantine Hellene" and "does not identify himself with Hellenism further than the point where he does not endanger his being Patriarch"³³, finally his acquaintance with the metropolitans "who are not Hellenes" but "Christians and epicureans"³⁴, all these made Dragoumis to seek for a compromise between the policy of the "small but honoured Greece" and the eastern ideal of his friend³⁵. The former horn of the dilemma was definitely rejected; Dragoumis seemed to be reconciled to the latter. But in part only. There were some deep convictions in him which stubbornly opposed Souliotis's eastern ideal. One such was what he called "levantinism", i.e. the lack of any national consciousness. Dragoumis seemed to fear that a "levantine" may well be hidden behind the eastern man. Another conviction was that the Turks through the "co-domi-

32. See "Report on the facts and the situation in Salonica region, for the year 1908" by the Special Bureau of the Greek Royal Consulate in Salonica, in *Hist. Arch. of the G.F.M.*

33. *Op. cit.*, "My hellenism", Constantinople 1907, pp. 119-120.

34. *Ibid.*, Philipoupolis 1904, pp. 21-22.

35. *Op. cit.*, "Those alive", pp. 135.

nance" should be led to their subordination to the Greeks³⁶. His belief that the national characteristics and, consequently, the differences among the nations are "a priori" categories, do not appease Dragoumis's worries. Perhaps because he saw that reality itself rejected these categories.

In this regard, Souliotis argues that Dragoumis "had been accustomed to the anti-bulgarian struggle", and for that reason "he did not let himself feel enthusiasm for the turbulent folk. He paid more attention than I to the difficulties of the entente between races... He saw its need as I did, but he wanted the Greeks to be the heart of that entente, on which matter I did not raise a question... But if he did not respond to the people's enthusiasm, Ion was bewitched at the prospect of an Eastern federation with its natural, psychological picturesque wealth, the warm vividness that it contained, and he was excited by the struggle to be carried out..."³⁷. However, Dragoumis, in his own words, maintained that if Turkey was going to remain untouched, "the policy of entente with the other nationalities for equal rights... may not turn it to Byzantine Empire, but it should restrain the Turks from the tyrannical, absolutist dominance... The 'rayah' would be free in the Ottoman state and gradually they would become co-rulers with the Turks. If on the other hand Turkey was going to be dismembered, then the same policy... would serve a higher goal than the negative ideal of the Greek petty politicians; because it would aggrandize the Greek state so as to include as great a part of the nation as possible. In that way Alexis (e.g. Dragoumis) sees two political ideals, depending on the developments, the Eastern Empire and the unification of the race"³⁸.

These two alternatives were the compromise that Dragoumis was looking for. Through inconsistencies, retractions and vague statements by "poetic licence", the above thoughts represent a serious attempt for systematic and realistic scrutiny of the Greek national claims. The reasoning of this attempt is condensed in a "Study" written by Souliotis and Dragoumis in their capacity as heads of the C.O. and sent to the Greek Foreign Minister:

"Since the free Greek state had been founded, all Greeks, from the most humble to the Prime Minister and the Patriarch themselves have as national ideal the liberation of the 'rayah' brethren by conquering those parts of Turkey in where they live. When the circumstances discourage us, we limit our

36. *Ibid.*, p. 119. See also G. Augustinos, *Consciousness and History: Nationalistic critics of Greek society, 1897-1914*, New York 1977.

37. C.O. text.

38. *Op. cit.* "Those alive", p. 137. See also, *op. cit.*, "Consciousness and History", pp. 120, 129. Augustinos maintains that these ideals were two complementary policies.

territorial claims. But even the smallest hope makes us see unrestrainedly far. This happens because deeply in the consciousness of all of us, from the most irresponsible to the most responsible, lies one hope, one aspiration: the Byzantine Empire, or even the state of Alexander the Great at their apex. But even if these empires had ever been Greek, from the state point of view, nowadays the state of affairs in the East and all over the world makes impossible for us to materialize this imperialistic dream*. On the contrary, if we keep being inspired by it, a small free Greece may be safeguarded. However, the biggest part of Turkey where millions of Greeks live, millions who cannot live in the small Greek state, will be annexed by other countries. And then, we may keep making national dreams and aspirations, but they will be more gloomy than they are now. Therefore, we believe that our imperialistic dream must be replaced at least in the leaders' mind as soon as possible..."³⁹.

Any interpretation of the above passage would be redundant. The old Empires could not exist in the twentieth century. But nor could the Ottoman Empire survive without taking into account the national question. It is noteworthy that while Dragoumis and Souliotis were not deluding themselves into believing that the Great Idea would be successful, nonetheless they seemed to ignore the Turkish national consciousness. Instead, the "Memorandum to the Athens HQ"⁴⁰, which definitely had been submitted after the proclamation of the Constitution, in July 20, 1908, gives us another picture of the feelings that prevailed in those days:

"The Turks... will take all measures and give the Constitution such a form as to make the state retain a strong Turkish character and form. If they are allowed to accomplish it, any possibility of redeeming the whole Greek Nation will gradually be lost... The programme (of Hellenism)... may include a show of good will and love towards the Ottoman State, and particularly

* Souliotis and Dragoumis use the word "ιμπεριαλιστικό"; they rather mean "imperial", referring to the Byzantine or Alexander's Empire.

39. "Study for a Hellenic Programme", undated, sent to the Greek Foreign Minister G. Baltatzis; in C.O. text and also in Hist. Arch. G.F.M. According to Souliotis, the study was sent a few days after the July revolution. However the G.F.M. copy is classified in 1909. Moreover it has some minor differences in the introductory part. The copy in the H.A.G.F.M. for instance does not refer to the "imperialistic dream", however the meaning of the text is not altered. The mention of a Hellenic Programme coincides with the events of 1909 while its comparison with the "Memorandum to the Athens Head Quarters", see *infra*, corroborate the view that it has been written in 1909.

40. "Memorandum to the Athens Headquarters" in Souliotis papers; also in X. Lefkoparidis, ed., "General P. Daglis. Archive, Memoirs, Papers, Correspondence", Athens 1965, Vol. A', pp. 355-357.

of fraternity, etc... Such an activity will enable us to forward our aim: the Hellenization of the Ottoman State".

Dragoumis's influence is apparent. He could not accept that the Turks would for ever put their stamp on peoples who considered them as newcomers in the region. Of course the Greek Spirit remained the creative power, and, thinking no more of the "a priori" categories of the national features, the "Memorandum" argues that the "civilizing power of the Greek Spirit", the economic dominance of the Greeks as well as the probable and hopeful expulsion of the Europeans by the Committee of Union and Progress guaranteed the Hellenization of the Ottoman Empire⁴¹.

However, the authors of the "Memorandum" for the first time take into consideration, although they do not seem to fully realize its importance, the question of Turkish nationalism. Behind the political initiative of the Young Turks themselves one could trace signs of Turkish national consciousness. The only Ottoman characteristic of the Young Turks was their wish to preserve the Ottoman Empire despite the course of events.

It was precisely on that wish that Dragoumis and Souliotis based the hopes for the realization of their plan. We should not believe, however, that they tried to delude the Young Turks with false friendship and good will. A nation cannot make history hiding its face. But nevertheless they could not accept the Greek Government dragging their feet and, after all, what Hellenism needed was action. Both Dragoumis and Souliotis rejected the Helladic policy and opposed the King. Moreover Souliotis believed that a "small Society" should be founded, which would compel the King to abdication and, thus it would give the signal of political change. "Because the King" he argued, "psychologically ridicules the *romeiko* (the Greeks)"⁴². We are not sure, however, whether he wanted King's replacement or the abolition of the Crown.

IV.

After Abd-ul Hamid's dethronement in April 1909, and the deterioration of Greek-Turkish relation because of the Cretan affair, the Greek Government was obliged to call back the officers working under consular cover in Turkey. Souliotis also came back to Athens, because the Turks had begun to be suspicious.

In Athens, Souliotis contacted the "Military League" (Στρατιωτικός Σύνδεσμος) and approved its pronouncement in August 1909⁴³. But it was

41. Ibid.

42. Souliotis to Dragoumis, March 1909. It is not clear whether Souliotis was aware of the secret "Military League"; see *infra*.

43. It is about the well-known Goudi affair, modeled after the Young Turkish pronounci-

not the change that Souliotis wished. On the other hand, the Greek press disclosed the existence of the "Panhellenic Organization", to which the C.O. belonged, by reason of factions policy⁴⁴. The revelations distorted truth and gave excuses to the Young Turk chauvinism, thus further adding to Greek-Turkish discomfiture. Finally the head of the "P.O.", Colonel Daglis resigned and the Organization remained an empty title. Souliotis concluded that he "almost became fanatic patriot out of charity..."⁴⁵.

However, a solution might be found with another "society" less conciliatory towards the old regime than the "Military League". As a matter of fact Souliotis was in contact with 16 officers, with whom he shared the same views. Five groups, unknown between each other, had been formed and, Souliotis expected them to organize 250 to 300 officers in fifteen or twenty days. None of them should ever have been involved in politics. The decisions would be taken by majority, and no order from without was to be carried out. The "Society" would be secret until the Greek deputies in Constantinople were contacted and the Turks, Bulgarians, and Serbs sounded. Afterwards the foreign policy programme of the Greek state was to be drawn. "Then, we will call upon new politicians here and we will draw a domestic policy programme subordinate to the foreign one. We will arrange the question of the King and so on. Then, in a theatrical manner, we will take the army with us; and in one day *we will clear up the situation here. And we will put in practice our programme, we that have some light inside us*"⁴⁶. (Soul. underl.).

One could not but admit the romantic character of Souliotis' plan. Nevertheless, what is important and it must not escape our attention, is that the foreign policy programme carried all the weight of Souliotis's and also Dragoumis's considerations. This view, radically different from the commonly accepted one, stipulated that "the small (Greek) State is subordinate to Hellenism and nothing else"⁴⁷.

If Souliotis and Dragoumis wanted "the internal development of the Greek Kingdom, by using all its forces", this was only for furthering Hellenism.

amento of 1908. Some historians call it revolution. The "Military League" demanded the withdrawal of the old politicians, better administration of public affairs, the non-interference of the royal family with the military and political questions. From very soon the "M.L." compromised and finally, with Venizelos advent to power, it had been dissolved. As for Souliotis, it is not certain to what extent he participated to the "M.L."

44. Ibid., Souliotis mentions the newspapers "Embros" and "Kairoi".

45. Soul. to Drag., Athens, 17 December 1909.

46. Ibid. Unfortunately, we do not have further information about this organization. The lack of information, precisely, may indicate its importance.

47. Soul. to Drag., Athens, 5 Jan. 1910.

At the same time they both suggested alliance with the Ottoman State on the conditions that: the latter would denounce all its rights on Crete, and Greece all its expansive ambitions against the Ottoman territory, and that the preservation of the ecclesiastic and educational privileges of the Patriarch would be guaranteed. To the reasonable objections that the Turkish part could raise as far as the educational autonomy of the Greeks was concerned Souliotis answered with a simple assurance that Hellenism was loyal to the Ottoman Empire⁴⁸. However, the Macedonian Struggle and the Cretan affair did not serve as convincing examples for the Turks.

In Athens, circumstances posed the dilemma: "Either we will detach parts from Turkey as many as we can, or we will give the battle for the equality of the Hellenes in Turkey. Of course both policies *are aggressive*, but we must definitely decide between these two"⁴⁹ (Soul. underl.). Souliotis and Dragoumis, as we have seen, favoured the giving up of the "imperialistic dream".

It should be mentioned that Souliotis did not fail to be in touch with Venizelos. The meeting was informative and did not lead to any conclusions: "...he is young and broadminded", Souliotis informed Dragoumis. "One may come to an understanding with him because he talks almost the same language with us. However, he is a politician by profession... I told him about our views. *He quite agrees* in theory. We came to practical matters, he told me... that he thinks that: 1st, a political government including Zorbas⁵⁰ should be formed and the "Military League" should be dissolved, and 2nd, the government should make a foreign policy programme, but he does not know how"⁵¹ (Soul. underl.).

Further on we will see why this agreement in principle did not make progress, but on the contrary it resulted in bitter opposition. We can conclude however today that Venizelos put the stress on the internal reorganization as a prerequisite for an efficient foreign policy; while Souliotis, without neglecting domestic affairs, believed that the emergence of the Ottoman Greeks' national consciousness and their organization in a political party would give an impetus to Greece's regeneration. It would be a lengthy struggle, without temporary narrow national successes; a struggle to turn the tide of history, "even if this struggle fails"⁵². It would not be correct, however, to reproach Souliotis for giving a hopeless battle. His, as well as Dragoumis's aim was

48. *Op. cit.*, "Study of a Hellenic programme"; let us remind that the "study" was written in 1909, before Dragoumi's return to Athens in February.

49. Soul. to Drag., Vienna, 20 Jan. 1910.

50. Zorbas was the head of the "Military League".

51. *Op. cit.*, letter of 5 Jan. 1910.

52. C.O. text.

to bring on the stage the historical perspectives that they thought Hellenism should have⁵³.

In Athens, Souliotis's plans could not be fulfilled. So much the worse then for the Greek state! He left for Constantinople, where the "Organization" still worked though in a loose way perhaps because of his absence. And if Dragoumis also lost hope, he could go there, to "that big city which links Europe with Asia, where all, nature, people and human deeds responded more completely and harmoniously to (their) inner world". There, they would put into practice their programme neglecting the Greek state. "It is the only way to take it with us and correct it"⁵⁴, Souliotis argued, apparently not being able to abandon such a hope.

V.

The efforts for an agreement with the other nationalities of the Empire started in 1909, but it was in 1910 that they brought fruit. The Holy Synod and the Mixed Council of the Patriarchate agreed that the Patriarch should not proceed to any step towards the Sublime Porte before contacting the representatives of the other nationalities. On the other hand the movements of Albanians and Arabs for autonomy were considered as strengthening the policy of the Christian nationalities. The C.O. was making that policy of the Patriarchate and Souliotis was determined to neglect Athens' instructions, in case these instructions were against the entente of the nationalities. "I will not let the cooperation with the Bulgarians collapse", he confirmed to Dragoumis⁵⁵; another proof that his anti-bulgarianism was due to the needs of the struggle only, in contrast to that of Dragoumis which was based on principles, i.e. on his belief that "panslavism" was the main adversary of panhellenism.

It should be noted that the Entente ideal did not blind Souliotis to its dangers. He was always vigilant that the C.O.'s good will should not be used by the Bulgarians to the detriment of Hellenism. That was the reason why the C.O. up to 1912, kept on "combating Bulgarians, in conformity with their attitude towards us", he noted. "But he did it without forgetting its ideal, on the contrary being aware of the fact that this propaganda was one of the

53. Soul. to Drag., Athens, 26 Sept. 1909.

54. Soul. to Drag., 5 Aug. 1910.

55. Soul. to Drag., 17 Nov. 1910. It is worth mentioning that Souliotis as he wrote in this letter, was ready to raise hand against prof. Carolidis, Greek deputy, because he was a fanatic opponent of Bulgarians and systematically ignored the C.O. efforts.

imperialistic tendencies of the Eastern peoples, tendencies which mainly hindered their unification..."⁵⁶.

Under those circumstances the Entente of the nationalities concerned Greeks and Bulgarians, and its edge was turned against the Young Turkish dominance. The emancipation of all peoples of the East went through the struggle for national autonomy and equal rights confirmed by the constitution. The autonomy slogan, promoted by several parts, did not necessarily mean, at least for the C.O., the partition of the Ottoman Empire. Its interpretation, however, varied; the idea itself was reminiscent of recent unhappy developments for the Empire. That is the reason why the Turks disliked, while the Ottoman Greeks and the other nationalities favoured Prince Sabaheddin's policy of administrative decentralization. It is dehetable whether administrative decentralization went as far as to mean federation, but it served as a vehicle for the promotion of some kind of federation advocated by Bulgarian and Greek circles. The Bulgarian I.M.R.O. favoured the idea of an Eastern Federation, propagated by the Bulgarian "National Federative Party" (N.F.P.).

The N.F.P. was sponsored by I.M.R.O.'s left wing (federalist section) and headed by a triumvirate, in which the Bulgarian deputy D. Vlachov was a member⁵⁷. The party wanted the establishment of a democratic, constitutional regime, guarantees for autonomy and equality of all nationalities, strife against the interventions of the advocates of Greater Greece, Greater Bulgaria and Greater Serbia, and finally the democratic union and organization of all nationalities into an "Eastern Federation"⁵⁸.

There is no further information, to the best of our knowledge, on how this federation would be organized, unless that the autonomy of the communities and provinces (as provinces would be considered greater peripheries than the vilayets) was a "sine qua non" term. Furthermore the N.F.P. put equal

56. C.O. text.

57. Dim. Vlachov, *Moments from the history of the Macedonian people*, Skopja 1950, mimeographed Greek transl. kindly placed at my disposal by J. Papadrianos, research assistant to the I.M.X.A.; pp. 186-187. One may have certain reservations, however, because of the political expediency for which this book has been written. See also E. Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, Thessaloniki 1964, pp. 61-62, partic. fn. 12. The NFP is mentioned by Bulgarian bibliography as "People's Federal Party"; see "Macedonia, Documents and Material", ed. by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, 1978, p. 589 fot 1 and p. 590; also S. Velikov, "Sur le mouvement ouvrier et socialiste en Turquie après la révolution Jeune-Turque de 1908, in *Etudes Balkaniques* 1964/1, p. 36.

58. The suggestion of the "Eastern Federation" was made in the founding congress of the N.F.P., on 3 August 1909. The N.F.P. was linked with the Serres' group of I.M.R.O. headed by Sandaski; op. cit. "Moments".

emphasis on social reforms to be carried out. In Souliotis these measures are not mentioned at all. Instead, Dragoumis informs us that Souliotis "did not consider social welfare as a goal"⁵⁹.

Apart from the ordinary contacts between Greeks and Bulgarians for the common demands of the nationalities, we do not know whether Souliotis had any other contacts with the N.F.P. We do know, however, that Souliotis with the C.O. aspired to create an "internal" Ottoman Greek organization, modeled after the I.M.R.O., and that he often wished there existed a Sandaski "to divide the Greeks into external and internal"⁶⁰, and that he was very fond of the Bulgarian deputies to the Ottoman Parliament Vlachov, Dalchev and Dorev⁶¹. As for the "eastern ideal" it was formulated by Souliotis later on; but the initiative for the nationalities' understanding belonged to him, as was admitted by the newspaper "Narodna Volja"⁶².

At the same time, the Greek newspaper of Constantinople, "Laos" ("People") mouthpiece of the "Brotherhood"—a society promoting the demotic language, to which Dragoumis belonged⁶³—reported from Paris the foundation of an association called "Federative Union of the peoples of the East". The "Union" was presided over by a Greek doctor Constantine Roccas. After almost a month from this first report, "Laos" published certain passages of the "Union"'s programme, depicting a rather clear picture of its aspiration⁶⁴. The programme suggested "the division of Turkey into independent federal states... and an alliance of the federal citizens... in order to defend the Empire from the frequent foreign attacks and to prevent it from the partition". Despotism (of the Sultan?) and any social class which was "playing" upon partition would be combated. The federative Republic which would have as official language French, would comprise the Albanians, Montenegrins, Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbians, Wallachs, Jews, Kutsowal-

59. *Op. cit.*, "Those alive", p. 85.

60. Soul. to Drag., 9 April 1909.

61. Soul. to Drag., 17 Nov. 1910. Dorev was accused by official Bulgaria of being member of the C.U.P.; see I. E. Gueshov, "The Balkan League", London 1915.

62. "National Will"; the article was reprinted by "Laos" of 18 March 1909. "Narodna Volja" later on became the N.F.P.'s mouthpiece.

63. The "Brotherhood" had been founded in 1905 and since 1908, after the Young Turk revolution, began publishing "Laos". Dragoumis, when he was in Constantinople, was an active member of the "Brotherhood". See *Pen. Delta, Correspondence 1906-1940*, ed. X. Lefkoparidis, Athens 1956, p. 70; also "Fifty unpublished letters by K. Hadjopoulos to the Socialist N. Yiannios and his wife A. Gaitanos-Yiannios", in per. "Nea Hestia", issues Nos. 724/1 Sept. 1957-743/15 June 1958, part. Yiannios's note to the letter of 23.11.08.

64. "Laos", 4 March and 5 April 1909.

lachs (?) and also the Kurds, Arabs, Armenians, Syrians, Lebanese and naturally the Turks. The programme called upon the Kingdoms of Greece, Bulgaria, Rumania, Montenegro and Hungary to unite with the Federative Republic, "whose existence was dictated to our patriotism by justice, equality and history"⁶⁵.

The programme did not explain, however, on what principles the Federative Republic would be based. Instead, the Bulgarian version based the division of the Ottoman Empire on territorial principles. That division, according to the Greek interpretation, implied an autonomous Macedonia paving the way to the San Stefano Bulgaria. Dragoumis rejected it for an autonomy based on national principles.

As for Souliotis, absorbed by everyday political activity, he left it unclarified. On the one hand he favoured Albania's and Arabia's autonomy, but on other he did not mention autonomy for Macedonia and Asia Minor. He the advocated that with Albania and Arabia as autonomous states, the rest of Turkey would remain definitely a constitutional state dominated by the "Eastern Christians"⁶⁶.

We should not pass unmentioned this new notion of the "Eastern Christian". It had replaced the term "Hellene", the narrow label "Greek" and most definitely "Ottoman citizen". The name Christian is not used in its religious sense, but rather in the context of the "millet" terminology. Dragoumis might have used the term "Easterner" to include Muslim Turk, Orthodox Greek and Exarchist Bulgarian. It should be noted, however, that all these views were not defined and in the progress of time changed in shape and meaning. They also seem to neglect Turkish nationalism, though Souliotis feared that the traditional ideas of the Turks, Young and Old alike, about the non-Muslim "rayahs" were powerful enough to inhibit the establishment of constitutional rule. The rabid articles of the Young Turk newspaper "Tanin" caused Souliotis apprehension. How could the nationalities make the dominant Turks respect their views? What would be the role of the Balkan States? He thought that the course of events should be as follows:

"Demonstrations will be organized here (in Constantinople) and in the provinces by all Christians. Demonstrations will also take place in Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia. Churches will be closed. The Patriarchate will submit to the Powers a Memorandum with all the demands of the Greek deputies. The (Balkan) States will show their teeth"⁶⁷.

65. Ibid.

66. Soul. to Drag., 11 and 12 May 1911.

67. *Op. cit.*, 11 May 1911. The Greek deputies to the Ottoman Parliament had already

The mobilization of the masses, as had happened on the eve of the 1908 general elections⁶⁸, would play a role in political development inside the Empire and the Balkan states. The request for assistance from the Great Powers would be necessary because of their ability to put pressure on the imperial government.

It is worth noting the role that Souliotis attributed to the Balkan States. He saw them acting as a last resort once other measures taken against the Young Turk Government had failed. These measures were considered by Souliotis as an opportunity which, if carefully used by the Greek Government would make possible the Balkan Alliance. He argued that the Balkan Alliance would be the main guarantee of equality within the Empire and give Hellenism a new impetus⁶⁹. Despite that, it should not take the lead from the Ottoman nationalities.

The Balkan Alliance was a new aspect of Souliotis ideological edifice. The Entente of the nationalities could naturally pave the way to an understanding between the Balkan States. A Balkan Alliance could, equally naturally, take an aggressive character against the Ottoman Empire. This worried Souliotis. He stressed that such an alliance, although necessary, was only a help to the Entente policy pursued by the nationalities. In other words the Balkan Alliance would not be interested in an expansionist policy, which would reduce its scope, but in the broad influence that it might exercise in the East; that is to say that it would replace the Great Powers in their interventionist role.

Dragoumis' influence is still alive in Souliotis' thoughts; that is the reason why "they have something confused and vague"⁷⁰. They were neither free from Dragoumis's "Hellenocentrism", nor from the traditional concept of the Great Idea, and consequently Souliotis was not able to formulate his own view of the Eastern Federation as yet⁷¹.

"As long as I grow older and meditate wider in space and time", he confessed to his friend Dragoumis, "thus more concrete a vivid image stands in front of my eyes". Souliotis compared this image with a mosaic: whose bits

submitted to the Sublime Porte such a memorandum; this affair was also sponsored by the C.O. As for Serbia, she was mentioned here for the first time.

68. On the eve of the general elections of 1908, the Greeks of Smyrna and Constantinople had organized mass demonstrations that indeed impressed the Ottoman Government.

69. Soul. to Drag., 23 September 1911.

70. *Op. cit.*, "Those alive", p. 129.

71. Soul. to Drag., 29 December 1911.

of stone represented the races, peoples and religions of the East, "the Egyptian theology, Christ, Mohammed", which were mixed up and their mixture "put the nebula of feelings and ideas in a rhythmical motion and gave it shape and made it 'cosmos'. Afterwards, the Franks* took this rhythmic cosmos in their hands and, as they were coarse in their feelings and thoughts, decomposed it. And the whole world, the whole humanity fell again in a deep and morbid melancholy...". This image belongs to the poet rather than to the politician Souliotis. Anyhow, Souliotis thought that out of this racial, religious and political amalgamation of the Eastern peoples and the interventions of the Great Powers, his vision could materialize. "And it is again here in the East", he assured Dragoumis, "that the electric spark will flash up, that the original logos will compose again now the feelings and ideas in a more complete rhythm"⁷².

The new ideal, the "oriental" or "Eastern" ideal, according to Dragoumis was the "gradual formation of a particular eastern race out of all the nations in Turkey", "which will not speak a common language, but will be animated by a common spirit, the Ionian, the Hellenic"⁷³. That the Hellenic spirit only would contribute to the formation of the "Oriental" man is Dragoumis's assumption. Souliotis leaves it open; but he was fairly sure that the oriental man would soon prosper "if only the millions of Slavs or Germans delayed their coming down".

At the same period of time, on the other side of the Aegean Sea the head of the Greek Government was also working to bring closer together the Balkan neighbours. The Turkification policy of the Young Turk committee rendered impossible a Greek-Turkish rapprochement. Venizelos, therefore, turned towards Bulgaria. He entrusted Bouchier with the delicate task of persuading Bulgaria to cooperate with Greece. Starting from the spring of 1911, Bouchier worked hard for nearly one year to secure the final consent of Bulgaria⁷⁴.

In that way the initiative for the understanding between Greece and Bulgaria passed from the "internal" organizations to Government level. This was an alarming signal for Souliotis. The Ottoman nationalities' cause was subservient to state policy and expediency. Bulgaria was stronger than Greece

* Pejorative for the Westerners.

72. Soul. to Drag., June 1911; the above passage, in some parts changed but not altered, is used by Dragoumis; *op. cit.*, "Those alive", pp. 128-129.

73. *Ibid.*

74. E. Prevelakis, "E. Venizelos and the Balkan Wars", in *Balkan Studies* 1966, 7, pp. 368, 370.

and could lead her astray from the policy Souliotis considered right. There existed also the danger of an estrangement between the Christian and Muslim nationalities. Thus, Souliotis insisted in pursuing a "combination", i.e. a coalition of the christian nationalities. In that coalition there was always a place for the Muslims who opposed the Committee of Union and Progress.

"With this combination and aiming at pulling the Balkan States into a certain system, (the Constantinople Organization) took the first big step, namely the Greco-Bulgarian understanding"⁷⁵. Souliotis did not see why this policy should be abandoned. The Entente policy, which turned solely against the Young Turk Committee, had so far managed, according to his opinion: to advance into Europe the principle of the "national egalitarianism", to propagate Greeks rather than Bulgarians, to restrict Young Turkish nationalism, to oblige the Sublime Porte to accept the Patriarchate's demands, and to make no concessions to Bulgarians. "I think", he argued, "that in two years, with a Patriarch like Joachim and a people of self-interested "rayahs" what our programme and the method we have followed has achieved is great; and we should not (change it, unless the situation changes) thus, as to compel us to do so"⁷⁶. Since the situation did not change, Souliotis concluded, what should be pursued was "in particular national self-existence and equality in Turkey and real guarantees for these"⁷⁷.

Developments in the Empire corroborated this view. The Young Turk Committee (C.U.P.), using all sorts of illegalities, moral and even physical violence, had won a landslide victory in the elections (February 1912) provoking outcry from the whole opposition. Twelve out of the fifteen Greek deputies were elected by the C.U.P. The Bulgarians managed even worse: not a single deputy was elected⁷⁸, while the federalist section of IMRO with Iane Sandaski refused to cooperate with the Greeks and the "Constantinople Organization".

The narrow nationalism and fanaticism shown by the Young Turks alarmed the Balkan Governments who, in the meantime, had resumed negotiations. Serbia and Bulgaria concluded a Treaty signed on 29 Febr./13 March 1912. Article 2 of its secret annex provided that four sixths of the acquired Ottoman territory would be annexed by Bulgaria and the remainder by Serbia⁷⁹. Greece

75. Soul. to Drag., 16 March 1912.

76. Soul. to Drag., 4 April 1912.

77. *Op. cit.*, 16 March 1912.

78. S. Makedonski, "Le régime Jeune-Turc et les deuxièmes elections parlementaires de 1912 en Macédoine et Thrace orientale", in *Etudes Balkaniques* 1978, 2, pp. 58-71.

79. N. Vlachos, "History of the States of the Aemos peninsula, 1908-1914", Athens 1954, pp. 290-91; also E. Prevelakis, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

must have realized from the general situation that critical changes had occurred, although she was unaware of the Serbo-Bulgarian Alliance and its provisions. On the other hand, Greece feared that Italy might acquire not only the Dodecanese but also Chios, Samos and Mitylene⁸⁰.

Relations with Bulgaria had since improved. In April 1912, D. Panas presented to the Gueshov Government a draft treaty; it was rejected on the grounds that it failed to mention autonomy for Macedonia and Thrace, and "even those privileges which had been granted to the Christian provinces of European Turkey by various international acts, particularly art. 23 of the treaty of Berlin, were passed over in silence"⁸¹. The Bulgarians also rejected any assignment of zones of influence provided for by the Greek draft. The negotiations, would have come to deadlock, but Venizelos, who seems to have been informed of the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty, insisted on a solution being found.

Bulgaria was also eager to reach agreement with Greece. So when Greece accepted Gueshov's formula concerning the articles 23 and 60 of the Treaty of Berlin, and at the same time showed remarkable military readiness, Bulgaria consented to sign a defensive alliance with her (16/19 May 1912). Article 1 of the Greek-Bulgarian Treaty stipulated that military action would only be undertaken by the signatories in the case of Turkey launching an attack against one of them or of her systematically ignoring and violating the national rights of the millets⁸².

It is apparent that the defensive character of the treaty was a matter of need rather than political good will. Greece was not caught by surprise by the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty and Venizelos did not proceed willy-nilly into the Greek-Bulgarian alliance⁸³.

The war of 1912 was nothing but the logical result of the new political orientation of the Balkan states. And it was only natural for Dragoumis and Souliotis to feel betrayed, because the Balkan coalition was being used for a goal other than the one they had conceived for it. Greece's aggrandizement was for them state rather than national integration. And this controversy resulted in the following years into a schism which took nation-wide proportions⁸⁴.

80. Prevelakis, *ibid.*; also D. Dakin, "The diplomacy of the Great Powers and the Balkan States, 1908-1914", in *Balkan Studies* 1962, 2.

81. I. E. Gueshov, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 40; also Prevelakis, *op. cit.*, p. 369, and Vlachos, *op. cit.*, pp. 305-307.

83. G. Ventiris, "Greece between 1910-1920", Athens, vol. I, p. 96.

84. The national Schism between Venizelists, from premier E. Venizelos and Constanti-

Venizelos' policy was based on the conviction that in the impending war, in which Greece would not take part, "if victory went to the Serbs and Bulgarians, our frontiers would be fixed for ever at the Meluna Pass or, at the most at the Aliakmon river, whilst if the Turks won the war, the life of Greeks living in the Ottoman Empire would be intolerable"⁸⁵. On the other hand, Dragoumis and Souliotis questioned Venizelos' arguments. They were keeping each other well informed on developments on both sides of the Aegean Sea. War at any rate favoured mainly Bulgaria's plans, who was only claiming territories in her immediate vicinity; this explains why she urged Montenegro to start fighting and ignore the hesitancy of the Greek Government⁸⁶. Greece on the other hand claimed, or had to claim a whole population scattered over large areas. As far as the situation in Turkey was concerned, the Young Turks were obliged, despite their parliamentary majority, to leave office in midsummer. They were replaced by the Liberals, who started immediately, though with great difficulty it is true, removing C.U.P. members from the administration. Ottoman Greeks and the "Constantinople Organization" took an active part in this anti-C.U.P. operation.

It was on those grounds that Dragoumis in a fervent article suggested that the Greek people despise "the childish imprudence, the short-sighted diplomacy, the compromising moderation of the history-ignorant Helladic politicians" who abandoned the nation for the sake of the state⁸⁷. Thus Dragoumis also appeared to be an advocate of Souliotis' ideal. The existing evidence corroborates that in the four years after the Young Turk revolution Dragoumis had been convinced about this ideal. Even the name Brutus with which Dragoumis signed the article, suggests that his affiliations were not with the man who expanded Greece, an expansion which he himself advocated years before.

In fact, if Dragoumis, two years earlier, believed that a clash with Turkey was not expedient⁸⁸ and later on he compromised "aspiring to two goals", now, after the first Balkan war he seemed to agree with the Eastern Federation policy. This was a national policy, he argued, which wanted "the Hellenic nation to live and prosper and co-rule along with the Turks the East, and gradually to replace them in order to make real again the miracle of the Eastern

nists, from King Constantine, is out of the scope of the present paper. Any reference, therefore, to it is occasional, when necessary.

85. Venizelos to Kountouriotis, letter 3 Dec. 1933, quoted by G. Roussos, "Vima", 22 April 1961, and by E. Prevelakis, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

86. Vlachos, *op. cit.*, pp. 452-453.

87. J. Dragoumis, "Honour and Curse", in per. "Noumas", No. 497/29 Dec. 1912.

88. *Op. cit.*, "Consciousness and History", p. 129.

Empire"⁸⁹. According to Dragoumis, the Greek and Bulgarian prime-ministers had used the Entente policy, being put into practice in the Ottoman state, in order to accomplish their own "pragmatic programme" which meant, at least for Venizelos, at any price increase of the state, evasion of the Cretan question and remaining in power. Dragoumis also let be understood that certain interests were behind this war but he did not say explicitly what interests. One should note the exaggeration about the Cretan question as well as the new term "Eastern Empire" put forward. The latter may raise doubts about how sincere Dragoumis was in supporting the idea of an Eastern Federation. First of all he used the term Empire which obviously is different from the term Federation; secondly he gave the priority to the hellenic dominance. What is particularly important, however, is the other argument of the article, which seemingly carries most of the weight; Dragoumis blamed the Government for planning the military operations in such a way as to leave thousands of Greeks at the mercy of the Bulgarian Great Idea. The Government, instead of sending landing troops to the Aegean islands, should send them to Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Serres, Drama, Kavala, while King Constantine should advance the army towards Monastir⁹⁰.

Similar was Souliotis's criticism, though he avoided reference to purely military questions. He thought it "monstrous that the Greek navy protected the Bulgarians who seized Thrace"⁹¹. However, his anger concentrated on those who attacked the eastern programme as being utopic. "They also called utopia the Entente among Turkey's nationalities, but nonetheless we achieved it". Souliotis blamed the Helladic politicians for their narrow state policy which did not allow them to conceive the broadness of the "nationalities' dogma"⁹². The Turks, he maintained, had already been faced with "the dilemma that the nationalities of the Ottoman Empire created and promoted; the dilemma menaced them and led them to fight each other. It was this dilemma, which made the Young Turk Committee leave the Government and the Liberal Turks accept the equality principles. But if we had seen that they (the Young Turks) did not conform with these principles, we would have taken measures

89. *Op. cit.*, "Honour and Curse".

90. *Ibid.*; it is well known that Constantine's plan was to march towards Monastir, but Venizelos "forbade" him to do so very much worrying about losing Salonica to the Bulgarians. Dragoumis seemed to neglect the political importance of Venizelos's orders; see Ventiris, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

91. Soul. to Drag., Sofia, 17 Feb. 1913. Souliotis insisted that Greece ought to demand the establishment of a neutral State of Thrace including "Constantinople from now or later".

92. *Ibid.*

to beat the Turks; the nationalities' dogma would succeed *to the detriment of the Turks only*"⁹³ (underl. by Souliotis). By that dilemma Souliotis implied the pressure that the Ottoman Greeks and Bulgarians put on the Young Turk government, namely either to accept their demands or to be faced with their fiercest opposition as well as with the enmity of the Balkan States. In the case of a refusal the intervention of the Balkan States would be justified. Even then, intervention did not mean for Souliotis war and partition.

As a matter of fact, even on the eve of the war, Souliotis maintained that the Balkan allies should ask the Sublime Port to declare within 48 hours: respect for the self-administration of the nationalities in religious, educational, economic and family matters; application within six months of article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin with respect to the common demands of the Patriarchate and the Exarchate. In the case of agreement both the Sublime Porte and the B. States would demobilize their reserves within 48 hours⁹⁴. Souliotis does not say what would happen in the case of the Porte rejecting this more "friendly" worded note; even though this was the most probable, considering the war-like feelings prevailing in all countries. However, even if the Imperial Government accepted the "démarche", which would institutionalize the Balkan states as supervisors of the Empire's internal affairs, it was too late for the Empire to avoid humiliation.

The outbreak of war disillusioned Souliotis. His disappointment however was in part dispelled by his belief that what had been achieved so far was due to the Entente of the nationalities⁹⁵.

It is worth noting here that with almost the same arguments the socialists of Turkey, particularly active in Macedonia, condemned the Balkan war and the partition of the Ottoman Empire. A statement by them written on the eve of the Balkan war, was published by the International Socialist Bureau, on 12 October 1912, as the "Manifesto of the Socialists of Turkey and the Balkans, 1912"⁹⁶.

93. Ibid.

94. Gryparis to G.F.M., rep. No. 4791 Urgent-Conf./28 Sept.; also Souliotis to Dragoumis, undated letter (probably written on 28 or 29 September).

95. Soul. to Drag., Paris, 17 Dec. 1913.

96. *Op. cit.*, "Balkan Federation", app. C, pp. 297-301. Apparently it is the same "Manifesto" mentioned by the Bulgarian advocate of the nationalities' Entente D. Vlachov, *op. cit.*, p. 196. It is worth mentioning that the "Manifesto" was signed by the representatives of five socialist groups and parties: "Federation" (well known in Greece and whose leader Abraham Benaroya died recently in Israel), the Armenian "Dasnakchoutoun" and "Handjak" (they were represented by 7 deputies to the Ottoman Parliament), the Jewish Socialist Party (its delegate to Constantinople was Ben Gourion, afterwards president of Israel) and the Rumanian Socialist Party (represented by S. Rakovski).

The "Manifesto" condemned a still then imminent war, which would be in the interests of the "great capitalist powers who for centuries have been snatching the territories of the East" and the most important, it questioned whether war would bring about the national integration "by a division of the population and the territories of Turkey among the small Balkan states". However, the responsibility of the successive Young Turkish governments in following a policy of national inequality and oppression is admitted and condemned. The Balkan governments also who, using the national pretext, were pursuing a policy of "economic and territorial expansion" were equally condemned. Finally, the "Manifesto" called upon all Balkan and Near Eastern peoples to unite "in the most democratic form of government, without racial or religious discrimination... With regard to the Ottoman Empire, more especially, we consider that only radical reforms in its internal relations can establish peace and normal conditions of life, remove foreign intervention and the danger of war, and finally, render possible the democratic federation of the Balkans..."⁹⁷.

It should be noted that, in the "Manifesto", while both the Eastern and Balkan federation were mentioned, they were neither distinguished nor identified. It is more likely that the socialists implied an Eastern Federation, which would necessarily attract the Balkan peoples with it. Let us recollect that Souliotis as well aspired at a Balkan alliance guaranteeing the application of national equality in the Empire⁹⁸. Despite the general character of both statements and the undoubted differences, the common purpose they express bring them closer together. Nevertheless, the limited influence of the socialist circles was unable to determine the political developments and avert the war; namely, to succeed where the C.O. failed.

VI.

If the activity of the C.O. and its goals was the ideal itself for Dragoumis and Souliotis, for Venizelos it was a mere preliminary stage, if not a vehicle to his Balkan diplomacy. That is why, gradually, they were both placed by Venizelos in less important posts. However, the prevailing euphoria after the spectacular successes of 1912 and 1913, did not give ground for catalytic critics. Even after the declaration of the World War, there were certain points of contact.

97. *Ibid.*

98. Soul. to Drag., 23 Sept. 1911; Souliotis then worried because the cooperation of Greece and Bulgaria in promoting together the nationalities' claims, was still in a low state; see also Souliotis to Dragoumis, 1 Oct. 1911.

As a matter of fact, in February 1915 Dragoumis cabled from Petersburg to Venizelos that Greece should participate in the war on Entente's side⁹⁹. Dragoumis based this suggestion: first, on the express assurances of Entente's representatives that within three weeks from their first attack on the Dardanelles they could seize Constantinople; second, on the assumption that the Greek Government would abandon the project of a "Balkan coalition", disadvantageous to Greece because of the unfavourable balance of power, and it would conclude a "normal" treaty with the Entente Powers containing express terms; and third, on the belief that since Entente was most likely to win the war, it would be better for Greece to take part in the following peace congress on the winners' side than be neutral.

Instead, Souliotis' anti-western feelings placed him on Constantine's side. Souliotis thought that neutrality would promote his eastern vision. He was quite happy with this war between the Great Powers, which would weaken them and therefore none of them would dominate over the others. Their influence in the East would be reduced and as a consequence Hellenism would be "more free in the East". The Eastern question, Souliotis stated jokingly, would be solved within the next two hundred years, but first "the movement of civilizations from Asia and Europe towards Aegean should stop, which means that all would be equally (of course not similarly) civilized, a fact that had not happened yet, and I do not even see when it will happen"¹⁰⁰.

In the meantime political passions were becoming heated. Souliotis bitterly opposed Venizelist policy, which wanted the Great Powers unconditionally in Greece and among the peoples of the East. His critics were going too far: "I'm sure that the King is right", he wrote to Dragoumis. "And I'm absolutely sure that Venizelos is a superficial, narrow-minded egoist and that type of demagogue who never allowed "Romeiko" (the Greek people) become as powerful a state as it is a nation"¹⁰¹. He thought, however, that they had their share of responsibility. "I'm sorry... that we were not able to hinder the first war to breakout so prematurely and thoughtlessly... That we left Venizelos take our profound work and use it ignorantly and imprudently, this destructive man who is for me, ambitious as well as weak minded"¹⁰². We

99. Answering letter by Dragoumis to a Dosios, dated 19 January 1916, in per. "Political Review", No. 4/23 Jan. 1916, pp. 140-142.

100. Soul. to Drag., Jannina, 13 March 1916.

101. Ibid.

102. Soul. to Drag., no date and place of writing. In Souliotis's archive is classified between 13 May 1916 and 28 May 1919 from its content however, it seems written in 1916. With regard to his "self criticism" see *op. cit.*, 17 Febr. 1913.

have already seen that Dragoumis also believed that Venizelos was using the policy of understanding of nationalities for his own aims. Four years after the Balkan wars, in the turmoil of the national Schism, Dragoumis attempted to explain and systematize his own concept of the eastern ideal¹⁰³.

Dragoumis rejected any "regional or geographical autonomies" as being the vehicle of Slav expansionism, but he favoured the national and language autonomy in a united Empire which gradually would cease to be Ottoman and become Eastern. This was the meaning of the 1821 liberation struggle, "the revolution of the Orthodox Christians, i.e. the "Rhum milleti", and not at all exclusively of the Greeks, ...for the remaking of the Eastern Empire and the restoration of the Cross on St. Sophia".

According to Dragoumis, the notion of the "national motherland" had been transplanted to Greece from Italy and promoted by foreign diplomacy for its own interests. But neither Rigas nor Ypsilantis fought for the "narrow" concept of motherland which had been commonly accepted after the establishment of the independent Greek state and in the course of years. The Great Idea, therefore, was the remaking of the multinational Eastern Empire and not the conquest of the East by Greece, since "the East was not Greek as we used to believe. This is the reason why "patriotism in the East came to be a commercial enterprise serving racial ambitions; that is why there is such a large number of so-called 'traitors' denying their motherland". What was important for Dragoumis was to cultivate in the people's mind the idea of the Empire, based on the fraternity of all peoples, as Byzantium was based on the Christian religion. Since national states had emerged, he concluded, and since it is difficult to conquer the East, what remained was "to pursue the unity through a Federation of the near Eastern States". Thus Dragoumis was sketching an Eastern Federation including the integral Ottoman Empire, which in turn would gradually absorb the national Balkan States. The "tracing of the latent Hellenic-Eastern civilization" by intellectual and inspired Greeks, seemed the only concession that Dragoumis made to his national origin¹⁰⁴.

The developments that followed the World War did not satisfy Dragoumis and Souliotis. The latter in a letter to Dragoumis, the last one according to the classification of his archive, expressed his deep concern because the Great Powers had not been exhausted as he expected, and continued to share the

103. I. Dragoumis, "Empire and the East", in per. "Political Review", No. 32/6 Aug. 1916, pp. 1083-1091.

104. Ibid.

East among themselves, according to their own interests: "You perhaps realize", he wrote, "that I, seeing England and America sharing the world with a victor's arrogance, unscrupulously and without fear of an opponent, am afraid about the fate of the East, of our nation and of the other small Balkan and Asia Minor nations. As affairs now stand the release of our East from the foreigners would be more difficult than before..."¹⁰⁵.

There is no evidence as yet about Dragoumis feelings after his coming back from exile, but one may easily conclude that he shared his friend's worries about the destiny of "their" East. For those who wanted to interpret the facts realistically, the Greek military landing in Smyrna also foreshadowed, sooner or later, the defeat. Dragoumis did not suffer the misfortune¹⁰⁶ of seeing his predictions come true. Souliotis did. The temporary victories did not blind him. "I always predicted", he wrote to his brother¹⁰⁷ after the Catastrophe, "for reasons of political ideology and also purely military reasons, the disaster to which the Asia Minor campaign was leading us... But I could not do anything while Venizelos governed dictatorially. When Venizelos's cabinet fell and I was elected deputy, I made every effort to prevent the catastrophe... In particular, when writing for "Nea Himerá", I insisted that King Constantine should not come back before a solution to the national question would be found. Almost everyday I went to the General Staff and to the Ministers and to anyone who had power, insisting on coming to terms with the Turks. When Gounaris was to go for the first time to London... I visited him and, though political opponents, I begged him to compromise accepting Turkey's conditions, because I considered that it was more important for the (Ottoman) Greeks who would remain in Turkey to live under good conditions, than the territorial expansion of the Greek state..."¹⁰⁸. Note, that I had not thought of the compromise with the Turks as a matter of need nor as a retreat, but as conformable with my political ideology: the conciliation and cooperation with the Balkan and Asia Minor nations... The policy of remaining in Asia Minor was disastrous as deriving from the erroneous idea, or rather motive

105. Soul. to Drag., Athens, 28 May 1919.

106. Dragoumis had been murdered on 13 August 1920 by Venizelos' bodyguard in retaliation for an attempt made the previous day on Venizelos' life in the Gare de Lyon, Paris.

107. Souliotis to his brother Costas, 30 August 1923; from Berlin, where Souliotis was self-exiled.

108. During the winter of 1921 - 22, Souliotis suggested to Gounaris disengagement from Asia Minor and seizure of Thrace; *Ibid.*

of fierce antagonism against the (...) ¹⁰⁹ nations

I was not able to dictate the policy that I thought salutary under those circumstances. The main reason for that was our internal discord... One thing should be done. To contribute to the removal of the internal split. A new power appeared, the Revolution... ¹¹⁰. Publicly, I declared myself for the Revolution, as allegedly being above parties... But the fanatics prevailed. And the revolution was becoming openly Venizelist...".

These words could be the sorrowful epilogue not only of his vision but also of the Great Idea, as it had been conceived, according to Souliotis and Dragoumis, by the narrow state policy of Greece.

VII.

The motives of Dragoumis and Souliotis were not romantic, i.e. they were not deprived of a sense of reality. Souliotis in particular did not overlook the particular national features of the Eastern peoples; the language, the religion, the new differences added to the old ones, the Macedonian Struggle and the Moslem tradition of domination over the Christian "rayahs". However, these difficulties did not conceal from him the kindred characteristics of the Eastern peoples "much more kindred than our fanatic education let all of us think about" ¹¹¹.

The emergence of the national states in the Balkan peninsula during the 19th century did not solve by any means the national question. And they were too recent to have erased from the common memory what had been established through their coexistence for over a thousand years under a united state apparatus. "For centuries our ancestors had been mixed and amalgamated thus as, even divided in nations or states, various anthropological types can be found in each one of them; but all of us are easily distinguished from the other Europeans or Asians. For centuries our ancestors lived together subjects of the same state, first the Byzantine... now the Ottoman. Therefore, we have so many elements of civilization in common, that all the particular civilizations of each of us together form a special one, within the general world civilization" ¹¹².

Thus for Souliotis, there are two points that should be taken into account if an Hellenic policy is to be formulated: first of all the common elements on

109. Illegible word in the manuscript: Balkan or Eastern nations (?).

110. It is about the military coup of Plastiras and Gonatas.

111. C.O. text.

112. Ibid.

which the Eastern peoples converged, and second their differentiation from the rest of the Europeans and Asians.

The first point is linked with Souliotis's conviction that the new political conditions created in that part of the world, did not allow the dominance of one state over another, in spite of "the petty successes that one state might gain to the detriment of the other"¹¹³. The second point applied to the complex of relations between Western Europe and the East. Souliotis believed that these relations were antagonistic and harmful to Hellenism. In the beginning this opposition was turned against the catholic or any foreign school, source of levantinism "with all the moral and national corruption that this word connotes"¹¹⁴.

Through these schools western propaganda was diffused in order to dissolve the regional unity of the Balkan peninsula and Asia Minor, "one of the most contested crossroads of the world". From that point on to the ascertainment that this region was wholly dependent on the Western Powers, the distance was not long and Souliotis covered it quickly "We are... always under the political, economic and any other pressure from the Great Powers, that is from States and nations much bigger than each one of us. We facilitate this pressure and we make it every day harder by wearing out each other in endless disputes... Thus none of the Balkan or Asia Minor states can get on their feet despite all organization and reorganization that it may try... And none of these nations of ours can develop their own particular civilization, which causes deep regret because every nation has its own way of thinking and feeling and acting; and the more it lives and creates in its own way, the happier it is"¹¹⁵. For Souliotis a nation should not confine itself to national consciousness; this would be a mere contrast to the neighbouring nations. Instead it should move towards the unification of the Eastern peoples; this presupposed the discovery of the common elements which would unite them against the hegemony of the Great Powers. The oriental nationalism should fight, therefore, against European interventionism.

Anti-Western feelings were widespread in Turkey. Souliotis and Dragoumis, and the Young Turks alike, they all opposed the capitulatory system. Certain Greek circles were also against the capitulations¹¹⁶, a fact of which

113. *Ibid.*

114. *Ibid.*

115. *Ibid.*

116. See newspaper "Amaltheia" of Smyrna, 30 Sept. and 6 Oct. 1908. The newspaper, expressing the view of certain Ottoman Greek commercial circles, supported the abolition of the capitulations, which would even counterbalance the loss of Bosnia and Herzegovina; it also wanted "the creation and strengthening of national industry".

Souliotis and Dragoumis were aware and supported¹¹⁷. By abolishing the capitulations only the nations of the Balkans and Asia Minor could be relieved of their "common misery" and "the pressure from without".

These prospects touched Souliotis. However, one feels that Souliotis's tranquil words have little in common with his ardent national activity in Constantinople. One feels that on these words Souliotis may have set his heart, but still they are reminiscent of the experiences from the Balkan wars, the World War, the temporary glory and disaster of Hellenism, the realistic though late attempt of Venizelos and Kemal for an agreement. On the contrary, Dragoumis did not survive the Schism and its dramatic result thus as to have the time to exercise such a sober judgement.

As a matter of fact, if we compare the language and the spirit of Souliotis' letters that had definitely been written then and there with those of his memoirs, we will see clearly the difference. In his letters one can discern the militant nationalism, which asks its self-assertion in the conquest of new, advanced positions. Dragoumis's ideas and the actual political struggle exerted their influence on Souliotis's views, obscuring his supra-national vision.

The late Souliotis, in his memoirs, had accepted the reality of the other national consciousnesses, their power for struggle and survival and at the same time he rejected the chauvinistic pretensions, the "imperialistic tendencies" as he called them, against the neighbouring eastern nations. What he wanted now was their mutual assimilation and the cultivation of their common elements; it was under these circumstances that the new, oriental man, the citizen of the Eastern Federation would be formed.

Up to that time it was commonly accepted, and Dragoumis and Souliotis were not an exception, that the nation included the state. The state was considered as a temporary stage and a base from which the unification of the nation would be accomplished. This concept was of course dictated by the existing state of affairs. Now, Souliotis was inverting this concept. It was the state that included the nations, but not in a multinational character. The nations would be amalgamated and, thus, promote a new nation.

The main problem in establishing such a state, which would contribute

117. See, C.O.'s circular No. 1/31 July 1908 towards the heads of departments: "The Europeans compete harmfully against the Hellenes, because of the stronger support they have, and they serve as an excuse for interventions. We must dislike them. Special instructions against them will be sent later on by the Organization". To the best of our knowledge, such instructions did not follow.

to the loss of the particular national features was that it would not derive from a “natural” national will, but it would be the result of the Eastern people’s option. It is noteworthy indeed that the man, who spent so much time and made so many efforts for the national emancipation and integration, eventually aspired at the assimilation of the particular national characteristics. Of course it is not certain how Souliotis conceived this process because he did not elaborate a systematic political theory.

“When I tried to plan a political system”, he confesses, “that could unite all of us, one by one the dreadful difficulties appeared... I consoled myself with the thought that if I managed to make them all realize how kindred they are,... how much happier they would be if they cooperated and came to an understanding..., they would find the political system which would unite them, and this would not be a copy of the known European systems”¹¹⁸.

Souliotis did not manage to do so. But he is not to be reproached. The difficulty was objective rather than subjective: the population of the Balkans and Asia Minor was scattered in large areas, it was illiterate, subjected to all sorts of religious, political and economic oppression. Which meant that the conditions for the Eastern Federation ideal still were not mature. Thus the federation remained only a matter of good will, because such a grandiose plan could not of course be achieved by any secret organization. What is important, however, is that men like Dragoumis and, particularly Souliotis were able to surpass temporary impediments and pioneer a supra-national ideal: “When I saw”, wrote Souliotis, “that a promise, even not quite sincere, for freedom and justice, was enough to tempt... people from all nations, who up to then suspected each other, I came to believe that it was impossible all these kindred nations should not be united, truly and perpetually by truth, not to find a way for coming together to an understanding and not to cooperate for their happiness”¹¹⁹.

However, neither did Souliotis’s plans for an Eastern Federation proceed to a further stage, nor did the peoples of the region managed to come to a true understanding. The national question was too complicated a problem to be solved by only peoples’ good will. If Dragoumis and, particularly Souliotis could see further, through the heavy national veil that covered the political scene at the time, they just were ahead of their times. Nonetheless they could not disassociate themselves from the ideas prevalent in the society in which they lived. That is the reason why their scepticism towards commonly accepted

118. C.O. text.

119. *Ibid.*

notions, such as nation, patriotism, state or national policy is incoherently combined with supra-nationalism. Thus, militant nationalism goes together with supra-nationalism, the latter however not being defined from cosmopolitanism; and national consciousness leads to the assimilation in the progress of time of every specific national characteristic into a mixture, from which the new eastern citizen would emerge.

It is not certain whether Souliotis and Dragoumis thought themselves more than advocates of the new ideal, namely as representative citizens of their federal state. What is certain is that they tried to clarify the nebulous meaning of the Great Idea; their Eastern Federation ideal eventually was not but their view about it. A systematic exposition of their theory, however, is not available. They both were politicians, men of action, even poets, but not scholars. Theory, therefore, was for them complementary and explanatory to their activities and not vice versa.

One may ask oneself then, whether Dragoumis and Souliotis did substantially contribute to the developments of the region, and whether their contribution is of any interest other than academic. We may certainly answer that these two men, who came out of a fierce nationalistic struggle, were able to contribute the nationalities' understanding of each other and had the courage to aspire to a broad humanitarian goal. If any value is to be attributed nowadays to such an activity, this same value should also be attributed to Dragoumis's and Souliotis's contribution.