

**Orthodoxy and Russian Policy towards Greece in the 19th century:
the Philorthodox Society's Conspiracy (1830-1840)**

I. Introduction

Greece was under Ottoman rule for four hundred years. The War of Independence (1821-1827), succeeded in establishing a small independent state by 1828 (officially 1830), and it took another one hundred years for Greeks to liberate more territory and put Greece on the map as it is today.

The first regime in independent Greece was a presidential republic under Ioannis Kapodistrias, who ruled the country for three years (1828-1831), until his assassination. Reacting to some authoritative aspects of his rule the Greeks formed three main political parties closely allied with foreign powers. The pro-Russian party was led by the Independence War hero Th. Kolokotronis and A. Metaxas. The pro-British Party was led by A. Mavrokordatos and Sp. Trikoupis. The pro-French Party was led by I. Kolettis.

I. Kapodistrias was clearly a pro-Russian leader and the typical if not actual head of the pro-Russian party. Descending from a prominent and noble Corfu family he had succeeded in reaching high positions of power in Russia, ending up as the czar's foreign minister. His views were no doubt pro-Russian because above his emotional ties to Russia he believed that the interests of the newly established Greek state lied with Russia. During his short term of office Kapodistrias proved to be a charismatic and innovative albeit authoritative leader. Many of the institutions he established were good for Greece and are in existence to this day.

After Kapodistrias' assassination in 1831 the foreign powers chose the second son of the philhellene King of Bavaria Louis I. to be the king of Greece. Otto, was not yet of age, so Greece was ruled by a Bavarian led unpopular Regency (1833-1835). When Otto became of age he reigned over Greece from 1835 to 1862 when the military and the people deposed him and he left the country.

The Philorthodox Society's conspiracy examined here, took place in

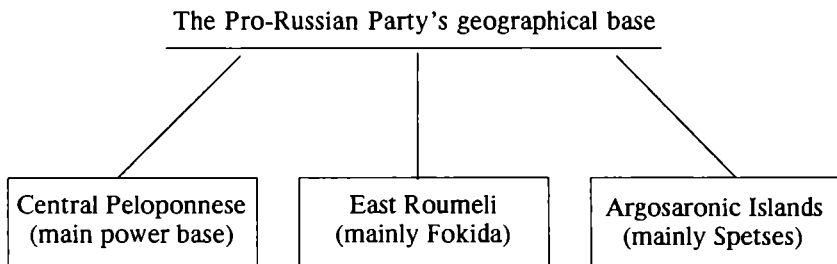
the years of Otto's rule during which the three party system, reflecting foreign power influence and intervention, was alive and well¹.

Secret societies were a common phenomenon in 19th century Greece. Their motives were nationalistic and/or ideological connected to the trends of the times under the influence of sociopolitical change. The Philorthodox Society's conspiracy (1837-1840) is connected to the increased influence of the pro-Russian faction under King Otto's reign (1837-1840), aiming at safeguarding Orthodox Christianity in Greece.

II. The Pro-Russian Party and the political dynamics

At first we thought useful making a brief analysis of the Pro-Russian Party's organization giving thus the framework of sociopolitical conditions during Otto's reign.

Back in the 19th century three were the main political parties in Greece, in alliance with foreign powers: The Pro-British, the Pro-French and the Pro-Russian. The Pro-Russian party was very strong since 1828 when the ex-Russian foreign minister I. Kapodistrias arrived in Greece as its first president. In addition the most important Greek Independence War hero Th. Kolokotronis and his entire family were pro-Russian². Its support among the people came from farmers and especially small holders of land who had greatly benefited from Kapodistrias' land reform policies. The pro-Russian support in the Eastern Roumeli region came from J. Gouras-Mamouris adopted son of the War hero Gouras³.



1. This paper is based upon sections of the unpublished doctoral dissertation of Mrs Sparti Marangou-Drygiannaki entitled *The Philorthodox Society and the Shift of Greek Foreign Policy towards Russia 1837-1840*, Panteion University, Athens 1995.

2. J. Petropoulos, *Politiki kai Sygrotisi Kratous sto Elliniko Vasileio (1833-1843)*, MIET, Athens 1986, vol. I, p. 17.

3. I. Poulos, "Politika tis Stereas Ellados epi Othonos", *EESM* (1969-1970) 52.

The pro-Russian party geographically covered all of Greece but its power base was in central Peloponnese, a region considered even today as conservative. The reason for this power base was the fact that Th. Kolokotronis, the general and leader of the 1821 War of Independence, came from there with strong family and political ties in the region. Some islands cannot be excluded from the strong pro-Russian party power base the most important of which was Spetses. In Spetses the pro-Russian feelings were very strong because among other reasons trade relations had developed between the island and Russia even before the 1821 War of Independence. In addition the Spetses shipowners were competing hard with their counterparts in the island of Hydra always considered pro-British.

The Russian envoy himself K. Katakazi (Katakazi or Katakazis), was of Greek origin, knew the Greek character very well and exploited to the fullest every opportunity at strengthening Russian influence in Greece. He descended from a "russified Greek family who had escaped to Russia from Mani, a southern Peloponnese region, because the Russian attempt to overthrow Ottoman rule in Greece (Orlofika - 1770), had failed. Katakazis' family was pro-Russian and had played a very active role in the Orlofika events. After the failure of this relevant the Katakazis were a marked family and had no choice but to escape to Russia where they became "russified" and never stopped their involvement in Greek affairs from a Russian point of view and influence.

The Pro-Russian party was weakened due to the lack of strong leadership. President I. Kapodistrias was assassinated in 1831⁴, Th. Kolokotronis ended up in jail for political reasons (1833-1835), and A. Metaxas was kindly removed from the country been appointed ambassador abroad⁵. The change of regime due to the president's assassination was by definition weakening Russian influence in Greece.

King Otto hired as his cabinet members people from all three factions (pro-Russian, pro-French and pro-British), to keep content the foreign powers upon which Greece heavily depended⁶. The apparently

4. Among other policies we must note that President Kapodistrias had helped landless peasants at the expense of wealthy landlord. See: F. Thiersch, *De l'État Actuel de la Grèce*, Leipzig 1833, vol. I', p. 65.

5. J. Petropoulos, *Politiki kai Sygrotisi*, p. 325.

6. Bower - Bolitho, 1939, p. 104.

pro-Russian shift of Otto's rule, in the early years of his reign, made the pro-Russian faction joyous. The appointment of two of its members in cabinet positions gave them a say in government. At the same time the broader pro-Russian party organization and propaganda remained very strong. The thrust of Russian propaganda was based on common religion namely Orthodoxy and the close ties between Greeks and their relatives living in Russia proper.

The good Russian administration over the Eptanisa region of Greece during the reign of the progressive Czar Alexander the First (1799-1807), was another reason to make most Greeks pro-Russian. In contrast changes in the Orthodox Church administration by the Catholic Regency had annoyed Greeks. The fact that they even made monks go to work and that they sold church items like oil lamps, made the Greek people even more pro-Russian⁷.

The policies implemented by the Regency were not consistent towards the fair and equal representation of parties in the exercise of power and the neutrality towards the Great Powers. The government's assessment that would attempt to dominate Greece led it to implement an anti-Russian policy. The regency's fears were not groundless since Russia was pressuring Otto to convert to Orthodoxy and to allow more representation of the Russophiles' government and in the civil service.

It is worth noting that during the years of his personal absolute rule (before the constitution), King Otto opened up to the Russian influence even though he knew that the pro-Russian party wanted to undermine his power. The answer is found in Otto's trouble with the British and French influences on occasion turning against him, the extreme popularity Russia enjoyed among the people and the authoritative ideology Russia had suited well the king who didn't want to give the people a constitution.

One other aspect of Otto's pro-Russian approach was his broader plan to unite all of Greece's factions under his leadership in the model of czarist rule in Russia. Such a move would succeed only under a strong pro-Russian faction that would absorb all political forces under King Otto and Queen Amalia. This plan known as "Naposighonefsi" (Union under the party of Napaioi or pro-Russians)⁸, suited well the aims of Rus-

7. Dakin, 1984, p. 112; Runciman, 1968, p. 385; Slade, 1837, pp. 248-251.

8. Zographos to Mavrokordatos, Athens 19 February/3 March 1839 No 5579, File

sian diplomacy in Greece. In addition it would make Greece independent of British and French influences, something these western powers were certain to oppose.

III. Aspects of the conspiracy

The most potent base of the pro-Russian Orthodox conspiracy was no doubt the Russian embassy in Greece representing the czarist regime of Russia. The Russian ambassador named Katakazi descended from a Greek family from Mani in the Southern Peloponnese. As we have mentioned above his family had escaped to Russia after the failure of the 1770 revolt against Ottoman rule known as "Orlofika". The Orlofika revolt was instigated by Russia. Thus Katakazi had become a Russian and also retained his Greek characteristics especially his knowledge of the Greek character such a useful tool in the hands of Russian diplomacy. The strong point of the Russian conspiratorial effort was not only that Katakazi himself but also most embassy personnel was of Greek origin and Orthodox Christians, thus better able to infiltrate the Greek masses and the clergy in particular. It was exactly because of the clergy that was close to the Greek people that the Russians were able to keep their influence in Greece high.

The basic structure of the pro-Russian Party was made up of three components:

- (a) The Russian diplomatic mission in Greece (under K.Katakazi)
- (b) The Greek leaders (i.e. G. Kolokotronis, K. Oikonomou etc)
- (c) Membership⁹

Leadership: One of the conspiracy leaders was Gennaios Kolokotronis proven a key personality in 1836 thanks to the weight carried by his

20b (1837-1840) Mavrokordatos' Archives; Sp. Marangou-Dryannaki, "I 'Naposyghonefsi' kai o Rolos tis stin askisi Philorosikis Politikis apo ton Othona (1837-1840)", in *Afieroma ston Antoni Antonacopoulo*, Athens 1997, pp. 485-494.

9. There were members of the pro-Russian Party who had served in the civil service or belonged to the inner circle of conspiracy leaders. Such members swung into action as Otto became of age taking the reigns and initiating a pro-Russian policy. In the framework of this policy George Glarakis, a die hard pro-Russian was hired as Secretary of Interior - Religion - Education.

Another pro-Russian Andronikos Paikos was placed as Attorney General. Also two of the King's aides-de-camp Gennaios Kolokotronis and Kitsos Tzavelas belonged to the pro-Russian Party.

name. Been the son of Theodoros Kolokotronis the arch-general of the 1821 War of independence and having become aide-de-camp to King Otto, gave him prestige and proximity to the Bavarian ruling inner circle¹⁰.

Another leader Konstantinos Oikonomou had arrived in Greece in October 1834 conscious of his mission to help in the pro-Russian conspiracy. He proved to be one of the most important personalities of that period. His arrival gave life to the already weakened pro-Russian party. From 1835 to 1838 Oikonomou had become a sort of “popular leader” among the people. His popularity expanded as the Bavarians (Maurer), were subjugating the Orthodox Church to the authoritative government. He became the undisputed leader of the pro-Russian party surpassing even the famous and powerful G. Kolokotronis. Kolokotronis may have been powerful in the Peloponnese but Oikonomou had a broader geographical appeal and fame throughout the country¹¹.

The pro-Russian party leadership, its appeal to the masses and the issues shaping up, with the issue of Orthodoxy been perhaps the most important one, all contributed to a strong overall influence of the Russian faction in the Greek political reality. Even though the British and French influences had made deep inroads in the Greek body politic, the Russian influence was by far the strongest one.

What were the political and social characteristics of Otto’s rule and what was the correlation with the Philorthodox Society?

At first Otto’s regime was opposed by basically two political forces: The official opposition was directed by British diplomacy as well as the powerful Russophile group. With both Russophiles and Anglophiles against him Otto could not hope to stabilize his regime or retain it for long. In addition his opposition and mistrust towards the existence of political parties further complicated matters.

Otto wanted to by-pass political parties by creating and/or empowering institutions potentially loyal to himself such as: the army¹², the palace council (Anaktovoulío), more control over the official Orthodox Church, and the creation of a type of high court to check and control the

10. Kolokotronis, 1961, pp. 6-83.

11. Metallinos, 1986, p. 321.

12. G. Finlay, *A History of Greece from its Conquest by the Romans to the Present Time (146 B.C. to 1864 A.D.)* (7 vols), Oxford 1876, p. 118.

civil service and his expenditures¹³.

The new institutions created by Otto were bound to find opposition from the people. The four changes seemed to be designed against the Russian influence but at the same time against the pro-Russian feelings of the majority of the people: Greeks resented Bavarian control over the military with a Bavarian as secretary of defense (G. Finlay, 1876, vol. 7, p. 118). Also, the church reform policy aimed at making the Greek Orthodox Church independent of Russian influences was planned to be another blow at the people's pro-Orthodox pro-Russian feelings.

The Russophiles were convinced that only an Orthodox King was able to save Greece especially right after the "Eastern Question" was to be solved¹⁴.

The Philorthodox Society¹⁵ is defined as a secret society aiming the safeguarding of Orthodoxy but was heavily dependent upon Russian foreign policy. Its basic aim was to replace the Otto dynasty with another willing to accept Orthodox denomination.

Right after the Greek War of Independence the new founded Greek state was very pro-Russian because both Patriarch Konstantinos the 1st of Constantinople and president Kapodistrias were Russophiles. At the same time there were plans under way to unite all eastern churches under one head (Patriarch or type of Pope), similar to the Vatican.

Mavrokordatos' estimation that the Society must have been founded in 1835 seems rather credible for the following reasons:

(a) Been disorganized during the Regency it needed reorganization.

13. Bartholdy-Mendelson, 1873-1876, pp. 473, 474, 475.

14. See: Finlay's paper "Ta Peri Ellados Fylladia" newspaper *CLIO*, 12-6 to 18 December 1863. Note that Britain and France adjusted to the Russian view about the need of King Otto to become Orthodox as to share the same faith with his subjects thus gaining their favour.

15. We have used unpublished material and other sources of history: "The Renieris' Deposition" saved by Lyons in his reports to Palmerstone, other such reports (Lyons to Palmerstone available in my doctoral dissertation). Also: Information from the G. Mavrokordatos' Archives, Reports of Wallenburg, the Austrian ambassador to Greece, to his superior the Foreign Minister Metternich in B. Jelavich, "The Philorthodox Conspiracy of 1839", *Balkan Studies* 7 (1966) 89-102, and also a letter of N. Renieris to G. Kapodistrias newspaper *ESTIA* 11.17.1928 (new calendar), in J. Kordatos, "Megali Istoria tis Elladas", vol. XI, p. 138. It is worthy to note that a number of secret societies existed at that time in the newborn state of Greece. Indicative characteristics of the former are given in my dissertation *op.cit.*, pp. 101-118.

- (b) The arrival in Greece in late 1834 of K.Oikonomou, his mission been to rally the clergy and the people behind the pro-Russian party, especially after the Church Reform policy of King Otto, Oikonomou felt could weaken the influence of the Church and Russia among the people.

The stage was thus set for the Philorthodox Conspiracy involving important leaders of the Greek War of Independence, their relatives and some key political figures. By the end of 1839 their conspiracy was uncovered.

One of the officers of the Regency was Maurer, a Protestant who feared that the Church of Greece could become a “papal state” much like the Vatican. The way he reorganized the Greek Orthodox Church aimed at avoiding the “papal” prospect. The Royal Decree of 1833 by which the Church of Greece was declared “autocephalous”, with the king as head of Church, was Maurer’s doing aided by Th. Farmakidis a pro-British liberal. The consequences of this move were negative because the reform caused a liberal-conservative clash and a strict government control over the church. In reaction to the new situation a new dynamic opposition group under the Russophile K. Oikonomou emerged (Ch. Yiannaras 1992, pp. 267-270).

At the international level the church administration’s changes triggered Russians’ displeasure, through the Russian ambassador Katakazi. Counter-reaction was provoked by Britain and its diplomatic apparatus, wanting to keep Greece away from Russian influences. Thus Greece became the battle-ground of foreign conflicts among Great Powers with immediate consequences at its religious life.

Changes implemented on the partial dissolution of orthodox Christian Monasteries caused reaction because these were considered the bastions of the Orthodox ideal (Ch. Yiannaras 1992, p. 272).

The monasteries that survived the government’s persecution were forced to pay double the tax they used to pay up to that time. (Ch. Frazee, 1987, p. 162).

The thing that annoyed the Greek people the most was the sale-off of Monastery property including small items (Aion, 1 March, 1839, old calendar).

The issue of religious freedom came up with the activity of Protestant missionaries in Greece. The leadership of the Church was always

suspicious of Protestants and Catholics because they felt that they were working against Orthodox Christianity. Until 1842 the issue of religious freedom was exploited by the pro-Russian philorthodox party with its key propaganda vehicle been the newspaper *AION* (J. Petropoulos 1986, p. 799).

The other aspect of the religious conflict had to do with the issue of the King's denomination. King Otto by remaining a Catholic in an overwhelmingly Orthodox country was drawing opposition upon himself. Russia also supported an Orthodox Christian King for Greece (Nesselrode to Lieven St. Petersburg, 17 February 1832, old calendar). The truth is that had Otto become an Orthodox Christian he could have avoided many of his political troubles.

The main objectives of the Philorthodox Society enacting its conspiracy were the following:

- (a) The establishment of a senate made up of local Greeks excluding even Greeks from abroad.
- (b) The exclusion of foreigners and immigrants (except of course Russophiles), from political, civil service and military positions.
- (c) The denial of political-civil rights to the Mavromihalis family, its heirs and all associated with them in the assassination of president Kapodistrias.
- (d) To honour in every way possible president Kapodistrias memory, and compensate his brothers with money, owed to them by the Greek government.
- (e) To cancel the Church Reform Bill and resubmit the Orthodox Church of Greece under the Patriarchate in Constantinople.
- (f) To rid Greece of all American schools and of all books edited by the bible companies.
- (g) That the King should officially recognize the Eastern Orthodox Christian faith as the sole religion of his heirs¹⁶.

IV. The conspiracy exposed

The conspiracy from its beginning had some problems. The way the

16. For details on the Organization of the Society see my dissertation *op.cit.*, p. 101, as well as "The Renieris' deposition" pp. 230- 232 of my dissertation. Also "Anonymous Memorandum", p. 723-731 and Newspaper *ATHENA* 12-27 and 30 1839 (old calendar).

leadership called upon the people to revolt, the lack of central organization tight enough to be effective, disagreements, inexperience, procrastination, all contributed to the conspiracy's failure.

Then King Otto having the testimony of Papas, the man who betrayed the conspiracy, called upon Glarakis his education, interior and religious affairs secretary and a member of the Russophiles organization, to explain himself.

At this time the group leader Geōrgios Kapodistrias thought about taking over with force the country's mint so to deny the government badly needed money and make it capitulate. This plan too failed.

The trial: After a deep analysis of the trial we have found that at the initial stage (depositions), the proper orderly procedure was not followed because:

- (a) There was a five-day delay of the depositions.
- (b) The wrong direction followed by the interrogations because the suspects turned up in court indirectly that is to say after third parties filed law suits.
- (c) The legal practice and logical order was not followed as not to offend the Russian mission in Greece since the accused were Russophiles.
- (d) Otto had fallen into a peculiar situation. On one hand he wanted and needed to expose the conspiracy. On the other hand he did not wish to offend Russia because he was following a policy of "even distances" towards all major powers involved in Greece, namely Russia, Britain, France.

The pre-trial depositions - interrogations lasted for five months and the complete file was forwarded to the state prosecutor in May 1840. The accusation was defined as a minor crime and not as a felony, because of lack of serious incriminating evidence. The accused were only three: Nikitas Stamatelopoulos and Georgios Kapodistrias as conspiracy organizers and Nikolaos Renieris as a secret agent of the conspiracy with its main aim been irredentism. The report by Renieris of his involvement in the conspiracy was not read in court so it remained unknown. The British ambassador then in Athens Lyons saved that report for future academic use.

We conclude that the Renieris report was judged improper because it

showed Nikitas Stamatelopoulos' hostility towards Otto, it proved Russian embassy's involvement, with Stamatelopoulos as a go-between, and the exploiting of Renieris and Papas by Stamatelopoulos and Kapodistrias to play the role of secret agents. The maneuvering by the conspirators was used to hide their real aim to overthrow Otto. In this deposition Renieris stated:

"Sometime after my arrival I happened to be one day in the house of Nicholas Theseus of Cyprus, copying for him some certificates, when Nikitas Stamatelopoulos came in to sign the certificates. Till then I knew Nikitas only by reputation, but on this occasion became personally acquainted with him. He assured me of his great respect for my cousin, N. Renieris councillor of state, and requested me to visit him (Nikitas), that we might become better acquainted happening soon after to meet Nikitas in a coffee house, I was invited by him to accompany him to his house. I remained sometime and on going away received from him a pressing invitation to visit him frequently. Having been asked by him what reputation he enjoyed in different parts of Europe I assured him he was generally much celebrated, that he was a great favourite in particular with the Russians, as I had an opportunity of remarking when I frequented the house of Alexander Turgeneff in France, and that Georgios Russiades intends to bestow in him great praise in the history he is going to publish. Nikitas also asked me to dine with him, and in a word we were soon on familiar and confidential terms. He always complained that his services had not been adequately rewarded, that he is persecuted by the king, —that the Government is trying to take from him the estate of Seremeti which had been granted him in the time of Kapodistrias, —that he had the intention to go to Russia and was thinking of the manner of obtaining from the king leave of absence— that he intended to urge as a pretext that he had a chronic illness which rendered it necessary for him to visit France and Germany, —that he would receive from Katakazi the Russian Minister, and from Leli councillor of Legation, letters of introduction to the Russian minister in France and Germany, requesting them to furnish him with a passport for Petersburg, and to give him every facility for prosecuting his journey. He intended on his arrival in Petersburg to present himself to the Emperor, to inform of the abuses committed in Greece, and of the persecution of the Orthodox Faith by heretics and schismatics. He also proposed to me to accompany him as secre-

tary, promising me much greater advantages than what I could expect by remaining in Greece. I replied I could not come to any decision without consulting my cousin, the councillor of state. On this he enjoyed me most particularly not to mention the subject to that relative. He informed me of his devoted attachment to the Kapodistrian family telling me he never would forget the kindness he had received from them, and in particular the beneficent intentions of the president Ioannis Kapodistrias respecting him—that the President's death had been his (Nikita's) greatest misfortune, that Georgios Kapodistrias is persecuted in particular by the king, who refuses to pay him the money which the President had lent the Nation in time of need,—that he (Nikitas) hoped things would soon take a turn in consequence of Georgios Kapodistrias' presence in Greece—, that he is exerting himself to this end and that his hopes are daily increasing—that he (Nikitas) and his friends are determined to risk their lives in assisting Georgios Kapodistrias to put things to right, driving out of the country the Protestants who are attacking the Orthodox Faith, and by circumscribing the influence of the Catholics,— that they were to bring here as vice-toy Viaro Kapodistrias, well known as an able statesman, and that then Otto run away of it is own accord or be sent packing”.

The trial took place in the Second Minor Crimes Court of Athens in July 12, 1840. After the trial the judges conferred for four hours acquitting the accused.

The acquittal upset Otto who fired the chief prosecutor Typaldos and appealed to the Supreme Court which refused a re-trial due to lack of jurisdiction. Two of the accused were “removed” from Athens, Nikitas Stamatelopoulos in the island of Aegina and Georgios Kapodistrias banished from Greece.

Of the accused, Nikitas Stamatelopoulos¹⁷ said nothing, Georgios

17. Nikitas Stamatelopoulos also known as “Nikitaras” was a pure and simple patriot and at the same time a very ambitious military officer bearing the rank of colonel. He had the reputation of a nice man who had bravely fought the Turks. The Philhellens had godified him and the foreign missions adored him. Stamatelopoulos was an old russophile since the I. Kapodistrias' presidency and was considered to be one of the leaders of the pro-Russian Party especially since 1835 when the number one War of Independence chief and a russophile himself Theodoros Kolokotronis, had withdrawn from politics. He was closely connected with the Russian ambassador been the godfather to one of his children. It was rumoured from the Russian ambassador K. Katakazi that Czar Nikolas himself had offered a toast in honour

Kapodistrias admitted that the pro-Russian organization was his idea, and Renieris confessed that the conspiracy plans were Papas' idea. In return Papas said he was initiated in the organization and the conspiracy by Stamatelopoulos and Kapodistrias. They all denied the existence of other members in the conspiring society¹⁸.

The claims for Russian involvement in the conspiracy were based on two facts. One was the Russian vision of uniting all Greeks of both Asia and Europe under the bond of their common faith. The other was a series of events and facts showing Russia as heavily involved in the conspiracy.

About the first claim we can further add that Russia had indeed a policy of incorporating under its influence all newly independent countries in the broader area, just out of Ottoman rule.

Regarding the other claim the conspirators may have brought it upon themselves. One thing they did all along was to invoke the name of the Czar to give their organization credibility. One of the Society's members involved the name of the Russian ambassador Katakazi as been the one who drew him in the conspiracy. Renieris in his deposition gave valuable information on Czar's involvement by saying: "Kapodistrias proposed a new project of society, different from the former, adding to the proposed object the consolidation of the Orthodox Faith, the appointment of an orthodox king, after the emancipation of the provinces in question, and proposed to give the Society the name of Philorthodox. He proposed further to establish a supreme Directory, consisting of three members, one military, one civil and one ecclesiastical. He proposed Nikitas as military member, himself as civil, and the Bishop of Damala (Trezene) as ecclesiastical" and continued:

"In the mean time Father Paul took me one day to the house of captain Anastasio Colandrouzzo, where we remained a considerable time, and explained to him the object of the Society, which was the emancipation of Epirus, Thessaly and supreme Directors, and Kapodistrias assured us of the support of the Emperor Nicholas".

of Stamatelopoulos. Such rumours were enough to awake the ambition and the zeal of a simple man like Stamatelopoulos. Stamatelopoulos was never able to accept Otto's regime considering the "Bavarian Regime" authoritative. Because of the way he felt towards the Otto regime, the Russians through their Athens mission were quick to recruit him of the broader pro-Russian conspiracy.

18. Newspaper *AION* 1.21.1840 and 3.3.1840 (old calendar).

King Otto himself appears convinced that the conspiracy was rooted in the Russian government, as high up as the Czar himself who wanted to topple him from the throne of Greece¹⁹. On the other hand the differences between Otto and the Czar were religious and not political. On one occasion the Czar discouraged the pro-Russian Greeks from going ahead to overthrow Otto and were rather supportive of a monarchy in Greece albeit Catholic and Bavarian.

As for the role of officials of the Greek government it is clear that people near Otto like G. Kolokotronis and Glarakis were involved.

V. Concluding thoughts

The Russophile Society was the creation of secret Russian diplomatic activity and of some civil servants but due to its uncovering it failed to infiltrate large masses of people. Despite its failure it kept having a strong influence until the Church of Greece reestablished its good rapport with the Patriarchate in Constantinople, by 1852.

One of the reasons for the failure of the conspiracy may have been the wrong choice of people to work it. Georgios Kapodistrias and Nikitas Stamatelopoulos were the key acting conspirators drawing in Nikolaos Renieris and Michael Emm. Papas.

A positive aspect of the conspiracy was the legend left over for the broader pro-Russian faction to act in the failure. The rekindling of a type of pro-Russian conspiracy in 1848, known as the "Monks' Conspiracy" further undermined Otto's position.

In the Russophile Society of 1839, men such as Georgios Kapodistrias and Nikitas Stamatelopoulos played a leading role drawing in Nikolaos Renieris and Michael Emm. Papas. The choice of such men was not the best possible and it may have contributed to the Conspiracy's failure.

The Russians thought that if Otto agreed to a constitution his rule would have been weakened. Thus K. Katakazi encouraged the movement for a constitutional monarchy hoping not to establish democracy in Greece but to undermine Otto's rule. The Russian aim was to empower Orthodoxy. This situation created an oxymoron. On one hand

19. Lyons to Palmerstone, Athens 2.3.1840, no 23, F.O. 32 96.

Russia supported the constitutional movement for the reasons we mentioned above, but on the other hand Russia did not believe in constitutional rule.

The constitutional coup of September 3, 1843 broke out leading to Otto conceding to a constitutional monarchy. The capable Russian diplomacy in Greece succeeded in presenting their Greek allies in the Russophile party, as a protagonist of constitutional reform.

In 1848 the Russophile Society reappeared known as the "Kalogeriki (monks) Conspiracy" with chief leaders Kosmas Flamiatos, Papoulakos, and Konstantinos Oikonomou. Russia never gave up its aim at establishing an Orthodox Christian Monarchy in Greece.

One safe conclusion is that Russia, by exploiting the Orthodox sentiment of the Greek people translated into a pro-Russian stand, used the situation to further its own aims for taking charge of Greek politics and building an Orthodox Empire. It was this notion that directed the pro-Russian party's policies making Orthodoxy and Russia into an identical value. So it cannot be disputed that the Philorthodox Society since 1830 was an instrument of secret power in Greek affairs, empowering thus its own political and diplomatic posture.

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