

*O Ergatis, 1908 - 09:*

**Ottomanism, National Economy and Modernization in the Ottoman Empire through a Greek-language newspaper of Izmir**

**Anastasia Ileana Moroni**

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Ottomanism, National Economy and Modernization in the Ottoman Empire through a  
Greek-language newspaper of Izmir

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## ABSTRACT

*O Ergatis*, 1908 - 09:

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*O Ergatis (The Worker)* is a Greek-language newspaper published in Izmir from August 1908 until April 1909. It was being published by a group belonging to the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie, with the cooperation of a Muslim, a Young Turk from Izmir. Its purported aim was to be a workers' newspaper; its programme is based on Ottomanism and national economy. As is shown in the first part of this study, Ottoman Greeks did support the strengthening and modernization of the Empire and, thus, could have cooperated with the Young Turks. However, very soon, *Ergatis* came into conflict with the Young Turks. Looking at this failure only through *Ergatis*, the second part of this study shows why the newspaper's programme could not have constituted an alternative for the organization of Ottoman society. The main argument is that this programme does not promote a deep democratization and modernization: in order for its aims to be achieved quickly and without social upheaval, it espouses a corporatist and elitist outlook. In fact, the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie see themselves as a social élite who should lead the modernization of the Empire; in order for them to legitimize this claim, they need to draw on traditional elements, mainly religion; this impairs their whole modernization project.

## KISA ÖZET

*O Ergatis*, 1908 - 1909:

İzmir'de Yayınlanan bir Rum Gazetesinde Osmanlıcılık, Millî İktisat ve Osmanlı

İmparatorluğu'nda Modernleşme

Anastasia İleana Moroni

*O Ergatis (Irgat)*, Ağustos 1908 ile Nisan 1909 arasında İzmir'de çıkan bir gazete. Onu yayımlayan grup Rum burjuvazisi mensuplarından ve Müslüman bir Jön Türk'ten oluşuyordu. Gazetenin belirtilen amacı, bir işçi gazetesi olmak; programının temellerini Osmanlıcılık ve millî iktisat oluşturuyordu. Bu çalışmanın ilk kısmında gösterildiği gibi, Rumlar Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun güçlendirilmesini ve modernleştirilmesini destekliyordu; o yüzden, Jön Türkler'le birlikte çalışmaları mümkün olabilirdi. Buna rağmen, çok kısa bir süre içinde, *Ergatis*'in Jön Türkler'le ilişkisinde ciddi problemler yaşanmaya başlandı; bunda *Ergatis*'in kendi başarısızlığın da payı vardır. Bu çalışmanın ikinci kısmında gösterildiği gibi, gazetenin programı, derin bir demokratikleşme ve modernleşmeyi desteklemediği için, Osmanlı toplumunun yapılandırılması için bir alternatif oluşturamazdı: *Ergatis*, amaçlarına çabuk bir biçimde ve toplumsal gerilim olmadan ulaşabilmek için, korporatist ve elitist bir bakış açısı benimsiyor. Aslında, Rum burjuvazisi kendini Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun modernleşmesini yönetecek olan bir toplumsal elit gibi görüyor; kendinde gördüğü bu rolü meşrulaştırmak için de, ana unsuru din olan geleneksel bir söyleme başvuruyor; bu da, burjuvazinin modernleşme söylemini açıkta bırakıyor.

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## Introduction

The Young Turk period is an era when various currents of thought are expressed. This lively image is due to the fact that during the preceding decades the Ottoman Empire undergoes rapid change: economic and social transformations, in combination with the appearance of new political currents, provoke the emergence of new ideas that, in the relative freedom of the Young Turk period - especially its first few months - are more readily expressed than previously. If transformations provoke the emergence of new ideas, they can also serve to explain the diversity of these ideas: change influences differently each ethnic and social group of the Empire. Even a trivial look reveals the existence of a number of different - at times conflicting - currents of thought: rival nationalisms, attempts to organize a workers' movement, Young Turk efforts to reform the state and create a national economy.

Apart from being often incompatible with each other, these currents of thought are, at times, inconsistent in themselves; this is only normal: on the one hand, most of the ideas expressed are new in the Ottoman Empire and have not taken their final form; on the other, the beginning of the 20th century is a period in time when different groups try to formulate different alternatives for the future of the Empire, while even the present seems to be constantly changing. This inconsistency is evident in the publication that we shall be examining, the Greek-language newspaper *O Ergatis* (*The Worker*; hereafter *Ergatis*), published in Izmir from August 1908 until April 1909. What we shall try to demonstrate, though, is that the inconsistency of the ideas of *Ergatis'* editors can be

justified; in fact, a thread of continuity can be found, which may help us interpret *Ergatis'* incoherence.

The truth is that the ideas of *Ergatis'* editors change over the brief period of time when the newspaper is being published; this is due, to a large extent, to the changing political situation: the optimism engendered by the Young Turk coup d' état of July 1908 is soon disproved<sup>1</sup>. However, this change of ideas seems too radical, as we shall see, to be explained only by the political events of such a brief period of time; this is the reason why we shall try to put *Ergatis'* ideas in a wider perspective, taking into account the economic and social transformations of the period that precedes the Young Turk coup d' état.

Thus, in the first part we shall provide an overview of the economic and social developments that took place in the Ottoman Empire - and, particularly, Izmir - during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The examination of these developments shows, mainly, two things: during the 19th century, Ottoman society, under the influence of international economic developments, is undergoing rapid change; at the turn of the 20th century, Ottomans coming from different ethnic and social groups desire to react to changes brought about by international economic developments, i.e. European economic penetration in the Empire. It is exactly this tendency that is expressed in *Ergatis'* programme: the group around the newspaper wish to see Greeks and Turks cooperating for a common response to what they perceive of as a challenge originating from Europe; therefore, they are enthusiastic about Young Turk rule and support Ottomanism as well as the efforts for the creation of a national economy. In brief, what is expressed in *Ergatis'*

<sup>1</sup> For an overview of the events of this period see Ahmad, Feroz, *The Young Turks. The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics 1908 - 1914*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969

programme is a tendency for Greek and Turkish interests to converge.

In the second part, we shall try to explain why *Ergatis*, a little later, takes a very different stance: we can discern, in its pages, a disappointment in the Young Turks and in the possibility of working together with the Turks for the common aim of responding to European economic penetration. Our argumentation will be based on the idea that this change is not as radical as it seems at a first glance; indeed, there exist, from the very beginning, certain elements in *Ergatis'* discourse that point to a divergence of interests between Greeks and Turks: if the two groups are pushed together by their common reaction to Europe, they are, at the same time, pushed apart by their different experiences and expectations within Ottoman society; the elements that point to a divergence of interests between the two groups can be traced to the Greeks' different ethnic and social background.

We do not claim, of course, that our examination of *Ergatis* provides a general tableau of the Ottoman Greeks' ideas and policies. We shall demonstrate, though, that the ideas expressed in *Ergatis* are compatible with general trends within the Greek Orthodox communities of the Ottoman Empire (especially that of Izmir, of course); thus, *Ergatis* can be taken as an example of the directions that the Ottoman Greeks' ideas and policies take during this period. Actually, in our reading of it, *Ergatis* shows, in a way, the limits of the Ottoman Greeks' policies.

Through *Ergatis* we can see that, contrary to common assumptions, Ottoman Greeks do not always defend European economic interests in the Empire, but support efforts to strengthen the Empire and build a national economy. *Ergatis* is one of the most fervent supporters of this tendency among Ottoman Greeks; as we shall see, its editors

belong to a section of the bourgeoisie who believe that their interest lies in promoting a modernization of Ottoman society in general - that is, without taking into account ethnic divisions. It seems that, if the Ottoman Empire is to be modernized through the common efforts of Greeks and Turks (and, of course, the other ethnicities, too), it is groups such as the one around *Ergatis* that will promote this movement. However, for reasons that we shall discuss in the second part of this paper, even this group are not in a position to propose a real alternative for the organization of Ottoman society, so as to promote a kind of modernization that would transcend ethnic divisions.

In short, we shall be examining a publication by Ottoman Greeks, attempting to study the ideas of this group of Ottoman Greeks and their relationship with other groups of Ottoman society, especially with the Young Turks, with whom they seem willing to cooperate for the achievement of common aims. First, after placing the group around *Ergatis* in the context of their time, we shall examine the programme of the newspaper; then, we shall try to explain why this programme did not help reach the aims set by its initiators. In doing so, we will be encountered with a number of inconsistent elements that we shall try to make more comprehensible.

We should note here that this inconsistency is evidenced, first and foremost, in the use of certain terms; the use by *Ergatis* of the same term to express different meanings is also reflected, to an extent, in the language that we use when examining the newspaper. Let us note here that our decision to use the terms "Greek" and "Turk", together with terms such as "Rum", "Ottoman Greek", "Greek Orthodox" and "Muslim" is a conscious one: by 1908, Ottoman Greeks identify themselves, to a great extent, with the people of the Greek kingdom; they are also aware of those characteristics that separate them from

the Muslim - Turkish element of the Empire. In *Ergatis*, as we shall see, despite its editors' engagement in Ottomanism, these dividing lines are never totally disregarded. Therefore, we believe that, when referring to *Ergatis'* ideas, it is better to use its own terms, which best reflect the Ottoman Greeks' multi-faceted identity.

The term "nation", as well, is used by *Ergatis* in reference to different groups. In some cases, the "nation" includes all Ottomans, regardless of ethno-religious affiliations; in others, "nation" is used interchangeably with "millet", in reference to all the people who are under the jurisdiction of the Rum Patriarch; in yet other cases, "nation" signifies the Greek nation, that is, Ottoman Greeks and subjects of the Greek kingdom together. We have tried to make the use of this term as clear as possible, without resorting each time to lengthy clarifications.

## Part I

### ***Ergatis' political programme: Ottomanism and national economy***

#### **1. The economic developments of the 19th and early 20th centuries and the position of the Young Turks and the Ottoman Greeks**

##### ***a. Incorporation and peripheralization of the Ottoman Empire***

By the beginning of the 20th century, the Ottoman Empire has become part of the world economy. This process is usually termed as the “incorporation” and “peripheralization” of the Ottoman Empire within the world economy. These terms are useful for a description of the transformation of the economic structures and international position of the Ottoman Empire; however, if used without a further analysis of this transformation and with no reference to the specificities of the Ottoman case, they become merely abstract terms, deprived of their historical context, and therefore lose their analytical value<sup>2</sup>. Thus, we shall attempt a brief discussion of how the incorporation and peripheralization of the Ottoman Empire comes about and what this entails for

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<sup>2</sup> For two examples, see: Wallerstein, Immanuel, Hale Decdeli and Reşat Kasaba, “The incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the world-economy”, in İslamoğlu - İnan, Huri, *The Ottoman Empire and the World-Economy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 88 - 97; Wallerstein, Immanuel, “The Ottoman Empire and the capitalist world-economy: some questions for research”, in Okyar, Osman and Halil İnalçık, *Türkiye'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Tarihi (1071 - 1920) / Social and Economic History of Turkey (1071 - 1920)*, Meteksan Limited Şirketi, Ankara, 1980, pp. 117 - 122; for a critique of the incorporation theory, mainly directed at Wallerstein, see İnsel, Ahmet, “Tanrı'nın hikmetinden sermayenin hikmetine: Wallerstein tarihinin bir eleştirisi”, in İnsel, Ahmet, *İktisat İdeolojisinin Eleştirisi*, Birikim Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1993, pp. 215 - 237.

## Ottoman economic structures<sup>3</sup>.

What the term “incorporation” attempts to capture is the fact that certain areas, those termed as “periphery”, become part of the world economy and start developing capitalist structures not through their own, internal dynamics, but because of their relationship to the “center”, that is, the areas where capitalism developed out of endogenous factors. In other words, “incorporation” is the process through which various areas are pulled into the economic orbit of Western Europe, by means of trade and financial transactions<sup>4</sup>.

In the case of the Ottoman Empire, incorporation begins from the Balkans and the Aegean sea and gains momentum in the 18th - 19th centuries<sup>5</sup>. The Balkans, the Aegean islands and Western Anatolia are those areas of the Empire that are closer to Europe and, at the same time, more accessible, through land towards the Habsburg Empire and through the Aegean islands and Western Anatolian ports thanks to Mediterranean trade. The fact that the intensification of the Ottoman Empire’s trade relations with Western

<sup>3</sup> The discussion below is based on the following: Wallerstein, Decdeli and Kasaba, op. cit.; Wallestein, op.cit.; İslamoğlu - İnan, Huri, “Introduction: ‘Oriental despotism’ in world-system perspective”, in İslamoğlu - İnan, op. cit., pp. 1 - 24; İslamoğlu - İnan, Huri and Çağlar Keyder, “Agenda for Ottoman history”, in ibid, pp. 42 - 62; Sunar, İlkkay, “State and economy in the Ottoman Empire”, in ibid, pp. 63 - 87; Pamuk, Şevket, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism 1820 - 1913*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987; Keyder, Çağlar, *State and Class in Turkey. A Study in Capitalist Development*, Verso, London - New York, 1987, pp. 25 - 48. All of these writers approach incorporation from different perspectives and diverge on certain issues, for example as to the point in time when the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the world economy begins; however, since here we are only interested in describing the main lines of incorporation and particularly its consequences for the Ottoman Empire in the 19th and early 20th centuries, we will only present the common framework offered by all these articles and books.

<sup>4</sup> For an analysis of the specific mechanisms of incorporation in 19th century Ottoman Empire, see Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism*, op. cit., especially pp. 18 - 81.

<sup>5</sup> “It was above all the Balkan provinces of the Empire which participated in the early expansion of European trade”: Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism*, p. 8; for the role of Izmir as a trade center starting as early as the 17th century, see Goffman, Daniel, “Izmir: from village to colonial port city”, in Eldem, Edhem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters (eds.), *The Ottoman City between East and West. Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 79 - 134.

Europe begins in these regions helps explain the economic role played by Christian merchants (mainly Greeks) during the 19th and early 20th centuries<sup>6</sup>.

In the 19th century, it is no more the Balkans but Western Anatolia that forms the spearhead of the penetration of foreign capital into the Ottoman Empire: in any case, a large part of the Balkans is lost to the Empire. Thessaloniki is still a very important port, but Izmir has a much larger hinterland and offers more possibilities to European merchants and investors. By the 19th century, Izmir, whose economic development had already begun in the 17th century, has become the most important trade center of Western Anatolia, dominating “the Ottoman Empire’s trade with the West.”<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, incorporation - especially in its early stages - proceeding mainly through trade<sup>8</sup>, the role of Izmir is quite important. It is not only that the volume of trade transported through Izmir is substantial<sup>9</sup>; it is also interesting to note that, throughout the

<sup>6</sup> Even though the conclusion that incorporation begins from the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire and, consequently, Christians play an important role can be extracted from all the works cited above, for a brief and enlightening discussion see Keyder, Çaglar, “The Ottoman Empire”, in Barkey, Karen and Mark von Hagen, *After Empire. Multiethnic Societies and Nation-building*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1997, pp. 32 - 33. In the case of Izmir, it is also interesting to note that, starting at the end of the 18th century, large numbers of Greek Orthodox (from mainland Greece, the Aegean islands and the inner parts of Anatolia) immigrate to Izmir and its region because of the economic possibilities - mostly in commerce - offered in this area; see Anagnostopoulou, Sia, *Mikra Asia, 19os aionas - 1919. Oi Ellinorthodoxes Koinotites: apo to Millet ton Romion sto Elliniko Ethnos [Asia Minor, 19th century - 1919. The Greek Orthodox Communities: from the Millet-i Rum to the Greek Nation]*, Ellinika Grammata, Athens, 1998, pp. 107 - 114 and, particularly, pp. 137 - 148.

<sup>7</sup> Frangakis - Syrett, Elena, “The economic activities of the Greek community of Izmir in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries”, in Gondicas, Dimitri and Charles Issawi (eds.), *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism: Politics, Economy, and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, The Darwin Press Inc., Princeton, 1999, pp. 17 - 44.

<sup>8</sup> “[U]ntil the Crimean War [...] penetration of world capitalism proceeded primarily through the expansion of foreign trade.”: Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism*, p. 11. Later on, capital transfers (in the form of loans or direct investments) also gain in importance; see Pamuk, op. cit., pp. 55 - 81.

<sup>9</sup> On Izmir’s economic development, see: Goffman, op. cit.; Bağış, Ali İhsan, “Osmanlı ekonomisinde ticaret sektörünün görünümü. Yabancı tüccar ve gayrimüslim tebbanın Izmir ticaretindeki yeri ve önemi”, in Izmir Ticaret Odası, 1885 - 1985. *Türkiye Ekonomisinin 100 Yılı ve İzmir ve İzmir Ticaret Odası Sempozyumu*, İzmir, 1985, pp. 48 - 54; Küttikoğlu, Mübahat, “Osmanlı dış ticaretinin gelişmesinde İzmir

19th century, exports are larger than imports<sup>10</sup> and, most importantly, Izmir and its hinterland show signs of considerable development<sup>11</sup>. To site only a few of these signs: the population of Izmir, which includes large numbers of non-Muslims and foreigners, rises steadily throughout the 19th century<sup>12</sup>; starting in 1856 and continuously expanding, railway lines assure easier communication between Izmir and its hinterland<sup>13</sup>; finally, various services are provided to the inhabitants of Izmir, making the city look more and more like a modern, Western city: hospitals, restaurants, theatres, clubs<sup>14</sup>, newspapers<sup>15</sup> etc.

But what exactly are the economic sectors assuring Izmir's wealth? Izmir thrives as a port through which a large part of the Ottoman Empire's commerce with Europe (in the 19th century, mostly with Britain) is transported, while agriculture in its hinterland is

limani ve gümrüklerin rolü", in ibid, pp. 99 - 120. Kütükoğlu makes some interesting comparisons of Izmir with Beirut and Thessaloniki (p. 107) and provides analytical figures regarding Izmir's international trade (pp. 115 - 120).

<sup>10</sup> Bağış, op.cit., p. 49, where import - export figures for 1839 are provided; Kütükoğlu, op. cit., pp. 116 - 117, where analytical tables of goods imported and exported, along with their value, for the years from 1869 to 1908, are provided.

<sup>11</sup> For a general overview of Izmir's urban development, see: Goffman, op. cit.; Ergenç, Özer, "Salnamelerde İzmir", in İzmir Ticaret Odası, op. cit., pp. 141 - 15; Kıray, Mübeccel B., "Az gelişmiş memleketlerde şehirleşme eğilimleri: tarihsel perspektif içinde İzmir", *ODTÜ Gelişme Dergisi*, Güz 1971, 3, pp. 465 - 497.

<sup>12</sup> For population figures, see Ergenç, op. cit.; Anagnostopoulou, op. cit., tables, pp. 611 fwd.; Kıray, op. cit., p. 475.

<sup>13</sup> The first railway line to be built, by a British company, was the one connecting Izmir with Aydin. See: Ergenç, op. cit., p. 147; Anagnostopoulou, op. cit., pp. 77- 79. For a table of all the railway lines around Izmir, with their kilometric length and years of construction, see Kıray, op. cit., pp. 494 - 495.

<sup>14</sup> Ergenç, op. cit., pp. 147 and 149; Anagnostopoulou, op. cit., p. 333.

<sup>15</sup> Goffman, op. cit., p. 128; Solomonidis, Christos Socr., *I Dimosiografia sti Smyrni (1821 - 1922) [Journalism in Izmir]*, Athens, 1959. Solomonidis focuses on Greek-language journalism; however, some information on newspapers published in other languages is also to be found in his book.

also positively influenced by trade<sup>16</sup>; on the other hand, industry is not all that developed. Even though, as we saw, exports are higher than imports, it is interesting to note that Izmir's exports consist of agricultural products (grapes, figs, cereals, cotton etc.) - with the only exception of carpets - and imports include certain foodstuffs (mainly sugar and coffee) and, most importantly, manufactured goods (textiles, thread etc.)<sup>17</sup>. Whatever industry exists in Izmir consists mostly of workshops, whose production is usually not even enough to satisfy the needs of the city<sup>18</sup>; modern factories are only built in Izmir during the final years of the 19th and early in the 20th century<sup>19</sup> and, even then, the most important industrial installations belong to foreign companies<sup>20</sup>.

Looking at Izmir's pattern of development, it is easy to understand what incorporation entails and why "peripheralization" is a term with negative connotations. The Ottoman Empire imports manufactured goods and exports agricultural products; this is a pattern of trade that has been characterized as "unequal trade"<sup>21</sup> and is common to all

<sup>16</sup> See Bağış, op. cit., p. 50, for the revenues received by the Ottoman state from Izmir's customs and from agricultural taxes in Izmir's periphery.

<sup>17</sup> Kütükoğlu, op. cit., tables on pp. 116 - 117. Kütükoğlu provides the following categories of goods imported to Izmir: "cotton textiles/ cotton thread/ woolen textiles/ timber/ manufactured goods/ sugar/ coffee/ silk textiles/ other".

<sup>18</sup> For an extensive analysis of Izmir's industry at the beginning of the twentieth century, see Trakakis, Georgios P., *I Viomihania en Smyrni kai en ti Elliniki Mikrasia [Industry in Izmir and Greek Asia Minor]*, Trohalia, Athens, 1994 (first published in 1920). Even though this study was written for the use of the National Bank of Greece, it should be trusted to be as reliable as possible: its aim was to contribute to the drawing of a national development policy in Izmir and its periphery, after the incorporation of these areas into Greece; this could only be achieved if reliable data were provided.

<sup>19</sup> See the tables of "Greek" and "Turkish" businesses, put in chronological order, provided by Trakakis, op. cit., pp. 60 - 61.

<sup>20</sup> An examination of all factories, including details such as capacity, capital, year of establishment and nationality of investors, is provided in ibid, pp. 115 - 246.

<sup>21</sup> Wallerstein, op. cit., p. 118

countries of the periphery<sup>22</sup>. What is negative about this pattern is that it expresses a relationship of dependency, where economic development in the peripheral country is dependent on dynamics stemming from the center: if, at some point in time, there is no demand for agricultural products from international markets, then the agricultural products exporting country may have to face severe economic problems, since manufactured goods - not produced in the country - would still have to be imported; on the other hand, during periods when there is high demand for agricultural products, economic development is encouraged in peripheral countries, but only in those sectors directly related to international trade in agricultural products (for example, infrastructure such as ports and railways or investment in land exploitation suitable for world markets)<sup>23</sup>.

Thus, in peripheral countries, it is not economy as a whole that is developed; on the contrary, whatever integrated internal markets existed are dismantled<sup>24</sup>. It is only in specific economic sectors and/or geographical areas that economic growth is witnessed; these "segments" become part of an international economic structure, instead of a local one<sup>25</sup>. To sum up, economic structures in peripheral countries are transformed not according to local needs, but according to the requirements of an international economic

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of the general characteristics of transactions between the industrialized countries and the periphery, see Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism*, pp. 1 - 4. Pamuk talks of an "unprecedented expansion in the volume of trade and a shift in its composition"; ibid, p. 3

<sup>23</sup> This process is examined extensively in ibid, especially pp. 82 - 129.

<sup>24</sup> Pamuk, who examines in detail the effects of this kind of development on Ottoman agriculture and industry, talks of an elimination of the "complementarity of agriculture and industry" in peripheral countries: ibid, p. 3

<sup>25</sup> "segments more and more disassociated from each other were increasingly bound up with the external markets": Sunar, op. cit., p. 83.

structure<sup>26</sup>. It is not that we consider this as something *a priori* negative; two things are clear, however: a peripheral economy - and, subsequently, society - is influenced by international economic trends, while its own influence upon them is only limited; because of this, the choices and policies of local groups (such as merchants or the bureaucracy), while not exclusively formulated by international economic developments, are, to a large extent, influenced by them.

b. Ottoman bureaucracy and the Ottoman Greeks: their position within the new economic structures

In this context, what is the position of the Ottoman state élites, out of which the Young Turk movement is formed during the final years of the 19th century? Traditionally - or, rather, ideally - , the state apparatus, composed of bureaucrats and military men, had a central role within Ottoman economic structures<sup>27</sup>. However, ever since the end of the 16th century, various developments were jeopardizing the centrality of the state: economic changes and the development of centrifugal forces had reduced the state's ability to appropriate the fiscal revenues necessary for the continuation of its role and the reproduction of the traditional order<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Vergopoulos sums up the process and effects of peripheralization as follows: "Les transformations dans les économies occidentales ont fonctionné comme des présupposés fondamentaux autorisant les changements qui allaient intervenir aux régions dépendantes du système international. En dernière analyse, toutes ces modifications, de part et d'autre, n'ont abouti qu'à une nouvelle division internationale du travail et à une nouvelle structuration du marché international, notamment à partir des dernières années du 19e siècle." Vergopoulos, Kostas, "La "Grande Dépression" européenne et la crise d'Orient, 1875 - 1900", *Review*, XI, 2, Spring 1988, pp. 231 - 249.

<sup>27</sup> For the role of the "patrimonial state" in Ottoman economy and society, see Keyder, *State and Class*; Insel, Ahmet, *La Turquie entre l'Ordre et le Développement*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1984, pp. 27 - 59; Sunar, Ilkay, op. cit..

<sup>28</sup> For a general overview of Ottoman economic history, see Pamuk, Şevket, *Yüz Soruda Osmanlı - Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi 1500 - 1914*, K Kitaplığı, İstanbul, 2003

Nonetheless, even though the state was seeing its fiscal basis and structural role put in danger, it can be argued that it was not completely hostile to the expansion of foreign trade and subsequent incorporation into the world economy: state élites were aware of the possibilities of economic growth and profit offered by these developments<sup>29</sup>. When initiating the 19th century reforms, the state élites hoped to create a framework within which it would be possible to encourage economic development in this new international environment, while at the same time, state functionaries would be able to control revenues originating from the new economic activities and safeguard, in a way, their traditional position<sup>30</sup>. In this context, it can be argued that the state was not all that hostile to foreign and non-Muslim merchants; on the contrary, if economic change was initiated, and incorporation mediated, by elements outside the traditional power structure (since the non-Muslim had never been part of the state machinery, except in some individual cases), then it would be easier for the state to maintain a balance between economic growth and the preservation - at least in form - of its traditional role<sup>31</sup>.

The non-Muslim communities played indeed a key role in the Ottoman Empire's trade relations with Western Europe. As we saw, the Empire's incorporation started in

<sup>29</sup> On the increasing interest in political economy and early attempts at constructing a new economic policy for the Ottoman Empire, starting during the Tanzimat, see Georgeon, François, "L'économie politique selon Ahmed Midhat", in Georgeon, François, *Des Ottomans aux Turcs. Naissance d'une Nation*, Editions Isis, Istanbul, 1995, pp. 223 - 240.

<sup>30</sup> "Within the narrow space left to the bureaucracy, its manoeuvres tended to favor a model of capitalist integration promising to uphold the claims of state functionaries as a surplus-receiving class.": Keyder, *State and Class*, p. 29.

<sup>31</sup> Tsoukalas, Constantinos, *Exartisi kai Anaparagogi. O Koinonikos Rolos ton Ekpaideftikon Mihanismon stin Ellada (1830 - 1922)* [Dependency and Reproduction. The Social Role of the Educational Apparatus in Greece], Ekdoseis Themelio, Athens, 1992 (first published in 1977), sub-section of chapter III, characteristically entitled "The [Greek] communities of the Near East and local administrative strata: a functional co-existence", pp. 348 - 353. Even though Tsoukalas exaggerates the extent to which Ottoman Greeks were estranged from local society and the state apparatus, he makes very interesting observations

areas (the Balkans and the Aegean sea) where Christians, especially Greeks, formed a majority of the population; thus, their role as intermediaries between Western European capitalism and the Ottoman economy is easy to explain<sup>32</sup>. Thanks to their involvement in international trade, a number of Ottoman Greeks, especially in Istanbul and Izmir, manage to accumulate significant wealth; a new Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie is formed<sup>33</sup>.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, these developments are reflected in a new power balance within the Greek Orthodox communities of the Ottoman Empire; this is evident in the new community regulations drawn during the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century<sup>34</sup>. Especially the new regulation of the Greek Orthodox community of Izmir, enacted, after very long negotiations, in 1907 and put into effect in 1910, offers the best example for this<sup>35</sup>; this is so, probably, because of the economic dynamism of the Izmir bourgeoisie<sup>36</sup> and the fact that it is not as much intermingled with traditional power centers - most notably the Patriarchate - as the Greek

regarding their role as intermediaries between the forces of capitalist development and local society.

<sup>32</sup> Often, in order to explain the important role played by the Greeks in trade with Western Europe, other reasons are put forward, such as the fact that the non-Muslim used to learn foreign languages, or that Europeans felt affiliated to the Christian millets because of religious - cultural reasons and thus preferred to conduct business with them, instead of with the Muslim; see, for example, Issawi, Charles, "The transformation of the economic position of the *Millets* in the nineteenth century", in Braude and Lewis, op. cit., pp. 261 - 286. These reasons are plausible, but they do not seem to us enough to explain this historical phenomenon.

<sup>33</sup> Frangakis - Syrett, op. cit.; Kasaba, Reşat, "Economic foundations of a civil society: Greeks in the trade of Western Anatolia, 1840 - 1876", in Gondicas and Issawi, op. cit., pp. 77 - 88; Exertzoglou, Haris, "The development of a Greek Ottoman bourgeoisie: investment patterns in the Ottoman Empire, 1850 - 1914", in ibid, pp. 89 - 114.

<sup>34</sup> On institutional developments within the millet-i Rum from the Tanzimat on, see: Anagnostopoulou, op. cit., pp. 276 - 317.

<sup>35</sup> On developments within the Greek Orthodox community of Izmir, see ibid., pp. 331 - 349.

<sup>36</sup> Indeed, because of Izmir's very early economic growth, changes - and conflicts - within the Greek Orthodox community of Izmir start earlier than in other communities, during the last years of the 18th century. See ibid, pp. 337 - 338.

Orthodox bourgeoisie of the capital.

We shall not make here an in-depth analysis of the Izmir community regulation; suffice is to say that the new bourgeoisie - who have risen thanks to, and derive their status from, their role in external commerce - manage to become the most powerful element in the balance of power within the community<sup>37</sup>. They represent a new, dynamic and to a certain extent modernizing force against the traditional power holders: the church and the "elders" of the community. It is important to stress that, whatever social transformations and modernizing tendencies are generated by the new economic conditions are to a great extent confined to the community, since the division of Ottoman society in millets "does not facilitate, if not completely prevent, the reorganization of society as a whole."<sup>38</sup>

It is also interesting to note that, due to immigration from Greece, the Greek Orthodox community of Izmir, as in many other parts of Western Anatolia, consists of both Ottoman subjects and subjects of the Greek kingdom (who enjoy the same status as many other foreigners residing in the Ottoman Empire). The limits between these two groups are quite fluid; most importantly, they both participate in decision making within the Greek Orthodox community; thus, they become one of the vehicles for the spread of Greek nationalism within the community<sup>39</sup>.

If we are to make a sketch of the position and interests of the Greek Orthodox and of state élites within the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20th century, we should

<sup>37</sup> For a detailed analysis of the community regulation of the Greek Orthodox of Izmir, see *ibid*, pp. 342 - 349.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p. 335

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 308 - 312.

note two things. First, nationalistic tendencies, as noted above, have made their appearance within the Greek Orthodox communities, especially those of Western Anatolia; nationalistic tendencies are also discernible, from 1908 onwards, within the Young Turk movement<sup>40</sup>. Second, these two groups have different interests within the economic and social structure of the Ottoman Empire: the most influential portion of the Greek Orthodox are the mercantile bourgeoisie, who have benefited from trade relations with Western Europe and therefore support further incorporation of the Empire into the world economy; the bureaucracy are not entirely hostile to the economic expansion created because of incorporation, but they are seeking ways to benefit from this expansion and to make it compatible with the continued existence of a state structure to which their role is central.

What is even more interesting to note is that the viewpoints of both these groups are conditioned by the economic and social realities stemming from incorporation. In other words, no matter what their stance is vis-à-vis the expansion of economic relations with Europe and the transformations this entails, it is precisely these developments that have altered their position within the Ottoman Empire; their viewpoints are formed as a - positive or negative - reaction to intensified relations with Western Europe. What they share, then, is more important than it is usually thought: it is a common framework within which their ideas and policies are formed. This will become clearer when, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, both the Ottoman Greeks and the Young Turks react to the same challenge, a challenge originating at the West, in similar

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<sup>40</sup> This is a commonplace on the Young Turks; see, indicatively, Mardin, Şerif, "The Ottoman Empire", in Barkey and von Hagen, op. cit., pp. 115 - 128. Mardin notes that the Young Turks had to "promote a new identity of turkishness, *tout court*, and, at the same time, maintain a pretense of a united Ottoman empire until the end of World War I." Ibid, p. 118.

manners: they try, in a way, to emulate the West by modernizing the state and promoting economic development according to local needs.

c. Ottoman bureaucracy and the Ottoman Greeks at the turn of the 20th century: convergence of interests

Actually, the developments that cause the interests of the Ottoman bureaucracy and Ottoman Greeks to converge run parallel to the developments (economic as well as political, i.e. the rise of nationalism) referred to above; certain events, however, will cause these new trends to surface at the beginning of the 20th century, most notably, right after the Young Turk coup d' état. 1908 inaugurates a short period during which the strengthening of local economic and administrative structures - as a response to the negative effects of peripheralization - by the combined efforts of Young Turks and Ottoman Greeks will seem possible.

The turning point should be situated at the last quarter of the 19th century, when, due to international economic developments, Ottoman state élites and Ottoman Greeks start feeling the adverse consequences of peripheralization; however, the potential for common action created because of this will only be fully released in 1908, thanks to domestic political developments. Let us summarize the events: in 1873, an international financial crisis breaks out; in 1876, the Ottoman Empire declares its inability to pay off its debts to its foreign creditors<sup>41</sup>; in 1881, an agreement is signed between the Western

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<sup>41</sup> In 1875 the Ottoman state announces a decrease of debt payments by half; in 1876 it discontinues all debt payments. Pamuk, *Yüz Soruda*, p. 281.

Powers and the Porte, establishing the Public Debt Administration (PDA)<sup>42</sup>. This means that the state to a large extent loses control over its finances; at the same time, Greek financial interests are also endangered because of the establishment of the PDA, while patterns of investment in the Ottoman Empire change; foreign capital becomes more aggressive<sup>43</sup>, trying to penetrate further into the Empire and diversifying the sectors of its penetration, thus endangering the position of locals, including Ottoman Greeks.

The bureaucracy, having lost control over state revenues, sees its traditional role endangered; even the future of the Empire itself seems more and more uncertain. The problem, of course, is not only with economic penetration; along with economic control over the Ottoman Empire, the political control by European powers is also expanding<sup>44</sup>. It is in this context that the Young Turks rise: their primary concern is to save the state<sup>45</sup>.

Thus, as soon as they come to power, they seek to enact a number of measures that would strengthen the state apparatus against internal and external threats<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> "The default of 1875 - 76 provided European financial interests with an opportunity to establish closer control over Ottoman finance and to ensure an uninterrupted flow of funds out of the Ottoman economy towards the servicing of the debt. After a five-year period of war, uncertainty and negotiations, the Ottoman Public Debt Administration was founded in 1881. The control of some of the major sources of revenue of the state was then handed over to this Administration for payments towards the outstanding debt." Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism*, p. 61. For a brief overview, see also Pamuk, *Yüz Soruda*, pp. 281 - 283.

<sup>43</sup> For the effects of the 1873 crisis on European capitalists, see Vergopoulos, op. cit., pp. 233 - 235.

<sup>44</sup> For an overview of the interrelation between economic penetration and political control, see Thobie, Jacques, "Finance et politique extérieure: l' administration de la dette publique ottomane 1881 - 1914", in Okyar and İnalcık, op. cit., pp. 311 - 322.

<sup>45</sup> "The Young Turk Revolution of July 1908 was first and foremost a political movement whose aim was to rescue the Empire from the old order and liberate it from the control of the European powers." Ahmad, Feroz, "Vanguard of a nascent bourgeoisie: the social and economic policy of the Young Turks 1908 - 1918", in Okyar and İnalcık, op. cit., pp. 329 - 350.

<sup>46</sup> The Young Turks directly and permanently seize power only in 1913; however, even before that date, they are a power to be reckoned with and they manage to have at least some of the measures in their agenda enacted as legislation. For a summary of the first session of the Ottoman Parliament (17/12/08 - 27/08/09), see Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, op. cit., pp. 57 - 64. Ahmad summarizes the Young Turks' legislative work as an effort "to modernize and give unity to the Ottoman Empire and its administrative machine": ibid, p.

Immediately, the need for a more coherent fiscal and economic policy, so that state revenues can be boosted, surfaces as part of these efforts at reorganization<sup>47</sup>. As far as general economic policy is concerned, in a trivial look, it looks that the Young Turks, at least until 1913 or 1914, are proponents of economic liberalism<sup>48</sup>. However, their viewpoint is more complex than that and is conditioned, essentially, by their identification with the state.

This is the reason why we should see a thread of continuity in the Young Turks' economic policy. No matter which particular doctrine they espouse at any given time, their aim remains the same: promoting economic development within the Ottoman Empire<sup>49</sup>, so that the state is strengthened; at the same time, they do not want this economic development to cause social upheaval and the appearance of new and dynamic social classes that might threaten the central role of the state<sup>50</sup>. These two elements, sooner or later, would almost automatically guide to étatisme and corporatism, both of which are important constitutive elements of the ideology of national economy (millî

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<sup>47</sup> Mehmet Cavit, an important figure among the Young Turks, later to become Minister of Finances, "had set out to educate the 'public' on the importance of financial reform even during the first days of the constitution." *Ibid*, p. 70.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example: Georgeon, François, "Un manifeste du libéralisme économique dans l' Empire Ottoman au tournant du siècle", in Georgeon, op. cit., pp. 241 - 251, where the economic thought of Mehmet Cavit is examined; Toprak, Zafer, *Türkiye'de "Millî İktisat" (1908 - 1918)*, Yurt Yayıncıları, Ankara, 1982, section entitled "1908 Devrimi ve liberal iktisat arayışları", pp. 23 - 25. See also Ahmad, "Vanguard of a nascent bourgeoisie", where it is evident that all the measures for the creation of a national economy are taken from 1913 onwards.

<sup>49</sup> For instance, Ahmet Midhat's economic thought, already at a very earlier time, was structured around the question of how to promote economic development; see Georgeon, "L' économie politique...". As for Mehmet Cavit, he supported economic liberalism because he believed that economic development could be boosted through this policy; see Georgeon, "Un manifeste du libéralisme économique...".

<sup>50</sup> On the Young Turks' anxious efforts to safeguard the central role of the state (and consequently of the bureaucracy they belong to), including its role in the economy, see Keyder, *State and Class*, pp. 49 - 69.

iktisat) and would later make their appearance in the thought of important theoreticians of the Young Turk movement (and of the Turkish Republic), such as Tekinalp and Ziya Gökalp<sup>51</sup>. Moreover, the state of mind that would lead to the project of building a national economy is manifested as early as in 1908 - 09, during the boycott against Austrian goods<sup>52</sup>.

The reason why the Young Turks do not immediately espouse national economy is, once again, related to their bureaucratic background. The Young Turks, not directly involved in economic activities themselves, place more importance on politics than on economics; most importantly, they tend to think of the Ottoman Empire's weakened position primarily as a problem of modernization and not a problem of economic underdevelopment. In consequence, they believe that modernizing the state will automatically solve some of the Empire's problems: seeing the Ottomans' progress towards democratization and westernization, indeed towards "civilization", the Europeans would start respecting the Ottoman Empire as a nation on an equal footing with European nations and would cease interfering in the internal affairs of the Empire<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> On millî iktisat, see Toprak, op. cit.; on the étatiste - corporatist outlook of Tekinalp and Gökalp, ibid, especially pp. 25 - 35. Not only do these ideas make their appearance as early as in 1908, it is also true that the thread of continuity goes even further back and stretches to the republican era; see Insel, *La Turquie*. Even Ahmad, who usually emphasizes the innovative elements of Young Turk ideology, notes that "[t]his emphasis on étatisme was merely a reflection of the traditional role of the state in the Ottoman Empire." Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, op. cit., p. 157.

<sup>52</sup> Actually, the boycott was directed against Bulgarian goods, as well; we only refer to Austrian goods because Austrian economic interests in the Ottoman Empire were more important than Bulgarian economic interests and, thus, the boycott was directed at - and affected - mainly Austria. The boycott was launched in October 1908 and lasted until February 1909. See Çetinkaya, Y. Doğan, *1908 Osmanlı Boykotu. Bir Toplumsal Hareketin Analizi*, İletişim Yayıncılığı, İstanbul, 2004; especially, on a short history of the boycott, pp. 97 - 119; on the surfacing of the ideology of national economy during the boycott, pp. 133 - 172.

<sup>53</sup> We do not mean, of course, to imply, that Ottoman modernization efforts were the result of only such external factors. It is true, however, that, at least since the time of Abdülhamid II, the Ottomans tried to create a different, more "civilized" image of their state abroad, so as to enhance respect towards the Ottoman Empire and, in a way, reassert the right of the Empire to exist in the modern world. See Deringil,

This is exactly what the Young Turks were aiming at when trying to reorganize the Empire's administrative structure<sup>54</sup>; this is also what made them, at first, very optimistic for the annulment of the capitulations<sup>55</sup>.

The Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie, on the other hand, because of their different position within the Ottoman social structure, have a somewhat different perspective. Being businessmen, they see the economic dimension of the threat posed by Western Europe more clearly. Moreover, they are in a position to see that economic liberalism is not enough to promote economic development: thanks to a number of liberal economic measures taken by the Ottoman state during the 19th century, and with the help of the capitulations, the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie already conduct business in a liberal environment; Izmir is a very good example of the important role and wealth thus accumulated in the hands of the Greek Orthodox<sup>56</sup>. Despite this, however, they cannot attain the level of economic development and independence that they would wish for. The reason for this is that they are faced with competition from their European counterparts, who have already accumulated larger capitals and, in addition - in some cases at least - are not all that liberal but enjoy their states' support<sup>57</sup>. Thus, the Ottoman

Selim, *The Well-Protected Domains. Ideology and Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876 - 1909*, I.B.Tauris Publishers, London - New York, 1999.

<sup>54</sup> The Young Turks "hoped to make the administration of the Empire efficient so that foreigners would no longer need to claim their special privileges." Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, p. 62

<sup>55</sup> See *ibid*, p. 63, note 1.

<sup>56</sup> See Frangakis - Syrett, op. cit.. According to Frangakis - Syrett, "[s]till strong at the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries, Greek merchants made up between 40 and 50 percent of the city's merchants, Ottomans and Westerners included." *Ibid*, pp. 18 - 19.

<sup>57</sup> For a general overview of foreign capital in the Ottoman Empire, see Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism*, pp. 55 - 81. On the Western European states' support to their nationals' investments in the Ottoman Empire, the example *par excellence* being Germany, see *ibid*, pp. 77 - 81.

Greek bourgeoisie feel the need for a strengthening of Ottoman economy and they are anxious to get state support for their economic activities; indeed, when the boycott against Austria begins, Ottoman Greeks seem to be more fervent adherents to the idea of a national economy than the Young Turks<sup>58</sup>.

If we take a closer look at the Ottoman Greeks' economic activities, the importance of the economic conjuncture of the late 19th and early 20th centuries arises even more clearly. It is exactly during this time that new trends start developing, not just in the Ottoman Empire but in the whole of Eastern Mediterranean: on the one hand, Western European capital engaged in the area becomes more aggressive, seeking, after the 1873 crisis, new venues for profit, such as financial activities in the form of state loans and further penetration, both geographically speaking and in a greater variety of sectors<sup>59</sup>. On the other hand, local bourgeoisies, in the face of increasing Western European competition, also try to diversify their activities, in an effort to assert their independence vis-à-vis their former patrons<sup>60</sup>.

In the case of the Ottoman Empire, we see all of these tendencies arising. The effects of the 1873 crisis are not very severe for Ottoman economy, especially for

<sup>58</sup> See Çetinkaya, op. cit., pp. 135 - 145: Greek-language newspapers, such as *Amaltheia*, published in Izmir, in some cases support, during the boycott, harsher measures than their Turkish counterparts; their main argument is that the aim of the boycott is to contribute to the development of industry financed by local capital.

<sup>59</sup> See Vergopoulos, op. cit., pp. 233 - 239.

<sup>60</sup> See Keyder, Çaglar, Y. Eyüp Özveren and Donald Quataert, "Port-cities in the Ottoman Empire: some theoretical and historical perspectives", *Review*, XVI, Fall 1993, pp. 519 - 558, especially pp. 535 - 544, for a discussion of the post - 1873 economic environment, the efforts by local bourgeoisies to assert their economic independence and the indications of economic growth, including industrialization, in port-cities. The case of the Ottoman Empire and Izmir is examined in more detail below. For an analysis of the case of Greece, see Tsoukalas, op. cit., pp. 246 - 266. According to Tsoukalas, starting in the 1870's Greek businessmen of the *diaspora*, in the face of European competition, withdraw their capitals from their business bases in the Eastern Mediterranean (with the notable exceptions of Izmir and Istanbul) and seek new business opportunities within the Greek state.

Ottoman trade, which is the main revenue source in those areas directly influenced by international economic developments; the period until 1898 can be characterized as a period of only "relative stagnation" for Ottoman foreign trade<sup>61</sup>. In the following years, there are indications of considerable economic expansion in the Ottoman Empire; indeed, "the decade and a half before World War I emerges as the only sub-period for which a discernible and positive link can be established between foreign trade and economic growth."<sup>62</sup>

However, it is important to see who benefits from this growth. The Ottoman Empire constitutes no exception to the trends described above: here as well, foreign capital seeks further and more diversified penetration. Significantly enough, it is at this time that the construction of railroads by foreign companies intensifies and a period of stronger rivalry among the three main Western powers (Britain, France and Germany) begins<sup>63</sup>. At the same time, foreign capital, except for providing loans to the Ottoman state - an activity resumed in 1881, after the establishment of the PDA, and which becomes a more profitable operation, in the detriment of the Ottoman state<sup>64</sup> -, is also keen on engaging in direct investments<sup>65</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism*, pp. 33 - 34. Compare also the figures of Izmir's foreign trade, provided in Kütükoğlu, op. cit., p. 115: there is no important difference in the years before and after the 1873 crisis.

<sup>62</sup> Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism*, p. 40.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, pp. 34 - 36.

<sup>64</sup> On foreign capital in the Ottoman Empire, both in the form of loans and as direct investment, see ibid, pp. 55- 81. From 1881 on, debt payments are higher than inflows from external borrowing; new borrowing accelerates especially after 1901: ibid, p. 61.

<sup>65</sup> "[B]etween 1888 and 1914 the rate of growth of direct foreign investment was higher than the rate of growth of foreign lending." Ibid, p. 64.

It is for this reason that, even though trade is not severely damaged, local capitalists are adversely affected by the economic trends of the post - 1873 period. This becomes clearer after the establishment of the PDA: while in the period from 1876 (the date of the Ottoman default) until 1881 it is only locals - including Ottoman Greeks - who provide the Ottoman state with loans, after this date they lose this important source of revenue<sup>66</sup>. Thereafter, the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie, feeling that their position is precarious, turn to different forms of investment<sup>67</sup>.

It is in this context that the development of industry begins in the Ottoman Empire<sup>68</sup>; competition between foreigners and local Greeks - unfavorable for the latter - is better illustrated in this sector. Taking the example of Izmir, we can observe a clear increase in the number of industrial installations owned by locals, mainly Ottoman Greeks<sup>69</sup>. This does not mean, however, that the industrialization of Izmir is realized thanks to the efforts of locals: as observed by Trakakis, most of the Greek-owned establishments are small in size and product output; Ottoman Greeks only seem to have an advantage over foreigners in sectors where small-scale operations are the rule, such as flour mills or confectionaries<sup>70</sup>. On the contrary, all big industrial establishments - which, significantly enough, are established between 1902 and 1911 - belong to foreign capital,

<sup>66</sup> Exertzoglou, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>67</sup> Investment patterns of the Ottoman Greeks, before and after the turning point of 1881, have been established by Exertzoglou, op. cit..

<sup>68</sup> See Eldem, Vedat, *Osmalı İmparatorluğu'nun İktisadi Şartları Hakkında bir Tetkik*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, Ankara, 1994, p. 65, where a table of private industrial installations is provided: while there are only 19 such establishments in the period from 1881 to 1890, the number rises to 32 in 1891 - 1900, only to jump to 107 in 1901 - 1915.

<sup>69</sup> See Trakakis, op. cit., p. 60, for the numbers of "Greek" and "Turkish" industrial establishments of the vilayet of Aydin that we have already referred to (see note 23).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, pp. 115 - 246.

with only a marginal participation by Ottoman Greeks<sup>71</sup>. It seems that Ottoman Greeks were aware of the serious competition they were faced with and tried to react to it, by their support of the boycott, as noted above, as well as by considering uniting their efforts and establishing bigger and more competitive companies<sup>72</sup>.

This is the context within which, in July 1908, the Young Turk coup d' état is realized and the constitution restored, followed by an outburst of enthusiasm coming from all the peoples of the Ottoman Empire, Muslim and non-Muslim alike<sup>73</sup>. Then, at least for a brief period, it seems that all Ottomans will be able to fraternize and respond to a challenge which, apparently, they have started to feel: the economic penetration of Europeans, with its subsequent transformation of economic and social structures leading to a dependency of the Ottoman Empire from external forces. Increased support for Ottomanism, during this period, as well as the scheme of creating a national economy, are part of the efforts to respond to this challenge.

<sup>71</sup> The most important such establishments are: Oriental Carpet Manufacturers Ltd., Société Anonyme Ottomane des Manufactures de Coton de Smyrne, Compagnie Industrielle de Filature et de Tissage du Levant, Ottoman Cloth Co., Brasseries Réunies Bomonti - Nectar, Valex - Fabrique d' Extroit des Valonnées, Ottoman Oil Co. For a detailed examination of both Greek and foreign-owned businesses, see *ibid*, pp. 115 - 246. The case of the Brasseries Réunies Bomonti - Nectar is interesting for an illustration of competition between local Greeks and foreigners: when this company, already established in Istanbul with Swiss and Greek capital, was about to start operations in Izmir, another company, owned by Ottoman Greeks, also decided to start producing beer; Bomonti - Nectar, in order to eliminate competition, made a partnership with the Izmir entrepreneurs. See *ibid*, pp. 188 - 191.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 100 - 101. Trakakis discusses methods for the reinforcement of Greek-owned industry in detail, since this is exactly the scope of his study; it is obvious from his discussion that not only the Greek government (who, in 1920, hoped to acquire permanent sovereignty over Western Anatolia), but also local Ottoman Greeks were aware of the problem and were seeking remedy. *Ibid*, pp. 99 - 114.

<sup>73</sup> See Ahmad, Feroz, "Unionist relations with the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire, 1908 - 1914", in Braude, Benjamin and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol. I: *The Central Lands*, Holmes & Meier, New York - London, 1982, pp. 401 - 434.

But is it only élite groups, such as the Young Turks and the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie, who feel this challenge and try to respond to it? Actually, it has been argued that the Young Turk coup d' état is the result of - or is at least related to - general popular unrest, caused by bad economic conditions and, more generally, by the adverse effects of peripheralization and European penetration<sup>74</sup>. In the lack of extensive research on the issue, the relationship between the Young Turk movement and social unrest has not been proven; in addition, one should keep in mind the élite origins of this movement, as well as, in the case of Ottoman Greeks, the fact that the power balance, within the Greek Orthodox communities, is in favor of yet another élite group, namely the bourgeoisie. However, it is significant that, right after the coup d' état, a number of strikes break out, usually in large units owned by Europeans<sup>75</sup>, and that simple people have an active role in the boycott against Austrian goods, in some cases even spontaneously demonstrating<sup>76</sup>. It is true, then, that the people really resent European penetration and all that it entails; whatever responses this will give rise to, even if originating in the upper strata of society, will have to be taking into account this broader, popular basis, even if only to placate popular masses.

<sup>74</sup> On popular resentment of European economic penetration, see: Quataert, Donald, *Social Disintegration and Popular Resistance in the Ottoman Empire, 1881 - 1908. Reactions to European Economic Penetration*, New York University Press, New York and London, 1983; also his "Machine breaking and the changing carpet industry of Western Anatolia, 1860 - 1908", *Journal of Social History*, Spring 1986, pp. 117 - 136. Quataert argues that there exists a direct link between social unrest and the Young Turk movement: "the [1908] revolution stemmed from the dislocations brought on by rising European economic penetration of Ottoman society and its economy." Ibid, p. 133.

<sup>75</sup> On the strikes and other indications of the beginnings of a workers' movement, see: Karaklıla, Yavuz Selim, "The emergence of the Ottoman industrial working class, 1839 - 1923", in Quataert, Donald and Erik Jan Zürcher (eds.), *Workers and the Working Class in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, 1839 - 1950*, London, 1995, pp. 19 - 34; Dumont, Paul, "Sources inédites pour l' histoire du mouvement ouvrier et des courants socialistes dans l' Empire Ottoman au début du XXe siècle", in Dumont, Paul, *Du Socialisme Ottoman à l' Internationalisme Anatolien*, Editions Isis, Istanbul, 1997, pp. 21 - 39.

<sup>76</sup> Çetinkaya, op. cit., pp. 189 - 297.

Given this context and its variety of actors, a number of issues arise, concerning the efforts to strengthen the Ottoman Empire and build a national economy. Here, we shall be mainly dealing with two: first, both Muslim and non-Muslim elements try to react to the challenge posed by peripheralization, but will they be able to unite in the face of this challenge? In other words, will Ottomanism prove functional? Second, the challenge being acknowledged by a broad section of society, is national economy a response espoused by an equally broad, indeed popular, audience?

## **2. Ottomanism and national economy as expressed by *Ergatis***

Here, we shall try to provide answers to these questions through a Greek-language source, the newspaper *Ergatis*, published in Izmir from August 1908 until April 1909. The publication of *Ergatis* begins within this climate of political effervescence and enthusiasm of the early Young Turk era that referred to. The first issue of *Ergatis* appears on Sunday, 24 August 1908 (old calendar), that is, approximately one and a half months after the restoration of the constitution; thereafter, the newspaper will appear almost every Sunday (and, during the first two months of its publication, sometimes on Thursdays as well), until Sunday, 5 April 1909. In total, thirty-three issues of *Ergatis* were published<sup>77</sup>.

The composition of the team that cooperated for the preparation and publication

<sup>77</sup> The collection of *Ergatis* that we were able to locate lacks one (the 31st) of these issues. Let us note that, hereafter, when referring to any article published in *Ergatis*, the date is given in the "day - month - year" format; the calendar used by *Ergatis* is old-style, i.e. 13 days behind the western calendar.

of *Ergatis* illustrates the spirit of fraternization that emerged right after the restoration of the constitution. While all of the writers (others writing regularly and others only in one or two issues) and the two editors are Greek, the person appearing as the owner of the newspaper is a Turk, Mehmet Mecdet. Information on Mehmet Mecdet is very limited: it seems that he was a middle-ranking bureaucrat and a prominent member of the Young Turks in Izmir who was imprisoned for a brief period of time right before the change of regime in July 1908; then, he engages in the publication of *Ergatis* and, briefly later, regains his official position at the vilayet of Izmir<sup>78</sup>. Interestingly enough, even though towards the end of its publication *Ergatis* - for reasons that we shall discuss later - seems disillusioned with the Young Turks, Mehmet Mecdet appears as the owner of the newspaper until the very last issue, his last article being published on the thirtieth issue<sup>79</sup>.

However, Mehmet Mecdet does not write regularly in *Ergatis*; there are very few articles written by him<sup>80</sup>. What is more, he is the only Turk writing in *Ergatis*; all the other writers are Greek, including the two editors, Leandros Kokkinidis and Dimitris Kotzamanis. Of these two, the latter writes in almost all issues and seems to be coordinating the publication, while the former does not write any articles (at least not with his real name; a number of articles are signed with pseudonyms); in fact, beginning at the fourteenth issue, only Kotzamanis appears as editor.

<sup>78</sup> This information is extracted from: "Enas adelfos mas" [One of our brothers], *O Ergatis*, n. 2, 28 - 08 - 08, p. 1, quoting the French newspaper *Le Temps*; "To zitima tou Tsesme" [The question of Çesme], *O Ergatis*, n. 4, 07 - 09 - 08, p. 3; Dumont, "Sources inédites...", op. cit., p. 34. According to Dumont, *Humanité* had also referred to Mehmet Mecdet, considering him to be a convinced supporter of socialism in the Ottoman Empire. *Ibid*, p. 34.

<sup>79</sup> Mehmet Mecdet, "Salpisma" [Trumpet-call], *O Ergatis*, n. 30, 01 - 03 - 09, p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> There are only three articles by Mehmet Mecdet: a salutation to *Ergatis'* readers starting with the words "My dear brothers! My brave workers!", *O Ergatis*, n. 1, 24 - 08 - 08, p. 1; a letter to the readers, again beginning with "My dear brothers", *O Ergatis*, n. 3, 31 - 08 - 08, p. 1; "Salpisma", op. cit..

An inquiry into the backgrounds of the editors and writers of *Ergatis* would be interesting. Kokkinidis studied medicine in Athens and later in Italy but never graduated and, upon his return to Izmir, started working as a journalist; Kotzamanis, to the best of our knowledge, was an architect or a sculptor. As for the writers, all those that we were able to identify were either journalists working at the same time for other Greek-language newspapers of Izmir or professionals, mainly doctors and lawyers<sup>81</sup>. Thus, even though *Ergatis* declares itself to be a “friend, protector, advisor to the people - a newspaper for the working people”<sup>82</sup>, its editors and writers are not workers themselves, but come from bourgeois backgrounds.

It seems, though, that they represent a particular section of the Greek Orthodox bourgeoisie of Izmir that espouses innovative ideas, and this not only because they are ready to cooperate with a Young Turk. Many of the most active collaborators of *Ergatis* are also working for another Greek newspaper, *Imerisia* (Daily), which, already ten years earlier, heralded some of the ideas expressed in *Ergatis*: *Imerisia* was first published in 1899 with the cooperation of two Greeks and one Turk, declaring it would work for the strengthening of friendship between the two peoples; later on, its ownership and editorship passes to the hands of people that we also find cooperating with *Ergatis* and, in 1907, *Imerisia* becomes the first newspaper in Izmir to support and use the simple form of the Greek language (*dimotiki*), which, during that period, had come to symbolize, for

<sup>81</sup> This information is extracted from Solomonidis, op. cit., and 1909 - 1910 *Ellinikos Emporikos Odigos tis Tourkias* [Greek Commercial Guide of Turkey], Izmir, 1910.

<sup>82</sup> This is *Ergatis'* motto, appearing in all issues until it is changed, on the 18th issue, to “newspaper for the working people - protector of the people - equality, fraternity”.

Greeks inside and outside the Greek kingdom's borders, progressive ideas.<sup>83</sup>

a. Ottomanism as a patriotic message for the saving of the Empire

It is obvious, then, that the ideas expressed by *Ergatis* have not been conceived by its creators in a vacuum: the new economic and political realities of the late 19th and early 20th centuries have already caused the appearance of new currents of thought within the Greek Orthodox community of Izmir. Especially Ottomanism seems to be enjoying wide approval: for instance, in October 1908 *Ergatis* announces the founding of a "Journalistic Union", formed by all the Turkish-language newspapers and a number of the Greek-language newspapers of Izmir, with the aim of "working for the fraternity of the Greek and Turkish elements"<sup>84</sup>.

*Ergatis* itself is a fervent supporter of Ottomanism. Not only do its writers constantly use expressions such as "fatherland", "nation", "our country", "our land" etc. in reference to the Ottoman Empire<sup>85</sup>, they go so far as to use all kinds of nationalist rhetoric in order to encourage their readers' patriotism. *Ergatis'* Ottomanist patriotism becomes all the more evident during the boycott against Austrian goods launched in October 1908. When breaking the news of the boycott, in the eleventh issue, an author

<sup>83</sup> On *Imerisia*, see Solomonidis, op. cit., pp. 196 - 204.

<sup>84</sup> "News", *Ergatis*, n. 12, 13 - 10 - 08, p. 3. Significantly enough, the Greek newspapers participating in this union, *Amaltheia*, *Armonia*, *Nea Smyrni*, *Imerisia*, *Kopanos* and *Ergatis*, have nothing else in common; for example, *Amaltheia*, *Armonia* and *Nea Smyrni* have been waging war against *Imerisia* because of its insistence on using *dimotiki*. See Solomonidis, op. cit., pp. 203 - 204.

<sup>85</sup> Expressions like these are used many times in all the issues of *Ergatis* and in all kinds of articles. We should note, however, that *Ergatis'* references to "fatherland" etc. are sometimes confusing, since they refer, according to the occasion, to different foci of loyalty. Thus, "fatherland" can sometimes be taken to have a narrower sense, denoting only Izmir; it is even more interesting, and intriguing, to see that the word "fatherland" is used both in reference to the Ottoman Empire and Greece; we shall be trying to provide an explanation for this seeming contradiction in the second part of this paper.

using the pseudonym O Syntagmatikos [The Constitutional] refers to all Ottomans as “the Turkish people”<sup>86</sup>, “Anatolites” [Easterners] and “the Turkish nation”<sup>87</sup>. In later issues, too, we see all kinds of sentimental references to the Ottoman Empire one would expect from nationalists: the Empire is “our great fatherland” and “Great Mother”<sup>88</sup>.

It is even more interesting to examine some definitions of patriotism and devotion to the Ottoman fatherland offered by *Ergatis*, such as Kotzamanis’s declaration that “[w]e owe our lives only to our Fatherland.”<sup>89</sup> The boycott, an act of patriotism, is justified with the following words: “all of us who live in Turkey should, for the sake of the Fatherland, wage war against every Austrian merchandise [...] let us show that we are ready to obey the Fatherland’s voice [...]”<sup>90</sup>. All those who violate the boycott are considered to be traitors and are excluded from the nation: “Curse and anathema to those who will not fight the enemy who came, during the Nation’s most difficult times, to spoil our peace.”<sup>91</sup>

Actually, despite this sentimental, nationalist rhetoric, what *Ergatis* is defending, when referring to Ottomanism, is something quite concrete and realistic: it is the idea of a

<sup>86</sup> “The Turkish people as a whole angry for this unfair treatment [...] decided never to buy or use again Austrian goods [...]: O Syntagmatikos, “Enas Polemos” [A War], *O Ergatis*, n. 11, 05 - 10 - 08, pp. 1 - 2.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid; the author then goes on to defend, interestingly enough, the wearing of the *kalpak*, which was later to become a symbol of Turkish nationalism, instead of the Austrian-made *fez*.

<sup>88</sup> O Syntagmatikos, “Ap ti politiki: Tourkia kai Bulgaria” [Politics: Turkey and Bulgaria], *O Ergatis*, n. 12, 13 - 10 - 08, pp. 1 - 2.

<sup>89</sup> D. N. Kotzamanis, “Eimetha i den eimetha eleftheroi;” [Are we or are we not free?], *O Ergatis*, n. 18, 30 - 11 - 08, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> “Kato i Austria” [Down with Austria], *O Ergatis*, n. 11, 05 - 10 - 08, p. 2.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. The people, in the name of national unity, are urged to boycott not only Austrians themselves but also those Ottomans who conduct business with the Austrians: “this war is necessary to all; he [referring to an Ottoman Greek businessman who cooperates with the Austrians] is one, we are many. Cursed be whoever sets foot in his factories.” Ibid.

nation based on democratic values and the common interests of its citizens. This is the reason for its enthusiasm about the restoration of the Constitution and for its admiration of the Young Turks, thanks to whom it was restored.

*The abolishment of despotism and the restoration of constitutional liberties destroyed the spiritual fetters that were obstructing our advancement as individuals and as a State.*

*The divine gift of Liberty, which we owe to our brave officers and heroic army, creates a new situation, that will benefit all the classes of our society.*

*It is for this that Government, Army and People are working, in one spirit and one heart.<sup>92</sup>*

*Ergatis'* editors believe that the Constitution, offering equal rights to all, will form the basis for the establishment of a democratic polity, where all Ottomans will be able to work for their common good. It is in this context that we should read *Ergatis'* preoccupation with such notions as state, nation and citizens' rights<sup>93</sup>. *Ergatis'* political message is a message of patriotic engagement of all citizens to work in the best interest of the Ottoman Empire:

*[The end of despotism] does not mean that we are also free of duties. On the contrary. It is exactly now that we start having duties. [...] Nothing can be done*

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<sup>92</sup> "To Programma mas" [Our Programme], *O Ergatis*, n. 1, 24 - 08 - 08, p. 1. Admiration for the Young Turks and the army is expressed in a number of articles, even not directly related to politics. "Now that our brothers, the Ottoman soldiers, liberated us [...]" : G. N. Vergis, "O giatros tou ergatou" [The worker's doctor], *O Ergatis*, n. 1, 24 - 08 - 08, p. 3; "To Enver Bey [...] honoured brave man": O Syntagmatikos, "Merikes skepseis" [Some thoughts], *O Ergatis*, n. 9, 25 - 09 - 08, p. 3.

<sup>93</sup> We even find in *Ergatis* a series of five articles, entitled "On the rights of man", aimed at offering a basic political education to its readers, where state, nation, types of government and the citizens' rights and duties are examined. These articles, all signed "Dr. D. N. Kalligeris (lawyer)", are: "Peri dikaiomaton tou anthropou" [On the rights of man], *O Ergatis*, n. 3, 31 - 08 - 08, p. 2; "Peri dikaiomaton tou antropou", *O Ergatis*, n. 4, 07 - 09 - 08, p. 3; "Peri dikaiomaton tou anthropou C [n. 3]", *O Ergatis*, n. 7, 18 - 09 - 08, p. 4; "Peri dikaiomaton tou anthropou D [n. 4]", *O Ergatis*, n. 9, 25 - 09 - 08, p. 4; "Peri dikaiomaton tou anthropou E [n. 5]", *O Ergatis*, n. 11, 05 - 10 - 08, p. 4.

*without our will, the will represented, better or worse, by Parliament. We command our fortunes and it is in our hands to raise a big and strong state upon the ruins that we are left by despotism. [...] If the state is not doing well, responsibility is all ours. A big responsibility formed by small and separate individual responsibilities. Each one of us adds, with a foolish word, with his acts, something to the unified and big responsibility that weights on a whole nation. [...] Individuals make nations; the big and definitive current of national policy is formed by individual acts. [...] Let us hope that we will all open our eyes and see what our real duty to the fatherland is [...]<sup>94</sup>*

The nation and its destiny being formed by individual citizens, the fortunes of citizens, too, are related to the survival of the Ottoman Empire; the benefit of the Empire is equated with the benefit of its peoples: we can detect, here, the patriotism of people who have come in contact with the democratic ideals of the French Revolution<sup>95</sup>.

*At last, Parliament has opened, this Parliament that will save us from old despotism and will make our Nation walk on the path of progress and civilization. [...] [...] Internal discord should stop. We have so many external enemies. Let us unite, let us all work for the consolidation of this constitution in our country. Let racial passions be forgotten. Deputies, representatives of the whole State, it is you that we are talking to now and it is from you that we expect our salvation. [...] [Y]ou have been called to reorganize it [the Ottoman Empire] and, should we say, to save it.<sup>96</sup>*

Put schematically, *Ergatis'* Ottomanism is an expression of the following

<sup>94</sup> "Protohronia" [New Year's Day], *O Ergatis*, n. 22, 04 - 01 - 09, p. 2.

<sup>95</sup> It is certainly no accident that they use slogans originating from the liberal ideals of the French Revolution. See, indicatively, the first-page title of the New Year's Day issue: "1909, Liberty - Equality - Fraternity". *O Ergatis*, n. 22, 04 - 01 - 09, p. 1.

programme: a unification of the Ottoman peoples - as represented in a democratically elected parliament - for the reorganization and strengthening of the Ottoman Empire, so that it can be part of the modern world. References to "progress" and "civilization" must be read together with another passage of the abovementioned article: "An Empire huge like the Ottoman Empire should be shining like a sun at the doorstep of the East and the peoples of Europe should be talking about it in respect and fear."<sup>97</sup> These words express the wish not only to build a strong state, but to respond to a much more complex challenge coming from the West, by modernizing and becoming part of the "civilized world". The "Easterners" are aware of their difference from the West and take pride in their nation<sup>98</sup>. But, at the same time, they believe that, through their own efforts and especially thanks to a democratization and reorganization of the state, they should become more like the West and assert the place that they deserve in the modern world: "But we, too, have made important steps towards civilization and, with the new regime given to us by constitutional Government, [we have progressed] even more"<sup>99</sup>.

This is, then, a political project for the modernization of the Ottoman Empire and its incorporation into the modern world in terms defined no longer by the international power balance but according to the needs and desires of the local peoples. In order to

<sup>96</sup> "I Vouli" [Parliament], *O Ergatis*, n. 19, 06 - 12 - 08, p. 1.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>98</sup> "the glorious people of Turkey, the people who worked miracles throughout their history and astonished the World with their achievements and heroic acts": speech delivered by *Ergatis'* contributor, the doctor Skevos Zervos, during a protest meeting for the defense of the freedom of the press, published under the title "Ap' to syllalititrio" [From the protest meeting], *O Ergatis*, n. 26, 01 - 02 - 09, pp. 3 - 4.

<sup>99</sup> O Syntagmatikos, "I enosi ti dynami" [Unity is power], *O Ergatis*, n. 5, 11 - 09 - 08, p. 3. This article discusses the issue of workers' organization, taking the example of France, and notes that the French, being Europeans, are "more civilized" than "us", "Easterners". Another article where a link between constitution and "civilization" is established, is: "Protohronia", op. cit..

achieve this, all Ottomans should unite and create a modern nation of free citizens.

*Ottoman Brothers, why have we gathered here all the Nations of the East, all the races of our glorious Fatherland, the immortal Turkey? [...] if only to exclaim to the Government that we no longer want chains [...] [Because of despotism] our fatherland, which under a free government can make us all happy and rich, was poor; we had been impoverished, while, when we gain perfect justice, absolute equality and all of us peoples fraternize, we will become the happiest and richest people of the world.<sup>100</sup>*

It is only thanks to such a deep transformation - and not a simple reorganization of the state machinery - that the Ottoman Empire will be able to assert its political independence vis-à-vis the West: "If our state [...] keeps on being a puppet in the hands of this and that state, we can no longer blame it on this *pasha* or that *bey*, since power is no longer in the hands of *pashas* and *bseys*."<sup>101</sup>

#### b. National economy as part of the project to save the Ottoman Empire

At the same time, *Ergatis* also focuses on the economic dimension of this reorganization effort. In order to save the Empire, it is necessary to assert not only its political but also its economic independence. This will only be possible with the promoting of economic development within the Ottoman Empire through the Ottomans' own efforts; to achieve this, foreign economic penetration should be limited. Thus, *Ergatis* argues for the building of a national economy and ardently supports the boycott

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<sup>100</sup> Speech by Skevos Zervos, "Ap' to syllalitirio", op. cit.

<sup>101</sup> "Protohronia", op. cit.

against Austrian goods<sup>102</sup>.

*Ergatis'* editors see a clear link between political and economic independence, as well as between progress and economic development. Thus, when calling on the Parliament to lead the efforts to reorganize and save the Ottoman Empire they go on to note:

*We have so many treasures and we leave them [unexploited].*

*There is gold hidden within our lands. [...] We live in the Era of Work and Progress.*

*Support the industry, commerce and [commercial] navy of the country.*

*All of our companies, all of them, are foreign: Railways, Gas [companies], Water [companies], Tramways etc.. Make sure that all these become Ottoman, belongings of the country.*

*Next to our Post offices you see so many foreign [post offices] and all foreign subjects live like kings in our lands, while we suffer.<sup>103</sup>*

*Ergatis'* argumentation in favor of a national economy is extremely rich and interesting. In all of its issues, even in those where articles directly dealing with this topic do not appear, we can find indications of *Ergatis'* strong preoccupation with the building of a national economy<sup>104</sup>. Of course, preoccupation with economic issues is much more

<sup>102</sup> See, for example, two very enthusiastic articles published on the day when *Ergatis* announces the declaration of the boycott: "Enas polemos", op. cit.; "Kato i Austria", op. cit.

<sup>103</sup> "I Vouli", op. cit.

<sup>104</sup> For instance, calls on the workers to accumulate their savings, placing them in local banks or insurance companies, may be considered to be part of *Ergatis'* plan to create a national capital for the promotion of national economy. On many occasions *Ergatis* makes such calls; unions and syndicates that have placed their money in local banks are also congratulated (see, for example: "Kali arhi" [Good start], *O Ergatis*, n. 1, 24 - 08 - 08, p. 3; "Entopia" [Local news], *O Ergatis*, n. 21, 20 - 12 - 08, p. 4). *Ergatis* even makes a deal with a Greek insurance company for the offering of special terms to workers ("O Ergatis gia tous ergatas" [Ergatis for the workers], *O Ergatis*, n. 23, 11 - 01 - 08, p. 3), since saving up is "a duty towards one's self and towards society" ("I 'Amoivaia" [Amivaia, a Greek insurance company], *O Ergatis*, n. 24, 18 - 01 - 09, p. 4).

pronounced on special occasions, such as the boycott and the strikes that break out in the Izmir region during the last months of 1908.

Most of the strikes break out in the large establishments that belong either to foreign companies or to the PDA<sup>105</sup>; this provides an occasion for the expression of hostility against foreign capitalists: bad work conditions in European-owned factories offer an additional reason for supporting national economy. It is deemed unfair for Ottomans to work in harsh conditions, to work "not like men of the present century but like savages living in the most barbaric nations"<sup>106</sup>, while foreigners not only receive better pay<sup>107</sup>, but even make large profits thanks to Ottoman resources.

*When Mr. Barfield came, he replaced them [chief workers] with Englishmen, because according to Barfield Englishmen should take most of the money, since the Company's capitals are English. He forgets that capitals are every man's penny that you take from our country and thus the Company increases its capitals and feeds him [Barfield] and all his countrymen, who, if it weren't for Turkey so that the*

<sup>105</sup> We find, in *Ergatis*, a number of news items and articles concerning strikes. The most important of these is, of course, the strike at the Aydin railway, in which *Ergatis*' editors play a leading role. From the seventh issue on, there are references to the Aydin railway almost in every issue: first, there is a wide coverage of the strike (in numbers 7, 8 and 9 of *Ergatis*); then, even after the strike ends, *Ergatis* keeps on accusing the railway company - especially its manager, Barfield - of mismanaging the railway and maltreating the workers (there appear, for example, three articles with the telling title "Ta orgia tou sidirodromou Aidiniou" [The Aydin railway orgies] - in numbers 19, 21 and 23 of *Ergatis*, pp. 1, 4 and 2, respectively - and a whole issue, n. 20, bearing the same title as a general title of the issue). Another important strike is the strike of the boatmen at the salt-pan of Foça, that belongs to the PDA: "I apergia ton kaixidon ton Alykon stes Fokais" [The strike of the boatmen of the salt-pan at Foça], *O Ergatis*, n. 13, 19 - 10 - 08, p. 2; "O nomos peri apergiás" [The law on strikes], *O Ergatis*, n. 15, 02 - 11 - 08, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> "I apergia ton kaixidon ton Alykon stes Fokais", op. cit.

<sup>107</sup> On the issue of inequality of pay, as well as inequality of opportunities to gain promotions, and maltreatment of local workers by foreigners, see: "I apergia ton kaixidon ton Alykon stes Fokais", op. cit.; "Megali dimosiografiki anakrisi. O sidirodromos Aidiniou" [Big journalistic inquiry. The Aydin railway], *O Ergatis*, n. 20, 13 - 12 - 08, pp. 1 - 2; "Ta orgia tou sidirodromou Aidiniou", *O Ergatis*, n. 23, 11 - 01 - 09, p. 2. See also Quataert, *Social Disintegration*, pp. 74 - 80, where the unequal treatment of European and Ottoman workers and employees on the Aydin railway is examined.

*capitalists can build the Railway, would die of hunger [...]*<sup>108</sup>.

*Ergatis* constantly urges the government to prevent abuses by foreign companies and to promote industrialization<sup>109</sup>. It is interesting to mention that, at least in one occasion, *Ergatis* denounces bad work conditions in a foreign-owned company without having been reminded of the issue because of a strike; we might even say that *Ergatis* is trying to provoke a strike and thus damage foreign-owned companies<sup>110</sup>.

It is also interesting to note that it is not only *Ergatis'* regular contributors, but a number of its readers too, including both entrepreneurs and workers, who raise their voices against European economic interests and for the creation of a national economy. We see, for instance, a worker calling on his colleagues to buy local products<sup>111</sup> and an entrepreneur asking the people to support local industry: "Now the new regime supports and protects Industry, but the people, too, should understand what their duty is and [...] prefer the products of our country and defend the interests of our Industry. It is their [workers'] interests, this is in their benefit."<sup>112</sup> National economy seems to be, then, much

<sup>108</sup> "Ta orgia tou sidirodromou Aidiniou", *O Ergatis*, n. 19, 06 - 12 - 08, p. 1

<sup>109</sup> See, for example: "Kai pali o stratos" [The military, again], *O Ergatis*, n. 18, 30 - 11 - 08, p. 2. This article accuses the army of treating violently the tobacco smugglers in Izmir (the tobacco monopoly, the Regie, belongs to the PDA); the newspaper claims that it does not support smuggling, but what the state should do about it is to provide work to the poor people who are obliged to earn a living by smuggling: "They [the state] should start public works, they should prevent the unfair treatment [of workers] in certain companies [...], they should provide for the development of industry. Asia Minor is full of riches, that we let vanish in vain and to be unjustly taken by foreign hands!"

<sup>110</sup> See D. N. K[otzamanis], "Ta metalleia ton Karabournon" [The Karaburnu mines], *O Ergatis*, n. 5, 11 - 09 - 08, p. 3. Kotzamanis, after noting that the mines are European-owned and describing the bad work conditions, calls on the workers to "seek their rights".

<sup>111</sup> Grigorios Iatropoulos, "Na enothoume!" [Let's unite!], *O Ergatis*, n. 9, 25 - 09 - 08, p. 2; Iatropoulos is secretary general of the shoe-maker craftsmen's union.

<sup>112</sup> Ilias K. Kokkonis, "Pros ton ergatin tou kathikontos" [To workers with a sense of duty], *O Ergatis*, n. 4, 07 - 09 - 08, p. 4; Kokkonis is an entrepreneur and owns an umbrella factory. Let us note that both this and the previously mentioned article by Iatropoulos were published before the launching of the boycott.

more than simply a measure to be used in order to strengthen the Ottoman Empire; it is, rather, the very basis for the unification of all Ottomans along patriotic lines, since it is the common preoccupation of large segments of Ottoman society and since the building of a national economy requires the active engagement of all Ottomans.

What causes the Ottomans to unite is their reaction against the foreigners' increasing economic penetration and influence in the Ottoman Empire. In the passages of *Ergatis* that we mentioned above, this reaction usually takes on the form of personal attacks against individual foreigners; such attacks even have, in some cases, racist overtones<sup>113</sup>. However, *Ergatis* seems to realize that the problem is not with individuals and thus passes from personal attacks to a general assessment, in political terms, of European economic penetration and political influence in the Ottoman Empire.

All this becomes evident during the railway strike, when the railway company, through the British Consulate, tries to use its influence with the Ottoman government in order to protect its interests<sup>114</sup>. This is seen as a violation of the Ottoman Empire's sovereignty; when the strikers are faced with the army, Kotzamanis exclaims:

*Tell me, please, are we living under the English Government or under the Turkish [government]? What is this? You have come here to arrest whom? Either the English Consul goes, or we will not obey. We all submit [i.e. to the state], but as long as the army takes orders from the English Consul we shall not disband.*<sup>115</sup>

<sup>113</sup> In one of the articles dealing with the Aydin railway, *Ergatis* mentions that one would expect Barfield to treat workers better, since he comes from Britain, "a constitutional Nation"; *Ergatis'* conclusion is, though, that this is not the case, because Barfield is Jewish and "blood is blood": "Ta orgia tou sidirodromou Aidiniou", *O Ergatis*, n. 21, 20 - 12 - 08, p. 4.

<sup>114</sup> On the strike and efforts to reach a compromise between the workers, the company and the government, see Quataert, *Social Disintegration*, pp. 80 - 90.

<sup>115</sup> D. N. K[otzamanis], "I apergia ton ergaton tou sidirodromou Aidiniou. I pragmatiki alitheia" [The strike of the workers of the Aydin railway. The actual truth], *O Ergatis*, n. 8, 21 - 09 - 08, pp. 1 - 3.

Similar statements can be found in *Ergatis* even after the strike has ended: “Are we living under the Turkish Government or under Barfield’s Government? [...] If we have a Government, it should impose limits on the subjects of the great Powers who, instead of teaching us civilization, come here and try to teach us corruption.”<sup>116</sup> We can discern, here, a clearly anti-imperialistic discourse; what is being defended is the democratic right of the people (since, as we have already noted, a democratically reformed Ottoman Empire is to express the will of the people) to command their economic and political fortunes<sup>117</sup>.

But is this democratic discourse, discernible in *Ergatis*’ anti-imperialism, also used in reference to the internal situation of the Ottoman Empire, that is, to relations between different social groups within the Empire? *Ergatis*’ programme, in both its political and economic dimensions (as expressed in its perception of Ottomanism and national economy) is a project for the complete transformation of the Ottoman Empire so that it can become part of the modern world in an equal footing with European nations. For the challenge posed by Europe to be successfully countered, this transformation is something that the Ottomans should achieve through their own efforts, even if the model to be used is European. In this respect, the West is, at the same time, an enemy to react against and a role-model to imitate. This dual relationship with the West provokes an important contradiction in *Ergatis*’ discourse. Even though the group around *Ergatis*

<sup>116</sup> “Eimetha i den eimetha eleftheroi;”, op. cit.

<sup>117</sup> *Ergatis* clearly reacts to both economic and political control of the Great Powers upon the Ottoman Empire and sees a link between the two: “[...] they [foreigners] come here to our country and suck the blood of our poor workers, not minding for the Fortune of our Nation. They take the fruits of our hard work, our sweat, our riches and then leave. Now they are trying to command our lives, too. But this, you shall not achieve, gentlemen.” Ibid.

refuse to be guided, to be “taught”, directly by Europeans<sup>118</sup>, they do believe that there is something to be learnt, that there exists some kind of a hierarchical order of developed and underdeveloped peoples<sup>119</sup>. This is, then, the question to which they do not seem to be providing a clear answer: is modernization to be achieved by the people themselves or are the people to be guided towards the desired development?

When it comes to *Ergatis'* discussion of the internal situation of the Ottoman Empire, this contradiction, in somewhat different terms, becomes all the more evident and gains in importance. How is this ambiguous stance vis-à-vis the West to be transferred in relationships among different social groups within the Ottoman Empire? If modernization is to be accomplished by peoples themselves, then the project for the transformation - modernization of the Empire should be a process to be carried out with the democratic consensus and participation of the whole society. If, on the other hand, modernization is a process through which the “underdeveloped” people are to be guided, if the group to which *Ergatis'* editors belong, the bourgeoisie, accept such a hierarchical order within Ottoman society itself, they will have to assume themselves the role that they refuse to recognize to Europeans and try, as the most developed group of Ottoman

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<sup>118</sup> See the previously mentioned passage from *Ergatis*, that refers to “the subjects of the great Powers who, instead of teaching us civilization, come here and try to teach us corruption”: it is accepted that there is something that the Europeans should be teaching; the problem is that Europeans, probably because of their selfish interests, are not doing so.

<sup>119</sup> This inconsistency is probably better illustrated in “Ta tramvai sti Gallia kai sta meri mas. Anoihto gramma tou Ilia Kokkoni, ombrelobiomihanou, apo ti Marsillia opou vriskotan se taxidi” [Tramways in France and in our lands. An open letter by Ilias Kokkonis, umbrella manufacturer, from Marseilles where he was on a trip], *O Ergatis*, n. 25, 25 - 01 - 09, p. 3. The author asks why the manager of the Izmir tramway, “a French, who comes from a developed country, the Mother of freedom”, is not doing anything to improve the tramway service in Izmir, so that the working people and commerce can benefit; he goes on to urge the Young Turks, “who speak French”, to explain to him what his mission is. Once again, Europe (in this case the excellent - according to Kokkonis - tramway service of Marseilles) is the model; but the Ottomans should try and make up themselves for all the knowledge and experience that the Europeans do not seem willing to share with them.

society, to lead the modernization of the Empire, transforming the rest of society according to their wishes. In other words, how far are they willing to go in their espousing of a democratic modernization? Do they support a deep democratization of the Ottoman Empire? This brings us to the second question that we have formulated, namely whether national economy can be a project espoused not only by élites but also by the people as a whole; the answer to this question will also help us understand why *Ergatis'* project ultimately failed, even though it seemed as though Ottoman Greeks and the Young Turks could unite around this programme.

## Part II

### ***Ergatis' failure: its inability to propose a real alternative for the organization of Ottoman society***

If we judge solely by *Ergatis'* political programme, its failure looks inexplicable: this programme seems to be in harmony with the Young Turks' aims; why, then, should these two groups not be able to cooperate for the realization of the Ottoman Empire's political and economic independence? We know, however, that, far from accomplishing its objectives, *Ergatis* ceased publication in April 1909, only nine months after the publication of its first issue. Thus, in order for us to understand why *Ergatis* failed, we do not have to look too far: the answer lies in *Ergatis* itself.

Indeed, starting very early, during the elections for the Ottoman parliament, we can observe that *Ergatis'* relationship with the Young Turks, in some topics at least, is tense<sup>120</sup>. Even though, at first, *Ergatis* is a fervent supporter (and admirer) of the Committee of Union and Progress, we can observe, in its pages, a gradual disillusionment with the Young Turks. In particular, some abuses by the army make Ottoman Greeks skeptical about the real intentions of the Young Turks, and, mostly, about their ability to

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<sup>120</sup> "Politika gegonota" [Political events], *O Ergatis*, n. 14, 26 - 10 - 08, p. 3: the Young Turks are accused of "electoral illegalities" against the Greek Orthodox; "I apistia tou Komitatou gia tin ypopsifiotita tou Kou Karolidi" [The Committee's dishonesty on the issue of Mr. Karolidis's candidature], *O Ergatis*, n. 15, 02 - 11 - 08, p. 3: Turkish electors and the Young Turks are accused of violating the agreement they had made with the Greek electors and not voting for Karolidis. These events are briefly discussed in Boura, Catherine, "The Greek Millet in Turkish politics: Greeks in the Ottoman Parliament (1908 - 1918)", in Gondicas and Issawi, op. cit., pp. 193 - 206.

implement all that they have promised<sup>121</sup>.

However, the group around *Ergatis* do not totally lose hope in the Young Turks<sup>122</sup> and, unlike a large part of the Ottoman Greeks, do not immediately support those groups who oppose the CUP. They believe that, if Ottomanism is to work and the Ottoman Empire to be saved, this can only be achieved thanks to the Young Turks.

*This is the situation today; the Constitution was in danger; the Parliament, with its decisiveness, saved it; and Parliament means the Young Turk party of "Union and Progress", because majority belongs to this party. [...] Both the Committee and the Liberals agree on that we should have a constitution [...]; everything else, centralization, decentralization etc. are details. Let's first secure the constitution, let's get rid of all absolutist elements and [...] then we can be divided in constitutional parties and decide which programme is the best. Actually, only the Committee have the power to defend the constitution [...]; until the Constitution is secured, a fall of the Committee shall be a disaster for the state and for all the nations who live in this state.*<sup>123</sup>

<sup>121</sup> “We thought that the Constitution would ameliorate the situation, but things are going from bad to worse. And because of whom? Because of the Army, the Army who first took up guns and cried out FREEDOM... [...] We think that it is time for the officers, whom we were admiring until yesterday, to teach to their inferiors respect for citizens [...]: D. N. Kotzamanis, “As prosehi o stratos” [The army should be careful], *O Ergatis*, n. 17, 16 - 11 - 08, p. 1. The following also refers to similar incidents: “Ta idia Pantelaki mou...” [Same old story], *O Ergatis*, n. 19, 06 - 12 - 08, p. 3; “Kai pali o stratos”, op. cit.; “Xypna lae!” [Wake up, people!], *O Ergatis*, n. 24, 18 - 01 - 09, p. 1; Giannis M., “Apo to drama tou Sevdikioi” [From the Sevdiköy tragedy], *O Ergatis*, n. 24, 18 - 01 - 09, p. 3.

<sup>122</sup> In a number of articles we see them state that, in spite of the problems that have arisen between the governemnt (or, sometimes, Turks in general) and Ottoman Greeks, cooperation is still possible and, indeed, desirable: “I Vouli”, op. cit.; “Protohronia”, op. cit.. When a rumor spreads, and is then denied by the government, that there might be a boycott against Greeks, *Ergatis* reads: “According to the official statement, this false rumor was spread by Austrians and Bulgarians, in order to upset the good relationship that exists between the two brother nations [i.e. Turks and Greeks]”; “Entopia” [Local news], *O Ergatis*, n. 21, 20 - 12 - 08, p. 4.

<sup>123</sup> “I politiki katastasi” [The political situation], *O Ergatis*, n. 27, 08 - 02 - 09, p. 2. This article refers to the events of February 1909, when the Grand Vezir, Kâmil Paşa, appointed his nominees as ministers of war and marine; the CUP were able to challenge this decision in Parliament and bring about Kâmil’s fall. Following this, though, the Liberals kept on their efforts to challenge the CUP’s power; during this

At the same time, however, other voices from within *Ergatis* point to a total disappointment in the Young Turks. We can discern two elements in *Ergatis'* argumentation against the Young Turks, two elements that, even if not immediately used against the Young Turks, already exist at the first issue of the newspaper, but are gradually more often evoked: on the one hand, there is a stress on the rights and duties of citizenship, on the idea that, if democracy is to work and the Empire to be saved, then the Ottoman Greeks' opinion should be taken seriously into account; on the other hand, we see *Ergatis* clearly separate between Turks and Greeks, in an obviously nationalist spirit.

*Once and for all, we should learn, by any means, whether the Turks are our friends or our enemies.*

*[...] [W]e stand up, with the bravery that should distinguish any constitutional citizen, and ask those who govern this poor land: Are we friends or are we enemies?*

*[...]*

*At last, brothers, think as free and as Constitutional citizens, for the benefit of our homeland. You are running towards catastrophe and you do not want to realize it.*

*We [i.e. Ottoman Greeks] shall live for ever. But what about you?<sup>124</sup>*

These are the two elements on which we shall base our analysis of why *Ergatis'* Ottomanist project does not work.

However, the change of spirit obvious in *Ergatis'* pages is striking and cannot be interpreted only by referring to pre-existing elements in *Ergatis'* discourse. Actually, the

sequence of events, and until the "counter-revolution" of March 1909, the Greek press generally supported the Liberals. See Ahmad, "Unionist relations...", pp. 409 - 410.

<sup>124</sup> "Filioi i ehetrooi;" [Friends or enemies?], *O Ergatis*, n. 26, 01 - 02 - 09, p. 1. There are a number of articles with similar argumentation; one of the most characteristic ones is "Gia ton Agion Tafo" [On the Holy Grave], *O Ergatis*, n. 30, 01 - 03 - 09, p. 1: "[...] stop deceiving us, don't call us to work for our common mother. We don't have a mother, we have a bad step-mother. [...] No, we don't have a fatherland. You are not letting us have a fatherland."

question that we should ask is why, if such elements and nationalist reflexes existed, the group around *Ergatis* were not able to overcome them, despite their declared desire to cooperate with the Young Turks for the strengthening of the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, even in the newspaper's last issue, together with accusations against the Young Turks, we can discern their continuing desire to see a strengthened Ottoman Empire, even if they have started to believe that this shall be more difficult than they first thought.

*Now that you [the Young Turks] [...] have exposed the whole nation to danger, what have you achieved? If behind the army's acts lies the great nation-saving work of the liberals, honor and glory to the leaders. But if this revolt is to take us back to absolutism, where shall we look for the culpable? In you, of course, you who rested on an accidental glory and [...] claimed to pass for great patriots.<sup>125</sup>*

Thus, before going into their specific differences of perception with the Young Turks, we should first try to understand why they were not able to overcome them. Most probably, this is due to Young Turk policies, as well; actually, it seems that the Young Turks, on their side, had been annoyed by *Ergatis'* stance<sup>126</sup>. Nevertheless, here we shall focus on *Ergatis* and try to demonstrate why its programme could not have constituted an

<sup>125</sup> "Ti ekamate" [What have you done], *O Ergatis*, n. 33, 05 - 04 - 09, p. 1.

<sup>126</sup> *Ergatis'* last issue appears on the 5th of April, 1909 (old calendar), only five days after the "counter-revolution" has broken out. Closing down the newspaper was definitely not its editors' decision: on the last issue, we read a call on subscribers to pay their dues. It looks plausible that the newspaper might have been closed down by the Young Turks, right after they regained power. When the last issue appears, news that the army might be marching towards Istanbul to suppress the "counter-revolution" have already circulated, as we read on the third page (on the "counter-revolution" and its suppression see Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, pp. 40 - 46). In addition, on the last page of *Ergatis'* last issue, in the series that we have managed to locate, appears the following hand-written remark: "Ergatis' last issue. After this issue began the systematic persecution of its editor and owner (sic), Mr. Dimitris Kotzamanis. The Young Turk committee 'Union and Progress' decided his assassination and then, with the help of the Greek Consulate, D. Kotzamanis fled Izmir." We do not know who wrote this remark and we have not been able to verify it; however, it might be considered as one more indication of *Ergatis'* deteriorated relationship with the Young Turks and of the violent end of its publication.

alternative for the organization of Ottoman society and, thus, the overcoming of differences between Ottoman Greeks and Turks. In order to do so, we have to examine *Ergatis'* vision of society.

### **1. *Ergatis'* vision of society: corporatism in the service of the nation**

#### ***a. Ergatis' social programme: the roles of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie***

When it comes to *Ergatis'* social programme, a contradiction is immediately discernible: while *Ergatis* is supposed to be a “newspaper for the working people”, its editors and writers are, as we saw, better described as bourgeois than as proletarians. However, this is not enough to lead us to a conclusion on their position vis-à-vis the proletariat; indeed, we can find in *Ergatis* a number of references to socialism<sup>127</sup>, including some calls for the workers to unite and form their own, separate ideology. Especially Kotzamanis argues for “the struggle [of the workers] against the dominance of the rich and their [the workers'] organization as a separate class and an independent social force”<sup>128</sup>; he wants *Ergatis* “to develop [its] programme boldly and clearly and untouched by any influence of bourgeois ideology.”<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Kotzamanis himself claims to be a socialist; see “Gia ton kyrio eisaggelea” [To the public prosecutor], *O Ergatis*, n. 24, 18 - 01 - 09, p. 4.

<sup>128</sup> D. N. Kotzamanis, “O skopos tis Panergatikis” [The aim of the Workers’ Union], *O Ergatis*, n. 13, 19 - 10 - 08, p. 1

<sup>129</sup> D. N. Kotzamanis, “Thelei o laos ti glossa tou” [The people want to have their own language], *O Ergatis*, n. 15, 02 - 11 - 08, p. 1. See, also, the following articles: O Syntagmatikos, “I glossa tou Ergati” [Ergatis' language], *O Ergatis*, n. 4, 07 - 09 - 08, p. 2; D. N. Kotzamanis, “To parapono tou ergati”, [Worker's complaint], *O Ergatis*, n. 10, 28 - 09 - 08, p. 1; D. N. Kotzamanis, “Ti tha mas sosi” [What will save us], *O Ergatis*, n. 20, 13 - 12 - 08, p. 1.

It seems to us, however, that any references *Ergatis* makes to socialism do not point to a coherent understanding of socialism; indeed, as we shall try to demonstrate later, *Ergatis'* not-so-often references to socialism are based on a distorted understanding of class divisions. Without going into a detailed analysis of all of *Ergatis'* allusions to socialism, let us note that these allusions are, at best, perplexing: there are, in various articles, references to Jaurès and Bebel<sup>130</sup>, to the Fabians<sup>131</sup> and to socialism's alleged close affinity with Christianity<sup>132</sup>.

Actually, by 1908, the first stirrings of a workers' movement - with socialist references, in some cases - have made their appearance in the Ottoman Empire, especially in large cities such as Istanbul, Thessaloniki and Izmir<sup>133</sup>. Even though we cannot talk of a fully formed and organized working class, a proletariat does exist; its living conditions are far from satisfactory and there are some efforts for workers to organize and struggle for their rights<sup>134</sup>. However, according to all indications, Ottoman workers, instead of demanding what they perceive of as their legitimate rights, usually

<sup>130</sup> Grigorios Skrous, "Empros" [Forwards], *O Ergatis*, n. 3, 31 - 08 - 09, p. 2

<sup>131</sup> We find in *Ergatis* an article, published in series, by a writer who is presented to the public as a member of the Fabians: Beatrice Webb, "I pistis ston sosialismo" [Faith in socialism], *O Ergatis*, n. 15, 02 - 11 - 08, p. 1 - 2; Beatrice Webb, "I pistis ston sosialismo", *O Ergatis*, n. 16, 09 - 11 - 08, p. 2; Beatrice Webb, "I pistis ston sosialismo", *O Ergatis*, n. 17, 16 - 11 - 08, p. 2.

<sup>132</sup> "Christianismos kai sosialismos" [Christianity and socialism], *O Ergatis*, n. 16, 09 - 11 - 08, p. 2; "Christianismos kai sosialismos", *O Ergatis*, n. 17, 16 - 11 - 08, p. 3; "Christianismos kai sosialismos", *O Ergatis*, n. 18, 30 - 11 - 08, p. 4. This article, published in series, is actually taken from another newspaper of the same title, *O Ergatis*, appearing in Volos, Greece. Some of *Ergatis'* own contributors also refer to an affinity between Christianity and socialism: N. G. Amiras, "O ergatis sti koinoniki viopali" [Workers struggling to earn a living in society], *O Ergatis*, n. 20, 13 - 12 - 08, p. 3; "HRISTOS ANESTI" [The resurrection of Jesus], *O Ergatis*, n. 32, 29 - 03 - 09, p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> For an overview, see: Dumont, Paul, "A propos de la 'classe ouvrière' ottomane à la veille de la révolution jeune-turque", in Dumont, op. cit., pp. 1 - 19; Tunçay, Mete, "Cumhuriyet öncesi sosyalist düşünce", in *Moden Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, cilt I: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi, İletişim* Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, pp. 296 -309.

<sup>134</sup> See Dumont, "A propos..."

employ more "traditional" tactics, asking the state to protect them against the newly emerging capitalist order<sup>135</sup>. The state and the bourgeoisie, on their part, try to avoid a confrontation with the workers, using paternalistic methods and attempting to enhance - mainly through philanthropy - the workers' incorporation to the ethno-religious communities to which they traditionally belong<sup>136</sup>.

In this respect, *Ergatis'* editors differ somewhat, but not radically, from the rest of the Greek Orthodox bourgeoisie in their attitude towards workers. On the one hand, they seem more willing to accommodate workers' demands; on the other hand, while they, too, want to avoid a rupture between workers and the bourgeoisie (or, for that matter, the state), they envisage the formers' incorporation into society at large in different terms: the alliance between different segments of society, which they propose, is based no longer exclusively on the traditional values and structures; the aims of this alliance are new, as well. This is only normal, since, for *Ergatis'* political programme to be realized, a transformation and mobilization of the whole of society is required.

It is in this context that we should read *Ergatis'* terming of the workers as "the

<sup>135</sup> On this issue, see Quataert, Donald, "Ottoman workers and the state, 1826 - 1914", in Quataert, Donald, *Workers, Peasants and Economic Change in the Ottoman Empire, 1730 - 1914*, ISIS Press, Istanbul, 1993, pp. 141 - 157. Examples for this can also be found in *Ergatis*; see, for instance, "I diadilos tis perasmenis Kyriakis" [The protest meeting of last Sunday], *O Ergatis*, n. 9, 25 - 09 - 08, pp. 1 - 2: various workers' unions of Izmir sign a resolution in support of the Aydin railway strikers, where we read that "they have decided to ask for the protection of the Ottoman Government and the hero of Freedom Enver Bey for the supporting of the workers' violated rights."

<sup>136</sup> "Maintenue dans l' infantilisme politique et social, la couche ouvrière ottomane était indubitablement condamnée à se contenter des structures (au demeurant fort efficaces) qui lui étaient proposées par la société traditionnelle." Dumont, "A propos...", p. 14. On the function of philanthropy as a means to incorporate, be it "passively", the proletariat of the Izmir Greek Orthodox community, see Anagnostopoulou, op. cit., pp. 346 - 347. Tsoukalas also argues that Greek communities functioned "like real state mechanisms" and managed to incorporate all segments of the population, even the proletarians; Tsoukalas, op. cit., pp. 344 - 347 (italics in the original).

foundation of Society”, the “great and robust element of civilization”<sup>137</sup>. Modern era being “the Era of Work and Progress”<sup>138</sup>, workers represent exactly the essence of the modern world: work. Thus, it is them “[...] who are always and everywhere the pillars of societies [...], who defend the fatherland when it is in danger [...], who honor the nation, thanks to whom societies advance [...]”<sup>139</sup>. Workers have, then, an important mission to fulfill and this is what *Ergatis* urges them to do: “You are its [life’s] chosen ones, its favorite children. The future is smiling at you.”<sup>140</sup>

It is true that *Ergatis* has a pro-workers attitude: we find, in its pages, articles on the bad work and living conditions of the people, calls for workers to unite, news on the founding and activities of syndicates etc.<sup>141</sup>; such a pro-workers outlook is obvious even in the novels *Ergatis* publishes in series<sup>142</sup>. As for the strikes that break out after the change of regime, *Ergatis* always supports them; it is significant that a number of its collaborators - especially Kotzamanis but also Tsourouktsoglou, Mehmet Mecdet and others - while not workers themselves, lead strikes or serve as unofficial arbitrators

<sup>137</sup> M. Mecdet, “Agapita mou adelfia...”, op. cit.

<sup>138</sup> “I Vouli”, op. cit.

<sup>139</sup> Skevos Zervos, “Dyo lexeis dia ton ergatin” [Two words for the worker], *O Ergatis*, n. 2, 28 - 08 - 08, p. 2.

<sup>140</sup> D. N. Kotzamanis, “Sikothite!” [Rise up!], *O Ergatis*, n. 2, 28 - 08 - 08, p. 1

<sup>141</sup> There are hundreds of news items and articles on such issues. Let us note only few of them, indicatively: on p. 4 of *Ergatis*’ 1th issue (24 - 08 - 08), we read the news of the founding of union of marble workers; in “Mikres eidiseis” [Small news], *O Ergatis*, n. 5, 11 - 09 - 08, p. 2, the gatherings of various syndicates are announced. Similar news are also announced in: “Kai alli prosfora” [One more contribution], *O Ergatis*, n. 8, 21 - 09 - 08, p. 4; “I panergatiki enosi” [The workers’ confederation], *O Ergatis*, n. 10, 28 - 09 - 09, p. 3; “I ekdromi stes Palies Fokais” [The trip to Old Foca], *O Ergatis*, n. 13, 19 - 10 - 08, p. 2; “Mikres eidiseis”, *O Ergatis*, n. 15, 02 - 11 - 08, p. 3; “Entopia” [Local news], *O Ergatis*, n. 20, 13 - 12 - 08, p. 4.

<sup>142</sup> A novel by the telling title “O Ergatis stin koinoniki viopali” [Workers struggling to earn a living in society], signed by the initials L. V., is published in issues 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 12 of *Ergatis*.

between employers and employees<sup>143</sup>.

It is exactly this that provides us with a hint for the interpretation of their attitude towards workers: why do people who are not workers themselves become so active in syndicalism? It is not that they consider themselves as part of the “working people”; it is significant that almost all articles addressed to the workers are written in the “you” - instead of “we” - form<sup>144</sup>. On the contrary, they seem to believe that they are, in a way, “superior” to the people and feel responsible for educating and guiding the people; they have set as their mission to “save” the working people: “For the sake of these innocent, honest people, who earn their living honorably, [...] it is them that we thought how to save and we have sworn to do so.”<sup>145</sup> Thus, the workers are considered to be an uneducated, ignorant mass of people in need of guidance: “[the people] are naive and harmless like innocent sheep.”<sup>146</sup> They should “understand that what we tell them and

<sup>143</sup> To site only a few examples: in issues 7 (“I nea apergia ton ypallilon tou sidirodromou Aidiniou”, op. cit.), 8 (“I apergia ton ergaton tou sidirodomou Aidiniou. I pragmatiki alitheia”, op. cit.) and 9 (“Ta sidirodromika” [On the railway], O Ergatis, n. 9, 25 - 09 - 08, p. 2) of *Ergatis*, where we read the story of the strike at the Aydin railway, we see Kotzamanis and Tsourouktsoglou play a leading role on the side of the workers and Mehmet Mecdet (who again favors the workers, as it seems) trying to mediate between the workers, the company and the government. Mehmet Mecdet assumes a similar role on the part of the shoemaker workers (“Mikres eidiseis”, O *Ergatis*, n. 3, 31 - 08 - 08, p. 3), while the workers of Çesme ask him and N. Tsourouktsoglou to take charge of the “workers’ issue” of Çesme: “To zitima tou Tsesme” [The issue of Çesme], O *Ergatis*, n. 4, 07 - 09 - 08, p. 3. Kotzamanis is also president of the tobacco workers’ union, “Anagennisi” (“I ‘Anagennisi’” [‘Renaissance’], O *Ergatis*, n. 11, 05 - 10 - 08, p. 4), and of the coalminers’ union, “Statheroti” [“Stability”] (“Entopia”, O *Ergatis*, n. 20, 13 - 12 - 08, p. 4). We should note, on N. Tsourouktsoglou, that he is not directly involved in *Ergatis*; no articles appear with his name. However, the fact that he is the owner of Imerisia (see above, footnote n. 83), together with the often references to him in *Ergatis* as a “friend of the people”, as well as the advertising of his law office in *Ergatis*, give the impression that he is part of - or at least close to - the circle around *Ergatis*. On Tsourouktsoglou see Solomonidis, op. cit., pp. 197 - 198.

<sup>144</sup> See, for example, a definition of workers provided in Skevos Zervos, “Dyo lexeis dia ton ergatin”, op. cit.: it is clearly stated that those whose work is not manual (the examples given are those of scientists, diplomats and priests) are not part of the working people; thus, the author, a doctor, is also excluded from the working people. A similar definition is given in: O Syntagmatikos, “Yper tou laou” [In support of the people], O *Ergatis*, n. 1, 24 - 08 - 08, p. 4.

<sup>145</sup> D. N. Kotzamanis, “O skopos mas” [Our aim], O *Ergatis*, n. 1, 24 - 08 - 08, p. 2

<sup>146</sup> O Syntagmatikos, “Yper tou laou”, op. cit.

what we advise them is the only truth that they should comply to.”<sup>147</sup>

And how, exactly, are they advised? Except for some advice on health, nutrition and even morals<sup>148</sup>, it is usually their rights as workers that they are called to learn with the help of *Ergatis*<sup>149</sup>. On this issue, the first lesson to be learnt is that workers’ rights are not unlimited<sup>150</sup>; employers have rights, too<sup>151</sup>. Cooperation between employers and employees is in the best interest of both of them and of society as a whole:

*Ergatis [...] will try, through adequate and enlightening education, to achieve a full and perfect cooperation between capitalists and workers, because, according to an economic law of unquestionable validity, what harms the interests of the capitalists also harms the interests of the workers.*<sup>152</sup>

Indeed, workers are advised as follows: “But if you ask for too much [when going on a strike], then the only thing you will achieve is to destroy both yourselves and your superiors [employers], who will go bankrupt and thus only foreign merchants and shopkeepers will profit.”<sup>153</sup>

<sup>147</sup> D. N. Kotzamanis, “O skopos mas”, op. cit.

<sup>148</sup> See the following articles: G. N. Vergis, “O giatros tou ergatou” [The worker’s doctor], *O Ergatis*, n. 1, n. 3, n. 7, n. 9; Is. K. Tatsoglou, “Pos mas vlaptei o alkoolismos” [How alcoholism harms us], *O Ergatis*, n. 4, n. 7; O Douleftis, “I doulia” [Work], *O Ergatis*, n. 20, 13 - 12 - 08, p. 2; Alex. Kampadis, “Kreofagoi i hortofagoi;” [Should we eat meat or vegetables?], *O Ergatis*, n. 23, 11 - 01 - 09, p. 4.

<sup>149</sup> See the series of articles by N. Amiras: “I yperaspisis tou ergatou” [In defense of workers], *O Ergatis*, n. 1, n. 2, n. 3, n. 4, n. 5, n. 6, n. 11, n. 12, n. 13; see also “O ergatis stin koinoniki viopali” [Workers struggling to earn a living in society], *O Ergatis*, n. 19, 06 - 12 - 08, p. 2 and N. G. Amiras, “O ergatis sti koinoniki viopali”, *O Ergatis*, n. 20, 13 - 12 - 08, p. 3.

<sup>150</sup> “Don’t you think that we want to give to workers rights that they do not have and do not deserve”: D. N. Kotzamanis, “O skopos mas”, op. cit.

<sup>151</sup> See ibid: “Just like you [the workers] have the right to strike, to leave your work, in the same manner the employer, too, has the right not to accept you [back to work].”

<sup>152</sup> “To programma mas” [Our programme], *O Ergatis*, n. 1, 24 - 08 - 08, pp. 1 - 2.

<sup>153</sup> “O ergatis stin koinoniki viopali” [Workers struggling to earn a living in society], *O Ergatis*, n. 19, 06 -

The meaning of this treatment of workers is quite clear; it is consistent with *Ergatis'* political programme. Workers' demands should be accommodated, to a certain extent, so that the "enlightened" élite can mobilize them in support of national economy and the strengthening of the Ottoman Empire. Even the organizing of workers in a workers' confederation is seen as a "patriotic necessity"<sup>154</sup>; "true patriotic feeling is hidden in the people's hearts"<sup>155</sup>. To those who complain that the workers do not raise their voices in defense of the nation, *Ergatis* replies:

*[...] in order [for you] to ask this or that from the people, you should start first by defending the people [...]. Workers' unions [...] do not need advice in order to perform patriotic work.*

*But was any moral satisfaction ever offered to our workers' unions for all the sacrifices they have made until now for every national goal? Their only satisfaction was that they were offended during the last assembly at the Episcopate, when they were called a "mob"! [...]*

*Workers' unions would always hold the banner of liberty, if you knew how to guide them. Now [...] let all those who were yelling against them during the assembly give the example and the workers will follow them, but this time they will follow them as simple soldiers of duty. We shall let those who always want to lead take up the leadership.*<sup>156</sup>

The position of workers, then, should be improved; in this respect, *Ergatis* seems to be satisfied neither with the workers' position nor with the attitude of those who

12 - 08, p. 2

<sup>154</sup> "Prosklitiria" [Calls], *O Ergatis*, n. 19, 06 - 12 - 08, p. 4

<sup>155</sup> "Kai pali ta ergatika somateia" [The workers' unions again], *O Ergatis*, n. 19, 06 - 12 - 08, p. 3

<sup>156</sup> "Sti 'Nea Smyrni'" [To 'Nea Smyrni' (a newspaper)], *O Ergatis*, n. 23, 11 - 01 - 09, p. 3

should assume the role of guiding the workers<sup>157</sup>. In *Ergatis'* vision of society, if workers form one part of the equation, employers constitute the other; thus, it tries to influence employers, too. Far from a socialist stance, *Ergatis* does not position itself against employers<sup>158</sup>: there is no argumentation against capitalists in principle; quite on the contrary, capitalists are described as being “workers, who had a frugal father or grandfather, who were saving and, gradually, accumulated a sum of money”<sup>159</sup>. It is only certain exploitative and cruel - and usually foreign - employers who are *individually* attacked<sup>160</sup>.

When behaving like they should - treating workers fairly, sharing their wisdom with the rest of society and working for the economic development of the fatherland - employers are praised<sup>161</sup>. It is “big capitalists [...] that the workers do not like. But we should not always be against capitalists. And you know why? Because no work can be done without capitalists, just like no work can be done without workers.”<sup>162</sup> Since all big

<sup>157</sup> In its programme, *Ergatis* states that it will try, on the one hand, to educate workers and, on the other, to “teach and convince everyone that the working population, who forms the largest part of our society, is an element worthy of our respect and love”. “To programma mas”, op. cit.

<sup>158</sup> In fact some of Izmir’s entrepreneurs seem to be its readers and, indeed, contributors. See, for example, a humorous article, according to which, despite its name, *Ergatis* is not being read by workers, but “enters the best salons”: Theatis, “Stroggyla logakia” [Clear words], *O Ergatis*, n. 25, 25 - 01 - 09, pp. 1 - 2; see, also, the two articles by Ilias Kokkonis, a factory owner, in issues 4 and 25 of *Ergatis*.

<sup>159</sup> Nikos Amiras, “I yperaspisi tou ergatou B’. Ti einai kefalaion;” [In defense of workers B. What is capital?], *O Ergatis*, n. 2, 28 - 08 - 08, pp. 1 - 2.

<sup>160</sup> Out of numerous examples let us cite only two: “Parapona” [Complaints], *O Ergatis*, n. 2, 28 - 08 - 08, p. 2, where employers are asked, in a very polite manner, to fulfill their obligations towards workers: “The truth is that they did not withhold a lot of money [from the workers], but we think that they should comply with their obligations”; “Ston diefthynti tou trohioromou Kiostepe” [To the manager of the Göztepe tramway], *O Ergatis*, n. 23, 11 - 01 - 09, p. 2.

<sup>161</sup> See, for example, “Oi alithinoi prostates ton ergaton” [The true protectors of the people], *O Ergatis*, n. 10, 28 - 09 - 08, p. 4, where those termed by *Ergatis* “good” employers are praised.

<sup>162</sup> Nikos Amiras, “I yperaspisi tou ergatou B”, op. cit.

industrial installations in Izmir are owned by foreigners, and having in mind *Ergatis'* anti-imperialist stance, we can assume that it is foreigners who are implied by "big capitalists", while "small", local capitalists are thought to be indispensable for economic development.

The role of local capitalists is not only economic. All those with a "superior" status within society<sup>163</sup>, are expected to assume, in a way, a "civilizing mission"<sup>164</sup> for the advancement of society. *Ergatis'* contributors constantly argue that employers and the "good people"<sup>165</sup> in general should constitute an example for the workers, by treating them well; they should also try to educate the people, by establishing night schools for the working people and organizing lectures<sup>166</sup>. We go back, then, to what we have already noted: the people are ignorant and need guidance; more than that, they are treated as children whom the bourgeois should "bring up"<sup>167</sup>. The role of the bourgeoisie, in this case, is not only to contribute to the strengthening of the Ottoman Empire and to the

<sup>163</sup> See Dr. D. Kalligeris, "Peri dikaiomaton tou anthropou E" [On the rights of man E], *O Ergatis*, n. 11, 05 - 10 - 08, p. 4: it is argued that, after the French Revolution, there are no aristocrats, but "in compliance with the Constitution, people have esteem and respect" only to the rich and educated; we can detect here a genuinely bourgeois outlook.

<sup>164</sup> Even if this element is not very pronounced, it seems to us that *Ergatis* regards the social transformation / modernization that it proposes in a very wide sense, as a deep transformation implying a change of mentality and, to a certain extent, culture, on the part of the "Easterners". See, for example, Grigoris Vasilas, "To theatro" [Theatre], *O Ergatis*, n. 29, 29 - 02 - 09, p. 3.

<sup>165</sup> Athanasios Dimopoulos, "Gia ta garsonia. Poios ptaiei;" [On waiters. Whose fault is it?], *O Ergatis*, n. 1, 24 - 08 - 08, p. 4. Dimopoulos, the owner of four coffee shops, presents himself as an ex-waiter and offers an evaluation of this profession, where inequalities between rich and poor are most pronounced, and deplores the fact that the bourgeoisie is not helping the proletariat to improve themselves: "They [waiters] leave darkness and, when they come close to the good people [...] you [the "good people"], with your manners, made them worse than they already were".

<sup>166</sup> This suggestion is put forward in "To programma mas", op. cit., and D. N. Kotzamanis, "O ergatis sto sholio" [Workers at school], *O Ergatis*, n. 6, 14 - 09 - 08, p. 1; see, also, "Liga logia" [A few words], *O Ergatis*, n. 18, 30 - 11 - 08, p. 4.

<sup>167</sup> Amiras argues that "speeches should be organized for the development of the people. [...] This is the only way for us to bring up the people." N. G. Amiras, "O ergatis sti koinoniki viopali", op. cit.

building of a national economy, but also, as a social élite, to lead the modernization of society.

### b. Corporatism and its function in the Ottoman Empire

It is obvious, then, that *Ergatis* does not see a conflict between employees and employers; on the contrary, it wants to promote cooperation between the two. In the final analysis, the group around *Ergatis* have a corporatist conception of society, according to which both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are part of the working people. Thus, while, as we have stressed, they do not consider themselves as workers in the strict sense of the word, on other occasions they provide a broader definition of the working people:

*Are you a worker?*

*You should be proud of it; no one has a right to live more than you do. Everyone and everything live thanks to you [...].*

*No matter what kind of worker you are, if you work on land with your mattock and oxes, if you process stone, iron, wood, on land or at sea, if you trade in any way, whatever you are, as long as you work with your hands or with your spirit [...] you are a worker.*<sup>168</sup>

Not only is everyone considered to be part of the working people; work is regarded as a source of respect and pride that helps man “approach the great worker, God”<sup>169</sup>.

This conception goes hand in hand with the aim of building a national economy. The Ottoman Empire lacking capital, the only way to promote economic development is

<sup>168</sup> Nikos Santorinaios, “Eisai ergatis;” [Are you a worker?], *O Ergatis*, n. 1, 24 - 08 - 08, p. 4. See also N. G. Amiras, “I yperaspisi tou ergati D”” [In defense of workers D], *O Ergatis*, n. 4, 07 - 09 - 08, pp. 1 - 2; Nikos Santorinaios, “Arminies gia to lao mas” [Advice to our people], *O Ergatis*, n. 6, 14 - 09 - 08, p. 3.

<sup>169</sup> N. G. Amiras, “I yperaspisi tou ergati D””, op. cit.

by making up for this lack: since *Ergatis* advances that both capitalists (i.e. capital) and workers (i.e. work) are necessary for anything to be created, we can assume that it has the same conception not only for any specific business, but for the Empire in its entirety; thus, Ottomans should try, in a way, to create capital through hard work, in the same way as, in *Ergatis'* view, a frugal worker can become a capitalist.

Besides, in *Ergatis'* corporatist perception, the nation can be compared to a family, and nations, just like families, should live in harmony<sup>170</sup>. This desire for harmony can be observed on all levels and in reference to all groups: in order for various groups to cooperate harmoniously for the advancement of the fatherland, harmonious cooperation should first be achieved within groups. Thus, *Ergatis* proposes, for the organization of workers, a scheme which is based more on solidarity than on common interests and demands<sup>171</sup>; it seems that it proposes a similar scheme for groups of employers, as well<sup>172</sup>.

In *Ergatis'* eyes, corporatist organization of society is more than a political programme: it is a new kind of morality that it is trying to promote. Capitalists, workers, the state, all have their roles to play in this process; the primary duty of all of them is to act, in economic and social life, not according to their selfish interests, but according to national interest<sup>173</sup>. In fact, personal interests and collective interest cannot be thought of

<sup>170</sup> “[...] in order for a family, a society, a nation or a state to exist with harmony and love [...]: Dr. N. Kalligeris, “Peri dikaiomaton tou anthropou” [On the rights of man], *O Ergatis*, n. 3, 31 - 08 - 08, p. 2.

<sup>171</sup> This is obvious in all articles referring to workers' organization, as well as in *Ergatis'* calls for workers to help their needy colleagues. See, indicatively: “Kai alli prosfora”, op. cit.; N. G. Amiras, “I yperaspisi tou ergati” [In defense of workers], *O Ergatis*, n. 13, 19 - 10 - 08, p. 2.

<sup>172</sup> For example, even though in previous issues we see them supporting the marble-workers in their conflict with their employers, they subsequently congratulate employers for their decision to form their own union: “Mikres eidiseis” [Small news], *O Ergatis*, n. 18, 30 - 11 - 08, p. 3.

<sup>173</sup> In reference to the bourgeoisie, the argument used is that, since absolutism has ended, they should

as separate: everyone should work for his personal advancement and, thus, contribute to the advancement of the Ottoman Empire. This is valid both for economic advancement<sup>174</sup> and for the strengthening of the Empire in general: "Let us [workers] unite, let's become a force [...] and then we will save ourselves from slavery and, at the same time, we shall be useful to the Fatherland. Then, the fatherland shall love us like a Mother and no more like a step-mother, as is the case now."<sup>175</sup>

Within the corporatist society envisaged by *Ergatis*, its own role is that of an enlightened leader. As groups shall be working in harmony within them and, in turn, cooperating with each other, a hierarchy is formed: in the basis, we see the workers, who, "being more naive because less educated", can be more easily guided<sup>176</sup>; on the next step, we find white-collar workers, who are, to an extent, educated and can contribute more to

behave accordingly: employers should treat their workers fairly and merchants should not profiteer. See "Den einai prammata afta" [This is not right], *O Ergatis*, n. 11, 05 - 10 - 08, p. 4 and "Stous kapnemporous" [To the tobacco traders], *O Ergatis*, n. 13, 19 - 10 - 08, p. 4. See also Anonymous, "Anoiho gramma sti diefthynsi tou ergati" [An open letter to the editor of Ergatis], *O Ergatis*, n. 17, 16 - 11 - 08, where maltreatment of workers is denounced with a very characteristic phrase: "here [in a textile factory] the Constitution has not reached". The state's role is, on the one hand to try and control profiteering and, on the other, to prevent employers' abuses and arbitrate between employers and employees: "Gia ta karvouna" [On coal], *O Ergatis*, n. 16, 09 - 11 - 08, p. 3, where the state is requested to stop profiteering; "Merikes skepseis", op. cit., where the state - characteristically termed as the workers' "mother" - is asked to protect workers; "I lysi tis apergias. I niki ton apergon" [The end of the strike. The victory of the strikers], *O Ergatis*, n. 10, 28 - 09 - 08, pp. 2 - 3, where the state's role as an arbitrator between the railway company and workers is praised. We have discussed the workers' envisaged role in the previous section.

<sup>174</sup> See N. Amiras, "I yperaspisi tou ergati", *O Ergatis*, n. 6, 14 - 09 - 08, pp. 1 - 2: the author argues that, more than go on strikes, workers should try to educate themselves and become specialized workers; thus, their products being better, employers shall win more money and, in turn, workers will receive better pays. A similar view is also expressed by Ilias Kokkonis, in "Ta tramvai sti Gallia kai sta meri mas...", op. cit.: France is praised because, according to the author, everybody is dedicated in working for economic development.

<sup>175</sup> D. N. Kotzamanis, "Na enothoume" [Let's unite], *O Ergatis*, n. 11, 05 - 10 - 08, p. 1.

<sup>176</sup> "Even a young child can understand the things that I am telling you, but neither workers nor capitalists understand them well and thus they fight all the time. [...] But I believe that you, being more naive, because less educated, can understand more easily than your superiors": N. G. Amiras, "I yperaspisi tou ergati" [In defense of workers], *O Ergatis*, n. 3, 31 - 08 - 08, p. 1.

the advancement of society<sup>177</sup>; on the upper echelon of this hierarchy, there are, as noted when discussing the role of employers, the bourgeoisie; all these are to be lead by *Ergatis*, as the pioneering element of society<sup>178</sup>. Thus, if the first element in *Ergatis'* vision of society is corporatism, the second is elitism, expressed in this desire for a hierarchical organization of society<sup>179</sup>.

But why do the group around *Ergatis* envisage the transformation of Ottoman society along these lines of corporatism and elitism? What is the final aim of their social programme? The objective of *Ergatis'* project, as we have noted, is to achieve the modernization of the Ottoman Empire and the assertion of its political and economic independence; it is this purpose that the transformation of society should serve. It is in this context that we should read *Ergatis'* corporatism: the modernization of society is a prerequisite for the development of the Ottoman Empire (and, thus, its survival); the specific programme of social transformation, proposed by *Ergatis*, aims at achieving the modernization of society, while, at the same time, guaranteeing - thanks to corporatism - social harmony<sup>180</sup>.

In turn, social harmony, in combination with elitism, would ensure one of

<sup>177</sup> See the comments made by *Ergatis* upon the founding of the "Ellinikos Syllagos Emporoypallilon Smyrnis" [Greek Union of Shop-assistants of Izmir]: "Pou boroume na elpizoume" [What we can hope for], *O Ergatis*, n. 14, 26 - 10 - 08, p. 2.

<sup>178</sup> See *Ergatis'* programme, published in the first issue of the newspaper ("To programma mas", op. cit.), where *Ergatis'* wish to guide both employees and employers is clearly stated; see also O Syntagmatikos, "Ergatis' Moisis" ['Ergatis' Moses], *O Ergatis*, n. 3, 31 - 08 - 08, p. 4, where the newspaper's task is compared to Moses' leading the Jewish people.

<sup>179</sup> Of course, the one does not exclude the other. For an enlightening brief discussion of corporatism see Parla, Taha, *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp 1876 - 1924*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1985, pp. 42 - 50.

<sup>180</sup> Corporatism expresses a yearning for harmony in the unstable environment of capitalism; it is exactly this that its scheme for the organization of society is trying to achieve. See Parla, op. cit..

*Ergatis'* most important objectives: the achievement of its social and political aim of development and modernization in a *short period of time*. The group around *Ergatis*, conscious of the relative underdevelopment of the Ottoman Empire, when compared to Europe, want to imitate Europe's achievements in the shortest possible period of time. This is the reason why they choose the specific programme of social transformation which they propose: leading the people through this process seems to be providing a short-cut towards modernization. Therefore, if we look at their social programme, we see that they do provide an answer to the dilemma that we referred to earlier: their search of a short-cut towards development and modernization pushes them to interpret - and try to impose - modernization not as a process to be lived through by the people (a process that would inevitably be slow), but as a very specific set of conditions to be *taught* to the people.

It is at this point that the contradictive elements in *Ergatis'* programme cause the failure of its whole project. The group around *Ergatis* refuse to foreigners - as we pointed out when discussing their anti-imperialism - the role of an enlightened leadership that would modernize - and "civilize", in a way - the Ottoman Empire and its population; they do, though, accept the existence of such a role, which they reserve to themselves. Thus, the democratic element that we discern in *Ergatis'* anti-imperialistic discourse is lost in reference to the internal situation of the Ottoman Empire. If peoples, collectively, have the right to command their fortunes, asserting their independence vis-à-vis foreigners, the same does not go for individuals and groups within Ottoman society: any group or class interests are subjected to the corporatist interests of the Ottoman nation as a whole; at the same time, the nation should be governed according to a strict hierarchy, the people

having to be guided by the enlightened élites of the nation.

Even though *Ergatis'* political programme contains democratic - liberal elements, these are subordinated to its corporatism. Constitutional government and democracy constitute principles of *Ergatis'* programme only to the extent in which they serve the national aims; this is why democracy is not seen as a value in itself (as a means for ensuring popular participation in the project to modernize the Ottoman Empire), but as a state to be achieved only after the people have been educated<sup>181</sup>. Thus, it seems as if the group around *Ergatis* support constitutional government and democracy only because it offers to the Ottoman Empire the appearance of a modern state, and, most importantly, ensures their own participation - as a social élite - to the decision-making process.

If *Ergatis'* democratic discourse is only valid in reference to the international situation, the same is true for its understanding of socialism, too. Indeed, *Ergatis'* perception of socialism is very peculiar: it is not only that, as we have noted, its editors do not seem to espouse a coherent socialist ideology; even their decision to use (whenever they do so) the term "socialism" is based on a distorted perception of class divisions. Instead of basing their perception of socialism on the existence of dividing lines and inequalities between different social classes, they perceive of such inequalities

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<sup>181</sup> The idea that, in order for democracy to work, the people should be educated is expressed in: Dr. D. N. Kalligeris, "Peri dikaiomaton tou anthropou" [On the rights of man], *O Ergatis*, n. 4, 07 - 09 - 08, p. 3; idem, "Peri dikaiomaton tou anthropou", *O Ergatis*, n. 7, 18 - 09 - 08, p. 4. The same idea - and even more exaggerated - is also expressed in reference to workers' organization: "Concord [among workers] requires that we first become human with some education, with feelings, with an enlightened soul and with an honest and real character. [...] We should create a center.; not an association, or a union, without presidents, nor elections, and all this staff which is so difficult for people like us to administer." "Gia tous ergates" [To workers"], *O Ergatis*, n. 21, 20 - 12 - 08, pp. 1 - 2. This last text is actually a letter written by Greek workers and sent to another newspaper by the name *O Ergatis*, published in the Greek town of Volos; Kotzamanis published it on the first page and wrote a foreword to it, that reads: "you [workers of Izmir] should also start working for your own good, because we are being disappointed by your indifference."

and diving lines as existing between nations<sup>182</sup>.

This perception is in accordance with their corporatism: if the nation is not divided internally, then, when deplored poverty and inequalities, they do not address the proletariat, but the whole nation, which they consider to be a “proletarian” nation, exploited and oppressed by the “capitalist” nations of Europe. It would be interesting, at this point, to quote extensively from a text by Ilias Kokkonis; the author, a businessman, posits himself at the same side of the dividing line as Ottoman workers, while he seems to think that all Europeans, including workers, prosper: thus, the Ottoman Empire in its entirety is considered to be “proletarian”, while all Europeans, because of the privileged economic position of their countries, are thought of as “capitalist”.

*Now it is time for you [the workers] to show your real value and to benefit our homeland, so that the people of the whole of Turkey progress, so that our homeland prospers.*

*In order for us to show to Europe that we are not good-for-nothings as they thought up to now. [...]*

*You should understand that it is your duty to support our industry, that is, the source of our happiness and the development of our homeland.*

*Industry means: to manufacture in our homeland things necessary to all, things that until today, we obtained from Europe, and our money was directed abroad and we were becoming poorer, eating stale bread, while workers in Europe were having an easy life, having two or three sets of clothes. [...]*

*Then [if local industry is supported], the people will grow rich.*

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<sup>182</sup> See, for example, O Syntagmatikos, “Enas polemos”, op. cit.; the author, breaking the news of the anti-Austrian boycott, describes this “economic war”, as he calls it, in the same way as he would have described the injustice of social inequalities: on the one hand, we see the Ottoman Empire “that has been treated unjustly” and, on the other, stands the rich Austria - Hungary, on which the “Turkish nation” should take

*Then, our homeland will be developed.*<sup>183</sup>

This way, *Ergatis'* anti-imperialism and socialism, far from being firm principles of its programme, become, in effect, a mere expression of the desire to develop in order to cope with the challenge posed by Europe.

All this, however, does not seem to provide us with an answer to the question why *Ergatis'* programme failed and why the group around the newspaper were disappointed in the Young Turks. Actually, at a first glance, it seems as though *Ergatis'* editors and the Young Turks could agree on a programme of "Ottoman nationalism" and struggle for the independence of the Ottoman Empire vis-à-vis Europe, that both of them perceive as a threat. *Ergatis'* project of transforming society from above is not something that the Young Turks would reject; they could even agree with *Ergatis* on the principles according to which this transformation should be pursued, corporatism being espoused by Young Turk ideologists, as well<sup>184</sup>.

It is probable, though, that they might disagree on the issue of who - and why - should lead this project: both of them believing that this is a project to be accomplished from above, under the leadership of an élite, they wish to assume this leading role. When such disagreements arise, *Ergatis'* very limited perception of democracy can be of no use in overcoming them. Since *Ergatis'* perception of the people's role does not include the full participation, but only the mobilization of the people for the achievement of a project formulated by the élite, there is no way for conflicts to be lived through and resolved in revenge.

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<sup>183</sup> Ilias Kokkonis, "Pros ton ergatin tou kathikontos", op. cit.

<sup>184</sup> On the early economic and social thought of the Young Turks, which eventually leads to corporatism, see Toprak, *Türkiye'de "Millî İktisat"*, pp. 22 - 35. Among the Young Turks, the representative of corporatist thought *par excellence* is of course Ziya Gökalp. On Gökalp see Parla, op. cit..

society at large. At the same time, the fraternization of peoples, too, cannot take roots without popular involvement; besides, *Ergatis'* corporatism tends to prevent the creation of social classes who might express their interests along class - instead of ethnic - lines.

## **2. *Ergatis'* perception of nation, state and democracy**

### a. Ottomanism as Greek-Ottomanism

*Ergatis*, far from contributing to the overcoming of nationalism, in reality - even though, as we shall see, this is not its conscious goal - fosters nationalism. *Ergatis'* editors are not ready to reject the nationalist reflexes that have been influencing them as well as the rest of the Greek Orthodox community of Izmir; in fact, as we shall try to demonstrate, they construct their discourse on a number of nationalist elements. These elements exist in *Ergatis'* discourse from the very beginning; as its conflict with the Young Turks progresses, these elements are gradually evoked more and more. Indeed, towards the end of *Ergatis'* publication, we can observe a turn of its repertoire from economic and social topics - such as workers' issues - to political topics, where the disagreement between *Ergatis* and the Young Turks is more pronounced.

It is very clear in *Ergatis* that its contributors see themselves as Greeks, more than as Ottomans. We can find in the newspaper countless indications of the Ottoman Greeks' pronounced Greek identity; by 1908, this is only normal<sup>185</sup>. For instance, in a number of

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<sup>185</sup> On the gradual "hellenization" of Ottoman Greeks, see Anagnostopoulou, op. cit., especially pp. 301 - 318.

occasions, *Ergatis* is compared to similar publications in Greece; in general, it seems as if Greek society is taken as the example to be emulated<sup>186</sup>. This is the reason for them stressing Ottomanism: despite the existence of common interests among different ethnic groups of the Empire, the Ottoman nation does not exist; it is something to be created. At first sight, what the group around *Ergatis* seem to be proposing, by Ottomanism, is to combine their “ethnic” Greek identity with a “national” Ottoman identity, meaning that there do exist different - and distinct - ethnic groups within the Empire, but they should cooperate and unite<sup>187</sup>.

They declare that they reject chauvinism, as well as religious fanaticism<sup>188</sup>; they do not wish, though, to totally dispose of their millet identity. They do discuss issues concerning the Greek Orthodox millet and seem to be placing importance on community affairs, as well as on the traditional leadership of the Greek Orthodox community of Izmir<sup>189</sup>. On most occasions, as we shall be discussing further in the next section, they

<sup>186</sup> See, for example: “Eine dikaioma ton gynaikon!” [It is the women’s right!], *O Ergatis*, n. 2, 28 - 08 - 08, p. 4; “Ta synafia mas” [Our guilds], *O Ergatis*, n. 7, 18 - 09 - 08, p. 3; “Mia spoudaia koinoniki meleti” [An important social study], *O Ergatis*, n. 10, 28 - 09 - 08, p. 3; “O ‘Ergatis’ tou Volou” [The ‘Ergatis’ of Volos], *O Ergatis*, n. 16, 09 - 11 - 08, p. 3. In nationalist self-confidence, one of *Ergatis*’ contributors declares: “we are the descendants of the ancient Greeks”; “Liga logia” [A few words], *O Ergatis*, n. 18, 30 - 11 - 08, p. 4.

<sup>187</sup> Such an interpretation can be applied on all levels. See, for example, the news of the creation of a multi-ethnic union: “Syndesmos tehniton ypodimatopoion” [Shoe-maker craftsmen’s union], *O Ergatis*, n. 4, 07 - 09 - 08, p. 2. According to this news item, initiative for the creation of the union came from “our” [i.e. Greek] craftsmen, but “all ethnicities are welcome”; the union’s symbol is four hands, that symbolize “the fraternal cooperation of the four great elements of our city”, that is, Greeks and “our brothers” Turks, Armenians and Jews.

<sup>188</sup> In fact, on a number of occasions they condemn chauvinism and religious fanaticism as detrimental to the “nation” (i. e. the Empire): “To programma mas”, op. cit.; E. Goritsas, “To Anatolikon zitima kai ai vlepseis tis Evropis B’” [The Eastern Question and Europe’s designs B’], *O Ergatis*, n. 15, 02 - 11 - 08, p. 2; “I Vouli”, op. cit.; “Protohronia”, op. cit..

<sup>189</sup> There are countless news items concerning the community, where we see *Ergatis* place importance on such traditional institutions as the church and community philanthropy foundations. Let us refer to only a few of them, indicatively: “Sholi Agiou Dimitriou” [Saint Dimitrios School], *O Ergatis*, n. 13, 19 - 10 - 08, p. 4; “Apo ton Tsesme” [From Çesme], *O Ergatis*, n. 13, 19 - 10 - 08, p. 4; “Proskliseis eis ta ergatika somateia” [Invitations to the workers’ unions], *O Ergatis*, n. 15, 02 - 11 - 08, p. 3; “Ehoume kathikon” [It is

approach community affairs critically, sometimes directing serious accusations against the community (and millet) leadership; this, however, does not diminish the significance of the fact that they see the communities' role as central:

*Vaindiri [Bayındır], this small place of the East, should be an example to all of us [...] Concord, Love, Patriotism, all of this can be found there [...]. So, work, Vaindirians [...], while all other Greeks are fighting with each other because they all want to show off and the only thing they do is prepare the disaster of the Fatherland.*<sup>190</sup>

Indeed, they envisage their participation to Ottoman politics through their millet: this is in accordance with the system in use in the Empire, which is not based on individual participation in democratic processes, but, rather, on collective participation through the millets. Thus, while *Ergatis* does not provide wide coverage of the elections for the Ottoman Parliament, it does mention all the negotiations that take place between the Patriarchate and the CUP for the election of Greek deputies<sup>191</sup>. Again, when referring to this issue, what *Ergatis'* editors stress the most is what they perceive of as “the injustice done to the Hellenism of Izmir by the Committee [of Union and Progress] and the Ottoman [i.e. Turkish] electors. [...] We see this great offense, this great injustice done to us and we protest in all our strength.”<sup>192</sup>

our duty], *O Ergatis*, n. 17, 16 - 11 - 08, p. 4; “Politikes eidiseis” [Political news], *O Ergatis*, n. 18, 30 - 11 - 08, p. 3; “Ta halia tis eforeias tis Ag. Aikaterinis” [The bad shape of the committee of Saint Catherine], *O Ergatis*, n. 20, 13 - 12 - 08, p. 2; “To prothesino konserto stou Klonaridi” [The concert given the day before yesterday at Klonaridis’], *O Ergatis*, n. 23, 11 - 01 - 09, p. 4.

<sup>190</sup> “Entyposeis apo to Vaindiri” [Impressions from Bayındır], *O Ergatis*, n. 13, 19 - 10 - 08, pp. 1 - 2.

<sup>191</sup> On these negotiations, see: Boura, op. cit., pp. 194 - 195; Ahmad, “Unionist relations...”, pp. 407 - 409.

<sup>192</sup> “I apistia tou komitatou gia tin ypopsifiotita tou Kou Karolidi”, op. cit.. See also: “Politika gegonota” [Political events], *O Ergatis*, n. 13, 19 - 10 - 08, p. 4; “Politika gegonota”, *O Ergatis*, n. 14, 26 - 10 - 08, p. 4; “Diafora gegonota” [Various events], *O Ergatis*, n. 17, 16 - 11 - 08, p. 3; “Politikes eidiseis” [Political

What they propose, then, is not the fraternization of all Ottomans as individuals, as citizens, but an alliance between the different millets.

*Turkey's enemies [...] lost their patience when they saw that Turkey could live [after the Young Turk coup d' état]. [...] If [Bulgaria] tries to take one step in Macedonia she will find Turks, Greeks and Albanians united.*

*The greatest and most dangerous issue is the internal issue, that is, how to make the Constitution work. The Constitution cannot exist if the current situation continues, if Turks alone keep on dominating; the Turkish people are the strongest, the most military element of the army; but Greeks, Arabs, Albanians, Jews and Armenians, too, have rights in this country [...]. [...] Only the Committee [of Union and Progress] can save Turkey and in order to do so it oughts, before anything else, to unite with the Christians.<sup>193</sup>*

This alliance is to be based on common interests in the international arena, in the context of the Eastern Question. In this respect, particular importance is placed on the common interests that, during this time, unite Greeks and Turks against Bulgarians. If “Greece and Turkey” (and the Albanians, who are “related to the Greeks by race and to the Turks - in their majority - by religion”) manage to cooperate against their common enemy, then they shall “elevate themselves to the respect and esteem of the civilized world, since they will be defending their common homeland.”<sup>194</sup> Rather than an alliance

news], *O Ergatis*, n. 18, 30 - 11 - 08, p. 2; “Teleftaia ora” [Last hour], *O Ergatis*, n. 18, 30 - 11 - 08, p. 3.

<sup>193</sup> “I politiki katastasi” [The political situation], *O Ergatis*, n. 26, 01 - 02 - 09, p. 3.

<sup>194</sup> E. Goritsas, “To Anatolikon zitima kai ai vlepseis tis Evropis B”, op. cit.; see also the first part of this article: E. Goritsas, “To Anatolikon zitima kai ai vlepseis tis Evropis. I ellinotourkiki kai i alvaniki sympraxis” [The Eastern Question and Europe’s designs. The Turco-Greek and Albanian cooperation], *O Ergatis*, n. 14, 26 - 10 - 08, p. 2. At first sight, the inclusion of the Albanians as a “sine qua non” - according to Goritsas - of this cooperation might seem surprising; however, until the appearance of Albanian nationalism, the Greeks seem to have considered the Albanians as, in a way, “uncivilized Greeks”. See Skopetea, Elli, “Oi Ellines kai oi ehthoi tous. I katastasi tou ethnous stis arhes tou eikostou

between the different millets, then, what they are proposing is actually an alliance between states. This is exactly the point where we see why *Ergatis* cannot agree with the Young Turks on a definition of Ottomanism. Despite all the talk of a “common homeland” and all the other positive elements that we have seen when examining *Ergatis’* Ottomanism, it is clear that what *Ergatis* means by Ottomanism is, in reality, Greek-Ottomanism.

Greek-Ottomanism is based on the idea of an alliance between the Greek kingdom and the Ottoman Empire against their common enemies, especially, during this time, against the Bulgarians<sup>195</sup>. The fact that what *Ergatis* actually proposes is an inter-state alliance demonstrates how great the influence of Greek nationalism is on Ottoman Greeks: even when they sincerely want to cooperate with the Turks, they can only perceive of such a cooperation through Athens, which, by this time, is well on its way to becoming their uncontested national center<sup>196</sup>.

As much as this may seem contradictory, the group around *Ergatis* are sincere both in their Ottomanism and in their espousing of Greek nationalism. Indeed, they themselves see no contradiction between the two; this is the reason why they see no

aiona” [The Greeks and their enemies. The state of the nation at the beginning of the twentieth century], in Hadjiiosif, Christos (ed.), *Istoria tis Elladas tou 20ou aiona*, t. A: 1900 - 1922. *Oi Aparhes* [History of Greece in the 20th century], vol. I: 1900 - 1922. *The Outset*, part 2, Bibliorama, Athens, n.d., pp. 10 - 35.

<sup>195</sup> On the idea of an alliance between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, besides the two articles by Goritsas, referred to above, see: “Mikres eidiseis” [Small news], *O Ergatis*, n. 13, 19 - 10 - 08, p. 3; “Ekdromi gia tin Athina” [A trip to Athens], *O Ergatis*, n. 17, 16 - 11 - 08, p. 4; “Politikes eidiseis” [Political news], *O Ergatis*, n. 20, 13 - 12 - 08, p. 4; “I politiki katastasi” [The political situation], *O Ergatis*, n. 26, 01 - 02 - 09, p. 3.

<sup>196</sup> On the process through which Athens comes to occupy the position of “national center” for Ottoman Greeks and the relationship between Ottoman Greeks and the Greek kingdom at the beginning of the 20th century see: Anagnostopoulou, op. cit., especially pp. 419 - 452; Veremis, Thanos, “The Hellenic Kingdom and the Ottoman Greeks: The experiment of the ‘Society of Constantinople’”, in Gondicas and Issawi, op. cit., pp. 181 - 191.

paradox in the using of the term “nation” - at times “our nation” - in reference both to the Ottoman Empire and to the Greeks, as a community of people comprising both Ottoman Greeks and the subjects of the Greek kingdom. Thus, we see them think of themselves as part of the “Turkish [i.e. Ottoman] nation”<sup>197</sup> and of the “Rum (or Greek) nation”<sup>198</sup>, while they regard the 25th of March (Greece’s national day, when, significantly, the 1821 Greek Revolution against the Ottoman Empire is celebrated) as their national day<sup>199</sup>. It seems as if, in the minds of *Ergatis'* editors, the alliance, indeed merge, envisaged by Greek-Ottomanism has already been realized: they see no conflict between Ottoman and Greek interests<sup>200</sup>.

In fact, if looked at through the eyes of its supporters, Greek-Ottomanism has the advantage of satisfying the aspirations and interests of, at the same time, the Ottoman

<sup>197</sup> “Enas polemos”, op. cit.. Other examples of them seeing themselves as part of the Ottoman nation (they usually make no distinction between the terms “Turkish” and “Ottoman”; both terms are used sometimes to depict all Ottomans - regardless of ethno-religious affinities - and sometimes in reference only to the Muslim - Turkish element of the Empire) can be found in: “As prosehi o stratos”, op. cit.; “I Voulii”, op. cit.; “Xypna, lae!”, op. cit.; “Ti ekamate”, op. cit..

<sup>198</sup> “Ainte na hatheite” [Get lost], *O Ergatis*, n. 25, 25 - 01 - 09, p. 1. As we have already argued, their feeling Greek is pronounced in the entire newspaper; the terms “Rum” and “Greek” do not seem to have a different meaning in *Ergatis*. On specific references to Ottoman Greeks as the “Greek nation” or the “Greek people”, see: “Ta pallikaria mas” [Our brave young men], *O Ergatis*, n. 27, 08 - 02 - 09, p. 4; “Ntopia” [Local news], *O Ergatis*, n. 28, 15 - 02 - 09, p. 4; “Gia ton Agio Tafo”, *O Ergatis*, n. 30, 01 - 03 - 09, p. 1.

<sup>199</sup> “Entopia” [Local news], *O Ergatis*, n. 32, 29 - 03 - 09, p. 4.

<sup>200</sup> When can read, for instance, sentences such as the following: “If, by the application of the law, the Greek race are to be benefited, the State shall be immensely benefited, because it shall let us know that justice is not just a word in Turkey, nor a pretext for oppressing the Christians.” Theatis, “Stroggyla logakia” [Clear words], *O Ergatis*, n. 27, 08 - 02 - 09, p. 1. The idea that no conflict exists between Greek and Ottoman interests is also applied on more practical issues, such as the anti-Austrian boycott (and the promotion of national economy, in general): when readers are asked to use only local goods, no distinction is made between Ottoman and Greek goods and services. See, for example: “Kato i Austria”, op. cit.; readers are urged to trust, instead of foreign insurance companies, the “Ottoman Society of General Insurances” and “Amoivaia”, an insurance company based in Athens (see 1909 - 1910, *Ellinikos Emporikos Odigos*).

Empire, the Ottoman Greeks and the Greek kingdom<sup>201</sup>. Of course, by this time, it is not really meaningful to make a distinction between the Ottoman Greeks and the Greek kingdom<sup>202</sup>; nevertheless, for the sake of convenience, we shall examine Greek-Ottomanism as if such a distinction could be made. For the Ottoman Greeks, then, Greek-Ottomanism has the advantage of ensuring their continued existence (and important position) in the Ottoman Empire; at the same time, the realization of Greek-Ottomanism does not require them being totally subjected to the policies of the Greek kingdom: indeed, the "cosmopolitan" outlook of Greek-Ottomanism is a proof that "Istanbul, while not producing independent political ideology, has *still*, but not for long, the ability to reproduce and re-adapt to its own needs the policy produced by the Greek state."<sup>203</sup>

As far as the Greek state is concerned, Greek-Ottomanism is, on the one hand, the only policy it can apply during this period and, on the other, for a number of intellectuals, the only desirable policy. One of the most influential currents of thought in Greece at this time is nationalism; ever since the launching of the *Megali Idea* (Great Idea) in the middle of the 19th century<sup>204</sup>, the main goal of Greek nationalism is the liberation of the "unredeemed". However, after the defeat of the Greek army by Ottoman forces in 1897, a war with the Ottoman Empire is not desirable; thus, the Greek kingdom adopts a friendly policy towards the Young Turk government. During the same period a number of

<sup>201</sup> On Greek-Ottomanism see: Anagnostopoulou, op. cit., pp. 473 - 476; Skopetea, "Oi Ellines kai oi eithroi tous"; Skopetea, Elli, *To "Protypo Vasileio" kai i Megali Idea. Opseis tou Ethnikou Provlimatos stin Ellada (1830 - 1880)* [The "Exemplary Kingdom" and the Great Idea. Aspects of the National Problem in Greece], Ekdoseis Polytypo, Athens, 1988, pp. 309 - 324.

<sup>202</sup> For the extent to which Ottoman Greeks still can be ideologically independent of Athens, see Anagnostopoulou, op. cit., especially pp. 419 - 452; Skopetea, "Oi Ellines kai oi eithroi tous", p. 11.

<sup>203</sup> Anagnostopoulou, op. cit., p. 474. Italics in the original.

<sup>204</sup> See Skopetea, *To "Protypo Vasileio"*, pp. 257 - 271.

intellectuals, disappointed by the Greek state's failures, start believing that the only way for Greek national goals to be achieved is in a framework other than the Greek state; the stage for the formulation of Greek-Ottomanism, which is based on the idea of a Greek-ottoman Empire (and no longer Greek state) has been set<sup>205</sup>.

At exactly the same time, the Greeks' claim of Balkan territories (especially in Macedonia, where the fight with the Bulgarians is on its peak) is under serious attack by other, more recently developed, Balkan nationalisms; this also entails, as the "Bulgarian Question"<sup>206</sup> of the late 19th century demonstrates, a severe blow to the Istanbul Patriarchate's ability - and claim - to represent all Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the Greek state and the Patriarchate are obliged to cooperate - a process which is not deprived of serious difficulties from both sides<sup>207</sup>. The final identification - more or less completed at around 1908 - of Ottoman Greeks and the Greek state can be seen as part of this process, too.

It is in this context that Greek-Ottomanism is formulated. What the Greek kingdom and Ottoman Greeks attempt to achieve through this policy is to avoid a war with the Ottoman Empire and, at the same time, to try and contain Bulgarian nationalism (the most dangerous Balkan nationalism in the eyes of the Greeks) by allying themselves to the Turks<sup>208</sup>. This is how Greek-Ottomanism gets to be seen by its supporters as a non-

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<sup>205</sup> Internal developments in Greece are best described in Skopetea, "Oi Ellines kai oi eithroi tous".

<sup>206</sup> In the late 19th century, the Bulgarians, although Orthodox Christians, demand the recognition of a separate Bulgarian Orthodox church; even though both the Patriarchate and the Greek state try to prevent this, in 1870 a Bulgarian Exarchate is founded. See Matalas, Paraskevas, *Ethnos kai Orthodoxy. Oi Peripeteies mias Shesis. Apo to "Elladiko" sto Boulgariko Shisma [Nation and Orthodoxy. The Adventures of a Relationship. From the "Greek" to the Bulgarian Schism]*, Panepistimiakes Ekdoseis Kritis, Irakleio, 2002.

<sup>207</sup> See Anagnostopoulou, pp. 421 - 437.

<sup>208</sup> Skopetea, "Oi Ellines kai oi eithroi tous". The Macedonian issue (and the fight with the Bulgarians over

nationalist ideology and as beneficial to the Turks, as well. The Greeks sincerely start believing that there is a “common destiny” uniting them to the Turks and see the Young Turk coup d’ état as a chance for them to cooperate with the Turks for the strengthening of the Empire<sup>209</sup>. The Greeks are anxious to achieve two things: modernize the Empire; preserve within it a “pre-national” state, so as to prevent the spread of rival nationalisms. This means that all Orthodox Christians of the Empire should be under the dominance of the Greeks; the Empire is to be governed by an alliance of Greeks and Turks<sup>210</sup>.

Despite the fact that the aim seems to be a “non-national” or “pre-national” state in the Empire, Greek-Ottomanism is manifestly nationalist. It is based on the Greek nationalism’s assumption that the Greeks are to “civilize” the East<sup>211</sup>. This is the role that the Greeks reserve to themselves in this project and the reason why they think that the

it) is the topic on which we can find a number of nationalist comments by *Ergatis*. See, for example: “Entopia” [Local news], *O Ergatis*, n. 20, 13 - 12 - 08, p. 4, where we read that “Macedonia has always been Greek”; “Ta Romiopoula” [Greek children], *O Ergatis*, n. 17, 16 - 11 - 08, pp. 2 - 3, where we find the patriotic story of a Macedonian Greek mother; Mihail Rodakis, “Makedonika. Ta palikaria mas” [Macedonian affairs. Our brave young men], *O Ergatis*, n. 22, 04 - 01 - 09, p. 4 (other “Makedonika” appear on later issues).

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, pp. 24 - 30. According to Skopetea, Greek-Ottomanism entails “the supporting of a *pre-national* state in the Ottoman Empire; this is thought to be as the common ground on which Turks and Greeks are based and as the interest and salvation of both peoples”: ibid, p. 26. This “pre-national state” means that nationalisms should be forgotten and all the peoples of the Ottoman Empire held together; within this framework, the Patriarchate should reassert the role it held before the spread of nationalisms, when, although to a great extent - because of the composition of the higher levels of the Orthodox hierarchy - hellenized, it could claim to hold under its authority various ethnically distinct peoples. On this role, as well as its questioning by various nationalist movements, see Clogg, Richard, “The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire”, in Braude, Benjamin and Bernard Lewis, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol. I: *The Central Lands*, Holmes and Meier, New York - London, 1982, pp. 185 - 207.

<sup>211</sup> Skopetea, “Oi Ellines kai oi eththroi tous”, p. 15. Indeed, one of the most important elements of Greek nationalism, as developed in the second half of the 19th century, is a “sense of purpose” summarized in the phrase “i Anatoli dia tis Anatolis” (“the Orient through the Orient”), meaning that the Greeks should enlighten the other peoples of the region without the West’s direct involvement. On intellectual currents in Greece in the period 1830 - 1880 see Dimaras, C. Th., “I ideologiki ypdomi tou neou ellinikou kratous” [The ideological substructure of the modern Greek state], in Dimaras, C. Th., *Ellinikos Romantismos* [Greek Romanticism], Ekdoseis Ermis, Athens, 1982, pp. 325 - 404; “the Orient through the Orient” is

Turks should accept their project of alliance: the Greeks are the most "western", the most "civilized" people of the East; if the Empire is to be reformed and saved, the Turks need them. At a later stage, of course, the Empire can be entirely "hellenized", since the Greeks are culturally superior<sup>212</sup>.

Greek-Ottomanism is, then, an expression of Greek nationalism adapted to the conditions of the beginning of the 20th century. In no way can we accept that Greek-Ottomanism is non-nationalist, except if we agree with the Greek nationalism's own assumption of Greek cultural superiority. The supporters of Greek-Ottomanism, though, convinced of their own rhetoric, thought that they were really defending an ideology that could be embraced by all the peoples of the Empire. This is the reason why the group around *Ergatis* are truly sincere in their espousing of both Ottomanism and Greek nationalism<sup>213</sup>; this is also the reason why they - without intending to do so - in reality exacerbate nationalist tensions: not being aware of their own nationalism, they consider that their conflict with the Young Turks is due only to the latter's (and, in consequence, the Turks') own malevolence.

#### b. Ergatis' modernizing, bourgeois demands and their limits

*Ergatis'* criticism of the Young Turks is based, first and foremost, not on

discussed in ibid, pp. 356 - 359.

<sup>212</sup> Skopetea, "Oi Ellines kai oi eththroi tous", p. 28.

<sup>213</sup> As we have already noted in the case of Macedonia (see note 211), we find in *Ergatis* a number of indications of nationalism; enmity to the Bulgarians is particularly pronounced. See, for example: "To Souliotopoulo" [this title is a reference to a difficult to translate symbol of Greek nationalism], *O Ergatis*, n. 17, 16 - 11 - 08, p. 2; "Ta Romiopoula" [Greek children], *O Ergatis*, n. 17, 16 - 11 - 08, pp. 2 - 3 (continuing on subsequent issues); Mihail Rodakis, "Makedonika", op. cit., appearing on the 22nd and later issues.

nationalism but on a specific understanding of the state and democracy. Differences of perception between *Ergatis'* editors and the Young Turks on this issue are real; thus, putting forward such arguments should not be considered to be simply a way to disguise nationalism. This does not mean, of course, that the importance of nationalism should be played down; by this time, as we saw, the Greek Orthodox community of Izmir, including the group around *Ergatis*, have been influenced by Greek nationalism to such a degree that it becomes difficult for us to distinguish between their ideology and ideology emanating from Athens.

However, as we have noted, at the turn of the 20th century the interests of the Greek Ottoman bourgeoisie seem to be converging with those of the Turkish state élites; in order for us to understand why this was not enough for the two to cooperate successfully, we have to look to those sides of *Ergatis'* ideology that express a divergence of interests between the two groups. In fact, as we shall try to demonstrate, nationalism as expressed in Greek-Ottomanism and a perception of state and democracy stemming from the Ottoman Greeks' social position (or, rather, the social position of the dominant group among Ottoman Greeks, the bourgeoisie) are interrelated.

*Ergatis*, then, posits its clash with the CUP as a difference between the government and the people, the latter including both Greeks and Turks.

*As for the Turks whom you saw yesterday attacking us, because those who were entrusted with governing the state ordered them to do so, they, too, will be with us tomorrow and they shall join the GREAT and SAVIOR ARMY that shall fight the struggle for real Freedom.*<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> D. N. Kotzamanis, "O ergatis to pan. Stous ergates" [Workers are everything. To workers], *O Ergatis*, n. 16, 09 - 11 - 08, p. 2.

Behind such statements lies the thought that “[Young Turk] revolution was not brought about by the nation but by the army, and only because they [the army] were tired of being hungry.”<sup>215</sup> Thus, the group around *Ergatis*, despite their admiration for the Young Turks, come to believe that, the change of regime having been effected by the army, as long as citizens do not participate actively in state affairs the Ottoman Empire cannot really become a modern, democratic state.

The people should try to constitute a political sphere outside the direct control of the state; it is in this sphere, through the sovereign people’s decisions, that national policy should be defined. Let us here quote in length from an article where *Ergatis’* understanding of the relationship between citizens and the state is clarified.

*We are not referring to Turks or Greeks, or Armenians and Jews. We are referring to our people in general because we want the best for the Nation and not to destroy it [the nation] because of chauvinism. It is, then, in the people that we are seeking for responsibility [i.e. for abuses by the army]. [...]*

*Yes, in the sovereign people who sweat in constant labor and who, while they are being attacked, do not rise up [...] to the state and say: “I work for you, I pay you [to provide] for army, justice, King (sic), the salaries of judges and public prosecutors and so many office-holders [...]. Since, then, I grant you all this, how do you let someone whom you armed in order to protect our lives take my life with no reason? [...]” [...]*

*This is how we see things, without being influenced by chauvinism; because if yesterday this happened to the Armenian and today to the Rum, tomorrow it will happen to someone else. It will happen to you too Turk citizen, to you who are today*

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<sup>215</sup> Theatis, “Stroggyla logakia” [Clear words], *O Ergatis*, n. 26, 01 - 02 - 09, p. 1.

*a soldier and tomorrow you will become a citizen; your brother soldier will kill you, because his chief will have ordered him to do so.*

*Wake up, then, because, thanks to the attitude of those who govern you, you will lose your nation and your freedom, that you died in order to gain.<sup>216</sup>*

In *Ergatis'* perception, then, citizens should posit themselves as an active interlocutor of the state and not passive recipients of state policies<sup>217</sup>. In this case, *Ergatis'* editors think of themselves not as a different ethnic element, but as representing a new social force who should lead this effort; we are encountered here with the bourgeois demands of an ascending class. This consciousness of them being a new, progressive social force is evident in their relationship to the Greek Orthodox community, too. They often criticize the community, its institutions and leaders, arguing for greater popular participation in decision-making and a modernization of community structures.

*[...] Regulations that deprive the people of every right and give all rights to a faction, these regulations are **dishonest** and can no longer stand, even if blessed by bishops and patriarchs. [...]*

*Since tsarism and absolutism have died once and for all, we should see to it that their companion, **despotism**, also joins them.<sup>218</sup>*

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<sup>216</sup> D. N. Kotzamanis, "Xypna lae", op. cit..

<sup>217</sup> For more examples of this perception see: D. N. Kotzamanis, "Ti tha mas sosi", op. cit.; "Ap' to syllalitirio", op. cit..

<sup>218</sup> "Ai enoriakai" [Community elections], *O Ergatis*, n. 22, 04 - 01 - 09, pp. 2 - 3; bold letters in the original. In this passage we see one of the strongest expressions of the desire to reform the community. There are of course a lot more news items and articles where criticism against the community is pronounced. Let us site only a few: "Eklogai" [Elections], *O Ergatis*, n. 13, 19 - 10 - 08, p. 4; "Oi pseftopatriotes" [Fake patriots], *O Ergatis*, n. 14, 26 - 10 - 08, pp. 1 - 2; "Entopia" [Local news], *O Ergatis*, n. 18, 30 - 11 - 08, p. 3; "Ta xoana tou politikou kentrou" [The dolts of the political center], *O Ergatis*, n. 19, 06 - 12 - 08, p. 3; "Entopia", *O Ergatis*, n. 20, 13 - 12 - 08, p. 4; "I Syntaktiki. Ta mansoupia" [The Constitutive Assembly. The *officia*], *O Ergatis*, n. 22, 04 - 01 - 09, pp. 3 - 4; "To anathema" [Anathema], *O*

This is thought of as a stage in the process of modernizing the Empire: reform should start from the millet level. In this respect, they think of their Greek-ottomanist project as a new, progressive ideology, more fit to contribute to modernization within the millet and to the Greeks' participation in Ottoman modernization<sup>219</sup>. This is the reason why, defining patriotism as Greek-Ottomanism, they question the leaders of the community: "why do you want to have this [i.e. being called patriots] as a privilege? [...] What has your programme offered to the poor Nation for you to have the pretense to pass for representatives of the Nation? [...] Real patriotism is to be found in the people's soul."<sup>220</sup>

Thus, the group around *Ergatis* claim to be themselves the legitimate national (in the dual - Ottoman and Greek - meaning that they attribute to the term national) leaders of the community; it is in their effort to assert themselves as leaders of the Greek-ottomanist project that they try to approach workers, seeking an alliance with all those elements that they perceive of as progressive. Their claim to represent a new, progressive social force can be said to be true to the extent in which they want to promote democratization on the millet level as well as in the Empire at large; power, according to *Ergatis*, should rest on "the sovereign people, the people who labor and sweat, artisans, farmers, small professionals, shop-owners and, finally, all the workers"<sup>221</sup>.

*Ergatis*, n. 28, 15 - 02 - 09, p. 1.

<sup>219</sup> Ergatis clearly expresses the idea that modernization of the *millet* and modernization of the state are interrelated: we quoted above (see footnote n. 98) from an article arguing that "individuals make nations; the big and definitive current of national policy is formed by individual acts"; the same article goes on to say: "Is it or is it not in our hand to correct our community affairs and to get rid of all the leeches attached to our misfortunate community by the policies of absolutism?" "Protohronia", op. cit..

<sup>220</sup> "Oi pseftopatriotes", op. cit..

<sup>221</sup> D. N. Kotzamanis, "O ergatis to pan. Stous ergates", op. cit.; we have already noted that "sovereign people" includes all the ethnicities. The demand for popular participation in community affairs is vividly

In short, *Ergatis'* programme, to the extent that it expresses the desire to reform and modernize millet and state structures, increasing popular participation, should be considered to be innovative. The ascending Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie want to take part in state affairs and to promote their desired solution to what they perceive of as a major problem, namely European economic penetration; this is the reason why they need democratization and modernization. In this respect, their conflict with the Young Turks can be defined as a conflict between the state and an ascending bourgeoisie.

There is, though, one more aspect in the conflict between the group around *Ergatis* and the Young Turks, which points to a different problem: it looks as though there is a power struggle going on between the two groups. Indeed, the group around *Ergatis* seem, in a way, to be threatening the Young Turks.

*Are you [i.e. the Young Turks] trying to exterminate us [i.e. Greeks]? Are you trying to write off our nation? Well, think twice! You brought constitution so that you can be saved from injustice, but now you want this salvation only for yourselves. As always, you only think of us as reaya. We, then, wish for you to go on like this, because this is the only way for us to get rid of your arbitrariness.*<sup>222</sup>

They believe, as we have already noted when discussing Greek-Ottomanism, that, without their participation, the Empire cannot be reformed and saved. What is it that makes them see themselves in this dual role, as, on the one hand, oppressed citizens who

put forth in a number of articles: "Entopia" [Local news], *O Ergatis*, n. 18, 30 - 11 - 08, p. 3; "Kai pali ta ergatika somateia", op. cit.; "Ai enoriakai", op. cit.; "I Syntaktiki. Ta mansoupia", op. cit..

<sup>222</sup> "Gia ton agion tafo", op. cit. The article goes on to refer to Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Cyprus and other Balkan states; the implication, a reminding of the danger of dissolution of the Empire, is obvious. See, also: "Mas arpazoun ton Agio Tafo" [They are taking the Holy Grave away from us], *O Ergatis*, 18 - 01 - 09, pp. 3 - 4; "I politiki katastasi" [The political situation], *O Ergatis*, n. 29, 01 - 03 - 09, p. 4, where we read that the government's not taking into account Greek interests is "the most adequate means for dissolving the state".

are trying to defend their democratic rights and, on the other, a powerful group who are in a position to threaten the very existence of the state?

In fact, Ottoman Greeks have such a dual role within the Empire; it is this dual role that is reflected in the contradictive elements discernible in *Ergatis'* programme. Let us recapitulate these elements: *Ergatis'* programme, while stressing Ottomanism, does not envisage a putting aside of millet divisions and actually ends up incorporating nationalist elements, thus transforming Ottomanism into Greek-Ottomanism; even though popular participation and democracy are seen by the group around *Ergatis* as part of their bourgeois demands for the reform of the state, their own perception of democracy is limited, since they regard a large part of the people (even if termed "sovereign people") as an ignorant mass.

At the basis of all this lies one major contradiction: the interests represented in *Ergatis* are those of a new social force, who desire modernization and struggle for their democratic participation in state affairs; at the same time, however, the same group are, rather than a new social force, a part of the imperial status quo, or, to put it better, they are trying to use the imperial status quo in their benefit. What we mean here by "imperial status quo" is the millet system, formally established and consolidated with the Tanzimat reforms<sup>223</sup>. If, at the beginning, thanks to the hellenized Patriarchate, Greek culture was preponderant within the millet-i Rum, at the turn of 20th century the meaning of Greek preponderance has changed. The Greeks, being the group that mostly benefited from the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the world economy, constitute the bourgeoisie of the Empire; it is because of this role - and not simply because of nationalism - that they

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<sup>223</sup> Braude, Benjamin, "Foundation myths of the *millet* system", in Braude and Lewis, op. cit., pp. 69 - 88; Anagnostopoulou, op. cit., pp. 276 - 283.

see themselves as “progressive” and “superior” and believe that they should lead the modernization effort<sup>224</sup>. However, in order for them to legitimize these claims, they have to resort to the millet “tradition”; thus, as long as they do not want to renounce their privileged position, they cannot constitute a new, modernizing force, either within the millet or in the Empire at large.

In fact, Ottoman Greeks see modernization as their opportunity to further their privileged position, by leading the modernization effort, thanks to their economic and cultural strength. It is exactly this that is expressed in Greek-Ottomanism: thanks to modernization, the Ottoman Greeks should be able to transfer, so to speak, their leading role from the millet level to the imperial level. It is for this reason that, while demanding freedom for themselves, they deny this freedom to other ethnicities from within the millet-i Rum; this, of course, is a highly contradictive position: “The Greeks on the one hand see themselves as the only fitting bearers of the western spirit and ‘civilisateurs’ [...] of the East; on the other hand, they are unable to apply the western principle of ethnicities in the region which they see as ‘their own’.”<sup>225</sup> Thus, the Greeks deny to other groups

<sup>224</sup> It is interesting to see how *Ergatis* sees Arab Christians when the latter try to assert their independence from the Greek clergy at the Holy Lands (this issue is discussed below): “A mob that have forgotten their honorable descent, a bunch of people without national consciousness, some bodies (sic) fed on Greek money and still feeding on Greek bread”; “Mas arpazoun ton Agio Tafo”, op. cit.. In this passage, we can clearly see that the Greeks base their superiority on economic strength. Arab Christians, on their part, perceive of the Greeks as rentiers who take advantage of their land; the vocabulary used by Arabs when describing the Greeks is reminiscent of anti-colonial argumentation. See “To ierosolymitiko zitima. Ena gramma gia ton Ergati” [The Jerusalem issue. A letter to Ergatis], *O Ergatis*, n. 32, 29 - 03 - 09, p. 2. This is a letter sent to Kotzamanis by a Greek living in Jaffa; the latter is transmitting a discussion he had with an Arab Christian: having kept secret from his interlocutor the fact that he was Greek, he was able to listen to the Arabs’ arguments.

<sup>225</sup> Skopetea, “Oι Ελλines kai oi eithroi tous”, p. 15. Taking this one step further, Skopetea notes that: “Contradiction lay in the very position of the Greeks, who, on the one hand, saw the [Young Turk] Revolution as the climax of the movement for the reform of the Empire, a movement that had started in the 19th century and was perceived as a great opportunity for Hellenism; on the other hand, they were not in a position to use *western means* for their participation in the reform - by definition westernist - movement.” Ibid, p. 27.

what they see as their legitimate right: if they accuse the Young Turks of wanting freedom only for themselves, the same can be said of the Greeks, as well. What they demand is not a complete modernization and democratization; on the contrary, their understanding of modernization and democratization is limited to reforms that would allow them to take part in state affairs, while preventing other groups from questioning their preponderance.

It is in this spirit that *Ergatis* furiously attacks another ethnic element from within the millet-i Rum, Arab Christians, when the latter, basing themselves on the democratic reforms brought with the restoration of the constitution, try to assert their independence vis-à-vis the traditional leadership of the millet<sup>226</sup>. What is important, for our discussion, is not whether, legally speaking, the Arabs were right or wrong; it is, rather, the arguments that *Ergatis* puts forth in defense of the Greek position that are significant. These arguments are based on three elements: tradition<sup>227</sup>; Greek cultural superiority<sup>228</sup>;

<sup>226</sup> From its 24th issue on, *Ergatis* continuously refers to the question of the “Holy Grave”, as it is called; in the 33rd issue there is something of a “chronicle” of the question: “To Ierosolymitiko zitima. Oli i istoria tou zitimatos” [The Jerusalem issue. The whole story of the issue], *O Ergatis*, n. 33, 05 - 04 - 09, pp. 1 - 2. The Arab Christians of the Holy Lands, basing themselves on the constitution’s regulations concerning the institution of community structures, institute a council (which they name “National Council”) and demand direct involvement in community affairs; the clergy and the Istanbul Patriarchate react to this, claiming that it is not in compliance with the law. *Ergatis* ardently supports the Patriarchate; Kotzamanis goes so far as to “take sixty brave men” with him and personally go to the Holy Lands in order to support the clergy: D. Kotzamanis, “Dilosi” [Statement], *O Ergatis*, n. 29, 22 - 02 - 09, p. 1; G. I. Anastasiadis, “Stous filous tou Ergati” [To Ergatis’ friends], *O Ergatis*, n. 29, 22 - 02 - 09, p. 1.

<sup>227</sup> “The Holy Grave is not only the acropolis of our religion, but also the great castle of our nation. [...] The Holy Grave is Greek and it should remain Greek.” “Kairos gia erga” [Time for action], *O Ergatis*, n. 29, 22 - 02 - 09, p. 1.

<sup>228</sup> The fight for the Holy Lands is deemed to be “an exhaustive war between Hellenism and barbarism”, where the “negro (sic) flood rushed to drown the Greek idea - the idea of civilization”: G. I. Anastasiadis, “Stous filous tou Ergati”, op. cit.. The Holy Lands are called “those holy grounds, hellenized by the divine power of Hellenism.” “Mas arpazoun ton Agio Tafo”, op. cit..

Greek strength, that should oblige the Young Turks to take the side of the Greeks<sup>229</sup>.

Apart from the fact that in these arguments we can discern traces of Greek nationalism and of the idea of Greek economic strength, the common assumption underlying them, as a factor of legitimization, is the idea that the millet-i Rum, "traditionally", includes all the Orthodox Christian of the Empire. According to this argument, all the Orthodox Christians, in spite of them speaking different languages, are part of the same millet; indeed, they are all "Greek"<sup>230</sup>, since Orthodox Christianity is, in this perception, identified with hellenism<sup>231</sup>. This presupposes, on the part of *Ergatis*, the acceptance of religion as the most important connecting bond between people; religion, then, comes to play a vital role. Thus, the group around *Ergatis*, for the sake of maintaining and legitimizing a preponderant position, are obliged to recognize to the Patriarchate - a traditional institution - a leading role; a compromise with traditional elements should be reached. This equals to them abandoning the effort to modernize the millet; in turn, this prevents them from contributing to Ottoman modernization.

In reality, despite their superficial radicalism, the group around *Ergatis* never seem willing to question the millet and its function; we saw that they envisage their participation to Ottoman politics through the millet. Even their criticism to the millet leadership and to the leading figures of the Izmir Greek Orthodox community is not

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<sup>229</sup> "We, Orthodox Greeks, should understand well that the Holy Grave, inherited by our ancestors is in danger of slipping out of our hands, is in danger of being taken away from us, today that , thank God, Hellenism has some power." Ibid. See also footnote n. 220: threats to the Young Turks are expressed on the occasion of the Holy Grave issue.

<sup>230</sup> "The so-called Vlachs of Macedonia are Greeks. [...] Here, in Anatolia, how many Greeks are there who do not speak Greek? Thousands. Does this mean that they are Ottoman [in this case, Ottoman probably signifies Muslim Turks]?" Mihail Rodakis, "Makedonika. Roumanizontes" [Macedonian affairs. Those claiming to be Rumanian], *O Ergatis*, n. 27, 08 - 02 - 09, p. 3.

<sup>231</sup> "[T]his nation [i.e. the Greek nation] has been united, with its blood, with Christianity, because Christ blessed hellenism and Hellenism glorified Christianity." "Mas arpazoun ton Agio Tafo", op. cit..

based on a questioning of the leadership's role, but, rather, on their inability to fulfill this role; the millet and community leadership are accused of not protecting the "rights of hellenism"<sup>232</sup>: "Until when will the poor Greeks be obliged to appear so small and humble in the eyes of foreigners, for the sake of five or ten mandarins who arbitrarily have taken power?"<sup>233</sup>

The compromise that we see forthcoming in *Ergatis'* pages finally comes with the realization that the protection of Greek "rights", i.e. of Greek preponderance, can only be achieved with the help of religion and the Patriarchate. Despite their efforts to show that, in a constitutional regime, the Greeks should fight for their rights constitutionally, through their elected representatives<sup>234</sup>, and their objections as to whether the Patriarchate can fulfill the mission of protecting Greek "rights"<sup>235</sup>, the Patriarchate is not questioned, in its essence<sup>236</sup>.

We see, then, that, despite the elements that might unite the two groups, *Ergatis* expresses certain aspects of the Ottoman Greeks' interests that clash with Young Turk policies. Divergence of interests between Ottoman Greeks and Young Turks can be

<sup>232</sup> "To anathema", op. cit..

<sup>233</sup> Ibid. For other characteristic cases of this kind of criticism see: "Ainte na hathite", op. cit.; "Kairos gia erga", op. cit., where the "rich" of the Izmir community are accused of not contributing to the defense of Greek rights.

<sup>234</sup> When a Rumanian deputy attacks the Greeks in Parliament, it is the Patriarchate, instead of the Greek deputies, that reacts; according to *Ergatis*, it is the deputies who should have reacted: "This gentleman [i.e. the Rumanian deputy] is a deputy and the constitution gives him the right to express his opinion freely. The man used his right and insulted us [i.e. Greeks]. But the Patriarchate, with its protest, was absolutist." Theatis, "Stroggyla logakia" [Clear words], *O Ergatis*, n. 28, 15 - 02 - 09, p. 1.

<sup>235</sup> The "Orthodox Greek people" are urged to pressure the Patriarchate, so that the latter becomes more active in the defense of Greek "rights": "Mas arpazoun ton Agio Tafo", op. cit..

<sup>236</sup> Despite of criticism, the Patriarch is still thought to be the "national leader" of the Greeks: "The Patriarch, our Ethnarch, said it, cried it out from His throne: things are serious [...]; "Kairos gia erga", op. cit..

discerned, in *Ergatis*, on two different - indeed in appearance mutually exclusive - levels. On the one hand, the group around *Ergatis*, in conformity with their bourgeois background, demand to have a saying in state affairs, as well as a larger space of independence from the state. On the other hand, they refuse to take these demands to their logical outcome and deny the full implementation of democratic principles in issues that might endanger the position of the Greeks. This dual discourse is due to the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie's effort to legitimize its position as a social élite through a discourse based on traditional elements. In the final analysis, this works against their claim to be a new, modernizing force, and results in the invalidation of their project.

## Conclusion

*Ergatis* is a child of its era, but a rather exceptional one. Its creators conceive of it as a rather radical response to the challenge of their times, but, ultimately, do not succeed in the aims that they have set. This failure is not due only to *Ergatis* itself; however, the causes for this failure are discernible in *Ergatis*, to the extent in which its project bears within it some contradictive elements that would not allow its creators to fully and without hesitations implement their programme even if unobstructed by external factors.

*Ergatis* is created in Izmir at the beginning of the 20th century, that is, in an environment where the effects of recent economic and social developments are very important. European economic penetration, and the realization of its effects, push large segments of Ottoman society to react to the European challenge; the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie, to which *Ergatis*' editors belong, and the Young Turks, a group of army officers and bureaucrats, are the two groups who are better placed to organize such a reaction. However, other groups, too, feel the need to react to European economic penetration: there are strong indications of such a tendency among workers, a group of particular importance, since they are directly involved in the new economic activities; thus, if an organized response to the European challenge is to be formed, workers should be taken into account.

*Ergatis* can be considered to be a pioneering publication in that it attempts to take into consideration all these factors. What the group around *Ergatis* try to do is to

formulate a response to the needs of their era by promoting a cooperation of all Ottomans, regardless of ethnic and social dividing lines; thus, they articulate a programme based on Ottomanism and national economy. This programme envisages, in fact, a deep transformation of Ottoman society; the aim is to become modern, to become more like Europe so as to cope with the challenge posed by it.

It seems that this plan can be accepted both by wide strata of society and by the Young Turks, who, as a state élite, are gradually consolidating their power in the Ottoman Empire. However, the newspaper's publication ceases in the space of only a few months; towards the end of the publication, its seems that the group around *Ergatis* are isolated and feel threatened. Then, we see them criticize the Young Turks, with whom they had hoped to cooperate, and to use arguments that do not seem compatible with their engagement in Ottomanism.

This stance, at a first glance, seems inexplicable. However, we can detect certain elements in *Ergatis'* programme, from its inception, that can help us understand this paradox. Firstly, *Ergatis*, even though it claims to aim at the building of a modern democratic state, in reality sacrifices democracy for the sake of a unity of the people beyond ethnic and class lines. The group around *Ergatis* are anxious to achieve economic development and modernization in the shortest possible period of time; at the same time, they see themselves as a social élite who should lead this project. Thus, they espouse a corporatist vision of society and do not promote a deep democratization; this, instead of uniting the people around a project of Ottomanism and national economy, can only prevent the integration of different ethnic and social groups.

Secondly, their claim to defend a programme beyond ethnic lines is also

invalidated: while defending Ottomanism and the creation of a democratic political sphere, they do not go so far as to renounce millet divisions. In fact, not only do they not give up millet divisions, they are anxious to protect Greek preponderance within the millet-i Rum. By 1908, this preponderance can be said to be "modern", in the sense that it expresses the economic and social preponderance of the Greek bourgeoisie; however, it is being expressed in a traditionalist idiom, that is, as an identification of Orthodox Christianity with the Greek culture. This effort to safeguard the millet and the Greek preponderance within it produces a twin consequence: on the one hand, the discourse of the group around *Ergatis*, even when referring to Ottomanism, has a nationalist nuance; on the other, their compromise with traditional elements (most notably the Patriarchate, the only institution that can render this traditionalist discourse valid) invalidates their modernizing discourse.

We see, then, that in the milieu of *Ergatis'* editors, i.e. that of the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie, ethnic and social characteristics are interrelated; in reality, even though they claim (and they probably sincerely believe that it is so) that their programme is beyond class and ethnic lines, they are trying to protect their class and ethnic interests. This is due to two factors: in the first place, we should not minimize the effects of nationalism; even if *Ergatis'* editors were convinced that their interest lay in denying their ethnic background, this would not be easy, as they have been influenced by nationalism. Secondly, despite the fact that the role which they claim (i.e. the role of an élite with a leadind role in Ottoman society) is actually based on the economic and social status of the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie, in order for them to legitimize their claim they are in need of the traditional elements that seem to justify their preponderance. Once

again, this compromise with traditional elements does not allow them to articulate a pure, bold modernizing discourse.

We do not claim, of course, to have reached final and secure conclusions on the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie. However, we believe that we have analyzed a characteristic example of their discourse. Actually, *Ergatis'* discourse is characteristic because it is exceptional: it represents, in a way, the limits that the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie's modernizing discourse could reach. It is a discourse articulated by a group of people who very clearly see the challenge of their times and try to respond to it in a comprehensive manner, taking into account all ethnic and social elements. However, the limits of this effort are set by the fact that *Ergatis'* editors cannot carry out this project without denying, in a way, their own ethnic and social background; in turn, the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie are not in a position to deny their role in the millet - and, consequently, imperial - status quo: if they do so, the legitimacy of their claim to be an élite, and thus their ability to promote any kind of change within society will collapse.

It is, of course, not entirely their own fault that their project could not be implemented: for a full analysis of their failure one should also take into consideration other factors, such as the society's readiness - or not - to accept *Ergatis'* programme. On a more practical level, the single most important factor is, probably, Young Turk policies: the Young Turks probably saw groups such as the one around *Ergatis*, i.e. groups with an inclination towards independence from the state and a claim to leadership, as contesting their own power; in turn, Young Turk policies contributed to the disappointment of *Ergatis'* editors and their losing of their faith in the project for a cooperation between Turks and Greeks. Here, though, we only focused on *Ergatis* itself and its own

inconsistencies. The reason for this is that we wanted to show the inner contradictions and self-deceptions of the group around *Ergatis* and, consequently, to a degree, of the Ottoman Greek bourgeoisie.

These are, then, certain of the difficulties of articulating a modernizing discourse in the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the 20th century. While large segments of Ottoman society - at least in places such as Izmir - are aware of the negative effects of European economic penetration and believe that, in order for them to cope with this challenge, they should effect a deep transformation, it is difficult for them to articulate a coherent discourse for the achievement of this aim. Of course, in order for us to understand how this whole process works, a much wider research is required; we have only shown a fragment of these modernizing efforts, hoping to demonstrate that they are imbued with inherent inconsistencies, but that these inconsistencies, if seen in a wider perspective, can help us understand a contradictive era.

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