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A Tale of Parallel Lives: The Second Greek Republic and the Second Spanish Republic, 1924–36

A cursory glance at Greek and Spanish history since the mid-nineteenth century suggests a number of parallels which become more pronounced after the 1920s and culminate in the civil wars of 1936–9 and 1946–9. The idea for a comparative approach to Greek and Spanish history occurred while writing a book on the Greek Civil War, when the social and economic cleavages which had polarized Greek society in the previous decade suggested parallels with the origins of the Spanish crisis of 1936–9. The Second Greek Republic of 1924–35 and the Second Spanish Republic of 1931–6 appeared to have shared more than their partial contemporaneity. The urge for a comparative perspective was reinforced by the need to provide against the threat of a historical and historiographical ethnocentricity; if the objective is to remain aware of the universality of human memory and avoid an ethnocentric perception of historical evolution, then it is not arbitrary to study other nations' histories and draw comparisons where possible. As for the grouping together of Spain and Greece, objections based on dissimilarities with regard to the level of industrialization and urbanization must not be allowed to weaken the case for a meaningful comparative approach. Political scientists now treat Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy as the distinct entity of southern Europe, structurally and historically different from the continent's western and eastern regions. Though their inquiries focus on the process of democratic consolidation in the four countries since the mid-1970s, a sophisticated effort has already been made to establish not only contemporary commonalities, but also those which emerge from a macro-historical perspective.[1] Among the latter, arguably the

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most intriguing is the republican experience of Greece and Spain in the 1920s and the 1930s.

I

The Second Republics in Greece and Spain had their antecedents in the nineteenth century. The First Greek Republic arose during the War of Independence from the Ottoman Empire (1821–8), when the three liberal-republican constitutions adopted in 1822, 1823 and 1827 were inspired by the republican constitutions of the French Convention of 1793 and 1795. In 1827 the Greeks elected as Governor of the country Ioannis Kapodistrias, the Greek ex-Foreign Minister of Russia. Kapodistrias arrived in the following year only to face enormous difficulties in his mission of turning Greece from a war-ravaged country to one of autarky based on the development of an agrarian economy. His assassination in 1831 was followed by a period of republican anarchy until in 1832 the Great Powers appointed a Bavarian Prince as King of Greece. In a reversal of the republican-liberal precedents of the 1820s, Otto I ruled as an absolute monarch until September 1843, when a bloodless revolution of army officers and politicians forced him to promise a constitution. The constitution of 1844 rendered Greece one of the most electorally democratic countries in Europe at the time, granting the right to vote to nearly all adult males, yet the principle of popular sovereignty was not enshrined in the charter, whereas the king retained the right to appoint and dismiss ministers and dissolve parliament.

Nineteen years later Otto I's incessant meddling in Greek politics and his failure to realize the 'Great Idea' — the irredentist dream of liberating the millions of Greeks still under Ottoman rule — led to the revolution of 1862 which ousted him. This time Britain selected Greece's new monarch, a young Danish Prince, whom the Greek National Assembly accepted as King George I in 1863. The new constitution adopted in the following year boded well for the new king, as it introduced the concept of a 'crowned democracy' and made male suffrage universal. The driving social force behind the developments of 1862–4 was a rising bourgeoisie of merchants who had made their fortunes abroad, lawyers, judges and civil servants, which had began to take shape in the wake of the first signs of economic

progress in shipping, commerce and export trade after the mid-1850s. The revolution of 1862 voiced the protest of this new social formation against the glaring disparity between theoretical constitutional liberalism and the corruption and arbitrariness of Greek politics in the 1840s and 1850s. The constitution of 1864 represented an attempt to create a new institutional framework within which this new emerging social class could establish its autonomy from the clans of landowners and local notables and obtain political power.[2]

The First Greek Republic had long ceased to exist when the First Spanish Republic came into being in the wake of the Glorious Revolution of September 1868, which overthrew Queen Isabella II. An economic crisis in the mid-1860s accentuated the deficiencies of a political system which was neither flexible enough to assimilate, nor confident enough to suppress, a radical challenge to Isabella's absolutism. As in Greece, the Glorious Revolution of September 1868 had a strong liberal content and was carried out by Spain's commercial and mercantile bourgeoisie. The Provisional Government which assumed power introduced a liberal democratic constitution in 1869, and in the following year Prince Amadeo of Savoy was chosen as King of Spain. His constitutional monarchy lasted until 1873, when radicals and republicans forced him to abdicate. The short-lived First Spanish Republic was established in February 1873, only to be brought to an end the following year by general Manuel Pavía's *pronunciamiento*. In 1875 the Bourbons were restored when Alfonso XII, Isabella II's son, assumed the throne. Like its Greek counterpart, the social class which had carried out Spain's liberal opening of 1868–74 was still in its infancy, uncertain and numerically weak. What further undermined the republican project was the fact that it did not completely break with nineteenth-century Spain's 'reactionary coalition' — a political oligarchy comprising the monarchy, the church and the landowners, and in which the mainly northern-based commercial and manufacturing bourgeoisie played the role of the junior partner. As the latter lacked sufficient revolutionary drive, it was emasculated by the powerful oligarchic coalition centred on land ownership, and its mild reformist zeal withered away in view of the rising social protest amongst peasants and workers.[3]

The liberal revolutions of 1843 and 1862 in Greece and 1868

in Spain were provoked by the autocratic and inept rule of Otto I and Isabella II. In both cases the army played a pivotal role which was far removed from its customary interventions in the twentieth century as the agent of reaction. With the middle classes of Greek and Spanish society still too weak to take on the lead in the struggle for modernization, the army became the bourgeoisie's spearhead in the attempt to introduce liberal reforms.[4] In the wake of the experimentation with institutional liberalism in the 1860s, the political system in both countries evolved in a fashion which, in the case of the Balkans and Southern Latin America, has been described as 'oligarchic parliamentarism': behind the facade of a 'liberal' and 'pluralistic' system of political representation which formally guaranteed the freedoms of speech and association, power lay with small ruling elites which effectively disenfranchised the masses 'through fraud, coercion, or other forms of political manipulation'.[5] Despite the names and ideological pretensions of political parties, power in both countries rested on the rotation of groups representing oligarchic interests — some less liberal than others. In Spain between 1875 and 1898 there was an alternation of Liberal and Conservative governments — headed by Praxedes Sagasta and Antonio Cánovas del Castillo respectively — which had more to unite than to separate them, notably the bipartisan consensus on stifling any call for radical change. Greece experienced something similar between 1882 and 1897, when Charilaos Trikoupis's New Party alternated in power with Theodoros Deliyannis's National Party.[6] Although the two Greek parties differed from one another more than their Spanish opposite numbers, the essence of Greek political consensus was encapsulated by the satirist Emmanuel Roidis in 1875 as follows:

> Elsewhere parties come into existence because people disagree with each other, each wanting different things. In Greece the exact opposite occurs: what causes parties to come into existence and compete with each other is the admirable accord with which all want the same thing: to be fed at the public expense.[7]

Both Greece and Spain lacked any political party in the modern sense of the term. In Spain, the parties were artificial entities constructed from above, held together by the lavish dispensation of government patronage, and depended for their

majorities in the Cortes on electoral management engineered by the Ministry of the Interior. Despite the introduction of universal male suffrage in 1890, decisions remained in the hands of a small elite, for Liberals and Conservatives had no difficulty in engineering parliamentary majorities through a combination of bribery, economic pressure, coercion, and manipulation by the Ministry of the Interior and by powerful local political bosses. What linked the components of the ruling oligarchy with each other and with the centre in Madrid was a nation-wide system of political bossism (*caciquismo*), in which local bosses (*caciques*) used a variety of corrupt means to ensure in their constituencies the electoral outcomes which had been decided in advance in Madrid. *Caciquismo* worked best in the direction of denying representation to workers' and peasants' rights.[8]

Dissimilar in form but not so in its consequences was Greece's answer to *caciquismo* — clientelism. Greek political parties in the nineteenth century and beyond were personal rather than parties of principle, resting on the formation and operation of a nation-wide patron–client system and on an informal parliamentary presence as groups of notables revolving around the same 'charismatic' leader. Clientelism had its origins in the over-development of the state and the civil service which rendered a large proportion of the population directly or indirectly dependent on the state for employment. As appointments to state jobs were controlled by the politicians, the latter posed as political representatives and brokers of political power through the dispensation of an ever-widening range of favours to their local constituents.[9]

The experience of oligarchic parliamentarism in both countries was underpinned by the lack of correspondence between the economic and social realities and the political power structures presiding over them. According to Raymond Carr, 'much of modern Spanish history is explained by the imposition of "advanced" liberal institutions on an economically and socially "backward" and conservative society: when universal suffrage was introduced at least eighty-five per cent of the population got its living from the land.' Nikos Svoronos similarly argued that Greece, 'an agrarian country with a low level of economic development, presented political structures analogous to those which had been formulated in the modern and advanced countries of the West'.[10] The antithesis between

political institutions and social and economic structures was due to the precedence of political liberalism over industrialization. Economic policies such as agrarian reform, public construction projects, protectionism and manufacturing were introduced gradually and much later than universal male suffrage, formal citizenship rights and universal public education. Yet in order for a liberal political revolution to succeed, political change must be accompanied by those social and economic changes which will substantiate, consolidate and safeguard the institutional revolution. This is not to assert that in both Greece and Spain the political changes in the last decades of the nineteenth century were unaccompanied by social and economic changes: on the contrary, during the last forty years of the nineteenth century social and economic advances were noticeable in Greece and substantial in Spain. Yet the consolidation of the liberal capitalist order in both countries after the 1870s was defective in that the political system and its trappings did not reflect social and economic realities but remained aloof and functioned according to its own rules.[11]

Industrialization in Spain had begun in the late eighteenth century but, despite a certain degree of economic growth throughout the nineteenth century, by 1870 the country was being outstripped by the industrial countries of northern and western Europe. Thereafter, and despite the contrast between the outward appearance of institutionalized liberalism and the reality of oligarchic rule and social and economic backwardness, the industrial sector of the Spanish economy continued to grow; nevertheless, by 1914 Spain remained a predominantly rural society of powerful landlords, a mass of impoverished peasants and agricultural labourers, and with half the active population employed in agriculture. Moreover, the Spanish economy was becoming increasingly dependent on loans for no government showed any willingness to reform an unproductive and unfair tax system in which the rich evaded almost all taxation.[12] Greece was lagging even further behind. In 1869–84 the first capital investments were made in industry, yet there was no industrial revolution in the sense of a sustained and self-perpetuating development; instead, the fragmentation of production, the obsolete equipment and the insufficient size of the domestic market became the hallmarks of an asymmetrical economic development. Capital flow benefited only the tertiary sectors of the

economy, such as shipping, commerce and banking, while Greek industry consisted mainly of a number or small and medium-sized textile and food-processing units. At the turn of the century Greece remained an overwhelmingly agrarian country with a tiny industrial sector. This imbalanced economic development did not lead to the formation of cohesive social classes with well-defined characteristics. The urban population increased from 8 to 33 per cent in 1853–1907, yet it still lacked class and social homogeneity, whereas the industrial working class had barely begun to form.[13] Of the two countries, therefore, Spain was the first to experience the violent outbreak of social tensions as industrialization and urbanization were evolving at a much faster pace than in Greece; and notwithstanding the brutal suppression of reformist initiatives, the irreconcilability between entrenched oligarchic interests and the forces of political and social change — especially land distribution — remained a key feature of Spain's history in the nineteenth century.[14]

The deficiencies of the liberal capitalist order in both countries account for the failure of the liberal monarchies introduced in the 1860s and the 1870s to provide long-term material prosperity and political stability. In Spain, the restoration of the Bourbons in 1875 inaugurated a period of spurious tranquillity. The liberal constitution of 1876 was fashioned along the lines of the British parliamentary system, but in reality it cared little about parliamentary democracy and even less about workers' and peasants' interests. A property qualification denied the vote to the working class, while even the middle and lower-middle classes found out that although they were eligible to vote, 'there was not a single honest or genuine election . . . until the disappearance of the Monarchy in 1931'.[15] In Greece the ruling elite exploited systematically the state apparatus and its political power and used the promise of state employment to consolidate patron–client relationships between politicians and voters. The absurdly over-sized state became 'a shapeless monster unwilling and unable to react intelligently' to changing circumstances,[16] while the pursuit of office became an end in itself for the politicians who could only thus meet the never-ending demands of their voters–clients for the dispensation of favours. As the formation of stable and durable governments became almost impossible, Greek politics in the last quarter of the nineteenth century revolved around bribery, electoral manipulation, fraud,

patronage and the intimidation of voters by the gendarmerie and the army.[17]

At the level of political representation, and while the 'Great Idea' remained the irredentist theme against which Greek politics evolved, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century two large political groupings had emerged: the National Party under Theodoros Deliyannis, representing the traditional oligarchic political families, and the New Party under Charilaos Trikoupis, representing a middle class with mildly reformist aspirations. Trikoupis was a bourgeois reformer who wanted to secure Greece's economic development before any irredentist adventures, hence with the backing of business interests he embarked on an effort to modernize the country. Deliyannis's political programme was the negation of reform and the uncompromising championing of the 'Great Idea'; as he once declared, he was against everything that Trikoupis was for.[18] The alternation in power of Trikoupis and Deliyannis from 1882 to 1897 witnessed an attempt by the former to modernize Greece's economy and infrastructure and the latter's dismantling of most of Trikoupis's measures once he came to power. Trikoupis financed his efforts by contracting foreign loans and increasing state revenue through tax rises. Yet, since most taxes were indirect, as in Spain, his economic policies favoured the business interests which had backed him, whereas the middle and lower classes were attracted by the anti-Trikoupis and irredentist demagogy of Deliyannis, who was thus able to replace him at regular intervals. Eventually in 1893, during a Trikoupis administration, Greece was forced to declare bankruptcy and Deliyannis returned to power in 1895. Two years later, when a Deliyannis government indulged in irredentist adventurism, the routing of the Greek army by the Turks exposed the country's economic and military weaknesses. This overwhelming defeat at the hands of the Ottomans in 1897 was followed by twelve years of disaffection and questioning.

In 1898, the year of 'The Disaster', Spain suffered a similarly crushing military defeat by the United States in the Caribbean and the Pacific, losing Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, the remnants of her erstwhile formidable colonial empire. Apart from the major material consequences, this was predominantly a psychological blow which inaugurated a period of introspection and questioning. The shattering of Spain's image as a great power became a moral catastrophe which compounded the

difficulties of a system which had already been shaken by economic backwardness and political stagnation.[19] In both Spain and Greece after the military defeats of 1897–8 the ruling elites which had presided over confused politics, economic depression and national humiliations came under increasing pressure from the middle classes which demanded modernization.

The storm first broke out in Greece in 1909, when a group of army officers rebelled demanding political, economic and military reforms. For a few months the future of the monarchy seemed to be in doubt, until the officers offered the political leadership of their movement to Eleftherios Venizelos, a lawyer who had made his name in the politics of the autonomous island of Crete and whose personal charisma would soon be admired by several of the world's leading statesmen.[20] Venizelos saved the monarchy through the promise of modernization and an attempt to reconcile anti-monarchist dissenters with the Crown, and in the elections of 1910 his Liberal Party won a massive parliamentary majority. Following the lessons of 1893 and 1897, Venizelos's platform consisted of vigorous economic, social and institutional reform and a pragmatic pursuit of irredentism. He promised that the Liberal Party would not be one of notables but one of principles and ideas, and pledged to take power away from those who fed on the budget and champion the cause of those who fed the budget. This political platform held genuine appeal and attracted widespread support amongst petty bourgeois, workers and peasants.[21]

Reforms were delivered, including the new Constitution of 1911 and, later, land distribution. In the Balkan Wars of 1912–13 Greece increased her territory by 68 per cent and her population from 2.7 to 4.8 million, which in turn increased the appetite to liberate those Greeks still living under Ottoman rule in Asia Minor. But then came the 'National Schism' which split the country into two violently opposed factions characteristically known as Venizelism and anti-Venizelism. Upon the outbreak of the First World War Venizelos's Liberal government advocated siding with the Entente, while the King and Venizelos's political opponents — first called the Party of the Nationally Minded and then the People's Party — insisted on neutrality. The National Schism was triggered by King Constantine I's unconstitutional dismissal of Venizelos from the premiership, but what exacerbated the dispute over foreign policy were social, economic and

even class differences, so that the 1915 National Schism may be seen as an extension of the intra-bourgeois conflict of 1909. The entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, which was politically represented by the Liberal Party, sought alignment with the Entente because, to lure Greece into the First World War, the latter had offered the promise of territorial expansion; this entailed the prospect of the lasting political domination of that faction as well as the prospect of modernizing the state, society and economy along the British model. For the anti-Venizelist camp, the state bourgeoisie and the landowners, the Greek King — who had close family ties with the Kaiser Wilhelm II — was the rallying point from which to counter-attack, undo the reformist momentum unleashed in 1909 and reassert oligarchic interests.[22]

The Liberals appeared to have set themselves firmly on the road to lasting political domination in 1919, when Greek troops landed in Smyrna on the coast of Asia Minor. Three years later, after Venizelos had lost the elections of 1920, Kemal Ataturk buried once and for all the dream of Greek irredentism. In 1922 the Greek armies in Asia Minor suffered a crushing military defeat, and in their retreat home they were followed by 1,300,000 refugees. With the violent and irreversible collapse of irredentism, twenty-four years after the Spanish Disaster of 1898 Greek history acquired its own far more drastic version in 'the Asia Minor Disaster'. Once the adhesive qualities of 'the Great Idea' had disappeared, the period from 1922 to 1936 was to be consumed by attempts to fill the ensuing ideological vacuum and tackle the multiple social, economic and political problems caused by the arrival of refugees.[23]

The 'disasters' of 1898 in Spain and 1922 in Greece were presided over by the monarchy and its political supporters, who were called upon to pay the price. The pace of events was once more set by the army. In Greece, in September 1922 a revolutionary committee of officers forced Constantine I to abdicate; he was succeeded by his eldest son, who took over as George II, while a commission of inquiry was to determine responsibility for the Asia Minor Disaster. Following the commission's findings, a special court martial found guilty of high treason eight royalist politicians and military commanders. The execution of six of them on 28 November 1922 restored discipline in the armed forces and prevented the eruption of civil strife, but it also introduced the precedent of a blood feud in the antagonism between

Venizelists and anti-Venizelists.[24] Suspicions about George II's complicity in the counter-*coup* of October 1923 signalled the end of the monarchy. The standing of the institution had already been eroded in the period 1897–1909, but in 1910 Venizelos had saved it. Victories in the Balkan Wars had then increased the appeal of Constantine I, while the National Schism after 1915 had crystallized around the crown a solid conservative opposition to the Liberals. In the immediate aftermath of the Asia Minor Disaster Venizelos was against the abolition of the monarchy for he regarded the institution a guarantee of stability in a period of major domestic and international crises. Though in the 1910s he had been supported by the numerically small and politically weak Greek proletariat, the foundation of the Socialist Labour Party of Greece (SEKE) in 1918 suggested that sections of the working class were beginning to withdraw their support from Venizelism. An indication of what was to come occurred in August 1923, when the military garrison of Piraeus fired upon protesting workers in an incident which initiated the army's new role as the instrument of state repression against social discontent. In this sense, the 'revolution' of 1922 ended up by quelling the workers' protest and preventing the frustrated and impoverished refugees from challenging the social and economic status quo.[25]

Venizelos's hesitation led some republican elements of the Liberal Party to defect and contest the elections of December 1923 as the Republican Union. Following the abstention of the bulk of the monarchists, the Liberals, the Republican Union and the Republican Liberals won 370 out of the 398 seats, a result which forced George II to depart from Greece pending a plebiscite on the constitutional question. Venizelos tried to postpone the settlement but the momentum of republicanism was too strong. The Republican Union formed a government which received a comfortable vote of confidence in Parliament, and on 25 March 1924 a total of 283 deputies present at a special session voted the resolution for the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic. A plebiscite in the following month ratified the decision by 69.95 per cent against 30.05 per cent. From its genesis, however, the Second Greek Republic was far too intimately associated with Liberal Party and army factions, while the monarchist People's Party would not recognize it until eight years later.[26]

In Spain, following the Disaster of 1898 the Bourbon

monarchy and the nominally two-party system came under increasing criticism by those preaching 'regeneration' through the introduction of sweeping political reforms. The critics included Republicans, who denounced the monarchy as an illegitimate and outmoded form of government; Socialists, who deemed it a reactionary system which had to be overthrown by a bourgeois republic — itself the ante-chamber to a socialist state; Anarchists, who rejected the monarchist state just like any other state; and regionalists from the Basque Country and more particularly Catalonia, who saw in the monarchy a system which strangled their local interests and aspirations. The outbreak of the First World War and Spain's neutrality accelerated the process of economic and industrial development due to a huge rise in foreign demand, together with the fact that, as imports were suspended, the need to find substitutes led to the establishment of new industries.[27] In the longer term the First World War had other important consequences for Spain. First, it led to the expansion and strengthening of two hitherto relatively weak classes in Spanish society, the industrial proletariat and the industrial bourgeoisie. Secondly, it exacerbated the uneven nature of Spain's economic development and intensified regional disparities centring around a clear division between the industrial north and the agricultural remainder of the country. Thirdly, the strengthening of the industrial proletariat and the urban bourgeoisie laid the foundations for increasing threats to the hegemony of the reactionary coalition. Finally, as rampant inflation set in, labour relations deteriorated dramatically, with industrialists being wholly indifferent to the plight of their workers, who thereupon reacted with strikes and unrest. Social tension was compounded by political instability, as from 1917 to 1923 there occurred thirteen serious and thirty less serious governmental crises, three general elections and fifteen changes of government.[28] The economic reconstruction of post-1918 Europe meant for Spain the loss of her foreign trade, an acute economic crisis and further deterioration in labour relations — so much so that from 1918 to 1923 Spain became 'the scene of one of the more savage social conflicts of postwar Europe'.[29] By 1923 the stifling oligarchic rule which perpetuated social and economic injustice, the Disaster of 1898, the economic and social crisis of 1917–23 and the ascendancy of the working class seemed to have placed the monarchy well past the point of redemption.[30]

Until 1921 the aim of the discontent was the 'regeneration' of

Spain. After July 1921 it expanded to find those responsible for the humiliating defeat which native forces inflicted on the Spanish army at Annual, in Morocco. The combined military, political and social crisis was cut short on 23 September 1923, when General Miguel Primo de Rivera, military governor of Barcelona, launched a *pronunciamiento*. Fear of revolution and the realization that Primo de Rivera's aim was to save the monarchy prompted Alfonso XIII to give the general a mandate to form a government.[31] It remained to be seen whether Primo de Rivera's dictatorship could solve the difficulties besetting the Bourbon monarchy.

Primo de Rivera's *pronunciamiento* was generally welcomed, after six years of bitter labour unrest, the violent suppression of the workers' movement, the monarchy's loss of credibility, the Moroccan humiliation, and a widespread feeling of stagnation pervading Spanish society. The forced inertia under the dictatorship led the two traditional oligarchic parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, to lose even more ground to the benefit of the two political movements that were already advancing. Republicanism and Socialism had been gaining ground since the First World War due to Spain's more rapid modernization and urbanization; in the 1920s alone the population of the country increased by 10 per cent, while a large proportion of it was urbanized. This process of social evolution accelerated in 1923–30 under a regime which — despite its admiration and importation of some of the trappings of Mussolini — was not fascist but rather one 'nearer to Aristotelian scholasticism'.[32] Yet economic and financial failure, coupled by the regime's inability to stem the tide of criticism against the monarchy, eventually deprived Primo de Rivera of the support of those who had initially backed him. Employers, landowners and bankers were sceptical of the regime's corporatist labour legislation, the Church resented its failure to assume full control over education, while even the military turned against Primo de Rivera when he tried to implement institutional reforms in the army.[33] In January 1930 the general handed power back to Alfonso XIII and resigned.

The economic policies of Primo de Rivera, whose expansionist and interventionist intent together with the favourable world economic conditions of 1923–8 had initially led to an economic boom, encouraged the self-confidence of the middle classes and

consolidated the position of the workers. Thus the dictatorship had set loose forces which, instead of consolidating the position of the monarchy, further eroded its autocratic foundations. One of the most important beneficiaries of this period was the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE). Founded in 1879, the party had been handicapped not only by its inability to adapt theoretical Marxism to Spain's economic and social realities; it had also been facing a reactionary and repressive state which, backed by the physical power of the army and the ideological power of the Church, was bent on thwarting any demand for reform and safeguarding landed interests. In April 1920, frustrated by the PSOE leaders' supposedly revolutionary rhetoric and decidedly reformist practice, the Youth Organization of the party, together with other dissidents, broke away and reconstituted themselves as the Spanish Communist Party (PCE). Still, the schism did not severely affect the PSOE, which in the years of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship opted for collaboration with the regime to avoid proscription and gain time to rebuild its forces. This strategy bore fruit in 1930–1, when the Spanish Socialist Party emerged as the most coherently organized political force in Spain and as the central component of the republican movement. Although the monarchy had been under strong criticism since the Disaster of 1898, in 1923 the King's support of Primo de Rivera, who proceeded to abandon the constitution of 1876, dealt a lethal blow to Alfonso XIII's pretension to rule as a constitutional monarch.[34] The republican groundswell was brought home to him on 12 April 1931, when in local elections the republican parties achieved a resounding victory. With the alternative being a possible civil war, two days later Alfonso XIII left Spain and a Revolutionary Committee took office as the Provisional Government of the Second Spanish Republic.

II

The short lives of the Second Greek Republic and the Second Spanish Republic were replete with economic crises, social upheavals and political instability. After three ineffective governments in its first year, the Second Greek Republic witnessed four military coups d'état (1925, 1926, 1933, 1935) and an attempt to assassinate Venizelos in 1933; a republican constitution was not

adopted until 1927, while the monarchist People's Party would not recognize it until 1932. Both Republics experienced a period of relative peace and stability — Greece under the Venizelos government of 1928–32, Spain under the Republican-Socialist government of 1931–3 — albeit marred by social and economic tensions; and this period was followed by the erosion of republican legitimacy and its overthrow by dictatorship in Greece and civil war in Spain.[35]

In Greece shortly after the advent of the Republic land reform and the settlement of the refugees from Asia Minor were completed with the breaking up of large estates and the distribution of land to the incoming Greeks; the project was radical, but large compensations had been paid to landowners, whereas adverse economic terms had by 1936 rendered three-quarters of the new smallholders heavily indebted. In 1928–32 Venizelos resumed the endeavour towards capitalist modernization through the massive import of foreign capital in the guise of loans, which came to control key sectors of the economy and rendered it highly vulnerable to upheavals of the international economic system.[36] The evolution of Greece came to resemble even more closely that of Spain after 1922, when the influx of refugees and the rapid industrialization and urbanization brought the workers into the forefront of Greek politics for the first time in the history of the country. The challenge from the Left emerged during the Liberal administration of 1928–32 and was spearheaded by the Greek Communist Party (KKE), SEKE's new name after 1924. By the late 1920s the effects of industrialization and the disillusionment of the peasantry from the limited immediate benefits of Venizelos's agrarian policies had generated the first serious incidences of labour unrest, which served notice of the prospect of a leftward drift amongst the more radical sections of the Liberals' mass support. As the concentration of the numerically small working class in a handful of cities amplified its presence in Greek society and politics, in 1929 Venizelos initiated the Idionym Law whereby the state officially sponsored anti-communism and persecuted any form of radical protest. The Law had been born out of labour unrest and the need to fill with anti-communism the ideological vacuum left after the irreversible collapse of the Great Idea in 1922, but in the long term it aimed to stave off an erosion of the Liberals' inter-class alliance from the Left.[37]

The difficulties which the emergence of a working-class movement posed for Venizelos were compounded by the Great Depression, which crushed the dream of sustained industrial development. The effects of the Slump of 1929 were more sorely felt by the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, sections of which deserted the Liberals and flocked to the People's Party, which posed as the guarantor of economic security and stability. In 1928 both Venizelos and Miguel Primo de Rivera had embarked on a battle to defend the stability of the national currency while deploying concepts such as the national honour to rally support for their economic policies. Both found out that defeat in the battle for the stability of the national currency as a matter of national honour inevitably entailed the loss of political prestige. In Greece, economic failure and labour unrest led many to long for a strongman, someone like Miguel Primo de Rivera, Benito Mussolini or, later, Adolf Hitler.[38]

In 1932 a prominent Liberal had noted that whenever Venizelos was in danger, he always raised the constitutional issue.[39] With the People's Party officially recognizing the Republic in that year, Venizelos was denied the use of republicanism as an electoral ploy and was forced to conduct the elections of 5 March 1933 without any disguise for his poor economic performance. The victory of the People's Party was instantly followed by a badly-planned republican coup d'état in which Venizelos was only indirectly implicated; a royalist attempt to assassinate Venizelos in June 1933; increasing talk amongst government circles about the restoration of the monarchy; and in March 1935 by a large-scale republican coup d'état launched by Venizelos and republican officers. The latter was of crucial importance, for it represented the last effort of the political faction which had ruled the country for most of the period since 1910 to reverse the electoral defeat of 1933 and return to power. Its failure provided the monarchists with the opportunity to do away with the Republic. The Second Greek Republic came to an end in November 1935, when the monarchy was restored by a grotesquely falsified plebiscite organized by extremist monarchist officers who had pushed aside the moderate — though not less loyal to the Crown — prime minister and leader of the People's Party.[40]

After March 1935 the state repression which had hitherto been reserved for the few followers of the KKE was extended to

embrace all anti-royalists. The result of the ruthless repression of what monarchists called 'Venizelocommunism' was a spontaneous fraternization at grassroots level amongst republicans of all shades, as they were all treated to the same kind of police brutality. By the summer of 1935 in Thessaloniki a KKE cadre described 'the common struggle' between the communist, socialist, republican and liberal youth organizations as based on a 'common democratic language, [a] common fundamental problem — the defence of the Republic and the fight against the restoration of the Glücksburg dynasty'.[41] In response to that threat, in September–October 1935 a united republican front had officially materialized on a national level when a Co-ordinating Committee was set up including the entire political spectrum from the Liberal Party to the KKE. Uneasy at the unholy alliance with the communists, conscious of the charge of 'Venizelocommunism', and anxious to stem the slow but steady leftward move of the Liberals' mass support, the leadership of the Party withdrew from the Co-ordinating Committee and, after the restoration of the monarchy in November 1935, it declared a trial recognition of the regime.[42]

The toppling of the moderate monarchist prime minister by extremist monarchist officers in October 1935 and the subsequent constitutional *volte-face* of the Liberal Party are largely accounted for in terms of the power base and strategic dilemmas facing both parties. The Liberals and the People's Party were both broadly-based inter-class alliances led by the two main components of the bourgeoisie — the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie and the state and gentry bourgeoisie respectively. Yet the Liberals represented an alliance between the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie and a potentially radical mass base of small landowners and urban labourers, formed under a programme combining pragmatic irredentism with social reform. After the Asia Minor Disaster of 1922 had killed off irredentism, all that was left was reform. Land distribution and the settlement of the refugees were soon completed, with the result that the Liberals found themselves in urgent need of a political programme. Partly because of bad planning, partly because of the prospect of some leftward move amongst their mass support, but mainly because of the major economic instability in the aftermath of the Great Depression and the defection of the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie to the People's Party, all that Venizelos was left with to hold the

Liberal Party together was republicanism. Thus after the electoral defeat of 1933 he saw renewed polarization over the regime as the only way to preserve the inter-class cohesion of the Liberal Party.[43] The failure of the March 1935 coup and the likelihood of a monarchical restoration presented the Liberals with the stark choice between a common republican front with the Left against the People's Party, or a common bourgeois front with the People's Party against the Left. The dilemma of the People's Party stemmed from the choice between an anti-Venizelist Republic and the immediate restoration of the monarchy as demanded by its extremist faction. Whereas it was the military wing of anti-Venizelism that resolved the latter's dilemma in October–November 1935,[44] the Liberals would continue to be plagued by their own for another year, and, after an enforced respite from 1936 to 1941, again in the 1940s.

In the elections of January 1936 the monarchists won 143 seats and the Liberals 142, with the fifteen communist deputies holding the balance. When it transpired that both the Liberals and the People's Party were holding secret talks with the communists, the army, which had been purged of Venizelist officers after the March 1935 coup, warned that it would not tolerate a government based on communist votes. In an attempt to rein in the military, King George II replaced the Minister of War with Ioannis Metaxas, a retired royalist general who profoundly disliked parliamentary politics and whose small royalist party had secured seven seats in the Parliament. On 13 April 1936, following the death of the caretaker Prime Minister, the King appointed Metaxas in his place. On 27 April 1936 Metaxas secured from Parliament a vote of confidence for his government and consent to his proposal to adjourn Parliament until 30 September 1936; of the 261 deputies present, 4 abstained, 16 voted against and 241 voted for Metaxas. The Liberals had supported non-parliamentary rule by a general who was known for his authoritarian views.[45]

These developments were taking place against an upsurge of violent labour unrest. By the beginning of April 1936 the Greek political establishment had been alarmed by the outbreak of a series of bitter labour disputes which, according to the British ambassador in Athens, became an 'epidemic'. Labour unrest was mainly due to the sharp rise in the prices of essential foodstuffs and the freezing of wages at their lagging levels. According

to Sydney Waterlow, the plight of the Greek people was compounded by the unwillingness and inability of the Greek government 'to remedy a state of affairs whereby the majority of Greek workers lived upon the borderline of starvation' and received 'little or no assistance' from the state.[46] The labour unrest reached a deadly climax in Thessaloniki in May 1936, when a demonstration by tobacco workers ended with twelve strikers dead. Metaxas's government attributed the event to communist agitators. The British Consul General thought otherwise: 'The real distress of the working classes', he cabled London, was due to 'the increases in the cost of living reducing the value of already low wages' and 'would have occurred even without the existence of communist propaganda'. His indictment of the insensitivity of the Greek state was ruthless: 'Unless a general rise in wages among the working classes is accompanied by a proper system of Health and Unemployment Insurance, serious troubles are likely to recur in the future'.[47] What added more fuel to the anger and desperation of the working classes was the indisputable fact that by 1935 the Greek economy had recovered from the strains caused by the Slump and was growing again swiftly: in that year industrial output was 13.13 per cent higher than in 1934 and 44.2 per cent higher than in 1928. Instead of economic stagnation, what caused unrest and challenged the foundations of the established order in the mid-1930s was the inability of the Greek political élite to ensure that some of the benefits of economic growth filtered down to the workers.[48]

According to Metaxas and George II, by the summer of 1936 'communism, already capitalizing on political anarchy . . . believed that the moment had come for the overthrow of the social order and the decomposition of Greek society'. Both men conjured up 'the seriousness of the prepared civil war', declared that the parliament, 'having failed in its main objectives . . . becomes harmful', and on 4 August 1936 suspended a number of key articles of the constitution and imposed the dictatorial regime of 'the Fourth of August'.[49] Yet the events of Thessaloniki in May 1936 and the other incidences of labour unrest were not an immediate threat to bourgeois rule in Greece — only a warning sign of the predicament and assertiveness of the working class. But coupled with the leftward gravitation of sectors of the Liberals' mass support, they led to an attempt from above to stem the tide of popular discontent and prevent the forging of a

leftist grassroots movement. The Liberals' vote of confidence to Metaxas on 27 April 1936 suggested that the differences between the two main parties could be eclipsed in the face of a challenge to the established social and economic order. Perhaps the most concrete sign of that challenge transpired on 22 July 1936, when the prospect of an alliance between the peasantry and the workers under the leadership of the latter emerged; the KKE and the unified Agrarian Party seemed poised for a major breakthrough when they set up the Popular Front and the KKE began to dissolve its rural organizations for the benefit of its new partner. The dictatorship of the Fourth of August was mainly intended to abort an emerging prospect rather than a concrete reality.[50]

While the Second Greek Republic was proving itself incapable of pursuing such social policies as would ameliorate the predicament of the lower classes, the Second Spanish Republic was suffering from the heterogeneity of the social forces that had created it. Spanish republicanism in 1929–31 reflected a resolute effort to replace the politics of *caciquismo* with the politics of mass mobilization. The movement embraced the urban petty bourgeoisie, small entrepreneurs, merchants and shopkeepers who saw in republicanism the vehicle with which the professional classes could assert their political independence after decades of nominal liberalism and actual autocracy. The heterogeneity of the republican forces of 1929–31 was compounded by the fact that the widespread hostility to the monarchy had led many of its upper-class supporters to subscribe to the cause of the genuine republicans of the urban middle classes, who were deemed capable of guaranteeing a moderate republic which might prove a better safeguard of entrenched interests than a discredited monarchy perhaps susceptible to overthrow through revolution. For the majority of monarchists, devotion to the institution was conditioned by the latter's ability to safeguard entrenched interests. Once it became clear that the monarchy was incapable of doing so, the majority of monarchists 'watched the fall of their monarch, as one of them put it, as they might have watched a bad film'.[51]

A republican movement comprising last-minute upper bourgeois defectors from the monarchy, a professional bourgeoisie, industrial workers and large numbers of landless peasants would have to reconcile the conflicting interests and aspirations of its diverse constituent parts. The republicans who held power in

1931–3 included two main components, the left Republicans and the PSOE, broadly representing two strands: a middle class which wanted institutional reform, and the socialists who wanted the redistribution of wealth and property. In a demonstration of political pragmatism and compromise, both strands agreed that change would have to come gradually and democratically; it was a noble intention which, nevertheless, enabled the opponents of the Republic to organize their resistance to the policies which were destined to deny them some of their privileges. Moreover, one of the two republican components, the socialists, were torn between two contradictory interpretations of the Second Republic: one was that the regime established in 1931 had to be welcomed as the long-overdue bourgeois revolution and supported in order to secure its consolidation and durability; the other, long-term, view was that even so the bourgeois republic would one day have to be seen as an obstacle to be removed in the march towards a socialist state. The republican government's pragmatism and compromise in 1931–3 was to compound the socialist dilemma.[52]

Wide-ranging reforms towards modernization and the lessening of social injustice were initiated in 1931–3 but many of them foundered for lack of money. The Republican government commanded limited resources with which to finance democratic reforms largely due to the very low level of direct taxation, but also due to the short-term effects of the Great Depression. Revenue came predominantly from indirect taxes, and the 1932 law which inaugurated a progressive income tax was so mild that it provided very little revenue. This led to the paradox that democratic reforms were difficult to implement because of lack of money, while at the same time the mere prospect or threat of democratic reforms solidified the opposition of the privileged classes to the Republic. The respect which the left Republicans and Socialists showed towards the democratic process in 1931–3 enabled conservative interests to block, evade or pay lip-service even to moderate social reforms; this, in turn, led to the Socialists losing faith in the bourgeois Republic and moving decisively to the left.[53]

The two main proposed reforms of the left Republican and Socialist government of 1931–3 were the successful Autonomy Statute for Catalonia and the unsuccessful land reform. The inadequate resources at the disposal of the government meant

that the Second Republic had no money with which to compensate landowners for the appropriation of their land. The Agrarian Law of 1932 furnished the legal framework for the solution of the agrarian question but what was equally needed was cash and political determination. Accordingly, the law in principle threatened the landowners but in practice it was mild, simultaneously succeeding in alarming one of the most privileged and most powerful classes in Spanish society as well as rekindling the hopes of the impoverished peasantry. Threatening intent and mild outcome was the common denominator of much of the 1931–3 legislation — so much so that by the summer of 1933 the threatening intent had cost the government support from the Right whereas the mild outcome had cost it support from the Left. This signalled the end of unity among the Republican forces, especially as the Socialists grew frustrated with parliamentary politics and disabused of the possibility of radical social reform within the confines of a bourgeois democracy. Their frustration culminated in September 1933, when they were effectively expelled from the government.[54]

The elections of November 1933 were won by the centre–right of the (nominally only) Radical Party and the conservative Catholic CEDA. Gil Robles, the leader of the CEDA, had already promised in summer 1933 that he would undo all Republican legislation.[55] From November 1933 to October 1934 the country was ruled by the Radical Party with CEDA not participating in the government but controlling many of its activities behind the scenes. Though Gil Robles and the CEDA were not fascist, their aim was to turn Spain into a Catholic corporate state. CEDA had not openly acknowledged the Republic but enjoyed the freedom to operate as a legal party within it, while all of the CEDA's opponents feared that Gil Robles wanted the forcible overthrow of the Republic and the establishment of a dictatorship. The party's authoritarian tendencies and external fascist posturings could only reinforce the Left's fear and dismissal of CEDA as fascist.[56]

When in September–October 1934 Gil Robles brought down the Radical Party government and three CEDA ministers were admitted into a reshuffled cabinet, the Socialists responded with a general strike which was easily suppressed — except in Asturias, where it became a full-scale revolution. It took the army two weeks, unprecedented brutality and massive bloodshed

to quell what amounted to a small civil war which left 4000 casualties. The repression that followed Asturias, and the dismantling of the 1931–3 legislation in 'the two black years' of 1933–5, made possible once more the unity of the Left. On 16 February 1936 the left Republicans, the Socialists and the PCE fought and narrowly won an electoral victory as the Popular Front. The polarization was evident as the Radical Party, representing the centre, almost disappeared, leaving two large political alliances of the Right and the Left to find out whether they could co-exist with each other.[57]

The Socialists and the PCE stayed out of the government, which effectively consisted of left-wing and centrist Republicans. The Popular Front proceeded to re-introduce the moderate reforms of 1931–3 while the Right was talking of an imminent Bolshevik takeover. Behind the apocalyptic rhetoric, however, lay the unwillingness of the Right to surrender power simply because of an electoral defeat. The irony was that the Spanish Popular Front, far from being the instrument of a proletarian revolution, was no more than an essentially defensive political alliance put together to save the country from what was perceived as a home-grown fascist threat.[58] Yet even the mere formation of a reformist alliance and its electoral victory convinced the privileged classes that the political parties which represented them were not up to the task of securing their interests within the confines of the parliamentary system. After February 1936 the only solution for the Right was to search for other forces that would enable it to cling to its privileges. These forces were the army and the fascist party of the Falange — both bent upon the overthrow of parliamentary institutions.[59]

With CEDA tarnished by electoral defeat, the militant right swelled the ranks of the Falange, set up in 1933 by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of Miguel. Thereafter the Falange unleashed a campaign of terror against the Left in order to destabilize the Popular Front government and the Republic itself. Though the destitute of Spanish society had celebrated the electoral result of February 1936 with urban strikes and the occupation of land, the unrest they caused was spontaneous and unco-ordinated, quite unlike the plans of the Republic's enemies. Still, the Right saw in this unrest the beginnings of the revolution it had feared all along. The army, with a long history of risings against civilian governments, with a history of conspiratorial

intrigues against the Second Republic as old as the Republic itself, and with its obsession against what it regarded as the Republic's failures with regard to regionalism and public order, duly obliged on 17–18 July 1936.[60]

III

The mass politicization and polarization which underlay the evolution of Spanish and Greek history in the 1930s and the 1940s progressed at a much faster pace in Spain, where they were completed between April 1931 and February 1936. For the privileged classes of Spanish society, the Republican experience

> . . . meant the sudden entry of uncultured barbarians into regions of power hitherto inhabited by their superiors, the consequence of a vast and perilous process of mass politicization.[61]

In Greece, where the seeds of polarization were only beginning to be sown in the 1930s, the schism would crystallize under the radicalizing impact of the Axis occupation in the early 1940s, when the rise of the KKE-inspired and led National Liberation Front introduced the kind of mass politicization which had been released in Spain in 1931. Yet common in both countries in the 1930s was the rejection by the privileged classes of the principle of wealth redistribution as the basis for establishing genuine and viable democratic republics. In Spain in July 1936 the rejection was made by force of arms. In Greece, a few days later, both the Right and the Centre accepted the overthrow of parliamentary institutions in view of the prospect of the Centre's erosion of political support by the Left. The Greek bourgeois politicians might have deemed parliamentary democracy desirable, but they did not regard it indispensable when faced by their own inability and unwillingness to provide fair and lasting solutions to the social and economic upheavals triggered by the influx of refugees and the Great Depression. The dictatorship was established in August 1936, virtually with the consent of Greece's political parties, as an attempt to counter with violence the currents of social discontent. The attempt failed and during the years of Axis occupation the discontent grew stronger; and from 1944 onwards it took the form of a mass popular demand for fundamental

changes in Greece's social, economic and political order.[62] For the time being in April–August 1936 the Greek bourgeois politicians had accomplished some feat in reversing the order of Karl Marx's dictum in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* — that history occurs twice, the first time as a tragedy, the second time as a farce; for them the farce was to show their belief in the dispensability of parliamentary democracy by giving Metaxas a vote of confidence in April 1936; the tragedy was the abolition both of themselves and of parliamentary democracy by the general in August 1936.

Yet the longer trends had occurred much earlier, in the mid-nineteenth century, when economic development, even if significantly different in origins and pace, had unleashed similar tensions in both countries; liberal revolutions in the 1860s had produced constitutional monarchies with assorted hopes for genuinely liberal political regimes; disappointment of such hopes had led to political stagnation and calls for substantial change; and major national humiliations in foreign affairs had rocked the foundations of the old order and strengthened demands for national regeneration. At first the monarchies paid the price, but ultimately democracy itself became the principal victim. In the 1930s both Republics faced major political, economic and social crises to which the 'respectable classes' responded with an attack on democracy. As the intensity of the crisis differed in the two countries, the response was proportionate to the challenge. This was to be expected, for a stalemate had developed whereby in Greece the forces of the Left had no chance of coming to power but neither could they be irretrievably suppressed within the framework of parliamentary politics; in Spain, when the forces of the Left returned to power in February 1936, only the sword could remove them; and again in Greece in the 1940s, when they seemed poised to seize power, it was the sword that would ensure that eventually they did not.[63]

On the other hand, one fundamental dissimilarity stands out. What distinguished the Second Spanish Republic from the contemporaneous Republics in Greece, Portugal and even Weimar Germany was that at least in the first two years of its existence it showed that its *raison d'être* was not simply to alter superficially some political forms, but to implement substantial reforms aimed at genuine national regeneration. The Second Greek Republic, which had not succeeded in inspiring

sufficient loyalty, resoundingly failed to do so.[64] This fundamental difference in social content meant that whereas the Second Spanish Republic swiftly became something worth defending for a large number of Spaniards, the Second Greek Republic appeared in retrospect as a temporary expedient in the bourgeoisie's struggle for perpetual domination. That the Greek republican experience, unlike that of Spain, lacked deep popular roots was brutally exposed by the editor of the Athens monarchist daily newspaper *Kathimerini* in his comment on the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic in April 1931:

> . . . godparent of [the Second Spanish Republic] appear at this moment to be the joy of the people, even if frivolous or irrational. But here, where and when have we seen this joy? . . . [In Greece] the new regime becomes a vogue, a newspaper title, the sign of a shop, a dress, a drink, a bottle, a cigarette case, even a kind of food or sweet . . . A beerhouse — those of us passing by Syngrou Avenue remember it — decided to call itself 'The Republic' and at first it closed down and then reopened under a new name in order to survive. Has anything else happened?[65]

Yet underlying the upheavals in both countries was the precedence of political liberalism over industrialization in the nineteenth century, combined with the emergence of the underprivileged into the forefront of politics in the early twentieth century. In Spain by the 1930s the latter process had crystallized into a social and political crisis which, since it could not be settled politically, would have to be resolved by other means: 'class struggle by civil war'.[66] The same process was just beginning in Greece, and though its internecine resolution would have to wait for another ten years, the Spain of 1936 had a certain resonance in the Greece of 1936. During the violent labour unrest in Thessaloniki in May, 'many workers with raised fists shouted "Spain, Spain", influenced by the outbreak of the Spanish Revolution [*sic*]'.[67] Lincoln MacVeagh, the US ambassador in Athens, who started a tour of Macedonia on 9 May, confirmed that 'cries of "Long Live Spain!" seem to have been frequent'. In northern Greece the ambassador witnessed resentment due to the fact that 'Macedonia and Thrace are still ruled as provinces and not yet integrated with the rest of Greece'. The feeling that Athens was only interested in what it could extract from Macedonia and Thrace in terms of taxes and votes prompted him to wonder whether Thessaloniki was 'destined to

become another Barcelona and spread the infection of economic revolt throughout the whole of the rotten body politic of this country'.[68] In June 1936 the KKE further impelled the Greek establishment to look to Spain and shiver by pledging to do everything in its power to set up a Popular Front 'after the example of France and Spain'.[69]

The impact of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in mid-July on the run up to the Fourth of August 1936 must have been considerable. In October 1936 the Greek Liberal general and academician Alexandros Mazarakis-Ainian noted in his diary with regard to the causes of the Metaxas dictatorship:

> . . . the fear of communism by the middle classes and the events of Spain made many to prefer to lose their liberties rather than their money.[70]

The resonance of Spanish developments would soon lead the dictator to use the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War to justify his own actions, thereby confirming that the events of Spain had served notice to the Greek ruling elites. The alleged communist threat in both countries and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War presented Metaxas with an opportunity to uncover a wider scheme of Bolshevik subversion. In a radio address six days after establishing the dictatorship, he told the Greek people that 'none of you, except for the well-known demagogues and the deranged subversives, wants to see our land experience the fate of the unfortunate Spain.'[71] He returned to the subject at a speech on 2 October 1936, when he established a more direct link between developments in Spain and Greece. Referring to the situation on the eve of 4 August, he said that Greece had faced a very real threat by the local agents of international communism:

> In communism's general scheme of subversion, Greece was part of the greater game, and would have to be sacrificed when the time came, for the sake of the general catastrophe. And the time which had been decided for Greece was the 5th August. We acted in time, the previous day . . . You remain in no doubt about the danger which you had undergone . . . You saw the whole game being played out before you. Witness Spain, a nation historic, courageous and proud, in order to reflect on the fate which would have awaited poor Greece.[72]

In arguing that Greece and Spain were parts of the greater game of communist subversion, Metaxas was alluding to a report which had been published in *Kathimerini* on 23 September 1936. The report consisted of extensive details from a document which

allegedly had come to the possession of the Greek government from abroad. The headlines summed it up:

> The full plan of the Third International for the world communist revolution is being uncovered. From abroad a common fate had been under preparation for Greece and Spain. The events of Thessaloniki were the prelude to the revolution.

At the core of the communist conspiracy lay the formation of Popular Fronts, which had brought first Spain to the threshold of a communist revolution; France was to come second, and Greece third. The path to a communist takeover in Greece had been embarked upon in early 1936, when the fifteen communist deputies voted the leader of the Liberal Party to the Presidency of the Parliament, thereby offering the Liberals the required majority to form a government. This was the beginning of the Greek Popular Front which supposedly was soon to drive the country down the Spanish abyss, had it not been for Metaxas's benevolent intervention.[73]

IV

Edward Malefakis has encapsulated one of the evil stars of the Second Republics in Greece and Spain as their 'unfortunate timing', for 'few periods in Europe's history were as ideologically conflictive or economically unstable as the 1930s'.[74] Both were trapped under the polarization between fascism and communism and asphyxiated financially under the Slump. The parallel extends into the 1940s, when the democratic forces in Franco's Spain and those of the National Liberation Front in Greece were trapped in the meshes of yet another polarized exigency — the global conflict between capitalism and communism. During the Greek Civil War memories of Spain were invoked by all the principal actors, foreign and domestic.[75] But for Greeks the living memory of Spain was not wholly negative, as Metaxas and his propagandists in the 1930s or the Cold Warriors in the 1940s would imply. During the Spanish Civil War, the Greek steamship *Kimon*, carrying a cargo of ammunition for the Republicans, reached the port of Suda, in Crete, where her crew abandoned her. When the Chania District Organization of the

KKE recruited a new crew which took the ship and her cargo to their destination, in an expression of gratitude the Republican government sent a medal of honour; this the secretary of the Organization wore proudly on his lapel for years.[76] In an essay on Federico García Lorca, Odysseas Elytis, the Greek poet who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1979, alluded to another dimension of the common experience of Spaniards and Greeks in the 1930s and the 1940s:

> Farewell Federico García Lorca! The gunshot which tumbled you against the stone wall of a village in your homeland achieved nothing! The strength of the people you loved now resurrects your words for ever, and you know how the teardrop of one villager is much more worthy than all the prizes of the Academies, and how that planetree leaf which in the misty mornings the northern wind sends as escort on the shoulders of the guerrillas who are fighting becomes a sign of life superior to a piece of gold![77]

In 1944, when he wrote this, Elytis could have been referring not only to those Spanish republican guerrillas fighting Franco's regime, but also to the guerrillas of the National People's Liberation Army, who were fighting fascism on the mountains of his own, Axis-occupied, country.

Notes

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8. P. Heywood, op. cit., 5, 16–17; R. Carr, *The Spanish Tragedy: The Civil War in Perspective* (London 1977), 21; P. Preston, *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War* (London 1996), 14–15; E. Malefakis, 'The Political and Socioeconomic Contours of Southern European History', 54.

9. Cf. G. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece 1922–1936* (Berkeley 1983), 5–14, 64, 67–75; N. Mouzelis, *Politics in the Semi-Periphery*, 39–48.

10. R. Carr, *Modern Spain 1875–1980*, 1; N. Svoronos, *Episkopisi*, 18.

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14. S. Ellwood, *The Spanish Civil War* (Oxford 1991), 8. On the importance of the agrarian question see E. Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain* (New Haven 1970), 65–144.

15. G. Brenan, op. cit., 3; see also E. Malefakis, 'The Political and Socio-economic Contours of Southern European History', 46–7, 52–9; P. Heywood, op. cit., 4–5.

16. N. Mouzelis, 'The Concept of Modernization: Its Relevance for Greece', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. XIV, No. 2 (October 1996), 222. See also K. Tsoukalas, *Koinoniki Anaptyxi kai Kratos: I Sygrotisi tou Dimosiou Chorou stin Ellada*, 2nd edn (Athens 1989), 84–153.

17. R. Clogg, *A Short History of Modern Greece*, 85.

18. Ibid., 90.

19. R. Carr, *Spain 1808–1975*, 387–8; P. Preston, *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War*, 16.

20. In 1919, when as prime minister Venizelos represented Greece at the Paris Peace Conference, Harold Nicolson wrote to his father: 'I can't tell you the position that Venizelos has here! He and Lenin are the only two really great men in Europe.' See H. Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919* (London 1933), 271.

21. G. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic*, 119–20, 125–6, 181; E. Malefakis, 'The Political and Socioeconomic Contours of Southern European History', 58–9; A. Rigos, op. cit., 134, 276; N. Mouzelis, *Politics in the Semi-Periphery*, 43–4.

22. G. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic*, 127–30.

23. A. Rigos, op. cit., 265–9.

24. R. Clogg, *A Short History of Modern Greece*, 118–20; I. Yiannoulopoulos,

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25. C. Chatziiosif, op. cit., 388, 390–4.

26. A. Veremis, 'I Antepanastasi tou 1923 kai I Anakirixi tis Avasileftis Dimokratias', *Istoria tou Ellinikou Ethnous*, XV (Athens 1978), 275–81.

27. R. Carr, *Modern Spain 1875–1980*, 29, 44, 47–8, 53; P. Heywood, op. cit., 16, 19, 43, 87–8; P. Preston, *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War*, 18; A. Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain*, 21.

28. P. Heywood, op. cit., 29–31, 59–60, 194 n. 3.

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