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DUŠAN SPASOJEVIĆ, ΕΛΛΑΔΑ. Ο ΑΓΩΝΑΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΑΝΕΞΑΡΤΗΣΙΑ, Η ΣΥΓΚΡΟΤΗΣΗ ΤΟΥ ΚΡΑΤΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ Η ΠΑΛΙΓΓΕΝΕΣΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΘΝΟΥΣ
 [GREECE. THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, THE CREATION OF THE STATE AND THE REBIRTH OF THE NATION]. ATHENS: KASTANIOTIS, 2023, 456 P.

Reviewed by Radmila Pejić*

Dušan Spasojević, the Serbian Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic since 2016, is the author of this monograph, which has already been published in Serbian (Čigoja Press, the Institute for the Recent History of Serbia, the Institute for European Studies, Šaper Foundation). This tome has garnered widespread attention in Serbia resulting in publication of its second revised edition. To the Serbian public Spasojević's book authoritatively reveals the country and the nation they hold close to their hearts but until now have known little of their history. Proof of this is the modest number of titles in the Serbian historiography dealing with Serbian-Greek or Yugoslav-Greek relations.¹ We

also need to stress the importance of the proceedings related to this topic.² Except for the translation of Richard Clogg's book (*A Concise History of Greece*, Belgrade, 2000) nothing has been published on the history of modern Greece in Serbia. The void has now been filled by Dušan Spasojević's book. From it, the Serbian speaking public has now learned more about the Greek path to independence and how comparable it is to the Serbian experience. From comparing the flows of battle to describing personalities, the author brings us closer to the whole process of building the modern Greek nation, as well as teaching us about what constitutes the modern Greek identity. Through these vivid images we see the Greek's dual identity, both Ancient and Byzantine, their relationship with their language, and the establishment of what their nation means to them today. Spasojević splendidly depicts characters who shaped Greek politics of the time through their public and political actions and distinctively portrays strong

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¹ S. Terzić, *Srbija i Grčka (1856–1903), Borba za Balkan* [Serbia and Greece (1856–1903) Struggle for the Balkans, Belgrade 1992]; M. Milošević, *Srbija i Grčka 1914–1918. Iz istorije diplomatskih odnosa* [Serbia and Greece [1914–1918, (Zaječar, 1997)]; M. Ristović, *Dug povratak kući. Deca izbeglice iz Grčke u Jugoslaviji 1948–1960* [A Long Journey Home: Greek Refugee Children in Yugoslavia: 1948–1960], (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 2000) and Greek (Το πείραμα Μπούλκας “Η ελληνική δημοκρατία” στη Γιουγκοσλαβία 1945–1949, 1η έκδ. – (Θεσσαλονίκη: Κυριακίδη Αφοί, 2006); M. Ristović, *Na pragu Hladnog rata. Jugoslavija i građanski rat u Grčkoj (1945–1980)*, (Belgrade, 2016). [On the Brink of the Cold War. Yugoslavia and the Civil War in Greece (1945–1949)]; A. Pećinar, *Српско-грчки дипломатски и савезнички односи (1912–1918)*, [Diplomatic and allied relations between the Serbs and Greeks], (Belgrade, 2016).

² Between 1974 and 1991, a series of scholarly conferences (organised by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) and the Institute for Balkan Studies (IMXA) in Thessaloniki) were largely devoted to political, cultural and particularly literary relations between the two nations during the period of Ottoman domination (mainly between the eighteenth and early twentieth century). Also see very valuable: Paschalis M. Kitromilides, Sophia Matthaïou, eds., *The Salonica Theatre of Operations and the Outcome of the Great War* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 2005) and *Greek-Serbian Relations in the Age of Nation* (Athens, 2016).

personalities that come with tumultuous times like these.

It is not easy to write a history book for wide readership especially for an author coming from another country. To do so well takes real skill. Covering recent centuries of Greek history requires courage too, as many in the Balkans have strong opinions about what and how it should be written about. However, what above all else makes Dušan Spasojević's absorbing and voluminous account of the Greek Revolution stand out, is exactly what Professors Spyridon Sfetas and Milan Ristović have pointed out in their Prologue to the Serbian edition – that it is a well written book in which both the expert reader-historian and anyone else interested in the history of Greece will find clear and trustworthy guidelines for navigating this essential period of its recent history. For its carefully selected contributions and rich scientific apparatus, Ristović and Sfetas also find it a good starting point for an advanced comprehension of Modern Greek history and an important part of the common Balkan and European history.

It was therefore no surprise that "Kastaniotis", one of the oldest and most respected Athenian publishing houses, decided to translate and publish Spasojević's book this autumn. The wholehearted welcome it received in Greece, by both the general public and in historical circles, strongly reaffirms that *Greece. The War of Independence, the Creation of the State and the Rebirth of the Nation* is judiciously thought-out, well-researched and commendably up-to-date. This assessment has been confirmed by one of the Greek historians, Professor Emeritus Thanos Veremis. In his review of Spasojević's monograph, Veremis notes several up to now unknown details about Greek-Serbian connections and overall Balkan aspects and influences on developments during the War of Independence. Appraising Spasojević's book, Veremis particularly emphasises its value to the Greek readership by drawing attention to thus far

unexplored links between Karageorge and Filiki Heteria, close interactions of the father of the Greek national history Konstantinos Papanigopoulos with the 19th century Serbian intellectual elite, extraordinarily well-documented reference to the lately neglected role of the great Russian poet Pushkin in the Greek Revolution, as well as the new information that book provides about Egyptian occupation of Peloponnese.

According to Professor Iakovos D. Michailides, Professor of Modern and Contemporary History and the Head of the School of History and Archeology at the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, who authored the Prologue for the Greek edition, Spasojević masterfully presents to the Greek readership a set of interrelated historical fault lines concerning the nature of Greek identity, the role of the state and the nation's place in the modern world. These deep-rooted aspects of the collective identity of modern Greeks as identified by Spasojević – Orthodox Christianity, synthesis of Antique and Byzantine heritage and the Greek language – have by no means gone away. According to the author, in some form or other, they still generate the views of today's Greeks, form and shape their perceptions of themselves and the outside world. After praising the knowledge, sharpness of mind, aesthetics and sensibility of the writer, Michailides goes on to include Spasojević among the ranks of the great modern Hellenophiles like Mark Mazower, Roderick Beaton and David Brewer. As his final point, Mihailides concludes that *Greece. The War of Independence, the Creation of the State and the Rebirth of the Nation* deserves to be the standard general history of modern Greece in both the Serbian and Greek language for years to come.

What the Greek speaking audience will find particularly stimulating is Spasojević's remarkable attraction to Crete. Here, the island is portrayed through the centuries under Venice, but also in the dark ocean of Turkish tyranny, where you can see how the

then existence of Turko-Cretans and Crypto-Christians reflects on today's lifestyle of the islanders.

In conclusion, Spasojević has produced the monograph with a wealth of information, carefully balanced interpretations and an excellent grounding in the wider Balkan and European context of the Greek War of Independence. It will serve as a point of departure for all researchers of Balkan history

in this period. The book is relevant for both audiences: for the Serbian public it fills a huge void of knowledge about their much-loved neighbours, while the Greek public gets a distinct roadmap through critical points in their own history. Such practice should spread to other Balkan historiographies, so that nations of this region can learn more about each other in a valid way.

PASCHALIS M. KITROMILIDES, ED., *THE GREEK REVOLUTION IN THE AGE OF REVOLUTIONS (1776–1848). REAPPRAISALS AND COMPARISONS.*
LONDON AND NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE, 2022, 284 P.

*Reviewed by Dušan Fundić**

The edited volume stemmed out of the presentations at the eponymous conference held in 2021 with the intention of contextualizing the Greek Revolution (1821–1829) within the framework of international relations, related revolutions and their legacies, the spread of the ideas of the Enlightenment, nationalism and liberalism, but also in the framework of Ottoman and Balkan history as well as the transnational Philhellenic movement. The collection, edited by Paschalis M. Kitromilides, is divided into six parts comprising 18 texts, produced by 21 researchers.¹ The book also contains an

editor's introduction with an accompanying index.

The volume's central claim is that the importance of the Greek Revolution as an event lies in its renewal and maintenance of the revolutionary idea in "Metternich's Europe" after the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte and the defeat of the French Revolution (1815). The Greek Revolution paved the way for new movements that would reach their peak in 1848. This claim is clearly argued throughout the volume and represents a valuable contribution to understanding new revolutionary frameworks. Simultaneously, it is an encouraging example of an active exploration of other events and processes often considered to be on the 'margins' of European history, such as the Balkan Peninsula, and providing them with a necessary reevaluation.

Kitromilides, in his introduction titled "The Greek World in the Age of Revolution"

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Eleftherios Venizelos. The Trials of Statesmanship (Edinburgh University Press, 2006); *Enlightenment and Revolution. The Making of Modern Greece* (Harvard University Press, 2013).

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