

The Unsettled Debate: Monarchy and Republic in Spain and Greece in the Interwar Years*

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abstract

The following essay examines the political development in Spain and Greece between the World War I and World War II, comparing these two Mediterranean countries and placing them in a broader European and global context. The conflict between the supporters of monarchy and republic as forms of government was extremely important in the political debate in both countries, and shaped their history in a quite remarkable way. The discussion of these intricate dynamics will help to appreciate the problems that Spain and Greece faced at that time, and can also contribute to a deeper understanding of some key features of the historical change in these two countries.

resumen

El siguiente ensayo examina el desarrollo político en España y Grecia en el período entre la Primera y la Segunda Guerra Mundial, comparando estos dos países mediterráneos y situándolos en un contexto europeo y global más amplio. El conflicto entre los partidarios de la monarquía y la república como formas de gobierno fue muy importante en el debate político de ambos países, influyendo en su historia de una manera muy notable. La discusión de estas dinámicas complicadas ayudará a apreciar mejor los problemas a los que España y Grecia se enfrentaban en ese momento, contribuyendo asimismo a una comprensión más profunda de algunas de las características clave del cambio histórico en estos dos países.

* An earlier version of this article was published in Greek as “Ζητήματαπερί Μοναρχίας Δημοκρατίας χαικοινωνικής εξέλιξης στην Ελλάδα, την Ισπανία χαισεάλλες χώρες, χατάτον Μεσοπόλεμο [The Unsettled Debate: Monarchy and Republic in Spain and Greece in the Interwar Years]”, in Dēmētrēs E. Fīllipēs (Epiméleia), *1936 ΕΛΛΑΔΑ – ΙΣΠΑΝΙΑ* [1936: *Elláda-Ispanía. Ēmerída “Elláda-Ispanía 1936”*], Athens, Bibliórama, 2007, pp. 233-256. The text is available online in PDF on <http://enricucelaydacal.weebly.com/>.

resum

El següent assaig examina el desenvolupament polític a Espanya i Grècia en el període entre la Primera i la Segona Guerra Mundial, comparant aquests dos països mediterranis i situant-los en un context europeu i global més ampli. El conflicte entre els partidaris de la monarquia i la república com a formes de govern va ser molt important en el debat polític d'ambdós països, influint en la seva història d'una manera molt notable. La discussió d'aquestes dinàmiques complicades ajudarà a apreciar millor els problemes als que Espanya i Grècia s'enfrontaven en aquest moment, contribuint així mateix a una comprensió més profunda d'algunes de les característiques clau del canvi històric en aquests dos països.

When we compare a given experience with another which is contemporaneous—in this case, Spain and Greece in 1936—, just what are looking at or for? Basically, I would answer, their *political rhythms*, which are understood as being in time, in some sense. There tend to be two obvious ways to trace a political rhythm, whatever one understands by this notion, whether that might be ideological continuities or institutional patterns. One can follow them *externally* or *internally*: externally by the general characteristics of political systems in the area (in this case, the Mediterranean basin or Europe); or internally, on the basis of what is the logic or dynamic which marks behavior over a relative period within a determined political community.

To speak of *forms of government* is often a very muddled discussion, even in supposedly specialized literature. Here we are discussing how power is *contained*, rather than its *content*. The container of power is essentially a patriarchal preoccupation, linked from its earliest beginning to the development of agrarian-based societies, with an uneven market structure. Industrial growth is lived—socially, above all—through technological change in communications, therefore facilitating urbanization, and the more efficient correlation of markets over distance. Industrial development, either partial or complete, offers choice, and the option to choose, when generalized socially, dissolves obligations and allegedly “ancestral” ties. The option of choice, as soon as it exists, easily becomes a right, which in turn introduces itself—as selection from below—into political relationships, through new kinds of shifting representation (elected delegates or deputies to a short-term assembly, on a schedule of voting), as opposed to fixed (a king as “father of his people”). But the limits of organized, elective representation are not rigid. Rather they are flexible, even potentially unlimited, until they become “full” participation, in which literally *everybody* votes, without any discrimination of any kind. Thus, nineteenth-century “representative government” and twentieth-century “democracy” have tended to evolve from a production-oriented social organization, which remains patriarchal in its macro-political and micro-political forms, to a more “feminine” social interaction (in the patriarchal pattern, men act and offer, and women choose).

The main difficulty of any kind of régime is its continuity, how it passes from one political period (whatever that may be) to the next, and then to another. Patriarchy is very obviously about patrimony (as is, ironically enough, matrimony). So political inheritance is inseparable from origin, descent, ancestry, or parentage, a passing-on "from generation to generation" of common "stock" or membership, that is defined generally by virile incarnations of kingship (male in style even when they are, very exceptionally, female) and motherly, matronly symbols of republicanism (that is, the king in profile on coins or stamps, but the bust of a generically female "Republic").

In this essay I am taking the frontiers of the modern debate between Monarchy and Republic, and the accession of women to the suffrage, as the beginning and closing parameters of a determined political dynamic or rhythm in Mediterranean or meridional European politics, between 1918 and some point later in the twentieth century, using the interwar years as a central focus of attention.

Spain and Greece: limited comparisons

We are looking at two solipsistic societies, which are therefore most usually perceived internally, their internal rhythm traced from the inside, on what are understood as insider rules. But seen this way, there is almost no connection between Spain and Greece. And, in fact, each historiography or "politology" overall ignores the other country while it dedicates its efforts to working out the precise details of its inner working over a time. Similarly, by external rhythm, both Spain and Greece would seem in practice unrelated. Undoubtedly, the most important events of the twentieth century are the two World Wars. But Greece was an active participant in the Great War, forced by outside pressure to enter the conflict, as it was again in 1941. Were such suffering not enough, Greece took part in the two Balkan Wars that preceded the 1914 outbreak of a general European conflict, as well as in a bitter Anatolian adventure -to realize the famous "Great idea" of national unification- which proved disastrous, and which rapidly reduced the distribution of Hellenic populations in all the Eastern Mediterranean area. In addition, after the devastation of German occupation, Greece underwent a brutal civil struggle from the end of the Second World War up to 1949, a confrontation which helped give shape to the "Cold War". On the other hand, Spain was neutral in World War I, the only political entity in the entire Mediterranean zone (including the Black and Red Seas) to so remain successfully; equally, Spain remained outside World War II, although it sustained a particularly cruel civil war in 1936-1939, which became the model for ideological confrontations between the ideal of the popular front and that of a fascist-with-conservative national front.

Nevertheless, when we contrast Greece and Spain in the interwar years and even in the second international postwar period, after 1945, using a combination of simple internal periodization and a standard external cadency, it becomes easy to establish at least parallels (that is, analogic comparisons which do not actually coincide). In this way, without

making any pretense at any in depth coincidence, one can align as roughly comparable the Spanish "disaster" in Northern Morocco in 1921 and the Greek Anatolian defeat of 1922. The pressure of militarism can be traced with the dictatorship of general Miguel Primo de Rivera, from September 1923 to January 1930, with the much shorter rule of general Theodoros Pangalos from mid-1925 to the summer of 1926. The failure of military rule can be seen with the establishment of Republican government and a non-dynastic parliamentary system. But, again in both cases, the Republican "experiment" collapsed, with a remarkable simultaneity.

With the February elections in 1935 in Greece (from which the Venizelists abstained, with a resulting rightist victory), the right used the standard plebiscite to replace the 1927 Constitution with that of 1911 and restore the Glücksburg Monarchy in the person of George II. This in turn, in the face of a surprising Communist presence in parliament after the January elections, facilitated the imposition of general Ioannis Metaxas between April and August of 1936. In August, Metaxas proclaimed a dictatorship.

In Spain, a left-wing victory in the elections of February 1936 was followed by a long spring of social unrest, confrontation, and terrorism. A failed coup by the anti-popular front elements in the military brought the outbreak of open fighting in July, a conflict quickly worsened by foreign intervention on both sides, which lasted almost three years. Further, the Metaxas régime, like that of general Francisco Franco, victor in the Spanish struggle, are usually considered to be a sort of fascist rule, however modified by local idiosyncrasy. Finally, the Greek civil war from 1944 or 1946 (depending on who does the interpretation) to 1949, seemed to echo some of the themes of the Spanish war ten years before, and indirectly guaranteed the survival of the Spanish dictatorship under United States tutelage.

But, seen internally, these two countries are exceedingly difficult to compare in any meaningful way. Their religious traditions, between an intense Roman Catholicism in Spain and Greek orthodoxy, are very different. There are important distinctions in political language: in Spanish, the difference between the "Liberal Monarchy" and the "Republic" are of major symbolic value, even today; in Greek, the distinction, while evidently very important, is complicated by the use of the same word, "demokratia", for both concepts. Even physically, in the 1930s, the two countries were very diverse. Spain's size was 511,985 km², with only 12,000 -5,000 in the Balearics, and 7,000 in the Canaries- in external islands; Spain also had a small overseas empire in Africa, between its territories in the Gulf of Guinea and a Moroccan protectorate. Spain had a slowly growing population: 19,000,000 in 1900 census, 20,000,000 in 1910, 21,000,000 in 1920; up to 23,560,975 in 1930, and 25,878,000 in 1940 (even with the losses of the Civil War). On the other hand, Greece's size, stabilized after its expansion in the first decades of the century and its defeat in 1922, consisted of 130,199 Km² (50,184 mi², of which 41,728 were on *terra firma*, and 8,856 were insular). With population exchanges carried out with Turkey, the 1928 census offered a population of 6,204,684 inhabitants; the projection for December 1937 was 7,013,000. In other words, Spain was almost four times Greece's size, and possessed almost four (or,

more correctly, between three and four) times the population of Greece. Urban size accentuates the difference: Athens had, according to the 1928 census, 459,211 inhabitants, and the Piraeus 251,659; Madrid and Barcelona had, in official 1930 figures, respectively 952,832 and 1.055.650 residents.

Economic statistics, however, help to balance out this distinction: in December 1930, Greece had 1,267 ships, for a total of 1,469,013 tons, divided in 559 steamships and 708 sailing ships, while Spain, on 1 January 1931, had 1,670 ships, for a total of 1.239.932, of which (in 1932), 574 were of steam power and 334 of sail. But Spanish resources for industry, mining, port facilities, and so forth were clearly stronger. In 1930, Spain possessed 16,735 km of railroad track, while Greece only 2,679 km. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Spanish consumer market was incomparably stronger than the Greek, with, for example, an important production of automobiles and engines (such as the Hispano-Suiza firm, in practice French after the Great War), as well as local film production and local musical records (in both cases, primarily under the labels of foreign companies), something that, in Greece, would come *after* 1945.

In short, both the narration of overall political rhythms and contrasting physical descriptions can only take the analyst just so far, which is not of much interpretative profit. Why compare then? Does it serve any purpose, beyond a mere exercise?

To answer positively, the methodological reply must be phenomenological. What Spain and Greece share in political rhythm is a long-term preoccupation with the alternation of Monarchy and Republic which was forgotten in the rest of Europe with the onslaught of World War II, but which marks both Hispanic and Hellenic priorities right up to the collapse of the respective dictatorial régimes in 1975 and the establishment of a long-lasting political solution, opposite in each case, probably significantly.

The European State system as a pattern in the twentieth century

All nineteenth-century political and ideological discussion in Europe was dominated by the debate between what as called the "democratic" (or "national") principle and the "monarchical principle". This was understood as the confrontation between the requirements of "representative government" and the "rights" of inherited Monarchy. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the general consensus among jurists and scholars of constitutional law though-out Europe (and especially in German-speaking universities) was that the best solution was a mixed model, which combined a hereditary Crown embodied in a dynasty with some kind of elected parliament (for which there could be more than one level: i.e. the German Reichstag was elected by universal male suffrage, but the Prussian Landtag was chosen by a "three-class system", based on taxes). Almost all European States followed this pattern up to some point, even Russian autocracy since the October 1905 revolution, and the "Turkish Empire" (no longer "Ottoman") since the 1908

Salonika revolution. Republican systems were very rare in Europe—France definitively since 1875 (after defeat and a bitter civil war), the very *sui generis* model of Switzerland, with the 1847 system (after a civil war), modified in 1874, and, if one insisted, San Marino: everything else was monarchical. The Americas were the homeland of Republican experiments, deemed not too satisfactory if the progress of South America was taken as a whole, with the exception of Canada, a “Dominion”, and other British territories: even Brazil had been a Monarchy until 1889, but the Republican federal system had immediately produced civil war (1893-1895).

In 1914, therefore virtually all Europe consisted of monarchies. In fact, the German project of continental hegemony and a generalized “common market” (or *Zollverein*) envisioned a radical re-monarchization of “representative government”, insofar as it assumed -as did everyone else by then- the distinction between the “democratic” and the “national” principles as different. “Self-determination” could be carried out, as it had been done in the “Germanies”, the “Italies” and the “suzerainties” of the Ottoman Empire, by means of crowned entities, with their respective parliaments or assemblies, as up-to-date versions of nineteenth-century modernity. Accordingly, independent Finland or Courland or Poland were to become kingdoms, with German princes on their thrones, if not in some case, presided over by the German Kaiser himself. Such projects, as the cases cited indicate, were valid right up to the November 1918 armistice, when they instantly became ancient history.

Allied political theorists—and to a much lesser degree Allied political leadership—looked forward to a radical “democratization” of the Continent, at the expense of militarism, which was identified with a powerful Crown not submitted to parliamentary rule. The collapse of Tsarism in early 1917 led to “Liberal Government” in Russia, even if the provisional government did not proclaim a Republican system until the summer and with it women’s right to vote, at least in theory.

Among the lesser States ranged alongside the Allies, the first Russian revolution was a jolt: in Portugal, a “radical” and anticlerical Republic in place since a coup overthrew the Monarchy in 1910 was submitted in December 1917 to a military-run “emergency” presidency attracted monarchist and Catholic opinion, until the dictator, Sidónio Pais, was shot, in December 1918; in Greece, wavering on the war issue in a complex way during 1916 between Eleftherios Venizelos’ “Salonika government” and royalist authorities in Athens, the “Great Division”, the result was rather the expulsion by Eleftherios Venizelos of king Constantine I and his replacement with his son Alexander (1917-1920), until the latter’s accidental death. Also, in neutral States, political change reflected this shift. In Sweden, the “crisis of 1917” successfully established parliamentary responsibility over cabinets in place of the Crown, with women’s vote given in 1921; by 1932, socialists were in government, and remained so until 1976. In Spain, the “crisis of 1917” failed, when the opposition to royal prerogative, led by the Catalan regionalists, failed to impose a parliamentary predominance; females would not be allowed the vote until 1931, and did not utilize it until 1933; socialists entered government with the fall of the Monarchy in

1931. In the Netherlands, exceptional elections were held in 1917 to facilitate the granting of women's suffrage, which took effect in 1919. Denmark, which gave women the vote in 1915, granted Iceland full self-government at the end of 1918.

But in 1917-1918, the great crowned empires (Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, the Turkish Empire) all collapsed. Initially, this was the significance of the "Russian Revolution", as almost no serious observers seriously expected the inexperienced Bolsheviks to survive, after their coup d'état in Petrograd in late 1917. The "Central Empires" all dissolved in two months, between October and November, at the end of the following year. Allied policy, since the coincidence of the United States' entry into the Great War as an "Associated Power" in April 1917 with the collapse of Russian autocracy scarcely a month before, was focused on creating a network of *parliamentary States*, which, without a dynastic agenda and a reservoir of German princelings, were of necessity to be *Republican in content and nationalist in form*.

Thus, the new *successor States*, like Finland, Poland, the Baltic States or Czechoslovakia, as well as the short-lived entities which emerged in the Caucasus, were for the most part republican régimes. Both Germany and Austria had "revolutions" and became Republics (Article 1 of the Weimar Constitution stated literally: "The German Empire is a Republic"). Most such Republics quickly gave females the right to vote: Austria, Germany, Poland, Latvia and Estonia already in 1918; the United States in 1920, along with Albania and Czechoslovakia; in 1921, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Lithuania; Great Britain and Ireland—completely—in 1928 (while New Zealand had already done so in 1893, Australia in 1902, and Canada partially in 1918, and even British-run Burma in 1922). After a brief and disastrous "Soviet", Hungary became a "regency" without a dynasty in sight. Tiny Albania, invented with a German prince on the throne, was also confirmed as a Republic. Even in Great Britain, the effect of the Great War and local civil warfare in Ireland led, in December 1921, to the conversion of the bulk of the second of the British Isles into an "Irish Free State", a kind of semi-republican system (a "Dominion" would have meant recognizing George V as king), with major democratizing effects (the collapse of the Liberal Party and its replacement by Labour, elected to office in 1924). The outstanding immediate exception to the 1918 settlement (ratified in the Paris Peace treaties of 1919) was the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (unified as Yugoslavia in 1929), in essence an expansion of Serbia at the expense of independent Montenegro, which annexed South Slav territories from Austria-Hungary, and confirmed its control of Macedonia at the expense of Bulgarian and Greek pretensions. Greece, which in 1920 had voted against Venizelos, provoking the return of king Constantine, was faced with a new withdrawal by the monarch in September 1922, after the defeat in Asia Minor, in a coup led by colonel Nikolaos Plastiras that harshly castigated with execution those royalist leaders (the "trial of the six") held responsible for the defeat. The king was replaced by his son, George II. After a monarchist counter-coup in October 1923, and Italian intervention in Corfu, George was exiled, and Plastiras abolished the Monarchy, and proclaimed the Hellenic Republic. But in June 1925 general Pangalos overthrew the government, made himself prime minister and

later, in March of the following year, president. Pangalos abolished the Republic, but established a new "Republican" Constitution. Nevertheless, his clumsiness, including a nasty border incident with Bulgaria, the "War of the stray dog", in October 1925, led to his own elimination from power in August of 1926.

The pattern of Greek politics—republican or monarchist—remained violently unstable: all the major players were ready to revolt when they did not like any given situation. There was no "civic culture", no systemic loyalty, but rather a "civil war culture", which exalted the call to arms, rather than patience and retribution at the polls on the next Election Day. Spain was to all effects the same, with variations in detail, rather than substance.

The structural shift in European and Middle Eastern politics

The changing situation, so apparently confusing to follow in Greece and in Spain, was clarified by the establishment of three "revolutionary" systems in 1922-1923: the invention of the Soviet Union (which constitutionally replaced Russia, although there remained, within the USSR a "Russian Federal Soviet Socialist Republic"), the consolidation of the Kemalist Republic in Turkey, and the progressive reinforcement of Fascist government in Italy. This set of "revolutionary" alternatives, stabilized in all three cases by 1926, confirmed that the old debate between Monarchy and Republic was now out-of-date.

The "modern" political confrontation was based on the nature, not of the degree of popular participation in a representative system, but on the self-evident failure of "democracy" and thereby of any liberal-derived form of representative government. It was not a question of greater popular intervention in long-standing institutional politics, but the abolition of these patterns, and their replacement by greater statist intervention in society. The State took over all civil society, with the justification that market politics and market economics could not achieve the needed generalization of public services to all the population. Lenin, in Russia, was often quoted as saying that "electrification, plus socialism, equaled communism", while Mussolini in Italy liked to repeat that "nothing outside the State, everything within the State". They were both essentially talking the same thing, *State worship*, legitimized by the panacea of more-or-less centralized planning. "Planification" was understood universally to be the great lesson that the "total war" experience of 1914-1918, with its clear primacy of strategic over tactical options. In a "revolutionary" perspective, the role of citizenry was to complete objectives set from above, by a *Machtstaat*, rather than to require power to be subject to individual interests, an idea considered now to be "corrupt". This viewpoint was shared by the extreme left and the extreme right, which nevertheless professed pure loathing for each other.

In many ways, the leading model was the immensity of Russia. Since Ancient times, the central purpose of a dynasty, in historical terms, is to resolve pacifically the succession of power in a given form of organization. Evidently, this is its purpose, and many, many

times, it has not worked. Nineteenth-century democratic thought, both monarchical and republican, expected succession to be forever peaceful once the mechanism of elections, representation, and parliament were in place. They were much surprised to find that new generations of super-democrats arose, each requiring ever more *participation* in any sort of political process, at all levels. Leninism seized power by a coup, which prevented the Constitutional Assembly from deliberating on a new juridical “representative government”. The justification was indirectly derived from Lenin’s 1916 polemic against moderate socialism, which was denounced as “social-imperialism” in the global war context. Now the Bolsheviks ruled an Empire, and, although they assumed the verbal criteria of the self-determination of peoples, they decided to apply it to *other empires*, not their own. Lenin’s disappearance (shot in 1918, first stroke in May 1922, retired in December of that year, dead in January 1924) turned the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of the USSR, created at that time, with an International organization of parties already created in 1919, *into the new dynasty*. Continuity was embodied in “the Party”: this was Stalin’s success and Trotsky’s failure after 1926.

Naturally, the new Soviet system was formally republican. But in fact it had a meritocratic and collective “family”, which eliminated all possible élites -aristocratic or otherwise- and established its own genealogical rules (“proletarian antecedents”) for sociopolitical rise or fall. The core project was the creation of a new “Soviet Man”, free from the conditioning of the past. When Stalin initiated the radical “collectivization” against the “kulaks” in 1929, these were considered “rural bourgeoisie”: but the 1930 definition of a “kulak” was ownership of two cows; the OGPU (or, later, NKVD) men who arrested them and sent them to the GULAG wore warm clothes, rode in cars, and when home to an apartment in town, but they were “proletarians dedicated to a Worker State”. The categories of “republican” and “monarchical” no longer meant much.

The constituent process of the USSR, established in 1922, with a Fundamental Law of the State in 1924, and a new Constitution in 1936, was reproduced throughout the “Soviet Empire”, which understood its legitimation as the raising of “feudal” peoples to the status of nationhood, with their local party-dynasty, so that they could then pass into the greater Soviet “party-dynasty”, and thus form a part of the “Soviet People” in the process of being born. This, as the USSR emblem, with its map of the World under the hammer and sickle, was a project for global domination, against “bourgeois capitalism” and “imperialism”, and, eventually, around 1936, against “fascism”. So Armenia, in 1918, became an independent, nationalist Republic, recognized by the Allies in 1920 as a “Greater Armenia”, but in December of that same year a Soviet Armenian Republic was set up by the Bolsheviks, which in 1922—after the definitive Armenian defeat by Turkish nationalism—was joined the Soviet-controlled Transcaucasian Federation, and which in 1936 became a Federal Republic of the USSR. A similar chronology can be established for Azerbaijan and Georgia. Again, roughly similar dates hold in in Central Asia: the khanates of Bukhara and Khiva became an Autonomous Turkestan Republic in 1918, but “socialist colonial” policy soon became even more sophisticated: Kirghizstan was an Autonomous

Republic in 1920, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan became Soviet Socialist Republics in 1924, in Tajikistan “evolved” into an Autonomous Republic of the Federal Russian Republic. And in 1936, Stalin turned them all into member Soviet Socialist republics of the USSR. In 1924, the Soviet puppet State in Mongolia, created in 1922, gave women the vote. Tajikistan gave suffrage to women the same year. In 1924, Kazakhstan granted limited voting rights to women. In 1927, Turkmenistan assumed woman suffrage. This evolution of Soviet control in Moslem Central Asia—and in the Moslem portions of the Caucasus—was a response to the striking actions of the Kemalists movement in Turkey.

Less radically, the invention of a “national Turkey” by Mustafa Kemal (later Kemal Atatürk), with the abolition of the sultanate in November 1922, the proclamation of the Republic in October 1923, and then of the Islamic caliphate in March 1924, was an especially attractive model of a “revolutionary State”, as applied to societies which lacked a “national” middle class of professionals (these were “aliens”: Greeks and Armenians, or Jews). In such a context the State became the explicit builder of a “national” middle class, which could eliminate foreigners, as “parasites”, and nourish, and in turn be replenished, by the circular cycle of social demands (say, improvements in education or health, or both), which translate into the pressure for State-administered services (more schools, some kind of free clinics), which, in turn, become upwardly-mobile public service jobs, with some lesser school title but not in the range of the “professional classes”). All of this fed the development of a “nationalist” or “national-socialist” State. If the social basis for the new régime was the peasantry (in Kemalists Turkey, the Anatolian population), how could the unlettered become landholders and administrators? “Agrarian reform” thus took form as an early form of ethnic cleansing, carried out against outside landlords, as was done in most of Eastern Europe from the decisive role of the Piast Peasant Party of Wicenty Witos in Poland (1918-1926) to Stamboliyski and his Green Agrarians in Bulgaria (1918-1922). When rural ambitions became too big, the army -also a channel for rural discontent- would step in, stop “excesses”, and offer the compensatory sop of school-teaching as upward mobility for peasant offspring, who could then turn to the extreme “fascistic” groups as a protest opinion. This was the 1920s secret to the “shirt movements” of the late 1930s. But, it should be added, this was not the Kemalists pattern: Kemal established a People’s Party in 1922-1923, reorganized as a Peoples’ Republican Party in 1927, but the heart of Turkish politics was the army, a virtual State-within-the-State, which has retained the Kemalists inheritance up to the beginning of the next century. Significantly, to eliminate the appearance of being undemocratic, women’s suffrage was admitted in Turkey in 1934.

In Italy, the Fascist movement was originally republican, when it was founded in 1919. But its enemies were on the left -from which it had sprung- rather than on the right: “fascism” meant literally “unitarism”, like the *fasci*, a word in Italian for a “union”. Mussolini’s “March on Rome” in October 1922 is usually seen as a relative defeat for the Savoy Monarchy, and it certainly led to the slow, but relentless abolition of the institutional and legal structures of Italian liberalism. But Mussolini’s radicalism, his “totalitarianism” (his term, even if he did not quite originate it), was forced to compromise: he became *Capo di Governo e Duce del Fascismo*, a dualism that uncomfortably resolved the contradiction

between Monarchy and Republic by *melding both together*. The supposition, in good Fascist doctrine, was that the evolution of the régime -indeed, in permanent change-would lead eventually to a "perfectly revolutionary" solution, i.e. a Republican system (of which the puppet *Repubblica Sociale Italiana*, from September 1943 to April 1945, headquartered in Salò, would be the full and yet truncated expression). But Italian Fascism was to a large extent improvised within certain ideological parameters. The decisive inflexion was the "Matteotti affair", which began in 1924, when (after the Acerbo Law, which gave the Fascists in practice a two-thirds majority, followed by limited voting rights to women in 1925) the antifascist opposition challenged Mussolini to go beyond the limits of liberal parliamentary practice; this he finally did, especially with the "*Legge Fascistissime*" in 1926, which set the basis for the evolution of government as régime, within a monarchical system. Fascist initiatives kept pushing at the limits of the system, especially after 1936, with the proclamation of the "Empire" as a constitutional space beyond the 1848 *Statuto*, and, after 1937, with projects for full scale "corporative" representation, but the mistaken entry into the German war in Western Europe in the spring of 1940 led to Mussolini's overthrow, precisely by the Monarchy, in the summer of 1943.

Both Turkish Kemalism and Italian Fascism permitted copycat responses, without a full assumption of statism, unrestricted central planning, full-scale economic development at any cost, and total ideological control that the Soviets established as a successful model with Stalin, and which took its fullest and most cynical form with the Soviet Constitution of 1936. But few imitators wanted to go all the way, Communist-style: in general, only intellectuals, over-educated for the social position, dreamt of such a fatuous solution for everybody. For the weaker sort of mimics, who did not really have the stomach for much change, the debate between Republic and Monarchy could be subsumed in "revolutionary" statist practice and ecstatic State nationalism.

Thus Portugal in May 1926 became a model of how monarchist discontent could adapt to a republican situation, especially with the lack of an adequate dynast. The Republic had changed symbols (including the flag), but a military "March on Lisbon" in that year initiated military control of institutions, which remained republican in appearance, although the left was excluded from power. In 1933, the Republic was even revamped, and became a "New State" with "fascistic" trappings, all the while retaining its old republican forms. Similarly, the rightward drift of the Austrian Republic became explicit in 1933, under Social-Christian chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, with strong Catholic and monarchist backing, against the socialists (who rebelled in February 1934, and were crushed), and Pan-German Nazis (who rebelled in June 1934, and were quashed, but killed Dollfuss). This lack of a good candidate to the throne had much to do with the development of internal Spanish politics in the face of the Republic, from 1931 on, and, later, in the nature of the rightist régime established there.

But perhaps the best example of imitation dreaming might be Egypt, which became a nationalist Monarchy in 1922, right on time by the Soviet-Kemalist-Fascist chronicity. In

1922, the country, which had been a British-administered, Turkish suzerainty until 1914, then an open British protectorate, became formally sovereign as a Monarchy (previously, it was a "khedivate", an autonomous regency). Independence under king Fuad I (1922-1936) meant acceptance of the Wafd, a nationalist movement, but parliamentary government was outstandingly corrupt, and the not-so-invisible British presence was reinforced in 1936, by treaty, underscoring the reign of king Faruk I (1936-1952). The breakup of the Turkish Empire Mandates meant that the British reproduced Monarchies (in Iraq, in Transjordan), left Palestine in an undefined situation, while the French abolished in 1920 the Syrian Monarchy the Hashemite king Feisal proclaimed in 1918, and (just as they already had done long before in Indochina) in mid-1922 created a loose federation of districts which joined Damascus, Aleppo, the Alawite State, and the Jebel Druze. In late 1924, France united the States of Aleppo and Damascus into the Federal State of Syria, while the Jebel Druze was incorporated in 1936, and Alawites in 1937. This new merger included the implication of an independent Syrian Republic, established through a negotiated treaty in 1936, which, however, was never ratified by the metropolitan power. But the French also broke off other portions: they gave up the district of Alexandretta (briefly Republic of Hatay in 1938) to Turkey in 1939, and created a separate Republican circumstance in the district of the Lebanon in September 1920, with a constitution in 1936 which balanced ethnic and religious interests. Syria proclaimed its own self-determination against Vichy France in 1944, much to the disgust of the Gaullists, while the French nevertheless recognized free Lebanon in 1943, and French forces left the country willingly in 1945.

Similarly, with the image of the "revolutionary" Soviet and Kemalist examples, and the Italian compromise between extremes, Persia and even Afghanistan acted as "reforming monarchies" in the 1920s. General Reza Pahlavi overthrew the Qajar dynasty in 1921, became Shah of Persia in 1925, a title converted to Shah of Iran in 1935, and emphasized military-led small-level change, until, in 1941, Anglo-Soviet fears of his Axis sympathies led to Allied occupation of the country and his forced abdication and exile. In Afghanistan, under emir Amanullah, from 1919 to 1923, then as king from 1923 to 1929, a more superficial expression of State-building took place, but came to an abrupt end.

The exceptional internal dynamic: Spanish and Greek politics

However, the countries that most clearly exemplified the ongoing European debate between Monarchy and Republic were Greece and Spain, with relatively parallel trajectories, at least in appearance. The dominant internal debate in political debate in both countries was couched in dynastic and anti-dynastic terms, in which representative institutions were understood predominantly as "democratic" as equivalent to "national". Spanish and Greek politics was about "The People", and the appropriate degree of its participation in government and elections.

To put the question another way: in the interwar years, Greece and Spain were exceptional in the European State system, even worldwide, because they were the only two

countries of any importance that shifted from Monarchy to Republican political systems, and then back again. It is true that Albania, founded as a Monarchy in 1912, and which, after some undetermined times as a regency, formally became a Republic in 1925, had president Ahmed Zogu do a "Bonapartist" coup in 1928, which made him king Zog I, until April 1939, when Mussolini, his major backer, eliminated him and made the Italian monarch also ruler of the small Balkan country. But everywhere else, after 1918 (and unlike nineteenth-century France or even Spain), the establishment of a Republic was a definitive, twentieth-century fact, and any sort of restoration remained a mere fantasy. Up to 1936, both countries were conditioned in Republican or Monarchical options, rather than more complex and post-1918 variations, working with traditionally-coded collective symbology, political factionalism in personalized terms, and insurrectional conspiracy rather than through effective elections, solid ideological party structures and effective corporative syndicates, be they "working-class" or otherwise, which could act as large-scale pressure groups. In both countries, more strictly twentieth-century "mass politics", with clearly defined electoral parties, labor unions, and "social" confrontation, came in the mid-1930s.

The differences between both countries, however, were important. General Pangalos was a was an extremely contradictory figure, who established a "Republican Constitution" in 1925 superseding the 1911 monarchical text, in marked contrast to the "Hellenic Constitution" of 1927 presided over by Venizelos during the "four good years" (1928-1932). Pangalos imposed measures like the lengthening of women's skirts, at a time when Kemalism in Turkey, and even president Zogu in Albania were doing the opposite, by prohibiting the veil.

Seen from Spain, the 1927 "Hellenic Constitution" was positively shocking, as its first articles are extensively devoted to Greek Orthodoxy and the religion's relation to citizenship. The indication of deeper change was the Communist Party presence in parliament as a result of the January 1936 elections, which led to general Metaxas' dictatorship. But, given what articles of the 1927 text stated (Article 1 begins with the affirmation of the "dominant religion" of Greece being the "Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ", which is then defined precisely and at length, including the Church's right of translation of the Holy Word), Metaxas' "Christian Hellenism" was no great innovation.

In Spain, by contrast, General Primo de Rivera was a staunch monarchist (although his son, after his father's death in Parisian exile in 1930, came to lead in late 1933 a "fascistic" leader of a *Falange* or Phalanx party, which received monarchist money, but was vaguely republican). General Primo de Rivera governed under exceptional decree, with the 1876 Constitution "suspended", even though king Alfonso XIII was monarch only due to the legal text. Primo de Rivera elaborated an alternative Constitution, finished in 1929, which for reasons not yet well understood, was never enacted. But the Republican 1931 Constitution, which is the reference point for the Spanish left since then and throughout the twentieth century, copied many of its basic points (women's vote, regional administration for nationalities) from the dictatorial text, a fact everyone today (especially

feminists) cheerfully ignores. In any case, the Spanish Second Republic was inherently unstable. In 1931-1933, as left republicans like Manuel Azaña depended on socialists for a majority, but the socialist movement was not inherently loyal to the new political system, which it took to be "bourgeois". The socialists themselves, however, were badly split and in a false position as an urban party and syndicate with a paradoxical growing rural base: their affiliation had taken off, after 1929-1930, in the poor, Southern countryside, where its role was disputed by anarcho-syndicalist unions. Anarcho-syndicalists and armed anarchist pressure groups demanded corporative, non-elective representation from the left also made republican stability impossible. From the end of 1933 to early 1936, right-wing republicans, like Alejandro Lerroux, tried to work with the Catholics, who led a coalition that explicitly voiced its desire to revise the 1931 Constitution, a moderate collaboration that the monarchists made their utmost effort to foil, with considerable success.

As we have seen, after a major military defeat in 1922, Greece overthrew royal government and had a brief military dictatorship, maintained an unsteady republican system, and, finally, with a new dictatorship, restored the Monarchy. After a serious military setback in 1921, Spain instituted an assertive military dictatorship under the Crown. Then a transition gave way to a republican system which collapsed in civil war in 1936-1939, giving place to a long-lived dictatorship in lieu of the Monarchy. The Franco régime, however, avoided defining itself: it was formally the "Spanish State" (i.e., neither one nor the other); at the end of World War II, in August 1945, the new "fundamental law" or *Fuero de los Españoles* indicated that the system was understood to be a "kingdom", waiting for an appropriate king (Law on the Succession to the "Chieftaincy" of State, in 1947), and Franco by implication a kind of "super-regent", according to formula, "only responsible to God and History". It was an ingeniously ambiguous model which Marshal Philippe Pétain and his "French State" or "Vichy government" from 1940-1945 found quite instructive.

The change in 1936

During the interwar period, however, much of this distinction between Monarchy and Republic remained invisible to contemporaries, always ready for some kind of revision and/or restoration in certain countries. The global hegemon was, after all, the British Empire. The fascination with monarchical coups and princes recovering their thrones that, during the 1920s and 1930s, was evinced by moviemakers in Hollywood, Paris, London, or Berlin, not to mention the production of cheap novels on the subject, is an indication of this incapacity of contemporary observers to see what was happening around them and foresee what was to come.

The announcement of a break in interwar pattern came in early 1933, with the arrival to government of Hitler. Much German conservative opinion (as well as many foreign sympathizers) was expecting a restoration of the Hohenzollerns; they were disappointed. The Nazis established a "monarchy" in the most primitive etymological sense, the "rule of one"; but they operated under the Weimar Constitution (there were still

elections to the *Reichstag* in 1938), but turned the *Führer* into the ultimate source of legislation. They did not need fancy "Death's Head" hussars and a court; instead, the SS, in its elegantly booted black uniforms, offered a new and perverted kind of meritocratic "aristocracy", with a different kind of ascendancy as proof of rank. Nazism, much more than Italian Fascism, was radical social promotion, without going so far as the Soviet elimination of all previous élites. The crux of the change was no longer significant: Germany, a *Grossreich* (the term "*Dritte Reich*" was monarchist and outlawed after 1939), was something beyond a Republic, and certainly above any discussion of new crowned entities.

The year 1936 brought out all the contradictions between what was supposed to be happening, and what was really taking place. At the end of 1935, in Greece, general Georgios Kondylis, at the head of an imposed government, called a plebiscite, which, by what may be termed a surprising majority, on 3 November, restored George II as king of the Hellenes. The shift was thus indicated on the periphery, in the winter months as 1935 became 1936, at the same time as Italy "raped" Ethiopia, without any significant intervention, except sanctions from the League of Nations. In February 1936, general elections in Spain, in a politically stalled and highly polarized situation, brought about a leftist, popular front victory. In March, Hitler implicitly abrogated the Versailles Treaty by militarizing the Rhineland, Germany's French border. In Greece, in April, general Metaxas came into power. Also in April, there began the first Arab *intifada* against the British Mandate administration and Zionist settlers. In May, with his African victory, Mussolini proclaimed Italy as an *Impero*, and a German-Italian rapprochement began in earnest. In June, the French popular front won the elections and formed a coalition cabinet, while wide-scale social protest erupted, soon calmed by the invention of paid summer vacations. In July, a coup against the popular front government in Spain failed, and became a violent war, which immediately implicated Germans and Italians on the side of the military rebels, and soon brought a Soviet response, in favor of the Republican side.

The Spanish conflict passed from being a localized struggle essentially between republicans and monarchists (though many coup participants could live with a Portuguese-style Republic), to a newsreel model, which confronted ideological options, and made them perfectly clear to everybody *outside Spain*. Was the future to be led by a new kind of *social democracy* or *popular government*, which combined the best of liberal rights with greater equality between economic classes, and increased protection from poverty as a normal right for all citizens? Those who saw this way to the future also understood that "fascism"—the "unity" of reactionary opinion with extremist bullyboys—was their prime enemy. Or were coming events to be dictated by a new kind of *social responsibility* and an *all-powerful "big government"*, which would discipline a confused populace, and lead it away from chaos, keeping hierarchy, but still assuring protection from poverty for all? Those who preferred such prospects also perceived that "communist subversion", a vast conspiracy on a world scale, had to be stopped by using the same tactics that the "reds" seemed to profit from so successfully. The debate over Monarchy or Republican forms of

representative government was thus superseded. Except that the visual stage for everybody else interested were either in Spain, or, later, in Greece.

The change in European political style was not really perceptible until the Spanish Civil War was almost over, in 1938, when, after Munich, the European balance was now tilted in favor of Germany over Italy. The German 1914-1918 policy of establishing new "self-determined" new crown-lands, was, after 1939, with Albania, and later, in 1941, with Croatia, an Italian dream. Dynastic monarchies remained of no interest to the Germans, who created republic-protectorates (Bohemia-Moravia) or puppet-republics (Slovakia), or dependent colonies which were also republican (the "General-Government" of Poland). Even the emperor-obsessed Japanese, after the experiment of inventing the Manchukuo "puppet-empire", chose republican forms for their puppets and clients in China, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

The end with World War II

The challenge to the World system devised at the Paris Peace Conference, sealed in the 1919 treaties, and presided by the League of Nations in Geneva came quickly, speeded along by the international financial crisis which affected market relationships generally after 1931, and renewed mercantilist aspirations based on barter agreements. In fact, the interstate system after the Great War was distinctly off-balance: it consisted of so-called "collective security", based on the alliance of two interoceanic powers, Britain and France. But the other two major interoceanic powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, remained outside "international" arrangements. So no real "balance of power" was sustainable; the system was a fraud, asking for any push so as to fall over. Three regional powers, "dissatisfied" for different reasons (defeat and territorial loss or insufficient booty), considered themselves "world powers", which they were not: Japan, which had no interests beyond the Pacific Rim; Italy, which was a Mediterranean presence that extended into the Red Sea; and Germany, which was predominant in Central Europe and could aspire to access to the North Atlantic.

Faced with their successive challenges, one after the other and then all at once, however, the Anglo-French alliance could not hold. Japan announced its intention to leave the League of Nations in March 1933; Nazi Germany did the same in October; Italy withdrew later, in 1937. As a sort of compensation, the USSR entered the international organization in 1934; it would be expelled in 1939.

Japan pushed naval settlements in the 1920s, and finally broke out of the rules in 1931-1932, and took on China by creating the puppet-State of Manchukuo (first a "Republic", at least a "State" with a "chief executive", in February 1932, then an "Empire" in 1934). As a climax of sorts, in July 1937, the Nipponese army invaded China without any real pretensions of an excuse, and simultaneously sustained an undeclared war with the USSR on the border of the Soviet Manchurian puppet Republic of Outer Mongolia (which it

lost). Finally, in December 1941, with France out of the European conflict, Japan -especially the "Navy party"- took on both the United States and the British Empire (as well as the insignificant Netherlands).

The Italian adventure was equally provocative. In 1934, Mussolini used a frontier incident with the Empire of Ethiopia, previously a semi-client, to press for large territorial concessions, and then, between October 1935 and May 1936, attacked the country and conquered it, establishing it as a component Crown of the Savoy dynasty. The following summer, after war broke out in Spain, Italian forces intervened heavily.

But the real gambler was Hitler in Germany. In 1936, he successfully established open armed forces, which ended the Versailles agreement. He further meddled successfully in Spain, forcing Mussolini's hand. In March 1938, Hitler annexed the Austrian Republic, which was reduced to a province of the Greater Reich. In September 1938, after a summer-long crisis, he managed to get Britain and France to accede to the annexation of the German-majority frontier area of Czechoslovakia (the Sudetenland). In March 1939, he repudiated the agreement of September, by incorporating the Czech lands into a dependency, and presiding over the "self-determination" of Slovakia; a few days later, Memel, a German-population city in Lithuania, next to East Prussia, was "recovered" by an equally energetic "self-determination". In the summer of 1939, he then required the cession of the so-called "Polish corridor", as well as in incorporation into the German Empire of Danzig, an independent free city. This time, French and German guarantees to Poland held, when on September 1, German forces attacked Polish territory.

The European War in September 1939 became possible because of an ideologically unimaginable alliance of Hitler and Stalin a week before; both gained the elimination of a two-front war (the Germans in the East and the Soviets, embroiled in the Far East, in the West). There were therefore *two* "Second World Wars". Initially, two different conflicts, a Sino-Japanese total war from July 1937 onwards, and a European War, from 1939 to 1940, which, with the defeats of Poland and France, became an Anglo-Axis (German-Italian) struggle in the Mediterranean. In June 1941, Hitler invaded The USSR, forging an instant Anglo-Soviet link, backed informally by the United States. In December, Japan attacked both American and British possessions in the Pacific, and Hitler (plus Mussolini) declared war on the United States, while the Japanese more wisely repaired their contacts with the Soviets, assured "non-aggression", and covered their flank. Thus, 1941-1945, was the *real* "Second World War".

Given the "union of three unions" (United Kingdom and Commonwealth, the Soviet Union, United States), the idea of the "United Nations" accordingly became, in 1942, the alliance of the "big three", plus all the "free peoples" (Free Poland, Free China, Free France, Free Czechoslovakia, and so forth) under Axis occupation. The objective of the struggle was the elimination of the Axis "aggressor States", plus the "Four Freedoms" (freedom of opinion and religion, from fear and want) enunciated in January 1941 by the American president F.D. Roosevelt, and recognized by British prime-minister Churchill in the "Atlantic

Charter" at mid-year. This apparent consensus, however, hid two structural disagreements. The British and the Americans agreed about the virtues of formal representative government, open elections, free unions, and religious liberty, none of which were recognized by Communist practice, and which in theory the Soviets could condemn as "bourgeois values". But the Soviets and the Americans agreed about "self-determination" for "colonial peoples", which in practice meant the dismantlement of the British, French, and Dutch overseas empires, but not the dismemberment of the Russian "near abroad" (Ukraine, Belarus, the Caucasus), nor the recently- acquired Central Asian territories (the U.S. was already divesting itself of its major dependencies, having abrogated its rights of intervention in Cuba and having established Philippine independence for 1946). At the same time, the Soviets and the British came to an understanding on the division of spheres of influence in Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and the Near East, a partition that the Americans would inherit in 1946-1948, when the British Labour cabinet under Attlee withdrew from its vaster commitments, given British exhaustion.

The results of World War II closed the Monarchy-or-Republic debate in Europe. In all of Eastern Europe, Soviet occupation eliminated the monarchy: in Yugoslavia, Peter II Karadjordjević was deposed by the Communist Constituent Assembly in November 1945; in Bulgaria the baby king Simeon II (under Communist regents) was removed as tsar of Bulgaria and the monarchy was abolished in September 1946, after a referendum that claimed 95% approval; in Rumania, Michael I lasted on the throne until the beginning of January 1948, when he was forced into exile. In Italy, as could be expected, the ambiguous nature of Mussolini's Fascism facilitated the collapse of the Crown. Switching sides, dumping Mussolini, and substituting the king Victor Emmanuel III with his son Umberto II did not save the dynasty, and Italy became a Republic in 1946, after a plebiscite. By 1947, the Communists were out of the antifascist coalition, and the internal "Cold War" firmly in place. Nevertheless, Greece suffered an on-and-off civil war between 1944-1944 and the "third round" of 1946-1949, which still posed the question of Monarchy or Republic (the so-called "Mountain Government" had a clearly anti-monarchist stand), and which, in many ways, resembled the Spanish internal struggle ten years before. In any case, Greek women did not achieve the right to vote until 1948, towards the end of the anti-communist struggle, perhaps as a conservative measure.

The definitive closing of the "Cold War" in 1991 seemed to announce a possible comeback of Monarchy. There was noise in Russia, which recuperated monarchical emblems, but not dynasts. Similarly, in Georgia, become independent, there were rumors and symbolic changes, but no more. But in Rumania, ex-king Michael flubbed his opportunity, as did the clumsy Albanian pretender Leka, son of Zog. The breakup of Yugoslavia ended the hopes to recover the crown for the son of ex-king Peter, although there are still those who hope for a restoration in truncated Serbia or even in recently independent Montenegro. Quite surprisingly, former king Simeon of Bulgaria, now an old man (and become citizen Simeon Borisov Saksoburggotski), won the elections in 2001 and acted as prime minister until 2005; at least nominally, he is still active in Bulgarian politics. Some post-communist regimes in central Asia and "Arab-Socialist" régimes in the

Middle East seem willing to follow the pattern established by ultra-Communist North Korea, with a party succession which is incarnate in the son of the party leader.

In Greece, the external form of the State was fixed after the repetitive process of the 1960s, with coup and failed countercoup, the exile of king Constantine II, the establishment of the "Colonels' régime", again *sui generis*, until their fall in July 1974, in the wake of the Cyprus civil war. After elections in November 1974, the establishment of the Greek Republic was confirmed by plebiscite, the following December. A republican Constitution was established in 1975. The system has held for over thirty years. In Spain, the death of Franco on November 20 of that same 1975, brought his official successor, Juan Carlos (the grandson of Alfonso XIII, and brother-in-law of the dethroned Greek king Constantine II) to the throne. A complex political process, with a justificatory plebiscite, dismantled the single-party statist system, facilitated free elections in June 1977, an incipient acceptance of Catalan autonomy followed by other regional autonomies, and a monarchical Constitution in 1978. The Spanish system has held up to the present. Admittedly, sooner or later political systems are likely to change. The economic crisis that has been upsetting Greece, Spain, and much of the world in the last few years, as well as current shifts in European politics can certainly have an impact on the political development in both countries, thus offering new material for reflection and comparison, although this time the factors to be considered would be doubtlessly quite different. Just how far the changes might go remains to be seen, and, as such, would be a question for another—and probably rather different—article.