

## Nationalism as a Claim to a State

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# Nationalism as a Claim to a State

*The Greek Revolution of 1821 and the Formation  
of Modern Greece*

*By*

John Milios



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Mēlios, Giannēs, author.

Title: Nationalism as a claim to a state : the Greek Revolution of 1821 and the formation of modern Greece / by John Milios.

Other titles: Greek Revolution of 1821 and the formation of modern Greece

Description: Leiden ; Boston : Brill, 2023. | Series: Historical materialism book series, 1570-1522 ; 278 | Includes bibliographical references and index. |

Summary: "In theorising on the causes, preconditions, dynamics and internal conflicts of the Greek Revolution of 1821, the analysis of Milios tackles the issue of bourgeois revolutions in general. Additionally, his investigation of the historical emergence and the limits of the Greek nation, calls forth the broader theoretical and historical question of the economic, political, and ideological presuppositions of nation-building. The book illustrates how nationalism brings the masses to the political forefront, which the capitalist state then incorporates into its apparatuses as 'sovereign people'. Nationalism being enmeshed within the political element, consists the basis upon which irredentism develops, recruiting populations into the expansionist-imperialist strategies of the ruling classes"— Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022055715 (print) | LCCN 2022055716 (ebook) | ISBN 9789004533516 (hardback) | ISBN 9789004533523 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Greece—History—War of Independence, 1821-1829. | Greece—Politics and government—1821- | Nationalism—Greece—History—19th century. | Revolutions—Philosophy. | Historical materialism.

Classification: LCC DF805 .M455 2023 (print) | LCC DF805 (ebook) | DDC 949.5/06—dc23/eng/20221230

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022055715>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022055716>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: [brill.com/brill-typeface](https://brill.com/brill-typeface).

ISSN 1570-1522

ISBN 978-90-04-53351-6 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-53352-3 (e-book)

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# Acknowledgements

A first version of this book was published in Greek on 15 December 2020 under the title *1821: Tracing the Nation, the State and the Grand Idea* (1821. *Ihnilatontas to Ethnos, to Kratos kai ti Megali Idea*, Alexandraia Publications).

I would like to thank Marios Emmanouilidis and Dimitris C. Sotiropoulos for reading the chapters of the book while they were being written, and for helping me to improve their quality with well-founded comments. I also thank Panagiotis Sotiris for his suggestions regarding the adaptation of the text for an English-literate audience.

I owe thanks to the participants of the seminar ‘Theory and History of Capitalism and the National Phenomenon: The Greek Case’ (October 2018–March 2019), whose questions, comments and interventions helped me to shape the arguments developed in this book.

A special mention is, of course, owed to Barbara Santos for translating the greater part of the book, for her valuable suggestions and for having improved the overall style of the manuscript.

## About *Nationalism as a Claim to a State*

Who were the Greeks whom the Revolution of 1821 sought to liberate into a national-constitutional state? In this fascinating book, distinguished political economist John Milios investigates the processes of economic, social, and political-ideological unification through which, from the second half of the eighteenth century, Greek-speaking and other Orthodox capitalists promoted a broad national politicisation of large Orthodox Christian populations in the Ottoman Empire and turned them into Greek freedom fighters. He shows how the revolution of the masses demanding representative institutions led to the formation of a constitutional bourgeois state and a national capitalist social formation (1821–27) before taking a Bonapartist and, later, monarchist turn. This is the first book to consider the role of capitalism, nationalism, republicanism, racism, and imperialism in the formation of modern Greece.

– *Vassilios Lambropoulos, C.P. Cavafy Professor Emeritus, University of Michigan*

*Nationalism as a Claim to a State* provides a groundbreaking account of the Greek Revolution and its aftermath. Opposing the myth of Hellenic continuity, Milios analyses the Greek nationalist movement in terms of capitalist interests within – and at odds with – the Ottoman Empire. He emphasises that early proclamations of Hellenic independence also included Albanians, Serbs, and Bulgars; later, the Greek state defined itself against those groups and pursued territorial expansion. Part of a broader historical movement, the emergent Greek state reveals how nationalist ideologies get twisted this way and that to avoid confronting the realities of capitalism. Carefully researched and persuasively argued, Milios's study takes us deep into the Greek Revolution and beyond, offering crucial lessons for the contemporary world.

– *Rush Rehm, Professor, Theater and Performance Studies, and Classics, Stanford University Artistic Director, Stanford Repertory Theater (SRT)*

John Milios offers us a timely and important intervention in the discussions on the character and role of the 1821 Greek Revolution, a necessary antidote to the nationalist consensus which seems to have prevailed in the bicentenary celebrations of that event. Through the lens of political economy, he critically analyses the role of the emerging middle classes in the formation of the nation state of Greece. At the same time, he shows that the protagonists of the national struggle had imperial (I would prefer to call them colonial) ambitions from the very start, ambitions that were burnt in the ashes of Smyrna a century later. The

book not only helps us understand the emergence and the fates of Greece as a national and political phenomenon, and its continuing role as a buffer state in global geopolitics, but it also constitutes a valuable contribution to the contemporary discussions on (and struggles towards) ideological, economic, and political decolonisation.

- *Yannis Hamilakis, Brown University, co-author of Archaeology, Nation, and Race: Confronting the Past, Decolonizing the Future*