

The historical context and the involvement of Greece

The discussion on whether World War I could have been avoided or not still remains open, especially as new approaches and contributions continue to be added to the already existing ones. The hecatombs and all kinds of atrocities of 1914-1918 brought to a close a long period of (relative) peace in Europe, a period dominated by the (illusory) impression that the power of reason was unshakable and, consequently, that the progress of humankind and its growth in all fields were ensured.

Contrary to what happened in most European countries, where the number of victims was colossal and the consequences of the war on all aspects of social life indisputable, one could say that what is also called the Great War only hit Greece indirectly, mainly through what is known as the National Disunity and certain isolated events.

Given, moreover, that these are little known, it is possibly worth making particular mention to certain events linked to the presence (1915-1918) of the fleet of the Entente Forces in the wider region of the Aegean.

Andreas Pappas, publications editor, PIOP

The joining of the Cyclades to the State of Thessaloniki

The joining of the Cyclades to the so-called State of Thessaloniki constitutes a particular small stone in the mosaic of the National Schism history. For historical research, it is particularly interesting to look into the causes of this joining. According to one view, at the time when the National Defence movement broke out, the inhabitants of the Cyclades were faced with the spectre of a provisioning crisis. Both the sinking of the steamships transporting victuals -by German submarines operating in the Aegean- and the control of provisioning carried out by the Anglo-French fleet, meant the islanders were caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. The domination of the Entente fleet in the Aegean would largely decide the side the inhabitants of the Cyclades would fall in with.

However, the joining of the Cyclades to the State of Thessaloniki would not take place without bloodshed. The bloody events of Apeiranthos bear testimony to the fact that said joining was not accepted by the population in its entirety. Indisputably, royalist factions existed within the Cyclades, and they reacted dynamically to the islands' rallying to the Venizelos State.

Vassilis Kollaros, doctoral student in History at the Panteios University

Tinos in World War I and the National Schism

World War I, the first mass European conflict, did not leave much latitude for neutrality to any country. Greece's involvement took place under particularly adverse conditions, in a climate of disunity called the National Schism. The Cyclades, and naturally Tinos, found themselves at the centre of this national tragedy and experienced the developments in a particularly painful manner. The Schism was not a bolt out of the blue. It evolved gradually as of the spring of 1915, to culminate in late November/early December 1916, when, in the wake of the Noemvriana (the armed confrontation in Athens between the royalist and the pro-Allies forces), the Cyclades' occupation by the Temporary Government of Thessaloniki was decided, with the direct assistance of the Entente's maritime forces. A basically conservative island, under the pressure of the food crisis, Tinos joined the National Defence Movement with many reservations, which in the end –luckily- did not go as far as an outright rift. The inhabitants' Schism between two extreme poles, represented mainly by the Roman Catholic population and a few Greek Orthodox extremists on the one hand and radicalized Panormos on the other, is of particular historical and anthropological interest. In the end, necessity imposed prudence and the island proceeded with the fewest possible scars.

Kostas Danoussis, researcher of the History of Modern Tinos

The unveiling of the Monument to the Dead of Panormos and the tense climate of the time

In the spring of 1917, thanks to the financial support of liberal statesman Antonis Mavrogordatos, the Monument to the Dead of Panormos was completed, crafted by master marble carver, Michalis Kouskouris. The unveiling took place with all due solemnity on May 28, 1917, and would constitute an excellent opportunity for a show of strength on behalf of the supporters of the Temporary Government of Thessaloniki. Already, as of end-November 1916, immediately after the Noemvriana events, the operation to occupy the Cyclades took place, with the close collaboration of the British forces. Tinos would join the National Defence Movement as of the 7th and the village of Panormos on the 12th of December 1917. However, with the exception of Tinos Town and Panormos, the island's inclusion in the State of Thessaloniki was far from enthusiastic. The rival factions will use any available means to strengthen their positions and the cultivation of tension was a convenient tool. In this context, the unveiling of the Memorial would offer a first-class opportunity.

Yorgos Vidos, marble carver-restorer, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports

The first «migration» of the icon of the Annunciation to Athens in 1915

The explosion of World War I brings all European countries to a situation of crisis. In Greece, particularly after the Dardanelles campaign, a divergence of views appears between the Crown and the Prime Minister as to the stance the country should take in this major conflict. The disagreement between King Constantine and Venizelos would lead to the latter's resignation and, finally, to the proclamation of parliamentary elections for May 31, 1915, organized by the government of Dimitrios Gounaris. The heavy political climate is further aggravated by the king's illness. In this climate of general emotivity, the Archbishop of Athens asked for the icon of the Annunciation to be brought to the royal patient's bedside, an event dully accomplished on May 13, 1915. The king's health takes a sudden turn for the better, an improvement defying all scientific explanation. The «miracle» of the icon of the Annunciation will strengthen the people's feelings for its belaboured king, but simultaneously will also reinforce the repute of the Holy Foundation and of Tinos, as, following this, the icon will be displayed for public worship at the Athens Mitropolis. The «management of the miracle», the repute of the icon's public worship and the bolstering of the Tinos people's morale due to the event of King Constantine's illness constitute an object of research for the very first time.

Nikos Gizis, library curator of P.I.I.E.T.