The Orthodox Church in Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century

Christine Chaillot

Peter Lang

It is common knowledge that the majority of the population of Eastern Europe belong to the Christian Orthodox tradition. But how many people have an adequate knowledge of the past or even of the present of these Orthodox churches? This book aims to present an introduction to this history written for a general audience, both Christian and non-Christian.

After the 1917 revolution in Russia, communism spread to most of the countries of Eastern Europe. By 1953, at the time of Stalin's death, the division between Eastern and Western Europe seemed absolute. However, the advent of *perestroika* at the end of the 1980s brought about political changes that have enabled the Orthodox Church to develop once again in Eastern Europe.

The foundation of the European Union in 1993 has had a broader significance for Orthodox communities, who can now participate in the future development of Europe. Some Orthodox Churches already have their representatives at the European Union in Brussels. These include the patriarchates of Constantinople, Russia and Romania, along with the Church of Greece and the Church of Cyprus.

Today, Europe is becoming increasingly religiously diverse, even within Christianity itself. A growing number of Orthodox Christians have come to work and settle in Western Europe. An understanding of the history of the Orthodox communities in Eastern Europe in the twentieth century will contribute, in a spirit of informed dialogue, to the shaping of a new united Europe that is still in the process of expansion.

This book is translated from the French version published by Le Cerf, Paris (2009).

Christine Chaillot is a writer who specialises in oriental churches. She is Swiss and Orthodox (Patriarchate of Constantinople). In 2006, *The Orthodox Church in Western Europe in the Twentieth Century* was published. She has written several books on the life and spirituality of the Oriental Orthodox Churches (of the Syrian Orthodox, Armenian, Coptic and Ethiopian traditions), some of which have been translated into Arabic, Amharic and Russian.

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Christine Chaillot

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Foreword

We Orthodox think of Orthodoxy as the 'Church of Holy Tradition', steadfastly guarding 'the faith once delivered to the saints' (Jude 3), 'neither deleting anything nor adding anything', as the fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787) affirmed. Yet at the same time we recognize that this unchanging Tradition has to be combined with personal experience, and needs to be rethought and relived in each new generation. To quote a leading Russian theologian of the twentieth century, Vladimir Lossky (1903–58), 'The only true Tradition is living and creative, formed by the union of human freedom with the grace of the Holy Spirit.' Lossky adds that Tradition represents 'the critical spirit of the Church'.

In this present book, skilfully edited by Christine Chaillot, we see how this 'Holy Tradition', always unchanging yet always living and creative, has been re-experienced by the Orthodox Christians of eastern Europe in the twentieth century. An earlier work, likewise edited by Christine Chaillot, *A Short History of the Orthodox Church in Western Europe in the 20th Century*,[1] described the establishment and growth of eastern Christian communities in western lands not historically associated with Orthodoxy. The companion volume now before us surveys the vicissitudes of Orthodoxy in its home territories during the same period. Like its predecessor, this new work is vivid and practical, full of detailed information not otherwise easily accessible. Once more in common with its predecessor, it raises many disturbing questions in the reader's mind concerning the future. For example: What is our quintessential Orthodox vocation, our God-given *Kairos*, in the twenty-first century? What are the open doors before us, the opportunities and challenges, and what are the dangers and temptations?

1 Paris: Inter-Orthodox dialogue, 2006. French edition: *Histoire de l'Église orthodoxe en Europe occidentale au XX^e siècle* (Paris: Dialogue entre orthodoxes, 2005).

For the Orthodox Christians of eastern Europe, the twentieth century has been a troubled epoch, a time of major trials but also a time of new hope. Externally the history of Orthodoxy in the last hundred years has been marked by three major developments.

First, during the opening part of the century, there occurred two decisive events: in Russia, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917; in Asia Minor, the defeat of the Greek army in 1922, followed in 1923 by the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey – what today would be called 'ethnic cleansing'. As a result of the first of these events, the largest and most influential of the Orthodox churches, that of Russia, passed under the dominion of militant atheism; and for the next seventy years it was subjected to persecution, sometimes direct and violent (during the 1920s and 1930s), and again in the early 1960s, sometimes more indirect and concealed (in the period following the Second World War). The establishment of communism in Russia led to a large-scale emigration of Russian Orthodox to the west, which in its turn contributed to a deeply constructive exchange between Orthodoxy and western Christianity.

As for the Asia Minor disaster of 1922–3, this deprived the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople of the greater part of its flock. Since the Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, 381), the city of Constantinople or New Rome has been the chief ecclesial centre in eastern Christendom; and during the Byzantine and Ottoman periods it exercised jurisdiction over a large and populous territory. But, as a result first of the foundation of national churches in the nineteenth century (Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania), and then of the exchange of populations in 1923 (involving the expulsion of all Orthodox Christians from Turkey, except in the immediate region of Constantinople itself), the numerical size of the ecumenical patriarchate was enormously reduced. Since 1923, and more particularly since the anti-Greek riots of 1955, the remaining Greek Orthodox and the patriarchate have been subject to considerable pressure from the Turkish authorities, and exist at present in a state of painful isolation. Yet, despite these losses, the patriarchate still retains its position as *primus inter pares*, 'first among equals', within the worldwide family of Orthodox churches.

The second major development marking the external history of twentieth-century Orthodoxy was the expansion of communism from the Soviet Union across the countries of eastern Europe in 1945 and the years immediately following. As a result, the Orthodox Churches of Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Albania and Czechoslovakia passed under atheist rule, so that about 85 per cent of the total number of Orthodox Christians were now living under communist rule. Although in all these countries the Orthodox Church was subject to many disabilities and to state interference, the persecution – except in Albania – was much less severe than it had been in Russia during the 1920s and 1930s. As in post-war Stalinist Russia, it was the aim of the communist authorities in the other countries of eastern Europe (Albania excepted) to control rather than to annihilate the church.

The third major development has been more encouraging for the Orthodox Church: the sudden yet decisive collapse of communism in 1988–9: In consequence, all the Orthodox churches – with the exception of the ecumenical patriarchate in Turkish Istanbul – today find themselves in a situation where the state gives them active support, or at least adopts an attitude of positive neutrality.

How, then, may we summarize the contemporary situation of the Orthodox Church in eastern Europe?

The position of the ecumenical patriarchate in modern Turkey continues to be delicate, not to say precarious. The number of Greeks resident in Istanbul is now less than 5,000. In the past forty years it has more than once seemed possible that the Turkish government would expel the patriarchate altogether. Sometimes it has been suggested that, in view of the restrictions to which the patriarchate is subject, it would be best for it voluntarily to leave Turkish soil. It should be remembered that the patriarchate still retains a substantial flock outside Turkey: namely, the 'New Territories' in northern Greece (administratively incorporated in the Church of Greece), Crete, the Dodecanese, Mount Athos, and the large Greek 'diaspora' throughout the western world. But the present ecumenical patriarch Bartholomew I has made it clear that he feels deeply committed to support his local flock in Turkey itself, and so he has no intention of leaving the city of his own free will. Despite all difficulties, he is active in many fields: in work for

Christian unity, in the dialogue with Islam, and above all in Christian ecological witness (he is popularly known as the 'Green Patriarch'). He is strongly in favour of Turkey's entry into the European Union, disagreeing here with many Orthodox in Greece.

Greece, and to a lesser extent Cyprus – in both of them the church dates back to apostolic times – are the only countries in the world where, from a constitutional point of view, the Orthodox Church is the officially 'established' church of the land (although in some of the former communist countries, most notably Russia and Romania, the Orthodox Church is not far from enjoying *de facto* a position of this kind. In both Greece and Cyprus the vast majority of the population are baptized Orthodox. For most Greeks it is still regarded as axiomatic that to be Greek means to be Orthodox. Yet it cannot be denied that, with increasing urbanization and with the growth in material prosperity – significantly assisted, in the case of Greece, by its entry into the EEC in 1981 – the church no longer influences the daily life of the people in the way that it once did. The level of church-going has fallen in Greece since the 1950s, and it is probable that only 10 per cent of the population attend the Divine Liturgy regularly every Sunday. But under the late Archbishop Christodoulos the church has remained impressively active in social and philanthropic work, and there is every indication that this will continue to be the case under his successor Ieronymos (enthroned in 2008).

What of the Orthodox churches in the former communist lands, and more particularly in Russia and Ukraine (converted to Christianity around 988), in Georgia (converted in the early fourth century), in Serbia and Bulgaria (converted by Byzantine missionaries in the second half of the ninth century), and in Romania (whose Christian roots date back to the occupation of Dacia by the Romans in the second and third centuries)? In all these countries, following the collapse of communism, there has been an impressive restoration of external church structures. This is particularly the case with the former Soviet Union. In Russia and Ukraine in 1987 there were 6,800 parishes; by 2007 the figure had risen to 27,300. The increase in monasteries (for both men and women) has been even more impressive: nineteen in 1987; 716 in 2007. During the same period, the number of theological colleges rose from three to seventy. Yet, despite this remarkable

expansion, it is probably time that, on an ordinary Sunday (not a great feast), not more than 5–10 per cent of the population attend church.

Throughout eastern Europe, whether in Greece and Cyprus or in the former communist countries, the Orthodox Church is facing the same challenge: How far will Orthodoxy succeed in resisting the process of secularization that has led to such a steep decline in religious observance throughout western Europe? During seventy years of atheist rule, despite enormous losses, a substantial minority of the Russian people remained faithful to the church. Their courage and persistence in the face of persecution were deeply impressive, and constitute one of the greatest triumphs of Christianity during the two thousand years of its existence. Yet we cannot avoid asking ourselves the question: Will the more subtle temptations of secular materialism turn out to be in the long term more destructive than direct persecution? The experience of the next thirty years will surely prove decisive.

One of the main problems confronting Orthodoxy in the twentieth century – a problem that will certainly continue to trouble us in the twenty-first century – has been the lack of inter-Orthodox unity and co-operation, not on the level of doctrine and worship (here there are no major disagreements), but in the domain of church administration and jurisdiction. We Orthodox share a single faith; we use the same forms of liturgical prayer; and in principle we are all in full communion with one another. But in practice the outward expression of our inward and spiritual unity is sadly defective. When inter-church conflicts arise, often many decades pass before they are resolved; we seem to have no clear and effective procedures for resolving our disagreements. For three-quarters of a century, for example, during 1870–1945, there was a break in communion between the patriarchate of Constantinople and the Church of Bulgaria.

Similar difficulties have arisen during the second half of the twentieth century. In 1967 an autocephalous Orthodox Church of Macedonia was established, without the blessing of the mother-church from which it broke away, the patriarchate of Serbia; it has not as yet been recognized by any of the other Orthodox churches, and after forty years the situation still continues unresolved. Since 1995–6 there has been severe tension in Estonia, where the Orthodox are divided between those who belong to the autonomous

Church of Estonia – recognized by the patriarchate of Constantinople but not by the Church of Russia – and those parishes and monasteries that are under the jurisdiction of the Moscow patriarchate. Despite continuing negotiations between the patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow, no final agreement has yet been reached.

Most seriously of all, because of the far larger numbers involved, the Orthodox in Ukraine are divided into three opposed jurisdictions. The largest group, the autonomous Orthodox Church of Ukraine, recognizes the authority of the Moscow patriarchate, and it alone is aknowledged as canonical by the worldwide communion of Orthodox churches. But members of the other two groups have approached the patriarchate of Constantinople, or at least are seriously considering the possibility of doing so, in the hope of being taken under the *omophorion* of the ecumenical patriarchate. Until now the ecumenical patriarch, although accepting some Ukrainian Orthodox in the western world under his pastoral care, has been extremely circumspect about intervening directly within Ukraine itself. Here there is an iminent danger of far-reaching rift between Constantinople and Moscow.

Throughout the twentieth century the lack of inter-Orthodox cooperation has deeply perturbed many Orthodox leaders, and ways have been sought to manifest more effectively our ecclesial unity; yet so far all too little has been accomplished on a practical level. At the very beginning of the century, in 1902, the ecumenical patriarch Joachim III sent a wide-ranging and visionary encyclical to all the Orthodox churches, urging the need for closer consultation. In its reply (1903) the Russian Church particularly emphasized the importance of 'special assemblies of Orthodox bishops', to be drawn from all parts of the Orthodox world. One notable attempt to convene such a 'special assembly' was made in 1923, when the ecumenical patriarch Meletios IV (Metaxakis) summoned a pan-Orthodox conference at Constantinople; but unfortunately only a few of the Orthodox churches sent representatives, and the decisions of this meeting, especially the proposal to adopt the New Calendar, proved seriously divisive.

A further attempt at a 'special assembly' occurred in 1930, when an inter-Orthodox 'Preparatory Committee' met on Mount Athos. The intention was that this 'Preparatory Committee' would lead to a 'pro-Synod',

and then eventually to a 'Great and Holy Council' embracing the entire Orthodox world. In some circles, it was even suggested that this 'Great and Holy Council' might turn out to be the Eighth Ecumenical Council. But the Second World War intervened before any further steps were taken. Then in 1948, to mark the five hundredth anniversary of the autocephaly of the Russian Church, a 'Conference of the Heads and Representatives of the Autocephalous Churches' was held in Moscow. When plans for this meeting were first announced, some spokesmen for the Russian Church speculated that this would prepare the way for an ecumenical council. But the patriarchate of Constantinople protested that it alone possessed the canonical right to summon pan-Orthodox councils, and so the Moscow meeting, instead of being called a 'council', simply claimed to be 'conference'. In Orthodox ecclesiology this is an important distinction! Although concerned with many burning issues, regrettably the 1948 Moscow Conference was marked by the prevailing spirit of the 'Cold War'.

Plans for a 'Great and Holy Council' were revived by the ecumenical patriarch Athenagoras I, who in 1961 convened a pan-Orthodox conference at Rhodes, in which all the main Orthodox churches participated. This was followed by further pan-Orthodox meetings at Rhodes in 1963 and 1964, and then by a series of conferences at Chambésy (outside Geneva). These conferences were partly concerned with technical questions, such as rules of fasting and the calendar, but they also discussed the far more fundamental problem of the organization of the Orthodox Church in the west. The Chambésy conferences of 1990 and 1993 urged that, in countries where parallel Orthodox jurisdictions coexisted in the same land, the churches concerned should form episcopal committees or conferences, at which they would meet each other on a regular basis. This has been done in most countries of the western world. While serving as a useful channel for communication, the Rhodes and Chambésy conferences have not yet led to a 'Great and Holy Council'.

The underlying reason for the failure of these efforts for closer Orthodox co-operation is undoubtly the strong spirit of nationalism that prevails in almost all Orthodox churches. All too often Orthodox see themselves primarily as Greeks, Russians, Serbs (or the rest), and only in a secondary sense as members of the one Orthodox Catholic Church. Now

patriotism, love for one's native land and one's ethnic conditions, is indeed a precious quality that can enrich our Christian life. Yet, precious though patriotism may be, incomparably more precious is our unity in the one Church of Christ. In Orthodox experience, past and present, the true order of priorities has been unhappily obscured. Our national loyalties need to be 'baptized', to undergo a far-reaching *metanoia*, repentance in the literal sense of a 'change of mind'. In the Symbol of the Faith we Orthodox state, 'I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church', but what happens in practice? We have forgotten the warning of St Philaret, metropolitan of Moscow (1782–1867), that the Creed belongs only to those who *live* it.

From the conversion of the emperor Constantine in 313 until the twentieth century, Orthodoxy has existed predominantly in the situation of a state church. Paradoxically this continued to be the case even after the fall of the Byzantine Empire; the Orthodox under Islamic rule existed as a kind of 'state within the state', administered in civil as well as religious matters by the church hierarchy. In the last hundred years, however – and this is the most importat single fact about the history of the Orthodox Church in the twentieth century – this traditional alliance between church and state has been abrogated or at least greatly weakened. It was abruptly abolished in those Orthodox churches that passed under communist rule; and even if, since the collapse of communism, it has been partially restored in countries such as Russia and Romania, this has happened only to a limited degree. At the same time, in a country such as Greece, the church–state alliance has been undermined as a result of growing secularization. This means that, almost everywhere in the Orthodox world, the bishops can no longer depend as once they did upon the government and the politicians.

This far-reaching breakdown of the long-established church–state alliance in eastern Europe means that the Orthodox Church is coming to rely more and more upon what has never ceased to be its essential source of life and strength – upon the Holy Eucharist, upon the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, upon the bond of communion in the body and blood of Christ. Inevitably the transition from the situation of a state church to that of a 'free' church, existing in what is essentially a multicultural secular society, will prove painful, and may seem at first to involve much material loss and many sacrifices. Yet in the longer term the change will be found to involve not

loss but gain. If in the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century the Orthodox Church is being deprived of much of its material and worldly influence – if in a kenotic manner it is coming to depend increasingly upon 'the one thing that is needful' (Luke 11:42), the Holy Eucharist – then that is surely to be considered not a punishment but a blessing. It means that the church is becoming more genuinely its true self.

The twentieth century has certainly been a time of tribulation for Orthodox Christians, whether in Asia Minor, in the Soviet Union, or in other parts of eastern Europe during the communist period. Yet, despite the 'fiery trial' (1 Peter 4:12) through which it has passed in the twentieth century, Orthodoxy can truly claim to be stronger in 2000 than it was in 1900.

As for Orthodox monastic life, epochs when the monasteries have flourished have been times of prosperity for the church as a whole; when the monasteries have been in decline, then so has the general life of the church.

Finally, let us report that from 10 to 12 October 2008, an assembly (*synaxis*) of the primates of the Orthodox churches was invited by the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I. A final declaration was made, in thirteen points, announcing the continuation of the preparation of the pan-Orthodox council, with inter-Orthodox consultations since 2009. The declaration also underlined the importance to follow up theological dialogue with other Christians as well as inter-religious dialogues, especially with Judaism and Islam. It also says that a faithful testimony of the message of redemption of the Orthodox Church also supposes the overcoming of internal conflicts of the Orthodox Church by calming down the nationalist, ethnic and ideological tensions of the past; it is only in this way that the Orthodox word will have an effective impact on the contemporary world.[2]

As was the case in its predecessor published by Christine Chaillot, this new work will (I am confident) be widely welcomed.

Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia

2 www.orthodoxie.com, 16 October 2008.

‘Thanks to the other, I discover myself’
Elie Wiesel

CHRISTINE CHAILLOT

Introduction

In 2005 I published a collection of articles, *A Short History of the Orthodox Church in Western Europe in the 20th Century*. The aim of the present book is to present an introduction to the history of the Orthodox churches in eastern Europe in the twentieth century, in nineteen countries.

Some of these countries are situated in central Europe rather than eastern Europe, but our title was already too long to include this precision.

The events experienced by the Orthodox churches of the different eastern European countries in the twentieth century are, of course, closely linked to the tormented and very complex political history of Europe during this period, which also involved numerous changes of borders. In this book we shall also touch on the history of Europe as a whole. The countries are named here according to the geographical borders of the end of the twentieth century.

Since the political history of eastern Europe is often not very well known, we recommend in our bibliography a number of general titles, some with historical maps.

Politics has much influenced the history of the Orthodox churches. In our articles we shall see that the relations between the Orthodox churches and the state were not without problems, especially in the states where the majority of people were non-Orthodox or non-Christian. Under communism in particular, but also because of other political events, numerous Orthodox churches and monasteries were destroyed or nationalized, and Orthodox Christians suffered much, sometimes to the extent of the camps and martyrdom. This was also the case for other Christians.

From the end of the 1980s, a time of reconstruction (*perestroika*), liberation and ultimately independence began in Soviet Union and in the countries of eastern Europe under it; this of course greatly influenced the life of all the churches.

With regard to the history, or rather the histories of the Orthodox churches in eastern Europe, these will be presented in the following order: first Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, ex-Yugoslavia and Albania; then Romania and Moldova; then Hungary along with the Czech Lands and Slovakia (ex-Czechoslovakia); then Poland and the Baltic Lands; then Belorussia, Ukraine and Russia; and finally Georgia.

The Church of Georgia is one of the most ancient Orthodox churches where Christianity was the state religion since its foundation in the fourth century; it became an autocephalous church in the fifth century. Its history is closely linked to that of Russia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Geographically speaking, Georgia and Russia are still part of Europe, the eastern borders of which are bounded by the Caucasus mountains.

Why include Turkey here? Geographically speaking, one can argue on the basis that since the seat of the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople is located on the western coast of the Bosphorus, it is thus in Europe, or at least in 'European' Turkey. Historically speaking, the Greek Orthodox patriarchate of Constantinople, established in the fourth century, is the mother-church of very many of the churches presented in this book and played an important role in the history of the Orthodox churches in eastern Europe, including the history of the twentieth century. Under the Ottoman Empire (15th–19th centuries), the patriarch of Constantinople was the representative of all the Orthodox of the southern Balkans; these Orthodox were thus part of the Orthodox community under the patriarchate of Constantinople (the *Rum millet*), and this endured at least until the nineteenth century.

The evangelization of the Balkans began in the ninth century, thanks to saints Methodius and Cyril who went from Thessaloniki (in present-day northern Greece) to preach Christianity to the Slavs in their local language.

In this way, in each kingdom or region of eastern Europe an Orthodox church was established and developed through the centuries its own history, culture, identity, and even a certain nationalism.

This evangelization extended to distant places, as far as the region of Kiev (in present-day Ukraine) and also further north, to the territories of present-day Russia and Belarus, the Baltic Lands and other countries

of eastern Europe. The Russian Church was founded in Kiev in 988 and became autocephalous in 1448. The great majority of the Christians of eastern Europe remained Orthodox after the schism of 1054 between the Catholic and the Orthodox churches.

If the patriarchate of Constantinople has had an influence on the Orthodox of the Balkans for many centuries, the patriarchate of Moscow had also an influence on the Orthodox living in the territories conquered by Russia in the west since the reign of Tsar Peter the Great (1682–1725).

With the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, which began in the nineteenth century and lasted until the beginning of the twentieth century, new independent countries were created, leading to the formation of new exarchates of the Orthodox churches. Then the independent organization of local national Orthodox churches was organized step by step until the twentieth century, with patriarchates and churches either autocephalous or autonomous. The first declaration of an autocephalous church recognized by the patriarchate of Constantinople was that of the Church of Greece in 1850.

In order to be able to read the history of the Orthodox in the twentieth century and even before, it is necessary to understand and localize not only the great number of the different Orthodox jurisdictions, but also the different Orthodox groups considered as non–canonical, because some will be named in our articles, such as the Old Believers and the Old Calendarists (see the Glossary).

For each country, and in the context of the new Europe, very general statistics are given about the different Christian communities as well as the Muslims and the Jews.

In eastern Europe there are Catholics of Latin or Oriental rite. As a matter of fact, some Orthodox who became Catholic continued to celebrate the liturgy and prayers according to the Orthodox rites. They are also called 'Uniates', that is, united to the Catholic Church of Rome.

The Protestants in eastern Europe belong to different congregations that include the Lutherans, the Calvinists and many others.

At the level of Christian ecumenism, the Orthodox churches in eastern Europe maintain ecumenical contacts at the national and international levels. Nearly all of them have become members of the World Council

of Churches (WCC) founded in 1948,[1] as well as of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) founded in 1959.

The other main ecumenical meetings with eastern Europe take place through the Council of the Bishops of Europe and through the Christian Conference for Peace.

In one Mediterranean country, Cyprus, the Orthodox Church is also a member of the Middle East Council of Churches.

Protestant and Catholic missionaries have been active in eastern Europe, particularly after *perestroïka*. This partly explains why ecumenical contacts are not always fruitful and sometimes not even possible in some countries or regions. Recently two Orthodox patriarchates interrupted their ecumenical contacts with the WCC: the patriarchate of Georgia in 1997, and the patriarchate of Bulgaria in 1998. In October 2008, the patriarchate of Moscow decided to suspend its participation in the Conference of European Churches.

In the eastern European countries where Orthodox and Catholics have clashed in the course of their history and have even experienced war, it is nowadays very important to maintain positive ecumenical contacts, even if this is not always easy. In fact, through ecumenism Christians can play a very positive role if they all mobilize together in order to structure the new Europe, now very secularized and even dechristianized; together, they must endeavour, among other things, not to forget the Christian sources of Europe.

For historical reasons, there are also non-Christians living in eastern Europe, mainly Jews and Muslims. This is why it is equally important to maintain good relations with these communities and to hold inter-religious dialogues.

In 2006, Romania and Bulgaria became members of the European Union. By 2007, the majority of the countries mentioned in this book were full members of the European Union or were to become so. In this context of the new Europe, representations of some Orthodox churches were opened in Brussels: the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople

1 See www.wcc-coe.org.

in 1995, the Church of Greece in 1998, the patriarchate of Moscow in 2002 and the patriarchate of Romania in 2006. A representation of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus was opened in 2009. The list may be extended in the future.

For young Orthodox, the Orthodox association *Syndesmos* organizes meetings and activities at the national and international levels in the whole world, including in eastern Europe.

The articles presented here are only an introduction to the history of the Orthodox Church in eastern Europe in the twentieth century. A complete account would require several volumes. This will be possible only when all the state and church archives are fully available, which is far from the case at the moment.

Some readers will perhaps be surprised to find in articles on the twentieth century summaries of the history of Orthodox churches before that century; this seemed to me useful in order better to understand the roots of these histories which are often complicated. As the Dominican Father Irénée Dalmais, a great specialist in the eastern churches, used to say: one cannot understand the history of any period without studying and knowing the history of at least the previous two centuries. I have followed this advice broadly, often overlapping the span of two centuries. History allows us to understand the difficulties of the past. To understand these difficulties and to remember the past should help us all not to repeat certain mistakes, and above all, to build the future, to prepare the Europe of tomorrow, including that which concerns the future life of the churches and of other religions.

With this book I hope to achieve two main aims. In the context of the new Europe being built, the number of member countries from eastern Europe continues to grow. Is it not desirable at the political and Christian ecumenical levels and even at the inter-religious level to learn to know, or know better, these ancient Christian Orthodox communities which form a majority in eastern Europe?

I hope this book may also achieve the following aim: to allow the Orthodox themselves to know each other better by reading their respective histories. The Orthodox should overcome any nationalist spirit in order to acquire a true 'pan-Orthodox' spirit. For all, Christians or not,

the clarification and analysis of history should help us to overcome, if not entirely banish, all the historical divisions and tensions of the past.

Nothing is more difficult than to be objective when it comes to writing history. When commissioning these articles, I asked all the authors to remain objective and non-polemical. At the same time I wanted to respect the right of the authors to express themselves freely. Thus I have to make the usual declaration that the views expressed in the articles are the responsibility of their authors.

The articles have been written by Orthodox, most of them historians well known in their own country and even in some cases on the international level too. Each article has been written in a way that allows it to be read independently, which explains some repetitions in the book. At the end of each article the reader will find a short bibliography, sometimes also in the local languages.

In order to contact the different Orthodox churches presented here, please consult *Orthodoxia*, published annually by the Ostkirchliches Institut, Ostengasse 31, 93047 Regensburg, Germany.

Certain words or names unfamiliar to non-Orthodox Christians are explained in the Glossary.

Because of the large number of the original languages and because of requests made by certain authors, it was very difficult to harmonize all the names in our articles. The first names in particular are sometimes transliterated according to the language of the community. For example, in the earlier articles we kept the ending in 'os' for most of the Greek names.

The reader will probably recognize without any problem the following names: Vasileios for Basil, Veniamin for Benjamin, Bartholomaios for Bartholomew, Vikentije for Vincent, Dionisij for Denys, etc.

In the article on Ukraine in particular, one has to understand Alexander for Oleksandr, Alexis for Aleksij, Antony for Antonij, Basil for Vasilij, Dimitri for Dimitrij, Eulogy for Evlogij, Luke for Louka, Michael for Mixail, Nicodemus for Nikodim, Parthenios for Parfenij, Polycarp for Polikarp, Stephen for Stepan, Theodosius for Feodosij, Theophan for Feofan and Tikhon for Tixon.

In certain articles the diacritic signs of the local languages have been kept.

Most of the articles were written by our authors in English. Three were written in French (Greece, Romania and Moldova), two in Russian (Russia and Belarus) and one in Greek (Turkey). I should like to thank here all the translators and correctors.

I should like to thank all the authors and other people who helped me to prepare, elaborate and finish this work. I cannot thank all of them by name. I wish to mention in particular, in alphabetical order: Fr Hyacinthe Destivelle (Paris), Archbishop Basil Karayanis (Cyprus), Dr Natalia Kulkova (Russia), Fr Antoine Lambrechts of the monastery of Chevetogne (Belgium), Dr George Lemopoulos (WCC, Geneva), Fr Serge Model (Brussels), Professor V. Phidas (Greece), Archdeacon Radomir Rakic (Serbia), Fr Ion Saoca (WCC), Dr Irène Semenoff-Tian-Chansky-Baïdine (France), Archbishop George Stránský of Michalovce (Slovakia), Elena Tikhonova (Belarus), Fr Georges Tsetsis (ex-WCC), Fr Benedikt Yohanou (ex-WCC) and Dr Ivan Zhelev Dimitrov (Bulgaria).

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METROPOLITAN ANDREAS NANAKIS

1 History of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in the Twentieth Century

Introduction

For the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople, the twentieth century began essentially on 25 May 1901, with the return of Joachim III to the patriarchal throne in a city still under Ottoman rule. The nineteenth century, in which the phenomenon of nationalism appeared and became dominant, especially in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe, culminated in the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and the ensuing establishment of national states and Orthodox national churches. Strangely, the instigator of the independence of national churches (autocephaly) from the great mother-church of Constantinople was the Church of Greece, which was constituted in 1833 in an uncanonical manner but was eventually recognized by the patriarchate in the Tome of 1850. This was followed by the rise of the Bulgarian national movement and the demand of the Bulgarian nationalists to establish an autocephalous Bulgarian Church despite the fact that the state had not yet achieved independence. In the case of Bulgaria, ecclesiastical and national demands were closely interwoven and interdependent. The patriarchate held a synod in Constantinople in September 1872 and, on the occasion of the ecclesiastical schism of the Bulgarian exarchate, condemned national particularity ('ethnophyletism'). By then, the internal split had already taken place in the single Orthodox religious community (the *Rum millet*), as it had been instituted in the Ottoman Empire. Orthodox ecumenism, which the patriarchate of Constantinople had represented throughout the life of the Byzantine Empire and then as the ethnarchic church in the Ottoman Empire, had suffered a mortal

blow. Also, the secessionist movements and the publication of synodal tomes that ratified the independence of the Serbian (1879) and then the Romanian Church (1885) completed the process by which the Orthodox world of the Balkans, which had co-existed united in imperial surroundings for more than 1,000 years, was fragmented. This process was to continue in the twentieth century, when the independent churches of Serbia and Romania became patriarchates in 1920 and 1925 respectively, while in 1945 the question of Bulgaria was settled by official recognition on the part of the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople. Meanwhile, in 1937, the independent church of the Orthodox faithful in Albania, which had acquired political independence in 1912, was recognized.

Patriarch Joachim III (1901–1912)

The problems of Patriarch Joachim III, who ascended the throne for a second term as patriarch after the resignation of Constantine V, were already acute: the Macedonian struggle, the Antioch issue and the archiepiscopate of Cyprus were in the forefront.

The rise of Joachim III also marked the culmination of an internal conflict within the patriarchate. He resigned from his first patriarchy (1878 to 1883/4) owing to complications arising from the first phase of the Privilege Issue. The Ottoman Sublime Porte disputed the privilege of self-government, and the judicial, educational and other competences that the patriarchate had exercised for a long time under the Ottoman Empire. Joachim's strong personality, in conjunction with his great work and his contribution to the ethnarchic centre of the Greeks in the empire, had divided the people of the patriarchate, clergy and laity alike, into fanatical supporters and strong adversaries.

This confrontation between 'Joachimites' and 'anti-Joachimites' marked the end of the nineteenth century and prepared the ground for the early twentieth; it was mainly associated with the difference in strategy between

what Joachim proposed for the future of the Orthodox population in the Ottoman Empire, and what was being organized by the national centre in Athens, and was expressed primarily by the foreign policy of Charilaos Trikoupis. Joachim was supported politically by the Zariphis family who were Ottomanists. Georgios Zariphis had provided substantial assistance to Joachim in his rise to the patriarchal throne the first time. Later, his son Leonidas Zariphis supported Joachim's re-election as patriarch in 1901. Chief among his political adversaries was Stavros Voutyras, publisher of the Constantinople newspaper *Neologos*. In addition, the majority of senior Orthodox clergy, led by Metropolitan Germanos of Herakleia, his successor, had turned against him.

The twentieth century in fact needed a strong personality like Joachim on the patriarchal throne. Moreover, the history of Hellenism in modern times is linked with similar choices. One of the first actions by Joachim III was to issue a patriarchal and synodal encyclical in 1902 in which he called upon the other Orthodox churches to enter into a process of dialogue with the Vatican in order to achieve a consensus among Christian churches. This move – apart from the fact that it was intended to affirm the ecumenical orientations of the patriarchate in a period of sharp ethnic confrontations, especially in the territory of Macedonia – was also a reply to the encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1894, in which the pontiff called upon Orthodox Christians to unite with the Catholic Church. At the same time, Joachim III strengthened relations with the patriarchate of Russia and non-Orthodox churches such as the Anglican, Old Catholic, etc. In any event, he had prepared a list of twelve basic themes for inter-Orthodox and inter-Christian discussion, but the resident synod was not held in Constantinople owing to the firm refusal by the Sublime Porte to issue the required permit.

Nevertheless, with the outbreak of the Ilinden Uprising[1] in 1903 and the beginning of the Macedonian Struggle (1904–8) and with the

1 The Ilinden Uprising (so called because it started on Ilinden, that is on St Elija's Day, 20 July 1903) was a turning point in the national and revolutionary struggle of the Slavic-speaking people of northern Macedonia. Its character is controversial.

military confrontation between guerrilla bands of Greeks and Bulgarians, the ecumenical patriarchate endeavoured to protect its Orthodox flock in what was, from all viewpoints, a key geographical region. Among the upper echelons of the Orthodox clergy, a new generation of priests had appeared, who were less inspired by an ecumenical view of the Orthodox nation than in previous centuries. At the same time, this new generation sought support from the national centre in Athens for the ethnic centre in Constantinople, as it foresaw the crisis in the empire. The confrontation in Macedonia took on the character of a conflict not of Greeks against Bulgarians, but of patriarchists against exarchists. The fact was, however, that the patriarchists were identified with the Greeks and the exarchists with the Bulgarians. Examples of such prelates were Germanos Karavangelis, who was sent to the diocese of Kastoria in 1900 before Joachim ascended the throne; Chrysostomos Kalafatis, metropolitan of Drama in 1902–10 and later of Smyrna in 1910–22; Gregorios Orologas of Stromnitsa; Joachim Phoropoulos of Pelagonia; and Alexandros of Thessaloniki. The intense activity of prelates who shifted from an ethnic-centred to a national mentality made life difficult for the patriarchate, which was subject to strong political pressure from the Sublime Porte to restrain their ethnic-patriarchal activity. The result of this discussion between the national and the ethnic centre was the so-called 'Metropolitan Matter' (1903–8). Concern was expressed by many metropolitans about this new reality and at its implications for the patriarchate. The transfer of Karavangelis to the diocese of Amaseia, of Kalafatis to Smyrna, and of Gregorios to Kydonies was done under pressure from the Ottoman Porte.

The uprising has been claimed by both Bulgarian and Slav-Macedonian nationalism. The fiercest fighting was first in the area around Bitola, then in Ohrid, Kicevo, Lerin, Prilep, Skopje and Odrin and other regions. The towns of Krusevo, Nevska and Klisura were captured. On 3 August 1903, the rebels proclaimed the Krusevo 'Republic', which lasted only ten days. The Turkish forces managed to destroy the Krusevo 'Republic'. As a result, 201 communities were wiped out, 12,400 houses were burned to the ground, more than 70,000 people were left homeless, and 8,816 were killed. As a consequence of the brutal suppression of the uprising, the emperors of Russia and Austro-Hungary pushed the Ottoman state to a new phase of reform.

In his effort to attain a balance between the ecumenical perspective of the church leading the ethnic centre and the needs imposed by the toughened stance of Bulgarian nationalism (persecution of Greeks in cities in Eastern Rumelia, that is, northern Thrace, or the south-eastern part of the modern Bulgaria and the Black Sea region), Joachim III eventually came into conflict with prelates of the holy synod. It was thanks to him that we have the famous movement of the eight synod members in 1904 who objected to the way in which the metropolitans of Bosnia-Herzegovina had been elected, as the synod had anticipated which candidates would be favoured by the patriarchate. At the same time, however, Joachim had reinforced his support among the lay members of the Standing National Mixed Council and had also dealt successfully with pressure from the Ottoman government.

Everything changed radically in 1908. The revolution of the Young Turks, the fall of Abdülhamid's regime and the reinstatement of the constitution of 1876 raised the hopes of peoples in the Ottoman Empire that the provisions of the constitution regarding equality, freedom and equality before the law, which the protagonists of the revolution had retrieved from the ideological arsenal of the nineteenth century Tanzimat reforms, would be implemented. The upsurge of Albanian nationalism, the annexation of Crete by the Kingdom of Greece and of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austro-Hungary in 1908 and, above all, the pro-western anti-Young Turk coup of March 1909, led the Young Turks to harden their stance and essentially to reintroduce the Privilege Issue, under much tougher terms than in the crises of 1883–4 and 1891. It is here that we should look for the reason why Joachim issued a Tome in March 1908 assigning administration of the communities of the diaspora to the Church of Greece. They were later brought back under the jurisdiction of the patriarchate by Meletios Metaxakis when he became patriarch of Constantinople.

Eventually the Young Turks, influenced by the dynamic of the various nationalisms, set their sights on abolishing the right of Orthodox Christians to exemption from service in the Ottoman army on payment of a military tax. They also sought to withdraw the educational competence of the patriarchate as regards setting the curricula for Greek Orthodox schools in the empire, and to abolish the right of Orthodox citizens to have ecclesiastical

courts resolve Orthodox civil matters. All this, under the influence of nationalism, led to the possibility that cultural and ethnic particularities would be reduced to a common level under an obligatory Turkification of the empire's old religious communities (*millets*). The Armenians had already suffered the first great blow (1895–6) during the reign of Abdülhamid. Some Young Turks favoured this approach as a way of resolving the problem of the empire's multi-nationalism. And eventually, with the advance of the Greek army in Thrace and Asia Minor, Orthodox Greeks, too, were subjected to this solution.

Despite these difficulties, during the first decade of the twentieth century Joachim III was able to improve the financial state of the patriarchate. He founded an orphanage for girls on the island of Proti (Kınalı Ada) and one for boys on the island of Prinkipo (Büyükada), established a school of languages and commerce, and completed construction of the Baloukli hospitals.

Joachim III died after a brief illness on 13 November 1912, just a few days after the outbreak of the first Balkan war, and was given a magnificent funeral. The splendour of his funeral indicated the importance of the man himself and what he had accomplished both for the Orthodox Greeks living in the Ottoman Empire and also for the peaceful co-existence of the *millets* at the turn of the twentieth century. All testify to the high repute in which he was held by both the Ottoman government and the other major Orthodox and Christian powers.

Patriarch Germanos V (1913–1918)

Joachim III's successor was his great rival, Metropolitan Germanos of Chalcedon – his secular name was Georgios Kavakopoulos – who ascended the patriarchal throne as Germanos V. He was elected on 28 January 1913 and his patriarchy lasted until 12 October 1918. Germanos was patriarch during the crucial years of the declining Ottoman Empire, from the Balkan wars

(1912–13) to the end of World War I (1918), in which the Ottoman Empire, together with the empires/kingdoms of central Europe, was defeated. The defeat was marked by the Armistice of Mudros on 17 October 1918, a few days after Germanos resigned. Joachim III had enjoyed the political support of the Zariphis family, whereas Germanos had had similar support from the Stephanovic family. It was he who persuaded Pavlos Stephanovic to finance the reconstruction of the buildings of the Theological School of Halki (1896).

Germanos was elected patriarch at the age of seventy-three. After the patriarchal election of 1887, his name was constantly on the lists of candidates sent by the patriarchate to the Porte, as stipulated by the general regulations. It is possible that as leader of the anti-Joachim faction he was regarded as favoured by the national centre in Athens, although careful study and analysis of these factions indicates that personal considerations played a significant role. During his patriarchy, Germanos always kept his distance from the spirit and the letter of the general regulations. He convened the holy synod with members of his own choice, rather than on the basis of the list of bishops as provided by the regulations. During his patriarchy he denounced the heresy of 'name-worshippers' (*onomatolatreia*) among the Russian monks on Mount Athos (1913),[2] but also recognized the re-establishment of the patriarchate of Moscow (1917).

The Balkan wars (1912–13) sparked the onset of a number of population exchanges and movements in the Balkans. The main factor then was that Muslims and Turks were moving in large numbers into Asia Minor, which the Young Turks intended should become the ethnic core of the newly constituted Turkish state. During World War I (1914–18) and the Greek–Turkish War (1919–22) that followed, hitherto unprecedented slaughter, displacements and compulsory population exchanges – in short genocides – were committed that changed the ethnic landscape of Asia Minor and the Balkans. One-third of the inhabitants of Asia Minor had previously been Christians (Greeks, Armenians, Syrian Orthodox,

2 H. Alfeyev, *Le Nom grand et glorieux: la vénération du Nom de Dieu et la prière de Jésus dans la tradition orthodoxe* (Paris: Cerf, 2007), 260, 261.

Assyrians, etc.) while another third were Muslims of non-Turkish descent (Kurds, Circassians, Laz, etc.)

The greatest problem that Germanos had to deal with was the obligatory displacement of Greek and Armenian populations necessitated by the strategic evacuation of the western Asia Minor coast. This strategy was known to have been proposed by the German general Liman von Sanders to ensure the effective defence of the Dardanelles in the event of an allied offensive, but the ulterior motive was to change the ethnic mix of the population on the coast, where the Greek-speaking element had been dominant. The Young Turks' defence against the allied landing was successful (October 1915). However, thousands of Greek men over the age of forty-five who could not be drafted into the regular army, were forced instead to provide unpaid labour in quarries, mines, roads and fields. They were banished to the hinterland of Asia Minor in the notorious 'labour battalions' (*amele taburu*). According to a report by Greek-speaking members of the Ottoman parliament (late in 1918), 250,000 ethnic Greeks perished from the hardships they suffered in the labour battalions at Konya, Erzurum, Sivas, Ankara, Mersin and other cities in Anatolia.

Patriarch Germanos V, aged and infirm, was unable to follow these events or to provide solutions. Representations were made by the patriarchate to the Sublime Porte, but to no avail. Germanos had asked the Greek state to make a representation to the Porte through the intercession of Germany, assisted in this respect by King Constantine's close relations with Germany. But the evolution of the war and the withdrawal of the Entente ambassadors from Constantinople further hindered the possibility of any diplomatic manoeuvre on the part of the patriarchate. Objections were raised by the majority of the holy synod and the mixed council members.

The refugee problem constituted the social foundation of these objections. Thus, when the dissolution of the empire appeared to be inevitable – without of course anyone knowing how far things would go, as it would have been difficult to predict the tragic end on both sides of the Aegean Sea – the anti-patriarchal opposition acquired an irresistible momentum with the result that Patriarch Germanos V, 'he who elevates and brings down ecumenical patriarchs', was obliged to resign, as noted earlier, on 12

October 1918. It is characteristic that Metropolitan Joachim of Aenus, who was one of the first synodal prelates and members of the Standing Mixed Council to oppose Germanos, was placed at the head of the Patriarchal Central Committee for Displaced Hellenic Populations in October 1918. The thorniest problems arose from the question of the return of displaced persons' property. In 1918–19, 79,034 Greeks were repatriated out of a total of 773,915 displaced. This was a very small percentage of the whole, and meant that the flock of the Asia Minor dioceses, which had shown an enormous demographic increase in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, was decimated and its repatriation would be very difficult in the years to come, despite the presence of the Greek army in the region.

Patriarch Meletios IV (1921–1923)

The resignation of Germanos led to a long period in which the ecumenical see was vacant, until Meletios IV ascended the throne in November 1921. During the two years that followed the resignation of Germanos, the strong personality at the patriarchate was the vicar of the ecumenical throne, Metropolitan Dorotheos of Prusa. The Greek government was mainly responsible for the postponement of the patriarchal election. This can be explained by the fact that in accordance with the pre-war state of affairs, as defined in the text of the general regulations, the election had to be ratified by the sultan. Both the patriarchate and the Greek government initially thought that this might be avoided, given that the issue of the territorial expansion of the Greek kingdom at the expense of the defeated empire was still pending. Under Eleftherios Venizelos, Athens very rapidly (April 1919) made known its wish to have Meletios Metaxakis elected to the office of patriarch (25 November 1921–20 September 1923), as he was known for his Venizelist sympathies and had been elected metropolitan of Athens in February 1918.

The signing of the Treaty of Sèvres (28/10 August 1920) that finalized Greece's territorial gains in the former Ottoman east, together with Venizelos's announcement of an election on 1 November 1920, postponed the election of the patriarch until after November. But the fact that Venizelos lost the election changed the relations between Athens and Constantinople regarding the election of the patriarch. Constantinople was concerned about the stance of the Entente, on which the future of the Greeks in Asia Minor and Thrace depended, about the monarchist government in Athens and about the course of military developments.

A handwritten note from the university professor Christos Androutsos, addressed to the 'head of the Rallis government' (Rallis served as prime minister from 4 November 1920 to 23 January 1921), is particularly revealing of the ideological colour of Constantinople:

> Constantinople suffers from an easily explained case of Venizelitis, since various people are being unwittingly exploited to serve foreign interests. In time, the situation will pass of its own accord, as the course of national issues goes forward. Thus I believe that any mission aiming at surveillance or correction would be superfluous. Suffice it that the good personnel of the authorities in Greece can monitor and direct things. The rest will come later. Details in person.

It is very likely that Androutsos, as a graduate of the Theological School of Halki, had connections in Constantinople and made this journey to ascertain the lay of the land and come to an informed opinion about the situation arising from the fact that Constantinople took a different ideological line from Athens. And that is what the last phrase of the note tells us: 'Details in person'.

A second testimony can be found in the findings of the delegation sent by Athens to Constantinople in order to form an opinion on the patriarchal question. The phrase 'our national centre has become a defensive nest inaccessible to anyone who does not subscribe to defensive sentimentalism' again indicates the political stance of Constantinople in late May 1921.

The manifest Venizelism in Constantinople was also strengthened by the Greek officers on the Asia Minor front. After the election in November, the officers who had been replaced by the new government or who had been cashiered because they could not accept the new political situation

had sought refuge in Constantinople. There, with Kondylis as prime mover and with the support of the Greek element, the organization called *Amyna* (Defence) came into being. The best known of the 150 officers who were then active in Constantinople were K. Mazarakis, P. Zymvrakakis, D. Ioannou and Katsotas.

In 1918, after the resignation of Germanos V, patriarchate officials wanted to expedite the election for fear that Venizelos would impose Meletios, who was deemed to be outside the prevailing climate, as ecumenical patriarch. But owing to actions by the embassy, since the post-war status of Constantinople had not been regulated nor, as a result, had the status of the patriarchate in the post-war period, the election was postponed, even though it had already been announced.

In 1919 some moves were made by the Liberal government in Athens to advance Meletios to the ecumenical throne. This can be seen in two reports. The first expressed the intention of Athens to guide the election 'to a person of authority worthy of this great mission and of the circumstances' and the second referred clearly to the person of Meletios: 'At the appropriate moment we supported, after approval by the president, the candidacy of Metaxakis ... superior to the other candidates being put forward.'

In 1920 at the meeting of prelates that took place in Athens during festivities celebrating the Treaty of Sèvres, and a little later, when the government indicated its willingness to hold the patriarchal election, we can find no evidence of its promotion of Meletios. The same was true after the second announcement of the election, since in May 1921 the candidates were reported as being Eirinaios of Kassandreia, Kyrillos of Mytilene and Vasileios of Nicaea.

On 8 November 1921, after the third election was announced and the electoral processes were initiated, we learn from a report by the commissioner Votsis that 'the person selected by it [Defence], Mr Metaxakis, will not be elected. All the clergy detest him. The patriarch who will be elected, if we (i.e. the royalists), abstain altogether, is the bishop of Kaisareia, and if we do take part ... the bishop of Cyzicus or of Vizye.'

With regard to the subsequent course and the impact of Meletios's candidacy, we have three testimonies from Votsis. In the first, dated 6 November 1921, in his effort to convince Athens to participate in the election, Votsis

warned that if Athens insisted on abstaining, Metaxakis might be elected. In his second report, on 13 November, Votsis again wrote to Athens that Defence had given up on the candidacies of Bishops Nikolaos of Kaisareia and Eirinaios of Kassandreia and 'rather tends to support as candidate for the patriarchate Metropolitan Meletios (Metaxakis) formerly of Athens, without any hope of success, and also the metropolitans of Verroia and Neokaisareia.' And in the third, on 24 November, the eve of the election, he sent a telegram to Athens that the Defence candidates would in all likelihood be Metaxakis, Polycarpos of Neokaisareia and Apostolos of Rhodes.

In the midst of these probes and currents, the electoral assembly convened on 25 November 1921 to elect a patriarch.

The three candidates were in fact Meletios, and the bishops of Amaseia and Kaisareia. In the voting, which took place in the church, Meletios was elected patriarch with sixteen votes, while the metropolitan of Amaseia received just two votes.

The question that arises is why the members of Defence were eventually led to select Metaxakis. In his report to Athens, just after the election, Votsis stated that Defence, although it had decided to choose Metaxakis, maintained 'a high degree of secrecy for fear that it would cause discontent and lose the support of the rather hopeful candidate prelates'.

A significant role in the election was played by a telegram from Venizelos, which was signed not by him but by his secretary. Neither the absence of Venizelos's signature, nor the objections expressed by the shipowner Kyriakides at a gathering of electors on the eve of the election, arguing that 'the presence on the patriarchal throne of a profoundly Venizelist man would inevitably bring the Nation to a definitive division' were factors capable of leading to the election of another person.

Thus, despite the fact that Metaxakis was not particularly popular among the prelates, as can be seen from the votes he received on the election ballots sent for the election 'the name of Meletios is on the lips of almost all the electors and appointees gathered in the patriarchal entourage'. The eventual selection of Meletios was due to the conviction on the part of Defence members that the Venizelos telegram in favour of Metaxakis

manifested a more general interest in the national issue and expressed a willingness to take initiatives beginning with the election of Meletios.

We know the difficult phase that the national issue was going through, which is why the Defence members in Constantinople planned to take serious action to promote the independence of Asia Minor, and thereby safeguard the Greek element there. The exhortation of Venizelos, who must have known about these plans, that Metaxakis be elected patriarch was regarded by Defence as an expression of indirect acceptance of its views about saving the Greeks of Asia Minor.

After a farewell service at the Orthodox Cathedral of Ayios Eleftherios in New York, Meletios set out for London on 19 August 1921. As he travelled through Europe, he met with political figures and tried to read their dispositions on the Greek national issue and assess the situation that had arisen after the Cannes conference, so that upon arriving in Constantinople he would have a clear picture of things and would be able to make the right decisions.

Metaxakis arrived in Constantinople on 24 January 1922, upon which he assumed the tasks of ecumenical patriarch. During his brief patriarchy, four new dioceses were created (Bryoules, Pergamon, Moschonisi and Alexandroupolis), and the names of the old dioceses of Melenikos, Bodena and Moglena were changed to Sidirokastro, Edessa and Florina. By patriarchal decree and by the synodal decree of 1 March 1922, the Orthodox churches and communities of the diaspora that had been ceded by Joachim III in 1908 to the Church of Greece, were brought back under the jurisdiction of the ecumenical patriarchate. In April 1922, the diocese of Thyateira was established as the exarchate of western and central Europe with its seat in London, while on 17 May 1922, the archdiocese of North and South America was created with its seat in New York.

Metaxakis had interesting conversations and meetings in England and France with important political figures (among whom were the British prime minister Lloyd George and the French prime minister Poincaré, as well as the former prime ministers of France Leygues and Clemenceau) during which he endeavoured to distance himself from the choices of the royalist government in Athens and persuade his interlocutors that the spirit of Venizelism was alive among the Greek population still living in

the crumbling Ottoman Empire. In fact, he proposed to Leygues the idea of creating a separate state in Asia Minor and Thrace that would include precisely this population. But it was at that particular political juncture that the Kemalists defeated the French troops in Cilicia. This event, together with the failure of the Greek offensive at the Sakarya River in the summer of 1921, drastically changed the geopolitical balance of power.

The course of events after the Asia Minor disaster in the summer of 1922 was appalling. The national centre's lack of faith in the Church of Constantinople and its fear that the latter, with the election of Meletios Metaxakis, would assist the restoration of Venizelism in Greece, thwarted the firm intention of Constantinople to address the national issue with a movement that would give Asia Minor self-rule.

At the transition between these two eras Meletios IV remained on the patriarchal throne. Seizure of power in Athens by Nikolaos Plastiras on 11 September 1922, the loss of Eastern Thrace, and the simultaneous victory of the Kemalists in Turkey did not lead to the patriarch's immediate expulsion from the throne, since it was necessary that a recognized ecumenical patriarch be present at the moment when negotiations were to be conducted between the two nation states. This necessity led the holy synod of Greece, after the Plastiras putsch, to recognize Meletios as patriarch. It was however natural for the Kemalist regime to regard Meletios as the pre-eminent representative of modern Greek nationalism. This is why, in the negotiations at Lausanne (1923), the issue was raised of his dismissal. In fact the request was put to Venizelos by Ismet Inönü, head of the Turkish delegation, and accepted by Venizelos, who in turn asked the patriarch to submit his resignation. Greece was interested in having the seat of the ecumenical patriarchate remain at Phanar.

The increased pressure from Venizelos ultimately made it possible for the ecumenical patriarchate to remain in its historic see. In order to facilitate reconciliation between the two sides, on 10 July 1923, fourteen days before the treaty was signed, Meletios departed from Constantinople with the permission of both bodies of the patriarchate and went to Mount Athos. From there he sent his resignation from the office of ecumenical patriarch on 20 September 1923, after the treaty was signed. The collapse of the Ottoman

Empire and the simultaneous shrinking of its Greek population had led to a new era in the institution of the ecumenical patriarchate.

Another major issue it had to face was the Papa-Eftim movement. Damianos Damianides, trustee in the parish of Galata and specifically at the church of the Panagia Kafatiani, led demonstrations against Meletios in June 1923. During those days (10 May–8 June 1923) the patriarch had organized a pan-Orthodox conference attended by representatives of the Orthodox churches of Constantinople, Russia, Serbia, Cyprus, Greece and Romania. The conference decided to correct the Julian calendar and discussed significant issues such as the marriage of priests and deacons after ordination, the second marriage of priests who were widowers, etc. A group gathered by Damianides stormed into the conference, interrupted its proceedings and demanded the immediate resignation of the patriarch. In response to this action, the patriarchate censured the leaders of this movement. These events accelerated the process of Meletios's resignation, while at the same time creating interest in an effort to create a 'national' Turkish Orthodox Church in the newly constituted Turkish state.

The anti-patriarchal actions of Damianides were warmly supported by a priest in the city of Keskin, Anatolia, named Papa Eftim (Euthymios Karachissaridis). Papa Eftim was an Orthodox ethnic Greek citizen of Turkey from Akdagmadeni Yozgat, who spoke both Greek and Turkish. During the war, he had come into contact with the Kemalists. In collaboration with three prelates in Anatolia, he held a conference at the monastery of St John at Zincidere near Kayseri on 15 September 1922, where he proclaimed the establishment of the Turkish Orthodox Church. He preached peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims, with the prospect of the Turkification of Orthodox Turkish-speaking citizens, as the Kemalists tried to do by establishing a Turkish Orthodox Church. But in the end, under the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), the population exchange was carried out on the basis of religion. Turkish-speaking Orthodox persons came to Greece and Greek-speaking Muslims moved to Turkey. The effort to set up a national Turkish Orthodox Church that would have been in a state of schism with the ecumenical patriarchate was not followed up. Given that the Karamanlides (Turkish-speaking or bilingual ethnic Greeks) who lived in Constantinople were fully assimilated into the bosom of the

ecumenical patriarchate and the Greek-Orthodox community there, Papa Eftim tried, after the resignation of Metaxakis, to promote himself to the position of ecumenical patriarch. Indeed, he put forward the fact that he was Turkish-speaking as an advantage in the new era that was dawning in Turkey. The holy synod at the Phanar severed all relations with him, but he entered the patriarchate by force (on 2 October 1923, just after the evacuation of Constantinople by the allied troops) threatening to remain there until the new patriarch was elected. He eventually returned to Ankara, the new capital of the Turkish state. This fact proves that his venture was fully supported by the official Turkish authorities.

Meanwhile, Metropolitan Kallinikos of Cyzicus, who chaired the resident holy synod, under the new circumstances created by the dissolution of the standing national mixed council and the fact that the general regulations ceased to be in force, proclaimed the patriarchal election. On 18 October 1923, he dispatched a relevant synodal encyclical to all bishops in the see. Representatives of the laity no longer participated in the election, and with the abolition of the general regulations, the patriarchate entered a new era. Before the election, the Phanar policeman delivered a ruling to the holy synod, signed by the assistant governor Fahrettin, according to which at the time of the election of the new patriarch, the voters had to be Turkish citizens and to practise their religion in Turkey. The same condition held for anyone standing as a candidate for the office of patriarch.

Patriarch Grigorios VII (1923–1924)

Finally, the resident holy synod was convened on 6 December and elected Metropolitan Grigorios (Zervoudakis) of Chalcedon as Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory VII. Gregory was the spiritual child of the late Germanos V and, as was natural, a supporter not only of the old regime of *gerontism* (governance of the church solely by senior metropolitan bishops, known as

gerontes, or elders)[3] but also of Ottomanism, which was why he did not take part in the events surrounding the election of Metaxakis. Remote from the national confrontations, even though he had been bishop of Chalcedon, Gregory appeared to be the ideal person to guide the patriarchate in the period after the Treaty of Lausanne. The day after the election of Gregory VII, Papa Eftim once again entered the patriarchate by force with forty armed Turks, arguing that the new patriarch served Greek interests. The government of Turkey, bound by the Treaty of Lausanne that provided for the historic patriarchate to remain in its see, discouraged Papa Eftim from moving into the patriarchate building. Because he refused to comply, the police ejected him on 9 December. On 17 December 1923, the minister of justice declared that the election of Gregory VII was valid.

The first action by Gregory VII was, not unnaturally, to relieve Papa Eftim of his duties and dismiss him from the priesthood (19 February 1924). What precipitated this move was the latter's forced entrance as a priest into the church of Panaghia Kafatiani in Galata. In response to his defrocking, Papa Eftim occupied the church in July 1924, and later the church of the Saviour also in Galata (2 April 1926).

One of the new patriarch's most significant acts was to issue an encyclical with a view to regulating the problems in the regions of Macedonia and Thrace (the so-called 'New Territories') that had been definitively annexed to the Hellenic state, by establishing new (temporary) dioceses. In addition, on 23 February 1924, the adoption of the Gregorian calendar was approved by the holy synod.

3 The system of *'gerontismos'* was introduced into the administration of the ecumenical patriarchate in the mid-eighteenth century. The *gerontes* archpriests (permanent members of the holy synod, who came in particular from the sees of Nikomedeia, Nicaea, Chalcedon, Derkoi, Cyzicus, Kaisareia, Herakleia and Ephesus), laid down the main lines of administration and the patriarch was obliged to comply with them if he did not want to be dethroned. The *gerontes* possessed the patriarchal seal and every official patriarchal document had to have their consent and signature and the impression of the seal in order to be considered valid. *Gerontismos* prevailed for a century in patriarchal life, until it was abolished upon adoption of the text of the four general regulations (*genikoi kanonismoi*) in 1860.

The relatively calm period of Gregory VII's patriarchy came to an abrupt end. He passed away on 16 November 1924, after a brief illness, his death marking the beginning of a troubled political period for the ecumenical patriarchate.

Patriarch Constantine VI (1924–1925)

On 17 December, the resident holy synod was convened at the Phanar and elected Metropolitan Constantine (Arampoglou) of Derkoi as the new patriarch Constantine VI. Constantine had been the leader of the opposition against Metaxakis. His term on the patriarchal throne was destined to last just forty-three days, because he was regarded by the Turkish authorities as 'exchangeable' (*antallaximos*), i.e. he was subject to the law regarding population exchange. So on 30 January 1925 Constantine was obliged to leave Constantinople and take shelter in Greece, specifically in Thessaloniki. Today's diocesan building in Thessaloniki was the private residence of Patriarch Constantine VI, where he was welcomed by thousands of people. From Thessaloniki, he appealed to the League of Nations for help in resolving the matter, which placed the Michalopoulos government in Athens in an extremely difficult position. Many senior military men in Greece believed that they should have responded to this humiliating move on the part of Turkey. The government tried to exhaust all peaceful means and to internationalize the problem. But neither the League of Nations, to which the patriarch appealed, nor the Greek government was able to provide a solution and the patriarch eventually submitted his resignation on 22 May 1925. The text of his resignation, *inter alia*, made the following statement:

> Always guided in our thoughts and decisions by the rule of serving the Church of Christ and the most holy and apostolic throne of Constantinople that was handed down to us, we also acted by this rule on the patriarchal issue created by the Turkish government's expulsion of our person. In the belief that our unprecedented expulsion

> from the throne has subverted the age-old patriarchate of Constantinople, whose status was secured by holy ecumenical synods, we took the actions known to all our Hierarchy, by which we have sought to secure the institution of the ecumenical patriarchate, as set out in our Memorandum to the League of Nations.[4]

Patriarch Basil III (1925–1929)

Constantine VI's successor on the patriarchal throne was Metropolitan Vasileios (Georgiadis) of Nicaea. Vasileios, as metropolitan of Anchialos (1894–1909, today Pomorie) had the cruel experience of having seen with his own eyes the destruction of that city by Bulgarian nationalists in 1906. Vasileios was elected patriarch on 13 July 1925 as Basil III at the age of eighty-five, even though Damianides and a few of his supporters tried unsuccessfully to stir up trouble again.

The patriarchy of Basil III was one of the most critical in the postwar history of the patriarchate. During his time, the agreement on the population exchange between Greece and Turkey was finalized, and thus the eleven synodal metropolitans, bishops and the patriarch himself were exempted from the exchange and thus avoided the fate of the previous patriarch Constantine VI. But the ecumenical patriarchate continued to be subject to pressure from both Papa Eftim (mainly for control of the community property of the various parishes and above all that of Pera) and the Turkish government, which disputed its ecumenical character. The prestige enjoyed by the patriarchate in the rest of the Orthodox Christian world and in the global community was perceived as threatening. This fact led to the international isolation of the patriarchate during the period of Kemalist rule, until the signing of the friendship agreement between Greece and Turkey in 1930. Notwithstanding all the above, the Phanar managed to survive once again in the period after Lausanne.

4 B. T. Stavrides, *The Laity in the Orthodox World* (Istanbul, 1961), 499–500.

Patriarch Photios II (1929–1935)

The death of Basil III on 29 September 1929 led Photios II (Dimitrios Maniatis) to the patriarchal throne. The rise of Photios coincided with the processes of Greek–Turkish rapprochement that culminated in the signing of the friendship agreement between Venizelos and Inönü in 1930. In September 1931 this fact made it possible for the Turkish state to recognize the ecumenical nature of the patriarchate officially and to send the new patriarch his identity card (*nüfüs cüzdani*), on which his official title was inscribed.

During his patriarchy, Photios endeavoured to enhance the pan-Orthodox policy of the patriarchate. He inaugurated exchanges of theology students between the Theological School of Halki, the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople and the Orthodox churches of Serbia, Romania and Poland (and of other Christian denominations, such as the Anglican). He tried to reorganize the churches in Latvia by sending Metropolitan Germanos of Thyateira there as exarch, and the church in America by dispatching Metropolitan Damaskinos of Corinth to the United States also as exarch. At the monastery of Vatopedi on Mt Athos he held a pre-synod in 1930 that was preparing to convene the pan-Orthodox synod. The patriarchate was represented at the pre-synod by Metropolitan Chrysanthos (Philippides) of Trebizond and Metropolitan Germanos (Athanasiades) of Sardis. One of the most important developments was that the pre-synod at Vatopedi monastery paved the way for the opening of negotiations to resolve the Bulgarian schism. The Turkish authorities raised no obstacles to these moves on the part of the patriarchate. Soon, however, the Turkish government became aware of the prestige enjoyed by the patriarchate in the rest of the Orthodox world, and was particularly concerned by Photios's close relations with the Anglican Church. In 1935 the Grand National Assembly of the Turkish Republic passed a law regarding clerical attire, on the basis of which all clergymen in Turkey were obliged to wear civilian clothes outside their places of worship. Only the patriarch was exempted from this compulsory rule. In some way, this measure constituted imposed

secularization that aimed to limit the authority of the Orthodox clergy in Turkish society. This secularization did not, of course, affect the Orthodox alone, but also extended to the Muslim clergy. A few months later, the Turkish government decided to convert the church of Agia Sophia from a mosque to a museum. At the same time, on 5 June 1935, the government tabled a law in the national assembly regarding religious properties. The law determined that all religious institutions were dependent on the Turkish state, and made their managers accountable to the state. The Religious Property Service (*Evkaf Genel Müdürlügü*) was established in order to oversee the property of the religious, cultural and social benefit institutions of all religions. This property fell into two categories. The first (*mazbut*), to which the property of Muslim institutions belonged, was administered directly by the state. Properties in the second category (*mülhak*, or dependent) that were annexed to non-Muslim community institutions were to be administered by committees of trustees elected in each parish. The trustees would be accountable to the Religious Properties Service.

No purchase or sale could take place without the consent of the service. In 1936–37 during the patriarchy of Benjamin I (1936–46), since Photios had died on 29 December 1935, an attempt was made by the Service to impose one sole administrator–trustee on every community institution. But after a representation by the Greek government, this provision was excluded. The parish committees elected in 1928 in reality retained their control over the ecclesiastical properties until late in the 1940s, with the tacit consent of the Turkish government. Also, it was not until April 1940 that the Greek community received official recognition of its property titles from the Turkish state.

Patriarch Benjamin I (1936–1946)

Patriarch Benjamin I was elected in 1936 as a necessary compromise solution. The impossibility of imposing the candidates promoted by Turkish foreign policy (Iakovos of Imbros and Tenedos) and Greek