ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΜΕΙΖΟΝΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΜΟΥ

Συγγραφή : *Macar Elçin* **,** *(γλωσσ.επιμ. αγγλ.) Lees Christopher*
(10/12/2007)

Για παραπομπή : *Macar Elçin , (γλωσσ.επιμ. αγγλ.) Lees Christopher , "Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople, 1923-today", 2007, Εγκυκλοπαίδεια Μείζονος Ελληνισμού, Κωνσταντινούπολη*
URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=10974>

Περίληψη :

The Greek-orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople experienced after 1923 a series of fundamental mutations since it lost its political character, and was deprived, due to the population exchange between Greece and Turkey, of a great number of dioceses and the majority of its flock. After 1945 the ascension of Athinagoras to the patriarchal throne inaugurated a golden period for the Patriarchate which was terminated though because of the Septemvriana riots and the expulsion of Greek inhabitants of Constantinople. After 1991 the election of Bartholomeos meant that the Ecumenical Patriarchate is much more active in a number of sectors.

Χρονολόγηση

1923-today

Γεωγραφικός εντοπισμός

Constantinople / Istanbul

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1. Introduction

The Ecumenical Patriarchate succeeded in staying in Istanbul, when Greece and Allies resisted the demand of the Turkish delegation, which participated at the Lausanne Conference, to expel the Patriarchate out of Turkey. But it was decided there that the Patriarchate would have merely religious functions, being deprived of its political, economic, etc. privileges acquired under the Ottoman Sultans. During the armistice period, Ankara had been very disturbed by Patriarch Meletios' collaboration with the Greek army and his support of the "Megali Idea" (Great Idea). Venizelos gave the signal to the Turkish delegation in Lausanne that the Patriarch could leave his throne in order to ensure the Patriarchate staying in Istanbul. Therefore, since he had got what he wanted in Lausanne, he had the Patriarch resigned. That is just then, right before the election, the governorship of Istanbul sent a memorandum to the Patriarchate. The official document of October 6, 1923 stated that any candidate who would participate any religious or spiritiual election in Turkey should be citizen of Turkey and that he should be on duty in Turkey during the election process.[1] The condition of citizenship was on grounds of the Regulation of the Greek Patriarchate by the Sublime Porte. So, that rule would be in practice from then on for the next elections.

2. Historical Developments in the Republican Era

After Lausanne, the government would call the person in charge of the Patriarchate, "chief priest" but not "the Patriarch". There were probably two reasons for that. Ending any possible reminiscence of its ecumenical character and ending its status of symbolizing its earthly authority because the Greeks within the Ottoman society had considered the Patriarch their "ethnarch". Press in Turkey started the debate about the Patriarchate to be taken out of Turkey, when the caliphate was annuled in 1924. It was asked in the newspapers "Why the government who had already taken the caliphate out of the borders did not do the same thing with the Patriarchate". President Mustafa Kemal explained his policy in the foreign press.

Regarding merely the current borders of Turkey, the population exchange of that period caused the eclispe of 11 metropolitan centers in the Thrace and 26 others in Asia Minor and thus caused a decline, of the number of the Patriarchate's flock, of over 90 percent. Moreover losing its properties in those areas made the Patriarchate dependent on financial support from Greece and the Greek diaspora. In 1917, 400.000 of 1.350.000 people living in and around Istanbul were Greeks. That figure declined to 100.124 in 1927. Population exchange caused other problems also for the Patriarchate. The status of the Patriarch Konstantine VI was contraversial because of the "etablis" issue.[2] He was deported by an order of the government in 1925. The crisis was resolved by the Holy Sinod having the Patriarch resigned and by that they were exempted from the exchange practice. The Single-Party period of 1923-1945 was a period that Kemalist reforms expelled religion and religious institutions out of the public life. The Patriarchate accepted that period with silence and withdrew into its shell.

But at the end of the World War II, United States of America intended to use the Patriarchate as an instrument in international

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relations after the first signs of "the cold war" and the church emerging as a political factor in the USSR. So, Athenagoras, the archbishop of North and South America was made a citizen of Turkey quickly and was elected as the new Patriarch on his absence. That was a very typical "cold war era operation". Years later, Athinagoras would admit that at the *New York Herald Tribune*: "I was the religious part of the Truman doctrine." Even before arriving at Turkey, he had said in Chicago: "One day in the first days of World War II, Roosevelt said that United States borders started from France. Today we could say without any hesitation that defence borders of the US has extended to Kars [borderline city of Turkey with the USSR]."[3]
Athinagoras' period could be considered as a "golden epoch" in the Republican period for the Patriarchate. In 1951 the Patriarchate started to publish a periodical: "*Apostolos Andreas*" [Απόστολος Ανδρέας]. In 1952, "Epiphany" [Θεοφάνεια] was organized with ecclesiastics attending the ceremony in their religious outfits, the first time in the Republican period. During that period, the Patriarchate provided some clergymen turkish citizenship, thanks to his good relations with Menderes, the prime minister.
But Septemvriana of 1955, in which Greek stores, churches and cemeteries were attacked for two days, occurred also in this period. Cyprus became an issue of friction both for Turkey-Greece relations and minorities and the Patriarchate.

The 60's were really crisis years in terms of Turkey-Greece relations. Turkish government cancelled the *Treaty on Settlement, Trade and Navigation* of 1930 which had been signed by Atatürk and Venizelos. 12.000 Greek citizens that had settled in Turkey were deported and 28.000 of the Greek minority in Turkey were forced to leave because of their marriages to the ones deported.[4]
So about 40.000 from the Patriarchate's community had to move to Greece. Some sanctions against the Patriarchate were put into practice. In 1964, the printing house of the Patriarchate was forced to close since it was claimed that its activity was against the Lausanne Treaty. Therefore, two of the Patriarchate's periodicals, "*Apostolos Andreas*" and "*Orthodoksia*", were forced to cease publication. There followed the bans for Orthodox clergymen entering the Greek schools, books and encyclopedias in Greek, morning prayers and celebrating the religious holidays and graduates of the Chalki Seminary teaching in Greek schools. Pringipo orphanage was closed as well.
The crisis went on in 1965, too. The spokesman of the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a very important statement: "Turkish-Greek relations depend on the balance founded in the Lausanne. Cyprus issue, Dodecanesian Turks, Greeks in Istanbul and the Patriarchate are considered in terms of that reciprocity by comparison."[5]

When Athinagoras died in 1972, it was known that the most preeminent candidate for the Patriarchate was Meliton (Hatzis), the Metropolitan of Chalcedon. But the governorship had him removed and four other candidates as well. In those circumstances, Dimitrios, elected Metropolitan of Imbros and Tenedos less than six months ago, was elected Ecumenical Patriarch.
In 1984 when former US President Carter mediated the process for, the Patriarchate's building, which was burned down in 1941, was reconstructed by a special permit from Prime Minister Turgut Özal. All the expenses were afforded by the Greek industrialist Panayiotis Angelopoulos and the new building was opened with a great ceremony in 1989.

After 1989, while the Eastern Block collapsed and eastern european nations tended to return to religion again, state pressure on Orthodox churches in Eastern Europe and the USSR ended and that gave the churches the possibility to become international powers and exert political influence, especially since their governments wanted them to be so. And that caused the US to be much interested in the Patriarchate. After the disintegration of the USSR, US needed to bind the Orthodox populations in Caucasian and Balkan regions and their markets to a religious center under its control, thus aligning its own economic interests with the policy of the church of that center. That is the point that the historical "ecumenical" character of the Patriarchate was remembered. US policy was to refer to the Patriarch as "the Orthodox Pope". The Patriarch Dimitrios made a historical visit to the USA in 1990. That visit has been regarded as a milestone in the Patriarchate's history. It was the first time that the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Istanbul visited the US and on the other hand Orthodoxy became much more visible than before both in the US and in the world.

Dimitrios' period in the Patriarchate was quite faint and excluding the late 80's, the Patriarchate could be considered withdrawn to its shell partly because of the political conjuncture. Dimitrios lacked the leadership qualifications suitable for the new role imposed after late 80's. A new patriarch suitable for those new conditions was elected in 1991, after the death of Dimitrios.

Another interesting development in the Republican Era, was the founding a "Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate."[6] By a decree of 1924, Papa Efthim and his family were to be exempt from the population exchange and he stayed in Istanbul. Efthim settled in the Panayia

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Church in Galata having the incentives from leaders of the Galata Greek community who had negative relations with the Patriarchate. He proclaimed the church as the center of the "Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate" and himself as the Patriarch. In 1968 after Papa Efthim's death his elder son Turgut replaced him and in 1991 so did the other son Selcuk Erenerol when Turgut died. Since Selçuk Erenerol's death in 2002, his son Paşa Erenerol has replaced him.

That church lacking a community since Papa Efthim period has been recognized by no other church and functioned as a balancing instrument for Turkey against the Greek Patriarchate. It has always lacked the minimum conditions that an Orthodox church organisation should have. For instance, though the bishops should have theology education neither Papa Efthim nor his sons had this. Another obligation is that the Patriarch should be elected by a Holy Synod consisting ecclesiastics. But that also has never happened with the church. Another condition is the tradition for bishops that they never get married. But neither Papa Efthim nor his sons have abided with that, as well.

3. The Ecumenical Character of the Patriarchate

The person in charge of that institution uses the title "the Patriarch" since Acacios period (471-489) and the title "the Ecumenical Patriarch" since Ioannis II (518-520). In fact the Patriarchate lost its historical ecumenical function, its role encompassing diverse lingual and ethic groups, right after new Balkan churches emerged in towards the end of the 19th century. Today, its ecumenical character should be understood as a function, coordinating the other Orthodox churches, being accepted as the arbiter in the areas which the other churches don't have jurisdiction for and being primus inter pares (the first among the equals).
Public opinion in Turkey regarding the Patriarchate could be divided basically into two groups. One group stresses that the Patriarchate is ecumenical and it is useless to deal with the issue. This group consists of two subgroups as well. One approach claims that the issue has got nothing to do with Turkey and it should not influence the relations with the Patriarchate and the other approach says that just because of its ecumenical character the Patriarchate could be useful as a factor in international politics. That group consists of left-wing and right-wing liberals and a few retired diplomats as well. The second major group are the nationalists who say that the ecumenical title and role of the Patriarchate had been ended by the Lausanne Treaty and that title -referring to a transnational character according to them- could not be used. According to them that title means being over the state's laws as well as not recognizing the sovereignty. This thesis is the official thesis of the state.

4. The relations of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the Church of Greece

Greece has its own church since 1833. On the other hand, that church does not have jurisdiction over the whole country. Crete, Dodecanese, Eastern Aegean Islands, New Territories (Νέες Χώρες) and Mount Athos are still under the canonical jurisdiction of the Patriarchate. Though the Patriarchate has become a "touristic center" for many Greeks, since it reminds him/her of a glorious past, it should be stressed that since the Ecumenical Patriarchate has jurisdiction over some Greek dioceses, it retains influence in Greek politics.
The status of "New Territories" has caused, and still causes some conflict between the two churches.[7] These territories had joined the Greece after the Balkan Wars and the Patriarchate left the administration of these to the Church of Greece vicariously.

5. The policy of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos during the globalization era

The collapse of the Eastern Block's regimes and the rebirth and fast advancement of religion in these countries, urged the Ecumenical Patriarchate to adapt wards a similar role it had played in the history, back again. Bartholomeos, the Metropolitan of Chalcedon back then, was elected for the throne in 1991, with his abilities suitable for the conjuncture, his charisma, speaking several languages and his broad culture and knowledge of diplomacy. This time, no candidates was left out of the list and Bartholomeos was provided the Patriarchate. The US demanded that particularly and the then President Özal personally involved in the process.
Since 1992, Bartholomeos gathered all the bishops in his jurisdiction and performed the ecumenical character of the Patriarchate every two years in Phanar, on September 1st which the church accepts as the beginning of the new year. He has opened a representative office in the EU, has organized meetings in favour of the environment so he has both attracted attention to the environmental issues of the earth and he provided himself to be in focus regularly.

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After he was elected as the Patriarch, Bartholomeos considered the European Union as the assurance of the future of both the Patriarchate and the Greeks in Turkey. Consequently, he has had disputes with Greek foreign policy which performed in order to keep Turkey away from the European Union.

Moreover, Bartholomeos placed the Church of Estonia under his jurisdiction again. That Church used to be autonomous and under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate before World War II. Another move by the Patriarch, which was also heavily criticised by the Russian Church was the Patriarchate's interference in disputes within the Ukranian Church. In that territory, the Patriarchate is in an apparent conflict with the Russian Church.
In 1996, Bartholomeos had Iakovos, the archbishop of the North and South America retired and divided that church in to four dioceses such as USA, Canada, Central and South America. Thus, while weakening the influence of the archbishop he increased his own power by having those bishops referring directly to himself. In 2006 the Pope visited Bartholomeos and this visit increased the prestige of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

Today the Patriarchate has two essential difficulties. The first, is its community being on the verge of vanishing. After the Lausanne Treaty, Greek minority in Turkey had experienced waves of migration in 1922-29, 1955-59, 1964-68 and 1974-79 which left the Patriarchate with the population from 110.000 to 5.000 today. That population –at least still existing- should be kept in Turkey. The second difficulty is the issue of reopening the Chalki Seminar, which the Patriarchate needs to train new members of its clergy. For now, the second issue could be considered of a vital importance, for the Patriarchate needs those ecclesiasts both to meet the needs in itself and abroad in order to "endure its ecumenical character".

6. General observations

There are two essential reasons for the tension, that characterised the relationship between the Patriarchate and the Turkish State during the Republican period. The first is the "Ottoman" legacy which has still solid grounds. The second one is the "enemy within" pattern which was brought up in the mid-50's and has been used to undermine the Patriarchate's power. That is why Turkey does not give the Patriarchate a legal status and anticipates that it eventually will disappear.
Post 1945 and post 1989 periods could be considered very similar in terms of the role or the position of the Church in international relations. In both, efforts, at the beginning by the USSR and later by the Russian Government to make the Russian Church international actor. In both of those periods, the US intended to use the Patriarchate as "an instrument of defense and spread". The issue which seemed to be a bilateral issue between Turkey and Greece for years has become an element of US-Turkey relations. For the Patriarchate itself, it makes sense to have US as an international assurance instead of Greece. Because issues between Greece and Turkey both historical and from the conjuncture are obstacles for the guardian role for Greece and "the most powerful state in the world" is much advantageous regarding the Patriarchate. Furthermore the US does not have nationalistic expectations like the ones Greece has. On the other hand, it is a success for Greek foreign policy to shift the issue from the bilateral context of Turkey-Greece relations to EU-Turkey and US-Turkey relations axis.

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1. Σταυρίδης, Β., *Οι Οικουμενικοί Πατριάρχαι 1860-Σήμερον*, vol. A' (Thessaloniki 1977) p. 488.

2. For details see: Alexandris, A., " The Expulsion of Konstantine VI: The Ecumenical Patriarchate and Greek Turkish Relations, 1924-1925," *Balkan Studies* 22/2 (1981) pp. 333-363.

3. "Le Nouveau Patriarche Grec Athenagoras", *Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu Belleteni* 84 (January 1949) p. 55.

4. For details see: Hülya Demir-Rıdvan Akar, *İstanbul'un Son Sürgünleri* (İstanbul 1994) and also see *30 χρόνια από τις απελάσεις 1964-1994* (Athens).

5. *Milliyet* newspaper, April 17th, 1965.

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6. For details and official turkish documents, see Macar, E., *Cumhuriyet Döneminde İstanbul Rum Patrikhanesi* (İstanbul 2003)

7. For main documents and correspondence see Μητροπολίτης Σεβαστείας Κομματάς, Δ., *Η Πατριαρχική και Συνοδική Πράξις του 1928 Παρακωλυομένη τοις Όροις. Το επί τη βάσει του Πατριαρχικού και Συνοδικού αρχείο ιστορικό του αγώνος του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου για τη διατήρηση των δικαίων του επί των Μητροπόλεών του των Νέων Χωρών* (Thessaloniki 2006).

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