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INFO – ZORA
OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2003
No. 12

1ST RAINBOW CONGRESS
EDESSA 30 NOVEMBER 2003
1-ot KONGRESS NA “VINOZITO”
VODEN 30 NOEMVRI 2003

POLITICAL REFUGES

PRESS RELEASE

Florina - Lerin 1-8-2003

Concerning the issue of exceptions *(N 1266/1982) to the right of repatriation of Macedonian political refugees from the Greek Civil War (1946 - 1949), many of whom as young children were forced to abandon their homes, and many of whom at the end of the war were deprived of their Greek citizenship and their property confiscated, we wish to highlight the following statements recently made by Greek officials:

On 8-6-2003 the Sunday edition of the pro-government center-left daily "Eleftherotypia" carried an interview of the Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Andreas Loverdos with regard to Greece's political relations with other Balkan countries. Below are excerpts:

Journalist: There is, however, a political and humanitarian question, at the societal level. We are referring to the political refugees of the Greek Civil War, who were excluded from general repatriation and live mainly in FYROM, and have the citizenship of this state.

Andreas Loverdos: "...what functions as obstacles for the visit of these persons to Greece could very well be overcome in a simple but technical way. We are seeking a technical solution and have found a number of them."

Journalist: This concerns the freedom to visit and communicate with relatives, which is the primary issue.

Loverdos: "People have strong emotional ties. There are also historical reasons. Now that we have overcome all those problems of the past and of the Civil War, we cannot maintain these vestiges, which may be political vestiges, but on a personal and emotional level they function in a very cruel way. We are willing to surpass them. I reiterate: we are seeking a technical solution."

Journalist: Is there a timeframe for resolving the problem of the refugees?

Loverdos: "We have specified it for within the summer."

On Tuesday, 1-7-2003, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Panagiotis Beglitis issued the following statement:

"Following the directive of Foreign Minister George Papandreou, Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Andreas Loverdos called a meeting to examine and solve the matter of granting entry to the political refugees who fled Greece during the Civil War and settled in FYROM. During the meeting a decision was made to grant the refugees permission to enter and stay in Greece for a period of twenty days, from 10 August to 30 October 2003. The proper instructions were then issued to the competent authorities."

Since Mr. Beglitis' announcement does not specify what these "proper instructions to the authorities" are regarding those refugees living in the Republic of Macedonia, we asked the Foreign Ministry Spokesperson to clarify how this unobstructed entry into Greece is to be put into force.

Specifically:

1. How will permission to enter Greece be granted to those Macedonian political refugees who are currently listed by the Foreign Ministry as "undesirables," and who have not been allowed into Greece to visit their villages and relatives for over half a century?
2. How will permission to enter Greece be granted to those Macedonian political refugees whose travel documents (passports) list place of birth with the old Macedonian name? These place-names are still used in Greece, not only orally but also in written form in

legal contracts, official documents, tourist maps, topographical surveys, and on military maps of the Greek Ministry of Defense.

3. How will this affect the entry of political refugees currently residing in other European countries, as well as Canada, Australia, and the U.S.A., who want to visit their ancestral homes, when for this category, too, there are still prohibitions and restrictions regarding their entrance into Greece?

We wish to point out that this form of entering village names (e.g., the village of Meliti using the old name of Voshtarani) on travel documents issued by the countries in which the political refugees now reside constitutes, for Greece, a reason to deny them entry. This is unacceptable for a country about to host the Olympic Games and prefacing them, moreover, with the Cultural Ministry's motto of "for a civilization of civilizations."

We assume that our country's civilization also includes the civilizations of all its various linguistic, religious, cultural, and ethnic groups. These place names, or toponyms, are a part of that linguistic-cultural heritage. We consider it an insult to our democracy that Greece forbids entry into its territory to those former citizens who use an element of this cultural heritage.

Greece should establish a record of toponyms (both old and new), a practice and policy carried out in many democratic countries, particularly as it is provided by international instruments concerned with protecting the heritage of linguistic, religious and ethnic minorities.

Let every democratic citizen of Greece consider how he or she would judge similar behavior by another country towards its Greek minority. Let us assume, for example, that the Albanian government has for over fifty years forbidden entry to one of its former citizens, a member of the Greek minority, who fled Albania during the Greek-Italian war of 1940, and has stripped him of his Albanian citizenship and confiscated his property. Assume that this person now resides in Canada or Australia and that his Canadian or Australian passport lists his place of birth, not as Drach (the Albanian name for a city in Southern Albania with a substantial Greek minority), but as Dirahio (the Greek name for the same city).

How would we judge such an action by the Albanian government? How would we judge the Albanian Foreign Office's placement of other such citizens on a list of *personae non grata*, because in Melbourne or Toronto they are members of Greek rather than Albanian cultural associations? What would we say if the Albanian government stripped them of their citizenship and forbid them to visit their families and their places of origin in Southern Albania for as long as they lived? Would we not correctly characterize such behavior as racist and inhumane?

Such, unfortunately, is the policy of the Greek government toward the Macedonian political refugees of the Greek Civil War, most of whom were small children when they were forced to leave Greece.

We call upon the Greek government to abolish this inhumane and racist decision that exempts these Macedonian political refugees from repatriation. We call upon the Greek government to restore their citizenship and to apply the same procedures to them as were used in the case of those political refugees who declared themselves "Greeks by genus" and returned to Greece after 1982.

We consider it our duty as Greek and European citizens to contribute to adopting a European identity and to further democracy in our own country. We therefore declare that with the cooperation of every democratic citizen, starting now through the opening of the Olympic Games, we shall make the best use of the Olympic Games of 2004 to promote of our viewpoints both in the domestic and international arena.

Given the latest developments and in light of recent statements by Greek Foreign Ministry spokespersons, whom we also quote, the Committee for the Reception of Refugees in Greece, consisting of members of Rainbow, the political party of the Macedonian minority in Greece, and the refugees' relatives, decided to organize a reception ceremony for the refugees at the Niki (Negochani) border station between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia on Sunday, 10 August 2003, at 11 a.m.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION
POLITICAL SECRETARIAT

**Law 1266/1982, which recalls apartheid, in a member-state of the European Union, reads as follows:*

**THE JOINT DECISION OF THE GREEK MINISTRIES OF INTERNAL
AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC ORDER**

Athens 29 December 1982

Topic: Unrestricted repatriation and restoration of Greek Citizenship to political refugees.

Keeping in mind:

The provisions of Law 400 / 76 "Concerning the Ministerial Council and Ministries" as amended by Law 1266 / 1982 and within the framework of the Greek government's policy on national reconciliation and compassion

WE HAVE DECIDED:

...may return to Greece all Greeks by genus* (*emphasis ours*) who left Greece during the Civil War of 1946-1949 and because of which went abroad as political refugees, even if they have lost their Greek citizenship...

*(*The word genus is synonymous with the word race and was deliberately used to discriminate against Macedonian political refugees on the basis of their ethnicity.)*

(Signed)

THE MINISTERS

OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS & PUBLIC ORDER

George Yennimatas
John Skoularikis

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| PRESS RELEASE |
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Florina – Lerin 13-8-2003

A statement issued by the Greek Foreign Ministry concerning the question of Macedonian political refugees notes inter alia that:

“...as we have previously announced, yesterday marked the start of the implementation of the humanitarian measure of issuing visitor’s permits to Greece to political refugees in FYROM, and everything is proceeding smoothly and without impediment. This permit is for those political refugees who were excluded by the 1982 law ‘concerning the return of political refugees’ and is valid for twenty (20) days during the period of 10 August to 30 October 2003.

The only thing that was required of the prospective visitors to Greece, political refugees, residents and citizens of FYROM, was that they use the new travel documents of their countries - that is, the new series of FYROM passports and, naturally, that they have the necessary entry visas.”

According to prior memos and statements made by Foreign Ministry officials (statements by Deputy Foreign Minister Loverdos on 8-6-2003 in *Sunday's Eleftherotypia* newspaper and a memo by Mr. Beglitis on 1-7-2003), unrestricted entry to Greece should have been permitted to all political refugees during the aforementioned period.

Unfortunately, this “humanitarian measure” turned into a farce. Once again, the large majority of Macedonian political refugees were denied entry into Greece even for a simple visit. On 10 August 2003 a delegation from Rainbow was present at the Niki - Negochani border station in Florina - Lerin. No political refugee was allowed to enter Greece (of more than 20 individuals appearing between 11.00 and 13.00) whose travel document recorded the bearer's place of birth with its former (Macedonian) name. Entry into Greece was forbidden to those Macedonian political refugees with Republic of Macedonia passports, as well as to those with passports from other countries, such as Australia, Czech Republic, and Hungary. The border officials did not note on the forms the actual reason why entry was denied (they explained it to us orally), but instead cited other reasons.

The absurdity of the matter of Macedonian political refugees holding travel documents (passports) from the Republic of Macedonia is that Greece does not recognize these passports because they record the name of country as the "Republic of Macedonia." Yet it asks the Macedonian refugees holding these passports to change the name of their birthplace in a passport that Greece doesn't recognize. For this reason, subsequent to the 1995 interim agreement between the two countries, the travel document that Greece does recognize is not a passport, but rather a sheet of white A4 paper bearing the visa. Perhaps our country ought to change its stand and finally accept Republic of Macedonia as the name of our neighboring country?

As for the Macedonian refugees from other European countries that have signed accession agreements with the EU (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia), how will Greece explain such a refusal of entry to these governments? How will it behave in April 2004 when these countries become full EU member-states? How will it then explain the refusal of entry to equal and law-abiding European citizens, who have the right to enter Greece simply by presenting their personal identity cards? Will Greece then blacklist these citizens as *persona non grata*?

Perhaps the Greek government and the Greek Foreign Ministry can explain - if the reason for barring entry into our country is, indeed, the use of place names, which are aspects of the linguistic and cultural heritage of both Greece and Europe - why the use of these names should to be a reason to bar entry? Can it provide us with an example of another European country that has barred entry to its former citizens for the same reason?

Since Macedonian place-names of villages and towns are used in official Greek documents, such as topographical surveys and military maps of the Ministry of Defense, why are they unacceptable when are used by the country's former citizens?

Perhaps the Greek government can explain why, at the dawn of the 21st century, it has not repealed the racist phrase in Law 1266/1982, which reads: "...may return to Greece all Greeks by genus* (emphasis ours) who left Greece during the Civil War of 1946-1949 and because of which went abroad as political refugees, even if they have lost their Greek citizenship..."?

(*The word *genus* is synonymous with the word *race* and was deliberately used to discriminate against Macedonian political refugees on the basis of their ethnicity.)

The issue of Macedonian political refugees of the Greek Civil War is only one aspect of the Macedonian minority issue in Greece. Other aspects include linguistic rights and the right to use Macedonian place-names. We therefore call upon the Greek government to move forward on a settlement concerning Macedonian political refugees and finally grant them all, unconditionally and without exception, not only the right to visit Greece - after fifty-plus years - but also the right to return. In so doing, the Greece would implement the law as it now applies to other ethnic Greek political refugees.

Today, civilized countries and democratic governments do not simply respect and promote the rights of their linguistic, cultural, and ethnic minorities; they also are courageous enough to recognize their past mistakes and rectify injustices. We expect the same of our own government: that it revises its positions on the rights of the Macedonian minority of Greece.

POLITICAL SECRETARIAT
RAINBOW

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| PRESS RELEASE |
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Florin – Lerin 22-8-2003

On 20 August 2003 a reception ceremony was held in Florina to welcome those Macedonian political refugees permitted entry into Greece on the basis of a recent decision by the Greek Foreign Ministry.

The event was organized by the Reception Committee, which was composed of the refugees' family members residing in Greece and Rainbow party officials. We believe that the repeal of the racist provision of the Ministerial Decision of Law 1266/1982, which excludes Macedonian political refugees of the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) from the right of repatriation, and a positive settlement of this problem, will have both a humanitarian and a political dimension.

The first dimension ought to be the promotion of the idea that Greece should unconditionally respect universal human values and fundamental human rights, such as the right to return, to live, and to die in the country of one's birth. The second dimension ought perhaps to be a signal of the change in attitude in Greek politics concerning the issue of the national identity of today's Greek citizens. The notion of "citizen" should play the primary role, as opposed to the view and political policy that has existed up to now, which holds that the state's national purity and homogeneity is a precondition to its prosperity. At the same time, the positive solution to the problem of Macedonian political refugees would provide an impetus to Greek society to take a positive view towards respecting the cultural, linguistic and ethnic rights of all Greek citizens.

However, state agencies have reneged on their promises for a definitive settlement of the problem of Macedonian political refugees, as witnessed in statements made these past few months by Foreign Ministry officials. This, and the reactions of nationalistic and conservative political circles are unfortunate indication of the rigid ideology, the insecurity, the prejudices, the phobias, the political immaturity, and the introversion still maintained by the greater sector of Greek society and its political representatives.

At the welcoming reception in Florina, a negative impression was made by the absence of representation from those organizations of Greek political refugees who repatriated in

1982, of the local authorities, and of various political party deputies and organizations that had been invited to participate.

We would like to point out to our government that there is no such thing as humanitarian measures by installments. We refer to the anti-democratic measure of selective entry, which allowed the possibility of visitation only to those political refugees whose places of birth are not written in their original form (the Greek state changed the original place names in 1926 and 1928 as part of its policy of national homogenization), and to the restriction of their stay in Greece to only twenty (20) days.

Rainbow has not hesitated in the past, nor will it cease in the future to condemn those Macedonian sociopolitical movements that express expansionist ideas. We therefore once again call upon our government and our fellow democratic Greek citizens to join us in discussing an approach to the issues of respect for diversity and the rights of the Macedonian minority in Greece.

We want a democratic Greece in which all citizens have equality and dignity. We want a modern European country that respects minority rights through the implementation of European and international conventions. We hope that the political arena will finally transcend the stereotypes and prejudices that impede the course of Europe and the overall democratization of our country.

POLITICAL SECRETARIAT
RAINBOW

***No to repatriation ... Demand the 33 New Democracy MPs by
written parliamentary question...***

QUESTION

To the Ministers of Foreign Affairs – Internal Affairs – Public Order and Justice

“Dangerous scenarios for congresses in Florina”

Politis, Florina’s local daily, published the information that “the press in Skopje has reported Greece’s decision to open its borders to the Slavomacedonian refugees from Northern Greece who, for decades, have been living in FYROM.” The article goes on to say that “it is still not known whether the borders are to open soon, so that all the Aegaiates [i.e. Aegean Macedonians as Greece's Macedonians refer to themselves] can be represented at the big meeting of refugees, scheduled for 15 July in Florina.” This and much more in FYROM, while in Greece stranger things are being said. Deputy Foreign Minister Loverdos in his repeated visits to Western Macedonia and in dangerous, erratic and contradictory statements has assured us that:

A) The laws will be upheld and visas/passports will be issued only as long as they do not use variants of surnames and place names (minutes of parliamentary session).

B) Entry permits to Greece will be issued through summary procedures (*Eleftherotypia* newspaper).

C) The measure will also be extended to permanent and universal repatriation of the refugees (*Eleftherotypia*).

Here, one must admire the seriousness, stability and sincerity of the words and deeds and, on the other hand, to also feel reassured that the “leadership” is keeping watch over and protecting the national interests, national dignity, and national integrity, while advocating Public Order, upholding the laws, the treaties, as well as maintaining international and bilateral relations and accords. The only solution in the national interests is yes to the visits with the stated preconditions and no to repatriation, a position that up until now had been a firm one.

The Ministers are asked:

1. Are you aware of the “games” being played, the schemes that are being concocted, and the decisions being taking, all at our country’s expense, with unpredictable to catastrophic consequences?
2. Do you realize what events are taking place and the unpredictable consequences they will have at the expense of Western Macedonia and our country in general?
3. Do the Ministers know about the convocation of the famed congress of Slavomacedonians in Florina on 15 July, its composition and its aim? If yes, are we serious?
4. Who of all of you will assume the consequences, the responsibilities of everything that we describe to you as decisions of the Greek Government as well as conflicting but totally disastrous decisions of the Deputy Foreign Minister?
5. We the undersigned and all the Greek people expect clear, categorical, sincere, and serious replies.

Athens 02/07/2003

THE INQUIRING PARLIAMENTARIANS

Kortaris Nikolaos – Florina, Angelis Anestis – Kastoria, Karasmanis Georgios – Pella, Leonaridis Theofilos – Serres, Karamanlis Achilleas – Serres, Kollia Maria – Serres, Haitidis Evgenios – Serres, Tsiplakis Konstantinos – Serres, Halkidis Michalis – Imathia, Fotiadis Ilias – Imathia, Kontos Alexandros – Xanthi, Tsairtionis Nikolaos – Kozani, Papadopoulos Michalis – Kozani, Konstantopoulos George – Pieria, Polyzos Evangelos – Pieria, Papadopoulos Stavros – Drama, Dailakis Stavros – Drama, Pappas Vassileios – Halkidiki, Florinis Athinaios – Halkidiki, Orfanos Georgios – A Thessaloniki, Kouvelas Sotirios – A Thessaloniki, Kalafatis Stavros – A Thessaloniki, Regouzas Adam – B Thessaloniki, Salagoudis Georgios – B Thessaloniki, Tsitouridis Savvas – Kilki, Kiltidis Konstantinos – Kilki, Dimoskhakis Theofanis – Evros, Lyberakis Leonidas – Evros, Stylianidis Evripidis – Rodopi, Pavlidis Aristotelis – Dodecanese.

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| RESOLUTION OF THE FLORINA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL |
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The Florina Municipal Council met on 23 July 2003. The draft resolution concerning “political refugees” was discussed off the agenda as an urgent item.

***Present** at the Meeting of the Municipality were:*

Stefanos Papanastasiou – Mayor of Florina, Antonios Spikas – President of the Municipal Council, and the Council members: Vassileios Yannakis, Petros Yannatsis, Haralambos Michailidis, Pavlos Vafeiadis, Athanasios Papaionannou, Antonios Delegos, Maria Stamelou-Pardali, Stavros Voskopoulos, David Kotselidis, Panayotis Antoniou, Phaidon Iliadis, Georgios Pouyaridis, Haralambos Bontzidis, Konstantinos Rozas. Except for P. Iliadis, G. Pouyaridis, and H. Bontzidis, who abstained from the discussion and the voting, all the other members of the Municipal Council voted in favor of the resolution.

***Absent were:** Georgios Argyropoulos, Yvoni Bara-Konstantakou – Secretary, Olga Mylona, Michal Mavros, Anastasios Grabovas, Pavlos Mangos.*

***Also present were** the Presidents of the Three-Member Local Councils of the Municipalities of Florina Nikolaos Petridis (Mesonisi), Alexandros Ilias (Proti) and Vassileios Markoulis (Alona). Absent were the Presidents of the Three-Member Local Councils of the Municipality of Trivouno Stavros Kalkopoulos and the Municipality of Koryfi Christos Ioannou.*

We quote the resolution as it was published in the Florina local press.

The Municipal Council of Florina, given all that has been written of late in the local press and stated by persons in official positions, feels obligated to take a stand on an event that has a relation to the past, present and future of the region.

Aware that it does not exercise foreign policy, the Council expresses its concern over the way in which the philosophy has been announced and used to cover the issue of entry of “political refugees.”

Our steadfast position is to follow the same policy that the state has displayed in the past towards these people, i.e. visitors to Greece, with the accepted preconditions and only for humanitarian reasons.

Florina,
23 July 2003

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| COMMENTARY |
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We presume that all those Council members who voted for the resolution have fathers, mothers, brothers or sisters.

We observe that their humanitarian sensitivities are exhausted in visits “for humanitarian reasons.” Humanitarian reasons are typically relatives’ funerals. Would they have voted in favor of comparable referendum if it involved their own fathers, mothers, brothers or sisters?

Would they have agreed to meet with their relatives and family members selectively, at funerals and only upon being issued a special permit by the authorities?

Fortunately or unfortunately for the Council members, the written word remains.

QUESTION

To the Foreign Minister

Topic: “Visit of political refugees from FYROM”

MARIA DAMANAKI

Parliamentarian, Second Electoral District, Athens

Athens, 30 July 2003

The reactions provoked in various circles by the government’s decision to facilitate the entry into the country of the last political refugees, and the pressures exerted again by various circles resulted in the retraction of the decision.

The announced facilitation of the last political refugees, who live in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to visit their homeland for the period of 10/8-30/10/2003 limits the number of people to very few. Entry would be permitted only to those who hold passports with Greece recorded as their place of birth.

Given that the remaining refugees have the human right to visit their homeland after so many years in the fashion recommended by the Foreign Ministry

The Minister is asked

What was the reason for his retraction and does he intend to reexamine the matter?

[signed] The inquiring parliamentarian

Maria Damanaki

Ananeotiki Eksynchronistiki Kinisi tis Aristeras
[Newly Revived Leftist Movement]

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PRESS RELEASE

On the occasion of the articles published concerning the impending decision by the Supreme Court on the appeal of the minority party, “Turkish Union of Xanthi,” the Ananeotiki Eksynchronistiki Kinisi tis Aristeras (AEKA) wishes to stress the following:

Independent of any judicial decision on the specific issue, the time has come for the Greek state to officially recognize the right of self-definition for national minorities and to finally proceed in unconditionally ratifying the Council of Europe Framework-Convention on the protection of national minorities.

Greece must conform fully to contemporary international conventions on minority rights and take bold steps to implement additional positive measures in this domain.

Fear, prejudice, and anachronistic views must not stand in the way of the state’s fulfilling its long-delayed obligation towards certain groups of its citizens.

A progressive development such as this will not harm our country. On the contrary, it will strengthen its international position and image and, above all, will advance our democracy.

2/10/03

The Press Office

GREECE AND ANTI-AMERICANISM

FROM THE ARCHER’S QUIVER

Apogevmatini 13-9-2003

Haven’t they gotten their fill of anti-Americanism – these intellectuals, politicians and commentators of every kind who flood the Greek print and electronic media with their opinions? In an odd unison, crusaders from the left and right have set to work to prove to us that the central cause of all the evil happening in the world today is none other than the American factor.

No one wants to underrate the many mistakes and misguided enterprises of the United States’ leadership. Is not easy, however, to stand by and listen to all the falsehoods being bandied about, the tacky populism, and the oversimplification of everything in commentary that submerges the public in inanity and in a profoundly dangerous nihilism. Why, in the final analysis, does everything that happens in the world have to be the fault of the Americans?

Take for a first example the UN. During the war in Kosovo the UN issued a condemnation of Milosevic, but the Security Council did not approve the invasion solely because Russia and China, for their own individual strategic reasons (intervention in

Chechnya and proceedings in the Xinjiang province, respectively) vetoed this decision. Yet at the time everyone assailed the Americans for their efforts to rescue the Balkan Muslims. When New York was attacked by terrorists, many declared that “it served them right” because the Americans had wronged the Muslims (!) Yet, when the Americans intervened in the first Persian Gulf War following a Security Council decision, still the anti-Americans were not silent. The UN is a tool of Washington, they proclaimed! There is no pleasing them.

And when the UN is not in a position to provide a solution to any international political problem, no one appears to care about this weakness. What has the UN done for Cyprus? How did it deal with the slaughter in Somalia and in Bosnia? How did it react to the slaughter of unarmed civilians in Liberia and in the Congo? Why is it that the pacifists who are “against all war” don’t utter a word when it comes to these atrocities? Could it be because the Americans aren’t involved? Are those the only wars that concern them?

In the final analysis, what, exactly, does concern us here in Greece. Is it in our interests to appear bigoted against the largest power on earth today? Why is it that the Greeks see the “Americans as murderers of humanity,” but not the Russians who cold-bloodedly slaughter Muslims in the Caucasus, or the Chinese who are annihilating the (also) Muslim Uighurs in the Tarim Basin of East Turkestan, or the French whose militia in three West African countries is violently suppressing the uprisings of local populations?

And finally, why do we Greeks care so much about the Americans’ failure to date to impose some form of democratic rule in Iraq, while the survival of the region’s oppressive regimes is to our advantage? Wouldn’t Greece benefit in general from the expansion of liberal democracy in the Middle East region, with more flexible and open markets? When all is said and done, where do we hope to export our few products? With the current state of corruption and centralization in the Arab world, only personal access and acquaintances are capable of creating such opportunities. The opening up of markets and the liberalization of systems will facilitate a new climate for commerce and greater economic prosperity for all.

In all issues of direct concern to us Greeks (Cyprus, Greek-Turkish relations, the Balkans, Europe), a closer relationship with the United States can only yield gains. It is characteristic that during a phase such as the present one, where developments in Iraq have brought Turkey into frequent conflict with the U.S., we have not managed to take advantage of the situation. Despite the personal efforts of Foreign Minister George Papandreou, the overall anti-American attitude of Greek society feeds with acrimonious commentary the special reports that appear in authoritative Washington journals (such as the article by Fouad Ajami in a recent issue of “Foreign Policy”) and complicate matters.

In my opinion, Greeks ought to be concerned about the interests of Greece - and not about the fate of Americans and whoever their political opponents happen to be in whatever corner of the world. We stand to gain or lose from our own actions. Isn’t it a shame for us to use our own hands to dig the very pit we will fall into?

- Repatriation to a non-homeland?

*By Christos Yannaras
(KATHIMERINI 17/11/02)*

What is the rationale behind the demand that the Parthenon sculptures held by and exhibited in the British Museum must be returned to the current Greek state?

I believe that the spontaneous reply of the overwhelming majority of today's Greeks would be that these sculptures belong to us. They were created by our ancestors. They are the manifestation of our history. The British stole them from our homeland.

I also imagine the objections of the British, mostly what they feel deep down but are too polite to say - that civilizations do not have natural heirs. Heirs are distinguished as those who can manage the legacy creatively. The Parthenon sculptures belong to those people who are cultivated enough to comprehend their timeless value and significance for all of humanity. The sculptures belong to those people who distinguish themselves as the de facto heirs of ancient classical civilization.

For centuries the British have believed that these people are only those in Western Europe. Western Europeans cultivated classical writing; they studied ancient Greek art; they published and interpreted the texts of ancient Greek literature. Through neoclassicism they disseminated the architectural orders and esthetics of Ancient Greece throughout the world.

I can imagine the British opposing our very own Adamantios Korais [humanist scholar and father of Modern Greek literature], who, like all Western Europeans, admitted that we new Greeks have no relation to the ancient Hellenes. This is why he constructed the theory of "*metakenosis*" [a type of transference], which proposes that only by de-westernizing ourselves could we Greeks once again become Hellenes, because Hellenism is historically preserved only in post-Carolingian Western Europe and not in the variously adulterated geographical Greece.

What do you understand of Hellenism, the British would want to tell us, and, so, by what credentials can you claim the Parthenon sculptures? Ask the average Greek intellectual of today or your political leadership to answer the question of why the Parthenon is a more important work of art than the Eiffel Tower – measure, if you have the courage, the extent of your per capita cultural and educational backwardness.

You, who have so crudely dishonored this Attic land bestowed upon you to inhabit, befouling its sacred beauty – is the loss of the Parthenon sculptures what ruined you? The truth of the Parthenon cannot be interpreted without the truth of the Attic landscape and this latter truth you turned into a plague of concrete of the shoddiest, filthiest, ugliest order. To the most criminal vandalism in history, to your third-world new-Greek capital, you have given the name of the city of Athens. How can we entrust you with the heirlooms of such sublime art?

Such is the respect you have for Ancient Greece - I imagine the British continuing in response to our demand - that you have also denied the only lifeline that could bind you to her: language. Except for illusory appearances, you have abolished the teaching of Ancient Greek in your schools, severing your language from its nurturing roots. And because of this, your contemporary Greek is comically crippled and corrupted by foreignisms. Your youth of today, those under age thirty, can no longer comprehend “ordinary” Greek, much less recent authors like Papadiamantis and Roidis. What percentage of your population has read even three lines of Aristotle, Plato, or Thucydides? So, where to you get off calling yourselves descendents of the ancient Greeks, and laying exclusive claim to what they bequeathed to humanity?

The contention with the British over the Parthenon sculptures could have provided us Neohellenes with an opportunity for productive introspection. 170 years ago, our new-Greek education and intellect (like our sell-out state and foreign policy) were blindly founded on the ideological fabrication that the world must respect us as the direct continuum of Ancient Greece. We used an unlicensed airlift to leap from the centuries of Turkish rule, the so-called (counterfeit) “Byzantium” and the Hellenistic era, to claim the title of direct ancestry to Pericles, Phidias, and Aeschylus. This same mindset, be it conscious or unwitting, is expressed today in our “crusade” for the return of the Parthenon sculptures.

For sure it was a brazen theft, but nationalistic sentimentalism and rhetorical babble do not suffice as titles of ownership to the stolen goods. To be even rudimentarily serious about our claim we have to have clarified (at least at the level of grammar school instruction) some basic axes of historical self-awareness - the relationship of New Hellenism to Ancient Greece based on historical realism (i.e. cultural continuum). This requires finally clarifying at some point just how Greek our “Byzantine” past was - a past that we are constantly groping after from the ancient Greek statue to the Byzantine icon, from ancient tragedy to Orthodox liturgy, from Athenian democracy to the social-centric (“socialistic” Runciman calls it) Byzantine and Late Byzantine society.

By conscientiously rejecting all rhetoric, all specious ideology, all presumption, we can then clarify, on the other hand, just how much Hellenism survived in the corrupting frenzy of Post-Roman (Frankish and Teutonic) Europe to usurp the ancient Greek legacy and monopolize it. What did Renaissance naturalism understand of the ancient Greek statue; what did Thomas Aquinas understand of Aristotle; what did the enlightenment thinkers of *res publica* understand of democracy? We Neohellenes have the right to demand the return of the Parthenon sculptures only if we bear a proposal that approaches and interprets the ancient Greek legacy. This proposal must be one that demonstrates that the Frankish and Teutonic (laborious and respectable certainly) employment reversed the working terms of the trust.

On exhibit at the British Museum, the Parthenon sculptures give their testimony from an international podium; they manifest their own civilization, one founded on the struggle for existential truth, not opportunism. They testify to the audacity of another civilization,

to theft, to a civilization that persists in boasting of the usurpation of a legacy by reversing the terms of its operation. They underscore the decline of the descendants, who once spoke the same language, who are battling for the repatriation of sculptures to what is now their non-homeland – to a foreign land of barbarity and illiteracy.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>The Greek Orthodox Church & Slavomacedonians:</u> <u>Aspects of a “Nonexistent” Issue</u></p> |
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(O Politis – September 2001, issue 92)
by *Tassos Kostopoulos*

The armed intercommunal conflict in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) was already underway when, on 4 March 2001, the Permanent Holy Synod of the Church of Greece decided to remind leaders and ordinary citizens of the boundaries of a “nationally correct” policy concerning the our one-time “major national issue.” It was during those days that the oncoming new Balkan storm fostered various scenarios to reach a compromise on the (now totally obsolete) question of the name of Greece’s neighboring country. Those who belatedly fought to keep Macedonia Greek in the previous decade, from the Pammakedoniki Organization in the United States to Stelios-Angelos Papatthemelis [then Public Order Minister], were milling around in obscure newspaper columns, condemning the apparent new capitulation to the acceptance (in reality imposition) of any “compound name.”

And the Holy Synod was there too. With its statement that *“it feels obligated to express its concern over the possibility that the neighboring state may be officially recognized by the international community with a name that contains the term ‘Macedonia’.*” This intervention is seen as the *“continuation and confirmation of an earlier pastoral encyclical of the Holy Synod (no. 2536), which was issued on 5 June 1992”* – during the height, that is, of the nationalistic hysteria – and in its reasoning invokes to the maximum degree all the arguments of the past decade. *“The Church of Greece believes that the neighboring country’s use of the name ‘Macedonia’ constitutes a usurpation of an important portion of our History and Civilization. It paves the way for territorial claims and for the agitation of nonexistent minority issues; it is injurious to Greek dignity, and an insult to historical fact.”* The adherence to this indelible memory of the 1992 “vested right” is considered by the Holy Synod itself to be a rudimentary response, not only to the *“agonized cries”* of *“Organizations of Macedonians Abroad,”* but also to the *“particular agony of its flock living in Northern Greece.”* The recipients of this message are, naturally, none other than the government and the politicians of Greece. And they are called upon *“to confirm their unwavering adherence to the earlier decision on the matter by the Council of Party Leaders that also was applauded by the overwhelming majority of Greek people and supported by the enthusiastic, patriotic mass rallies in Athens, Thessaloniki, as well as many other cities and large Greek centers outside of Greece.”*¹

¹ Holy Synod Press Release, Athens 5.3.2001, as displayed on the official website of the Church of Greece (<http://www.ecclesia.gr>).

One might say that all this was perfectly normal. After all, the Church of Greece was one of the basic levers in the 1992-94 mobilization against the “*skopjian-gypsy usurpers of our history*.” The bishops participated in an organized fashion “*with their flocks*” in the nationwide rallies of the first period (1992-93), only to subsequently become autonomous of mayors and political parties and direct the second wave of mobilizations (1994-95) – this time against the “selling-out” politicians and the prospect of compromise. The crowning moment could be considered the rally organized on 15.2.94 by Bishop Panteleimon of Thessaloniki. Officially the rally was against the then recent U.S. recognition of FYROM, but its actual target were the feelers put out by the PASOK government for a compromising solution to the disagreement. The rally, which was dominated by the fascistic ultra-right (chanting “to arms, to arms, let’s take Skopje”), ended with disturbances in front of the American Embassy. The next day the Papandreou government, in a dramatic reversal of policy, imposed an 18-month embargo against FYROM.² In hindsight, the political games and ideological amalgamations of those days reveal themselves to be the womb that gave birth to the current phenomenon of postmodern fundamentalism. This phenomenon found its political expression in the person of Archbishop Christodoulos of Greece and his “*laosynaxes*” (or people’s assemblies) of 2000, in opposition to the removal of religious designation from official identity cards. So, it makes total sense for the Church of Greece to invoke itself as the preferential legitimate petitioner in its intervention in those days of 1992.³ But the rest of the Holy Synod’s reasoning is another matter entirely. In addition to inanities such as, “*if by our own signature a state is recognized by a name containing the term ‘Macedonia’ then it is possible in a few years time that Northern Greeks could be prohibited from calling themselves Macedonians,*” there is also the pointed reference to the potential “*stirring up of nonexistent minority issues.*” This remark is a particularly barbed one because, if nothing else, these “nonexistent” minority issues (e.g. for one: the Slavomacedonians) are anything but unknown to the Church of Greece, as indisputably proven by the Church’s own documents. Moreover, these are documents that the Church itself saw to make public in former days in efforts to stress its contribution to the “Nation’s struggles.” I am not referring here to the Macedonian Struggle, which thanks to its crude forgery by official historiography is a pet reference point for every sort of “nationally sensitive” prelate – with the current Archbishop leading the pack.⁴ Rather, these are encyclicals that the Holy Synod issued after 1913 and which are inextricably linked to the campaign of the Greek government to forcibly assimilate the Slavophone Macedonians of Northern Greece. This population group, which in the years between the two world wars numbered about 200,000 and following the Greek Civil War was at least 130-150,000, was for decades the object of a (partially successful) official governmental campaign to destroy its individual linguistic and cultural identity, regardless of any

² An idea that was attributed to the then-Minister of the Press & Information, Evangelos Venizelos (Evangelos Kofos: “Greece’s Macedonian Adventure: The Controversy over FYROM’s Independence and Recognition,” http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/Contributions/contr_Kofos19990705.html).

³ For a first journalistic overview of the role of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the nationalistic hysteria of 1992-94 see: Ios tis Kyriakis [Sunday Virus Group]: “The cassock makes the politician,” *Epsilon* (magazine of *Sunday’s Eleftherotypia*), 20.3.94.

⁴ A characteristic example is his speech, “The contribution of the Greek Prelates of Macedonia to the success of the ‘Macedonian Struggle’” (~1992), as quoted to this day on the website of the Bishopric of Dimitriades (<http://www.imd.gr/html/gr/section02/history/speeches/01/01.html>).

“national conviction” of the people and the particular minorities comprising it.⁵ Published in 1956 by the Holy Synod itself in an official collection of synodical encyclicals from the first half of the 20th century,⁶ these documents complete the picture we have of the particular aspects of this governmental policy. In addition, they superbly illuminate the attitude of the official church towards that part of its flock that objectively deviated from the nationally desirable “norm.”

The text below cites the most important of these documents. Most come from the period of the Ioannis Metaxas dictatorship (1936-41), a terrible time for the Slavomacedonians of Greece directly linked to the universal prohibition of their language and the enactment of a number of authorized discriminatory practices. Some of these practices were retained until the time of the return to civil rule in 1974 or later (surveillance zones, certificates of consciousness, prohibition on the purchase of real estate by those classified as “Slav-conscious,” etc). Other documents date from the first years following World War II, an era certainly no more liberal on this specific issue. To whit:

*The Holy Synod, in the year 1939, prohibits the baptizing of children with Slavic names. It informs its local bishops that, in cases where priests encounter resistance in implementing this prohibition, a summit agreement (obviously with Maniadakis’ Ministry of Security) provides them with the authority to “*request assistance from the local Police Authority*” to coerce the recalcitrant parents, relatives and godparents. This measure is part of the efforts of the Fourth of August Regime to impose “*to encourage the devotion of every Greek toward uncorrupted Hellenism and the preservation of our national tongue.*”⁷ Nearly two decades later (1955) the same prohibition is revived by the Holy Synod and the bishops are ordered to be vigilant in its “*faithful and unswerving implementation.*” As for its protracted application, characteristic is the relatively recent (1998) story published in the Athenian press of a priest in a particular village in Florina who refused to baptize a female child “*with the Bulgarian name Donka.*”⁸

*In the year 1939 the Holy Synod orders that extensive and detailed files be made and kept on all “*Slavophone and Vlachophone parishes*” in Northern Greece. The data that the competent bishops are asked to forward to the central authority include the “*mother tongue,*” the “*national conviction,*” the “*national [military/paramilitary] activity,*” and the “*family and property status*” of the priests of these communities. The entire filing process goes hand in hand with the imposition – during precisely the same period – of the institutionalized listing of all citizens without exception and the

⁵ For a thorough survey of these assimilation efforts see my book “The forbidden language. State suppression of Slavic dialects in Greek Macedonia” (Athens 2000, ed. Mavri Lista). The ongoing study of various official evaluations and records of this population’s “national conviction,” as well as the consequences of this practice on the daily lives of those directly affected, is the subject of my next book (“The weighing of consciousness”), which is currently being written.

⁶ “The synodical encyclicals, published by the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece on its 100th anniversary,” vol 2 (1934-56), Athens 1956, Apostolic Ministry Press. My thanks to Sakis Alexandris for bringing this anthology and the pertinent documents to my attention.

⁷ On this policy see T. Kostopoulos “The forbidden language,” pp. 162-80; on the Hellenization of Slavic names in the same, pp. 147-51.

⁸ *Eleftheros Typos*, 3.5.1998. The article explicitly praises the cleric’s stance.

“certificates of community consciousness” by the architects of the Metaxas regime’s “Third Hellenic Civilization.” In all probability the data from this intra-ecclesiastical “census” can still be found in the archives of the Holy Synod.

*A year and a half later, in the midst of the Greek-Italian war and shortly before the German intervention and the collapse of the front, the Church of Greece undertook on a special directive from the Ministry of Education to “replace” the Slavic icons in churches “*with other Greek ones of the same kind.*” The “removal” (more commonly the plain destruction) of offensive Slavic ecclesiastical artifacts from the churches and cemeteries of Northern Greece had, of course, begun much earlier – based mainly on “personal” initiatives of local politicians and military commanders.⁹ The Holy Synod’s directive systematizes and legitimizes this ethnic cleansing of monuments, but we do not know to how much time there was for it to be put into force given the particular conditions of the day. At any rate, the amount of time prior to the onset of the German Occupation was, in effect, very limited. We do know however that this task was completed to a large degree during the 21st of April military dictatorship (1967-74), thanks to the allocations for “special Macedonian programs” and the special contribution of individual priests like Avgustinos Kantiotis, the chief monument assassin.¹⁰ For example, a subsequent document by the Bishop of Florina describes in detail the “correction” with oil paint followed by the removal of the Slavic icons in the city’s (erstwhile exarchate) metropolitan cathedral to be stored in “*some office of the General Administration of Macedonia,*” along with the supplementary “*modifications*” of the building’s architectural features so that there would be “*no sign of even a trace of Slavic style.*”¹¹ In most Slavophone villages the signs of such crude “corrective” interventions in church iconography are, as a rule, still visible. Elsewhere, the replacement of Slavic icons was more discreet. For instance, we have evidence from a few years ago that in the village Ossa (Vysoka), the birthplace of Stelios Papatthemelis, the former PASOK Public Order Minister, the old Cyrillic icons of the local church are simply being stored in a special place, out of public sight.¹²

*The next – and last – document dates from the final months of the Greek Civil War (1946-49) and concerns the decision of the Foreign Ministry on the “*most appropriate [name] from a national standpoint*” for this controversial population group. This decision resulted from the meeting that took place on 23.3.1949 at the General Military Headquarters [Geniko Epiteleio Stratou] with delegates from the military, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, and Public Order, as well as other actors, “*on the question of the Slavophones of Northern Greece.*” Its aim was to define the basic axes of a governmental political policy concerning the “nonexistent minority” after the apparent disintegration of the DSE in the Greek Civil War. “*After examining the issue*

⁹ For a typical narrative see I. Vernardos, “Davakis-Pindos,” Athens 1947, ed. P. Dimitrakou, p. 336. For earlier destruction of Slavic monuments and graves, according to Bulgarian diplomatic sources of the time see Georgi Daskalov, “Uchasta na Balgarite v Egejska Makedonija, 1936-1946,” Sofia 1999, p. 55.

¹⁰ In detail in Kostopoulos, op cit, pp. 282-3 and Ios tis Kyriakis: “The Nation’s Inquisitor,” *Epsilon (Sunday’s Eleftherotypia)*, 16.1.2000.

¹¹ Ioannis Pichos (ed) “Metropolitan Cathedral of Aghios Panteleimon of Florina (history-icons),” Florina 1993, pp. 23-4. In the end, the church was torn down in 1971 in the presence of the dictator Georgios Papadopoulos to be replaced by the present on of “*pure Greek artistic style.*”

¹² Ios tis Kyriakis: “In the Balkan homeland of Mr. Papatthemelis,” *Eleftherotypia* 1.3.1997.

from all sides,” we read in the document of the permanent deputy Foreign Minister, “*it was decided that those in Greece having as a mother tongue and commonly speaking the familiar Slavomacedonian idiom will hereafter officially be called ‘Slavophones,’ precluding all other terms.*” The names prohibited from this point on are those terms recorded, typically, as “Slavomakedones,” “Voulgaromakedones” and “Voulgarophrones” [*sic*, suffix “phrones” = consciousness]. Another recommendation by a prominent politician of the day, Philippos Dragoumis, for the adoption of the term “Voulgarophone” was also rejected.¹³ Upon receiving this decision, the Holy Synod then forwarded it to the local priests for their knowledge and compliance.

The picture emerging from all the above is more than clear. The Church of Greece not only “knows” of the existence and scope of the “nonexistent” (so it says) minority question, but also was an active contributor to the governmental campaign to assimilate at all costs the Slavomacedonians into the “national body.” (One may be certain that the archives of the Holy Synod contain many more subsequent documents on this delicate matter – even though recent publications of encyclicals from later decades avoid including even one.) The Holy Synod’s stand on this matter is transparent: fully sharing in the assimilation schemes, maintaining files on the population, and destroying the linguistic and cultural particularity of the Other. Here there is not even the slightest indication of the celebrated supranational “ecumenicity of Christian Orthodoxy.”¹⁴ As Mr. Paraskevaïdis [now Archbishop Christodoulos] writes regarding the patriarchal despots of the Macedonian Struggle, “*these prelates forfeited to the military their capacity [sic] as peace-loving Clerics*”¹⁵ – and with that every vestige of Christianity in general.

The Archbishop himself, when all is said and done, knows very well exactly what this is all about. In his doctoral dissertation on the Old Calendarists, one encounters not only the expected references to the between-war alliance of the latter “*with the domestic Voulgarophones*” (and/or “*Bulgarian minority*”), but can also glean some interesting information from the archives of the Holy Synod on the years that followed. One bit of information is the description of the deliberations between the ecclesiastical leadership and the staff officers of the 21st of April “*revolution*” [dictatorship] on “*the influence of certain Slavic circles on the Old Calendarists in Greece.*” This particular backstage political activity, the dissertation informs us, concluded in an agreement for a clandestine “census” of Old Calendarists by the Dictatorship’s local military or police authorities.¹⁶ It

¹³ Concerning Dragoumis’ recommendation to the controversial meeting, see Kostopoulos, *op cit*, pp. 215-8 and D. Lithozoou: “Philippos Dragoumis on the renaming of the Macedonian language”, Korydallos 1996. It remains unknown to this day whether it was at this meeting that the decision (cross-referenced from many sources) was taken to transfer the Slavomacedonians (or at least a large portion of them) to Southern Greece and replace them with a Greek speaking population with “*sound national convictions.*” This decision in the end remained largely unexecuted, obviously because of an inability to find a population of sufficient numbers willing to immigrate to Northern Greece.

¹⁴ For a more detailed critique of the concept of “ecumenicity” through a retrospective examination of its historical roots see Paraskevas Matalas: “Nation and Orthodoxy. From the ‘Helladic’ to the Bulgarian schism” (under publication).

¹⁵ “The contribution of the Greek Prelates...” *ibid*.

¹⁶ Christodoulos Paraskevaïdis “Historical and canonical review of the Old Calendarist question” [Volos] ed. I.M. Dimitriadis, pp. 194, 228, 329-30 & 380-2.

was at just this time that Christodoulos – then chief secretary to the Archbishop – was simply devoted to his studies.

Documentation

A. The prohibition of Slavic baptismal names (1937)

“Protocol Number 1219 / Dispatch 1150

To not baptize children with Slavic names

KINGDOM OF GREECE

THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF GREECE

To the Venerable Prelates of the Church of Greece

Pursuant to the Synodical Encyclical no. 582/598 of 2 March 1934, which forbade the baptizing of infants with non-Christian names, and in consideration of the memorandum of the Ministry of Religions, protocol no. 417/436, of 23 April of this year, we request that you to give the requisite instructions to your Clergy to refuse to give Slavic baptismal names, because this is opposed to the aim pursued by the State and the Church to encourage the devotion of every Greek toward uncorrupted Hellenism and the preservation of our national tongue.

The Holy Synod leaves the manner and means for the success of this pursued aim to the discretion of the Venerable Prelates. Nevertheless, it asks the Ministry of Religions to make available to its Police Authorities in each parish the necessary means and have them provide any required assistance to local priests if such assistance is requested.

Athens, 20 May 1937

+ CHRISTOSTOMOS of Athens, Chairman, + ANTHIMOS of Maroneia, + EIRHNAIOS of Kassandreia, + GENNADIOS of Thessaloniki, + SPYRIDON of Ioannina, + IAKOVOS of Mytilini, + KONSTANTINOS of Kitros, + ANTONIOS of Ilia, + POLYKARPOS of Messinia, + PHILARETOS of Syros etc, + EZEKIEL of Thessaly etc, + THEOKLITOS of Kalavryta etc, + ANTHIMOS of Thera.

Secretary

Archimandrite Polykarpos Koutsoupidis”

[“The synodical encyclicals ...”, p. 151]

B. Recording and informing (1939)

“Protocol Number 1450 / Dispatch 12

CONFIDENTIAL – TOP SECRET – URGENT

Request for submission of information concerning Slavophone and Vlachophone parishes

KINGDOM OF GREECE

THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF GREECE

To the Venerable Prelates of the Provinces of Thrace, Macedonia and Epirus

The Holy Synod of Greece, wishing to know the number of Slavophone and Vlachophone parishes existing in our Bishoprics, asks that you submit by the 10th of the coming month of June, at the latest, a detailed statement that includes: 1) the name of the village and its corresponding parishes, 2) the number of families comprising each parish, 3) the names of the priests who serve in each parish, the date they assumed their duty and the name of the priest who ordained them, their age, family and property status, the length of their service, place of birth, education, their national convictions and national [military/paramilitary] activities, their mother tongue, and lastly the form and amount of their remuneration.

Athens, 24 May 1939

+ CHRYSOSTOMOS of Athens, Chairman, + AMVROSIOS of Fthiotida, + IOAKEIM of Didymoteichos, + SOCRATES of Ierissos & Mount Athos, + DIODOROS of Sisanios & Siatisti, + PROKOPIOS of Hydra, Spetses & Aegina, + SYNESIOS of Thebes & Levia, + SPYRIDON of Arta, + EIRINAIOS of Samos & Ikaria, GERVASIOS of Grevena, + KONSTANTINOS of Serres, + IEROTHEOS of Aetolia & Akarnania, + CHRYSOSTOMOS of Zakynthos.

Chief Secretary
Archimandrite Polykarpos Koutzoupidis”

[“The synodical encyclicals ...”, pp. 225-6]

C. The “retiring” of Slavic icons from churches (1941)

“Protocol Number 19 / Dispatch 389

On the replacement of any Slavic ecclesiastical icons in the Churches where they exist with other Greek ones of the same kind

KINGDOM OF GREECE

THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF GREECE

To the Venerable Prelates of the Church of Greece

Pursuant to document Number 59594/2523 of 17 December of last year, of the Ministry of Religions and National Education (Bureau of Antiquities) on by authority of the Synod, we urge you to promptly see to the replacement of Slavic ecclesiastical icons, which in all probability are found in the Churches of the Our God Savior Community [Theosostos Ymon] with other Greek ones of the same kind.

Athens, 4 January 1941
+ CHRYSANTHOS of Athens, Chairman

Chief Secretary
Archimandrite Polykarpos Koutzoupidis”

[“The synodical encyclicals ...”, p. 326]

D. Compliance with the recommendations for the new official name

“Protocol Number 1668 / Dispatch 1084
Concerning the naming of the “Slavophones” of Northern Greece

KINGDOM OF GREECE
THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF GREECE

To the Venerable Prelates of the Church of Greece

We draw your attention to the following document, number 27094 of this year, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the Slavophones, and ask that you read it.

Athens, 28 June 1949

+ SPYRIDON of Athens, Chairman, + IOAKEIM of Xanthe, + IOAKEIM of Didymoteichos, + EIRINAIOS of Samos and Ikaria, + KONSTANTINOS of Serres, + IOAKEIM of Alexandroupolis, + CHRYSOSTOMOS of Zakynthos, + PROKOPIOS of Mantinea and Kynouria, + IOAKOVOS of Attica and Megara.

Chief Secretary
Archimandrite Damaskinos Chatzopoulos

Number 27094
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

To the Ministries of the Military, Public Order, Bureau of Aliens, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Bureau of Administration, Ministry of Education, General Bureau of National Economy, Bureau of Statistics.

We have the honor to inform you that in the meeting that took place on the issue of the Slavophones of Northern Greece, on 23 March at the General Military Headquarters [Geniko Epiteleio Stratou], under our Presidency, we discussed inter alia the question of how to, from a national standpoint, most appropriately characterize those in Northern Greece who have as their mother tongue and commonly speak the familiar Slavomacedonian idiom. After examining the issue from all sides, it was decided that these persons whom we have discussed will hereafter officially be called “Slavophones,” precluding all other terms.”

The usage of this characterization has been judged from a national standpoint as most appropriate and in our best interests because, given current conditions, the terms “Slavomakedones,” “Voulgaromakedones,” “Voulgarophrones” could lay the issue of the Slavophones open to all manner of exploitation by those enemies of our country who have interests in this and to foreign propaganda.

So, with pleasure we ask you to provide the requisite instructions to your own competent Authorities so that they can henceforth solely and exclusively use the term “Slavophones” for those persons speaking the aforementioned idiom, thus maintaining a unified stand by all the competent services on this particular issue.

The Permanent Deputy Minister
[Signature]

[“The synodical encyclicals ...”, pp. 497-8]

E. “Renewing” the ban on Slavic names (1955)

“Protocol Number 1668 / Dispatch 1084

On baptizing infants with one name only, of a Saint of the Church, and by one godparent, under no circumstances Slavic

KINGDOM OF GREECE

THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF GREECE

To the Venerable Prelates of the Church of Greece

Since the liberation of our country, the Holy Synod has many times concerned itself with the names given in holy baptism to Christians, and with the godparents. Finally, on 20 May 1937 it sent its Venerable Prelates a Synodical Encyclical, Number 152, which stated the following: “Pursuant to the Synodical Encyclical no. 582/598 of 2 March 1934, which forbade the baptizing of infants with non-Christian names, and in consideration of the memorandum of the Ministry of Religions, protocol no. 417/436, of 23 April of this year, we request that you to give the requisite instructions to your Clergy to refuse to give Slavic baptismal names, because this is opposed to the aim pursued by the State and the Church to encourage the devotion of every Greek toward uncorrupted Hellenism and the preservation of our national tongue.

The Holy Synod leaves the manner and means for the success of this pursued aim to the discretion of the Venerable Prelates. Nevertheless, it asks the Ministry of Religions to make available to its Police Authorities in each parish the necessary means and have them provide any required assistance to local priests if such assistance is requested.

In this collective Encyclical the Holy Synod renews all the above Synodical Encyclicals and asks you to order the Clergy of your provinces to implement it faithfully and strictly. It furthermore requests your particular attention concerning the ban on giving Slavic names or the names of men considered evil or enemies of our immaculate religion.

Athens, 20 May 1955

+ SPYRIDON of Athens, Chairman, + IOAKEIM of Polyani and Kilkisios, DOROTHEOS of Trikki and Stagoi, + ANANIAS of Karystos and Skyros, + POLYKARPOS of Thebes and Levadia, + CHRYSOSTOMOS of Argolida, + CHRISTOFOROS of Naupactos and Evritania, + IAKOVOS of Sisanios and Siatisti, + PHILIPPOS of Grevena.

Chief Secretary
Archimandrite Damaskinos Themelis

[“The synodical encyclicals...” pp. 784-5]

