

HERCULES MOSKOFF

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

PhD THESIS

**CHURCH, STATE, AND POLITICAL CULTURE IN
GREECE SINCE 1974:
SECULARISATION, DEMOCRATISATION, WESTERNISATION**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between religion and politics in contemporary (post-1974) Greece, and the implications of this relationship for the secularisation, democratisation, and westernisation of Greek society. In *Part One*, the thesis uses an institutional and historical analysis of Church-State relations to explain how tensions and contradictions rooted in earlier historical experiences have paved the way for relations between Church, State, and political culture since 1974. *Part Two* presents three case studies of contemporary Church-related movements that have affected both relations between Church and State and today's Greek political culture generally. Overall, the thesis will explore the major connections between the Greek-Orthodox Church and the political establishment, and determine to what degree they are affecting the process of modernisation. The main problems highlighted are: (a) the secularisation of Greek society and politics, and the ability of the Greek-Orthodox Church to resist or influence this process, especially within the context of the secularising policies of the government, Church-State separation, the contemporary resurgence of religion in public life; (b) the implications of Church-State separation for the democratisation process in Greece. The role of Orthodoxy in Greek politics is explored with the focus on foreign affairs, especially concerning the so-called "national issues" within the context of the modern Greek cultural and religious identity; c) the attitude of the Greek-Orthodox Church and its off-shoot movements towards westernisation, EU integration, and the increasing globalisation of the contemporary world. The main conclusions of the thesis concern the ability of the Greek-Orthodox Church to influence government attempts at secularisation, as well as those Eurocentric modernisation efforts that conflict with the deep nationalistic undercurrents of Greek society. In addition, future research areas of investigation in Greek political culture will be identified, mainly in the direction of a more systematic study of what seems to constitute the essence of Greek political culture, as well as of a more thorough analysis of the role of religion within that culture.

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Introduction

Today's resurgence of religion in Greece's political culture is a phenomenon with far-reaching consequences. The concept of political culture is here identified with the growing interest in the irrational character of political systems – essentially, the role of the unconscious in politics to the detriment of reason. Political culture is used as a conceptual tool so as to enhance our understanding of important but little explored aspects of both western and non-western political systems focused on values, symbols, and beliefs.

Forces as distinctive as the recrudescence of Islamic fundamentalism and Orthodox nationalism have shaped the politics of developing or recently emerged countries. The pervasive vitality and dynamism of religion in the constitution of political culture has created a new challenge for sociologists trying to understand the affinity between religion and political transformation, and for politicians attempting to manage the tension and turmoil around this dynamic affinity.

Changes in the conceptualisation of both religion and politics have generated a renewed interest in the meaning of secularisation and modernisation, the sacred and profane sources that inform and articulate national culture, and the impact of the interpenetration of the religious and political spheres on social change.

This thesis will explore how the integration of political culture and religion, specifically Eastern-Orthodox Christianity, has affected the modernisation process in post-1974 Greece. Despite the widespread resurgence of nationalist politics and religiously defined conflicts in the Balkans since the end of the Cold War, Eastern Christianity has remained *terra incognita* in most analyses dealing with social change. The region is simply relegated to the category of late-developers with few prospects for successful democratic modernisation.

Both US and EU policy making institutions have largely ignored the possibly constructive ways in which the Orthodox Churches might contribute to democratic modernisation, and use a pejorative discourse that explains the putative non-European nature of the Balkan societies in terms of the Byzantine Orthodox legacy, which is considered an inherently non-democratic religious tradition. This hypothesis is analysed and tested throughout the thesis in terms of both its theoretical presuppositions and empirical reality.

Part One of the thesis furnishes the historical background of the Greek-Orthodox political culture, and then analyses Church-State relations during the 1980s and 1990s.

Part Two examines and evaluates the above historical and theoretical presuppositions in the context of three case studies of contemporary Church-related movements that have influenced relations between Church and State as well as Greek political culture generally.

The main objective has been to show some major connections between Church and politics in post-dictatorship Greece (since 1974). Most politicians and commentators with only superficial knowledge of Christian Orthodoxy contend that, due to its continued close collaboration with the State, the Greek Church has not been able to assume an independent political stand against the secular authorities, and that the State, through constitutional provisions and historical precedent, has exerted such pressure on the Church as to render it almost politically subjugated. While it is true that these pressures have reduced the power of the Church as an official political institution, they have not eliminated the Church's indirect influence on Greek politics. In fact, because of its resources and its unique position in Greek society, the Church is now re-emerging as a powerful and extremely popular institution demanding to play a major role in Greece's future within Europe.

This study will revolve around the capacity of the Greek Church to affect, both constructively and negatively, the socialist PASOK government's initial aspirations to implement radical changes towards secularisation, as well as the ostensibly Eurocentric orientation of Greek foreign policy. The converse of this situation is the government's inability to present a consistent and uniform strategy with respect to the Church's role in Greek political culture. Its ambivalent dual strategy of tolerating and even enhancing the Church-nation-State connection at the same time as upholding the country's condition as a secular EU democracy underscores the main problematic investigated by the thesis.

Basic Conceptualisations

The history, theory, and empirical reality of the relationship between Church and politics in Greece will be examined in terms of three basic analytical concepts. The first is secularisation, with the main focus on the ability of the Church to control the secularising policy of the government, and on the major political forces relying on

Church support in return for propagating anti-secular political convictions. The chief political development encapsulating the secularisation debate relates to Church-State separation. The wider concept of secularisation is connected with this through the socialisation/nationalisation of Church property, liberalisation of the Civil Code (e.g. introducing civil marriage), and reforms towards a more secular education.

The second basic conceptualisation concerns the correlation between Church-State separation and democratisation. This will be explored at three levels: (i) the reaction within the Church and Church-related movements concerning the government's intention to implement changes to upgrade the role of the laity, and promoting gradual autonomy from the State and a generally more inclusive internal Church; (ii) external democratisation affecting Church tolerance towards religious and ethnic minorities; and (iii) the purely political dimension of democratisation in terms of political interference in Church issues and vice versa.

The third approach relates to the position of the Church and Church-related movements towards westernisation, which will again be examined from three viewpoints: (i) the complex issue of modern Greek cultural and religious identity as shaped by tradition and modernity; (ii) the position of the Christian-Orthodox political culture *vis-à-vis* EU integration and the wider issue of globalisation; and (iii) specific foreign-policy issues (the so-called "national issues") and in how far the Orthodox element plays an important role in Greek political culture, whether the Orthodox political culture presents serious obstacles to the country's political orientation (re Greece's commitments within NATO and the EU).

Despite some partial overlapping, these three areas are analytically distinct and may vary independently. So Church-State separation is not an essential precondition for democratising the Church, and vice versa. Also, westernisation does not inevitably lead to the marginalisation of religion from politics; in contemporary Greece the links between religion and politics are reflexive and mutually transformative, with the interpenetration of religion and politics strongly evident in informing and articulating cultural concepts of collective identity.

A note on Secularisation

From both an anthropological and a sociological perspective, religions produce social stability. If not always the core element, they are indispensable for the organisation of human societies, offering stability and cohesion on the social level,

and a meaningful interpretation of reality for the individual. In traditional communities, religion both asserts and reinforces the well-defined and organised system of mutual dependencies that form society, and at the same time attempts to rationalise and control the adverse impact of natural processes beyond human manipulation (natural catastrophes, illness, death). In this context, technological and scientific progress has been seen as contributing to the weakening of religious belief as more and more of these natural processes are understood and partially controlled.

The related notion of secularisation is the process by which the sacred is made profane, belief in the supernatural because belief in only the natural, i.e. in what can be physically observed and rationally and scientifically explained. Secularisation and the debate around it is a phenomenon considered as having been developed in the West and relevant to other societies in direct relation to their perspective level of westernisation. It is seen as both a result of, as well as an impetus to modernisation, and in non-western contexts both constitute indicators of westernisation. Modern capitalism, with its immoral reverence for and pursuit of profit and its glorification of the meaningless and wasteful consumerism that has become almost an end in itself, has also been perceived as contributing to the secularisation of western and westernised societies.¹ In the case of England, for instance, Alasdair MacIntyre attributes the secularisation of society to the Industrial Revolution and its concomitant effects on the traditional social and moral fabric.²

David Martin,³ on the other hand, although also perceiving urbanism and industrialisation as adversely affecting religious institutions, does not consider the process of secularisation as an inevitable axiomatic development, but rather as a phenomenon dependent on the cultural, social, and historical background of the societies potentially affected by it. Martin sees inevitable secularisation as more of an ideological construct than a theory based on solid observable facts, and goes as far as to state that “the word secularisation should be erased from the sociological dictionary”. Perhaps it would be better to adopt Nikos Kokosalakis’s differentiation between the secularisation thesis as referring to the recognised and accepted marginalisation of religious institutions in industrial societies, and a concept used to argue a broader axiomatic decline of religion in the contemporary

¹ Wilson 1976.

² MacIntyre 1967.

³ Martin 1969.

western/westernised world.⁴ Casanova claims that the latter postulate is “... a notion which has proven patently false as a general empirical proposition...”⁵ We should also keep in mind that scepticism has been a persistent feature of the western mind, taking many forms such as modernism in religion, scientific humanism, naturalism, rationalism, determinism, agnosticism, etc.⁶ Most importantly, however, when referring to secularisation, a clear distinction should be made between “...three very different, uneven and unintegrated propositions: secularisation as differentiation of the secular spheres from religious institutions and norms, secularisation as decline of religious beliefs and practices, and secularisation as marginalisation of religion to a privatised sphere.”⁷ These distinct aspects of secularisation should not be conflated but separately treated and examined.

According to Wilson, one of the main exponents of the theory, secularisation is the dominant trend in contemporary western societies and religion is on the decline. As modern notions of economic and technological progress, rationality, globalisation, consumerism, and individualism supplant religious values as the dominant values of the western world, religion is on the way to gradual extinction. He contends that since changes in religion reflect social changes, “secularisation relates to the diminution in the social significance of religion.”⁸ It should also be noted in this respect that in most cases the established churches of Europe (historically protected as they were from dissent and divergence through their association with the state), within the framework of a secular state, were unable to maintain the necessary levels of popular support that would prevent their decline.⁹

Wilson considers the proliferation of new religious movements and growing western interest in Eastern religions as manifestations of individualistic consumerism that cater to the existential and moral gap that western capitalism has produced, and which are not to be seen as signs of a true religious revival countering the secularisation process. Membership of such movements tends to be individualistic and ephemeral, and as there is no integration into the mainstream of the societies in which

⁴ Kokosalakis 1993a, 81:133-48.

⁵ Casanova 1994, p.7.

⁶ Radhakrishnan 1940, p.267.

⁷ Casanova 1994, p.211.

⁸ Wilson 1982, p.149.

⁹ cf. Madeley 2003a.

they operate, they are devoid of wider social significance or impact.¹⁰ Moreover, as Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan has observed, “Mysticism has a deep appeal to the spiritually minded. Science cannot minister to the needs of the soul; dogmatism cannot meet the needs of the intellect.”¹¹

Wilson’s arguments have been eloquently reaffirmed recently by Steve Bruce in his uncompromisingly titled book *God is Dead*.¹² However, as we shall see later in this thesis, the pivotal role the Greek-Orthodox Church and Christian-Orthodox religion play in Greek politics and society indicate that God may not yet be quite dead after all, at least not in conditions such as prevail in countries like Greece. The Greek-Orthodox Church, seen by the State and most political parties as an indispensable source of legitimation and power to the point of often becoming an *instrumentum regni*¹³, is an institution that few politically aspiring individuals or organisations will dare to antagonise, so testifying to a situation of tacit approval of church influence.

Wilson also believes that the effects and challenges of secularisation have led the various Churches to concentrate on themselves and on ways to affect a rapprochement among the different denominations: “In an age when Christianity has been demythologised ... ecumenicism becomes a new faith – something to believe in.”¹⁴ Given the association of nationalism and religion in contemporary Greek politics, it is hardly surprising that the leadership of the Greek-Orthodox Church is vehemently opposed to any such rapprochement with “heretics”, to the point of disapproving even the ecumenical orientation and initiatives of the Istanbul-based patriarchate, the purported spiritual centre of the Orthodox world.

In the context of the national mythmaking of modern nation-states Martin groups Greece, with those countries where religion has been closely identified with nationhood following a traumatic external domination. Such an association is strengthened when the country shares a border with one of a different dominant faith that is traditionally perceived as a threat.¹⁵ Following the national awakening however, the Greek-Orthodox Church increasingly promoted the lay and enlightened

¹⁰ Wilson, op.cit., ref. 1.

¹¹ Radhakrishnan, *ibid.*, p293.

¹² Bruce 2002.

¹³ Makrides 1991, p.291.

¹⁴ Wilson 1969, p151.

¹⁵ Martin 1978, p.107. Also see Madeley 2003a.

Hellenic values of the newly developed neo-Hellenic identity. This resulted in the triple secularisation of the Greek Church by: (a) identifying with the nation, (b) through secular power and corruption, and (c) via the promotion of Hellenism.¹⁶

Even if in respect to Greece the secularisation theory is generally accepted, we must note what, according to Bryan Wilson, is one of its main indicators, namely the level of political power of the Church. As he says: "Taking European societies at large, the first evident sign of secularity is the diminution in the political influence of the churches."¹⁷ As this thesis will demonstrate, the ability of the Greek-Orthodox Church to affect both Greek politics generally as well as specific governmental policies is not only not diminishing but has actually been increasing, due to factors and circumstances to be expounded in the course of this thesis.

Plan of Chapters

To assess the above hypotheses, *Chapter One* will give a historical review of the relationship between politics and Orthodoxy. When tracing the complex relationship between Orthodoxy, politics, and the West back to Byzantine and Ottoman times we shall find some of those past historical events and traumas are still reflected in Greece's political culture today. It will also be seen how the Greek-Orthodox culture gradually became estranged from its western and Latin counterpart, how religion affected the constitution of other institutions such as the State, and the way religion was manipulated to cement social order and promote nation-building.

This first chapter will trace the rise of religious and ethnic nationalism during the Ottoman period, present the conflict between Europhile modernists and Orthodox traditionalists during the Greek Enlightenment, and examine the position of the Church *vis-à-vis* the official western orientation of the Greek State after independence. It will end with a brief history of Church-State relations in the twentieth century and the cultural identity debate (western or Orthodox) during the same period.

This historical introduction to Church-State relations and to the issues of cultural identity and the State's religious policy will pave the way for the issues of secularisation, democratisation, and westernisation within the context of a detailed study of Church-State relations in post-dictatorship Greece.

¹⁶ Martin, *ibid*, pp. 262-263.

¹⁷ Wilson 1981, p.3.

Chapter Two will focus on the socialist PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) government's religious policy and its attempt to implement changes in Church-State relations towards secularisation, democratisation, and EU integration. State policies during that period can be understood as a move toward separation of the political and religious spheres by liberalising the traditional social legislation on matters such as civil marriage, abortion and adultery, and restructuring the organisation of the Church along participatory, democratic lines designed to empower the laity.

It will be shown how the party's secular policy was only partly realised as a result of the confusion due to PASOK's socialist-versus-populist ideology and strategy. The party's catch-all political tactics strove to combine profound changes towards socialism with keeping intact Orthodoxy's pivotal role in the national constitution of Greek society. This created confusion and misunderstanding in Church-State relations and a legitimacy crisis for both institutions.

Chapter Three examines how this legitimacy crisis has developed since 1995, and the spectacular change in the leadership of the Church that coincided with a change in the leadership and orientation of the government towards a more Eurocentric strategy. The emergence of a charismatic new Archbishop, who gained unprecedented popularity and became able to defy the government's antagonism and overtly advocate his nationalistic political ideas, underscores the political power of the Church to influence Greek public life.

His uncompromising tactics have shown the precariousness of the balance between the differing conception of collective identity for Greece's State and Church, her two most important Greek institutions. This has resulted in a profound re-examination of the meaning of national identity in contemporary Greece. In short, PASOK's modernisation and Eurocentric stance engaged the religious leader in an extensive debate over his right to express political views, and the need for reforms within the Church towards democratisation, modernisation, and harmonisation with the rest of the EU. At the same time the Archbishop's successful resistance to Eurocentrism and secularisation has proved useful in showing how modernisation and Europeanisation in Greece cannot avoid the involvement of religion, and cannot disregard the privileged position of Orthodoxy in the people's consciousness.

Having examined Church-State relationships in Part One, the thesis evaluates these observations in three case studies of Orthodox-related movements that have

affected Church-State relations and, more generally, the Greek political culture. Part Two then studies the impact of religion on shaping the political culture and collective identity. The fundamentalist,¹⁸ Neo-Orthodox, and cosmopolitan versions of the Orthodox political culture that will be examined aim to demonstrate how the activism of religiously inspired movements exert an important influence both on the official Church as well as on the agenda, processes, and outcome of politics.

The historical development of political culture in Greece points to Church and State as the foremost institutional determinants of the national culture and, specifically, of what it means to belong to the national collective. Given the contradictions between the two competing worldviews, PASOK's Church-State policy became a struggle over the boundaries of secularity and Orthodoxy in Greek civil society and, most crucially, over establishing the legitimacy of the institutional arbiter of collective identity under conditions of modern democracy.

Chapter Four underscores the impact of religious fundamentalist groups on specific political developments in contemporary Greece. Both this and the other two case studies revolve around the threefold conceptualisation running all through the thesis, accounting for the two protagonists' positions *vis-à-vis* democratisation, secularisation, and westernisation.

The chapter first examines the liaison between the fundamentalist brotherhood *Zoë* and the junta dictatorship (1967-1974), and then provides examples of contemporary fundamentalist activism and their interactions with mainstream politics. It concludes that, due to interrelated factors such as the unprecedented popularity of the Archbishop's Eurosceptic nationalism, public insecurity regarding globalisation,

¹⁸ 'Fundamentalism' is a polysemic term with differing connotations according to context. For western Christian fundamentalists who introduced the term, fundamentalism takes a positive connotation and refers to a movement aiming to return to the fundamental principles of the Christian faith, as contained in the Holy Bible, which should be strictly adhered to. In relation to Islam, and other religions, on the other hand, the term has acquired a more sinister connotation and has come to refer to a fanatical belief in a righteous cause, based on the possession of an absolute religious/cosmic truth, in defense of which extremist actions are not only readily justified but in many cases also an imperative duty. For the purposes of the present thesis, the term is used more in this latter sense to refer to the most reactionary or strict/fanatical interpretations of Greek Orthodoxy.

EU cultural integration, and a large influx of non-Orthodox immigrants into Greece, fundamentalist politicians and religious groups ceased to identify with the extreme Right, and have been incorporated into the mainstream political and cultural picture as the “patriotic” social faction that cuts right across the political spectrum. This has introduced a totally new dimension into Greek political culture, in that it obliges the traditional parties, ideologies, coalitions and rivalries to reshape their stand on the role of the Church in Greek politics, and the role of Orthodoxy in foreign policy.

Indeed, the integration of political culture and religion in Greece means that identity issues and cultural dilemmas are entwined with ideological and political issues such as foreign policy. Inasmuch as the Archbishop and the (reactionary) patriotic political faction manage to attract popular support and media attention, forces allied to political Orthodoxy will inevitably influence relations between Greece and the West. Fundamentalism thus constitutes one part of the wider patriotic front that opposes the government’s secular policy and its Eurocentric political and cultural orientation.

Chapter Five examines another contemporary Orthodox movement that belongs to the broader Hellenocentric political and cultural faction. The so-called Neo-Orthodoxy evolved from a marginal intellectual endeavour in the early 1980s to determine the relation between Orthodoxy and Marxism, into a full-blown political critique against the government’s policies of westernisation and secularisation. Under the Archbishop’s leadership and the patriotic political umbrella, the Neo-Orthodox intellectuals provided support and legitimacy for opposing the prevailing government attitude to compromise on national issues (e.g. with Turkey over Cyprus, or to close the “Macedonian question”) and to abandon the nationalistic and populist tactics of the late 1980s/ early 1990s that had jeopardised Greece’s relations with its western allies.

The chapter will show how leading members of Neo-Orthodoxy and their ideas were gradually incorporated into left-wing politics. Civil-society organisations like the influential “Network 21” also adopted Neo-Orthodoxy and welcomed its advocates into an alliance for jointly promoting patriotic political intervention.

The chapter will also look at an alliance vindicating the contention that Greece is a prime example of the interpenetration of religion and political culture. This alliance resulted from the transformation of the hitherto internationalist communist party into a section of the patriotic Hellenocentric faction. Neo-Orthodox politicians

and thinkers were the mediators of this transformation, being able to combine a critique of the western paradigm with a leftist quest for independence and a nationalist quest for a pure authentic culture. As a leading member of this coalition, the Archbishop has cultivated strong ties with Neo-Orthodoxy, and did not hesitate to unite with communists, nationalists, and anarchists in an “unholy” front against westernisation and globalisation.

Chapter Six examines a different aspect of the Orthodox political culture, one that does not adopt a negative stance towards the West and fosters a positive appreciation of the Church’s role in a largely secular and multi-cultural environment. The Orthodox Academy of Crete (OAC) operates on Greek soil but belongs spiritually and administratively to the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople; independent of both the Athens Church hierarchy and the State, it maintains close cooperation with the World Council of Churches and the Council of European Churches.

As regards secularisation and democratisation, the OAC encourages lay participation in its activities and widely cooperates with civil society on matters of ecology, science, education, and gender equality. It advocates the theological concept of reconciliation as an antidote to nationalism, which it strongly condemns. The Academy organises annual inter-faith dialogues, as well as providing a communication platform between the Orthodox Church and representatives from major European political parties. In short, this case study presents a different aspect of the Orthodox political culture, one that is embraced by the Eurocentric political and social forces and endorsed by the leading members of the government.

As a result of the PASOK’s catch-all strategy, however, this version of Orthodoxy is less influential than the one championed by Archbishop Christodoulos. Fear of political costs and the clientelist structure on which the electoral objectives and power expedencies of most politicians rely, means that any Orthodox activism that does not rely on the Church-nation-State triad, remains without the political support needed for it to be effective.

Finally, the concluding *Chapter Seven* compares features from the case studies and the analysis of Church-State relations, with a view to examining any new theoretical implications in the relationship between the Greek-Orthodox political culture on the one hand, and democratisation, secularisation and westernisation on the other. The main question here is the extent to which the conclusions are relevant to a

general theory of secularisation, and whether this will enhance the understanding of the nature of modern Greek democracy, as well as the possible affinity between religion and Greece's democratic deficit. In this chapter the concept of "critical juncture", which Collier and Collier define as "a period of significant change ... which is hypothesised to produce distinct legacies"¹⁹ and "...a polarising event that produces intense political reactions and counter reactions..."²⁰ is introduced, as a particularly useful and relevant research tool for analysing the causal links of the subject matter examined.

The most important theoretical implications for the Greek case are:

(1) rejection of the secularisation and modernisation thesis, (2) the primary importance of the concept of political culture, (3) the need for a rigorous analysis of the role of religion in Greek political culture, (4) the relevance and limitations of Huntington's civilisation paradigm,²¹ (5) Greece's alternative path to modernity.

The bulk of writings on post-dictatorship Greek politics and history tend to endorse the assumptions of the secularisation and modernisation paradigm, viewing the western developmental experience as a model to emulate. Directly relevant to this, indeed to any discussion concerning modernisation, is Eisenstadt's important contribution to the field with the notion of "multiple modernity". Eisenstadt refutes the assumption that the modernity cultural program and institutional pattern arising in the West will gradually prevail all over the world, claiming that: "The actual developments in modernising societies have refuted the homogenising and hegemonic assumptions of this Western program of modernity. While a general trend toward structural differentiation developed across a wide range of institutions in most of these societies – in family life, economic and political structures, urbanisation, modern education, mass communication, and individualistic orientations – the ways in which these arenas were defined and organised varied greatly, in different periods of their development, giving rise to multiple institutional and ideological patterns."²² The West cannot claim a monopoly on modernity as there are multiple paths to it as different societies develop according to their specific cultural and historical backgrounds and peculiarities.

¹⁹ Collier and Collier 1991, p. 29.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 37.

²¹ Huntington 1996.

²² Eisenstadt 2002, pp.1-2.

Most authors are agreed that Orthodoxy and the Church did not greatly affect the nature of Greek modernity and democracy. Modernisation is taken to equal secularisation and the concomitant marginalisation of religion, to emancipate society from religious and irrational control over human reason by marginalising traditional values and replacing them with rational concerns, as well as efficient, meritocratic and specialised forms of social life. With its rational structural and functional differentiation of the social system, secularisation renders faith a matter of individual choice among a wide range of worldviews and belief systems.

Implicit in the secularisation thesis is the assumption that secularisation and the decrease in Church authority are brought about by politics and the growth of civil society. However, it will be argued that in Greece conditions of secularity and modernity do not lead to the peripheralisation of religion from politics. Instead, the historical and contemporary affinities between religion, the State, and political culture have initiated a process of dynamic transformation resulting from their mutual interpenetration.

Moreover, by jointly participating in the construction of a concept of collective identity that includes unresolved inconsistencies (related to the imperfect coexistence of secular and sacred aspects), any attempt by either institution to alter its role *vis-à-vis* the other could be seen as destabilising those psychological, emotional, and cognitive bonds that constitute the collectivity. The most contentious episodes in Church-State political cultural relations under PASOK were interpreted precisely in these terms by principal actors in each group, which helps to explain the failure to bring about institutional change, and underscores the determinant capacity of culture on politics.

Methodology

Before explaining how evidence was obtained and the research skills employed in the methodology of the thesis, and before focusing on a justification of the specific selection of case studies, it should be stated why the author chose this particular field of research. The reasons for the choices made were as much personal-subjective, as they are practical and theoretical. They relate to personal biographical influences, to a specific interest in sociology, as well as to more practical issues like research access, evidence availability and, most important, compatibility of the case studies with the main conceptual tools of the thesis.

Why did the author embark on this specific research area? The answer to this is that the research was a product of broad questions raised in the course of studies in sociology and social anthropology. The specific field of interest during the author's studies was the critique of ideology and identity from the post-Marxist perspective of critical post-modernism (e.g. Pierre Bourdieu's influential notion of the *habitus*). The intellectual genealogy of this approach can be found in the work of Max Weber, later developed by Gramsci, the Frankfurt School and others. This sociological framework addressed the issue of ideology from a perspective that gave increasing primacy ("relative autonomy" in post-Marxist terms) to the role of culture, traditional values and everyday life beliefs, which were previously marginalised as mere epiphenomena of an omnipotent class struggle.

In his undergraduate dissertation the author accordingly endeavoured to touch on the complex ramifications of the historical construction of the Greek national identity and how this has affected the politics of modernisation. He clearly showed that nationalism has been a quintessential ingredient of the Greek political culture. In this context, religion was seen as an important element consistently subjugated to politics and secular interference. In other words, most commentators recognised the importance the Orthodox Church had in the construction of the modern Greek identity and political culture, but attributed to it a passive role confined mainly to the narrow boundaries of a cultural resource, a spiritual heritage, and a Church structure strongly manipulated by the state for purposes of nation-building. While this was true indeed, it was all too clear that this approach does not allow for the possibility of a more active and creative intervention of religion and the Church to politics. There was little mention of the possibility that Church-State interpenetration was not a one-way-street of Church subjugation and State control, but a mutually transformative dynamic that assigned a crucial role to the Church, particularly inasmuch as it concerned the public legitimacy of the government and the politics of national identity and collective belonging.

If this deficit was true in mainstream Greek historiography, it was even more noticable in modern approaches to Greek politics that were strongly positivistic and deterministic, and focused on a general understanding of Greek political culture in terms of emulating or rejecting what was "happening in the West". This approach ignored more subjective and creative accounts of how different segments of Greek society were reacting towards the massive influences of secularisation, westernisation,

consumerism etc. On the other hand, various commentators in Greece and abroad constantly referred to the idiosyncrasy that Greek institutions and political culture have had and continue to have serious difficulties once they encounter the values and implications of Greece's western orientation.

This tension and turmoil between the Greek political culture and the values and institutional implications of secularisation and westernisation was not properly analysed nor systematically approached. During the 1990s, Greece witnessed profound challenges (EU integration, a massive influx of foreign immigrants, the Macedonian question, the Bosnian and Kosovo wars) that fuelled an unprecedented interest from politicians, intellectuals, the Church, civil society and the mass media, concerning the fate of Greek identity and Orthodoxy in late modernity and in western institutions. In the above context, religious sentiments and sensitivities appear in every single opinion poll as the strongest ingredient in the Greek collective identity.

The dialogue was superficial, however, and its sentimental and partisan character resulted in anathemas and simplistic conclusions – contending, for instance, that religion was mechanistically associated with an inward-looking cultural logic allegedly detrimental to Greece's European prospects. On the other hand, for the Hellenocentric political and cultural forces it was the modernisers with their poor knowledge of the wisdom entailed in the Greek-Orthodox way of life and their futile emulation of western systems having no resonance and appeal to the Greek people, who received the lion's share of the blame.

These profound shortcomings caused the author to embark on a systematic examination of exactly what constitutes Greek modernity and political culture, and how different actors in the religious, political, intellectual and civil-society spectrum stood vis-à-vis the identity dilemma of Greek modernity.

During the first year, the research focused on the history of philosophical ideas and affinities between the Enlightenment and its heritage in the context of a Europhile indigenous political and intellectual discourse, juxtaposed with more inward-looking political and cultural forces affiliated with Orthodoxy. This was extremely instructive for addressing questions on the genealogy of the larger picture of contemporary Greek political culture. Although initially the grand narratives of the relationship between the Enlightenment and Orthodoxy were much more appealing to the author than a detailed empirical analysis of Church-State relations, it soon became very clear that the latter reflected and demonstrated all the traditional cleavages entailed in the long

intellectual struggle among traditionalists and modernisers in their inclusive or exclusive definition and control of what it means to be Greek Orthodox and the dynamics in Church-nation-State relations. To recapitulate: the main reason that prompted the author to undertake this particular research was the realisation that any analysis of the political situation in modern Greece that discounts the significance of the religious factor will fail to account for the realities of the current developments.

This need to engage with the linkages between political culture and the Greek-Orthodox collective identity was further fuelled by the author's subjective experience as a Greek living eight years abroad in the potent environment of the British version of western culture, coupled with the equally formidable ambience of multicultural London. It is certainly true that most of the enquiries that led to the decision to undertake this particular research endeavour were influenced by the fact that, in addition to the academic stimuli gained through his studies in London, the author was thus provided with the distance and objectivity necessary for confronting issues that touched on sensitive parts of his personal identity and patriotism.

Given the abstract and elusive nature of a topic dealing with the complex relationship between tradition and modernity, investigation of the empirical reality required a flexible research methodology. Since the main objective has been to demonstrate the interpenetration of political culture and religion, the thesis deliberately avoids focusing exclusively on a detailed study of formal religious organisations through structured interviews and quantitative analysis. Instead, a research methodology was preferred that is flexible enough to permit looking at the whole picture of the complex ramifications involved in interactions between the State, the Church, and political culture. Evidence and information were obtained in the following ways.

The thesis includes the results of an extensive review of secondary literature and the media. Coincidentally with the research, Church-State relations and issues of cultural identity became one of the most important subjects in Greek public life, capturing the attention of virtually all Greeks and daily producing headlines. With the enormous rise in interest in the subject, Greek editors, journalists and writers have published extensive texts and facilitated the presentation of the intellectual debate between Eurosceptic and Europhile thinkers.

The thesis incorporates a detailed study of the work of intellectuals associated with the case studies. Especially the Neo-Orthodox movement has produced a highly sophisticated, indigenous critique of the western paradigm based on Orthodox theology and Marxist politics, the study of which was imperative for a thorough understanding of the affinity between culture and politics in Greece.

Methodological emphasis was given to participatory observation of events organised by the groups involved in the case studies selected. This included participation in formal and informal discussions, seminars etc., including two weeks at the Orthodox Academy of Crete (OAC), attendance at most of the “Network 21” meetings, at many political panel discussions of Neo-Orthodox thinkers and fundamentalist politicians, and at demonstrations organised by the official Church against the religious policy of the State.

Participatory observation aimed to engage in highly differentiated, even antagonistic milieu, from neo-Marxist intellectual elites to hard-core fundamentalists and from devout conservatives to Christian anarchists. This demanded a modified form of participation, of openly attending as an observer and researcher, watching and listening and questioning over a certain amount of time. This role affords considerable scope for discovering phenomena and their interconnections, and at the same time it flexibly allows investigation of different contexts. Indeed, the research required meeting with many different people to secure evidence not just for the case studies (chs 4, 5, 6) but also for a contemporary analysis of Church-State relations (chs 2 and 3).

Throughout the long course of study, the research benefited from many different acquaintances and working relationships, from religious prelates and politicians such as the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Archbishop, Prime Minister Simitis and a number of ministers, to many more politicians, clergy, journalists, academics and other laymen associated with one way or another with the subject matter of the work. Of course it was not always possible to engage in thorough-going discussions with all of them, but it was all part of a continuous familiarisation process that paved the way for the conclusions.

A strong component of this modified form of participatory observation is informal but intensive in-depth interviewing. Formal interviews and tape recordings were avoided because a detailed and permanent record being made tends to render the informant reluctant to express other than theologically and politically “correct” views.

With some of the individuals involved in the case studies it was possible to meet several times and exchange views so as to gain a fuller understanding of the subject.

Finally, much of the evidence was secured through collection and analysis of primary sources, such as minutes of events organised by the case-study groups, pamphlets and other documents distributed by them, evidence from the official archives of the Church of Greece, and personal notes from events.

What were the reasons for selecting these particular case studies and what difficulties were encountered along the way?

The purpose of the present case studies is to show how far the attributes of these Greek movements, agree or disagree with the observations made in the analysis of Church-State relations, and how different versions of the Orthodox political culture (fundamentalist-entrenched, Neo-Orthodox syncretic and cosmopolitan-communicative) are situated with respect to the main conceptual tools employed in the thesis (modernisation, secularisation, westernisation).

For reasons of the thesis' consistency and scope, no attempt was made to engage comparatively and exhaustively with the wider theoretical questions that are associated with the sociology of modernisation, secularisation, and westernisation. Instead, the thesis employs such theoretical tools as best illuminate the specific Greek case. As will be seen, the case studies were selected for examination because each one develops attributes that are notably absent from the pertinent literature on Greece and the Orthodox world, or least inaccessible to commentators not speaking Greek.

As a result of their different places in the political conjuncture the three case studies exemplify the political culture of the post-junta period (after 1974), which culminated during the 1990s. The three studies constitute a continuum extending from the fundamentalist-entrenched political culture to the soft-universalistic one, and cover all possible variations. Accordingly, the subject-organisations and affiliated groups of all three case studies were affected by the same dilemmas and issues as faced in the Greek political culture during this period (modernisation, secularisation, westernisation, consumerism, urbanisation, massive influx of foreign immigrants, etc.), as well as by the same internal political developments (transition to democracy, PASOK's ascent to power, the Left's wavering between patriotism and internationalism) and "national" issues (E.U. integration, the Cyprus and Macedonian questions, the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo).

The common Orthodox/religious origins of the three case studies provided a framework for illustrating the differences and similarities in their shared strategic dilemmas. The political and cultural outlook of all three was built around a core of the same strategic dilemmas, but the answers are different in each case. A detailed account is given of how the common cultural background (Orthodox) and a mutual desire to resort to politics led to the articulation of different political and cultural identities. This shows that each of the three cases is not simply a product of its contextual setting, but also a partial producer of its chosen trajectory.

Moreover, these specific case studies were chosen because their ideological profile and main advocates were seen to be most relevant to the subject of the thesis and the conceptual tools employed. With respect to their compatibility with the work's basic conceptualisations (secularisation, democratisation, westernisation), fundamentalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, and cosmopolitanism are three broad movements in the Orthodox political culture that demonstrate a proactive position both politically and ideologically in terms of our three basic concepts and Greece as a whole.

These types correspond to a methodological approach that is laid out in accordance with the degree to which the three movements foster a cultural logic that is either positive (cosmopolitan cultural logic), negative (entrenchment cultural logic), or syncretic (catch-all cultural logic) vis-à-vis secularisation, democratisation, and westernisation.

Working through a twofold research framework, the thesis addressed questions dealing with the complex issue of cultural identity and political culture, approached through the perspective of a more pragmatic and detailed analysis of Church-State relations. Bearing in mind this twofold approach and the overriding conceptual tools, the cases were chosen in accordance with their heuristic value – namely, because they could provide valuable information and data relevant to the main questions addressed in the thesis.

It was decided to select as case studies two broad movements attracting a wide range of groups and sympathisers, and as a third (that of the OAC) a formal organisation affiliated to a movement. The fluidity of Greek political culture during the 1990s being a prime target of the thesis, It was considered that the most accurate examination of such fluidity of movements and political-cultural alliances in the 1990s would be by means of studying groups that were themselves subject to fluidity rather than by comparing specific, singled-out and perfectly comparable formal

organisations. Such fluidity renders any theoretical and methodological endeavour extremely difficult. However, on the other hand this twofold approach of furnishing case studies of movements and organisations allows a narrower focus on the organisations of the Greek-Orthodox political culture and makes the specification of attributes somewhat more feasible and reliable. On the other hand, the “movement dimension” introduces into the analysis larger historical and political accounts of wider networks that interplay in the Greek political culture.

Another criterion decisive in the final selection of case studies was geographic consistency. The intention was to move from the local to the national scale and to furnish examples of nation-wide importance, seeking case-study examples that represent the whole of Greece rather than a specific local group.

At a time when Neo-orthodoxy’s human resources and ideology were debated every day from mainstream politicians, and civil society, the author was faced with an unprecedented opportunity to surpass the narrow boundaries of an isolated group of people, (as it had been the case in the early 1980s when Neo-Orthodoxy was still a marginal intellectual endeavour examining the affinities between Marxism as an emancipatory discourse and Orthodoxy as a revolutionary spiritual call), and address larger political questions.

The overall picture that unfolded during the 1990s, especially following Archbishop Christodoulos’ enormous success and impact, presented a unique opportunity to examine how the official Church, powerful civil-society groups, political parties from the whole spectrum, media, and intellectuals were situated vis-à-vis Neo-Orthodoxy’s positions on secularisation, democratisation and westernisation. Consequently, the selection of case studies prompted a research approach that was rather more inclusive, and other possible case study options were included in umbrella case studies. Obviously, a rigorous presentation of a different selection of case studies would perhaps have presented a more straightforward story. For all that, the research did not disregard other options, but attempted to put them together under umbrella movements like fundamentalism and Neo-Orthodoxy. For example, the powerful civil-society organisation “Network 21” was the subject of thorough investigation with many informal interviews, participation in events and public lectures, and examination of their written material. But rather than focus exclusively on this specific group, it was decided to put it with other examples in a more inclusive and representative picture (i.e. the Neo-Orthodox movement). Similarly, some

considerable effort was spent examining the fundamentalist publication “Orthodox Press” by participating in their scheduled weekly meetings etc., but eventually it was the political connections of this group and its affiliation with the political-culture dimension of the study that captured the attention.

To recapitulate: the research methodology of the thesis employed a combination of primary and secondary sources. The primary material and the interviews gave access to the participants’ views and strategies. The secondary sources enhanced the process of unifying fragmented information into a coherent framework. The research was obstructed to a certain extent by the absence of collective archives and the lack of detailed historical accounts of the organisations, movements, and groups involved. In some instances (the OAC and the Neo-Orthodox movement) the lack of previous research made access to personal records, contacts, and literature the only means of obtaining information.

Last but not least, an issue that affected research access and penetrability to the various sources of information relates to the author’s surname. His father, Constantine Moskoff, was a public figure and known to most of the individuals approached by the author. He was generally considered a romantic Marxist historian, poet, politician, and diplomat who approached the politics of emancipation and class consciousness from the point of view of the particularities of Greek history and the sensitivities of Orthodox identity. Particularly concerning the Neo-Orthodox and cosmopolitan movements, he was one of the first to see the complex affinities between Marxism and Orthodoxy in the early 1980s. This gave the author privileged access to informants. For instance, six months of sharing a flat with the Neo-Orthodox key figure and famous media personality Kostas Zouraris was virtually fieldwork around the clock and benefited the research process enormously.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Historical processes from the 4th century AD onwards have continually modified the relationship between Church, State, and political culture in Byzantine, Ottoman, and modern Greece. Alongside the issue of relations between Church and State the westernisation debate has developed, namely the struggle of competing modernist and traditionalist cultural and intellectual forces to interpret and shape the orientation of the nation's political culture (traditionally eastern and Orthodox versus secular westernisation).

Religious worldviews like the Byzantine *Symphonia* or the Ottoman *Millet* system and the modern constitutional model each represented an attempt to institutionalise a vision of social organisation according to the prevailing views of religion and politics. While study of them shows that the origins of contemporary culture in Greece are rooted in historical belief systems whose actualisation was primarily guided by Church and State interaction, they also demonstrate that the main conflict between the two institutions concerned the issue of collective identity. What this meant in each historical period depended on how Church and State claimed the right to define and protect it, and their developing interrelationship led to the emergence of contradictions and inconsistencies in the political culture over this issue.

1.2 The Roman Era, the Great Schism, and Byzantine Hellenism (313-1453)

The conversion of Constantine the Great (in 313 AD) and the occupation of the imperial throne by a Christian emperor are momentous and crucial events in the history of Europe. This conversion ended the age of martyrs and persecution, and the Church of the catacombs became the Church of the empire. In 324 AD, Constantine decided to move the capital of the Roman empire from the Italian peninsula to the shores of the Bosphorus. On the site of the Greek city of Byzantium he built a new capital and named it after himself, *Constantinoupolis*. His motives were partly economic and political but also religious. Old Rome was too deeply stained with pagan associations to be the centre of the Christian empire that he envisaged.

By the end of the second century, the western world had gradually become conscious of its association with Rome. Western Christianity spread from Rome, and most of the western churches regarded the Roman church as the mother church from which they received the traditions of their faith and apostolic succession. While at

this early stage the church of St Peter was the object of special respect in the East, early theological and organisational disputes already showed a tendency towards formation of a separate socio-religious identity.¹ In the words of historian S. Runciman, the two attitudes to theology and culture were essentially contradictory: “The East enjoyed speculation and argument ... and avoided doctrinal pronouncements and condemnation ... the West had a simpler, stricter and more legalistic and logical concept of right and wrong beliefs.”²

Church-State relations in this first period provide an apt example of how rivalries springing from early theological disputes exercised a profound influence on the institutional structure of the two worlds as it developed in the long history when the concepts of “development” and “progress” acquired different meanings in the intellectual discourse of the two arms of Christendom. The Byzantine concept of Church-State relations was based not on any concordant or juridical circumscription of power, but on faith in the Christian Church, which the emperor first and through him the empire recognised as a truth superior to all else.

From the sixth century on we can clearly perceive the progressive orientalisation of the empire in its culture, psychology, art, and court ritual. The Byzantine mission developed eastward and, although the East was still connected by organic succession with Rome, a new Byzantine world developed, while the Roman West plunged into those dark ages from which Roman-Germanic Europe would later emerge. It was at this time that the Hellenisation of Byzantium took place. This development can be seen in official terminology (where Greek terms replaced Latin), the appearance of Greek inscriptions on coins, and the change of the legislative language from Latin to Greek. At the same time the triumph of Islam defined the geographical and cultural boundaries of Byzantium in the East.

The estrangement of Eastern and Western Christendom was a long and complicated process, conditioned by cultural, political and economic factors manifested entirely on theological grounds. For example, as a result of the iconoclast conflict, Rome and Constantinople had to establish other alliances with third parties to confront the Islamic threat in the South and that of the Barbarians from the North. Pope Stephen, cut off from Byzantium in 754 and in need of help, turned northwards

¹ These disputes concerned Arianism, the celebration of Easter, and the question of baptism.

² Quoted by Ware 1983.

to the Frankish ruler Pepin - the first step in a decisive change of orientation that eventually brought Rome increasingly under Frankish influence. Half a century later, on Christmas Day in the year 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charles the Great, King of the Franks, as Emperor. When Charlemagne sought recognition from the ruler in Byzantium he was rebuffed. The Byzantines adhering to the principle of imperial unity regarded the Franks as intruders and the papal coronation as an act of schism within the empire. Matters were exacerbated by linguistic differences. By the year 450 very few people in the West could speak Greek, and after 600, although Byzantium still called itself the Roman empire, it was rare for one of its inhabitants to speak Latin. Greek East and Latin West, no longer drawing upon the same sources or reading the same books, began to interpret their officially common Christian tradition in increasingly divergent ways.

Cultural and political estrangement easily led to ecclesiastical disputes and general prejudice. When Charlemagne was refused recognition by the Byzantine emperor, he retaliated with a charge of heresy against the Byzantine Church. He denounced the Greeks for not using the *filioque* in the Creed, and declined to accept the decisions of the seventh Ecumenical Council.³

The greatest difficulty came from papal claims to extend Rome's jurisdiction over the East. The Greeks assigned the pope primacy of honour, but not the universal supremacy which he regarded as his due. The pope viewed infallibility as his own prerogative, while the Byzantines held that in matters of the faith the final decision rested with a council representing all the bishops of the Church. Cultural and political divisions combined to bring about an increasing estrangement, but there was still no open schism. In the long transition from estrangement to schism three incidents are of particular importance: the quarrel between Photius and Pope Nicolas I,⁴ the crusades, and the Frankish occupation of Constantinople in 1204.

The dispute between Photius and Nicolas I was clearly over the papal claims. In 865 Nicolas wrote that "the Pope is endowed with authority over all the earth, that is over every church", but this precisely the Byzantines would not accept. Open dispute broke out over who (Rome or Constantinople) was responsible for missionary activity

³ Originally the Creed ran: "I believe... in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father." This is recited unchanged by the East to this day, but the West inserted an extra phrase "and from the Son" (in Latin, *filioque*).

⁴ Usually known as the Photian schism.

among the Slavs, and over the precise teachings by the missionaries.⁵ This dispute was essentially one that involved heightened geopolitical interest. Rome and Constantinople alike were anxious to bring the Balkan peninsula into their sphere of jurisdiction. The year 1054 was a critical juncture for the unity of the Church.⁶ The Normans forced the Greeks of Byzantine Italy to conform to Latin usage; in return, the Patriarch demanded that the Latin churches of Constantinople should adopt Greek practices, and when they refused closed them down. Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael Cerularius excommunicated each other leading to an official schism between the two Churches. Ordinary Christians in East and West, however, were largely unaware of the geopolitical and ecclesiastical disputes. It was the crusades that eventually made the schism definitive: they introduced a new spirit of antagonism, bitterness, and prejudice, and brought the conflict down to the level of the people. Antioch was captured from the Turks in 1098 and the crusaders proceeded to set up Latin patriarchates despite the already existing Greek one. The Greeks in Antioch were unwilling to recognise the Latin patriarch, and the two rivals divided the Christian population between them.

Worse was to come in 1204, when Constantinople fell to the knights of the Fourth Crusade. The crusaders were originally bound for Egypt, but let themselves be persuaded by Alexius, the dispossessed emperor, to turn aside to Constantinople to restore him to the throne. This western intervention in Byzantine politics exacerbated the situation, and the crusaders, in their hunger for gold and disgusted by what they regarded as Greek duplicity, sacked the city and set up a short-lived Latin kingdom, which ended in 1261 when the Byzantines recovered their capital. Eastern Christendom never forgot those appalling days of pillage, even the Saracens were considered merciful and kind compared with the men who bore the cross of Christ on their shoulders. The long-standing doctrinal disagreements and differences in cultural and intellectual outlook were now reinforced on the Greek side by an intense feeling of resentment against western aggression and sacrilege. After 1204 there can be no doubt that Christian East and West were divided.

Despite the recapture of Constantinople, the territorial integrity of the empire had been irreparably damaged by the Fourth Crusade and the establishment of Frankish rulers throughout the Eastern empire. However, with the gradual decline of

⁵ *Filioque*, rules of fasting, married clergy and, etc.

⁶ cf. Madeley 2003a.

the empire as an autonomous State, the lasting legacy of bitterness and distrust began to coincide with an intellectual and political desire to restore East-West relations, either to confront the rise of Islam effectively or from intellectual admiration for western cultural developments. This marked the beginning of an intellectual and political debate that has imbued the development of the modern Greek intellectual identity and culture with ambivalence and confusion ever since.

As early as the thirteenth century, the long history of disunion notwithstanding, the Byzantine emperors realised the need for western support if they were not to lose more territory to the Turks. The mass of the population however, remained steeped in anti-Latin prejudice and remained true to Orthodoxy as the only true faith. On many occasions in Greek history these profound convictions were at the root of a particular kind of social dissent felt by the Orthodox population against the elite's western propensities.⁷

When the emperor Michael VIII, in an effort to avert a threatened invasion by Charles of Anjou, pursued a pro-western policy which culminated in his submission to Rome under the Union of Lyons (1274), he provoked a bloody conflict between Unionists and anti-Unionists which further undermined the cohesion of the realm. Although it was by now clear that the final eclipse of the eastern empire was imminent, the intellectual and artistic life of the last dynasty (the Paleologoi) displayed remarkable vigour. Under the patronage of emperor Andronikos II there was a considerable revival of interest in the culture of ancient Greece, despite its pagan connotations. Nor were intellectual developments in the West ignored. Dimitri Kydones' translation of St Thomas Aquinas' *Summa contra Gentiles* into Greek in 1354 was an important milestone in Greek history, because it marks the beginning of a progressive shift of intellectual emphasis towards the culture and civilisation of the West. Kydones' admiration for Aquinas' theology led to his conversion to Roman rites. His translation of the *Summa Theologia* is the first sign of a Latinophile tendency among Greek intellectuals, although mainstream Byzantine education continued patristically to use the ideas and language of the Church Fathers.

In western Europe this was replaced by Scholasticism – the great synthesis of philosophy and theology that employed new categories of thought, a new theological

⁷ Later, Orthodox criticism was launched against the Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries and modernisation in the 19th and 20th centuries, both considered to entail a Western bias and to be alien to Greek culture and identity.

method and new terminology to rationalise religious thought, and which paved the way for the scientific view of morality culminating in the Reformation and the Enlightenment. In the briefest possible terms, Scholasticism has been described as a “technology of truth”, a methodology of theory and practice that emphasises the absolute simplicity and non-differentiation of the divine essence and truth.

In other words reason although still divine in character, came to be the absolute truth, guarded by the Inquisition and the austere blessing of God. In contrast to the absolutist nature of the scholastic approach to progress, the 14th century saw the revival of an eastern mystical doctrine known as Hesychasm (Greek for quietism). Here we have the first example in Greek intellectual history of a debate between tradition and change. This revival of Eastern mysticism found its most determined advocate in Gregory Palamas, a monk on Mount Athos who later became metropolitan of Thessaloniki. Some Byzantine theologians, particularly the Greco-Italian monk Barlaam of Calabria who essentially represented the Latinisers, attacked Palamas for failing to justify in meaningful and tangible terms a cosmology suitable for the common people and so helping to cement a unified culture.

The mystical tradition of Hesychasm embodies the apophatic teaching, that God cannot be properly comprehended by the human mind, nor can we recognise his truth in absolute rational terms like those of Scholasticism. Intellectual debates such as the one between western Scholasticism and eastern apophatism were crucial for preparing the historical and intellectual ground on which the West developed a philosophy of political culture based on rational pragmatism, whereas the East developed a more idiosyncratic notion of progress based on subjectivity and a personal relation with God’s truth (and by extension on any authority that can claim a legitimate monopoly of the “truth” (theological or secular).

If Orthodox culture was undergoing a severe crisis by being drawn to the West, its power as a unifying bond for brotherhood was strengthened by the emergence of a specifically Greek-Hellenic (as opposed to merely Greek-speaking) Orthodox or Byzantine consciousness. As the Ottoman Turks advanced on the very heart of the empire, some of the inhabitants came to look upon themselves as the descendants of the ancient Hellenes. This particularly applied in the Morea where, during the early 15th century, despot George Gemistos Plethon stressed the historical continuity of the inhabitants and even changed his name so that it would resemble that of Plato. In contrast to the eastern theologians who interpreted the empire’s decline as

a sign of the demise of Orthodoxy – through either cultural subjugation to the West, or total defeat by Islam – Gemistos Plethon adumbrated a comprehensive scheme of social reform heavily influenced by Platonic ideas and the Hellenic ideal. He clearly perceived that the political stability of the State depends on the strength of its religious and spiritual foundations.

But no schemes for reform could stem the irresistible decline. Emperor Manuel II decided to visit western Europe (1400) to ask for support. He travelled to Venice, France and England, and met with considerable sympathy but little concrete help. In 1438-39 a council was held in Florence and a formula for reunion drawn up, but the emperor could not proclaim it publicly in Constantinople since only a minute fraction of the Byzantine clergy and people accepted the council decrees. Grand-Duke Lukas Notaras, echoing the popular sentiment, remarked: “I would rather see the Muslim turban in the midst of the city than the Latin mitre”. On 7 April 1453 the Turks began to attack Constantinople by land and sea. Outnumbered by more than twenty to one, the Byzantines maintained a brilliant but hopeless defence for seven long weeks. In the early hours of 29 May, a united service of Orthodox and Roman Catholics was held in the great church of St Sophia. The emperor, after receiving communion, died fighting on the walls. It was the end of the Byzantine empire.

1.3 Ottoman Occupation and the Emergence of Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment (1453-1821)

The Turkish occupation definitely did not involve the persecution of Christians. On the contrary, the Turkish ruler clearly meant to strengthen and ornament his empire with Greek culture, and one of his first acts after victory was to allow the Greeks to elect their own Patriarch. For the Turks, who were not religious fanatics, Christianity was simply the faith of the Greeks, and they made no distinction between secular and religious society. While Islam for them defined the entire civil structure of Mohammedan society, State, law, etc., it did not apply to non-Mohammedans.

Accordingly, the Christians in the Ottoman empire were accorded the status of a national/religious minority, the patriarch became their leader, and the higher clergy became the civil administrators of the Christian population. Theoretically, the Christian Church became a sort of State within a State. This historical period of Orthodox culture was marked by two interrelated phenomena: the consolidation of an

intellectual establishment that was profoundly influenced by developments in the West, and an unprecedented rise in religious (and later ethnic) nationalism.

The first breach in the universality of Christianity in the multi-cultural Roman and Byzantine worlds had been the division of the Christian empire when Byzantine patriotism was gradually transformed into a rejection of everything alien. As the national Greek element in its ideology increased, Christian universalism became Hellenism – which was not only condoned by Ottoman rule but gave unprecedented secular as well as religious authority to the ecumenical patriarch.

Although the empire had lost its geopolitical integrity, the task of the patriarch was to safeguard the faith and Hellenism. Paradoxically, the rise of Hellenism as a nationalist discourse was informed and articulated by Orthodox thinkers and elites who were profoundly influenced by western cultural achievements or belonged to the Greek diaspora. The first Patriarch elected under Turkish rule, Gennadios Scholarios (1405-1472), exemplified this intellectual movement.⁸ Mohammed II would never have agreed to give him such a position had he not been persuaded of his hostility to union with Rome,⁹ although Gennadios' intellectual orientation was profoundly unionist and influenced by western cultural achievements. His command of Latin was fluent, and his main interest was the theology of St Thomas Aquinas, most of whose works he translated, adopting the basic axioms of Scholastic philosophy.¹⁰

After the fall of Constantinople many Greek intellectuals found refuge in Italy, teaching the Greek language and philosophy at universities or translating classical Greek philosophers into Latin.¹¹ Between 1572 and 1600 more than twenty Greeks were teaching at the University of Padua. Another group of Greek thinkers was centred on the Patriarchal Academy in Constantinople, founded by Gennadios.¹² The main

⁸ Runciman 1968.

⁹ Mohammed needed to break any friendly relationship between Greeks and the West, so no western military aid could jeopardise his conquest.

¹⁰ Scholasticism interpreted the ancient Greek writers in terms of the teachings by the Orthodox Fathers.

¹¹ Such 15th and 16th century Greek intellectuals of the diaspora were Theodoros Gazis who taught at Ferrara and Rome, and Andronikos Kallistos in Bologna, Rome, Florence, Paris, London, and elsewhere.

¹² In the context of an independent Greek State.

personalities at the Academy had all been educated in the West and adhered to the Latin orientation established by Gennadios. The diaspora and the Patriarchal Academy shared the same objectives: they sought to attract western interest and military intervention for the liberation of eastern Christendom from the Turks. Although at this stage such aspirations did not take the shape of a specific nationalistic discourse, they formed the intellectual background of an ideology that fully emerged with the Greek intellectuals of the Enlightenment (17th -18th century).

Europe in the 16th century witnessed the conflict of the Reformation, and in 1540 the Pope founded the Society of Jesus for the dissemination of counter-Reformation ideas. Before long, Jesuit missionaries operated within the Greek-speaking areas of the Ottoman empire. With the consent of the Patriarchate they set up and developed a number of institutions whose influence in the 17th and 18th centuries helped to consolidate a Greek intellectual orientation that imported the ideas and values of western culture. In 1577, the Jesuits founded the Greek College of St Athanasios in Rome. It was directed by five cardinals, who offered advanced education to the Greek youth of the diaspora as well as to students from occupied mainland Greece whose families could afford to send them abroad. Thousands of Greeks eventually graduated from the school and contributed to the formation of an intellectual elite profoundly sympathetic to the ideas of the West. By the end of the 16th century, the Jesuits had similar establishments in Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Smyrna, Athens, and – indicative of the degree of Orthodox consent to such developments – after 1635 even on Mount Athos, the heart of Orthodox monasticism.

Notwithstanding this admiration for the West by the occupied Orthodox Greeks, very few were actually converted to Catholicism (2-3%) possibly because the majority of the population remained either ignorant of or hostile to the West and its culture.¹³

During the 17th century the Academy of the Patriarchate became the leading centre of Greek culture within the Ottoman domain. Its director, the Aristotelian philosopher Theophilos Korydalefs, was the perhaps most influential figure in occupied Greece's spiritual and intellectual life for more than a century. It was under his

¹³ However, there are some impressive examples of elite Orthodox clergy who converted to Catholicism. Among them were the metropolitan of Sparta (1625), three patriarchs of Ochrid (between 1624 - 1658), and the metropolitan of Rhodes (1645).

administration of the Academy that the emphasis shifted from the traditional mystical and apophatic heritage of Orthodox theology towards western Scholasticism and science.

Under Turkish rule education was confined to the elite, not available to the broad masses. The faithful received instruction in Church services whose formalistic and xenophobic character preserved the general spirit of Hellenism. According to a Russian traveller, the consequence was “pedantry and pomposity resulting from a ridiculous desire to use ancient Hellenic phrases in simple conversations in vernacular Greek. The teachers prefer to explain the state of the country two thousand years ago, instead of its contemporary situation.” Contrary to educated westernised Orthodox and secular elites, the Orthodox lay Greeks were polemically opposed to all foreign ideas, particularly Latin and later Protestant ones. But as the whole period was marked by escalating Latin propaganda, this proselytising injected new venom into the division between the Christian worlds.

The poor educational facilities resulted in a sharply divided culture, with a westernised elite, and a confused Orthodox laity further disorientated by an undefined and pretentious Hellenic ideal. Most important of all, during the Reformation – a period of review and re-evaluation of traditional values in the West – the Orthodox world was mute and could only entrench itself and preserve. It certainly could not engage in a constructive dialogue between tradition and change. The resultant sense of inferiority to everything western either led to imitation (by the elites), or entrenchment (by the laity). Nationalist sentiment, formalistic education, xenophobia and a sense of inferiority were aspects of this period in the history of Greek political culture that are persistent even today. They account for the difficulties encountered by any social policy trying to implement modernisation and introduce supra-nationality.

1.4 Church-State Relations in the Byzantine and Ottoman Periods

For more than sixteen centuries, the Greek Church and State played a central role in public life, defining the relationship between politics and religion. Both the *Symphonia* and the later *Millet* models reflect a worldview that envisioned a dynamic role for religion in public life.

1.4.1 The Byzantine *Symphonia* System

The putative goal of the *Symphonia* system was to create a Christian kingdom on earth where society would be structured according to Christian beliefs and ideas.

Similarly, the objective of the *Millet* (= nation) system was to model a society organised according to the tenets of Islam. The religious worldviews that informed Church-State relations offered an all-encompassing system of meaning to interpret historical events. Where Church and State subscribed to the same worldview (as in the Byzantine *Symphonia* model) their mutually reinforcing interpretation of historical experiences generated a coherent set of ideas and values that was shared by all members of society. However, in the Turkish *Millet* system, the Ottoman State and the Orthodox Church interpreted historical experience according to antagonistic worldviews, with society divided into separate ideas and beliefs.

In Byzantium, the patriarch and emperor were the respectively spiritual and secular ministers jointly responsible for ensuring that the Church-State *Symphonia* functioned correctly to achieve the universality of religion and empire. Because the creation of a Christian world through empire expansion rested on the State's ability to safeguard society against both external threat and internal fragmentation, the Church was necessarily subject to the legal and administrative framework built by the State. The emperor being entrusted with maintaining the ecclesiastical organisation and preserving doctrinal order for the Church within the empire, he enjoyed ecclesiastical prerogatives in non-doctrinal matters. The most important of these was his influence over the process of patriarchal succession by direct nomination and appointment, and his mandate to preserve the unity of the Church by calling ecumenical councils.

On the other hand, *Symphonia* made the Patriarch responsible for the spiritual welfare of Byzantine society, including matters of State and its leadership. Although the Church surrendered the management of its external affairs and administration to the State, it always considered this surrender contingent on the State's own submission to divine law. On the one hand the State recognised the Church as a powerful force for imposing cultural unity on the heterogeneous peoples under State control and the Church's missionary work as an effective precursor to direct political penetration and military conquest. On the other, the Church relied on State protection to pursue its mission of spreading Christian-Orthodox values to the whole of society, and capitalised on State support to consolidate the ecclesiastical structure.

With the progressive decline of the empire the Church's purview was reinforced. Arab and Turkish victories in the East were not simply military matters, but being waged in the name of Islam, the Byzantines increasingly defined themselves and their counter-struggle in religious terms. Moreover, given the State's failure to

protect the geopolitical community, the Church stood alone in moral and spiritual authority over Byzantine society.

1.4.2 The Ottoman *Millet* System

Under Ottoman occupation, the Orthodox Church played a central role in the organisation of the Christian society over the next four centuries. Ottoman policy gave the Orthodox Church official political status as the legal representative of the Christian *Millet* (nation), of which Greek, Slav, and Arab Orthodox Christians were all considered members. The Islamic worldview effectively equating religious communal identity with collective political identity or nationality, and the Islamic State making no distinction between the spiritual and temporal realms, the *Millet* was both religious community and political entity.

By virtue of the Church's role in the *Millet*, religious, political, and increasingly ethnic identities were conflated. The Patriarch of Constantinople was the leader of the largest and most important colonised nation in the Ottoman empire, and as ethnarch charged with overseeing a civil jurisdiction corresponding to his ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The Ottoman State, by institutionalising a range of tax obligations and other measures aimed at consolidating the Church's subordinate status, contributed to the emergence of cleavages within the Christian strata. An increasing proportion of the Greek population could not understand or endorse the Patriarchate's close collaboration with the Ottoman administration, nor the subtle manoeuvrings of Church-State interaction. For them, Church-State relations became a symbol of spiritual decay and of the humiliating Ottoman overlordship.

These tensions in Church-State relations under the Turks contributed to the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821. By virtue of the legal recognition accorded to the Orthodox Church as the political and spiritual representative of the Christian population, the *Millet* model made of the nationalist struggle a religious one. Regardless of attempts by Greek nationalists to define the independence movement in terms of a community with a common language and historical continuity, under the *Millet* system the objective experience of subjugation to Ottoman Turks was interpreted in terms of the religious Orthodox collective.

The *Symphonia* and *Millet* arrangements, therefore, underscored a central contradiction and inconsistency evident throughout the course of Church and State political-culture affinities: namely, a historical and deeply structured definition of

Church-State relations as a political arrangement, with all the antagonism and corruption that this implies. Given the interventions of the Byzantine emperor and later the sultan, in the patriarchal selection process, and the Church's pragmatic support of the State's empire-building in return for economic benefits, the Church became increasingly factionalised as ordained and lay strata developed differing perspectives on how it should pursue its missionary strategy within the context of *Symphonia*.

The role of the Orthodox Church in the independence struggle against the Turks must not be underestimated however, although the endemic corruption among a hierarchy ambivalent on the question of nation-statehood, and determined to keep its privileged status within the Ottoman structure, intensified the antipathy of Greek nationalists towards it.

1.5 Westernisation and the Greek Enlightenment

Virtually all western sources attest to the striking intellectual contrast among Greeks in the 18th century. Those who had contacts with western Europe thought of statehood in terms of nationalism, centralisation, bureaucracy, and perhaps constitutionalism. For the indigenous elements, the oriental structures of the Ottoman State or Orthodox theocracy were quite satisfactory as long as they were dominated by Greeks.¹⁴

George Aspreas, an 18th-century historian, regarded the intellectual contrast of his contemporaries as a conflict between a western secular and an inward-looking, traditional element.¹⁵ Generally speaking, the former were drawn from Greek merchants within the Ottoman empire and the diaspora, graduates of European universities and the Patriarchal Academy, and the professions; the latter, which constituted the bulk of the population, and many of the lower clergy were traditionalists wishing to preserve a way of life that was being challenged.

The Enlightenment was the ideological expression of a modernity that emerged from the intellectual and political rifts marking European civilisation in the 18th century. Its liberalism regarded the intellectually and morally autonomous and responsible individual personality as the basic unit of the reconstructed society which symbolises the

¹⁴ Kitromelides 1994.

¹⁵ Ibid

emancipation of human consciousness from authority and tradition.¹⁶ Philosophically formulated by Kant, Descartes, Rousseau, Bentham etc., the movement aspired to the liberation of human thought from superstition and prejudice, from the fetters of traditional religion and established intellectual conventions.¹⁷

In areas of Europe outside France and Great Britain, forms of regional Enlightenment resulted from the interplay between local conditions of social change and intellectual influences from the cultural centres. No contrast could be more instructive for our study than that between western Enlightenment and the fate of the new philosophy in the Southeast of Europe. In the West, the Enlightenment was generated in an environment prepared for it by the experiences of Scholasticism, the Reformation, the development of science, together with growing secularisation and economic growth.¹⁸

In Greece the Enlightenment transmitted during the 18th century collided with deeply entrenched social structures and mentalities completely inimical to the values and implications of the new philosophy. Despite the elite's much more positive attitude, the eventual destiny of this regional Enlightenment was shaped by the conditions of Byzantine and Ottoman Greece. Reconsideration of the basic social and cultural problems confronting local society led to a re-interpretation of its history and a visualisation of its political future in terms of the new ideas. It is this pattern of ideological manipulation and change that essentially constitutes the Enlightenment in Greece.¹⁹

Eugenios Voulgaris (1716-1806), a prominent member of the Orthodox clergy, was a central figure in the awakening Greek response to the Enlightenment. His concern for eastern Orthodoxy was combined, however, with hopes for a rejuvenated Hellenism through the ideas and values of the new western ideas. His interests and expertise ranged from logic, mathematics, physics and astronomy, the Greek and Latin classics, to Byzantine and later Greek Church history as well as contemporary western political

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* is the classical work expounding this line of thought.

¹⁸ Thus in Scotland or British America, 17th-century socio-economic growth, combined with appropriate spiritual traditions, provided an ideal contextual configuration for the reception and integration of the new ideas and values. See Batalden 1982.

¹⁹ It is the period of Greek history that stands between the ancient and the modern.

history.²⁰ He sought to build bridges between the new philosophy of the Enlightenment and Orthodoxy, a task hindered by the prevailing Scholasticism of his time (initiated a century earlier by Korydalefs), the xenophobia of the Orthodox population, and the traditional mystical apophatism of the old patristic theology and culture. He recognised that the legacy of the Patriarchal Academy had been antithetical to the Byzantine tradition of the East that he thought should be preserved as an integral part of Greek intellectual history to inform and articulate the character of an enlightened national education.²¹

If Voulgaris was a seminal figure in the revitalisation of secular Greek thought and learning, he was also deeply involved in what he perceived to be a dangerous subtle threat to eastern Orthodoxy: the Jesuit and Protestant advance in the Christian lands of the Ottoman empire. Basic to his involvement was his growing realisation that defence of the faith rested on preserving its ideological purity, and for this he sought financial, political, and later military support from Orthodox Russia. His essays on Greek-Russian relations presented the first systematic conceptualisation of the Greek predicament within the framework of international relations.²²

In his essay, "Reflections on the present critical State of the Ottoman Empire" (1774), Voulgaris discussed the role of the Ottoman Empire and Russia in the European States system in terms of the 18th century theory of balance of power. Showing great political realism, he suggested to the Russians that only by weakening the Ottomans could the international balance of power be restored.²³ Turning to an analysis of the Greek predicament, he suggested the partition of the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of an independent Greek principality as conducive to the preservation of the international balance of power.

Voulgaris combined political pragmatism with a unique knowledge of his culture. His aspiration for the resurrection of Greek civilisation and his fight against Ottomans and Jesuits should not, however, make us consider him a nationalist; his views

²⁰ Batalden 1982

²¹ This process started about a century later with the foundation of the modern Greek State.

²² The essays included a translation of Muratori's *Moral Philosophy* (1761), *Reflections on the Ottoman Empire* (1774), *Nicolem* (1779), *Pedagogy*, *Theory of Geography* (1780), *Apology* (1780) and *Physiological Notes* (1784).

²³ Kitromelides 1994.

were moderate, respecting both the cultural achievements of western Europe and the local tradition of Orthodox Byzantium. Above all, he was a realist, seeking to contribute to Greek nation-building with pluralistic education and a rational political strategy to cultivate international alliances.

Iosipos Moisiodax (1725-1800) was another leading figure of the Greek Enlightenment. As both student and teacher he worked in major educational centres in Greece and Italy.²⁴ Like Voulgaris he opposed ideology that focused on philosophical disagreement and abstract cultural criticism, and his understanding of social and economic factors transformed cultural into social criticism. Moisiodax advanced the wholly pro-western argument that remedying the “shame of Hellas” required the whole-hearted acceptance into Greek culture of the ideas and values of the Enlightenment. Educational and cultural models should be imported from Europe, which “had surpassed even ancient Greece in the lights of learning.”²⁵ If Ottoman influence was to be driven from Hellas, cultural reform had to be combined with profound and far-reaching changes in social attitudes and customs, behaviour and values. His view of these involved replacing arbitrary despotism with the rule of law in a republican regime.

Despite his commitment to the ideas of Hellas and the urgent “needs of the nation”, Moisiodax too was not narrowly nationalistic but advocated the cosmopolitan humanism of the Enlightenment, which he saw as a non-nationalist, intellectual phenomenon with striking affinities with the ecumenicism established much earlier by the Orthodox Church. He hoped that, as an alternative supra-national cultural configuration, it might carry on the role of Christian Orthodoxy as the region’s intellectual heritage. This hope was pre-empted by the inexorable rise of nationalism, which in the 19th century destroyed both the universal humanism of the Enlightenment and the ecumenicity of the Orthodox spiritual tradition of south-eastern Europe.²⁶

The foremost personality in the Greek cultural revival of the late 18th and early 19th century was Adamantios Koraïs (1748-1833). After his medical studies at Montpellier he went to Paris in 1788 and commented on the French revolution while working on ancient Greek medical texts. From 1805 until the end of his life, he

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Sherrard 1959.

published of classical texts with long *prolegomena* of his own. His aim was the cultural and moral preparation of his compatriots for their liberation from the Ottoman yoke.²⁷

Koraïs has been called the prophet of modern Greece because his ideas not only promoted the Greek War of Independence (1821) but also dominated the intellectual, cultural and political life of the new Greek State.²⁸ He envisioned the revival of the Greek nation in terms of a cultural classicism born in ancient Greece, preserved through the Hellenist and Roman periods, submerged in the Christian middle ages, then reborn in Italy with the Renaissance and invested with the Enlightenment ideas and liberal spirit of the 18th century.²⁹ To allow Greece to assume her rightful place among the nations of the civilised West Koraïs advocated the country's emancipation in terms of the secular liberalism and humanist Enlightenment of contemporary western philosophers such as Bentham, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau.³⁰ With his faith in the civilising influence of education, Koraïs made it his lifelong concern to extend throughout Greece a secular, utilitarian education which relied on reform of the Greek language of his day – the “cleansed” Greek or *katharevousa*.

Koraïs saw no value whatsoever in indigenous culture, railed against the eclipse of civilisation in the Byzantine era, was bitterly hostile to fundamental elements of Christian-Orthodox spirituality such as monasticism and apophatism, and opposed Orthodox ecumenicism because he thought the Church should be the servant of the State. His aspirations for the Greek nation were to shape its life, laws, and institutions along the lines of the contemporary West.

The 18th-century neo-Hellenic Enlightenment met with considerable resistance, associated largely with the so-called *Kollyvades*. Although the confrontation was initially an internal and purely ecclesiastic one, by the end of the century it had become a general conflictual cultural reaction to the ideas and values imported from the West. The leading figures of the *Kollyvades* movement were Athanasios Parios (1721-1813), Makarios Notaras (1731-1805) and Nicodemos of Mount Athos (1749-1809), all of them

²⁷ Sherrard 1959 and Kitromelides 1994.

²⁸ On the impact of Bentham's ideas and their correspondence see *J. Bentham and Koraïs*, in Kitromelides 1994.

²⁹ Sherrard 1959. Koraïs was following the Romantic philosophers of late 18th century (Herder, Fichte) and their movement of romantic nationalism.

³⁰ Sherrard, 1959.

Orthodox clergy. This movement is considered to have provided the intellectual legacy of today's reactionary "patriotic" political and cultural forces.

The traditionalists clashed with the Enlightenment innovators who wanted a Greek nation-state because they believed that if Greek influences attacked the heart of the Ottoman empire from within they would emerge as the dominant force, with the Greeks then becoming co-rulers of a multi-racial State and so realising their own liberating political dream of the Greek nation in an Ottoman State. This line of thought was obscure but very widespread both among the Greek population and the administrative Church aristocracy that had evolved in Constantinople.³¹ In the final years before the revolution (1800-1821), Koraïs dubbed those who professed such views as *Greco-Turks*.

1.5.1 The 19th Century

The uprising of 1821 was not solely a matter of armed insurrection. This war for national independence also had to face the dilemma of the religious concept of belonging versus the secular social and political entity of the nation-state. The Greek world, including the church, was forced to choose and take sides.

The January 1822 declaration of Independence and a provisional constitution of Greece in both Greek and English asserted the emergence of a self appointed nation-state that claimed to be European: "... Descendants of a generous and enlightened nation, witnesses of the happiness which the sacred aegis of Law secures to the civilised nations of Europe...strong in these principles, and wishing to advance as equals with (the rest of our brethren) the Christians of Europe in the paths of civilisation ... [our] sole and immutable object is the establishment ... of that civilisation which sheds its blessings over the States of Europe ... ”

The Greeks' assertion that they were European initially supported plausibility of their claim to independence from Moslem Turkey, and subsequently their territorial expansion. The armed struggle finally ended in 1830 with the creation of an independent Greek State. The status of this new Greek State was mediated by conditions of military, economic and political dependence on the West after military aid from the Great Powers (England, France and Russia) had played the decisive role in the final victory. The Treaty of London (6 July 1827) granted military support and at the same time legitimised the Great Powers' subsequent interference in pursuit of their respective geopolitical

³¹ Varouxakis 1995.

interests. The so-called independence loans (1824 and 1825), required by the desperate need to build a military and administrative infrastructure, laid the foundations on which the Greek economy has developed since.

In 1833, Otto, son of King Ludwig of Bavaria, arrived in Greece as the State's first monarch. He governed Greece as an autocrat until 1843, and as a semi-constitutional monarch until 1862. As the representative of foreign interests he was never accepted by the people, and various interest groups showed their dissatisfaction through political factions or parties that had come into being by the end of the revolution.³²

The main national issues of the time were the *Megali Idea*, and the Idea of Europe. The *Megali Idea* was essentially political romanticism, which envisioned the recapture of Constantinople from the Turks and the creation of a large Greek State reminiscent of the Byzantine empire. By mid-century there were two views on how this "Great Idea" was to be implemented. Kolettis of the French party saw it as a panacea for the nation's foreign and domestic ills,³³ and the king was prone to follow this line in his foreign policy. The opposing view, held by the English and Russian factions, insisted that Greece must first deal with her internal economic and administrative problems before embarking on the hazardous path of irredentist expansion. Regardless of these differences, the *Megali Idea* was a catalyst for national unity (and ghostly tatters of it still persist).

Meanwhile Europe continued to dominate the Greek intellectual mainstream in the 19th century. The most characteristic example of this is Markos Renieris' English-language article entitled "What is Greece? Orient or Occident?"³⁴ For Renieris, an eminent historical philosopher, this was the most important of all questions generated by the resurrection of the Greek nation in the 19th century.

If Greece is East, he argued, her national character is Eastern also and so "opposed and adverse" to western civilisation. But by receiving her institutions from western Europe, Greece was "committing political suicide, renouncing her national character and adopting alien features, the end result being that Greece would henceforth live a borrowed life." If on the other hand Greece is West, western civilisation would mean her "familiarising herself with her own patrimony; not relinquishing her national

³² There was a Russian contingent led by Metaxas, an English and a French one under Mavrokordatos and Kolettis respectively.

³³ Both views are summarised in Campbell and Sherrard's *Modern Greece*.

³⁴ Varouxakis 1995.

character but complementing it, developing rather than committing suicide, progressing rather than regressing.”³⁵ Far from being merely academic, this issue divided the nation. Supporters of the first view advocated that Greece should look to Russia as her archetype, those of the second believed she should turn to England and France.

Renieris maintained this was a pseudo-dilemma, since Hellas had herself given birth to the very distinction between East and West, she being the West and assuming the westernisation of the East as her “mission”. He attributed the gradual shift in “the nature” of ancient Hellenism to barbarian invasions, the “Slavish spirit that emanated from the Byzantine court”, and to the “oriental customs regulating the relation between the subjects and monarchy.” Then, after the conquest of Greek lands by western princes, Greece for the first time had the privilege of being initiated into the “institutions and manners” of the West. The subsequent Turkish conquest plunged Greece into darkness again. Finally, the modern regeneration of Greece was achieved thanks to the appeal of western ideas for young Greeks who had gone to the west for commerce or study. The “repulsion for the West” felt by the “few adherents to Byzantine ideas”, Renieris argued, was the result of religious fanaticism.

Meanwhile, in January 1844, leader of the French party and future Prime Minister, I. Kolettis (1844-47), told parliament that it was Greece’s role to receive civilisation from the West and transmit western “light” to the East.

The so-called international nationalists, represented by Andreas Rigopoulos, even subscribed to the romantically vague 19th-century ideas for European unity. It was asserted that natural harmony would prevail among the people of Europe once they were liberated from the grip of multi-ethnic empires. In an evocative speech delivered before the Greek parliament in 1886, Rigopoulos anticipated the creation of a United States of Europe similar to that of America. His main aspiration was for an independent and powerful Greece to participate on equal terms in the European federation.

The poet Kostis Palamas severely criticised both the ethnocentric intellectuals and the Europeanists, as well as religious anti-European views.

He introduced a distinction between “Frankism” and “Europeanism”, wherein the former was degenerating and degrading for the Greeks, and the latter an indispensable ingredient of Hellenism. He was equally interested in patriotism and the

³⁵ This exposition of Korais’ ideas was also shared by other scholars of the time, such as Koumoundouris, and Armenis (cited in Varouxakis 1995).

“national tradition”. In 1896 he argued that his countrymen should make their patriotism the basis for all their conscious endeavours, and defined patriotism as a quest “to perceive the idea of the homeland more deeply and organically, relating it to all areas of our *spiritual and social* actions.” (my italics)

In practical terms, Palamas was greatly concerned over the lack of individuals with modern leadership potential. He was incensed with politicians pandering to the people’s emotions by proclaiming that the country was destined to recapture the grandeur of Byzantium and the artistic achievements of classical Greece.³⁶ This could only destroy true patriotism and result in chauvinism, he argued.

Meanwhile a long and passionate debate raged between the “Demoticist” and “Purist” camps over the appropriate source of inspiration for the nation, its language and literature, the “true” nature and identity of the Greeks, the prospects for the “race” and, above all, Greece’s relation to western European influences. The Demoticists championed the use of the vernacular, and opposed the use of the purified *katharevousa* language and the cultural classicism of Church and State. From the 1880s to the 1920s these issues preoccupied Greek intellectual life with an astonishing urgency.

During the last two decades of the 19th century, negative attitudes towards Europe held sway, largely due to the views expressed by Psycharis and his followers. Juxtaposing European influences to folk culture, the demotic (vernacular) language and the cult of Byzantium, the “Psycharists” associated Europe with linguistic archaism and the exclusive veneration of ancient Greece at the expense of Byzantine and modern Greek popular life and culture. However, the Enlightenment legacy of Koraïs and those defenders of Europe who had the support of the Church, State and Royalty, the intellectual mainstream of the time, effectively marginalised the ideas of this influential group. An article that Palamas published in *O Noumas* after the Patriarch of Constantinople deprecated the literary ability of “demoticists”, incurred the wrath of both Church and State. Palamas’ defence of the demotic cause led to a heated debate in Parliament about the propriety of a public official supporting such a movement, and Palamas was suspended from his post as Secretary of the National University.

³⁶ This generation was influenced and embittered by the lost war between Greece and Turkey in 1897.

Palamas' view was that both ethnocentric traditionalists and Eurocentric modernisers were mistaken in their assumptions. The two traditions in conflict with one another could offer little in the form they had adopted. He implied that something new must arise from these two worlds, they should not merely destroy one other. Ancient Greek culture would journey to the West and there spring up anew. The dichotomy could only be resolved through a blending of the two traditions. This would result in a synthesis to form the basis for a new culture. Arid imitation and preservation of traditional forms would merely result in an impoverished, sterile formalism. Only when the past was combined with the enlightened spirit of creative individuals, could the modern Greeks expect to have a culture of any consequence.

With ethnocentrism, the reaction against Europe culminated with those who are referred to as "the generation of 1897".³⁷ So Pericles Giannopoulos held that Greece's Byzantine legacy was as objectionable as the centuries of Turkish rule. He was disillusioned with the new Greek State, which seemed to him to possess elements that fostered mistaken, and even harmful attitudes in society. Contrary to the attitude of many westward-looking intellectuals, he felt that there was little that his countrymen could learn from Europe. Europeans could never recreate the spirit of the ancient Greeks because they lived in a different world.

Giannopoulos said his nation's circumstances were humiliating, since Greece was not able to compare with the economically and militarily powerful nations of Europe that could impose their will on it. He noted that while the west used "all small States as cesspits for its commercial and industrial constipation", the Greek government were xenomaniac worshippers of everything foreign.

Ionas Dragoumis, another representative of the "generation of 1897", rejected westernisation much more soberly. His criticism less of Europe and her civilisation *per se* than the process of his country's Europeanisation, which he deemed futile and naive. He emphatically placed the burden of guilt on the 19th-century Greeks who had created a disorientated, mixed-up society. Life under Turkish rule had sustained uniformity in Greek society, an eastern way of life with a large measure of influence in public affairs and education given to the Orthodox Church. The revolution had reoriented Greek culture towards the West and its Enlightenment, classicism and archaism.

³⁷ P. Giannopoulos, "Literature and Patriotism" (in Greek), *Estia* 1899.

He noted that westerners had initially looked favourably on Greek efforts to identify themselves with the ancients, but Philhellenism was only a pretext for the pursuit of their geopolitical interests in the area. Dragoumis feared that westernisation would cost the nation its identity. As evidence he cited the new educational system on the German pattern, the administration no longer of self-sufficient communities but through a centralised western bureaucracy, and growing materialisation. Dragoumis did not believe that materialism, science and rationalism could solve mankind's problems, but held that the emotions, passion and irrationality were an integral part of human nature whose antinomies and contradictions are inevitably reflected in the structure and culture of a society.

1.6 Church-State Relations since the Foundation of the Greek State: The Constitutional Period (1821-1974)

Apart from the above secular intellectuals, many 19th-century Christian-Orthodox thinkers criticised the westernisation of Greek culture and the ecclesiastic authorities who had decided to establish an autocephalous Church under the aegis of the Greek State. The attempt to modernise the Church according to western concepts of public administration was instigated by Koraïs, and implemented by king Otto's administration in 1833. It met with considerable opposition from those who regarded the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople as the one and only spiritual and administrative authority. Two central intellectual figures are associated with this reaction in the 19th century, Constantine Economou and Christophoros Papoulakos. Both were representatives of the traditionalist view, launching relentless attacks on the nationalism of the modernists as a threat to the ecumenicity of the Patriarchate.

The decision to establish the autocephalous Church of Greece without the patriarch's consent was seen as the first step in dismantling the Patriarch's religious commonwealth. For many Orthodox thinkers, such as Economou and Papoulakos, it was the first disruptive consequence of the Greek revolution whose success had owed so much to Orthodoxy. Under the monarchy, the Church of Greece now constituted merely one department of the secular State. Most importantly, the government now appointed the bishops of the synod. It was not until 1850 that the patriarch, represented in Athens by Economou, agreed to issue a special synodal *Tome*, in which Economou attempted to re-establish some of the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The *Tome* stipulated that the Church of Greece should be ruled by a

permanent synod presided over by the metropolitan of Athens, but that in important matters the Patriarchate should be consulted. This attempt to deal with a reality that for all practical purposes had slipped out of patriarchal control proved to be an awkward move.

From 1833 onwards, State policy for religion followed its overall pattern of modelling matters of administration, education, and of course Church-State relations on European lines. In 1833-34 this resulted in the closure of 412 monasteries, and caused great resentment and frustration in a society that profoundly respected the monastic tradition. The confiscation of Church properties and an attempt to reduce the number of clergy contributed to popular dissent, when the people could not understand the official consent of the Church to these moves.

The constitutional model of Church-State relations was in every respect designed to achieve the legal subordination of the Orthodox Church, eliminating its ability to challenge the legitimacy of the State on the basis of rights granted it under the *Millet* system. The monarch was appointed the highest authority for the Church's external affairs, including administrative and juridical aspects of ecclesiastical organisation. Synod procedures were invalid without the presence of the government procurator, a layperson appointed by the State. Further, the State decreed the formation of an ecclesiastical treasury, which paid out the proceeds from expropriations as emoluments to the ordained members of the Church, so making them civil servants.

Although the modernist State officials had envisioned the Church-State constitutional model as a mechanism for reducing any sense of collective belonging defined strictly in terms of religious Orthodoxy, they nevertheless tried to manipulate the Orthodox Church in such a way as to make the State and the national imagery co-terminous. In this process of national-identity construction, the irredentist dream of the *Megali Idea* relied to a great extent on traumas inflicted by the infidel. Here lies the main ambiguity and inconsistency in the Church and State political-cultural relationship in the modern constitutional period. The Great Idea tried to re-establish a community defined in terms that preceded the nation-state, including Greeks resident in the Byzantine and Ottoman territories. This meant that the ostensibly secular policy of the modern Greek State in fact relied on a historically continuous Orthodoxy that far preceeded any secular conception of modern Greek nationhood.

Because it was the Church that had been the legitimate representative of the community which the *Megali Idea* was seeking to recreate, the State's political move to unify the nation acknowledged a competitor in the definition of the collective image. Rather than subordinate religion to politics (a central feature of the constitutional model of Church-State relations), the State's domestic and external projects of collective-identity formation offered the Church an opportunity to use its constitutional privileged status (as the established religion) to participate in political life.

1.6.1 The 20th Century

The period from World War I to the end of the colonel's seven-year dictatorship in 1974 was one of striking political, social and economic change, in which Orthodoxy and the Church played an important role. Factions and reform movements within the ordained and lay strata offered different interpretations of how the Church should negotiate the modernisation process. It was also a time marked by State intervention in ecclesiastical affairs in order to ensure Church co-operation in the State's domestic and foreign nation-building policies. Certain internal Church reform movements were in response to constraints imposed on religion by politics.

The evolution of institutional Orthodoxy is best understood in terms of the socio-political and economic context within which the Church was operating at the time when its status was that of a department of the Greek bureaucratic administration. Budget problems, fiscal mismanagement, and State bureaucracy were largely responsible for producing an anachronistic religious-education training system of poor quality, and undermining the Church's dynamism in public life. The status of parish priests as poor civil servants reinforced the decline in an activist, spiritually committed clergy. Earning a mere subsistence salary, priests relied on discretionary fees in return for sacramental and pastoral services, and their parishioners resented this. The result was growing alienation between the clergy and laity, and deepening antagonism among the simple clergy for the wealthier prelates. Although many of the complaints against the higher clergy were well founded, its response to intra-ecclesiastical problems was severely compromised by direct State interventions in the affairs of the Holy Synod. These interventions intensified during nearly three decades

of disintegrative politics in Greece,³⁸ the fractiousness of which spread to the ecclesiastical arena as alternating regimes ousted archbishops and synods. However, the importance of religion for the cultural dimensions of nation-building was well understood as evidenced by the State encouraging the ex-communication of Prime Minister Venizelos in 1916 for pursuing anti-Orthodox policies.

These constraints were aggravated by episcopal apathy arising from the bureaucratisation of the higher clergy. Some elements in both the laity and clergy interpreted this apathy as indicative of the hierarchy's unwillingness to sustain the message of Orthodoxy. This generated formal and informal efforts within the Church towards reforms to adapt Orthodoxy to the conditions of political and social modernisation while adhering to the concept of the dynamism of Christianity's Orthodox religious message. By far the most organised response to what seemed like ecclesiastical deficiency came from the religious brotherhood *Zoë* (Life). The formation of *Zoë*³⁹ openly engaged the Church in a process of reformation. Its emphasis on the need for impeccable morality, piety, and obedience to the nation-state gave the movement a fundamentalist tone. The response of the Church hierarchy was to adopt a conservative interpretation of tradition, with institutional changes being guided by leaders wishing to conserve and protect the essential meaning of Christian Orthodoxy in the fluid context of Greek politics.

The imposition in 1936 of a politically extreme-Right dictatorship headed by General Metaxas and endorsed by King George II represented an attempt to prevent the intra-bourgeois competition for control of the State from being decided by an increasingly radicalised working class represented by the Communist party. The Metaxas regime drove the communists underground and severely polarised the country.

During the dark years of WWII the Church was not exempt from the effects of the Fascist occupation and then the civil war that bled Greece for almost all the 1940s. Under the leadership of Archbishop Damaskinos, the Church, supported by *Zoë*, mobilised effectively in the face of external invasion and internal disintegration. He adroitly managed the Church coordinating with all segments of the political spectrum to bring humanitarian aid and assistance to the people while avoiding identification

³⁸ The political climate was uninterruptedly beset by crises, from the conflict of Liberals and Royalists over World War I until the start of World War II.

³⁹ Founded in 1907.

with any particular ideological tendency. In fact, the progressive breakdown of State services in most of rural Greece left the Church as the only institution with a functioning infrastructure capable of providing relief.

After the withdrawal of the occupation forces Archbishop Damaskinos of Athens and All Greece held the position of Regent from January 1945 to September 1946. This regency was a tactical decision by the Allies to facilitate domestic peace, and ultimately restore the pre-war political order. However, despite Archbishop's efforts to appear as a national protector and to establish Church priority over the State, the political Left soon denounced the Church as a puppet of the Right and a lackey to western imperialism given that Damaskinos was formally appointed by the government-in-exile, and in view of his refusal to condemn British and U.S. interference in the civil war. The intensification of the resistance movement's stridently communist agenda obliged all levels of the clergy to become openly anti-Left, and by the end of the civil war (August 1949) the institutional infrastructure of both the official Church and the *Zoë* movement was devastated.

After the civil-war defeat of the Left the post-war political system was constructed in absolutist ideological terms, reinforced by Greece's frontline status as a NATO ally in the cold war. The rapid reconstruction of a country that had faced the 1950s in a state of utter economic collapse and societal exhaustion was due to a massive influx of Marshall Aid managed by an anti-communist State apparatus that included the armed forces, the monarchy, and the parliamentary Right. Like the political leadership, the ecclesiastical leadership also favoured conservatism. As intra-hierarchical struggles intensified during the 1960s, the focus of the Church was mainly on its organisational survival.

In 1948 Archbishop Spyridon brought the Church of Greece into the World Council of Churches and responded positively to the ecumenical movement for reuniting all Christian denominations, but his tentative moves in this direction were soon marginalised by the practical challenges of reconstruction. The Church's need for large amounts of financial assistance, for training new clergy and to rebuild churches, and the fact that the State controlled those financial resources, partially accounts for the higher clergy's willingness to endorse the State's anti-communist ideology.

This pragmatic approach to ecclesiastical reconstruction reflected the failure of the Church to develop a coherent policy to respond to the political exclusion and

societal fragmentation of almost half the Greek population. As a result of this Church acquiescence *vis-à-vis* state authoritarianism, Greek society was split even further, in that people excluded from egalitarian citizenship were also implicitly excluded from the religious community. The alienation of those lay strata who viewed the blatant politicisation of the Church as a perversion was aggravated by the process of cultural transformation associated with modernisation. At a time when accelerated economic development and political re-ordering were calling into question the beliefs, values, and ideas with which the people had organised their lives, the Church's position seemed to defy modernity, and to identify religion with a culture formulated on exclusivist modes of social interpretation. Meanwhile *Zoë* and similar brotherhoods merely offered an even more fundamentalist view of modernity, based on highly moralistic and puritan notions.

The colonels' military coup of 1967 imposed an authoritarian regime that resulted from disillusionment with the existing parliamentary institutions designed to circumscribe participation by non-Right political forces, and the expansion of the petty bourgeoisie that was looking for non-traditional political formats to address the structural imbalances generated by Greece's post-war economic development.

The colonels explicitly stated that they intended to "restore to health" the country's political and social system until such time as a democratic regime could be reinstated. As part of their programme for rehabilitating the institutional foundations of the anti-communist society, they quickly and extensively intervened in the internal affairs of the Church in a deliberate attempt to use religion to reshape notions of national identity as well as to ensure Church-State co-operation.

The junta ordered the compulsory retirement of Archbishop Chrysostomos, replaced the existing Holy Synod with one selected exclusively by itself, and installed a new Archbishop. Paradoxically, the new Archbishop Ieronymos was at first regarded as an excellent leader of the Church. His intellectual rigor as Professor of canon law at the University of Thessaloniki, and his record of social activism during and after the war, suggested that he would give the Church the dynamic leadership it needed for its social reform in terms of inclusive notions of community. However, because of his association with the dictatorship his tenure was marked by intense polemics.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ The Archbishop's programme for ecclesiastical reform included improvement of educational standards for the clergy, the development of an ecclesiology of broader

The shortcomings of Ieronymos' leadership lay in his inability to oversee the modernisation of the Church while dissociating himself from the repressive measures of the junta. His autonomy from the regime was substantially weakened by the departure of King Constantine into self-imposed exile in the wake of an unsuccessful coup against the colonels. The announcement of a new ecclesiastical charter with organisational changes in line with Ieronymos' objectives brought an open split of the synod. The charter was eventually passed – more than a third of the synod's bishops had been appointed by the colonels – but after four years of internecine fighting the anti-Ieronymite faction succeeded in overturning it.

In the wake of this public rupture within the Church, a *coup d'état* by a hard-line faction within the military government in late 1973 reflected cleavages within the junta over the regime's persistent failure to achieve legitimacy. The victorious colonels decided to snub Ieronymos by asking metropolitan Serapheim to administer the oath of office to the new government instead. They hoped by this to gain the support of the anti-Ieronymite faction then on the ascendant within the Church.

The above events show the Ieronymos period as one of factionalisation, fragmentation and cleavage within the Church. The junta's slogan "A Greece of Christian Greeks", and the extremist approach to spiritual renewal through mandatory Church attendance for children identified Orthodoxy with social coercion and political authoritarianism. The illegitimacy of the junta culminated in the foreign-policy debacle that led to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in July 1974. This precipitated the dissolution of the authoritarian regime and the transfer of power to a democratic government headed by Constantine Karamanlis.

1.7 Summary

Different intellectual discourses in Greek-Orthodox history have tried to address the westernisation dilemma in Greek political culture, and the state co-opting a religious and national identity. A historical review of Church-State relations clearly shows that due to the constant interaction between politics and culture these relations cannot be satisfactorily dealt with through a legalistic, technocratic and reductionist conceptual framework. There is always the question to what degree historical, cultural

participation through strengthening the catechetical school programme, and achieving economic independence of the Church from the State.

and ideological factors have influenced the formulation, reception, and outcome of both State and Church policies.

Historically, State and Church have come to stand for specific formulations of community and collective identity. The relationship between these two leading institutions created a balance of power in Greece for stabilising the delicate consensus on the origins, meaning, and future of both the collective identity and political culture. Despite the marked changes in the political, economic, and cultural conditions of the Greek people under the Byzantine and Ottoman empires, relations between the Christian Church and the State functioned throughout as the driving force for social organisation. The continuity of this dynamic role for religion in public life is a point that emerged in the religious and political debates of the 1980s and 1990s.

Considering the history of the Greek Orthodox Church, three main critical junctures can be discerned: a) The 1054 schism, b) The dissolution of the Byzantine Empire and the Church's institutionalisation within the Ottoman administrative system, and c) The Greek national revolution and subsequent formation of an independent Greek State (in 1832). An immediate repercussion of the latter was the sudden dichotomy between the universality of the Greek Orthodox Church as expressed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the much narrower concept of a strictly national Greek Church as expressed by the Autocephalous Church of Greece created in 1833. An ideological gulf developed that continues to have a distinct religious and political significance to this day.

A second pattern generated by Church-State arrangements in the Byzantine and Ottoman times was the disintegrative impact of politics on the internal cohesion of the Church as a religious institution. On the eve of the formation of the Greek nation-state, both the *Symphonia* and the *Millet* systems left the Church with a mixed legacy of legitimacy in Greek society. Given the regular interventions of the Byzantine emperors in the patriarchal selection process, as well as the Church's strategy of lending its public support to the State's policies in return for economic benefits, the institutional reality of the Church became increasingly polarised and factionalised as ordained and lay strata developed differing perspectives on how the Church should pursue its missionary strategy within the context of the *Symphonia* accord. Moreover, while the Church's role in the independence struggle against the Ottomans must be appreciated, the endemic corruption amongst a hierarchy with manifest ambivalence towards the question of nation-statehood had demoralised

important segments of the clergy and laity, and had intensified the antipathy of Greek secular nationalists towards the Church. Nevertheless, as the development of parties and a party system is a slow process that requires time,⁴¹ the fact that at the time of independence the Church was the only well established existing “Greek” institution with direct administrative and social functions affecting everyday life, further strengthened the association between the Church and the emerging modern Greek state.

During the modern period of the Greek nation-state, the constitutional model of Church-State relations was part of the overall project of political modernisation directed by the Bavarian Regency and that group of Greek elites whose interpretation of nation-statehood was defined according to western European prototypes. Since this model reflected the interests of the modernist segment of Greek society it excluded the political and cultural approaches of more traditionalist groups. This deliberate break with the *Symphonia* and *Millet* arrangements had a profound effect on the Church-State power balance. The religious dimensions of collective identity that had been entrenched during the Byzantine and Ottoman experiences were now shaped according to the modernist aim for statecraft and the construction of a national homogeneity.

The constitutional model promoted the formation of a secular society in Greece, since one of the essential conditions of secularity is the relativity of worldviews concomitant with the secularisation of society. Moreover, by stripping the Church of its political prerogatives the constitutional model of the State intended to stress the secular elements of Greek nationhood, such as the continuity of language and the aura of Greece’s classical past.

By making Orthodoxy the established religion of Greece and by providing the Church with an official and privileged status, the constitutional model circumscribed the kind of religious and cultural pluralism that characterises secularity. The dual logic of the model, therefore, was that by perpetuating the distinctive character of Orthodoxy in society and by perpetuating the historical claims of the Church as the purveyor of collective identity, it weakened the State’s ability to control the definition of political culture according to western criteria of secular modernity. Insofar as the Church participated in public life through its official support for irredentist policies aimed at incorporating the Greek-Orthodox populations on the Turkish coast into the

⁴¹ Lipset and Rokkan 1967, p.34.

new nation, it remained a competitor to the State as the sole purveyor of collective identity in modern Greek political culture.

The most obvious feature of the last sixty years that form the immediate background of a more detailed study of today's Church-State political-culture relationships is the dynamic engagement between the doctrinal and institutional reality of the Orthodox Church on the one hand, and the political manoeuvres necessary to handle the delicate needs of a Greek society in the throes of modernisation on the other. Archbishop Damaskinos' aspirations to modernisation were severely compromised as a result of the political crisis that emerged out of World War II and the civil war. The prevailing conservative tendency within the Church saw the political-ideological and cultural aspects of post-war social flux as a threat. Those of the higher clergy who, despite the State's ideological exclusion of large segments of society from political life, had endorsed a co-operative relationship with the State during the reconstruction years, upheld the idea that the Church's survival depended on its ability to avoid antagonism *vis-à-vis* the State. After all, the State controlled the financial resources that were absolutely essential to the Church's own reconstruction project.

This passive civil servant mentality prompted a reaction from the *Zoë* movement that advocated a more active engagement of the Church in public life. Modernity being seen as a threat to religion, the remedy was to support Church reform, but in such puritanical and moralistic form that it ultimately undermined the ability of Orthodoxy to serve as an integrating force in society.

This demonstrates how the historical experiences of the 1940-1974 period have contributed to the conflation of sacred and profane notions of collective identity by generating a deep confusion towards both Orthodoxy and nationalism as they came to be defined by Church and State. The tacit Church endorsement of the State's anti-communist ideological policy undermined the unifying nature of the Church, and suggested that the religious conception of collectivism was as exclusivist as the secular definition of nation. As a result, both religious and secular definitions of community became unacceptable for large segments of the Greek population. Christian Orthodoxy came to be seen as a source of contradictions and confusion in Greek culture, rather than as a source of integration of the ideas, beliefs and values by which people gave meaning to their history.

PART ONE

CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS:
Secularisation, Democratisation, and Westernisation

CHAPTER 2

CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS 1981-1998

2.1 The 1975 Constitution

In order to analyse and assess Church-State relations for the period 1981 to 1998, a brief look at the ruling PASOK party's political ideology may be instructive. In contrast to the essentially Eurocentric way in which political parties had articulated their cultural perspectives in modern Greek history, Andreas Papandreou founded PASOK in 1974 to realise a new social order understood from a cultural perspective that was neither western nor traditionalist. Unlike the other contestants in the 1974 first post-dictatorship elections,¹ PASOK occupied an entirely new place in the political arena as a moderately left-wing party accommodating a variety of different groups, and representing a cross-section of interests united mainly by their rejection of the post-war system of guided democracy with its conservative overtones.²

Papandreou claimed that its multiple facets gave the party strength by creating unity in diversity. The most important aspect of PASOK's radical strategy and cultural potential was that its intention to restructure relations between State and society, and its criteria for national unity, were contrary to the prevailing social order. The September 1974 founding declaration reinterpreted the country's political and economic problems in terms going beyond but incorporating elements of the existing modernist-versus- traditionalist critiques, and presented a new concept of modernity.³

The declaration established PASOK's ideology as based on Marxist dependency theory, explaining Greece's structural imbalances as a replication of the international political-economic order whereby the capitalist centre exploits the dependent periphery and semi-periphery. He emphatically rejected the strategy of westernisation and argued that the logic of the capitalist centre had consigned Greece to a permanent state of economic underdevelopment, political authoritarianism, and cultural inferiority. The prospects for building a "socialist democratic Greece" depended on achieving the strategic goals of national independence, popular

¹ Founded by Karamanlis in 1974, the conservative New Democracy Party (ND) won the elections that year and remained in power until 1981. Between 1981 and 1998, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) won four elections (1981, 1985, 1993 and 1996), interrupted by an "ecumenical" coalition government (1989-90), and a New Democracy government from 1990 to 1993.

² The three groups that made up PASOK were the Panhellenic Liberation Movement (PAK), the Democratic Defence (DD), and the Panhellenic Liberation Front (PAM).

³ Prodromou 1993, p.225.

sovereignty, social liberation, and democratic procedures.⁴ Realisation of these goals required socialisation of certain sectors of the economy, the creation of agricultural co-operatives, socialisation of the education system, *the complete separation of Church from State*, and a host of legislative changes designed to ensure gender equality. Papandreou articulated a vision of modernity that was based on a mixed economy, participatory democracy, and secularity.⁵

Promulgation of the post-junta constitution on 9 June 1975 was an essential factor in shaping the cultural and institutional features of the emergent democratic regime. The constitution stirred up heated debates and provided the arena for delineating the radical versus moderate cultural perspectives towards modernisation. Although its provisions on religion were not Papandreou's main objections, they provided a vital insight into how the transition from dictatorship to democracy involved a unique opportunity for redefining the role of Orthodoxy.⁶ The religious provisions in the 1975 draft constitution underscored the regime change as an opportunity for "pioneering modifications in Church-State relations", with significant repercussions for the organisation of the Church.⁷ The draft constitution contained three Articles (4, 16 and 33) whose overriding principle was the separation of Church and State. While these provisions reflected Karamanlis' New Democracy conservative vision of the role of Orthodoxy in a constitutional Greek democracy, the positions advocated by PASOK expressed the radical character that marked this early period of the party's ideology vis-à-vis modernisation and Orthodoxy. Konstantinos Zeppos, ND's minister of education and religion at the time, confirmed his government's gradualist approach to the issue of Church-State separation: "I have indeed argued in favour of a system that separates Church and State ... however, in the present circumstances, and given the traditionally close relationship between Church and State, it is difficult to abandon the system existing at the present time."⁸

Papandreou's response epitomises PASOK's early radicalism: "We believe in the complete separation of Church and State. This will be beneficial for both... the

⁴ Ibid., p. 226.

⁵ Ibid., p.227.

⁶ Papandreou opposed the draft constitution mainly concerning the role of the president.

⁷ Prodromou 1993, p.239.

⁸ Karragianis 1997, p.182.

Church must cease to be a department of the State, without however becoming a State within a State.”⁹

The conservative government proposed constitutional changes for a gradual move towards the legal separation of the two institutions, and articulated this framework in terms of the Enlightenment values of religious pluralism and individual rights. The 1975 constitution acknowledged the Orthodox Church of Greece as the established Church, meaning that Orthodoxy is the religion of the majority of the country’s population. At the same time, the provisions confirmed religious pluralism by stating that “enjoyment of individual and civil rights shall not depend on the religious convictions of the individual”, and prohibited all kinds of religious proselytising.¹⁰ The draft also shifted sole responsibility for matters of education to the State, and cancelled the State’s responsibility for ensuring that the education system upheld the values of the so-called “Greek-Christian culture”. The 1975 draft provisions also eliminated the invocation of the Holy Trinity, traditionally placed in the introduction to the constitution. The ties between Church and State were further loosened by removing the stipulation regarding the president’s membership of the Greek-Orthodox Church and his official oath of allegiance to the Church.¹¹

It was implicit in ND’s gradualist strategy, however, that the final draft of the 1975 constitution could not become law without the State reaching consensus with the official Church as represented by the Holy Synod. A memorandum from this body suggested introducing the system of *Synallilia*, a mode of contact based on the principles of co-ordination or co-operation. It may be defined as a relationship of equal partners, with neither able to dictate to the other. The synod argued that the system of *Synallilia* “embodies the traditional relationship between the Church and State in Greece, while also corresponding to the spirit of the times and modern ecclesiology.”¹²

At stake for the synod was not only the legal aspects of a Church-State separation, but an end to the identification of Orthodoxy with the Greek nation. The synod’s arguments were based on the long years of Ottoman occupation, when it was above all the Orthodox Church that was able to perpetuate the Greek identity, both

⁹ Ibid., p.182.

¹⁰ Prodromou 1993, p.240.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p.241.

religious and secular (it is interesting to note that such close association of religious and ethnic identity is characteristic of Eastern Orthodoxy).¹³ They also noted that the legal separation of Church and State implied separating “religious freedom prematurely from its central place in the national consciousness of the Greek people, which may be highly dangerous not only to the Church but to the State itself.”¹⁴

In stark contrast to the conservative government’s gradualism, PASOK demanded a clear and definitive separation of Church and State so that “the administration of the Church ... will remain completely free and beyond any sort of official State imprint.”¹⁵ The question of the ecclesiastical administration’s autonomy was also a major item in the approaches of ND and PASOK. The ND government stipulated that the Church administration “is by the synod of the hierarchy, as defined by law”, and that the constitutional charter of the Church be voted on by parliament.¹⁶ Criticism of this stipulation rested on its imprecise wording. In the strict interpretation, the constitutional charter of the Church would be a secular law of the State, the parliamentary decision-making process having precedence over the ecclesiastical one. Such a reading creates significant latitude for State interference in internal Church affairs. Conversely, according to a more flexible interpretation of the clause, the State’s ratification of any constitutional charter would be understood as endorsing a set of changes autonomously determined by the Church according to internal procedures grounded in canon law. This reading rejects State prerogatives for interference in the internal affairs of the Church, and was, of course, consistent with PASOK’s emphasis on full administrative separation of Church and State.

There is no doubt that the PASOK proposal for a radical break with the past system of Church-State relations stood in contrast to the gradualist approach of the ND government, and moved well beyond the *Synallilia* arrangement proposed by the synod.¹⁷ However, the PASOK perspective on Church-State relations was rather less radical in one key aspect. Although Papandreou argued strongly in favour of radical changes in the administrative relationship of the two institutions, he deliberately

¹³ Madeley 2003a.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ PASOK’s position on the 1975 constitution was put forward by a group of scholars supervised by the former Prime Minister, K. Simitis. See Konidaris 1989, p.26.

¹⁶ Prodromou 1993, p. 242.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.243.

omitted references to matters such as the Church's bond with the nation, the people, and the traditional view of Christian Orthodoxy as the quintessence of Hellenism. Thus, even in this early pre-governmental period of PASOK ideology, Papandreou was well aware of the shortcomings of a radical approach that would challenge the *Synallilia* arrangement proposed by the synod. As radical change involves inevitable political cost, Papandreou was very careful to acknowledge a historically informed position for the Church in Greek culture and the collective imagination. Such tactical political manoeuvres show that PASOK understood the relationship between Greek political culture and Orthodoxy, but while encouraging administrative changes towards democratisation, the party was reluctant to secularise Greek national identity.

The final version of the constitution emphasises New Democracy's gradualist approach and suggests the ongoing ability of the Church to affect political outcomes. While official Church influence on the constitutional provision seems at first glance to be quite limited, the contradictions in ND's gradualism suggest otherwise. The invocation of the Holy Trinity was reintroduced at the beginning of the constitution and into the oath sworn by the country's President and members of parliament, implying an implicit elevation of Christian Orthodoxy over other religions. While it is true that the new constitution had to take into account the nation's historical memory by acknowledging the Church's capacity for affecting political decisions, its ambivalent compromise between *Synallilia* and legal separation meant that, in effect, neither *Synallilia* nor complete legal separation was achieved.

With respect to the clauses on education, the new constitution revealed a peculiar and confusing formalism, in that although mandated as the responsibility of the State, education was given the task of ensuring the *development of the national and religious conscience*. Another compromise was that the constitution recognised the Orthodox Church as the *established* church of Greece (*epikratousa*). This recognition preserved the position of Orthodoxy in Greece, constituting a *de facto* acknowledgement of Orthodoxy over other faiths, and avoiding any *de jure* separation of Church and State. The ND minister of education and religion explained his government's decision to forego the option of definitive constitutional separation in terms of "...the critical nature of the circumstances in the country following the seven-year dictatorship, the need for ensuring the religious unity of the people, and the possibility of correcting the relevant provisions through a review of the

constitution, as well as because of the reaction by the Church.”¹⁸ The minister’s remarks echo the Church arguments about the State’s need to account for the impact of historical memory on the national conscience, and to acknowledge the Church’s ability to affect political decisions.

The reaction by the Church against constitutional changes towards religious pluralism was strongly affected by its internal organisation at the time, which to a great extent had been embittered by the relationship during the dictatorship. Archbishop Serapheim’s appointment by the colonels’ regime had further weakened the credibility of the Church, and factional infighting between the members of the synod who still claimed allegiance to the dispossessed Archbishop Ieronymos and the Serapheim clergy over lay participation and administrative reform,¹⁹ was largely unknown to the vast majority of the laity. With the organisational dissension and contradictions within the Church at the time of the transition from junta to democracy, the hierarchy regarded the possible restructuring of Church-State relations as imposing some kind of societal competition, for which the Church was unprepared. So while acknowledgement of the Church’s ability to influence the ND government’s already gradualist approach to religious policy satisfied the immediate concerns, the result was a constitutional arrangement that effectively increased the State’s ability to circumscribe Church autonomy, both within the Church itself and in society generally.²⁰

When the revised constitutional charter of the Church of Greece was passed in 1977 this set a precedent for State interference in internal Church affairs. The changes were ratified by parliament, thereby rendering the document a product of State legislation rather than of ecclesiastic determination. The new law reflected not only the failure to meet the Church proposal for *Synallilia*, but made it uncertain whether or not the 1975 constitution had in fact abolished the system of a State-dominated Church established and controlled by the law of the State, or merely covered it up with legal recognition of the Orthodox Church as the established Church of Greece. For even as the 1975 constitution had created the possibility for “new terrain in the relations between the nation’s two leading institutions that might be free from friction

¹⁸ Prodromou 1993, p. 244.

¹⁹ See sub-chapter 4.4 for details of the Ieronymos and the Serapheim factions within the higher clergy.

²⁰ Prodromou 1993, p. 245.

and shocks”, the ambiguities in the constitution and their incorporation into the ecclesiastical charter of 1977 “tipped the balance towards a system of Caesaropapism and so proved to be a move in the wrong direction.”²¹

What went wrong with PASOK’s unique potential to act as the vehicle for reconciling the two main sources of contradiction in Greek political culture (i.e. tradition versus modernity)? In the early, pre-government stage (1974-1981), Papandreou has offered an alternative view of modernisation which accounted for the domestic political-cultural factors and international constraints specific to Greece’s path towards democratisation. His demand for change (*allaghi*) held out the promise of resolving the problematic relationship between the State and society through an inclusive integrated collectivity.²²

The party’s failure in this early period as a radical political force to realise its potential for religious change can be attributed to several factors. Each of them points, on the one hand, to the interaction between the religious dimensions of Greek culture and the wider socio-cultural and geo-political processes of the time and, on the other, to the ideological syncretism, formalism, and populism that characterised Papandreou’s strategy.

Thus in the relations between religion and political culture, Papandreou had to conform to the established religio-political discourse of *Synallilia*. Following the ND government’s successful discourse which identified democracy with national unity in the face of the threat of a Greco-Turkish war over Cyprus, Papandreou wanted to establish PASOK as an equally if not more credible patron of the national ideals. He pursued this ideological strategy by combining several cultural strategies with respect to the question of national identity. For the above reasons of internal legitimacy, he had to avoid an overtly Marxist interpretation of the Cyprus crisis, but consistency with his iconoclastic image required a radical explanation of the crisis that was different from ND’s without, however, disrupting a *de facto* commitment to progress, development, and Hellenism (its Orthodox associations included). Papandreou’s rejection of Karamanlis’ claim that “Greece belongs to the West” was indeed

²¹ Ibid., p.246.

²² Change (*allaghi*) was the catchphrase of Papandreou’s campaign and encapsulated what he felt Greece needed in order to modernise. Indicative of the radical-maximalist character of PASOK’s early period are the party’s foundational documents. See Konidakis 1991, p.33.

consistent with PASOK's interpretation of the Cyprus crisis as a political problem demanding an ideological strategy that would be legitimate in terms of Greek political culture only if it resorted to a combination of several discursive strategies. As a result of US plans for incorporating Cyprus into the western security net, PASOK's view of the crisis was indeed consonant with Papandreou's nationalist ideas about certain aspects of the Greek historical experience that were incompatible with the western archetype of development and progress. In so far as PASOK's nationalistic interpretation of the Cyprus emergency touched on the country's non-western identity, it embroiled Orthodoxy, nationalism, and a moderate Marxism with its perception of the foreign-policy crisis, so reiterating the confusion over the religious versus secular sources of national identity in post-dictatorship Greece.

The advantage of this kind of populist strategy for electoral objectives was that it operated above class contradictions. It made it possible for several heterogeneous groups to identify themselves with *the people* on the basis of a definition that was negative simply by virtue of its opposition to *the privileged*.²³ In addition, the populism that generated such oppositions as *the privileged* versus *the non-privileged*, also constructed a malevolent West with which the Greek political identity supposedly, had little in common. The problem with this kind of logic is not so much whether it is sound or not, but rather that putting the blame on factors operating outside the ideological space of the Greek political culture fosters a defensive and narcissistic nationalism, that does not contribute to a positive attitude to the country's political and cultural identity.

Within this framework of interaction between PASOK ideology and Greek political culture, it is not surprising that Papandreou's anti-western sentiments evoked rather idiosyncratic notions of the Eastern-Orthodox dimensions of Greek collective identity. It was no coincidence that in the same period the so-called Neo-Orthodox movement began to articulate its anti-western critique of Enlightenment rationalism, basing itself on a quasi-Marxist, quasi-theological discourse.²⁴

The debates on the religious provisions in the country's first post-junta constitution can be seen as PASOK's first attempt to resolve the religious aspects of the cultural contradiction in Greece. While these debates contributed to a more general discussion concerning the role of Orthodoxy in Greek political identity,

²³ Prodromou 1993, p.249.

²⁴ See chapter 4 for details on the Neo-Orthodox movement.

PASOK's strategy actually perpetuated the long-standing cultural inconsistencies it sought to challenge. The party's emphasis on the need for full separation of Church and State, with a simultaneous emphasis on the indivisible bonds between Church and nation, failed to create a rational political discourse and a quest for a democratic society that would be modern, secular, politically and culturally pluralist and at the same time exclusively Orthodox.

Paradoxically, PASOK's inconsistent strategy to resolve the country's cultural contradictions only prolonged them. Its unsuccessful attempt to clarify the role of Orthodoxy within an all-encompassing Greek modernity was further undermined by a concentration of power and decision-making prerogatives in the charismatic figure of Papandreou. That, as well as populist demagoguery in the handling of the tension between modernists and traditionalists, may well account for the confusion in Church-State relations at the time PASOK came to power in 1981.

2.2 Church-State Relations 1981 - 1985

Any examination of Church and State interactions in Greece today must take into account that there are four main areas of overlapping interest between these two institutions.

- (i) Secularisation, including sections of the Civil Code as they relate to the family (marriage, divorce, abortion, etc.), religious teaching in Greek education, religious freedom, tolerance, and cultural pluralism.
- (ii) Church lands and property, the financial affairs of the Church, and remuneration of the clergy.
- (iii) Democratisation and Church-State separation, including State involvement in Church administration through the ministry of education and religion, the appointment of bishops and especially the Archbishop of Athens, Church involvement in secular politics and foreign affairs, and democracy within the Church allowing reduced participation of clergy and lay in the decision-making process.
- (iv) The Westernisation dilemma with respect to cultural unity and homogeneity in Greek society, the modern Greek identity, and the increasingly debated position of the Greek Church in the forging of a supra-national European culture (i.e. the EU integration policy).

The sections below will concentrate on Church-State negotiations during the two PASOK administrations of 1981-85 and 1985-89. This requires an understanding

of PASOK's religious policies within the context of the cultural dimension of the modernisation debate. By examining how Church and State interpreted the legal-formal separation, we hope to broaden the overall problematic of the religious and secular features of Greek identity. The question of institutional control over the definition of Greek identity may also allow consideration of whether Church ability to influence State legitimacy in this matter entails any serious implications for conceptualising Greek modernity in the 1990s.

2.2.1 The Socialisation/Nationalisation of Monastic Properties, and PASOK's Dual Religious Strategy

Two issues consistently mentioned in PASOK's statements were the separation of Church and State and socialisation of monastic lands. These pronouncements were consonant with Papandreou's demand for structural changes, including the need to reduce institutional concentration of power. Due to the long history of the Orthodox Church taking a leading role in the network of institutions mediating between the people and the State, it is not surprising that Papandreou's policy was based on enhancing Greek civil society through democratisation of the Church as its main institution. However, when the new elections approached, his early radicalism gave way to a more ambivalent interpretation of what the country needed. In his increasingly more populist discourse socialist modernisation and Orthodox traditionalism managed to coexist. For reasons of political expediency, Papandreou put forward a dual concept of Church-State separation based on a clear institutional-cultural distinction. In terms of the former the Church would have complete autonomy in administrative matters, but in cultural terms would retain its vital role in cementing the bonds between *the Nation* and *the People*.²⁵ The socialisation of monastic lands into agricultural co-operatives came to be tied to the larger question of how to handle this vast real estate so as to benefit the landless peasants while simultaneously maintaining the Church's administrative autonomy.

Implicit within PASOK's dual approach to the role of Orthodoxy in Greece is its rejection of modernity based on Eurocentrism. Papandreou and his associates proclaimed the party's election to power in 1981 not only as a popular decision in favour of *change*, but as an affirmation of his new paradigm for modernisation.

²⁵ Prodromou 1993, p.279. and Karagiannis 1997, p.183.

The constitutional feature of this new, more inclusive modernisation was “popular participation”, which inevitably involves the quintessential Greek institution of religion. PASOK envisioned enhanced relations between Church and nation.²⁶ This pro-Orthodox side of PASOK’s religious policy found expression in the reconstruction of religious education, which aimed to enable the Church to respond positively to the rapidly changing character of Greek society in the early 1980s. The then-minister of education and religion Kaklamanis emphasised the government’s hope for co-operation between the State, the Church leadership, and academic theologians to transform Greek society along “progressive, socialist and democratic” lines.²⁷

2.2.2 Secularisation of the Civil Code and the National Education System

At the opposite pole of PASOK’s dual strategy,²⁸ the government’s proposed major revisions of Greek family law had already begun the institutional separation of Church and State. These revisions provide a clear example of how the three main actors (Church, government, and opposition) are situated *vis-à-vis* the question of modernisation, and of the catch-all strategy underlying PASOK’s approach. The Church adamantly rejected the revisions, considering them an assault on the moral foundations of Greek society. The ND opposition announced that these changes in the Civil Code were actually the outcome of ND policies expressed in the 1975 constitution. This confirmed ND’s pro-western concept of modernisation as having the objective of marginalising the Church and its eastern, non-Enlightenment orientations.²⁹

²⁶ Ibid., p.281.

²⁷ Ibid., p.282.

²⁸ Opposite in the sense of promoting reforms towards secularisation which risked being perceived by the Church as anti-Orthodox, anti-religious, etc.

²⁹ The fact that between 1975 and 1981 the ND governments had been unwilling to change the family law drawn up in 1946 further confirmed their strategy of gradualism. Indeed, had ND taken a decisive stand against the Church at that time, this would have jeopardised the party’s ideological legitimacy as a significant number of its voters identified with conservative and traditionalist ideals. As a result of this gradualist and conciliatory policy, the Church and ND had no serious dispute between

The challenge for PASOK, therefore, was to remain consistent with its image as a progressive social movement ready to take responsibility for changing obsolete elements in the Civil Code, while simultaneously ensuring that the necessary changes would not offend the Orthodox sensitivities of Greek society.³⁰

As might be expected, PASOK's proposals for the legalisation of civil marriage and the decriminalisation of adultery reflected the duality of Papandreou's vision of Church-State separation and the Church-nation connection. PASOK proposed a radical change, whereby individuals who wanted the religious sacrament could exercise that prerogative, but that the prior civil ceremony would be the legally binding act. Under this proposition the separation of Church and State is achieved through a clear distinction between religious and secular matters, consistent with the notion of modern religious pluralism and the right to individual choice. The proposed legislation, however, was not merely aimed at institutional separation. Indeed, epitomising PASOK's dual policy, Papandreou and his associates described the new legislation as enhancing the appeal of Orthodoxy in contemporary society. The Church, by abolishing obsolete and authoritarian rules, would no longer be perceived as an obstacle to the exercise of individual civil rights. Accordingly, the proposed changes would be a positive element in the Church-nation connection, since both Church and nation would benefit from loosening the legal-formal interdependence between Church and State. At the same time the Church's image would be modernised by justified democratic changes.

The reaction of the higher clergy, represented by the Holy Synod, was consistent with its inward-looking traditionalism. The synod accused the government of depriving Orthodox Christians of the spiritual essence of the ecclesiastical

1979 and 1981. The party's western orientations, however, sometimes obliged ND to confront the Church, political costs notwithstanding. One of these rare occasions was in 1979 when the Karamanlis administration established diplomatic relations with the Vatican as a prerequisite for Greece's entry into the EEC. See Karagiannis 1997, p.187.

³⁰ The PASOK ministry of justice preliminary report on revisions of family law made the case for the necessity of these changes to "take into consideration not only contemporary social developments, needs, and ideas in Greece, but also...(preserve)...tradition within the present social reality and (reinforce) continuity in the future." See Prodromou 1993, p. 283.

ceremony and argued that giving priority to the civil ceremony was anti-Christian. Political expediency led to a compromise and the modification of the final legislation, so that the civil and religious ceremonies were of the same legal force. With respect to adultery the protests of the official Church were overridden, and PASOK decriminalised adultery by removing Article 357 from the Civil Code.³¹

The Church-State mistrust generated by these revisions was deepened by government decisions on two other matters related to the issue of separation. The first concerned changes in education proposed by Kaklamanis' 1984 draft legislation. The Church condemned the proposed religious-education reforms as anti-Christian, particularly objecting to the use of textbooks with Darwin's theory of evolution as well as Marx's historical materialism and his theory of social change.³² Yet again PASOK's radical aspirations had to be severely curtailed due to political expediency. The ministry's working group on religious education concluded that the proposed reforms would not be implemented unless the Church consented to them, and emphasised that the educational system would enhance "Orthodox perception in the instruction of our youth."³³

The second issue that sharpened antagonism between Church and State was a bill dealing with "questions of monastic property."³⁴ However, with elections set for June 1985, both issues were left pending. During this first period of PASOK government (1981-1985) mutual suspicion had infiltrated the Church-State relationship as a result of conflicting notions of tradition and modernisation. The PASOK government tried to implement its policy of Church-State separation through a discourse on modernisation via nationalism, deliberately creating an atmosphere of inseparability between Church and nation. Papandreou kept stressing that the

³¹ Justice Minister Alexandris, stated adamantly "the State will not negotiate the legislative authority." The issue was central to democratisation and as such not negotiable. Karagiannis 1997, p.188, and Prodromou 1993, p.284.

³² Prodromou 1993, p.289.

³³ Indicative of PASOK's decision to employ a dual *modus operandi* is the fate of former education ministers who opposed the Church in support of their reform policy. In 1977, G. Rallis's attempt, despite Church opposition, to establish the vernacular-demotic language at the expense of the purist-archaic *katharevousa*, almost cost him his seat in parliament. See Karagiannis 1997, p.187, and Prodromou 1993, p.290.

³⁴ Prodromou 1993, p.289.

proposed changes concerning family law, education and monastic land-holdings were not intended as an attack on the Church, and that positive relations between Church and State were essential “for the good of the nation.” The higher clergy however, perceived such changes as bringing impermissible confusion ... to the hierarchy.”³⁵ In effect, with Papandreou’s electoral expediencies and the imperative to keep political costs as low as possible, as soon as PASOK came to power the radicalism of its pre-government phase (1974-81) gradually gave way to a more ambivalent interpretation of social change.

2.3 Church-State Relations 1985-1989

When PASOK began its second term in office after winning the elections of 2 June 1985 its twofold orientation towards the Church was basically unchanged. The party remained focused on creating a modern secular society with minimal legal-formal ties between religion and politics while attempting to strengthen the bonds between Church and nation.

In collaboration with the Church hierarchy, the government eventually passed a law on national education. In stark contrast to PASOK’s initial radicalism, Article 1 of the law emphatically stated that one of the purposes of the reform was to restore “the original element of the Christian-Orthodox tradition.” The education minister went so far as to declare that PASOK was re-orientating the educational system towards Orthodoxy, strengthening the bonds between Church and nation.³⁶

Once again PASOK used its dual political logic to pass further revisions of family law at the same time, and provoked intense opposition from the Church. The new dispute was over the decision to legalise abortion. Despite Papandreou’s intention to re-establish and sustain Orthodoxy as a unifying bond of Hellenism,³⁷ the conflict over abortion put the two institutions sharply at odds, and exposed the main shortcomings of PASOK’s Janus-faced political strategy. Much confusion and ambivalence was generated when Papandreou resorted to a populist discourse on nationalism while trying to give legitimacy to his program of modernisation of Greek society along secular lines. His reasoning brought together elements as diverse as Orthodoxy, socialism, modernisation and westernisation (i.e. EEC and NATO

³⁵ Ibid. 1993, p.285.

³⁶ Ibid. 1993, p.292.

³⁷ Presumably rejecting ND’s western and gradualist strategy towards modernisation.

membership) in an idiosyncratic and uneasy coexistence. Each of these elements seem equally democratic, but taken together, and mediated by conditions of traditional statism and clientelism, only lead to ideological confusion and manipulation.

For the first time in post-authoritarian Greece, it became clear to both institutions that their opponents were willing to mobilise every means at their disposal to obtain their political objectives. The *Synallilia* doctrine was nearly finished with, and matters soon deteriorated further on the most controversial issue of Church-State relations under the two PASOK administrations of the 1980s.

2.3.1 Conflict over Law NS 1700

At the beginning of his second term as minister of education and religion, Kaklamanis introduced a Bill (NS 1700) into parliament “On Regulating Questions of Monastic Property.” The objective of the Bill was to transfer the vast majority of Church lands to the State agricultural co-operatives PASOK had introduced in 1982.³⁸ The government declared that the State’s responsibility in the question of Church property was both legally sound and economically necessary.

Kaklamanis argued that, since it was the State that shouldered the bulk of the financial burden of the Church’s operating expenses, in order to fulfil its fiscal responsibility it was legitimately responsible for resolving the property question, restructuring the financial apparatus of the Church, and placing the ecclesiastical organisations on a solid economic footing.³⁹ The basic intention of the Bill was to be consonant with PASOK’s commitment to democratisation of the main institutions of Greek society, and to reinforce the ties between Church and nation.

At a formal and superficial level, this restructuring would ideally allow the Church economic self-sufficiency and autonomy from the State payroll. At a more practical level, however, the main shortcoming was that implementation of NS 1700 was predicated on the acceptance of the traditional tacit joint jurisdiction, which implied that the government still regarded the Church as a department of public

³⁸ The transfer process was a large-scale undertaking, which included resolution of outstanding ownership questions, issue of new title deeds, compensation to the Church, and finally, restructuring of those ecclesiastical organisations responsible for managing Church properties and associated financial matters. Prodromou 1993, p.294.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 294

administration.⁴⁰ PASOK's dual concept of legal-institutional separation between Church and State and cultural connection between Church and nation was not only inconsistent with the party's statements during the debates on the 1975 constitution, but also responsible for ideological confusion. This confusion was an unavoidable result of the party's inconsistent logic that kept up a formalistic discourse of separation consistent with the party's left-wing orientation, while avoiding the equally important discussion of more historical and holistic issues related to ethnic identity and nationalism (e.g. the bond between Church and nation). In these circumstances it is not surprising that the legal, institutional interdependence of Church and State remained largely intact, while suspicion, mistrust, and confusion continued to plague their relationship.

The Holy Synod replied to the NS 1700 proposals in terms similar to those implied by PASOK's tacit approval of the joint jurisdiction rationale. It underscored the Church's desire to facilitate the government in meeting its social and political responsibilities, but also reminded the State of its obligations to support the Church carrying out its "sacred objectives" in Greek society. The prelates warned that "the one-sidedness of the Kaklamanis Bill contains the danger of friction between Church and State, which the Church not only does not want, but rejects."⁴¹ In place of the Bill, the synod called for some co-operative action by Church and State to resolve the question of the monastic lands.⁴² The Church objected strongly to what it perceived as an attempt to alter the existing *status quo* in the State's favour.

The rising tension between the two institutions prompted Papandreou to replace Kaklamanis with Tritsis, who served as minister of education and religion from April 1986 until his resignation in April 1988. Tritsis' account of the institutional and cultural dimensions of the Church-State relationship was consistent with the dualism of his predecessors. Addressing the Sixth Panhellenic Conference of Theologians, Tritsis followed Papandreou's syncretic reasoning, advocating a symbiosis of tradition, nationalism and modernisation in a populist model of

⁴⁰ For more on Church manipulation by the State see Konidaris 1991, p.45.

⁴¹ Prodromou 1993, p.295.

⁴² The hierarchy's letter suggested some preliminary alternatives to the Kaklamanis proposals, particularly regarding the method for classifying properties as acceptable for transfer of ownership and the proposed compensation to the Church in these cases. See Prodromou 1993, p.295, and Karagiannis 1997, pp.189-90.

socialism. He outlined a modernity concept with positive articulation and inherent compatibility between Orthodoxy, democratic-socialist modernisation, and the Hellenic identity. He described Orthodoxy as the “portentous meeting point between Christianity and Hellenism”, arguing that the Church’s activities throughout Greek history expressed a “perpetually revolutionary” message of “brotherhood, justice, and peace.”⁴³ Just as Enlightenment philosophers had associated freedom and truth, Tritsis discussed the Christian-Orthodox struggle in terms of a social vision of freedom, which was both uniquely Hellenic and compatible with PASOK’s policy of change.

Having constructed a positive atmosphere of mutual concern for building a democratic Greece, with a public role for Orthodoxy, Tritsis urged the Church to grasp the dynamic essence of the Orthodox tradition “by democratising itself” through the creation of “organs of popular participation.”⁴⁴ He invited the Church to move with the State beyond outdated elements whose “anachronistic conservatism has nothing in common with Greek tradition.”⁴⁵ Anticipating a new round of potentially bitter disputes over NS 1700, Tritsis finally claimed that the modernisation of the Church would re-establish the link between Orthodoxy and the people, clarifying the relevance of Orthodoxy to the definition of a contemporary national identity. Despite his tactical manoeuvres, the centrepiece of Tritsis’ proposals expanded the scope of the Kaklamanis Bill, suggesting that the Church’s vast urban and commercial holdings might come under the purview of the Monastic Properties Bill.⁴⁶

In the synod’s view, Tritsis’ adjustments suggested that the State intended to curtail the Church’s economic autonomy by depriving it of its landed properties and so of a major source of income. In a countermove, the prelates voted for the transfer of certain Church properties to the State, but excluded its urban properties from consideration.⁴⁷

⁴³ Prodromou 1993, p.297, and Stavrou, 1994.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.298.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ The Kaklamanis Bill restricted the property question to the Church’s rural holdings. Prodromou 1993, p.299, and Konidaris 1991.

⁴⁷ This was consonant with the Church’s decision in September 1984 to offer 360 square acres to accommodate poor families. Konidaris 1991, p.39

2.3.2 NS 1700 and Democratisation

The various rounds of proposals and counter-proposals culminated with Tritsis laying the final version of NS 1700 before parliament for discussion.⁴⁸ The most critical revision of NS 1700 had meanwhile shifted the emphasis from the issue of property towards reform and democratisation of the Church's administrative structure. The crux of the changes presented by Tritsis was re-instatement of the Church's conciliar structure, with a membership comprised of elected-lay representatives working co-operatively with appointees of State and Church. The ministry of education and religion was entrusted with sole responsibility for drawing up the electoral lists of lay candidates.⁴⁹

The synod response was prompt and defensive. It claimed that by removing the Archbishop from the presidency of the Organisation for the Administration of Ecclesiastical Property (ODEP) it became a State organ with unlimited powers for the disposal of ecclesiastical property. This was an act "astonishingly provocative ... anti-canonical ... anti-ecclesiastical; an expression of a Protestant worldview imposing populist power over the Church and abolishing episcopal authority."⁵⁰ Bishop Christodoulos of Demetriada, as spokesman for the Committee of Bishops, maintained that the synod was opposed to neither the modernisation of the Church *per se* nor to examining democratic revision of the Church's existing administrative structure. But on the Tritsis Bill, the Church expressed its outright opposition as a matter of principle. The Church was resolutely against the State interfering in internal ecclesiastic affairs over which it had no legal or theological purview.⁵¹ Bishop Christodoulos criticised PASOK for producing pretexts for modernising and democratising changes in the ecclesiastical structure which would, in fact, destroy any semblance of democracy within the Church. He concluded that the Church did indeed have a moral responsibility to the Greek nation, namely, to oppose what was actually

⁴⁸ As suggested by its title, the Tritsis Bill was significantly different from the Kaklamanis Bill, in that the latter's scope was restricted to "monastic" properties as opposed to the much more inclusive term "ecclesiastic" property.

⁴⁹ Prodromou 1993, p.303.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.304.

⁵¹ Ibid.

a State-engineered effort to politicise the Church in such a way as to prevent Orthodoxy functioning as a force for democracy.⁵²

PASOK's dual approach and the Church opposition to the Tritsis Bill were reflected in the civil-society groups mobilised to support the respective views. Most vocal in support of the Bill were the lay theologians of the *Theologikos Syndesmos* (Theological League). The initial suggestions from this group were presented at an open conference in Thessaloniki of ordained clergy, politicians, academic theologians, non-theological academics, and laymen. In its review of Church-State relations, the group argued for the revitalisation of the Church and its role in Greek society under the new circumstances of modern democracy. The conference posited two changes as absolutely essential to achieve these objectives: (i) the revitalisation of the lay and clerical roles at every level of ecclesiastical administration, and (ii) the legal-formal separation of Church and State which, however, should in no way weaken the link between Church and nation.⁵³ The participants at the conference announced that their decision to form a tactical alliance with Tritsis and the PASOK government on questions of Church-State reform was based on the fact that the "government has demonstrated its interest in [seeing] the most decisive possible impact of the Church in the realm of Greek society."⁵⁴ Equally important was the lay-intellectual's perception of Tritsis as a creative thinker, appreciative of the dynamism of Orthodoxy as a force for progressive social change, and of the links between Orthodoxy and the collective identity.⁵⁵

This working alliance between the Theological League and Tritsis may well account for the vehemence of the official Church reaction. In television debates, Church liturgies, and massive demonstrations in Athens and Thessaloniki, the official Church called on the Greek public to protect Orthodoxy against State intervention and NS 1700.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, NS 1700 was voted into Law on 8 April 1987. The ND

⁵² Ibid., p.305.

⁵³ Ibid., p.306.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.308.

⁵⁵ For more on Tritsis' relations with *Syndesmos*, see Prodromou 1993, p.307.

⁵⁶ The Church hierarchy's intense reaction is evidenced by its appeals to the UN, the World Council of Churches, even the Vatican, and by the absence of the higher clergy from the liturgies and parades during National Independence Day. Karagiannis 1997, p.192.

opposition party abstained from voting and denounced the Bill as “fraudulent, anti-ecclesiastical, anti-constitutional, and nationally dangerous.”⁵⁷ The official Church categorically refused to co-operate in the implementation of NS 1700.

In the wake of the ratification NS 1700, Tritsis announced the establishment of the Committee for the Study of Religious Issues (*Epitropi Meletis Ekklesiasticon Thematon* - EMETH). Its mandate was to formulate a new constitutional Church charter, which would be submitted to the Committee for the Study of Church-State relations (*Epitropi Meletis Scheseon Politias-Ekklesias* - EMSPE). According to Tritsis, EMSPE’s composition would include the four members of the Committee of Bishops, so as to provide a balanced perspective between the higher clergy, lay representatives of the Church, and the State.⁵⁸

EMETH in due course presented Tritsis and EMSPE with a set of “general and specific principles” for a new constitutional Church charter, which was seen as the logical concomitant of the impending implementation of Law 1700. The proposals reduced the decision-making purview of the ministry of education and religion, and limited the Church’s hierarchical control in favour of greater lay and clergy participation. This was consonant with EMETH’s objective of revitalising the Orthodox Church as a dynamic agent for the modernisation of Greek society along democratic lines of pluralist participation. EMETH’s long-term goal was the administrative separation of Church and State by “an extended process of freedom and democracy in the Church.”⁵⁹

The events that followed the formal submission of the proposals to EMSPE well illustrate the main problematic discussed in this chapter. The example of Church-State relations shows very clearly how – due to historical, cultural, political and economic reasons – PASOK had evolved from a radical socialist party with a maximalist strategy for the structural modernisation of society, into a catch-all party with a populist ideology and an increasingly hierarchical, clientelistic approach to decision-making. Events demonstrated the Church’s detrimental yet powerful role,

⁵⁷ ND president Mitsotakis declared that “...not even Mohammed the Conqueror in the course of our long-lasting enslavement contemplated enslaving the Orthodox Church in the way the PASOK government is doing.” Karagiannis 1997, p.192.

⁵⁸ Prodromou 1993, p.312.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 1993, p.312.

and how far political expediency had penetrated the Church higher clergy and posed a real obstacle to the modernisation of Greek civil society.

The prelates' representatives on EMSPE refused to even consider the EMETH proposals and a parliamentary vote was avoided. The key participants disregarded the existing framework and moved to the most senior level. Archbishop Serapheim bypassed EMETH, EMSPE and Tritsis, and arranged a private meeting with Prime Minister Papandreou.⁶⁰ This meeting brought a turning point in what had become a public confrontation between Church and State, Papandreou targeting his criticisms at Tritsis, gradually distancing himself from the controversy and adopting an increasingly apparent conciliatory stance towards Church demands for the abrogation of Article 8 in Law 1700. Tritsis submitted his resignation.⁶¹ He was persuaded to withdraw it on Papandreou's assurance that the discussions with the Archbishop had not deviated from the EMETH proposals. Following yet another round of meetings between Papandreou and the Archbishop the government issued an official statement that a preliminary agreement satisfactory to both Church and State had been reached.⁶² Tritsis' promptly resigned from both his post and the PASOK party on 9 May 1988, and was replaced by the Prime Minister's son G. Papandreou. In August 1988 Parliament passed a "Special Accord on the Holy Monasteries Conceding Agricultural and Forest Land to the Public."⁶³ This effectively emasculated Law

⁶⁰ On 1 March 1987 the Archbishop wrote to Papandreou requesting a meeting. In this letter he urged Papandreou to intervene "at the eleventh hour" before it was too late to avoid the obvious danger to relations between the two institutions. Konidaris 1991, p.57.

⁶¹ Article 8 concerned ousting the archbishop from his decisive position in ODEP (see above), and the re-instatement of the "conciliatory structure" with mixed participation. Prodromou 1993, p.314.

⁶² Papandreou's reconciliatory attitude emerges from his comments after the final meeting: "The archbishop, who is a personal friend, discussed with me issues concerning Church-State relationships, and we are in total agreement." Karagiannis 1997, p.194.

⁶³ Prodromou 1993, p.314. More generally, it may be argued that, as in the earlier crisis over Cyprus, both Church and State had to adjust their positions in the light of geo-political developments. On this occasion, the Church-State conflict over NS 1700 coincided with a "hot episode" in the Aegean concerning Greece and Turkey. As the

1700, by officially cancelling the property concessions stipulated in the Tritsis law, and indicated Papandreou's consent to suspend the democratisation endeavours of EMETH.⁶⁴

2.3.3 Open-ended Questions for the 1990s

The dual approach to Church-State relations by the 1980s PASOK governments reveals that, despite the partial secularisation and modernisation of Greek society in accordance with a rather idiosyncratic concept of socialist democracy, the Orthodox Church continued to play a significant role in public life. Although PASOK's initial radicalism was able to effect the social changes necessary to resolve historical contradictions over the meaning of modernity in Greece, the internalisation of these long-lasting contradictions in the ideological-discursive and organisational structure of the government turned this radicalism into a catch-all strategy. Its electoral success notwithstanding, this meant that in order to mobilise its heterogeneous base of popular support PASOK had to rely on symbolic successes to reinforce the party's image, sometimes at the expense of democracy itself. In other words, the government's idiosyncratic policy-making framework meant that it had to be all things to all people, while simultaneously engaged in the extremely difficult task of modernising the Greek economy. The revisions in Greek family law epitomise the government's ability to gain symbolic capital by presenting the social legislation as a modernising victory over the forces of conservatism. Despite granting significant concessions to the Church on the civil-marriage issue, PASOK, at least partially, achieved its target of secularising Greek society with a civil-marriage option, decriminalising adultery, and abortion legislation.

Similarly, the decision to replace Kaklamanis with Tritsis during the crisis over NS1700 was part of the party's image policy to appoint individuals with radical anti-establishment credentials to positions where the tension between tradition and change is susceptible to symbolic manipulation. However, once Tritsis' iconoclastic

Archbishop wrote to Papandreou, politicians and priests should resolve the issues between them so they could return to their posts close to the people to "boost the morale of the nation in the light of potential danger". Konidaris 1991, p.60.

⁶⁴ This was clearly welcome to the Prime Minister. In an address to his ministers Papandreou asserted, "If there is disagreement between Church and State, then we always have the Prime Minister." Karagiannis 1997, p.187, and Konidaris 1991, p.35

attitude threatened to cause a public rupture between Church and State, Papandreou resorted to an organisational tactic that undermined both PASOK's target of modernising Church-State relations, and the democratic procedure itself. In view of broader electoral considerations, Papandreou did not hesitate to marginalise Tritsis and so undermine the credibility of a member of his own cabinet as well as the latter's policy achievements.

PASOK's apparent inconsistency over Church-State relations is a reflection of wider dynamics that might be understood as part of a legitimacy crisis in the Greek State. It is particularly instructive to situate this legitimacy crisis in the context of the conflict between Church and State that is grounded in different conceptions of the role of religion in the definition of collective identity in the modern democratic Greek polity. Between 1975 and 1988, PASOK's politico-ideological legitimacy relied on a number of different discursive strategies concerning modernisation and traditional Orthodoxy. Its leadership's endorsement of the legal-formal separation of Church and State may be viewed as acceptance of the central premise of the modernisation theory. Specifically, that modernity required a reformulation of the legal arrangement between Church and State if it was to reflect the relativity of religious worldviews, and to reinforce the principles of rationality and pragmatism whose archetype can be found in the individual institutional make-up of the secular West.⁶⁵

The party's understanding of Church-State separation, however, also seemed to be built on a flexible and realistic interpretation of the role of religion in a modern pluralistic democracy. The underlying logic of this strategy evolved from a maximalist/radical interpretation of Church-State relations into a rather syncretic one. The emphasis on the links between Church and nation reflected an awareness of the historical importance of Christian Orthodoxy in Greek culture, and aimed to forge a platform of communication and legitimacy between Orthodox sensitivity and the socialist collective imagery. Despite Papandreou's firm convictions concerning the imperative of Church-State separation, by replacing the Church-State dyad with that of Church-nation, he clearly rejected a rigid equation of secularisation with the marginalisation of religion.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ This view was strengthened by the fact that, prior to PASOK, Church-State *Synallilia* was strongly influenced by the political Right, culminating with the dictatorship of the colonels' junta.

⁶⁶ cf. Casanova 1994, pp. 16-17: "Those versions of the theory of secularisation which

In contrast to PASOK's position, the Church's stance on legal-formal separation and, by extension, on the secularity-modernity problematic, was one of entrenchment. The prelates' support for *Synallilia* remained largely intact, based as it was on privileged constitutional treatment for the Greek-Orthodox Church. This view implies a logic that considers the European integration values of cultural pluralism and secular modernity as undesirable, seeing them as a threat to the vitality of religion in Greek society.⁶⁷ PASOK's gradual modification from a radical-maximalist to a syncretic-populist party resulted from a conscious decision to reduce the possibility of a legitimacy crisis arising from the divergent views of religion and modernity.

PASOK's ideological legitimacy could hardly afford the political cost of an open confrontation with the Church over which of the two strategies for modernising Greek society was more legitimate. Papandreou's claim of an indissoluble bond between Church and nation perpetuated a major weakness in the legitimacy of the Greek State in terms of its ability to stand as the leading modern institution responsible for defining and protecting the nation. The State's weakness as the purveyor of national identity was rooted in the peculiar legal-constitutional relationship of *Synallilia* which, paradoxically, had been established precisely to avoid such a problem (*Synallilia* being a co-operative relationship between Church and State). However, as a result of attempts by successive regimes to manipulate the message, symbols, and heritage of Orthodoxy for the exclusive use by the State in constructing the ethnic-national imaginary, the legitimacy of the two institutions

begin precisely with such an unfounded assumption and conceive the process of secularisation as the progressive decline of religious beliefs and practices in the modern world are indeed reproducing a myth that sees history as the progressive evolution of humanity from superstition to reason, from belief to unbelief, from religion to science. This mythical account of the process of secularisation is indeed in need of desacralisation."

⁶⁷ It is interesting in this respect to consider Grace Davie's questioning on how the EU, seen as a social entity, can contribute to the construction of an integrated European identity, considering the diverse role of the religious factor, at the one end leading to efforts at rapprochement, and at the other strengthening the entrenchment of some Orthodox and Protestant groups towards what they perceive as the threat of a mostly Catholic Europe. See Davie 2000.

became intertwined, rendering each vulnerable to the other's veto.⁶⁸ Because the long-lasting legal-constitutional arrangement between Church and State had added to the State's legitimacy problem concerning national identity, PASOK's commitment to the complete institutional separation of Church and State was a *sine qua non* for any successful prospect of building a stable pluralist democracy where State and civil society existed as autonomous, yet complementary spheres of activity.⁶⁹ PASOK's failure to achieve this separation, due to its deteriorating economic performance highlighted the State's inability to legitimise itself on the basis of its dual policy, and meant that Papandreou could hardly afford to challenge the Church in a struggle that could easily escalate to include questions over whether either institution could claim exclusivity in the matter of representing the people or the nation.

The legitimacy question is related to yet another aspect of Church-State relations. The concentration and personalisation of power in the leaders of both institutions illustrates how institutional factors define the overall nature of the relationships between religion and politics in public life in Greece.⁷⁰ Both Church and State claimed to be making decisions on behalf of "the people" who, in fact, were ignored or marginalised in a dialogue restricted to the senior levels of both institutions. In the disputes over the revision of family law, Church property, and democratisation, the leadership of both institutions justified the institutional power struggle in ideological terms grounded in respective visions of how to organise society. Yet society itself remained apart, oscillating between the Church which charged the State with trying to impose ideological criteria on the ecclesiastical rights of the laity, and the State charging the senior clergy with obstructing full participation of "the people" in the life of the Church. With the exception of a few televised debates and two Church-orchestrated demonstrations, exclusion of that very collective that both Church and State claimed and pledged to protect has severely compromised the credibility of either leadership with regard to legitimate authority over the regulation and definition of the Greek collective identity. The compromise by Prime Minister Papandreou and Archbishop Serapheim was in fact a sensible tactical manoeuvre by

⁶⁸ A good example of this manipulation of Orthodoxy is the junta regime's slogan of a "Greece of Christian Greeks." The association of Church and junta contributed to a legitimacy crisis for both the Church and the State.

⁶⁹ Prodromou 1993, p.330.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 1993, p.331.

two problematic institutions to retain a joint, however imperfect, mandate over the definition and protection of the identity of the collective.⁷¹

Shifting the emphasis away from the legitimacy question, it seems equally requisite to assess the importance of the need, expressed by popular ordained elements of the Church, to re-negotiate the meaning and realisation of the religious message of Orthodoxy. The lay-reformist tendency represented by the *Syndesmos*-EMETH factions argued that the social message of Orthodoxy was becoming irrelevant to public and private life in modern society because the prelates had managed to obtain a monopoly over its interpretation. This view was not necessarily novel and indeed, throughout modern Greek history several religious groups have expressed their discontent regarding Church-State interpenetration.⁷² The lay-reformist opposition to the conservative clerical factions was unique, however, in that they conceived Orthodoxy and modernity as complementary. Unlike other factions (e.g. the theological brotherhood *Zoë*),⁷³ which in the past had tried to affect political change through the conservative means of Church-State interpenetration, they understood the religious message as meaningful for transforming the country's contemporary social reality in terms of pluralism and democracy.

From this perspective, the Theological League decision to co-operate with the Greek State assumed a reflexive relationship between religion and politics beyond the problem of Church-State interpenetration. The fact that the ideological vision for democracy-building and popular participation was caricatured by State patronage and hierarchical meddling does not diminish the importance of the reformists' decision to embark on civil-society politics so as to revitalise the popular voice in the Church. Nonetheless, the failure of both Tritsis as a representative of the radical remnant of PASOK, and of the reformist intellectuals representing Orthodoxy's popular strata to shape the debate in democratic terms shows the persistence of organisational and ideological constraints that are typical of the "democratic deficit" in Greece during the 1980s.

⁷¹ Ibid. 1993, p.335

⁷² The Neo-Orthodox faction, for instance, attempted to criticise the Church's subjugation to the State as a "spiritual deficit" for which Greek Orthodoxy had been suffering since it became "just another department of public administration." Neo-Orthodoxy, ch.5 is one of three case studies to follow.

⁷³ The fundamentalist brotherhood *Zoë* is discussed in chapter 4.

What was the outcome of Church-State interactions under PASOK in the 1980s, and which open-ended questions emerged for Church-State relations during the 1990s?

First, PASOK's election with a huge majority, on the basis of its platform for democratic transformation through institutional restructuring of society, gave the government a broad mandate for reformulating the roles of Church and State. On the other hand, the dualism and purely formalistic results of PASOK's religious policy suggest that the party leadership was ambivalent about how to use that electoral mandate to define Church-State relations within the context of a modern democracy. Did the subsequent ND administration from 1990-1993 adhere to this dual logic? Have the much hailed post-Papandreou PASOK governments taken any fresh steps to modernise its relations with the Church?

Secondly, during the 1980s Church influence on State religious policies took both an oppositional and a co-operative form. The conflicting stands by the higher clergy and lay theologians suggested fragmentation within the Church. Different actors pursued different strategies and goals for the Church but, remarkably, they all shared a mutual willingness to enter politics in order to use State power to achieve ecclesiastical goals.

Is the prospect of a possible change in the leadership of the Church Hierarchy likely to seriously affect the continuing negotiations with the State? Are there other currents within the Orthodox Church that deviate from the logic of conservatism? Given that in the 1980s both State and Church linked their institutional roles in the public sphere to their respective concepts of the collective-national identity, what is their stance regarding the increasingly Europeanised official political strategy of the 1990s? Moreover, does the widely acknowledged resurgence of a religiously informed nationalism in Greece and elsewhere affect the country's emerging role in the transitional context of democracy-building in the Balkans during the 1990s?

Our methodology for addressing these issues relies as much on an analysis of the government's policy *vis-à-vis* the legal-constitutional separation of Church and State, as it does on the cultural dimensions of the relationship, particularly concerning secularisation, nationalism, and European integration. It is quite remarkable that none of those involved in the Church-State dialogue during the 1980s ever questioned the government's emphasis on the link between State and nation. Has this attitude changed in the 1990s? How does absorption into the European Union and the new

modernisation agenda of Prime Minister Simitis relate to Orthodox culture and identity?

Throughout this work much importance is given to historical analysis for an understanding of culture as a subjective order of meanings, cognitions, and values that have a determinant impact on politics; by the same token, politics shapes the reconstruction of culture.⁷⁴ The mixture of secular-political and sacred-religious precepts that formed Greek culture were reinforced and perpetuated by the interpenetration of Church and State. PASOK's dual religious policy during the 1980s can be understood as an attempt to supersede both the religious and secular inconsistencies and contradictions in Greek culture, and resolve the power struggle between Church and State for control over the construction and reconstruction of national identity. The government's underlying strategy was to establish the unrivalled legitimacy of the State for defining and protecting national identity, while insisting on the institutional separation of Church and State as a prerequisite for modern pluralist democracy. By dissolving the constitutional bond PASOK implied that the Church could become like any other institution or interest group in Greek civil society.

The Church's ability to successfully mobilise political power to block the government objectives not only reinforces the implication of PASOK's policy that Christian Orthodoxy is an inalienable component of the Greek national identity, but also that privileged constitutional treatment has preserved the Church's claim to participate with the State in the definition and protection of that identity.⁷⁵

This questions the State's legitimacy as the undisputed arbiter of the nation in the Greek collective identity. Any explanation of the Church's ability to affect the State's religious policies during the 1990s must, therefore, account for the mutually determined relationship between politics and culture.

2.4. The Situation in the 1990s (1988 – 1998)

2.4.1 Historical and Theoretical Perspectives

Overshadowed by the tension and turmoil of the 1980s, Church-State relations between 1988 and 1998 went through a phase of relative stagnation, precipitating

⁷⁴ Prodromou 1993, p.366.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 1993, p.368.

another modernisation challenge as the Greek Church prepared to face the new millennium under a new leadership. Based on four issues (secularisation, democratisation, the question of ecclesiastical property, and westernisation), the chapter examines more recent developments in the following order: (i) the fate of NS 1700 (property), (ii) the faction of the Ieronymites (democratisation); and (iii) the Church *vis-à-vis* European integration (westernisation).

A salient feature of all societies is the tension generated by the interaction of local cultures and global processes. In sociological terms, this phenomenon has been discussed within the modernity/post-modernity framework. While certain commentators maintain that religion still has a significant cultural role to play,⁷⁶ others⁷⁷ claim that religion in late modern societies should be understood primarily as a form of cultural resource rather than an autonomous social institution. Both approaches are particularly instructive for our own study of the correlation of Greek-Orthodoxy as a social institution and/or cultural legacy, and of contemporary social change in a modern democratic culture.

Earlier in this work a historically-oriented interpretation of Greek-Orthodox political culture was given in terms similar to the cultural logic of syncretism: by occupying an ambivalent position between the rational cultural forces of western Enlightenment and the mystical apophatic tradition of eastern Orthodoxy, the political cleavages and cultural resources which shaped the main Greek institutions have failed to resolve the tension between tradition and modernity and perpetuated long-standing cultural inconsistencies. Moreover, the interpenetration of Church and State, the Church's association with the national identity and its identification with the (conservative) ideological projects of the State, have contributed to a legitimacy crisis of the two major Greek institutions and to an extensive democratic deficit in Greek society.

To recapitulate, there are four basic areas of overlapping interest between Church and state in contemporary Greece: (i) crucial parts of the Civil Code as they relate to the family (marriage, divorce, abortion, etc.); (ii) the contentious issue of State involvement in Church administration through the ministry of education and religion, and the appointment of bishops, especially the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece; (iii) the financial affairs of the Church, emoluments of the clergy, and the

⁷⁶ Bell 1976; Robertson 1986 and 1987; Kokosalakis 1995c; Roberts 1995.

⁷⁷ Beckford 1989; Huntington 1996.

question of ecclesiastical property; and (iv) the cultural unity and homogeneity of Greek society, which involves the sensitive issue of the cultural constitution of modern Greek identity, religious and cultural pluralism and the awkward area of the ideological legitimation of the Greek nation-state and of political ideology.⁷⁸ Each of these overlapping areas of interest will be examined below in contexts of specific examples from Church-State negotiations between 1988 and 1998.

In more general terms it must be stressed that PASOK's dual strategy of modernisation via nationalism remained unchanged during the 1990s, despite the succession of different governments and the challenge of the European Union's integration policy. This confirms the view that the Church-State and Church-nation association in contemporary Greece has always been manipulated by both institutions in order to cement social order and cohesion, and to legitimise their pursuit of policies which at times were completely inimical to the values and implications of Orthodox culture. For example, when the conservative New Democracy party returned to power in 1989, it followed liberal-capitalist, almost Thatcherite policies and an austerity program of economic stabilisation that primarily affected the lower and middle strata of the population. These policies, which were congruent with global capitalist developments, once more acutely posed the problem of social inequality and injustice in Greece.⁷⁹ Prime Minister Mitsotakis, when announcing his program to parliament, found it necessary to stress the importance of Church and religion in the context of global socio-economic change: "In our country religious freedom is guaranteed by the constitution, and we Greeks have confirmed in our history that we respect all religious faiths. Orthodoxy, however, is the bedrock of the nation. Orthodoxy can and must play a significant role, especially today in the context of the cosmogonic changes taking place around us in the Balkans, in Eastern Europe, and in the Soviet Union. It is a spiritual force of global dimensions and surely supports the State in our ethnic concerns. This relation of Church and State must be both smooth and undisturbed."⁸⁰

Given this close connection between Church and State, Orthodoxy frequently becomes an ideological tool in the hands of politicians from whatever part of the political spectrum, for purposes that have little or nothing to do with the spiritual

⁷⁸ Kokosalakis 1995b.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 260.

⁸⁰ Minutes of Parliament, 24 April 1990, Ibid., p.260.

ideals and vision of Orthodox Christianity.⁸¹ Both Papandreou and Mitsotakis adhered to the dictum that a political leader must always publicly exhibit religiousness to bolster his public image. So while PASOK constitutionally introduced and promoted the option of civil marriage, Papandreou, true to his party's dual logic and political tactics in 1989, remarried in Church according to Orthodox tradition. In August 1990, while out of office, he also visited the bishop of Florina, an uncompromisingly fundamentalist upholder of the Orthodox tradition.⁸²

Given the long legacy of Church-State interpenetration for reasons of each side's political expediency, it is not surprising that there should be increased emphasis on Orthodox symbolism in pre-election periods. The opportunism that made PASOK abandon its initial position on Church-State separation because of prohibitive political costs persisted throughout the period between 1988 and 1998. In the election campaign of 1990 the ND party categorically denounced the abuse of Orthodoxy by the PASOK government. The political motivation behind this is obvious, at a time when PASOK was accused of anti-Orthodox policies (re NS 1700). Just before the 1990 election, the leaders of both PASOK and ND met separately with Archbishop Serapheim and stated they would not interfere with Church administration in the future by violating its "autonomy". Such declarations are of course pure rhetoric. It suffices to remember that only just below this apparently smooth surface lay the shaky construct of NS 1700 which had been voted into law by parliament a few months earlier. Full implementation of even this modified version of the ecclesiastic Bill was to generate a new round of open confrontation between Church and State, which could hardly be prevented by the standard pro-Orthodox discourse of the politicians. Such formalism contributed to the general confusion surrounding the meaning of Orthodoxy in Greek political culture, and confirmed once again that nationalism (i.e. association of Church and nation) is an indispensable ideological device in the hands of Greek politicians and the priesthood, regardless of any consolidation of Greece's orientation in the EU.

Throughout the thesis this unsatisfactory situation has been assessed in relation to the notion of a political and cultural populism. Further substantiation requires investigating how populism manifested in Church-State relations. One prime example

⁸¹ This is not an exclusively Greek phenomenon. Makrides 1991b (p.291) cites a contemporary example from Israel. See Davis 1989, pp.483-95.

⁸² Makrides 1991b, p.292.

of the populist tactic has already been identified and examined in PASOK's dual logic during the 1980s. Within the Greek political culture, this strategy towards Orthodoxy operates at two levels, abstract and concrete. In the first, Orthodoxy is idealised as a cultural entity closely related to the historical development of the ethnic identity and the future of the Greek nation. It is not viewed as a religious tradition proposing a specific way of life and requiring absolute faith and obedience, but simply as one of the basic components of contemporary Greek culture.⁸³ In this way, "Orthodoxy is set free from its essential religious foundations and used as an instrument for various non-religious purposes (for the control or legitimation of the social system; for social integration, as a common core of values helping to maintain social order). Greeks belonging to this category are not necessarily Christian-Orthodox believers."⁸⁴ The second, more concrete operational level derives from an understanding of Orthodoxy as a specific religious tradition and the only authentic expression of Christianity. "This naturally implies faith in Orthodoxy as the sole true religion and as dictating a specific way of life within the secular world. Such viewpoints are not generally accepted by Greeks seeing Orthodoxy at an abstract level, who express the dominant cultural consensus."⁸⁵

Apart from a few notable exceptions,⁸⁶ Greek politicians usually belong to the first category. It is in any case not easy to combine the expediencies of a secular State with the requirements of a fairly conservative religious tradition. Yet both for the idiosyncratic socialist modernisation of Papandreou during the 1980s and in the Thatcherite ideology of ND (1990-1993), and indeed under the post-Papandreou PASOK governments,⁸⁷ the Church-nation connection consolidated and enhanced its already privileged position. This demonstrates the crucial role of Orthodoxy for the

⁸³ Ibid., p. 294.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Papathemelis, a prominent figure of the so-called patriotic faction in PASOK and a former cabinet minister, is strongly Orthodox and emphasises in particular the Church-nation connection. This prompted him to disagree openly with his party's Church policies.

⁸⁷ This period stressed the need for modernisation, rationalisation, pragmatism, and EU integration, and the struggle against the "old" ideological devices of despotism, populism, clientalism, and formalism.

Greek State, and shows that changes at the level of Church-State relations (e.g. their separation) are very difficult to implement in a political culture that is highly sensitive and over-protective towards Orthodoxy and strongly stresses the association of Church and nation.

Traditionally, the political exploitation of Orthodoxy has generally been much easier for the Right, which has consistently profited from the fear of communism among Orthodox believers. Ceaseless propaganda and active canvassing now extend across the entire politico-ideological spectrum, with all sides in favour of Papandreou's "socialist" appropriation of the discourse of nationalism and Orthodoxy (previously reserved for the conservatives). This tendency manifests even beyond the ideological confines of political culture and can now be observed in a more general "patriotic" turn in Greek popular culture towards the re-appropriation of a variety of discourses that have been hitherto limited to certain groups of people with a common ideology or an exclusive cultural background.⁸⁸ In the context of the present study, this proliferation of Orthodox symbolism to an ever wider network of cultural and political forces is aptly exemplified by Neo-Orthodoxy. The objective of this current of Orthodox theologians, left-wing intellectuals, and lay believers was to make the rediscovered cultural heritage an instrument for emphasising the Orthodox tradition in modern society. They searched for the spiritual source of the nation in order to enhance their quasi-Marxist, quasi-Orthodox critique of the hegemonic capitalist West, and to identify it as the foundation of Greek values rather than imported foreign ideologies of emancipation.⁸⁹

Another aspect of cultural confusion is the fact that, as a result of some of the aforementioned processes, in modern Greece there is neither separation nor bifurcation between the private and the public domain as far as Orthodoxy is concerned. A sacred/profane dichotomy does not exist. The fact that the Church-State and Church-nation dyads still go together in their public assertion of Orthodoxy proves that this tradition permeates all of Greek society, at the popular as well as the official level, and ritualises all social and individual life.⁹⁰ As a result, secularisation

⁸⁸ An example is the glamorisation of *Rebetika* and other forms of Greek folk music previously confined to marginalised groups or the working classes.

⁸⁹ More details on this in chapter 5 on Neo-Orthodoxy, and in the chapter on historical background.

⁹⁰ Makrides 1991b, p. 299.

is not as uncomplicated as in some of Greece's partners in the EU. In theory, secularisation presupposes that religion loses its previous pivotal role in modern, functionally differentiated, increasingly specialised and rationally organised societies, and becomes simply a subsystem or a "cultural resource". In the Greek case, however, due to the long association of Church, nation, and State the differentiation of society and the institutionalisation of its various sectors neither led to a complete disappearance of religion from the political sphere, nor did it debase its social message into mere rhetoric: "The fact alone that the attitude of the State on this issue is ambivalent – since on the one hand it tries to limit Church influence, and on the other there is no serious evidence of their impending separation – shows the complexity of the issue under discussion."⁹¹

The discussion of developments in Church-State relations during the 1990s that follows will pave the way for an empirical investigation of three modern Greek organisations concerned with the relationship between Orthodoxy, the State, and the nation. On the one hand there are the religious fundamentalists and other strict believers who, due to their enthusiasm for the Church-nation-State triad, are more influenced by the *Synallilia* model and seek the closest possible collaboration and alliance with State power (for them, the State means primarily the armed forces or the police, rather than the government).⁹² On the other are the members of the Orthodox Academy of Crete and the movement of Neo-Orthodoxy, whose orientation is characterised by reformism, selectivity and fragmentation. Just as the fundamentalists project their ideological conservatism in a dogmatic interpretation of Orthodoxy, the reformists rationalise Orthodoxy in whatever way best meets their need to criticise the status quo and denounce the impact of state patronage. Nevertheless, such reformist zeal does not attack the Church-nation connection, which has remained largely intact or is even enhanced.

This increased emphasis on the Church-nation-State alliance, which culminated in the 1990s,⁹³ may also be seen as an aspect of the globalisation process.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² It would be interesting to examine how such fundamentalist circles share similar nationalist visions with the extreme Right (e.g. the collaboration between *Zoë* and the junta), and particularly whether the idiosyncratic modernisation during the 1980s and 1990s meant any serious disruption of this connection.

⁹³ When Prime Minister Mitsotakis visited Mount Athos (Sept. 1990), he stressed that

According to Robertson, globalisation means making the world into a single socio-cultural space because “all societies have become increasingly subject to global constraints” which largely originated in the West. Religious traditions felt obliged to offer some answers to these radical developments. Some Orthodox organisations are more oriented towards a global-pluralist society and try to adjust to the new situation (e.g. the Orthodox Academy of Crete). Other groups interpret developments more negatively, mainly because they feel threatened by the idea of a unitary world. This defensive reaction can be understood if we take into account an important consequence of globalisation (in the Greek case, EU integration): the perceived threat which emanates from the dramatic proliferation of western culture at the expense of traditional, ethnic, and cultural identities.⁹⁴

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Church of Greece officially expressed its scepticism regarding these developments, and that anti-European trends became quite common in the 1990s among several of the country’s religious organisations. Finally, the excessive sensitivity concerning the persistence of the Greek national identity, shared by both clergy and politicians, presents a serious challenge to the westernising strategy of certain modernisers who regard a separation of Church and State as a panacea and automatic solution to the problem of cultural confusion. Perhaps such a rupture in the historical consciousness of the Greek people would create even greater problems. In previous chapters we discussed how former ruptures of this consciousness, e.g. the forced and mechanistic Europeanisation in the 19th century, created tensions between tradition and modernity that are still largely unresolved, as was so clearly manifested in the 1980s’ conflict between Church and State over NS 1700. Similar to what happened during the second PASOK government (1985-1988), the State in the 1990s continued the same policy and shifted its emphasis from the maximalist strategy of Church-State separation towards an amelioration of more specific contentions by means of compromise and a logic of gradualism.

Orthodoxy can help the Greek nation in the present harsh times, and underlined his intention to bring religion and God back to the schools to instill sound principles into the young. He also added: “Orthodoxy will not die. Orthodoxy will survive.” Makrides 1991b, p.303.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.304; and Robertson 1985, pp. 31-42. Also Beckford and Luckmann 1989, and Robbins and Robertson 1987, pp. 39- 51.

However, the assessment below of the fate of NS 1700 in the 1990s shows that even this modified version of the ecclesiastic Bill could not be implemented unless certain vested economic and political interests in both Church and State were seriously challenged. In this manner the Church could secure greater economic and administrative independence from the State – an undoubtedly positive step. However, this solution required bringing in a state attorney, as several cases of financial fraud and unlawful deals were revealed.⁹⁵ Since the human,⁹⁶ economic, and political cost of such serious allegations would inevitably have had repercussions on the electoral objectives of both PASOK and ND, let alone the credibility of the Church hierarchy, it is not surprising that the whole process ground to a halt. At the same time, both politicians and clergy remained secure behind the nationalist Church-nation-State discourse, which enjoyed unprecedented legitimacy and popularity during the 1990s.

2.4.2 The Fate of NS 1700

During the crisis over NS 1700, a number of monasteries appealed to Greece's highest legal body of civil justice and administration (the Council of State), concerning certain Articles of the Bill proposing the nationalisation/socialisation of several monastic properties. Their main legal argument was that the Article would be in clear violation of the constitutional right of religious institutions to operate freely and manage their finances independently.⁹⁷ The Council of State rejected the monasteries' appeal, and upheld the constitutional legitimacy of NS 1700 in terms of the dual logic that "...in her capacity as the dominant religion as established by the constitution, the Orthodox Church (along with several secular institutions) is an integral part of the State infrastructure and devoted to the highest service of them all, the law of morality and ethics... This constitutionally guaranteed jurisdiction, however, may not be extended to issues of administrative legislation and legal authority, which are determined according to modern exigencies of Greek society, in the light of new perceptions for the mutual benefit of Church and State."⁹⁸

⁹⁵ They concerned management of the Church's vast property.

⁹⁶ The human cost involved the prosecution and imprisonment of prominent members of both State and Church who had profited from scandalous deals.

⁹⁷ Ramiotis 1997, p.29.

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp.29-30.

The ratification of the Bill by the Greek courts and parliament prompted an unprecedented act on the part of the Greek Church. Bypassing the long-lasting legacy of *Synallilia*, which would have permitted recourse to negotiation and compromise in the two top hierarchical levels,⁹⁹ and ignoring the negative consequences for the image and unity of the Church-nation-State concept, eight Greek monasteries laid the matter before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg on 5 June 1990. On 9 December 1994, the European Court finally reached its decision. Whereas it rejected the suit of three of the monasteries on the basis of their legal-formal contracts with the State prior to NS 1700, the Court vindicated the remaining five, and acknowledged that with NS 1700 the Greek State was violating Articles 1 and 6 of the Treaty of Rome concerning human and property rights.¹⁰⁰ The implication of this ruling on the property rights of monasteries extends far beyond the purely legal argument, and once more acutely questions the State's legitimacy to stand as the undisputed arbiter of the nation in the Greek society and collective identity. As the Greek courts are obliged by international and national law to comply with the Strasbourg decision, the Church gained a symbolic victory over the secular authority of the State in the matter of protecting the human rights of the Greek citizens and, most importantly, did so by secular European legal means. In other words, the Church managed to discredit the overriding rationale of NS 1700 which had attempted to legitimise the proposed changes by associating secularity with "catching-up" with the rest of Europe and facilitating Greece's EU integration.

The Strasbourg experience further slowed down the already gradualist pace of developments in the matter of Church-State separation.¹⁰¹ In fact, even 10 years after the Bill was introduced, the situation was still pending for should the State have decided to implement it after all, a total of seven trillion drachmas (about 20.5 billion Euros or 13.5 billion pound sterling) would have been payable in compensation to the five monasteries.¹⁰²

Given the seriousness of the allegations of financial fraud and scandalous misconduct in the management of its vast property,¹⁰³ it is not surprising that the

⁹⁹ Cases in point were the Papandreou and Serapheim meetings in 1987.

¹⁰⁰ Ramiotis 1997, pp.276-82.

¹⁰¹ See section 1.1 above for gradualism.

¹⁰² Karagianis 1997, p.196.

¹⁰³ This implicated members of the clergy, prominent politicians, and other state

Church too is relatively content with the current stagnation. This “latency phase” also owes something to the fact that between 1990 and 1996, Greece had four different governments.¹⁰⁴ On the one hand, there was never enough time to implement a stable political program, and on the other, once a party had come to power it gave priority to amending the resolutions made by its predecessor.

The catch-all strategy of dualism (modernisation via nationalism) was thus perpetuated by the Archbishops’ and politicians’ public pronouncements concerning the abstract concept of separation, while both were acutely aware of the underlying issues that could very well jeopardise their own threatened legitimacy. So for example Archbishop Serapheim argued: “Personally, I am in favour of the separation between Church and State ... but this issue requires a great deal of consideration ... there are pros and cons.... but we would rather separate a hundred times than suffocate in the State’s embrace and intervention. The Church is afraid of nothing and nobody. There are always enemies of the Church. Even if we should separate we are not going to disappear.... But let us not discuss it at the present time... it demands a lot of thinking and discussion.”¹⁰⁵ In another interview he said: “For so many years Church and State have walked side by side. Let us not forget that the Church has always been the protector of our people. Its role is still important today. It is a liberating, spiritual, national, social, cultural, and philanthropic role. Such decisions should not be reached in the heat of the moment. If, however, this would protect us from the kind of problem we are facing, I personally am in favour of separation.... on condition, of course, that the role and importance of Orthodoxy will be safely assured, for I see so many more people today deeply involved and affected by the Church.”¹⁰⁶

In summary: Dualism and gradualism *vis-à-vis* Orthodoxy and Church-State separation informed the governments of both PASOK and ND between 1988 and 1995.¹⁰⁷ In consequence, the changes set out in NS 1700 have not yet been

officials.

¹⁰⁴ After the so-called “ecumenical” coalition government of 1989-90 came that of ND’s Mitsotakis (1990-93), Papandreou (PASOK 1993-95), and Simitis (PASOK since 1995).

¹⁰⁵ Interview in the Sunday newspaper *To Vima*, 11 July 1993.

¹⁰⁶ Karagianis 1997, p.184.

¹⁰⁷ During 1989 there was a coalition government (“ecumenical”) between ND and a coalition of the Left.

implemented, despite the significant intellectual input from lay academics, clergy, and politicians in the specially drawn-up committees of the 1980s.¹⁰⁸

2.4.3 Democratisation I: Church-State Separation through Constitutional Amendments

A new opportunity for democratisation arose when Konstantinos Simitis succeeded the late Papandreou as Prime Minister. Simitis epitomises the modernising trend within PASOK and did not hesitate to confront the “presidential” faction that adheres to the old, largely populist socialism of Papandreou. Confident of his motto “Modernisation now” and “Battle of the new against the old”, Simitis managed to gain election within his own party (a few days after Papandreou’s death) as well as the national vote in Sept.1996. He pledged that no political cost would make him shy back in his struggle against the parochial and obsolete logic and practice of populism, despotism, clientalism, and statism. The chief aim of his program was rationalisation of the public sector and State infrastructure, by means of the extremely difficult task of dealing pragmatically and meritocratically with the economic deficit produced by the so-called “problematic” State-owned corporations entrenched behind powerful trade-unions. Concerning foreign policy, Simitis promised to handle the “national issues” soberly and realistically so that alongside a stable economy and an increase in foreign investments, the country’s negative international image would be rehabilitated and Greece’s proper integration with the EU ensured.¹⁰⁹

The fact that between 1995 and 1998 the Church-nation-State association remained intact notwithstanding Simitis’ iconoclastic campaign against traditionalism, proves that Orthodoxy is still a *sine qua non* in the Greek political culture, and the indispensable element in the fabric of Greek nationhood that the majority of politicians have considered one of their best card in the ideological game of establishing and sustaining public legitimacy and social consent.

¹⁰⁸ See sections 2.2 and 2.3 on EMETH.

¹⁰⁹ This policy stood in stark contrast to Papandreou’s nationalistic Euro-scepticism, which had prompted Huntington (1996) to characterise Greece as an anomaly within western institutions because of her support for Serbia, sanctions against the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, her uncompromising attitude towards Turkey, the Balkan Orthodox alliances, etc.).

Simitis' gradualist political strategy with respect to Church-State interpenetration is aptly exemplified by PASOK's tactics on certain amendments to the constitution debated in parliament in 1995 and 1996. Although the party reopened the question of separation, it did so merely to suggest an amendment (of paragraph 1 of Article 3) "in the direction of the gradual consolidation in the Church's self-governance.... which will facilitate the separation of Church and State."¹¹⁰ The gradualist logic of this proposition would imply that the inalienability of the bond between Orthodoxy and nation does not permit the removal of additional Articles from the constitution so as to expedite complete separation. Evangellos Venizelos, professor of constitutional law and a leading adviser in the post-Papandreou party was quite outspoken on this. As the then-minister of Press he commented that a relevant amendment of the constitution "should not challenge religious feeling, sensitivity and tradition, but merely rationalise the institutional relationship between Church and State."¹¹¹

The ND party remains adamantly opposed to any changes and would wish to consider the position of the Church hierarchy before arriving at any firm conclusions. Among the smaller parties only the KKE (hard-line communists), and the Coalition of the Left (moderates), support complete separation. The position of the Church was expressed by a specially appointed committee of five bishops,¹¹² which found that the hierarchy opposes a separation of Church and State, and that the proposed constitutional amendment of Article 3 should not go forward.

The government's response to the synod decision reflects an understanding of the situation that is clearly affected by the imperative to avoid an open rift between the two institutions. The experience of the conflict over NS 1700 in the 1980s and the Strasbourg verdict of 1994 have strengthened the position of the Church and a new round of bitter disputes over constitutional amendments would potentially be highly detrimental to the government's social legitimacy. In these circumstances PASOK has adopted ND's position and withdrawn all its propositions, even including the minimalist amendment to Article 3. Officials of both State and Church have mobilised all means at their disposal to present their agreement in such a way as would enhance their respective public image. In a televised ceremony held at synod headquarters,

¹¹⁰ Karagianis 1997, p.185.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.186.

¹¹² Among them was the future Archbishop Christodoulos.

upper clergy and prominent politicians from the two main parties sealed the agreement with mutual embracings and pompous pronouncements about the inalienable bond of Orthodoxy and Hellenism.¹¹³

The text of the synod's statement clearly illustrates that the rationale underlying this compromise involves the ideological struggle for legitimacy of both Church and State as it relates to the secular and sacred-religious aspects of the Greek national identity and consciousness: "... The Holy Synod considers the separation between Church and State.... a catastrophe for the future of both institutions, inconceivable for the Greek-Orthodox conventions, at odds with our long-lasting spiritual and cultural heritage, and nationally detrimental for the survival of the entire Hellenic nation. In a time of imperative need for the consolidation of the unity of Hellenism, the separation ... may prove in effect extremely hazardous, ... lead to loosening our people's spiritual cohesion, to the fragmentation of ecclesiastical unity ... with the final consequence of dividing Hellenism."¹¹⁴

2.4.4 Democratisation II: State Interference in Church Affairs, and Church Interference in Politics (the Ieronymite Conflict)

Before considering the second major conflict in Church-State relations during the 1990s, we must first briefly look at the doctrinal and institutional aspects of Orthodoxy. The doctrinal dimension is understood as the message of the Christian religion. The institutional dimension is the Church, comprised of ordained and lay strata.

The account below of the Ieronymite conflict makes it clear that the fragmentation of the doctrinal and institutional dimensions of Greek Orthodoxy, and particularly the discord within the institutional strata, was part of the broader interpenetration of politics and religion that has operated ever since the colonels' junta of 1967. This fragmentation is seen in the lack of cohesiveness between the ideas of the religious doctrine and the institutional structure intended to realise them. The main reason for the doctrinal-institutional incongruity has to do with the State intervening

¹¹³ Karagianis 1997, pp.186-87.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp.230-31.

in ecclesiastical affairs in order to ensure official Church co-operation in its domestic and foreign politics of nation-building.¹¹⁵

The 1967 junta's immediate intervention in the Church occurred by virtue of a State decree, thereby setting a precedence for State decision-making in the internal structure of the Church. In addition to ordering the mandatory retirement of the then-Archbishop Chrysostomos, the State replaced the existing synod with a "meritocratic" one, mandated to elect a new synod and an Archbishop whose final approval still remained subject to the State.¹¹⁶

The State's approval of Ieronymos as the new Archbishop of Athens and All Greece reflected the colonels' belief that the new Archbishop's earlier activist history (during World War II and the civil war), as well as his roots in the fundamentalist brotherhood *Zoë*, and his position as the long-time chaplain of Greece's royal family, made him the ideal candidate for the State's project for "the moral regeneration of society based on devotion to ... nationalism, anti-communism and the Orthodox Church."¹¹⁷ Because of Ieronymos' association with the dictatorship, assessments of the Church's evolution under his leadership and the impact of his tenure on the Church's public role have been marked by intense polemics.¹¹⁸ The discord began with Ieronymos' emphasis on the financial autonomy of the Church from the State, and brought an open split of the synod into Ieronymite and anti-Ieronymite factions. Given that over one-third of the bishops in the synod were junta appointees, it took four years of internecine fighting among the ordained, and the eventual involvement of the Council of State before the anti-Ieronymites succeeded in having a set of episcopal appointments by Ieronymos overturned. These events are relevant for the

¹¹⁵ The doctrinal-institutional fragmentation and the period of the junta will be further discussed in the chapter on the fundamentalist brotherhood *Zoë* (4.2.3).

¹¹⁶ For a summary of changes see Frazee 1969, pp. 148-49, and Prodromou 1993, pp.155 and 183-84.

¹¹⁷ Frazee, p.148, and Prodromou 1993, p.155.

¹¹⁸ Chapter 4 will return to the matter of Ieronymos' reformism. Despite his liaison with the junta, some considered him a suitable choice because of his intellectual sophistication and record of social activism. Yannaras a leading member of the Neo-Orthodox group, confirmed this view in an interview with the author on 10 Jan. 1998. See also Yannaras, 1983.

1990s with respect to the attitude of Archbishop Serapheim (1974-1998) and the new democratic regime towards the prelates elevated during Ieronymos' tenure.

Once democracy was restored, the way Prime Minister Karamanlis and the new Archbishop dealt with the Ieronymite prelates illustrates how power-politics permeate the whole fabric of Church-State relations, as well as how public sentiment against the authoritarian regime was manipulated in the interest of private ambitions, political expediency, and the overall strategic game of legitimation. Both the government and the Church were set on improving their strategic position concerning the legitimate authority for defining and controlling the nature of the new democratic regime and its effect on the modern Greek identity. Each realising that Ieronymos' aspirations for the administrative and financial autonomy of the Church were detrimental to the complementarity of *Synallilia*, Church and State joined forces to eliminate the Ieronymite faction from the 77-member synod. The fact that the Archbishop had collaborated with the hated dictatorial regime provided an ideal pretext.

The new status quo included a State decree depriving the Ieronymos-appointed bishops of their constitutional right to appeal to the Council of State, and the appointment by Serapheim of new "loyalist" bishops, which assured him a majority in the synod. In this way several well-known and popular bishops were obliged to seek refuge outside Greece.¹¹⁹

This situation remained unchanged throughout the 1970s and 1980s, although on a number of occasions lay people campaigned in unruly demonstrations (involving clashes with riot police) in favour of the deposed Ieronymite bishops. This again shows that PASOK's socialist modernisation during the 1980s could not afford to take effective measures towards democratising Church-State relations. Finally, under Laws 1816 (15 Dec. 1988) and 1877 (9 March 1990), the Ieronymite bishops were granted their constitutional right as Greek citizens to appeal against their deposal in the Council of State.¹²⁰

This did not, however, indicate any wider changes, nor any significant lay participation in Church-State relations. It simply underscored the powerful role of

¹¹⁹ Among them was Anastasios the current Archbishop of Albania, who found refuge in the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, and has been among the Ieronymites acknowledged for their broad views and extensive diaconal mission.

¹²⁰ Karagianis 1997, p. 196.

personal relations and religious clientelism in the Greek political culture. So the protagonist of the promotion and implementation of Law 1877 was I. Palaiokrassas, finance minister in the coalition government of 1990. As a member of the brotherhood *Zoë* (whose president was Ieronymos), and financial administrator of ODEP during Ieronymos' years in tenure,¹²¹ Palaiokrassas served in ND's post-junta government and as a Commissioner of Greece in the EEC.

The higher clergy's reaction against Palaiokrassas was immediate and defensive. Archbishop Serapheim gave his own version of the events that led to Law 1877: " ... The State, through Palaiokrasas, passed a law which took the Church by complete surprise... The arrangement was made so the minister could fulfil his personal obligations. The time has come for the people to know that Palaiokrassas was a close friend of Ieronymos; they both came from the Cyclades and Ieronymos had appointed him director of ODEP ... It seems that the man could not forget his kinship with those (deposed bishops) who belonged to religious brotherhoods. All who were elevated by Ieronymos had been members of similar organisations: *Zoë*, *Sotir*, etc..."¹²²

The minister's reply to the Archbishop avoided the issue of his connection with Ieronymos and the brotherhoods and emphasised instead the democratic and constitutional nature of the decree: "... under a State decree introduced by the junta,¹²³ the twelve bishops who were deposed by the Archbishop [Serapheim] were also deprived of the right to appeal against their deposal in the Council of State. I consider this State decree, the only one still in force from the junta period, as clearly anti-constitutional. Every Greek citizen should have the right to appeal to the Council of State".¹²⁴

¹²¹ ODEP, Organisation for the Administration of Church Property (*Organismos Diekisis Ekklesiastikis Periousias*).

¹²² Karagianis 1997, p.198.

¹²³ This refers to the period from November 1973 until the fall of the regime in August 1974 when, as a result of an internal coup within the military government, the new leaders decided to shun Ieronymos and invited Serapheim to administer the Church. A detailed analysis of that period is given in chapter 4 on *Zoë*.

¹²⁴ Karagianis 1997, p.198. The excerpts are from the Minister's interview with the newspaper *Apogevmatini*, published on 6 July 1993. Question by journalist: "Is this amendment a result of your own initiative exclusively?" Minister: "Yes, it was my

The turmoil that followed the announcement of the decree very well illustrates the extent to which power politics have penetrated the religious sphere, and the ability of prelates to mobilise their lay supporters in rather extreme forms of activism. Several Ieronymite bishops exercised their right of appeal against their “holy brothers” elevated by the predominately Serapheimite hierarchy. The agitation was not confined to the premises of the Council of State, and quickly spread to the streets of several dioceses. Violent clashes between followers of the two opposing factions brought out the riot police and terminated in a number of arrests. This partisan behaviour was largely the result of the “colonisation” of the religious sphere by both politicians and politically-minded prelates who were trying to benefit from the situation by accusing each other and claiming that the choices and timing of the episcopal appointments rested on political and clientelist affiliations stretching back to the junta years.

With all these intertwined vested interests at stake, the State opted for a strategy of compromise, since an irrevocable solution to the problem would entail too high a political cost for the winning faction. Between 1990-1993, therefore, the ND government of Mitsotakis both acknowledged and respected the Serapheimite majority in the synod, and at the same negotiated with the last three Ieronymite bishops for a viable solution (all the others were meanwhile deceased).¹²⁵ PASOK, on the other hand, remained totally opposed to the Ieronymites, chiefly because they had been elevated by the junta. Matters became further complicated when the Council of State in July 1993 vindicated bishop Theologos’ appeal for reinstatement in the diocese of Larissa, and subsequently prosecuted the Archbishop for failing to comply with this verdict. This triggered a vociferous reaction from Serapheim, who joined forces with the PASOK opposition against what was perceived as a State-engineered attempt to control the administration of the Church and give in to the Ieronymite bishops in return for political support. Finally the government, wishing to prevent the potentially harmful political repercussions of its pro-Ieronymite position, decided to suspend all legal actions against the prelates. On 21 July 1993, following an intense debate in the Ministerial Council, Prime Minister Mitsotakis announced the

own initiative.”

¹²⁵ Under a statute passed on 31 May 1991 the Church hierarchy offered to reinstate these three bishops in dioceses of lesser importance created specifically for this purpose.

government's decision to this end, and added: "...the involvement of the Council of State in ecclesiastic affairs, and particularly the prospect of prosecution, should not upset our relation with other Orthodox countries, patriarchates, or Churches abroad."¹²⁶

Once the threat of legal action against the Church had been lifted, the synod proceeded to ensure the virtual elimination of the Ieronymite bishops by defrocking them, on the grounds that they had failed to comply with its decision. The Ieronymites remained intransigent and responded with a new round of appeals to the Council of State, accompanied by demonstrations and riots in the dioceses of Larissa and Attica. In due course, in February 1996, the Council of State irrevocably rejected the three bishops' appeal. However, neither the Council's decision nor the subsequent death of Theologos (bishop of Larissa) brought the issue of the Ieronymites to a close. As will be shown in the next chapter, the Ieronymite faction within the synod (bishops who either belong to brotherhoods or supported the ecclesiastic model of Ieronymos),¹²⁷ played a decisive role in the election of the new Archbishop after the death of Serapheim in April 1998.

2.4.5 The Westernisation Dilemma: Church and State Relations, Secularisation, and EU Integration

The European Union's attempt to forge a supranational European identity is arguably the greatest challenge the Greek-Orthodox Church has had to face in the 1990s. The bond uniting Church and State in Greece having been cemented in the course of their long historical and cultural past, both institutions have a legitimate basis for justifying the close association of Orthodoxy with national identity and the cultural constitution of modern Greek society. In the 1980s Papandreou attempted to buttress his idiosyncratic socialist modernisation with a cultural policy that aimed at incorporating into the Church-nation connection the previously excluded Centre-Left, and so to divest nationalism of its mainly conservative ideological connotations. However, the populist nature of his strategy generated huge confusion over the meaning of modernity and the role of Orthodoxy in the largely secular, institutionally differentiated political culture of the EU in the 1990s.

¹²⁶ Karagianis 1997, p.199. Mitsotakis referred to several Orthodox patriarchates which had condemned the prospect of prosecuting leaders of the Greek Church.

¹²⁷ See chapter 4.

On the one hand, for geo-political and economic reasons, the Greek State followed a pro-European strategy and expressed no reservations whatsoever in subscribing to the Maastricht and Shengen agreements. On the other hand, for reasons of internal consumption, the State has evinced the highest interest in emphasising and enhancing nationalism in Greece, while remaining strangely indifferent to various manifestations of chauvinism and intolerance.¹²⁸

Global socio-economic changes thus have enhanced the ethnic functions of the Greek Church. While the official Church adopted a cautious strategy and did not openly condemn the State's pro-European stance, some bishops, lower clergy, and lay groups have exhibited a rigorous conservatism and intransigently promoted the absolutism of Orthodoxy, along with an almost irredentist, xenophobic and racist discourse on the "national issues" and Greece's integration with the EU. There has always been a significant conservative-nationalist element among both the Orthodox clergy and laity, but the neo-traditionalism of the 1980s and the widespread nationalism of the 1990s are unprecedented, inasmuch as they are accompanied by attempts at large-scale modernisation projected alike by Papandreou's socialism in the 1980s, Mitsotakis' neo-liberalism (1990-1993), and Simitis' democratic Europeanism today (since 1995). These three different political strategies of modernisation have not only failed to manifest a strong willingness to challenge the structural interpenetration of Church and State, but have actually contributed to the continuing expansion of nationalism and the consolidation of the Church-nation connection, which has now acquired a peculiarly modern legitimacy.

With respect to the Orthodox attitude towards Europe, this generalised type of nationalism can be observed in the hostility towards EU integration that is shared by both the Neo-Orthodox and fundamentalist movements.¹²⁹ Although the upper clergy seem reluctant to engage in open confrontation with the State over EU integration, they implicitly endorse Euro-scepticism in that it takes no initiatives whatsoever to

¹²⁸ Aside from examples pertaining to Orthodox chauvinism, evidence of such discrimination is found in the xenophobic and racist reaction to the influx of Albanian immigrants, the nationalistic fervour with which the media and politicians welcome Greek successes in international sports and many other mainly aesthetic fields (e.g. music), which points to an increasing glamourisation of anything Greek (in contrast to the "xenomania" of the 1960s and 1970s).

¹²⁹ More about those two movements in subsequent chapters.

promote any positive prospects for Orthodoxy in a unified European civil society. The examples that follow are all indicative of the positions of various Greek-Orthodox prelates and organisations towards the EU agreements of Maastricht and Shengen, the dramatic increase of foreign immigration into Greece, the role of Greek Orthodoxy in the recently emancipated eastern-European Orthodoxy, religious and cultural pluralism in Greece, and the so called national issues. We shall investigate the fundamentalist movement in a later chapter;¹³⁰ here it suffices to note that its Euro-scepticism is clearly anti-Semitic and anti-Occidental, as witnessed by their frequent references to “dark powers”, “Zionist plots”, and “Papal conspiracies” against Orthodoxy.¹³¹ There has also been extensive talk of the coming of Antichrist, so much so that the government was actually obliged to put into abeyance an act concerned with new identity cards, because the fundamentalists claimed that the number 666 (the Number of the Beast) was somehow hidden in the new cards.¹³²

The government’s unwillingness to overcome such fundamentalist dissent and implement an uncompromising secularisation policy, seems to imply its tacit consent to a civil society that is vulnerable to irrational obscurantism and susceptible to party-clientelistic patronage and ideological manipulation. It is also indicative of an unholy alliance between religious fundamentalists and left-wing Euro-sceptics, the two main poles of reaction against the Shengen and Maastricht accords.¹³³

In other words, Papandreou’s normalisation of the discourse of nationalism and its subsequent standardisation during the 1990s has had a profound impact on the relations between Orthodoxy, political culture, and civil society, inasmuch as it has encouraged reactionary entrenchment and theological conservatism in religious organisations and the official Church itself. To the extent that the *Synallilia* doctrine of the Church-State connection entails Church support for the imperative European orientation of the Greek State,¹³⁴ this combination of heterogeneous strategies *vis-à-*

¹³⁰ The Neo-Orthodox and the Orthodox Academy of Crete are the subject of two additional case studies (chapters 5 and 6 respectively).

¹³¹ Kokosalakis 1995a.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p.261

¹³³ This is discussed at greater length in chapters 4 on fundamentalism (*Zoë*) and 5 on Neo-Orthodoxy.

¹³⁴ Apart from economic considerations, Greece’s European orientation is considered imperative by almost all political parties, due to reasons of geopolitical integrity (the

vis Europe and modernisation inevitably results in a discourse of syncretism. Henceforth, modernisation in contemporary Greek political ideology does not include the cultural values and implications of secularisation.

In accordance with this line of thought, the president of the Greek Theological Association told delegates at their 1990 annual conference: "After the collapse of the Marxist-Leninist regimes and the complete failure of the capitalist system to form humane communities, Orthodoxy is the only possibility for united Europe to become a community with a human face."¹³⁵

Archbishop Serapheim expressed his fears not only concerning the impact of socio-economic change on the Greek ethno-religious identity, but also of a perceived threat emanating from the proliferation of religious and ideological pluralism in Greek society: "It is no exaggeration to say that never since the establishment of the Greek State in 1830 has our nation faced a more serious crisis than today. Our problem does not lie only in our weak economy.... Our problem is spiritual, ethical, and cultural. Like Hercules, the mythical hero, our nation finds itself at the crossroads of choices and re-orientations. Our entry to the new world of a United Europe is connected with the agony and the struggle for the safeguarding of our national, cultural, and especially our spiritual and religious continuity... All kinds of propaganda from East and West flood our country and create tragic victims among those who have no foundation in the faith and traditions of our fathers. Para-religions and heresies, various ideologies, and even magical cults ensnare our brother Greeks, ostensibly in the name of progress and freedom.... Let us then remain steadfast in our faith, our traditions, our ethics and customs, in everything that constitutes the specificity of Hellenism through the centuries. I, therefore, call on you all to gather around the Church, a tower of strength and the antidote against the corrosion of our Greek-Orthodox identity, our race itself."¹³⁶

Given the upheavals in the Balkans during the 1990s (the Bosnian war and the Macedonian question), and the still unresolved Greco-Turkish conflict, the connection between Orthodoxy and the "national issues" has become even stronger. Combined with a huge influx of foreign economic immigrants into Greece and the perennial debate between Europhiles and Euro-sceptics renewed in the light of Greece's place

threat of Turkey).

¹³⁵ Kokosalakis 1995a, p.261.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.261.

in the supranational EU, these previously chiefly political issues have attracted the attention of several politicians, prelates, and civil-society groups with a vested interest in appropriating Orthodox symbolism for their own political expediency and legitimacy. Hence Antonis Samaras, a former minister of foreign affairs in the Mitsotakis government (1990-1993), founded a new party (Political Spring) and emphasised the role of Orthodoxy in a political agenda intended to sensitise Greek public opinion to real or potential national threats. In announcing his platform (June 1993), he stressed the role of Orthodoxy as a major factor in shaping his foreign policy towards other Orthodox countries in the Balkans and Russia.

At the same time several members of the clergy, confident in their legitimate role as protectors of the nation, manifested a racially discriminatory, xenophobic, or ultra-nationalist attitude and are blatantly at odds with constitutionally guaranteed basic human rights. Examples are the curfew that was proposed by a local priest for Albanian immigrants in a village in the province of Drama; the arbitrary refusal of another priest to officiate at a burial service because the deceased had been married in a civil ceremony; the adamant opposition of several dioceses in Attica and Thrace to grant permission for the building of mosques; the ordeals of a Catholic and an atheist student of theology who were not permitted to register at the University; or the case of two high-school professors who were facing legal prosecution because they refused to join in the compulsory morning prayers.¹³⁷

Usually, the Greek legal system has upheld the constitutional legitimacy of suits associated with religious freedom, and almost always has ruled in favour of citizens or groups who are discriminated against because of their religious affiliation or their atheism. Yet the persistence of certain undemocratic Articles in the constitution and the provocative indifference of the Greek political mainstream, the media and civil society towards such phenomena of intolerance and arbitrary despotism, only underscores the pivotal role the Greek State attributes to the promotion of Orthodox nationalism.

¹³⁷ Bishop Panteleimon of Thessalonika is perhaps the most outstanding case of uninhibited racism and ultra-nationalism. In the official ceremony on the anniversary of Greek independence (25 March), numerous ministers and parliamentarians watched him launching a vociferous attack on “our foreign enemies, Turks, Skopjans and Albanians” and warned them, “go back to your countries, Greece is for Greeks”. Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 11 April 1998.

Apart from reasons of internal legitimacy, there are even more significant sociological reasons that serve to strengthen Church-State relations and the role of religion in Greek society. It is now well understood that all national societies are shaped and transformed by global, socio-economic forces and political processes. As globalisation grows, so does the need for an awareness of cultural roots and identity. The following statement by Robertson is fully applicable to Greece: "A pressure to connect religious and State domains in the modern world, regardless of the degree to which there is formal, constitutional separation, arises from the fact that increasingly we face the problem of the plurality of cultures and faiths at the global level, and that circumstance is almost certainly also a source of our becoming more conscious of the 'deeper' aspects of modern life. By the same token, consciousness of roots, tradition, heritage, and so on increase the likelihood that societies will draw upon religio-cultural resources in defining their identities and that movements within and across societies will invoke religious symbols."¹³⁸

2.5 Summary

While Greece has entered the EU as a full member and as her economy and polity are increasingly becoming part of an interdependent supra-national socio-economic framework, so her cultural and ethnic identity undergoes an experience of heightened tension and insecurity. Religion in this context, as Kokosalakis argues, is the most immediate and most amenable cultural resource to give not only a cultural response to the global socio-economic forces, but also provides cultural boundaries for a continued identity.¹³⁹ Despite the resurgence of the Orthodoxy-nation dyad, however, neither the Church nor the political mainstream, nor public opinion generally are objecting to Greece's membership in the EU. But the fact that much of the legislation concerning citizenship and religious rights is now being enacted in Brussels or Strasbourg, combined with Greece's unequivocal decision in favour of a European geo-political and economic future, seems to present a definite danger for the historical and cultural hegemony of the Orthodox Church in Greek civil society. As a result of this, as well as the fact that pluralist components are increasingly penetrating the whole fabric of the relatively homogenous Greek culture (especially through the

¹³⁸ Robbins and Robertson 1987, op.cit. p. 96.

¹³⁹ Kokosalakis 1995a, pp. 254-55.

recent influx of all kinds of legal and illegal immigrants, as well as through the proliferation of various western consumer subcultures and alternative lifestyles), there is apprehension that sooner or later the strain and tension between Church and State will become increasingly severe.

Whether and how these strains could be managed depends largely on the Church's ability to reflect on such radical and unprecedented social changes in a way compatible with the *Zeitgeist* of the modern Greek political culture. On the one hand this necessitates concessions, modification, and compromises to cope with the modern exigencies and avoid a renewed demand for total Church-State separation. On the other hand the Church will continue to maintain and enhance its privileged and exclusive position as the main institution responsible for the definition and protection of the Greek national identity. Inevitably, this ideological project entails several antinomies and contradictory values that reflect the complexity of the Greek case and the eminent confusion surrounding the issue of the country's integration in the secular culture of the EU.

CHAPTER 3

THE END OF SERAPHEIM'S LEGACY, AND THE NEW
ARCHBISHOP CHRISTODOULOS

3.1 From Serapheim to Christodoulos

Any meaningful conceptualisation of the lack of institutional differentiation between Church and State in contemporary Greece must go beyond the legal-formal interpenetration of these two main Greek institutions. The more inclusive approach of this thesis emphasises that the democratic deficit in Greek political culture can be partly attributed to the personalisation of power at the higher-elite levels of each institution. It is the charismatic authority of the main actors on both sides that is partly responsible for the concentration of power in specific individuals and the concomitant marginalisation of lay participation.¹

The career of Archbishop Serapheim, who died on 10 April 1998, was a striking example of the difficulties that can arise in Church-State relationship in extreme circumstances. It was one of the earliest acts of the colonels after the establishment of the military dictatorship in April 1967 to elevate Ieronymos to the highest ecclesiastical office in Greece. When his patron, Colonel Papadopoulos, was ousted by Brigadier Ioannidis in November 1973, Ieronymos was likewise deposed and Ioannidis engineered the election of his own nominee, Serapheim, as Archbishop. Whereas Ieronymos had been unanimously elected by a “specially selected or meritocratic synod” composed of eight Bishops (nominated by the junta), Serapheim was elected by 20 members of a synod consisting of 32 Bishops nominated by the Ioannidis regime (out of a total of 66 Bishops in the country as a whole). General Gizikis, one of the junta’s protagonists, assured Serapheim’s election by excluding from the electoral body more than half the Bishops as possibly hostile to his protégé. Serapheim therefore was the second non-canonical Archbishop in succession. When a few months after his enthronement the colonel’s regime collapsed, he remained in office despite the purges of junta appointees in other areas. A brilliant tactician, Serapheim not only remained in his post – even officially swearing in the newly reconstituted parliament – but appeared immune to any criticism from the Left that he was tainted by association with the colonel’s regime.

Epitomising our contention that personal relationships occupy a pivotal role in the Greek political culture in general and in Church-State relations in particular, Serapheim’s immunity can be partly attributed to Florakis, the leader of the newly

¹ See chapter 2 on how the special committees organised by Tritsis were marginalised as Papandreou and Serapheim decided to negotiate the issue between themselves.

legalised Communist party, who helped to protect his old friend from the time of the resistance against the German occupation, despite considerable disagreement from left-wing politicians.

“The Church is neither politics nor opposition” is how Serapheim defined his own role, and how he justified the manoeuvring necessary to negotiate the position of the Church with a succession of different governments during his record quarter-century at its head. He showed little inclination, however, to soften the Church’s hegemonic stance towards Greece’s small religious minorities and fervently supported the constitutional ban on religious proselytising.² Serapheim’s concerns tended to be narrowly parochial and made little impact on the Christian Ecumenical movement. He seemed reluctant to tackle any of the great spiritual and intellectual questions of the age, and his measures to improve the educational level of parish clergy did not go far enough. He not only rebuffed overtures from the Vatican, to which he attributed the darkest of motives in “stealing Balkan souls”, but also scorned the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for his liberalism and ecumenicism.

Although, therefore, he had the managerial and personal skills to hold together an institution much given to factionalism and ridden with constitutional disputes, he did not display any great vision of the role of the Church in a rapidly evolving society. The crucial question for Serapheim’s successor was whether a possible modernisation of the Church could be confined to giving it a more sophisticated public image, or if it will include more substantive and structural changes towards democratisation. Would the new Archbishop perpetuate the intense factionalisation at the hierarchical level which was the result of the Ieronymos and Serapheim periods? Is it realistic to anticipate a democratisation process that will mark the end of what had effectively become the regimentation of the Church leadership?

As had happened in the early 1980s in politics with the advent of a socialist government, the prospect in the late 1990s of a new leadership in the Greek Church provided the opportunity for altering the official status of the Church in society and for significant changes in the organisational life of the Church. Indeed, during the six months between the death of Serapheim and the first samples of the new Archbishop’s

² It will be shown below how two laws passed during the Metaxas dictatorship (1936-40) guarantee the privileged treatment of the Orthodox Church over other faiths by forbidding religious proselytising.

policy there was an unprecedented rise in political and public interest concerning the role of Orthodoxy and the Church in Greek society. The issue of the Church-nation - State connection ceased being the preoccupation of an influential but relatively small proportion of academics, politicians, clergy and lay believers, and became national headlines capturing the attention and interest of all Greeks. We shall try to account for developments during this transitional period by looking at contested issues such as the autonomy of ecclesiastical administration (Church-State separation), social pluralism and tolerance regarding religious and ethnic minorities, amendments to the Constitution for secularisation and democratisation, religious education, and finally, the role of the Church *vis-à-vis* EU integration and the so-called national issues.

3.1.1 The Election

Serapheim insisted on his right to exercise office for life. In an unprecedented move (March 1998), some of the 77 Bishops now making up the Holy Synod asked him to step down because of poor health.³ The response from his deathbed was to dismiss “the vultures circling around to get me”. This macabre detail illustrates how the State, by means of a mix of power politics and tactical alliances, had reinforced the archiepiscopal prerogatives of decision-making to create a virtual despotism within the Church. By the same token, this concentration of authority encouraged the formation of backstage factions and alliances, since any chance of dialogue and democratic representation within the synod was subject to final consent by the Archbishop. At the time of the election, therefore, the synodal body was deprived of any motivation for a democratisation of the ecclesiastical structure, and intra-hierarchical debate was severely undermined. The Archbishop was effectively armed with two forms of recompense *vis-à-vis* his Bishops: penal or promotional.

In this respect and concerning the pertinent role of charisma and personal relations in Greek political culture, the identity of candidate Bishops is central to the nature of the Church’s future prospects. The difficulty for the 77 Bishops was deciding whether to sustain the established *modus operandi* of Church-State

³ 59 of the 77 bishops were appointed in Serapheim’s period, nine of the remainder are Ieronymites (elected between 1967 and 1974), and the other nine were elected prior to 1967. Newspaper *To Vima*, 26 April 1998.

interpenetration, which requires the undisputed authority of a single negotiator in the person of the Archbishop, or to follow the ancient paradigm of synodicity where the Archbishop is first among equals and the lower clergy can participate in elections and voice opinions in Church matters. Despite the obvious democratic merits of the latter option, this was not easy to implement. The late Archbishop had virtually eliminated any residue of the Ieronymite faction and managed to elevate his favourite Bishops who, in return for their loyalty, were granted their customary honours. Serapheim in fact had forged a benevolent hegemony, inasmuch as he rarely met with any opposition and the synod reflected a strong and peaceful image of unity. This and the fact that he did not promote a successor for the archiepiscopal throne exacerbated the fear that less absolutism could lead to the resurgence of bitter disputes between different factions and brotherhoods which would potentially do incurable damage to the unity and power of the Church.

The consensus of the synod seemed to be that the new Archbishop should possess the necessary social and intellectual skills to revive the fading message of Orthodox spirituality and deploy his cultural-symbolic capital against the impoverishing values of consumerism, secularism, individualism, and the fragmentation of traditional identities. New, more sophisticated discursive practices and image policies were considered imperative for all those interested in a Church capable of surpassing its parochial and obsolete elements in accord with modern exigencies. In practical terms, the new Archbishop's agenda was weighted down with at least four major problems.

(i) *The resolution of the complex issue of Church property*, still pending despite the passing of NS 1700 (see previous chapter). If no viable compromise could be agreed between Church and State, neither the Strasbourg verdict nor the ecclesiastical Bill can be implemented. According to several commentators,⁴ failure to satisfactorily deal with this problem not only damages the country's credibility in the EU but also exposes the weakness and dependency of both Church and State on extra-institutional economic and political interests that prefer to cover up the issue rather than find a solution to it.

⁴ Law professor I. Konidaris, *To Vima* (26 April 1998) and theology professor G. Fidas, *ibid.*

(ii) *The westernisation dilemma*, where the new Archbishop, as the head of the strongest, most homogenous and best organised Orthodox Church in the Balkans, is called to decide the role of the Greek Church towards the post-communist Balkan Orthodox Churches in conjunction with the official Greek foreign policy and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. This is a highly contentious issue, particularly taking into account the Church's role and commitments in the EU despite its possible anti-western political and cultural predisposition, as well as the western-European (liberal, secular) orientation of the Greek State.

(iii) *Several pressing social problems* having been marginalised or completely ignored during Serapheim's tenure, the new Archbishop will need to re-orient the Church towards such matters as unemployment, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, racism, and xenophobia. In addition he must deal with the increasing wave of new religious movements and the persistence of heterodox or schismatic churches,⁵ and do so in a way that does not violate the status of Greece as a pluralist, democratic member of the EU.

(iv) *Communication with the Ecumenical Patriarchate* was minimal during Ieronymos' and Serapheim's tenure in office, and there were no visits between them. This had a negative impact on the Greek Church, since particularly in the 1990s the Patriarchate won worldwide recognition for its initiatives towards peace, ecology, and Ecumenical religious and cultural dialogues. Serapheim used the pretext of his bad health to justify this apparent lack of communication, but that did little to cover differences in outlook. The new Archbishop will have to restore relations with the Patriarchate, and find a viable third way between the inward-looking strategy of his predecessor and the overt ecumenicism of Patriarch Bartholomew.

During the eighteen days between the death of Serapheim and the day of the election (April 28), the above issues dominated the media, and a number of politicians and intellectuals were asked whether they were for or against Church-State separation. With the exception of the two left-wing parties, the representatives from PASOK, ND, DIKKI,⁶ and Political Spring seemed to endorse the established strategy of dualism

⁵ See below for how the new Archbishop dealt with two schismatic churches: the Old Calendrists and Jehovah's Witnesses.

⁶ Headed by former PASOK minister D. Tsovolas, DIKKI was a new party that was

and gradualism. On the one hand they urged the Church to use the opportunity of the new leadership for modernisation, while on the other they all expressed doubt about the introduction of amendments to the Constitution for full differentiation between the two main Greek institutions.

Papathemelis, a former PASOK minister argued that “In Greece the Church and people are identical concepts and can not be separated”,⁷ and suggested the deep organisational changes towards democratisation to “meet the challenge of the second millennium”. In particular he singled-out the need to upgrade the role of parish clergy and lay believers in the organisational life of the Church; and the gradual introduction of the conditions and measures which will ultimately allow the re-institution of the ancient system of synodicity, by which episcopal appointments are decided according to the public vote of parish clergy and lay believers. ND vice-president Varvitsiotis was even less reformist and echoed the standard gradualism of his party *vis-à-vis* Church-State separation: “No change is necessary in the established constitutional decrees delineating the mode of conduct between Church and State.... any initiative towards constitutional amendments that may alter the existing status quo is the exclusive prerogative of the Holy Synod...”⁸

Meanwhile, the four main candidates – the Bishops of Dimitriada, Ioannina, Alexandroupolis, and Thebes – during their election campaigns relentlessly maximised their networks of allied Bishops and factions. The outcome was highly unpredictable, since the limited number of voters (77) created several cases of overlapping promises of promotion – the basic means by which the candidate Bishops tried to attract the vote of their “holy brothers”, involving transfer from some small, isolated, and relatively insignificant diocese to a larger and more important one.

established a few months before the elections of 1996. It attracted mainly former PASOK voters who could be loosely associated with the “patriotic” and “presidential” factions of the party. Tsovolas’ ideology claimed to be the true spirit of Papandreou’s political logic which was supposedly undermined by the new PASOK of the “modernisers” and the leadership of Simitis.

⁷ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 11 April 1998.

⁸ Ibid.

Several denunciations came from members of the synod who realised that a fellow-Bishop had been promised the same diocese by the same candidate.⁹

Amid this rather Machiavellian procedure of religious clientelism, Bishop Christodoulos of Dimitriada succeeded in gaining an astonishing 49-majority vote and winning the election.

3.1.2 The New Archbishop

Born in 1939, Christodoulos Paraskevaides is one of the most educated and younger prelates. He studied law and theology at the University of Athens, and speaks five languages. He also studied Byzantine music and has a theology doctorate in canon law. During his 25 years as Bishop of Dimitriada he established himself as a successful and modern leader, capable of addressing the public through a wide network of diaconal institutions and media of communication. As one of the synod's chief negotiators, he represented the Church in the 1987 crisis over NS 1700 and has been a regular contributor to the most prominent nation-wide Sunday newspaper.¹⁰ According to a nation-wide survey in March 1996, the public regarded Christodoulos as the most appropriate choice for the post-Serapheim era.¹¹ Confident in his popularity and possessing excellent public relations, the new Archbishop attracted unprecedented media attention and received an enthusiastic reception from the laity, which saw in him the personification of the Greek Church in the second millennium.

Indeed, as soon as Christodoulos' victory was confirmed, his immediate reaction was to announce a large-scale modernisation project for "Church open towards the modern society of the 21st century." At the same time, he declared his admiration for the Ecumenical Patriarch, and stated his intention to co-operate closely with the mother church of Constantinople, beginning with an invitation to the

⁹ Newspaper *To Vima*, 19 April 1998.

¹⁰ In his diocese Christodoulos founded the radio station "Orthodox Witness", a newspaper, and a web-site and oriented his diaconal mission towards youth problems, drugs, AIDS, unemployment, young offenders, etc. He is also the author of more than forty books.

¹¹ The VPRC institute sampled 1200 individuals in this survey. Published in newspaper *Ta Nea*, 29 April 1998.

Patriarch to visit Athens. He also spoke about the need to rejuvenate the human resources of the Church by appointing young and educated individuals in key administrative positions.¹² On the contentious issue of Church unity and the conflict with the Ieronymites, he insisted that there are no factions among the higher clergy, and emphasised that “this was reflected in the election... The politics of sterile confrontation do not facilitate the new dynamism that we envision.”¹³

The euphoria, however, lasted only a few days, and the Archbishop’s popularity and tendency to comment on a variety of political issues, literally dominating the media headlines, started to arouse a strong feeling of unease in the government. The first signs of discomfort appeared at the occasion of the enthronement ceremony (May 6), where the State delivered a clear message of differentiation between the political and religious spheres, by the Prime Minister and the President of the Republic refusing to attend. In his introductory address, parliamentary Speaker Kaklamanis emphasised that Church and State each have their own space, and warned the Archbishop to “avoid direct or indirect engagement of the Church in fields irrelevant to its spiritual and diaconal mission.”¹⁴ Christodoulos reassured the secular authorities that the Church’s presence is “maternal, spiritual... and by no means political”, but declared that “we are not going to abandon our precious privilege to express the Church’s views on the vital problems of our nation.”¹⁵

Despite such formal reassurances, the question of whether the new Archbishop’s intervention is essentially political or strictly religious epitomises the increasing tendency of the Greek political culture during the 1990s to give pre-eminence to issues of identity and culture. Different actors and agencies confront each other in the struggle between the religiously sensitive “patriotic” faction and the

¹² His first decision was to appoint Father Georgakopoulos, who conducts a religious program on State television, as his representative and spokesman.

¹³ Indeed, his astonishing 49-majority vote included the 9 Ieronymites of *Zoë*. His good relations with the brotherhoods dates back to 1961 when, prompted by his mentor bishop Kallinikos from Piraeus, Christodoulos joined the brotherhood *Chrysopigi*.

¹⁴ Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 11 May 1998.

¹⁵ Ibid.

secular modernisers. This is as much a civilisational/cultural cleavage as it is an ideological and political one. In this sense, the patriotic factions both within PASOK¹⁶ and ND are relatively content if not enthusiastic with the new Archbishop, since his astonishing popularity and overtly patriotic views may very well serve the legitimisation of their own more inward-looking political strategy and cultural logic.

Certain right-wing newspapers re-introduced the term *ethnarch* for the new Archbishop, used previously to describe the qualities of men like the late Karamanlis who from 1974 guided Greek democracy for decades along the path of development, or Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus. Christodoulos' comments and public appearances certainly seemed to reflect an exuberant desire to live up to this characterisation. Speaking on the issue of globalisation he said, "We Greeks are an exception, and next to us in the same exception is the State of Israel", and "any attempt to dissociate Orthodoxy from Hellenism is a threat against the unity of the nation."¹⁷ Commenting on a proposal from 52 parliamentarians (modernisers from PASOK and the Left) to abolish the religious oath in the parliament, he did not hesitate to denounce "such Brussels-imposed initiatives."¹⁸

Tension culminated when the ultra-nationalist newspaper *Stohos* recognised in the person of Christodoulos "a friend from the past" and proudly asserted that "Archbishop Thunder" identifies with their irredentist ideology. They gave several examples, such as Christodoulos lecturing at a symposium organised by *Stohos* to commemorate the fall of Constantinople, where he congratulated the editor and said: "Mr Kapsalis is known for his Hellenocentrism.... which is at the same time Christian-centrism and Orthodox. The country needs men like him."¹⁹

The resurgence of the old cleavage between nationalists and modernisers in Greek political culture during the late 1990s is exemplified by the way the new Archbishop's ethnocentrism has been embraced or rejected by religious organisations, political parties, and civil society groups. To understand the way in which religion and

¹⁶ Also referred to as "the presidentials". Inspired by the late A. Papandreou's independent and nationalist political/cultural logic, they fervently oppose what they perceive as blind Europeanism by Simitis and his governing modernising faction.

¹⁷ Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 11 May 1998.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Periodical *Anti*, issue 661, p.17, May 1998.

modernisation are mixed up in Greece with the debate about secularisation, democratisation and EU integration, it is instructive to examine how the two camps are situated with respect to specific issues that arose in the first six months of the new Archbishop's tenure.

3.2 Democratisation, Secularisation, and Church-State Separation

3.2.1 The Political Debate

As anticipated, the end of Serapheim's era and the elevation of a widely acclaimed moderniser to the archiepiscopal throne, reopened discussion on the contentious issue of Church-State separation. Only two days after the election the Coalition of the Left and Progress²⁰ initiated the procedure of collecting fifty MP signatures in order to bring the issue before the forthcoming parliamentary committee responsible for discussing amendments to the Constitution. The parliamentary representative of the Coalition articulated the party's proposal in terms of secularisation and democratisation: "The established system of *Synallilia* is a residue of the distant past and its shortcomings are clear and well documented.... Those who have a vested interest in the prolongation of Church-State interpenetration are manipulating Orthodoxy through the tension and turmoil associated with our national issues. They offer a bad service to both sides."²¹

It is characteristic of the lack of communication and co-operation among Greek political parties that, whereas the proposal was backed by more than the necessary number of signatures, ten Coalition MPs were not available at the time of voting and the petition failed. It was followed by two more effective petitions, however, one from the modernising faction within PASOK, and another one from a wide range of influential individuals. Its 60 signatures came from MP's, MEP's, former ministers, academics, writers, publishers and journalists, who aimed to create forums and sensitise civil society groups to the idea of Church-State separation.

²⁰ A moderately left-wing party which does not identify with the hard-line Communist party KKE.

²¹ The representative of the Coalition, F. Kouvelis, interviewed in the newspaper *Kathemerini*, 29 April 1998.

Indeed, within two weeks from the launching of their declaration, five civil-society groups were mobilised and organised two open discussions.²² Their objective was to affect amendments to the Constitution that would guarantee full religious freedom as well as freedom of consciousness and speech: “Church-State interpenetration in Greece is one of our civil society’s unresolved problems in that it establishes a privileged ideological, legal, and administrative regime for Orthodoxy at the expense of other religions. This is against the liberal spirit of the Constitution and several international agreements (e.g. the European Convention on Human Rights)... A whole range of different issues, which fall in the wider field of the protection of individual and social rights, are directly or indirectly regulated in co-operation with or through interference from the Church.”²³

Their programmatic declaration then referred to two decrees passed during the Metaxas dictatorship which are still in force (Laws 1363 and 1369 voted in 1938) : “According to these decrees the free expression and dissemination of non-Orthodox ideas is considered proselytism, while a special permission from the Church is required should a religious minority wish to exercise its constitutionally guaranteed right of religious freedom by building a temple or place of pilgrimage.”²⁴ Among several other issues that are “unprecedented in a democratic country” they singled-out: (i) the compulsory registration of religion on the identity cards; (ii) the absence of any regulation allowing the option of a civil (non-religious) funeral service; (iii) the privileged treatment of Orthodoxy in the teaching of religion in secondary education and its compulsory nature; and (iv) discrimination against non-Orthodox or atheist teachers and professors.

Religious freedom, they maintained, was and still is a precondition for political liberty and the cornerstone of social freedom: “Unfortunately, in the Greek State this is not self-evident.... since on the one hand Orthodoxy is inalienably connected with national identity (the majority believe that only an Orthodox Greek is

²² These groups were the Citizens’ initiative for the Separation of Church and State, the Citizens’ Movement, the Citizens’ Union for Intervention, the Greek Union for Human Rights, and Nicos Poulantzas (an organisation loosely associated with the Coalition of the Left).

²³ Newspaper *Eleftherotipia*, 5 May 1998.

²⁴ Ibid.

a “pure” Greek), while on the other a mutual clientelistic relation between Church and State is perpetuated.... The separation between Church and State does not have any anti-religious implications, nor does it in any sense harm the benevolent spiritual role of the Church. On the contrary, it enhances the Church by emancipating her from the State’s suffocating embrace. Yet both the parties and the government are frightened by the high political cost and so avoid to address the problem.”²⁵ The text concludes by saying that the forthcoming parliamentary discussion on the amendment of the Constitution presents a unique opportunity for revising Articles 3 and 13 which are responsible for this unsatisfactory situation: “The one thing that is required is political will.... This will be a clear indication that Greece is indeed marching towards a democratic European modernisation rather than some merely technocratic version of it.”²⁶

At the same time, 52 PASOK MPs signed a petition proposing the substitution of the religious oath in parliament (“in the name of the Holy Trinity”) with a secular one (“in the name of the Greek people and nation”). The fact that foreign minister Pangalos and public-works minister Laliotis subscribed to this petition brought an immediate and vociferous reaction from the “patriotic” majority of ND. The resulting hubbub reflected an increasing tendency in Greek political culture during the late 1990s to debate fervently issues of cultural and civilisation identity. Out of the total of 102 ND members, 83 signed a counter-petition expressing their adamant opposition to the abolition of the religious oath and to Church-State separation generally. They produced a text in which the 83 MPs proclaimed themselves “guardians of our historical heritage, our Greek-Orthodox tradition, our ideals, faith and country.”²⁷ Although none of the leading ND members were among the signatories, the 83 MPs clearly reflect the vast majority of the party’s base (82%). In this sense, they articulated their counter-declaration in accordance with the Orthodox sensitivity and historical particularity of the Greek people, and condemned the proposal of the 52 PASOK MPs for being “.... a-historical, a product of ignorance of Hellenic history, and detrimental to the unity of the Greek nation.”²⁸ This “battle of the dossiers”,²⁹ in

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Newspaper *To Vima*, 10 May 1998.

²⁸ Ibid.

Papathemelis' apt aphorism, may be viewed as a "Trojan horse, or a controlled experiment measuring the extent to which it is feasible to promote Church-State separation in the Greek political system."³⁰

The question of the parliamentary oath was eventually brought before the Council of State, which was asked to decide whether or not the liberal spirit of the Constitution is congruent with a compulsory religious oath. The supreme administrative court embarked on the extremely contentious task to terminate a long-lasting system of co-existence between certain Articles of the Constitution which entail the liberal-pluralist values of secularism, and others that give priority to the "sacred" bond cementing Church, nation, and State. The Council of State decided to ratify the option of a non-religious oath in terms of Article 13 (par.1), which states that: "...freedom of religious consciousness is inalienable. The enjoyment of individual political rights does not depend on the religious convictions of the Greek citizens."³¹

Whereas the Left and PASOK's modernisers welcomed this decision, the Church found an unexpected ally in the person of justice minister Gianopoulos, a highly popular, quick-tempered and outspoken politician whose role in the party is to mediate between the modernisers and the "presidentials" or patriots. His statement: "I feel sorry for them (the Council of State)... Since 1822 all Constitutions refer specifically to the oath's pivotal role, so how can they now rule that anyone can swear in his or her own way?" came as a complete surprise from a politician who is his party's protagonist in matters opposing Christodoulos. Gianopoulos' position underscores the eminent confusion surrounding issues of secularity, tradition and modernity in Greek political culture.

During this dispute the rest of Prime Minister Simitis' government maintained neutrality and awaited the final results of the "Trojan horse experiment" and the Archbishop's response before committing themselves. They also procrastinated because they wished to know the results of official opinion polls which are the indicators of the people's political will and a standard measure of possible political costs.

²⁹ The "dossiers" were circulated by the two factions to collect the signatures.

³⁰ Newspaper *To Vima*, 10 May 1998.

³¹ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 25 Sept. 1998.

Christodoulos' reaction to the Council of State decision was energetic. Addressing himself for a time to the public on different occasions every single day, he once more dominated the media headlines and launched a vociferous offensive against the advocates of Church-State separation. Commenting on the proposal of the 52 MPs for the abolition of the religious oath and the proposal of the 60 for the imperative need of separation, he resorted to uninhibited political criticism and condemned the "disgrace of those *Graeculi* ³² whose criteria are the directives of Brussels rather than what is commanded by the historical tradition of this country."³³

Once more, the congruity of sentiment shared between the Archbishop, the patriotic factions within PASOK and ND, and powerful civil-society groups (i.e. "Network 21")³⁴ is a clear indication of the shift of emphasis in Greek political culture away from class-bound ideological cleavages. It is not, however, purely a consciousness of Orthodox civilisation seeking alliances outside the western world (as Huntington described Islamic fundamentalism)³⁵ but rather a syncretic one generated by the interaction of anti-western Orthodox nationalism and the pro-western geopolitical orientation of the Greek State which paradoxically the new Archbishop has endorsed.³⁶

Nor is it feasible to see the Greek case as an example of Huntington's concept of a "torn" country, because it is not an isolated elite that is boosting people's awareness of their western orientation but a large and dynamic proportion of the

³² *Graeculus*: ironic appellation for a decadent Greek, one who is servile towards foreigners. The Romans called *Graeculi* those who unsuccessfully imitated the Greeks. Also used in modern Greek history (from 1949 until the legalisation of KKE in 1974) by the governing Right to stigmatise communist internationalism.

³³ Newspaper *Kathemerini*, 5 May 1998.

³⁴ The "Network 21" is a patriotic civil society group that is affiliated both with the Archbishop and the neo-Orthodox movement. We shall deal extensively with this group in the chapter on the neo-Orthodox movement.

³⁵ Huntington 1996.

³⁶ In his enthronement address Christodoulos emphasised the strong connection between Orthodoxy and Europe (see newspaper *Christianiki*, 11 June 1998). At the Archbishop's meeting with Greece's EU Commissioner Papoutsis both men expressed their satisfaction for the future of Orthodoxy in the EU.

Greek society including the current Simitis administration. Matters became even more complicated if one considers the reasons for the increasing popularity of the “patriotic” trend in Greek culture and politics. In fact the “patriots” seem to be less concerned with the fading spiritual values of the Greek-Orthodox identity, and more with expressing their social dissent and private disaffection over what they see as a docile and submissive governmental strategy towards real or imaginary threats (the national issues) and an uncompromising austerity policy for which the West (i.e. EU) takes the lion’s share of blame.³⁷

As far as alliance-making in the late 1990s was concerned, however, the Archbishop’s ethnocentric discourse, combined with his efforts to live up to his modernising credentials, suggested a strategy aimed at the maximalisation of power. To the extent that his subtle power politics augmented his alliances and popularity, the Greek State was obliged to accept a new powerful actor. If another crisis should occur it would be very difficult to reach a compromise like that between Papandreou and Serapheim in 1987. There are two reasons for this. (i) Unlike the 1987 crisis, a new confrontation between Church and State would also involve the government’s alleged defeatism concerning the national issues and its perceived subservience towards the West. Neither did Serapheim have the enthusiastic support of the “patriotic” factions within the internal opposition of PASOK and the whole of ND. (ii) Unlike Serapheim, Christodoulos is well able to mobilise the masses through his modern image and sophisticated discursive practices.

Although no such scenario has as yet unfolded, the government almost panicked at the time in the light of two opinion polls revealing an astonishing and unprecedented social consensus with the new Archbishop’s ideas. In the first nationwide survey,³⁸ the Archbishop managed to dramatically increase Serapheim’s popularity rate from 41.6 % for and 38.8 % against, to an astonishing 76.8 % for and 11.5 % against. By the same token, 46.9 % of the sample was against Church-State

³⁷ The combination of those two reasons made possible the paradoxical “unholy” alliance between left-wing Euro-sceptics and anti-western Orthodox fundamentalists.

³⁸ Face to face interviews of 930 people, between 12 and 21 May 1998, conducted by the VPRC institute in the informants’ homes with structured questionnaires, and published in the newspaper *Ta Nea*.

separation (36.8 % in favour), whereas only a few months earlier the results had been 46.7 % in favour and 39 % against.

This survey is interesting for our own study for yet another reason; it indicates quite vividly that PASOK's dual tactics on the question of Church-State separation, reflects a cleavage of its electoral base between modernisers and "patriots"/presidentials. Whereas in ND it is a clear majority that is against separation (61.1 % against 19.7 %), results for PASOK give 40.2 % in favour and 46.4 % against. If the issue of Church-State separation is schematically viewed as a barometer of modernisation, then this apparent split in PASOK's electoral base, seen against the uniform opposition of ND, points to severe limitations and inconsistencies in the modernisation project. With respect to the westernisation debate it also demonstrates that the dilemma and rift in Greek politics in the late 1990s was increasingly cultural, and the unifying bond of nationalistic patriotism is now able to cement factions that operate beyond ideological and class dichotomies.

Almost one month later (18 June 1998) a second nation-wide survey assessed the popularity of political leaders and main public figures.³⁹ The new Archbishop received a high popularity rate of 73.3 (with only 8.9 % expressing a negative view), at the same as the PASOK Prime Minister's popularity dropped to 28.4 % and the ND leader's to 35.8 %. Amid strong criticisms from modernisers in PASOK and the Left, Christodoulos also succeeded in consolidating the right to express his nationalist political ideas, by receiving a 39 % affirmative answers to the question of whether the informant agreed or disagreed with the Archbishop's inclination to intervene in political and national issues (25 % disagreed). Not surprisingly, the Simitis government responded to the potentially hazardous implications for its electoral objectives by swiftly dissociating itself from the advocates of Church-State separation. Addressing himself to a symposium entitled "Human Rights and Orthodoxy: Conflict or Symbiosis?",⁴⁰ PASOK's chief moderniser Paschalides

³⁹ Conducted during a six-month period by MRB on behalf of the television channel MEGA, which also presented the results.

⁴⁰ Organised by three civil society groups – the "Citizens' Initiative for Church-State Separation", the "Citizens' Movement", and the "Greek Human Rights Association" – and held at ESIEA (Journalists' Union of the Athens Daily Newspapers) on 25 May 1998.

attempted to explain the government's unwillingness to discuss separation in terms of its sensitivity towards public opinion. Tacitly accepting a situation that could be described as a tyranny of the majority, the minister argued that "the government's position ... is consistent with the last opinion poll ... showing that Greek society is against separation." In conclusion he stated that "Greek society is not ready yet for such change", but that "amendments to certain laws from the Metaxas period might be attempted by the government."⁴¹

In the parliamentary debate on the amendment to the Constitution, culture minister Venizelos was even more categorical than Paschalides. He emphasised the inherent consequences of separating the Church from the current system of *Synallilia* which "guarantees the Church's neutrality and spiritual role... The paradox is that those who suggest revision of Article 3 are unintentionally pushing the Church into a political and ideological role, active and aggressive, which jeopardises its political neutrality and ecclesiastic essence, and undermines the politically liberal, pluralistic, and meritocratic character of the regime."⁴²

The government's reluctance to include the subject of separation in its parliamentary agenda consolidated the Archbishop's political footing and introduced an unprecedented political debate. This was between moderniser MPs who did not endorse the idea of a new, non-secular actor in the overall game of legitimisation, and Christodoulos whose charismatic style, political alliances, and argumentation resembled not so much that of a prelate but rather that of an idiosyncratic opponent of the government. At that time even the Sunday services became a political happening, with the congregation enthusiastically applauding Christodoulos' declarations that the Church will not succumb and subjugate itself to State pressure which, the Archbishop asserted, even included life-threats.⁴³

⁴¹ From the author's personal notes taken during the symposium.

⁴² Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 6 May 1998.

⁴³ The Archbishop did not specify these threats nor where they came from. After a couple of days of intensive probing by the media his representative admitted that the mention of life-threats had been an inaccuracy uttered "in the heat of the moment."

Apart from the ultra-nationalists' publication *Stohos*, which threatened that the "soldiers of Christodoulos will severely punish the Greaculi and their janissaries",⁴⁴ the bulk of the Archbishop's political support came from the far Right of New Democracy. The party's former MP Karatzaferis, who owns and runs the television channel Telecity, was, until his expulsion,⁴⁵ the chief protagonist of ND's extremist faction that wants to restore the party's right-wing ideological orientation by re-establishing contacts with its "natural conservative space".⁴⁶ Implicit within this strategy was the increasing incorporation of nationalistic discourses into the political mainstream,⁴⁷ and to derive electoral profit from the resurgence of reactionary forces. In this context the new Archbishop became an emblematic figure in Karatzaferis' promotion of a legitimate nationalist discourse for his party: "Our television channel is in total harmony with Christodoulos... What you are seeing today are issues we have been discussing with His Beatitude since 1985. When the time comes we shall prevail and march forward. I, of course, was simply an MP five years ago, but he, by occupying the highest office in the country, has the power to impose his word... We are not alone now. The Church is behind us. No more Right, Centre and Left. Now there are only patriots and traitors."⁴⁸

The Church, therefore, found in Christodoulos a charismatic leader whose popularity and political alliances may ensure the perpetuation of its association with the State administration and the Greek national identity.

⁴⁴ The *Janissaries* were the special militia of the Ottoman Sultan which was comprised from Christian youths who were selected at a very young age, converted to Islam, and rigorously trained to fill in military and administrative posts..

⁴⁵ In 2000, which led him to the subsequent founding of his own party LAOS (Popular Orthodox Alarm).

⁴⁶ He even approached the rising neo-Nazi group *Chrysi Avgi* (Golden Dawn) and proposed to ND leader Karamanlis to incorporate them in the party.

⁴⁷ The emblematic figure of Papandreou was responsible for the post-junta renaissance of nationalism. This tendency is represented within PASOK by the internal opposition of the patriotic/"presidential" faction.

⁴⁸ Telecity program of 16 June 1998.

3.2.2 The Intellectual Debate

Meanwhile, the debate over separation continued to preoccupy the media, but this time emphasis shifted from the politicians to the intellectuals. The schism between “patriots” and modernisers spread to the intellectual field, with the latter (loosely linked to the Left and the PASOK modernisers) trying to problematise the underlying cultural and political dimensions of the constitutional debate over separation; The “patriots” insisted that the status quo of *Synallilia* is the most appropriate for reasons of historical considerations, cultural sensitivity and political necessity. The modernisers asked whether the Archbishop’s fervent patriotism is indeed promoting the best interests of the nation. They referred to the Church’s segregation of Orthodox from non-Orthodox, and its demand for State intervention (in the form of constitutional privileges) to consolidate and legitimise its position superior to other faiths. The modernisers asserted that, aside from the obvious democratic deficit generated by obstructing and opposing the social integration of non-Orthodox minorities, this strategy would render the Greek political culture particularly vulnerable to escalating tensions. A purely intra-religious dispute can too be easily turned into a political or even national issue: “When we consent to raise religious differences at State and national level, we inevitably endorse a current of religious and national purification where the only Greeks are the Christian-Orthodox, and non-Orthodox citizens are stigmatised as non-Greek or, worse, as alien and suspect.”⁴⁹ The Archbishop’s recent characterisation of the advocates of separation as Graeculi exemplifies this “symbolic or civilisational racism”.⁵⁰ It also confirms our contention that the Greek political culture of the late 1990s mixes old and outdated ideological cleavages with even older civilisational ones.

Henceforth, the first argument of modernising intellectuals concerns the consolidation and enhancement of religious freedom in Greece. According to Mouzelis, this can be achieved within the existing legal-formal framework of *Synallilia* by introducing certain amendments that will bring the Greek legal system into harmony with the liberal spirit of the Constitution (e.g. abolishing the outdated law on proselytism voted by the Metaxas junta of 1936-39). This largely legalistic debate can only offer peripheral solutions, however, since it fails to deal with the

⁴⁹ Chiotakis in the newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 15 June 1998.

⁵⁰ See Anthopoulos, “Information and Racism”, periodical *Thesis*, issue 63, 1998.

underlying problem of the Church's fading spiritual message and its inability to become an agency of democratisation in Greek civil society. Indeed, the Church could offer a spiritual alternative to the impoverishing implications of instrumental rationalism, conspicuous consumerism, technocratic consciousness, and extreme individualism which exacerbate the estrangement and insecurity of the Greek people. Inasmuch as this is essentially a legitimacy problem, Mouzelis comments that a necessary precondition for enhancing the spiritual and diaconal presence of the Church is to eradicate its status as an administrative extension of "an inefficient and deeply corrupt State."⁵¹

Although the post-dictatorial ecclesiastical Charter provided a certain degree of autonomy, the institutional differentiation between Church and State is still inadequate: "... the clientelistic mentality and extreme formalism of the State infrastructure is automatically transferred to the administrative mechanism of the Church. This means that the State undermines the autonomy of civil society in the religious sphere...There is no doubt that the rejuvenation of the Church not only requires its dissociation from the State Leviathan but also internal reformation, a more open situation where the laity can participate in the decision-making process."⁵²

Mouzelis argues that, concerning the patriotic assertion that Church-State interpenetration is based on the inalienable connection between Orthodoxy and the Hellenic nation, the modernisers emphasise three main arguments. Firstly, that further differentiation between Church and State infrastructure, in the form of greater autonomy from State patronage and less colonisation from the logic of party clientelism, does not imply compartmentalisation and isolation of the Church. Unfettered by the logic of the State, the Church would be free to pursue its true spiritual and diaconal mission.

Secondly, the inalienable bond between Orthodoxy and Hellenism should be seen as a spiritual and ethnic resource rather than an institutional doctrine of the official State. Our Greek-Orthodox habitus⁵³ does not justify the perpetuation of the

⁵¹ In the newspaper *To Vima*, 10 May 1998.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Mouzelis here uses Bourdieu's notion of habitus for the association of the Greek religious identity and the wider network of collective predispositions and cultural patterns specific to the Greek context.

existing system of Church-State relations, since these have less to do with our spiritual heritage and more with “Bavarocracy” and the mechanistic encroachment of 19th-century German absolutism in the public administration of the new-born Greek state.⁵⁴ Thirdly, the argument against separation entails a clear ideological bias. In essence, the critics of separation are less concerned with the persistence of the Greek national heritage than with sustaining certain privileges and prolonging their established politico-economic vested interests.

It is precisely this last point, also utilised by the critics of separation to launch their offensive against the modernisers, that confirms our contention that the underlying logic of the Church-State debate is more civilisational than legalistic or exclusively ideological. Both traditionalists and modernisers share the vision of a developed European Greece, but differ in their westernisation logic: the former advocate either entrenchment or syncretism in respect of EU integration, whereas the latter employ an either monological or communicative strategy. In this context, syncretic patriots are the Neo-Orthodox and the Archbishop, who co-operate in the framework of “Network 21” (see chapter on Neo-Orthodoxy); entrenchment patriots are the ultra-nationalists of *Stohos* and the far Right of ND (e.g. Karatzaferis), who co-operate with the fundamentalists of *Zoë*; monological modernisers are pro Church-State separation advocates (like Lipowatz) who co-operate with various civil groups; and finally, communicative/polylogical modernisers are other intellectuals, entrepreneurs and politicians who identify with the Orthodox modernisation of the Patriarchate or the OAC (see Chapter 6). Just as modernisers accused the traditionalists of ideological expediency, “patriots” accused the modernisers of being less concerned about justice or pluralism than about voicing their antipathy to the eastern-Orthodox dimension of the Greek identity. “The modernisers are hostile towards Orthodoxy ... deeply annoyed by its impact and appeal to the people, and aim to diminish the religious sentiment of the public ... Because they belong or used to belong to the Marxist Left, it is only natural that having failed to impose a world-wide ban on religion, they now observe with panic the resurgence of religion in the former East bloc and try by other means and arguments to achieve what they failed to gain by violence.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Bavarocracy and the 19th century are discussed in ch.1, p.38.

⁵⁵ A. Marinos, newspaper *To Vima*, 24 May 1998.

The critics of separation also stressed two more arguments. One is that the legal framework of separation (NS 1700) was deemed anti-constitutional by the Strasbourg Court of Human Rights. This ruling underscores that the legal-formal status of the Church is not the exclusive prerogative of the State, and any future discussion on separation would have to emanate from the Church itself, rather than be imposed from above.

The second argument noted that several western-European democracies that have embarked on an autonomous path of modernisation have done so without full differentiation between the religious, political, and State spheres. So, the Church of England remains the established Church, and self-government in England does not necessarily mean disestablishment.⁵⁶ In Belgium and Germany the State is responsible for the clergy's emoluments and a percentage of the income tax goes to the affiliated Church of each citizen. In Italy, Germany and smaller EU member-States, the Christian Democrats have been ruling for decades, and Germany's chancellor Kohl declared outright that Christianity defines the limits of Europe. Finally, in the US, the election of John F. Kennedy as the first Roman-Catholic president was made possible only by a specially devised provision in the Constitution.⁵⁷

3.2.3 Financial Issues

The controversial issue of economic scandals in the management of Church property occupied a pivotal role in the new Archbishop's programmatic agenda. Christodoulos has promised to enforce a strategy of *catharsis* ("cleansing"), under which justice would be done even if the guilty were senior members of the Church hierarchy. His elevation to the highest ecclesiastic office coincided with the final stage of a lengthy legal process in which an investigation committee, comprised of Bishops and judges, closely scrutinised the financial affairs of the Church since 1986. Despite the Archbishop's public reassurances that he is determined to punish severely anyone profiting at the expense of the Church's credibility, the results of the investigation committee presented the members of the Permanent Holy Synod with the dilemma of whether indeed to disclose an extensive network of corruption whose ramifications

⁵⁶ Ress-Mogg 1998.

⁵⁷ A .Marinos, *To Vima*, 24 May 1998.

might involve prominent prelates, or to engage in back-stage negotiations with the State in the well-tried method of covering up the case.

Full disclosure might easily expose latent cleavages and re-introduce the clergy into the power game of antagonistic factions that could end with impeachment and legal prosecution. This would inflict vast damage to the credibility of the institution, result in a legitimacy crisis, and mean the Church's marginalisation from the rest of society. It is not surprising therefore that both Church and State have found it expedient to claim that *catharsis* was accomplished without serious disruptions of their own legitimacy and the established status quo.

The events discussed in what follows are indicative of a combination of different strategies. These range from *catharsis* (the implicated individual is either somebody outside the Church-State network or an upper-clergy opponent of the Archbishop) to covering up (both institutions having a vested interest in (i) diverting public opinion away from the deep structural changes necessary to bring to an end mismanagement of the property; and (ii) protecting their own threatened legitimacy from the social dissent associated with extensive financial irregularities due to fraudulent conduct by senior members of the synod and State officials).

The synod's first move was a public declaration by the Archbishop that the disgrace inflicted on the Church by financial scandals must cease. He promised to co-operate closely with the investigation committee to identify and punish those responsible. The investigating committee in fact did disclose a four trillion drachmas (approx. £8,000,000) deficit in the "development-works" budget of a great number of dioceses.⁵⁸ The second move, as soon as the scandals were exposed, consisted of the Archbishop gradually distancing himself from the position of uncompromising *catharsis*. This change of tactic was Christodoulos' response to a threatened *counter-catharsis* and denunciations from the accused. The situation could have developed into old rivals implicating each other in an avalanche of unlawful deals so as to deflect the damage onto those who had begun to upset the delicate balance of corruption. Deserting his usual radicalism, the Archbishop mildly commented: "...*catharsis* is a very difficult and delicate issue" – implying that he would attempt to preserve the balance of power and prevent the dissemination of disclosures. This moderation did not, however, apply to Bishop of Thebes Ieronymos who had been Christodoulos'

⁵⁸ Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 31 August 1998.

main opponent in the archiepiscopal elections. Now, the Bishop of Thebes became the sole recipient of the bulk of accusations involving a 600 million drachmas (approx. £1,200,000) deficit; the managing director of a consulting agency co-operating with another diocese was also named by the committee's 400-page findings, having unlawfully received 408 million drachmas (approx. £816,000). They both reacted vociferously confirming that *catharsis* has less to do with rationalising the Church's financial affairs than to serve as a platform for legitimisation on which the power game of hierarchical control can be manifested and fought.

The Bishop of Thebes addressed himself both to the Archbishop and the media through a public note in which he not only dissociated himself from the scandals but accused the Archbishop of failing to implement an unequivocal *catharsis*: "The way you are handling the issue ... convinces me that it is not the transparent and honest *catharsis* of our ecclesiastical affairs that you desire..."⁵⁹ The Bishop implied that Christodoulos' supposedly moderate stance was in fact only a subterfuge for slowing down the proceedings in order to manipulate public and media opinion against him (Ieronymos), and pave the way for his ultimate impeachment. He warned the Archbishop: "The escalating pressure from the press to respond to its false allegations, and the fact that my silence is used against me as an ideal scapegoat as well as against the credibility of the Church, does not allow my conscience to suffer in silence ..." ⁶⁰ Meanwhile, the accused consultant Kosmatos threatened to disclose "documents that may lead to the persecution of several Bishops", claiming that "it is not Kosmatos that owes to the Church but the exact opposite."⁶¹ At this point the State decided to join in and launched an independent inquiry into the case through the Attorneys' Assembly. Although it was the intention of both Church and State to reach a compromise that would not harm their overlapping vested interests and prevent a legitimacy crisis, the Church reiterated the imperative need for some degree of rationalisation in the management of its vast property. To this end the Permanent Holy Synod took an undoubtedly positive step by abolishing the Archbishop's exclusive prerogative to appoint his own financial committee. Under a new ruling, the committee responsible

⁵⁹ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 9 Sept. 1998.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

for financial affairs would be elected from the synod's 77 members, and most importantly, will also include members of the laity.

3.2.4 Education

Education has always been the epicentre of any Greek debate involving questions of collective consciousness and ideological legitimacy. Amid the euphoria surrounding the elevation of Christodoulos, 58 ND MPs addressed the education minister to voice their strong concern over “the State’s failure to inculcate the ideas and values of our national Orthodox heritage in the education curriculum.”⁶² They denounced what they saw as a State-engineered attempt “to undermine the role of Orthodoxy by imposing drastic reductions in the hours dedicated to religion in secondary education.”⁶³

The PASOK parliamentary representative’s reply shifted the emphasis from religious education towards a critique of the underlying electoral and ideological objectives of the ND MPs’ complaint: “The only comment I wish to make is that the Right has a long tradition in the manipulation and patronage of the people’s religious sentiment for its own political expediency.”⁶⁴

A new round of bitter disputes began when education minister denied the Archbishop’s personal request that the hours given to the “religions” course be increased. Arsenis argued that it was the exclusive prerogative of the ministry to regulate the education curriculum and course timetable, but the whole issue was blown out of proportion as a result of subsequent interference by the Council of State. Bypassing the ministry and the appropriate pedagogical institutions, the Supreme Court rejected the ministry decision to limit the hours of religious instruction to facilitate the introduction of new courses, on the grounds of the Constitution clearly stating that Orthodoxy is the “established” or “dominant” religion (Article 3, par.1). The Council vice-president argued that the constitutional provisions on national

⁶² Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 7 May 1998.

⁶³ The course title “Religions” refers to a plurality of religious views, but in effect the teaching is restricted to Orthodox Christianity. It had been suggested to reduce it from two hours weekly to one.

⁶⁴ Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 7 May 1998.

education enable the development of the religious consciousness of Greek youth “according to the values of the Christian-Orthodox dogma, the teaching of which is compulsory” (Article 16, par.2). The ruling concludes that “reducing the teaching hours of religious education is not conducive to the above constitutional Decrees.”⁶⁵

This triggered an immediate reaction from several professors of constitutional law and the national union of secondary school teachers against the “unprecedented interference to our internal affairs”, and “arbitrary abuse of judicial authority beyond the limits of its jurisdiction.”⁶⁶ One professor commented that “It is scientifically illegitimate and erroneous to institutionalise ideological manipulation”, while another repudiated Article 16 for bearing “a pompous resemblance to the Hellenic-Christian sacrilege of the military junta.”⁶⁷

Council vice-president Marinou, one of the most outspoken and influential advocates of the Church-nation-State connection, was also criticised for having taken advantage of his professional capacity to impose his personal views.

In addition to the controversy around certain constitutional provisions that facilitate the privileged treatment of Orthodoxy in the Greek education system, the first six months of Christodoulos’ archepiscopacy not only confirmed that education is an overlapping area of interest between Church and State, but also that the Archbishop intends to enhance the Church’s “sacred” message and challenge the predominantly secular orientation of the educational system. He publicly urged the clergy to revive the old practice of paying visits to schools, and to organise a variety of religious activities ranging from Sunday-school lectures to confessions. The reply by the president of the Teachers’ Association is evidence of the resurgence of a civilisation dichotomy in the Greek political culture. He said that what the Archbishop suggested is a “parochial practise ... incompatible with the secular nature of the Greek State... The State is responsible for education, and the Church cannot bypass the established pedagogical laws with its Sunday-school mentality, nor it can turn us back to the distant past.”⁶⁸ In the end a compromise was reached by which priests shall first acquire permission from the school director before addressing the students.

⁶⁵ Alivizatos, newspaper *To Vima*, 31 May 1998.

⁶⁶ Tsatsos, newspaper *Ta Nea*, 28 May 1998.

⁶⁷ Alivizatos, newspaper *To Vima*, 31 May 1998.

⁶⁸ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 3 Sept. 1998.

Similar policies apply to other overlapping areas of interest in education. So the Archbishop and the education minister agreed to abolish the economically non-viable ecclesiastic schools and to incorporate them in the national education network. The opposite was agreed with respect to three advanced ecclesiastical schools (which instruct to the level of University entrance), for which the Church would assume full responsibility. In both cases the Church fully agreed that the schools would operate “under the aegis of the education ministry”⁶⁹ – its underlying motive being to sustain its say in the administration of the schools (the program and content of the courses) while not bearing the burden of their funding. This is an example of how Church and State co-operate in the pursuit of their overlapping interests. The State provides power and authority to the Church, and the Church reciprocates by cementing the State’s symbolic legitimacy through boosting people’s awareness of their Greek-Orthodox national identity.

3.3 Secularisation and the Westernisation Dilemma: Religious Pluralism and EU Integration

One of the new Archbishop’s most pressing problems was to improve the poor human-rights record of the Greek Church and its undemocratic stance towards religious minorities and new religious movements. The country’s credibility as an EU member was severely damaged as a result of five law suits between the Greek State and members of religious minorities who were subsequently vindicated by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.⁷⁰

Despite Christodoulos’ overtly democratic programmatic declarations, and his general image as an open-minded, sophisticated, and modern prelate, his first six

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ These court cases were *Kokinakis against the Greek State* (1993), concerning a Jehovah’s Witness prosecuted for proselytism according to the Metaxas period Law 1363-1936; *Manousakis against the Greek State* (1996), concerning a license to operate a recreation area for Jehovah’s Witnesses which was declined by the local diocese; *Tsirlis against the Greek State* (1997), concerning his appeal to be exempted from military service due to the fact that he is a Jehovah’s Witnesses minister. Under Law 1763-1988 “priests from all known religions are eligible for military exemption”, but Jehovah’s Witnesses were not deemed a “known religion” but an unlawful cult.

months in office revealed peculiar and confusing attitudes to the rights of religious minorities. The issue at stake was the decision by President of the Republic, Konstantinos Stefanopoulos to receive Archbishop Chrysostomos of the Old Calendrists.⁷¹ Christodoulos reacted sharply: “The Old Calendrist movement consists of several schismatic groups ... Their indirect acknowledgement by the highest authority of the Greek State is causing serious problems.”⁷²

The presidential representative justified the meeting in terms of social pluralism and tolerance: “Mr Stefanopoulos is the President of all Greeks and every citizen or group has the inalienable right to approach him.”⁷³ The Old Calendrists spokesman said that followers of the patristic (old) calendar should not be treated as second-class citizens, but that the response from the synod confirmed the new Archbishop’s attitude towards religious minorities. The Church had expressed its willingness to incorporate “schismatic” Christian groups that wish to return to the mother Church as “according to the Constitution and the State authorities, the Church of Greece is recognised as the one and only agency of the Orthodox dogma in our country.”⁷⁴

There was considerable turmoil on 26 August 1998, when 40,000 Jehovah’s Witnesses congregated in an Athens stadium for a celebration. Archbishop Christodoulos requested the minister of education and religion that the State stop treating Jehovah’s Witnesses as a Christian denomination: “They are self-styled pseudo-Christian groups with serious dogmatic differences with Christianity...”⁷⁵ The Archbishop attempted to justify this argument by analogy with difference between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Greeks. He described the latter as heretics who, among

⁷¹ Approximately 200,000 Orthodox Greeks are still loyal to the old calendar which was abandoned in 1923 by Patriarch Meletios to bring the Greek Church in line with the Gregorian calendar. The Old Calendrists consider this a schismatic act, and still celebrate Christmas 13 days later. See chapter 4 on fundamentalism.

⁷² Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 5 June 1998.

⁷³ The main issue discussed between the Old Calendrists and the president concerned their recognition as a religious minority whose priests enjoy the same legal status as those of the official Church (e.g. the right of exemption from military service).

⁷⁴ Newspaper *Vradini*, 7 June 1998.

⁷⁵ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 30 Sept. 1998.

other evils, “follow the orders of foreign centres and do not share the Greek patriotic sentiments.”⁷⁶ Christodoulos’ assertion vividly illustrates the eclectic way in which advocates of the Church-nation-State concept exclude the non-Orthodox from participating in the symbolic community of the Greek nationhood and citizenship. The holy synod too sent a memorandum to the minister, asking the State to stop this “contamination” (of the Jehovah’s Witnesses). The synod based itself on two Metaxas period laws on proselytism that give the Christian-Orthodox Church privileged treatment over other faiths. Those laws had recently been the centre of discussions on the prospect for certain amendments. The ministry replied that although it can not abolish the laws preventing proselytism, it would put forward the case for certain modifications: “It is imperative to modernise and harmonise them according to the European legal system and in the light of the modern exigencies of the Greek State.”⁷⁷

The State’s ambivalence and dual strategy is also due to the fact that, aside from Church pressure at home, it has to meet certain requirements, regardless of possible internal political costs, at the level of supra-national interaction. An example of this was the UN decision to send a special envoy to inspect how the Greek State is treating religious minorities. The envoy concluded that “despite the fact that the Greek Constitution guarantees freedom of consciousness, there are limitations in the freedom of certain religious groups that are not consonant with the international standards for human rights.”⁷⁸

Such ambivalence towards the values of social pluralism and tolerance also manifests in the Archbishop’s views on European integration. Christodoulos’ strategy *vis-à-vis* Greece’s foreign affairs consists of three hardly compatible parameters: (i) he generally endorses the Greek State’s European geo-political orientation and its commitments in the EU and NATO; (ii) he envisions an eastern-Orthodox axis between Athens, Belgrade, and Moscow, supervised by the Ecumenical Patriarchate; (iii) within the patriotic political faction he is becoming the emblem of uncompromising opposition to the government on the “national issues” and of entrenchment in matters of secularisation.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

The challenge before Archbishop Christodoulos has to do with EU's attempt to forge a supra-national entity and culture. In a sense the Greek Church epitomises the struggle of an ancient institution to ground its contemporary existence in a non-western cultural resource (aptly described in Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations*) as well as in geo-political and institutional strategy that is irrevocably oriented towards EU integration. As a brief examination of the Archbishop's foreign policy, he is well aware of the fact that Orthodoxy and Europe are both inalienable components of the modern Greek political culture. Problems arise only when the project is limited to mere discursive manoeuvres within the existing framework of Church-nation-State interpenetration, rather than allowing large-scale differentiation and democratisation to develop a more autonomous religious institution and so contribute its spirituality to the wider European arena of cultural communication.

Although Christodoulos initially declared that Greece is the most emblematic of the European cultures and occupies an undisputed position in the European family of nations, he then moved on to launch a vociferous critique against EU cosmopolitanism and an eclectic interpretation of what he saw as western bias against Greece: "According to her name and culture, Europe is the offspring of Hellenism and Christianity. The heart of Europe lies in Greece, and without Greece Europe is inconceivable.... Historically Europe owes to Orthodoxy its very substance and survival."⁷⁹

This positive, if narcissistic interpretation of the Greek-European relationship soon changed to hostility: "The biggest threat for any people derives from meeting with the peoples of a unified Europe. It is thus imperative to examine the European edifice with regard to its views on us and our culture.... Christian Byzantine-Orthodox Greece is so distorted by the descendants of the Romans and Franks that is now being treated in the same way as Islamic fundamentalism".⁸⁰ Referring to Huntington he argues that "the adoption of this schema (i.e. the clash of civilisations) has led the westerners to side against the Orthodox Serbs who supposedly express a spirit of chauvinism and intolerance, whereas on the atrocities of Bosnian Muslims the vested

⁷⁹ From the Archbishop's address at his enthronement ceremony, published in the newspaper *Christianiki*, 11 June 1998.

⁸⁰ Christodoulos 1997, see pp. 18-30.

western interests remain silent and tolerant".⁸¹ This contention is shared among the "patriotic" political forces in Greece and, regardless of whether the pejorative Balkanist discourse of the West is biased or not, Christodoulos' assertion underscores Huntington's interpretation of the increasing primacy of civilisational alliances and conflicts.⁸²

The Archbishop then mentions several initiatives undertaken by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, all of which condemn chauvinism, racism, and intolerance.⁸³ He does not, however, comment on one of the Patriarchate's most persistent values; its dissociation from the Church-nation connection and its criticism, among other chauvinistic manifestations, of the nationalism of the Greek Church. Elsewhere Christodoulos subscribes emphatically to the "patriotic" political faction, confirming the contemporary rift with the modernisers: "It is sad that the anti-Greek and anti-Orthodox hysteria of the West has found its apologists in the heinous Greek pseudo-intellectuals who surpass even their patrons in their acquiescence and animosity...The Church is frequently at the heart of criticism from all those who aspire to its total annihilation, those who wish to see a Church that will cease to exercise its benevolent influence for our Nation and Race. Impregnated with an inferiority complex concerning their Hellenic descent, totally illiterate with respect to the endemic social dynamism of the Orthodox spiritual tradition, our "enlighteners" roam triumphantly from one international conference to the other, now that Huntington has vindicated their "progressive" anti-patriotism. They denounce their very own country and people for religious fundamentalism, racism and anti-Semitism, for persecuting minorities, even for preventing the religious freedom of Jehovah's Witnesses."⁸⁴

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Huntington himself confirmed his views on Orthodoxy and Hellenism in an interview about Greece with the newspaper *To Vima*, 24 May 1998.

⁸³ Bartholomew and the Patriarchate in general have indeed gained worldwide admiration for their efforts to promote peace and tolerance. In the Greek context, the same could be said about the OAC, which is affiliated with the Patriarchate (see chapter 6).

⁸⁴ Christodoulos 1997, pp.18-31. Here the Archbishop adopted the views of the leading Neo-Orthodox member Yannaras.

For the Archbishop, EU integration necessarily presupposes the estrangement of the Greek people from Orthodoxy. His discourse is based on the essentialist dilemma and Manichean opposition between “us” and “them”, or “survival” and “death”: “We are like an irritating itch for the Europeans trying to integrate.... This is the final count-down of civilisational self-consciousness. We can either win and survive, or passively observe our effacement from the family of great nations.”⁸⁵

Christodoulos finally expostulated: “We have recently been informed that a foundation was set up pursuing a multi-ethnic and multi-religious Greece.... Why is it desirable for Greece to become a multi-ethnic State and a multi-religious society? There is a clear and present danger.”⁸⁶ As we are continuing to welcome more and more Europeans who choose to settle and work in our country, bringing their traditions and way of life with them, building their temples and schools, publishing their own newspapers and operating their television channels ... we Greeks have to face two options; either subjugation if we ignore or marginalise our native tradition, or persisting in what we are without closing our gates and borders.... The Church is the only solution to the current crisis... All those who have experienced the predicament of alienation and ridicule, those who leaned on the futile illusion of ‘progressivism’, those who exchanged their spiritual identity for the passport to Europeanisation, all those who are now exhausted and humiliated, are about to face chaos... Atheism and materialism are superfluous luxuries for Greece... We need Faith and Hope which, together with sustaining our soul, will militate against the conversion of our country into a protectorate of some superpower.”⁸⁷

The overriding principle of the Archbishop’s cultural policy, therefore, is to entrench the Greek-Orthodox identity and to prevent spiritual integration in the EU: “Europe is currently undergoing a deep moral and spiritual crisis which is defined in terms of syncretism and relativism. Catholicism and Protestantism went through secularisation to alienation... When the Churches are the protagonists of toleration and consent to homosexuality and bless lesbianism, when Christian States abolish public prayers because this might offend the atheists, when Christian universities teach

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Elsewhere in the same text he asserts, “I do not wish to say that EU integration is a mistake, but that it is dangerous.”

⁸⁷ Ibid.

theology in parallel with Satanism and cult studies, when I observe the extent of child pornography in Christian societies,⁸⁸ then I only find it necessary to express the imperative need for the transfusion of pure Christian blood into the alienated societies of the West.”⁸⁹

The Archbishop’s ideology now includes a paradoxical interpretation of European unity, dialogue and tolerance, in that it neither entails diversity nor does it accept that the Orthodox spirit of Greek culture has anything positive to gain from integration with Europe. This is underscored in the Archbishop’s views on the Schengen Agreement.⁹⁰ Interestingly enough, he rejects it in terms of “violating individual human rights and religious consciousness, which should be respected and tolerated” – like objections to the Number of the Beast (666) and registering the holder’s religion on the new identification cards. He thus makes an eclectic interpretation of human rights, proposing toleration of the Orthodox human right to feel offended by 666, and at the same time excluding the rights of the heterodox, of atheists, homosexuals, etc.

Apart from the EU, the Archbishop’s views on foreign affairs centred on three overlapping and interrelated projects: to improve relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate; to maximalise the Greek Church’s influence in the Balkan Orthodox world; and to consolidate the Church’s role and right of interference in the so-called

⁸⁸ This is an example of how the logic of entrenchment co-opts under the category “West” matters that have little to do with each other in order to manufacture a homogeneous malevolent entity. So child pornography is not related to either Catholicism or Protestantism, whereas others of his criticisms (e.g. of the toleration of homosexuality) are indeed part of the modernisation of western Churches.

⁸⁹ Christodoulos 1997, p.55.

⁹⁰ The Schengen Agreement guarantees the free movement of persons within the European Union and at the same time enforces tight border control and strict immigration policy for the areas involved. Greece fully entered the agreement in 2000. The other participating countries are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

national issues. As all three projects fall under the heading of the Church-nation interconnection (in that they enhance the nation's social legitimacy and State power) it is not surprising that all three projects have been endorsed by the political mainstream, including the modernisers. Only the hardline communists have expressed their party's reservations regarding the role of the Greek Church in Balkan irredentism.⁹¹

In the first meeting between the new Archbishop and Prime Minister Simitis, Christodoulos stated: "Our Church is ready to exercise its mediating role for the fellow Orthodox peoples of the Balkans. Our scope there is very wide and benevolent." This attitude was confirmed in two subsequent meetings the Archbishop had with foreign affairs minister, Pangalos: "We reviewed the state of affairs in the Balkans... and I am particularly satisfied to announce that the minister confirmed our mutual desire for a close co-operation between the ministry and the Church concerning Greece's interests of in the Balkans."⁹² Pangalos, whose serious and disinterested character is greatly valued, and who has publicly criticised the Church in the past, seemed to endorse Christodoulos' geo-political responsibilities: "The new Archbishop possesses a sound knowledge of the international state of affairs, and a diplomatic capacity that can facilitate the achievement of our mutual interests."⁹³

However, in his highly political discourse aiming on maximalisation of power and the consolidation of his public legitimacy, the new Archbishop did not hesitate to criticise the government's handling of the delicate national issues. This was no doubt motivated by a wish to take advantage of the social dissent associated over the government's efforts to reach a compromise with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Turkey. On a visit to the archaeological site of Vergina in the northern Greek province of Macedonia, he commented: "Whoever gives away our history is not a worthwhile descendant of our ancestors. This archaeological site [the burial place of King Philip, father of Alexander the Great], supports our historic rights

⁹¹ This derives from the Bosnian war experience, where the Greek Church openly supported the Serbs on the basis of common historical memories and their mutual struggle against Islam.

⁹² Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 5 June 1998.

⁹³ Ibid.

on the Greekness of Macedonia, and those rights should not be given away.”⁹⁴ Implicitly criticising what he perceived as subservient governmental handling of the national issues, the Archbishop concluded: “We must be prepared to safeguard and defend our rights regardless of any sacrifice.”⁹⁵

Visiting the Aegean island of Samos, just a few miles from the coast of Turkey, Christodoulos identified the second major target of Greek irredentism: “I can only feel nostalgic and emotional looking across to the holy land of Ionia. I am not talking about my country’s expansionism but to express the deep sorrow of my soul.”⁹⁶

The Archbishop was determined to approach the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, and through its internationally acclaimed endeavours in matters of ecumenicism, tolerance, ecology and peace gain additional internal and external legitimacy as a modern leader of a pluralist-democratic Church. The Patriarchate is the perfect institution for this because it attracts the interests of both the “patriots” (for obvious reasons of irredentism and nostalgia for Byzantine glory) and of modernists who are generally in favour of a religious institution of world-wide magnitude that can also play a major role in Greek civil society (e.g. boosting people’s awareness of ecology, tolerance, etc.).

One of Christodoulos’ first commitments, therefore, was a visit to the Patriarchate to publicly declare his admiration for Bartholomew. But the rapprochement between the two sister Churches was not as easy and straightforward as might have been wished. This was due to several contentious issues, all related to potentially antagonistic interests in the funding of the two Churches by the EU, and question whether to be represented in Brussels as a single unified Church or as two separate ones.⁹⁷ The Archbishop’s intention to claim autonomy and be represented as

⁹⁴ Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 20 June 1998.

⁹⁵ Ibid. As the Church is traditionally considered the patron of the armed forces, the Archbishop was also particularly harsh and intolerant with the conscientious objectors who “jeopardise the safety of our nation. We shall not facilitate privileges for those who behave irresponsibly towards our moral values and our country’s needs, and towards the feelings of the people.”

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ The Church of Greece is the only Christian-Orthodox Church in the EU, but the

the sole recipient of EU funding programs and development projects was in contradiction with the Patriarchate's ancient canonical status as the Ecumenical representative "first among equals" and co-ordinator of sister Orthodox Churches in their international commitments (in the EU, the World Council of Churches, etc.). The bargaining table was soon strewn with various Patriarchal claims in Greece – such as the opening of an Athens office, which Serapheim had objected to adamantly. The desired balance of claims and power was not achieved during the Archbishop's first visit to Constantinople (13-16 June 1998), but both prelates publicly committed themselves to continue the dialogue.

The second round of meetings (9-11 September 1998) failed to solve the conflict, consolidated the existence of antagonistic interests – chiefly the matter of representation in Brussels, an Athens office for the Patriarchate, and Christodoulos' irredentist pronouncements – and manifested the climate of mutual mistrust that has plagued the relationship between the two sister Churches ever since their separation.

Even before the second round of meetings, Christodoulos' endeavours for unity were undermined by the majority of the synod not welcoming the Patriarchate's exclusive canonical prerogative in Orthodoxy's foreign affairs. The synod blocked the Patriarch's intention to approach the Greek foreign affairs minister in the hope of improving his strategic position in the forthcoming negotiations by persuading the Greek State to exercise pressure on the Church over the Orthodox representation in Brussels. Bartholomew feared that the existence of two Greek-Orthodox offices in Brussels could lead to a wider demand for separate national Orthodox Churches and so compromise the Patriarchate's Ecumenical status. State interference such as Bartholomew sought here emphasises the pivotal importance both Churches attribute to political alliances, quite aside from the fact that political intervention is always desirable when it conduces to the maximisation and legitimisation of Church power.

Examination of the minutes of the meetings shows an understanding of this struggle over the appropriation of State and EU power that epitomises the politico-ideological schism between the Patriarchate and the Church of Greece. The Archbishop's wish for an autonomous Greek representation in Brussels relied on the two institutions' different orientation to the national issues: "There are national

Ecumenical Patriarchate is responsible for all Orthodox citizens of the Greek diaspora, wherever they live.

projects that you [the Patriarchate] cannot support because of the hostile situation in which you find yourself. Would it be feasible, for example, for us together to implement some project to support the Cypriot cause in Europe? ... The blame for a possible failure in this and other national issues would automatically fall on the shoulders of the Patriarchate ... [and] consolidate the anti-Patriarchal climate within the (Greek) synod.”⁹⁸

The Archbishop’s dual tactic is reflected in his subsequent closing statement: “My respect and admiration for the Patriarchal institution and Your Beatitude personally is the greatest, but I am not alone. We have a hierarchy of 77 Bishops... and my position is vulnerable... In the pre-election period the other candidates criticised my pro-Patriarchal orientation. Do not vote Christodoulos, they argued, for he will surrender us to the phanari (i.e. the Patriarchate).”⁹⁹ Christodoulos also announced that the Church of Greece would welcome the Patriarchal intention of establishing an Athens office, on condition that the Patriarchal envoy addresses the public with the appropriate impartiality and “will not interfere in any way in the internal affairs of the Church of Greece.”¹⁰⁰

It is instructive for our study that, apart from matters concerning the delicate balance of power between the religious and political spheres, the minutes reveal that there was much discussion about how the two sides should respond to pressure from the Greek mass media. Bartholomew’s request for an Athens office arose from the need to restore the Patriarchate’s public image and protect it from “the omnivorous and relentless appetite of the Greek media ... which do not hesitate to distort reality and actually create problems themselves as long as this increases their audience ratings.”¹⁰¹ This criticism was also aimed against certain conservative ecclesiastic circles which systematically cultivate an anti-Patriarchal climate in the Greek media and through their own networks of communication disseminate a variety of “conspiracy theories”, such as the conventional fundamentalist assertion that the

⁹⁸ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 10 Sept. 1998.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Also see Davie 2000 on the media’s interest in religious affairs (leading many times to misunderstandings), and which the Churches cannot afford to ignore.

Patriarch's cosmopolitan outlook will shrink Hellenism, and surrender the Greek nation to Islam, the Pope, the Zionists, etc.

The two sides spent a whole day to prepare a common statement whose careful phrasing would ensure that their differences will not appear to the public as an overt cleavage. In the end it was agreed that the two Churches will be represented in the EU separately, and that the distinguished scholar Bishop John of Pergamon will be appointed to the Patriarchal office in Athens. Both decisions may prove detrimental, because there will be little or no communication between the two EU representatives, and Bishop John's liberal and cosmopolitan intellectual rigor will need to be tempered by much diplomacy if the balance between the Patriarchate and the predominantly conservative and nationalist members of the synod hierarchy is to be sustained.

Concerning the third point of friction between the two Greek-Orthodox Churches, the Patriarch, having to consider his institution's precarious location in the Turkish State, readily expressed his displeasure with Christodoulos' persistent discourse of irredentism so gratifying to the "patriotic" Greek faction. On a number of occasions Christodoulos has not hesitated to assert on camera that at some later time he hopes to be able to lead the liturgy in the churches of Saint Sophia in Constantinople and the Panagia Soumela of Trebizond (see footnote 114), two of the most popular and nostalgic symbols of Greek irredentism.

His undisputed popularity and the public support to such aspirations makes any governmental attempt to control him very difficult. Indeed, the government has simply turned a blind eye and did not bother to remind the public that Greek foreign policy is a secular affair and as such the exclusive prerogative of the State. The only member of the government who reacted publicly was the idiosyncratic justice minister Gianopoulos, who engaged with the Archbishop in a superficial dispute through media headlines. But this was more a controversy between two media personalities than a debate on the secular versus religious dimension of the Greek political culture.

Epitomising the interpenetration between politics and religion, the spokesman for the predominantly "patriotic" ND opposition, in reply to the question whether the Archbishop ought to declare publicly his aspirations for recapturing Constantinople from the Turks said that "The spiritual leader of Greek-Orthodoxy not only has the

right but the sacred duty to express his views and speak to the Greek citizens who are particularly sensitive towards the national issues.”¹⁰²

The growing civil cleavage between modernists and nationalists has undoubtedly obstructed the effectiveness and political will of the Greek State to implement a stable, systematic, and internally legitimate foreign policy. Meanwhile the Turkish government reacted swiftly to the Archbishop and his political alliances by ensuring that the numerous historical monuments of Greek-Orthodox Asia Minor are efficiently protected by the ministry of Turkish culture and heritage. Indeed, one can hardly avoid seeing the political reasons behind the decision of the municipality of Trebizond in Turkey to suspend plans for a mining project and declare the whole area of the deserted Orthodox monastery of Soumela a protected zone.

3.4 Christodoulos and Cultural Populism

The so-called Christodoulos phenomenon is evidence that a new powerful actor has emerged in the national arena, who in his first six months in office achieved unparalleled social legitimacy largely due to his skills for creating and utilising alliances and manipulating for his own ends the legitimacy battle being fought in the Greek political culture. His persistent popularity amongst the reactionary political-cultural forces and the fierce opposition to him by outward-looking intellectuals and politicians epitomises the country's increasing political polarisation and cultural cleavage. The platform for his struggle over the orientation of Greek culture and politics at the beginning of the second millennium is a widespread cultural populism in which the Greek media play a major role.

We have endeavoured to account for this phenomenon by showing the interactions of “patriots” and modernists in the political, intellectual, and ecclesiastic spheres. It has to be concluded that it is the populist logic generated by politicians or clergy driven by considerations of political cost, and powerful communication media completely regulated and driven by the market's need to manipulate audience rates that is partly responsible for both the failure of the Greek public to look critically at the continued interpenetration of politics and religion, and the confusion and

¹⁰² Newspaper *Eleftherotipia*, 27 August 1998.

disorientation of the Greek political culture over the religious versus secular character of Greece in a unified Europe.

At the level of political interaction, such populism was manifested in the controversy between Justice minister Gianopoulos and Archbishop Christodoulos that captured the attention of virtually every Greek. The dispute was over the Archbishop transforming Sunday Church services into political happenings and arrogating to himself a role in national issues, as well as with his grandiose aspirations for a powerful new Church that will play a pivotal role in the Constitution of the modern Greek society of the second millennium. The minister, who was publicly acclaimed for his outspoken, extroverted personality and often criticised his opponents in very blunt terms,¹⁰³ took the matter personally and launched a vociferous offensive intended to disenchant the public with the Christodoulos phenomenon.

Ignoring PASOK's dual moderate strategy towards the Church, he employed the type of populism that relies on manipulating public sentiment against certain right-wing politicians who may or may not be associated with the hated dictatorship of 1967-74. Gianopoulos televised comments, show all too clearly how populist demagogy limits any opportunity for dealing with historically-grounded tensions centered on the meaning and role of Christian Orthodoxy. Whereas, for example, other government spokesmen remained conciliatory in accord with the established principles of *Synallilia*, Gianopoulos capitalised on turmoil as a chance to gain additional popularity through uninhibited anathemas. Commenting on the Archbishop's irredentist views concerning Saint Sophia and Panagia Soumela, Gianopoulos said: "If he wants to be a politician then let him take off his frock... Christodoulos wants Constantinople and Saint Sophia. What kind of talk is that, that he'll go to Trebizond to lead the liturgy in Panagia Soumela? What's his point? ... to change the borders?" The Archbishop's reply did nothing to calm the tension ("I do not comment on nonsense"),¹⁰⁴ but he subsequently attempted to justify his irredentism in terms of the inalienable bond between Church and nation: "Orthodoxy and Hellenism have always followed a parallel course ... no secular power can uproot

¹⁰³ It should also be said that although Gianopoulos supported the government of the moderniser Simitis, he also had excellent relations with the patriotic faction of the party.

¹⁰⁴ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 28 Sept. 1998.

the people's unlimited love and confidence towards the Church. Your love is our shield, our power."¹⁰⁵

Feeling perhaps that his failure to arouse public opinion against Christodoulos might be due to the fact that the Archbishop reflected the growing nationalist sentiment of Greek political culture, the minister then resorted to the standard and very effective practice of accusing an opponent of having collaborated with the authoritarian regime of 1940-45 (Nazi occupation) or 1967-74 (Colonels' junta): "We are aware of the Archbishop's past since the time he was appointed a close associate of Ieronymos, the junta Archbishop."¹⁰⁶ ... I remember the time when the priests spoke against democracy and the people's political freedom ... unfortunately this right-wing mentality still persists in the minds of certain religious prelates. We wanted to forget the past and endorsed his elevation to the highest ecclesiastical office, but if he persists in meddling in politics he'll get the proper answer. That's my objection to Christodoulos."¹⁰⁷

The Archbishop responded by turning the minister's charges to his own advantage and led a memorial service to honour the controversial junta Archbishop, and so sealed the Church's unity with the Ieronymite faction. He also suggested lifting the sanctions on the deposed Ieronymite Bishops that were imposed under Serapheim to eliminate counter-factions.

As the dispute is primarily one of social legitimacy, it is not surprising that the minister interpreted the Archbishop's commemoration of the late Ieronymos as an act of treason against the unity of the Church: "This memorial tribute to a junta-appointed tyrant of the Church is despicable. Disseminating his far-right political convictions, Christodoulos in not following the example of Serapheim who united the clergy and people."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Gianopoulos assertion concerning the new Archbishop's presumed collaboration with the junta is based on the fact that during Ieronymos' tenure Christodoulos served as a senior secretary in the Archepiscopate. It must be stressed, however, that Christodoulos was appointed Bishop by Serapheim in 1974, once democracy was restored.

¹⁰⁷ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 28 Sept. 1998.

¹⁰⁸ Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 8 Sept 1998.

The above examples illustrate that beneath the criticisms lies the logic of cultural populism, since both sides seem to be chiefly preoccupied with how they can manipulate the Greek media and public for their own ends. Meanwhile the structural causes of the crisis and any prospect of resolving it are neglected or ignored. Perhaps it is not even desired to resolve it, since the perpetuation of obsolete structures and anachronistic stereotypes serves the two sides' respective interests in prolonging their rule and legitimises their access to political power through factionalising the political culture. In other words, this power struggle entails a populist ideological dimension to which the issue of Greek cultural identity is pertinent.

The minister's offensive actually constituted a shrewd mixture of religion and politics, which was adopted by anti-Christodoulite factions within the higher clergy, and on at least two occasions Gianopoulos found unexpected allies in the synod. The first was a discussion on the impeachment of the Bishop of Zakynthos over a *Penthouse* magazine interview in which he had endorsed pre-marital sexual relationships. The motive behind the minister's and several Bishop's reaction against the impeachment was not to examine the important issue of secularisation (human rights, sexuality, Christian ethics), but to damage the Archbishop's popularity through the populist practice of categorising the opponent as belonging to the political Left or Right. Instead of using the opportunity to promote an in-depth discussion, the minister and several Bishops manipulated the subject of pre-marital sex to create an obsolete right-wing image of Christodoulos intended to improve their own strategic position in the overall game of legitimation: "The right-wing orientation of the Church leadership [the minister argued] is cracking down on any progressive idea that might penetrate its infrastructure.... The Bishop of Zakynthos is one of our most enlightened hierarchs..."¹⁰⁹

Populist demagoguery notwithstanding, the issue of the Bishop's impeachment extends far beyond political exploitation, and has already put the synod in the awkward position of having to decide whether to embrace a modern-tolerant or a traditionalist-austere stance towards premarital sex and other aspects of every-day life. At the present time the Archbishop seems to be preparing an inconsistent populist strategy, inasmuch as his prelates are mostly over-aged and poorly educated Bishops (to whom he owes his elevation), but the future of his office will depend on whether

¹⁰⁹ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 29 August 1998.

or not he can tackle contemporary problems and concerns and attract the younger generation. His main concern seems to consist of being all things to all people, and this catch-all *modus operandi* epitomises the logic of cultural populism.

Much the same applies to the second occasion when Gianopoulos' criticisms found fertile ground within the synod. The Archbishop's decisions to lead Ieronymos' memorial service and to lift the sanctions on the deposed Ieronymite Bishops do not at first glance seem in Christodoulos' best interests. In fact they were opposed by both the justice minister and the Serapheimite faction within the synod, although for the nine Ieronymite Bishops who had voted for Christodoulos the Archbishop's initiative to pay tribute to Ieronymos was consistent with his election promises. When on 3 October 1998 the predominantly Serapheimite synod decided against lifting the sanctions against the Ieronymites, the result did not particularly distress the Archbishop. This was because on the one hand it could not detract from his image as a leader trying to promote the unification of the Church, and on the other, it saved him from having to reinstate the deposed Bishops, and so kept the status quo without serious disruptions in his relations with the Serapheimites.

The Archbishop's cultural populism is inextricably linked with the civilisational cleavage in Greek political culture during the late 1990s. The reactionary patriotism of Christodoulos' discourse equates Orthodoxy with Hellenism ("Us") and juxtaposes this sacred entity to the heterodox, the foreign, the "Graeculus" ("the others"). Personalising the latter as enemies of Greece, the Archbishop insists that there are both internal (e.g. Jehovah's Witnesses) and external (the "barbaric East and the heretic West") threats to the unity of Hellenism.

In parallel with indulging in this demagoguery, the Archbishop is fully aware that the exclusively Greek-Orthodox qualities he strives to entrench entail the danger of isolating the Greek Church from the increasingly cosmopolitan orientation of the international community to which the Greek State wishes to belong (EU integration). Church participation in this supra-national community requires tolerance for heterogeneity and cultural pluralism. However, the principles of the Archbishop's "modern" discourse to bring together the two sides of his ideological project are sometimes utterly inimical to the values and implications of cultural modernisation and EU integration, let alone Orthodoxy itself.

His pronouncements in the EU context are riddled with ideological constructions and paradoxical formulations, that were extremely popular between

1996 and 2000, in criticism of the government's program of economic austerity and its restraint in national issues, for which Greece's EU commitments take most of the blame. Projecting a variety of endemic deficiencies on "foreign centres" is a routine tactic of nationalist populism and, combined with the disorientation and insecurity of Greece's role in a supra-national Europe, provides ideal circumstances for Christodoulos augmenting his popularity. The bulk of his supporters share New Democracy's traditionally conservative ideology. Since Papandreou's idiosyncratic socialist modernisation managed to include in the nationalist ideology the previously excluded Centre-Left, the Archbishop's populist discourse is also welcomed by a significant proportion of PASOK's base. Christodoulos' emergence coincided with the consolidation of the "patriotic" or presidential faction within the party that is particularly sensitive to the national issues. For them too, the Christodoulos phenomenon is potentially useful, as it can help in their attack on what they perceive as a neo-liberal threat and a Brussels-directed foreign policy in Simitis' Eurocentrism.

The Archbishop's increasing power has prompted several commentators to express apprehension regarding his role in the unlikely event of a military emergency with Turkey: "Imagine something like the *Imia* crisis,¹¹⁰ which requires cool manoeuvring and sensible political handling – and there you have Christodoulos mobilising a million demonstrators down to the Constitution Square!"¹¹¹

While the Simitis administration had committed itself in the EU to improve Greece's relationship with Turkey, cut down on armaments and so save millions of euros for its deficient welfare State, it was brought up against a new powerful opposition in the alliance between Christodoulos and the "patriotic" faction. The Archbishop himself confirmed his essentially political outlook: "Today that our voice is echoed throughout the heavens, we once more declare in every direction, both to the civilised West and the barbaric East, that we are ready and prepared to say another *Molon Lave*.¹¹² All of us who keep on talking about our unforgettable and lost

¹¹⁰ The disputed Aegean islets of *Imia* (*Kardak* in Turkish) were the epicenter of a "hot episode" between the Greek and Turkish fleet in 1996.

¹¹¹ Professor Gavroglou, addressing the Youth Festival of the Coalition of the Left and Progress on Church-State relations (15 September 1998).

¹¹² The ancient Greek phrase *Molon Lave* is equivalent to "Come and get it". Leonidas of Sparta gave this reply to the Persian King Xerxes when he demanded the surrender

lands,¹¹³ all of us who keep on remembering those lands, are in danger of being characterised as anti-democratic. This is a monstrosity of logic.”¹¹⁴

Irredentist comments of this kind were soon noticed by the international media. The Associated Press reported from Athens: “Christodoulos resembles a general preparing for war provoking nationalist fever in sensitive times... Although initially he was considered a reformist promising to modernise the Church, he became eventually the emblem of the far Right.” The Austrian newspaper *Die Presse* reported: “From God’s slave, as the name Christodoulos suggests, the new Archbishop has become a slave of the mass media.”¹¹⁵

Back in Greece, intellectuals tried to account for the so-called Christodoulos phenomenon and to explain the notion of cultural populism:

“Although it may gain him a great number of supporters, Christodoulos’ nationalist discourse can never promote unity. The existence of exclusive religious-national entities inevitably presupposes the existence of adversaries, and so the Church’s discourse becomes stereotyped. This transforms its natural spiritual role of humanising and unifying the impersonal secular world into merely another ideology of fragmentation and antagonism. With regard to the Archbishop’s self-proclaimed role in Greek foreign policy and his remarks on the fading legitimacy of the elected political representatives and by extension of parliament itself, it must be emphasised that this not only reflects an alarming democratic deficit at the level of institutional interpenetration, but most importantly underscores a nationalist populism for which the Archbishop seems to enjoy unprecedented social consent. When his irredentist discourse is articulated ‘in the name of the Greek people who are betrayed by the

of the Greeks that were opposing him.

¹¹³ A term used to describe the Greek-populated areas in Asia Minor that were abandoned during the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in the war of 1920-1922.

¹¹⁴ Newspaper *Eleftherotipia*, 14 Sept. 1998. The Archbishop made this comment during an event commemorating the abandoned Monastery of Soumela in Trebizond, Turkey.

¹¹⁵ Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 20 Sept. 1998.

politicians', it is not only the politicians who should react, but primarily the people."¹¹⁶

Consequently, the Archbishop's persistent popularity and the social consent to his nationalistic role cannot be properly explained except by taking into account the interplay between the historical, cultural, and political factors that paved the way for the resurgence and consolidation of chauvinism and irredentism in Greece on the eve of the second millennium. Particularly instructive is an assessment of how Church and State co-operated throughout modern Greek history in the construction of a pathological fixation to the glories and traumas of the past which has plagued the political culture since Greece's independence.¹¹⁷

3.5 Summary

The purpose of chapters 2 and 3 has been to examine how the relationship between Orthodoxy and the State has developed since 1974, and the direction in which the Greek political culture is currently moving under the influence of a powerful new religious prelate. The underlying contention in both chapters is that, apart from the nationalist ideological manipulation and political exploitation emanating from the vested interests of the Church-State interconnection, the so-called Christodoulos phenomenon found fertile ground in the cultural sensitivity of the Greek public, who are vulnerable and susceptible to any discourse of difference and superiority. The Macedonian question is a good example of how a shrewd mix of populist media sensationalism, politicians' electoral objectives, and the desire for power among the clergy corresponded to the chauvinistic patriotism of millions of Greeks who were mobilised in massive demonstrations on an unprecedented scale. The matter of internal legitimation and the omnipresent fear of political cost (in the sense of electoral losses if voters are alienated by the specific governmental policy) have negatively affected Greek politics with their inconsistent and deeply irrational logic, culminating in the fiasco of the country's isolation from the international community both over the Macedonian question and the Bosnian war.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Quote from an analysis by Theology professor Konstantinou in the newspaper *Ta Nea*, 20 Sept. 1998.

¹¹⁷ See chapter 1 on the historical background.

¹¹⁸ In the same way that the Greek aggression towards FYROM can be partly

In his capacity as the Archbishop of Greece, Christodoulos seemed initially to embrace the iconoclastic profile of a moderniser ready to reconsider the practices of his predecessor. However, his radicalism was merely confined to a variety of symbolic and discursive innovations (e.g. modernising the Church's media network), leaving the structural (Church-State interpenetration) and the ideological dimensions (Church-nation connection) largely intact. Moreover, his aspirations for the Greek Church extend far beyond the status quo sustained by Serapheim. The new Archbishop reflected between the imperative necessity of Christian-Orthodox patriotism (supposedly expressing the age-old pride of the Greeks and safeguarding the future progress of Hellenism) and the malevolent threats emanating from the modern West, the "barbaric East" and the atheist Greeks or Graeculi whose ultimate target is to alienate and destroy Hellenism.

This reactionary discourse of cultural populism, which segregates the benevolent/proud patriot from the malevolent/conciliatory modernist, is alarmingly popular. The radical patriotism and cultural populism disseminated by Archbishop Christodoulos has also been embraced by several political factions, media interests, intellectual currents (e.g. Neo-Orthodoxy), and powerful civil-society groups (e.g. "Network 21"), and cannot be ignored in any serious analysis of how the Greek political culture is preparing to integrate into the supra-national entity of the EU.

interpreted as a side-effect of this chauvinistic patriotism and an overdose of cultural classicism, the Greek consent to Serbian aggression in Bosnia can be attributed to cultural empathy towards "our Orthodox brothers who fight against the perennial enemy of Islam and its heretic western ally."

PART TWO

RELIGION, POLITICS AND CULTURE: Three Case Studies

CHAPTER 4

ASPECTS OF ORTHODOX FUNDAMENTALISM IN CONTEMPORARY GREEK POLITICAL CULTURE

It is one of the key contentions of this thesis that even at the start of the new millennium the Greek political culture is still struggling to resolve its ideological inconsistencies and contradictions. While Prime Minister Simitis and his establishment of modernisers moved towards European integration, reactionary political and cultural forces were exploiting the people's disaffection with pro-European economic and foreign policies. These forces represent a remarkably heterogeneous front consisting of members from the whole range of the political spectrum.

Perhaps the most radical and polemic protest against a Greece fully integrated into Europe has come from the fundamentalist brotherhoods. Despite the extreme and eschatological nature of their critique it is not altogether without interest. Some of their contentions echo the preconceptions of a large section of Greek society that is inimical to or totally at odds with some basic presuppositions of the Greek constitution, not to mention EU integration – e.g. with human rights, religious tolerance, etc. This chapter will show that the recent upsurge of religiosity in contemporary Greece has had a profound effect on the people's political and cultural outlook, and that extreme-Right politicians from the "patriotic" faction maintain close links with fundamentalist brotherhoods.

The reasons for this liaison lie in the Greek State's systematic policy of cementing national cohesion through the cultivation of the Church-nation-State interconnection. In contrast to western European secularism, the Greek political system upholds the traditional *Symphonia* between politics and religion, in both institutional and ideological form (Church-State and Church-nation interpenetration respectively). This chapter will first focus on the political and historical conditions that have consolidated the connection between Orthodox fundamentalism and the Greek Right, and then account for the impact of these conditions on today's political culture, and on the dilemmas now confronting Greece.

4.1 Historical and Theoretical Perspectives

4.1.1 The Origins and Basic Characteristics of Fundamentalist Brotherhoods in Contemporary Greece

The term “brotherhoods” refers to privately governed associations within the Greek-Orthodox faith whose work lies primarily in the areas of preaching and education. The most important groups which survive today are *Zoë* (Life), *Soter* (Saviour), the *Ellino-orthodoxo Kinema Soterias* (Greek-Orthodox Salvation Movement), *Chrysopigi* (Golden Spring), and *Christopistia* (Faith in Christ).¹

They have enough in common to permit their joint consideration. Notwithstanding some sectarian features in the hands of the official Church such groups constitute a very important tool. Although the synod always states its formal disagreement with the extreme practices and views of fundamentalist brotherhoods, whenever Church and State clash, the government’s task of maintaining social order is threatened by the possibility of fundamentalist belligerence.

The fundamentalist brotherhoods appeared on the scene principally because of the inability of the official Church to satisfactorily handle the people’s spiritual needs, particularly as regards preaching and religious education. Their historic origins lie in various popular religious movements of 18th and 19th century Greece. A key figure in the early religious brotherhoods was Apostolos Makrakis (1831-1905). Not a priest but familiar with the thought of the Church Fathers and that of ancient Greek philosophers, Makrakis emphasised the importance of returning to the fundamental principles of Church tradition. He advocated both religious and political reforms and saw himself as designated for this work by divine providence. Eager for the religious reform of political life, he drew up a special political program (*Christopoliteuma*) and repeatedly stood for parliamentary elections. He also suggested a philosophical view of history, stressing the theocratic mission of Hellenism as bringing about “the new Israel”.²

¹ Section 4.1.1 will focus chiefly on *Zoë*, as by far the most influential in Greek public life.

² Jioultsis 1975, p.69.

Many laymen and clergy, who saw in the *Christopoliteuma* a theoretical justification of their own ideas, enthusiastically welcomed the vision of Byzantine grandeur illuminating Makrakis' national and religious messianism. The official Church being unable to respond to popular needs, Makrakis saw it as his responsibility to lead the people back to the source, to the roots of the tradition from which they had been cut off. The recklessness of his grass-roots leadership resulted in his separation from the Church. This was due not only to Makrakis' own activities and disobedience, but also to the upper clergy's unwillingness to exchange their positions in the State bureaucracy for pastoral work with the faithful. When Makrakis persisted in his opposition to the Synod, many of his followers abandoned him and created separate religious movements and brotherhoods (see below).

The basic premises of Greek-Orthodox fundamentalism are as follows:

(i) Fundamentalists harbour a strong sense of exclusivity, believing that they alone are in possession of the truth. Their naïve elitism makes them likely to “demonise” all they perceive to be a threat to Orthodox Hellenism. These attitudes have intensified in the 1990s due to globalisation processes and particularly Greece's EU integration. If the entire world becomes one, then strong interdependence between societies and cultural pluralism poses a serious challenge to exclusive claims to truth – and so undermines Orthodox superiority. Fundamentalists overemphasise the importance of Orthodoxy in the modern world to such a degree that it counterbalances their inferiority complex with regard to the West. This inward-looking spirit leads to religious complacency, triumphalism, and the idealisation of Orthodox history. Self-critique and objective evaluations are rare or unknown. The profoundly human characteristic of striving for novelty is subjugated to an absolutist process which strongly repudiates any attempt at change as a betrayal of Orthodoxy.

(ii) Fundamentalists are predisposed to seeing threats and enemies all around them, plotting malevolently against Orthodox Hellenism. Even in the absence of obvious danger (when, for example, there is no tension between Greece and Turkey), they tend to conjure up remembered historical traumas or some new evil plots supposedly jeopardising the existence of Orthodoxy “As a result, they not only build up a community of solidarity in order to exclude all enemies, but also embark on an ideological or even active show-down against them.”³ The bulk of Greek

³ Makrides 1991a, p.54.

fundamentalist dissent is directed towards Islamic Turkey and the Latin West. In section 4.1.2 below, it will be seen how the initially religious antithesis has been turned into a broad and generalised clash of Orthodoxy versus both Islam and the West, which involves the systematic manipulation of popular stereotypes rather than doctrinal arguments.

(iii) The intense militancy of Greek-Orthodox fundamentalism prompts the faithful to consider the Church as a kind of public prosecutor. Their stubborn adherence to “eternal Orthodox verities” has occasionally endorsed the use of violence and the demonisation of differing viewpoints. Such ideas may lead their adherents to a sacred war to actively implement their beliefs.

(iv) Fundamentalists place strong emphasis on moral issues and pride themselves on their puritanical, pietistic ethic and lifestyle. For them, the survival and welfare of Christian-Orthodox Hellenism depends primarily on personal morality. According to Makrides, they usually see things from a polarised, Manichean perspective, as a struggle between Good and Evil, right and wrong, light and darkness, within a deeply apocalyptic framework.⁴ They make efforts to abstain from the hedonistic habits and consumer values of the modern urban lifestyle, as well as from the “sinful” pleasures of sex. Since fundamentalists are highly sensitive to such issues as the preservation of the patriarchal family and oppose women’s emancipation, their ideological critique is often intensely moralistic. In later sections the chapter will furnish examples of the moral and apocalyptic tenets with which they interpret historical, political, and natural events. A great variety of issues, from the fall of Constantinople to AIDS, are thus more likely to be interpreted as evidence of God’s wrath than as natural, historical or scientific facts.

(v) In Makrides’ view, fundamentalists are afraid of offending divine law. Their attitude to the surrounding prevailing secular culture from which they disconnect themselves is twofold. On the one hand they want to transform it according to their ideals, on the other they feel threatened by urban socio-cultural differentiation and their own marginalisation as an unimportant subculture. They are vitally interested in not only increasing their social legitimation, but also in instilling sound principles into the young generation. Their strong social activism and its necessary infrastructures (e.g. pamphleteering and publishing, missionary work, Sunday schools), as well as the

⁴ Ibid., p. 60.

support of nationalistic political forces, are clearly offensive rather than defensive. In consequence, Greek fundamentalists do not passively expect justice and rewards in the afterlife, but engage in an active reformism that demands the total restructuring of modern society according to the values and mores of their own perception of the Christian-Orthodox tradition.

(vi) Finally, Orthodox fundamentalism is highly sceptical of the idea of progress and modern development. While the dissertation's enquiry whether Orthodoxy is compatible with modernisation relies much on Mouzelis' concepts of autonomous (development with human rights) and heteronomous (development without human rights) modernisation, the fundamentalists' values seem to have little use for any kind of modernity. Indeed, their uncompromising views and attitudes are hardly compatible with the values of tolerance and pluralism. However, although fundamentalism is an impediment to any objective judgement of new developments and ideas, it does not rule out the prospect of achieving progress, development and productivity, nor does it obstruct an industrious work ethic (heteronomous modernisation).

4.1.2 Ideological and Political Considerations

A crucial question related to the ideological and political dimension of fundamentalism in Greece is whether or not fundamentalists pose a threat to the alliance between the official Church and the State. At the politico-ideological level, there is complete accord between fundamentalists and the Church. Nationalism being the common denominator for both the official and the fundamentalist version of Orthodoxy in Greece, the sectarian features of fundamentalist organisations are effectively contained in a mutual endeavour to consolidate the Church-nation-State interconnection.

This relatively peaceful relationship suffered a major blow as a result of Simitis' Eurocentric and secularising policies. While the official connection between Church and State remained intact, several measures to harmonise Greece's legislation with that of the EU (e.g. new identification cards) jeopardised the State's usual line of being both modern and Orthodox, and brought fundamentalists closer to the official Church, both of them being completely inimical to the government.

This new configuration means a wider reformulation of ideological alliances in Greek political culture along increasingly civilisational lines. Inasmuch as the government has been very reluctant to implement policies that may offend the Greek people's Orthodox propensities, the "patriotic" political faction and the official Church rely on this long-lasting legacy and utilise fundamentalist activism to put pressure on the modernisers. Threat of political consequences would not be possible without the versatile strategies of the fundamentalist brotherhoods. Tactics like this can be observed in the vociferous Church protests against the State confiscating ecclesiastical and monastic property in 1987, as well as in more recent Church-State disputes (see below).

Notwithstanding certain sectarian features, historical circumstances and political expediencies have rendered Greek-Orthodox fundamentalism an idiosyncratic but pertinent part of a relatively unified official Church. In other words, any possible differences between the official Church and the fundamentalist brotherhoods are less important than their joint convictions. First and foremost, both share a chauvinistic attachment to inherited tradition, xenophobia towards other religions and cultures, and a constant fear of imminent dangers threatening Orthodoxy. This conservatism underlies their liaison with the extreme Right, which in 2000 had culminated in the establishment of the fundamentalist extreme-Right political party LAOS. Before discussing this development (section 4.3), the ideological presuppositions that made this collaboration possible should be clarified.

The ideological liaison between Greek-Orthodox fundamentalism and the political extreme Right, derives from their common reactionary absolutism with respect to the past. In Orthodox traditionalism, the past generally is indubitably better than either the present or the future. For example, the theocratic Byzantine State is considered vastly superior to the present, largely secular reality. This idealised and eclectic interpretation of the past emphasises the glorious elements, while its less triumphant periods are overlooked or cited as the cause of all evils and subsequent misfortunes. According to Makrides, this constant preoccupation with seeking religious truth solely in the age-old verities of the past has turned into a predisposition to measure modern developments by standards from the Golden Age, a form of obscurantism that hinders any attempt at free inquiry.

Such distorted ideological use of the past is evident in the way both official and popular Greek Orthodoxy sanctifies the State's nationalistic aspirations. A recurrent theme within the fundamentalist discourse is the idealisation of the Byzantine era when the emperor and priesthood were inextricably linked, and Orthodox superiority was a key element in the empire's political philosophy by legitimising its political aspirations on the basis of religious superiority. The same applies to post-1453 Moscow, called the third Rome, which was intended to be the sole bearer and guardian of Orthodoxy within the Tsarist foreign and domestic policies. In the early 20th century, religion and nationalism were associated with the irredentist dream of the *Megali Idea* to liberate Constantinople and Asia Minor from the Turkish yoke. This dream has not entirely vanished even today, but fundamentalist emphasis has shifted to the liberation of northern Cyprus from the Turks, and Greece incorporating the mainly Orthodox-populated northern Epiros (southern Albania).

The fundamentalists' aversion of the Left goes hand-in-hand with adherence to the Right. The communists in particular have always been considered enemies, as plotting to undermine the very existence of Orthodoxy and the Greek nation. It will be seen later how the most influential of the fundamentalist organisations collaborated with the dictatorial regime in the anti-communist crusade after the civil war. More recently, fundamentalists have interpreted the disintegration of the communist bloc as the realisation of ancient prophecies and the triumph of Orthodoxy over atheism and materialism.

Although the Right often manipulates Orthodox symbolism to attract fundamentalist votes (see section 4.2), theirs is by no means an alliance between indifferent collaborators. A case in point is ex-ND parliamentarian Karatzaferis, whose ultra-nationalistic discourse combining fundamentalism, irredentism, chauvinism and xenophobia renders him the leading proponent of a new, Haider-type Greek Right (see 4.3.2). The Karatzaferis faction denounces the Eurocentrism of ND and PASOK, and aims at uniting all Greek "patriots" under Archbishop Christodoulos' charismatic leadership. What is the political background that facilitates this convergence between fundamentalist Orthodoxy and the extreme Right?

4.1.3 *Zoë* and the Junta

The politically most active and influential Orthodox brotherhood in the 20th century has been *Zoë*. Founded in 1907 by a Makrakis follower, the archimandrite Eusebios Matthopoulos, *Zoë* became a group with a profound impact on Greek people and public life. From 1924 onwards, it very effectively organised both clergy and (for the most part) laymen, and expanded noticeably. In its early stages, the purposes of *Zoë* were twofold: to foster the spiritual growth of its members according to the principles of Orthodoxy, and complete dedication to the expansion of Orthodoxy within Greece in view of the growing urbanisation and secularisation then taking place.⁵

Zoë's internal structure exhibited some similarities with traditional eastern monasticism. Its members have to accept the three monastic virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience and have to spend a certain time as postulans before receiving full membership. In contrast to monasticism, however, *Zoë* has always remained in the world, fighting any new problems challenging the Orthodox tradition. Through its rapid development *Zoë* acquired a sophisticated organisational network of members dispersed all over the country, supervising all local missionary activities such as preaching, Sunday schools, summer camps for students, etc. The zeal of *Zoë* in preaching and teaching was surpassed only by its massive output of published material. Since 1911 it has brought out its own weekly for up to 170,000 subscribers, and as many as 1,300,000 copies of its pamphlets on "Religion and Life" have been printed and distributed.

Aided by professor Tsirintanes, an ardent supporter of the brotherhood, in the 1950s the purely religious aims of *Zoë* became part of a broader development of all aspects of Greek life under the banner of the "Graeco-Christian civilisation". This quasi-messianic vision led to another, more political culmination of the brotherhood's power in the 1960s and early 1970s. Concerning the theoretical presuppositions of this liaison between fundamentalism and politics, and particularly how it manifested in *Zoë*'s dynamic mix of ideological chauvinism and religious pietism, it can be said that the brotherhood succeeded fairly well in supplementing the Church's national and political views with the purity of Christian preaching. In other words, the standard geographical messianism of the "Great Idea" and revival of a Byzantine theocracy

⁵ Makrides 1988, p.168.

were merged with social, racial (ethnophyletic), and humanistic pietism. Great stress was laid on practical piety, personal morality, and liturgical participation.

Notwithstanding the conservative ideology and puritan character of *Zoë*, its striking similarity with German Protestant pietism gradually led to the estrangement of the brotherhood's older members who accused the younger of "progressivism". In the long run a schism between conservatives and progressives was inevitable, as the latter gradually subscribed to an increasing amount of more action-oriented and political tactics. Eventually most of the conservatives split off from *Zoë* and founded the new brotherhood *Soter*, denouncing *Zoë* for having heretically deviated from the original principles outlined by Eusebios Matthopoulos.

The brotherhood's "progressivism", however, found ideological shelter within the discourse of the junta regime (1967-1974). While not advocating any religious opposition to the official Church or a relatively a-political critique of alleged secularism in Greek society, the group assumed power over the Church leadership and joined forces with the junta in the unprecedented project of building a "Hellas of Christian Greeks". In its capacity as the largest and most vocal lay organisation, *Zoë* had maintained for some time that the higher clergy were so steeped in stagnation and irresponsibility that interested parties, both secular and clergy, would have to come to the Church's rescue. The opportunity presented itself in the spring of 1967 when the military took over the government. This *coup d'état* incidentally pointed to the political limitation of Church intervention, and also brought out its latent power. While the military took up the reins of government, the Church embarked on a project to legitimise the new regime's ideology.

Rather than totally reject modernisation, the junta elaborated its own brand of modernisation via nationalism. In an authoritarian/heteronomous type of modernisation, the colonels attempted to rationalise the governmental structure and mitigate the power of nepotism, class, and status, as well as to eliminate the menace of communism. In other words, the new regime championed an inward-looking modernisation without regard to human rights, and focused on a robust economy and a society bonded by nationalism and an austere work ethic.

Part of the junta's regulations was aimed at rehabilitating life in Greece and restoring its purified ideal. To this end the people had to be in better communion with the Church. Government officials were expected to attend services regularly, and one

of the junta's first decrees was to order all school children and civil servants to take Holy Communion once a week. Government slogans presented the view that "Youth and clean living will win every time." Anyone who publicly voiced doubt of the existence of God could be arrested and found guilty of blasphemy. As one commentator noted at the time, "These spiritual benefits are hastened by torture as well as exile."⁶

In order to avoid the possibility of an unpredictable and recalcitrant Church, a *concordat* between the junta and a particular faction of the higher clergy was worked out. A key figure in this affair was Ieronymos Kotsonis, chaplain to the King. He was an educated and ambitious clergyman, held back professionally because of his association with the lay organisation *Zoë*. As one of the brotherhood's most active and outspoken members Ieronymos was denied episcopal rank though more than qualified. Once the junta took power, however, he seemed to be well situated: with his military and *Zoë* connections, he could not be considered a threat to the military regime. He therefore formulated a working arrangement with the colonels, which served as a valuable platform to legitimise the coup.

Ieronymos was able to offer the support of those elements of the Church that could benefit the new regime, and the junta needed someone to mediate the differences between themselves and the king. Their liaison was especially fruitful because it was a natural alliance: "Both were trying to form monolithic establishments; one within the Church and the other concerning the whole of society. Through *Zoë*'s influence, the State was using the Church to control the population."⁷

The junta was able to advance Ieronymos' aspirations because *Zoë*, by taking control of the synod, could thoroughly reform that body and ensure the promotion of individuals associated with the new Graeco-Christian regime. As we have seen, the junta, in an unprecedented act of direct political intervention, deposed the then-Archbishop Chrysostomos and replaced the members of the permanent holy synod with bishops from among the clergy belonging to *Zoë*. Once installed on the archepiscopal throne, Ieronymos not only began to remove bishops hostile to his reforms, but also introduced personnel changes in the public offices dealing with Church matters. Posts in the ministry of education and religion as well as its top

⁶ Kent 1971.

⁷ Ibid., p. 416.

offices were filled with new men. Virtually all these new personnel were *Zoë* members who, consistent with the junta ideology, believed that to be Greek means to be Orthodox.

One of the most remarkable events of this entire period occurred in the spring of 1968. Archbishop Ieronymos held a press conference at which he announced that the Greek Church would boycott the World Council of Church's Fourth Assembly to be held in Sweden. The reason he gave was the Swedish government's "hostile attitude" towards Greece. The Archbishop said that he was "incensed" by what he termed as "the World Council of Churches' blatant and inconceivable interference in suggesting that its Commission of Churches on International Affairs seek expert appraisal of the new Greek Constitution."⁸ At the same time he announced that the secretary-general of the World Council of Churches would not be welcome in Greece. The executive committee of the Council had proposed earlier that the secretary-general should visit Greece to investigate charges of maltreatment of political prisoners.

Despite the fact that *Zoë* seems to have influenced some of Ieronymos' reforms, such as increased participation of laypersons in ecclesiastical activities, Runciman's prediction was to prove true that, "though Greece is now the only fully Orthodox country left in the world, and though the Church still means a great deal to the average Greek, it is hard to believe that religion in Greece will benefit in the long run by its subjection to the wishes of dictators."⁹

After the fall of Ieronymos (1973) and that of the military regime (1974), the *Zoë* brotherhood entered a long period of disregard. Especially during the 1980s, the positive public reception of Papandreou's socialist overtones left very little space for *Zoë* or any other fundamentalist movement. But rather than leading up to complete oblivion, this period may be considered a time of hibernation, when fundamentalism was waiting on the sidelines of the political and cultural mainstream for better times to come. This situation changed dramatically in the 1990s, when favourable circumstances for the development of politico-religious fundamentalism begun to re-emerge in reaction to the State's Eurocentric policies. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 will furnish a critical account of contemporary Greek-fundamentalist ideology.

⁸ Ibid., p. 427.

⁹ Runciman, 1971, p.71.

4.2 Secularisation, Democratisation and Civil Society

4.2.1 Secularisation: Bishop Kantiotis, the Schengen Agreement, and the Antichrist

Greek-Orthodox fundamentalists have been especially hostile towards secularisation, due to their deep conviction that Orthodox Greece is under continuous threat from the plottings of external enemies. Such obsessions lead to strong anti-ecumenicism (see section 4.2.3) and a general suspicion of western culture as well as of the Islamic East and South. It also tends to see dangers and conspiracies outside the religious domain. The fundamentalist conspiracy theories usually operate within an apocalyptic framework consisting of a great struggle between Good and Evil, expressed in terms of God's battle against the "dark powers".

The supposed role of Zionism in the machinations of these "dark powers" is a key aspect of modern Greek anti-Semitism. For example, there is strong emphasis on the Jewish roots of Marxism-Leninism (i.e. the Jewish descent of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin) and of freemasonry and other organisations (the Rotarians, Lions etc.) all of whom, according to the fundamentalists, conspire against Orthodoxy.¹⁰ The origin of these sentiments lie in the stereotyped view of Judaism as the arch-enemy of Christianity.

Apocalyptic orientations frequently mean that fundamentalists expect the end of the world to be nigh, and interpret historical phenomena or natural catastrophes from this perspective. Apocalyptic frenzy turned into a pure hysteria in the 1990s, when it was alleged that the number 666, the sign of the Antichrist according to the *Book of Revelation*, appeared in code on new identity cards being issued. A wide range of polemical literature on this theme appeared, and several demonstrations were organised against the Antichrist's plot to subject Orthodoxy to the powers of Satan, mostly by Old Calendrists from the Greek-Orthodox Salvation Movement.

Despite the extreme, eschatological nature of their critique, fundamentalists do not stand outside the Greek political culture. Inasmuch as the values of secularism and rationalism collide with their deeply entrenched nationalistic political and religious discourses, apocalyptic scenarios provide fertile ground for political manipulation by

¹⁰ Makrides 1991a, pp. 49-72.

the Helleno-centrists. Before we examine political fundamentalism (section 4.3), it should be understood that, unlike western politicians and New-Age fundamentalists pursuing more or less separate courses and operating in distinct domains, Greek fundamentalism and the political mainstream still negotiate a viable way to coexist and collaborate. This is true also of the relation between fundamentalists and the official Church, whose common endeavour to cement nationalism greatly outweighs their differences.

The most notorious fundamentalist member of the synod is Augustinos Kantiotis, the bishop of Florina. Despite his advanced age, he runs a highly effective fundamentalist network and has had repeated conflicts with the government. Anticipating the likely political costs of meeting him head-on the government often retreats before his militancy. In his “sacred wars”, Augustinos often mobilises his numerous adherents against a variety of supposed “anti-Greek” and “anti-Orthodox” enemies. A case that vividly illustrates the bishop’s strategy is the organised reaction to the film “The Last Temptation of Christ”, in 1989. Fundamentalists marched singing and praying, and some went so far as to damage the cinemas where the film was shown and even attacked the spectators. This fanatical spirit was clearly depicted in the fundamentalist newspaper *Orthodoxos Typos* (Orthodox Press), which urged the Orthodox people to revolt: “Let us be ‘illegal’ for the sake of Jesus Christ and carry his blame and blemishes. Many saints would like to live in our hard days to earn precious crowns of martyrdom. Perhaps Christian blood will be shed in the streets of Athens, because a Church that is not persecuted is no Church at all!”¹¹

Another feature of anti-secularism is the fundamentalists’ endeavour to abstain from hedonistic consumer habits and the ephemeral pleasures of the modern world. They are even more militant in matter of sexual transgression (pornography, homosexuality) and vehemently against women’s emancipation and related issues (e.g. abortion). They also abominate the introduction of sex education in schools, considering it potentially dangerous for the students’ moral integrity. They deplore the decline of traditional, patriarchal family values and usually claim that their enemies fail to run a properly pious Orthodox family. Finally, both moralising and the irrational interpretation of historical events (e.g. the invasion of Cyprus by the Turks in 1974) or natural catastrophes are very common among fundamentalists. So

¹¹ Ibid., p. 59.

Kantiotis asserted that the 1978 earthquake in Thessaloniki was a sign of the wrath of God over the increase in abortions and blasphemies in Greece.¹²

Is the fundamentalist mobilisation and protest against the surrounding secular culture a yearning for otherworldliness? Given the pervasiveness of Greek nationalism, Orthodox fundamentalism is less a spiritual retreat from the modern world, as in the case of New Age groups, and more a form of reactionary social activism. Regardless of the secular culture's negative responses towards their extreme ideals and activities, fundamentalist devotees have associated themselves with chauvinistic political and cultural forces. Their sense of exclusive truth and elitist superiority, their persecution complex, and their absolutisation of the past are all irrational characteristics that bring them close to their chauvinistic ideal of racial purity.

One of the anti-secular convictions that cement the liaison between fundamentalism and the extreme Right in Greece is their common aversion to the principles of free thought and inquiry. Thoroughly engrossed in dogma and convinced of being in possession of the sole truth, they denounce all academic institutions that employ scientific reason as "centres of darkness". Even the theological schools of Athens and Thessaloniki are allegedly "contaminated" by the "Protestant" preoccupation with dry intellectual theology, neglecting the real problems of the believers by avoiding "practical theology" and, worst of all, showing a predilection for non-Orthodox positions. Moreover, fundamentalists strongly oppose the continuing tendency of Orthodox theologians to pursue their graduate studies abroad. For them, all and any contact with foreign theological circles and lifestyles inevitably leads to the loss, or at least the relativisation, of Orthodoxy.¹³

In consequence, fundamentalists condemn the modernising influences of the Orthodox diaspora. There are indeed striking differences between the Greek-Orthodox Churches of the diaspora influenced by the cosmopolitan ideas of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, and Orthodoxy within the Greek borders which is generally more nationalistic, chauvinist, and less tolerant. This cosmopolitan "contamination" prompted bishop Kantiotis to denounce the unorthodox practices of the then-Archbishop of Australia Stylianos. Followers of Kantiotis visited Australia

¹² Ibid., p. 61.

¹³ Ibid., p. 67.

for missionary purposes and professed themselves shocked by what they considered deviations from the true Orthodox spirit. They severely criticised and denounced various of the Australian Archbishop's policies, and Kantiotis demanded the intervention of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. However, the Patriarchate supported Stylianos' policies and suggested that Kantiotis avoid interfering in the affairs of a diocese outside his jurisdiction.¹⁴

Let us now look at some of the implications in the matter of the number of the Antichrist as well as the Schengen Agreement, as prime examples of fundamentalist logic and how it has entered the political mainstream.

The first point that should be emphasised is that, despite the profoundly anti-western character of the fundamentalist Greeks' critique of secularism, they often emulate the Protestant fundamentalist model. For example, the creation and evolution controversy occupies a central place in Greek fundamentalist thinking. In their anti-evolution campaign, fundamentalists organised a demonstration against a high-school textbook entitled *I istoria tou anthropinou genous* (The history of the human race), which openly endorses Darwin's theory of evolution. The demonstrators demanded not only the withdrawal of the book from the schools, but also its public burning. Yet although their intention is to uphold Orthodoxy by such measures, their entire argument is based on Protestant fundamentalist literature (for instance Duan Gish's book *Evolution? The Fossils Say No!* which was published in Greek in 1985).¹⁵

Much the same applies to the matter of the satanic number 666, which was for the most part based on Protestant fundamentalist publications. Another paradoxical point is that despite the eschatological nature of the fundamentalist critique against 666 and the Schengen Agreement of 2000 (see fn. 91, ch. 3), the latter is based on Enlightenment notions of human rights in defence of what is perceived as the inalienable constitutional prerogative of any citizen to deny the State access to his/her private data and personal sources of information.

The same contradictory attitude is held by the synod as well as the communists, whose suspicion towards EU-integration measures (such as the Schengen Agreement) has a striking affinity with fundamentalist anti-Occidentalism:

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 72.

“The Holy Synod and every Greek citizen has the constitutional right to revolt against the violation of our inalienable constitutional rights ... we can no longer bear to see the malevolent way in which the progress in digital applications and electronic technology has been erroneously associated with 666, the number of the Antichrist as it is clearly identified by the Holy Book of Revelation.”¹⁶

Not only the official Church, but also the priestly community on Mount Athos (the centre of Christian-Orthodox spirituality) denounced the government in the matter of the satanic number, and launched a relentless campaign against all who are supposedly trying to undermine the unity of the Greek-Orthodox nation. The common denominator in the alliance between fundamentalists, the official Church, the Mount Athos community (and the communists with regard to the Schengen accord) was the nationalistic essence of their shared contentions. The most crucial point of dispute, however, was not so much the eschatological dangers of having the State subjugated to a “Devil hacker” but another clause of EU legislation that would make it possible not to mention the holder’s religious affiliation on the new identity cards. Since 1939 identity cards have compulsorily listed the religious affiliation (and incidentally shown that some 98% of the Greek population are Greek-Orthodox).

EU legislation considers religion a sensitive personal matter that should not be revealed in a citizen’s transactions with the State because it might lead to discrimination against religious minorities. This view has met with harsh criticism: “The new electronic identity cards that make the inscription of religion voluntary will facilitate the ongoing process of the immortal Greek soul’s spiritual demise, and will serve in the disintegration and loss of the heroic Greek soil to the enemy... Only the total and irreversible abolition of this law will appease the people and end their justified concern for those who are paving the way for the Antichrist coming through 666.”¹⁷

The reasons for fundamentalist dissent against the Schengen Agreement stem from a deep historical scepticism towards European integration, and particularly unwillingness to accept subjugation of the Greek-Orthodox culture to the values and mores of the West. Moreover, it is doubted that the West would be a true ally ready to

¹⁶ Angeloglou 1997, p. 10.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

protect Greek interests against Turkish imperialist claims. Despite the fundamentalist assertion that the Orthodox have greater justification than anyone else for desiring a strong and unified Europe – because “We are the very founders of Europe” – misgivings raised by historical and current affronts (the crusades, western support for Turkey) exacerbate the already existing climate of cultural estrangement and promote a logic of entrenchment. Perhaps the most interesting point about the fundamentalists’ Euroscepticism is that it more and more resembles the communist critique of EU cultural integration. For both, it is the capitalist imperative to create new markets and maximise profits that boosts the epiphenomenon of cultural unification. In other words, Maastricht and Schengen were not the products of a benevolent democratic endeavour to eradicate potentially explosive differences by creating a unified political body, but a pragmatic decision to create uniform consumer needs in a stable and docile political and cultural environment.

According to the fundamentalists, the modification of national constitutions in line with the interests of the Eurocrats in Brussels is part of the effort to create such a submissive environment. It is believed that, under the pretext of cracking down on crime and introducing a more effective containment of illegal behaviour, European forces ultimately aim at establishing a surveillance society (quite similar to Foucault’s *Panopticon*) that will diminish national sovereignty and signal the demise of Orthodoxy. Epitomising the connection between communism and fundamentalism, we have the remarks of the Neo-Orthodox sympathiser communist MP, and major media personality Liana Kanelli, who identified the sentiments underlying the alleged words of the former US foreign-affairs secretary Henry Kissinger with the logic of Schengen: “There is no chance of controlling the Greek people unless you inflict damage on its civilisational roots. Unless we exterminate the Greek people’s rich spiritual and cultural reserves, namely language and religion, Greece will not cease to cause us trouble in the Balkans, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.”¹⁸

The fundamentalist critique against Schengen is, therefore, less an otherworldly conviction about the coming of the Antichrist than the manifestation of a long hostility to secularisation, westernisation, and globalisation. Devotees of this anti-ecumenical political stance back their convictions with highly apocalyptic and eschatological arguments. They assert that the Antichrist bar code, including sensitive

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

information from political convictions to health history, DNA structure and sexual preferences, is to be carved into the individual's forehead or arm, and will follow him/her in every transaction with the supra-national State. The control panel for this omnipresent *Panopticon* will be in Brussels, where a worldwide dictatorship will set to work to utterly eradicate Orthodoxy.

4.2.2 Fundamentalism and Democratisation: Church-State Relations and the *Rotonda* Affair

The fundamentalist opposition to secularisation is interrelated with a number of issues that either have prompted fundamentalists to seek inroads into the State apparatus in order to improve their negotiating position, or has brought them into direct odds with State attempts to enforce certain measures of democratisation and secularisation.

The most important dispute between the Church and State was over PASOK's attempt to socialise-nationalise Church property and modernise-democratise the Church structure (see chapter 2 on Law 1700), when fundamentalists worked hand in hand with the official Church and were the first to take to the streets to campaign against the government's wicked plot. Although fundamentalism criticises the concentration of wealth in the hands of a small number of bishops, and at least certain fundamentalist groups endorse an extremely austere and ascetic life-style, they were much more eager to support the Church in the matter its real-estate property than to support an "anti-Christian socialist government." A justification for this is couched in mainly nationalistic and traditionalist terms: "I do not feel pain about the landed property. I feel pain over the treatment of the Church. I hurt because of its systematic marginalisation and the unappreciative way we treat our race's Saviour. I feel pain and agony for the future of this great nation, its continuous de-Hellenisation, and de-Christianisation, its disconnection from the roots of its being. The landed property issue is just a symptom of our people's widespread alienation."¹⁹

Most of the disputes between the State and fundamentalists are cases where fundamentalist logic considers State intervention in the values and mores of the faithful as blasphemous. In consequence, fundamentalists have had a strong interest in upholding the law criminalising blasphemy. Passed by the Metaxas dictatorship in

¹⁹ Theodoropoulos 1987, p. 19.

1937, this law provided legality for fundamentalist “prosecutors” wanting to impose censorship on virtually anyone who dares to openly declare his/her deviation from the Orthodox mainstream or disseminated an eccentric or heretical intellectual, artistic and political viewpoint. In order to uphold the otherwise secular and tolerant character of Greek legislation, the law prosecutes only “malevolent” in differentiation from “non-malevolent” blasphemy, perceived as non-malevolent in the sense of not taking the name of the Lord in vain but being a form of expressing philosophical objections.

The interpretation of the aforementioned law constitutes one more example of the inconsistency in the Greek political culture. More specifically, despite the vague and ambivalent sense of tolerance entailed in distinguishing between malevolent and non-malevolent blasphemy, the Church in its capacity as the semi-official State religion was in effect the only legitimate authority empowered to make that distinction. Indeed, it makes little sense that somebody may be systematically stigmatised and dragged through endless court battles, only to be eventually vindicated by a higher court. The only meaningful measure that could restrain the official Church and its fundamentalist avant-garde from prosecuting a variety of “heretics” is obviously a complete separation of Church from State.

However, even uncompromisingly modernising Prime Minister Simitis has avoided bringing the subject up in parliamentary debates on amendments to the constitution. The dual strategy of a secular/pluralistic legal framework, combined with a political privilege for Orthodoxy, reflects the ambivalence in the constitution in this matter. The balance between the two leading Greek institutions is disturbed whenever either of them acts without making the necessary concessions to the other. Examples have already been given of bitter disputes resulting from the failure to strike a balance in Church-State relations, but in conflicts between Orthodoxy and the State, the fundamentalists’ main allegation is that the State tolerates blasphemy.

The so-called Rotonda affair is an instance of a dispute in which fundamentalism and the official Church united their voice against the State’s “anti-Greek” projects. The Supreme court was called to deliberate whether or not to uphold a decision by the culture ministry to limit liturgical services to three times per year in the Thessaloniki Rotonda, a building that dates back to Roman times. The Church denounced the ministry decision as violating the freedom of worship. The Rotonda dispute quickly turned into another example of the ideological, political, and cultural

ramifications of the turbulent relations between Church and State. It also underscored the role of the fundamentalists as an Orthodox militia vigilantly active in containing the government's aspirations for secularisation, and a reminder of Orthodox power to punish the unfaithful "heretic" at election time.

One of the city's oldest and most beautiful landmarks, the Rotonda is a national monument. The State wanted it as a venue for cultural events, and the Church sought to perpetuate it as a church. Thessaloniki having been designated the cultural capital of Europe for 1997, EU funds had poured into the city to restore the Rotonda and other monuments. It is ironic that the Rotonda should encapsulate Greece's dual identity (Orthodox and European), because violent riots erupted over the attempt to give it a twin role. This is symptomatic of the more general predicament in Greece's political culture. At the same time as the Eurocentric Greek government is trying to forge a coherent cultural policy and build bridges between Greece's different identities, its privileged treatment of the modern-secular-western identity encourages a divide between the modernisers and an increasingly powerful nativistic movement that employs tactics of cultural populism to assert what makes Greece essentially different from other EU countries.

A brief look at the actual events that unfolded in the Rotonda affair will show the kind of political and cultural frenzy associated with the aforementioned predicament, as well as the role played by Orthodox fundamentalism. While an exhibition of Byzantine icons was still in progress at the Rotonda, the Church obtained permission from the ministry of culture for a service there. When the exhibition closed, a lot of people gathered at the Rotonda on the Sunday, expecting that a church service would be held. (It is the fundamentalist groups that had disseminated this information.) In the event, the gates to the building remained locked. This generated frustration and anger among the faithful, and one of the rumours that began to circulate was that the ministry of culture was planning to turn the Rotonda into a centre for Islamic studies.²⁰

At this point the Church called for an all-night vigil to be held at the Rotonda. The crowds shouted slogans such as: "Not a synagogue, nor a mosque, but a Greek church!" and "This is Greece, not Albania: For Macedonia and Orthodoxy!"²¹ A

²⁰ Stewart 1998.

²¹ Ibid.

senior archimandrite as chief spokesperson of the Church went on the offensive. He asserted that, when allocating it to the ministry of culture, the State had never ruled out the Rotonda's use as a church, and disputed the authority of the Archaeological Service or even the ministry to deny him and other faithful the right to worship there. He also charged State officials with plundering and desecrating the Rotonda, and even claimed that in 1986 the Rotonda had been used to show pornographic films. The archimandrite concluded: "The Turks took the cross down from the church, and so did the archaeologists... What is going on?"²²

The Church instigated a lawsuit against the Archaeological Service for violating the freedom of worship. Eventually the culture ministry declared that the Rotonda would remain a museum, and that its religious use would be limited to three times a year; One day later the bishopric officially rejected the decision and planned another liturgy for the coming Sunday. The bishop of Thessaloniki adopted the fundamentalists' rhetoric and associated the Rotonda affair with the need to entrench Orthodoxy, in the light of concerns that university students were succumbing to heresies. Muslim students were reported to be worshipping on Fridays in the Theology school of the university.

The dispute over the Rotonda's double identity attracted the interest of most of Thessaloniki's citizens, who came to be divided into two opposing camps. The Citizen's Union of Thessaloniki, comprised of academics, professionals, journalists, students and other open-minded residents, wanted to maintain the monument's secular character, and expressed their discontent with what they considered an anachronistic attitude on the part of the faithful. Reactionary political and cultural forces took sides with the synod and its fundamentalist activists.

As usual, the State – unsuccessfully – tried to pacify both sides. When the synod declared the Rotonda a sacred place of pilgrimage, thus indicating that it would not back down and that it would deploy every means at its disposal to make it clear that this was a dispute between the sacred and profane, the Supreme court hastily passed a temporary ruling that the Rotonda could be used as a church provided applications were made to the Archaeological Service. The Church formally requested and received permission to hold an all-night vigil to conduct a special liturgy celebrating the holy relics of St George. That night the Archaeological Service

²² Ibid.

watchman observed an unusual number of clergy entering and re-entering the Rotonda, carrying bulky objects. Next day it was found that they had been building an altar of marble and cement, on which they had laid the Saint's relics.²³

By this action the Church exceeded its right to "use" the Rotonda and violated State law by making unauthorised additions to a protected national monument. An altar, however, is a consecrated object and it violates the canons of the Church to remove it. Clearly its erection was a carefully thought-out act meant to bring the issue to the popular level and heightening Orthodox sensitivity.

The most dramatic event in the saga of the Rotonda took place on Monday, 30 October 1995. A piano recital of jazz music was scheduled by the Citizen's Union and permission for it to be held in the Rotonda was obtained from the Archaeological Service. The Church promptly called a vigil for the very same time, clearly attempting to ruin the concert. The "faithful" surged and seethed outside the locked gates shouting "Anti-Greek!, Anti-Christ!", "Do you want to make the church a mosque?", and "God will burn you!" Finally they broke in, and yelling "A piano in the church! Antichrist!", proceeded to overturn chairs and then banged, struck, and bludgeoned the piano, completely destroying the instrument. At the end a member of the clergy took the microphone and shouted: "The people of God have triumphed! They tell us that Thessaloniki has a mixed history. If they mean that many conquerors passed through here, I agree. But the Orthodox character of the city has never changed."²⁴ When the same clergyman was asked to explain this atrocious behaviour, he said it was because the government had been trying to close churches throughout Greece. Besides, he was worried that the government was supporting Muslim interests to a greater degree than it should.

The Rotonda events may, therefore, be seen as evidence of the power struggle between Church and State. Provoked by the State's secularising (NS 1700), and its moderate foreign policies (normalising relations with FYROM), the Church had begun to realise its ability to cement a variety of anti-European political and cultural forces. So in the Macedonian controversy, it had been the Church that spearheaded the rousing of popular support. The bishop of Thessaloniki was in the forefront of massive demonstrations opposing EU recognition of "Macedonia", and presented the

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

Church as the guardian of national interests – indeed, as the representative of the nation – and, moreover, at the same time that the State had to give in to international pressure and relax its initially uncompromising position.

The Rotonda affair clarifies the parameters at play in the Church-nation-State triad, and the role played by fundamentalism in the balance of power between them. Nation and Church are virtually equivalent and equally subordinate to the secular State. However, whenever fundamentalism ignites Orthodox nationalism, the State has to oppose any forces which the fundamentalists for their part consider dangerous to the Greek identity. To a certain extent, therefore, fundamentalism controls the quality of democracy enjoyed in Greece, and is one of the main causes of the country's considerable democratic deficit.

4.2.3 Anti-ecumenicalism, Chauvinistic Patriotism, and Xenophobia

The above description of Orthodox fundamentalism seems to confirm that its discourse and activism is the definitive anti-western critique, and that its position at the head of the “patriotic” political and cultural alliance threatens to boycott the government's European strategy.

However, this alliance between fundamentalism and other anti-western ideas (e.g. communism) is a quite recent phenomenon and underscores the importance culture plays in contemporary political processes at the expense of class-based ideologies. During the last thirty years fundamentalists have evolved from being collaborators with extreme-Right dictatorial politics relying heavily on Orthodox symbolism and American aid, into active enemies of the State's European orientation and its culture of secularisation and human rights. In other words, once the Soviet threat was gone, fundamentalism ceased to be connected exclusively with the Right and unleashed its cultural dynamism to found new alliances based on long historical and cultural stereotypes. At the same time, now that Orthodoxy has loosened its ties with authoritarian politics, a similar process has gradually drawn the Left away from internationalist ideals, and some former leftists have discovered elements of Orthodox political culture that better suit their now more Hellenised image (see chapter 5.3.2).

With new confidence and a more inclusive and sophisticated image, therefore fundamentalist individuals and ideals are penetrating mainstream Greek society. Exploiting a general sense of uncertainty around such issues as globalisation and EU-

integration, fundamentalism has attracted growing audiences to whom it appears as the last frontier of a proud patriotic tradition. Reluctance towards ecumenicism and pluralism, previously confined to purely religious issues, now has a political dimension and affects even foreign policy and public administration. This poses serious problems for the normal course of Greece within the EU.

Before looking at purely political interactions between fundamentalism and the political establishment (in section 4.3), let us examine certain aspects of fundamentalist activism in religious issues that paved the way for xenophobic political ideas becoming acceptable to wider audiences.

Unlike the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Greek Church has not been overly optimistic or enthusiastic about the ecumenical movement, and has hesitated to co-operating fully with the World Council of Churches in all matters. A telling example of this was a dramatic Greek reaction to patriarch Athenagoras' attempts at rapprochement with the Roman-Catholic Church in the 1960s. The meeting of pope Paul VI and patriarch Athenagoras I in Jerusalem in January 1964, the simultaneous lifting in December 1965 of the 1054 anathemas in both Rome and Constantinople, and their exchange of visits in the summer of 1967 were historic events with international repercussions. In Greece, where distrust and suspicion of Roman Catholics goes back to the time of the crusades and the sack of Constantinople in 1204, the vast majority of the Greek people and even the clergy are either indifferent to or completely ignorant of these matters. The Greek intelligentsia, on the other hand, were favourably impressed by the Patriarchate's endeavours for Christian unity. Fundamentalists and other conservatives within the Orthodox Church meanwhile engaged in a bitter, vehement, and concentrated campaign against any and all collaboration with "heretics".

By promoting the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue within the context of the ecumenical movement, the Ecumenical Patriarchate is drawing the Greek Church into an international setting, given that Greek representatives must be able to engage in meaningful relations within a worldwide context. This does not seem to appeal to the Athens higher clergy, however, who still maintain that there is nothing to gain from a more open Church. This difference in attitudes show very clearly that politics and religion can interact in different ways. From the fundamentalist point of view, priority is given to the development of a robust and coherent national(ist) Orthodoxy. At the

ideological level, this would keep public opinion pro-fundamentalist in respect of the more pluralistic ideas of the role of modern Greece in the new millennium. At the political level, it prolongs Orthodoxy's privileged constitutional treatment and so, by its ability to influence the State's political decision-making, ensures its own power.

In addition to the fundamentalist discursive mechanisms examined earlier, we shall now look at a typical example of fundamentalist rhetoric. Seeing how irredentism, Orthodoxy, and Hellenism make up one seamless entity will pave the way for analysing political fundamentalism.

In the prologue to his book *Eternal Greece of Mine*, the archimandrite Timotheos Kilifis asserts that all readers are aware that our country is in a very difficult situation. He also assumes they know about the need to "overturn all organised anti-Hellenic propaganda against eternal Greece and also to respond to the internal needs of our nation."²⁵

Kilifis then illustrates the threefold character of Orthodox fundamentalism. First he says that the flag, "the symbol of our nation and of Hellenism throughout the world, expresses our national substance as well as our spiritual one, through the cross. The cross must never be absent from our flag. It is our guide on our crucified course to ... resurrection Day!"²⁶ He then, in typically eclectic fashion, quotes one line by the widely acclaimed poet N. Vrettakos, entirely out of context, claiming that it refers to the dangers Hellenism is facing today: "The Barbarians camped in the dreams of the Hellenes."²⁷ Finally, in an obvious attempt to give international kudos to his views, Kilifis quotes, the non-Greek commentator Will Durant: "There is nothing perennial in the world that does not come from Hellas. All people should have two countries, the country they are born in, and Hellas, which regenerates the world."²⁸

The bulk of Kiflis' text is directed against Turkish and "Macedonian" claims on Greece and purports to give proof of the Greek identity, not only of today's "Free Greece", but also of the still "enslaved Greek areas". Elsewhere he proclaims: "There do not exist for us lost native lands. There only exist enslaved native lands which sooner or later we will liberate." Doubting the benign motives of Greece's western

²⁵ Kilifis 1992, p.5.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

²⁸ Ibid.

allies he says: “I am also addressing our audacious ‘friends’ and enemies. I am telling them that if they dare attack our territorial integrity, they will once more receive the befitting reply from the whole of the Greek nation.”²⁹

The author invites both Church and State as equally important and complementary forces to undertake common national(ist) initiatives. The strategy of the State should consist of doing everything in its power to “enlighten the whole world about the ‘Greekness’ of all the parts of free Greece... Because the forgers, anti-Hellenes, enemies of ours throughout the world are in frenzy, saying that we are descendants of Albanians, Dardanians-Skopjans, and of other barbaric tribes, trying to usurp our eternal and indelible achievements.”³⁰ The Church is assigned a task much more important than merely raising awareness about Hellenic purity. The priest unreservedly urges the Church to instil and uphold irredentism: “The Church must establish an unceasing prayer for the liberation of North Macedonia, North Epiros, North Cyprus, North Thrace, the Pontus and Asia Minor, as well as for all our brothers who are still in bondage, so that all the Greek generations are being brought up with this conscious thought. We must not listen to our enemies saying the opposite, namely that they want to take from us more of our territories... Would to God, my proposals will be heard!”³¹

He touches on another fundamentalist hobbyhorse concerning the West when he cites a number of enthusiastic statements by western leaders about Greece’s sacrifices in World War II, and then denounces them for failing to pay Greece back as promised: “And indeed! They ‘repaid’ and ‘rewarded’ us in ‘excess’... That is why, today the whole of our Cyprus, the whole of our Aegean sea, the whole of our Thrace, the whole of our Macedonia, is threatened...”³²

On Islam the priest expresses the stereotyped mentality shared by Orthodox fundamentalism with many Greeks throughout the political spectrum: if the West is a malevolent and ruthless ally, Islamic Turkey epitomises evil itself. His rhetoric is simple and effective. Just as the crusades were taken as typical of western

²⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 66.

³¹ Ibid., p. 67.

³² Ibid., p. 80.

Christianity, the most extremist Islamic irredentism is interpreted in fundamentalist logic as representing the whole of the Turkish people and the essence of their faith.³³

The archimandrite praises the restrained Greek way of treating enemies, and compares it with that of the “barbarian” Turks “who even in their Koran are talking about Greece’s annihilation.” He substantiates his contention with citing a poem which on the eve of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 appeared in the popular Turkish newspaper *Hurriyet*. It is entitled “Hatred” and says outright that only the ethnic cleansing of all Greeks will wash this hatred from the Turkish heart. Kilifis then extends the evil nature of Turks and Islam to the rest of Greece’s enemies and neighbours, Slavs, Bulgarians, Albanians, Skopjans, whom he brands as forgers of history. Other fundamentalist and extreme-Right voices having spoken of a uniform Balkan-Russian “Orthodox arrow”, Kilifis tarring Turks and Orthodox Slavs with the same brush came as a surprise to his fellow-fundamentalists.³⁴

The archimandrite’s book concludes with an urgent message: “It is absolutely necessary for Eternal Greece to wake up and gather around Hellenism and Orthodoxy in order not to be annihilated ... The biggest threats are our discord and our seeming indifference to the continuation of our glorious history... we must take draconian measures ... today; we seem to be living without roots, without ideals and without actions in proportion to our historical mission.”³⁵

³³ Ibid., p. 81.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 85.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 93.

4.3 The Impact of Fundamentalism on Contemporary Politics

4.3.1 Fundamentalism and the New Greek Right

Archimandrite Kilifis' book includes more than mere fundamentalist views on Greece's relations with other countries. In two appendices, he publishes a series of letters he sent to US president George Bush, EU president Jaques Delors, and Russian president Boris Yeltsin, in which he explicitly champions the "eternal verities" of Greek nationalism and irredentism, such as Greek superiority over the West, the inalienable Greekness of Asia Minor, Macedonia, Cyprus, Eastern Thrace, northern Epiros (southern Albania), etc. He does not hesitate to refer to FYROM's intention to request international recognition for the constitutional name "Republic of Macedonia" as utterly preposterous: "The Skopjans are described by all the ancient historians as barbarians and uncultured, having contributed nothing significant to the cultural history of the world, unlike the Greeks, who founded philosophy, science, arts and democracy."³⁶ The priest warns the EU president that a possible failure to comply with his message would have ominous consequences for the stability of the area: "...You would not wish to make such a historical mistake nor to commit such a crime against Greece."³⁷

While the open irredentism of such views is not particularly novel, their timing (when Greece was about to achieve full integration into the EU), and the choice of persons to whom they were addressed seem to reflect a new confidence in the internal legitimacy of nationalistic claims. The political underpinnings of such views would have been much more modest and contained had it not been for Christodoulos leadership and his political agenda. As we have seen (ch.3), the new Archbishop managed to transform relations between the Church and politics, and gave an entirely new meaning to the conceptualisation of contemporary Greek political culture.

Both his advocates and critics were agreed that the Archbishop's power made him, and through him the Church, into powerful political players. For the first time in modern Greek history the Church did not have to rely on the State but, as a department of public administration with the task of cementing national cohesion,

³⁶ Ibid., p.107.

³⁷ Ibid.

could claim relative autonomy from its traditional role. This same ideological mechanism of national cohesion now threatens the authority and legitimacy of the State in socio-cultural and foreign-affairs issues. In other words, Christodoulos has managed to challenge the government's pro-Europeanism and secularism, and to present the Church as a more popular representative of national interests than the State. The choice of "popular" instead of "legitimate representative" is deliberate, because so far there have been no serious signs of social disorder due to the State's pro-European strategy. However, the government is suffering deeply as a result of underestimating the Archbishop's ability to affect political outcomes.

Above all, in the person of Christodoulos the government has an evasive ideological critic who can inspire politicians from the Right, the Left, and the Centre and engage in a variety of alliances. In a sense he is a symbolical figure in the post-modernisation of Greek political culture in that he epitomises the rampant power of image and the importance of the mass-media while, by condensing the pertinency of culture and tradition, he transcends the old predominance of class and ideology.

The repercussions of this phenomenon on PASOK and the Left were examined earlier, but the natural recipient of fundamentalist ideas was and still is the Right. Christodoulos managed to reconcile the adverse reactions of right-wingers not inclined to fundamentalism, and his charismatic discourses present fundamentalist views as patriotic ideas of sovereignty and independence that are acceptable to all, even communists. The association of most of the Right with fundamentalism, references to the junta, anti-communism and the monarchy have become relatively unimportant now.

Christodoulos, instead of adopting a recalcitrant position towards western culture and having engineered an unprecedented upsurge of what we may call "Orthodox political culture", can actually claim a leading role in the process of Greece's integration into Europe. His acceptance by ever wider audiences may be partly attributed to slogans like "Greece, Europe, Orthodoxy", that are clearly designed to endorse Greece's position in Europe without any concessions towards "opening up" Orthodoxy in the integration process. Needless to say, this strategy entails some highly paradoxical and confusing consequences, already apparent in Greek public life.

The slogan “Greece, Europe, Orthodoxy” was originally launched as part of the Church campaign against the State intention to issue the new identity cards that would not mention sensitive personal information (religion, marital status, profession). The change from previous usage complies with the International Accord for Human and Civil Rights and aims at harmonising the Greek legal system with that of the EU. The Church’s stubborn refusal to endorse the measure has introduced a new type of cleavage between “patriots” and “anti-Greeks” and added yet further confusion to the inconsistencies in the country’s political culture. Moreover, the Church campaign and polemic against secular Europeanists is not conducted in a moderate and sober manner, but reinforces the profound role of cultural and political populism in Greek public life. (Indicative of this is the Church's campaign to collect over three million signatures petitioning against the new identity cards.)

The new civil-society dilemmas introduced during Christodoulos’ tenure of office found their warmest reception among the so-called new Greek Right. Having been raised by the populist and Manichean values of fundamentalism, nationalism and anti-communism, the “patriotic” Right is the most enthusiastic group among Christodoulos’ followers. The association between the Archbishop, fundamentalism, and the new Right was brought about by (i), the social unrest created by the massive influx of foreign immigration; (ii) public dissent with the austerity measures necessary for Greece to join the European Monetary Union; (iii) the cultural insecurity due to EU integration procedures (e.g. new identity cards); (iv) unresolved problems with Turkey, FYROM and Albania, coupled with EU and NATO reluctance to vindicate the Greek position; and (v) the anti-western and anti-Muslim sentiment that had penetrated Greek-Orthodox society following the role of NATO and Turkey in the defeat of Orthodox Serbia in the Bosnian and Kosovo wars.

The profound impact of the above parameters on Greece’s political culture, combined with the messianism of Christodoulos, resulted in an injection of fundamentalism into politics. This affected particularly the Right, and a rift between the liberal pro-European faction of New Democracy, and the party’s reactionary, xenophobic, and fundamentalist faction was inevitable.

4.3.2 *LAOS* and Karatzaferis – the Greek Haider?

The personality of former ND parliamentarian, television-channel owner, and party leader Karatzaferis, exemplifies the type of political outcomes following Christodoulos' fundamentalist advance. As a "child of the Right", Karatzaferis was disillusioned by the increasing discrepancy between the liberal/pro-European leadership of New Democracy, and the popular Right-wing values he and presumably the base of the party believes in. He therefore resigned from ND and formed a party of his own, the *Laikos Orthodox Synagermos* (Popular Orthodox Alert); the *LAOS* abbreviation of its Greek name means "people". He should not, however, be regarded as simply the leader of a small party, but is in fact the representative of the so-called radical-Right populism.³⁸ This political movement has gained growing success in western Europe (e.g. under Haider in Austria), and is best exemplified in Greece by Christodoulos and his political alliances that cut across the party spectrum. What is unique about Christodoulos therefore is that, in contrast to western chauvinism almost exclusively associated with the Right, he has managed to attract a large section of Greek society not necessarily belonging to the Right.

The main features of *LAOS* are anti-elitism, anti-Semitism, anti-intellectualism, populist majoritarianism, fundamentalist neo-pietism, and radical patriotism.

(i) Anti-elitism and overt anti-Semitism are grounded in suspicion and prejudice against leading members of local society who are indiscriminately deemed to be members of a global Zionist establishment. In his tv-show, Karatzaferis offers a graphic sample: "We live in a country run by Jews. The prime minister's grand father was Aaron Avouris. George Papandreou had a Jewish grandmother... the whole government is run by Jews."³⁹ Karatzaferis then identified more hidden Jews among his former party's leading members who are malevolently plotting against Orthodoxy and Hellenism. The *LAOS* leader similarly denounces parliament and all MPs as traitors and agents of the new order, the *Pax Americana*. He makes one single exception of Mr Papatthemelis, for whom he expresses admiration and to whom he extends an invitation to join the "Club of the Untouchables".

³⁸ Betz 1994.

³⁹ Telecity tv-channel, 24 May 2000.

(ii) Anti-intellectualism is the abomination of the so-called “oligarchy of *koultouriarides* and *kathegitades*” (derogatory names for intellectuals and professors respectively). Christodoulos and Karatzaferis share the conviction that the pro-European Greek intelligentsia has estranged itself from the people’s mores and values, and is responsible for cultural confusion, moral crisis and alienation from Orthodox roots.

(iii) Populist majoritarianism is the pseudo-democratic contention that it is legitimate to violate or ignore the human rights of a small minority in the name of the people's majority. This tyranny of the majority is typical of the Greek-Orthodox political culture's democratic deficit, and partly attributable to the Church-nation-State concept. The success of majoritarianism depends on fostering fundamentalist prejudices and stereotypes. In this respect, Karatzaferis and Christodoulos share a vested interest in disseminating pejorative popular beliefs and manipulating conventional wisdom through conspiracy theories about Jews, the Vatican and Muslims. For example, according to Karatzapheris, a wide range of developments and institutions, from the new identity cards to the EU itself, are essentially serving anti-Greek interests: “Who benefits from a Unified Europe and the New Order? The Jews and the Vatican. I can offer more than one example of the Vatican and Zionistic conspiracy against Greece. Karamanlis and Papandreou went together to a Masonic ark in Scotland. There they met with Cem, Holbrook and the rest of the Jewish pack. We are nothing more than puppets in the hands of Masons and Jews. The single currency, the new identity cards, the supranational authority of Brussels: these are the targets set by the Protocol of Zion two hundred years ago.”⁴⁰

(iv) Fundamentalist neo-pietism is the resurgence of religious dogmatism through a new wave of contemporary pietism that aims to impose theocratic rules for social behaviour. Karatzaferis saw in this movement a formidable opportunity to attract more votes and does what he can to support the political role of fundamentalist organisations. He has collaborated with members from the Greek-Orthodox Salvation Movement (*Ellinoorthodoxo Kinema Soterias, ELKIS*) by screening television debates to mobilise the masses against Schengen and other supposed threats.

(v) Radical patriotism is a term which may be applied to the new type of combined nationalism, xenophobia, and fundamentalism that coincides with the effort to

⁴⁰ Ibid., 29 May 2000.

eradicate such vies in a culturally, politically, and economically unified world. If “unity in diversity” is the cosmopolitan motto, radical patriotism juxtaposes it with its advocacy of charismatic leadership as well as racial and cultural purity.

His allegiance to Christodoulos was one of the basic parameters that prompted Karatzaferis to abandon ND and pursue an independent political course. Even as a ND member he urged to shift the party's orientation away from Eurocentric liberalism towards inward-looking political and cultural forces: “Why does ND not bring the people down to the streets to support Christodoulos? Adopt the Archbishop's line and your popularity will rise to 70%.”⁴¹

In the *LAOS* founding declaration, Karatzaferis did not hesitate to express his policy for racial purity: “For the Nation, the Faith, the Race and our Civilisational identity”.⁴² Two more details indicate the new party's ideological syncretism as well as its liaison with the Church. The first is, the party's logo, which consists of a red Byzantine circle, a blue Greek flag, Christian Cross and a laurel wreath symbolising the ancient glory. Secondly, the party's organisational structure does not follow the conventional style of having local committees, but the Church system of dioceses. Moreover, the party's first political propositions made a clear demand for more Church intervention in politics by proposing that it should be the synod's responsibility to appoint education ministers, and that Church universities should be established in every major city.

4.3.3 Fundamentalism and the New Archbishop

The election of Archbishop Christodoulos changed the status quo in Church-State relations, and initiated a new era of religious interference in politics. As a leading figure of the “patriotic” political and cultural force, Christodoulos has been using the Church's power to affect public opinion in several political issues such as foreign affairs and education. Although officially he expresses himself in favour of a more or less moderate strategy, he also endorses the uncompromising and fundamentalist views held by most of the members of the synod. As mentioned already, the fundamentalists are striving to undermine the government's efforts on key

⁴¹ Ibid., 25 May 2000.

⁴² Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 6 August 2000.

issues such as rapprochement with Turkey, educational reforms towards secularisation, and EU cultural integration.

The popular fundamentalist newspaper *Orthodoxos Typos* (Orthodox Press) went so far as to issue a pamphlet entitled *Ekklesia kai Kyvernisis* (Church and Government) about the disillusionment of the faithful with PASOK's policies. The pamphlet offered "enlightened intervention" and was distributed in all churches a few days before the national elections in April 2000.

The *Orthodox Press* described the government stance towards Orthodoxy as hostile and anti-Greek. In particular, the paper denounced the proposed introduction of non-religious funerals and cremation. It also objected to the education minister supporting the right of Muslims' to be educated according to their own values, and to the withdrawal of chapters from religious textbooks that describe certain new religious movements as "satanic cults serving anti-Greek interests."

In his capacity as synod secretary at the time of the military dictatorship, Christodoulos wrote a small book to commemorate the inaugural convocation of the new synod, where he praises the "national government" for helping the Church break free from traditional State patronage and bureaucracy and play a more important role in Greek Orthodox society.⁴³ As explained earlier, this effort to inculcate puritan, fundamentalist, and nationalistic values was a characteristic of the *Zoë* brotherhood's political strategy.

Even when democracy was restored in 1974 Christodoulos continued to profess his fundamentalist convictions. After PASOK took power in 1981 and proposed reforms for secularisation, Christodoulos in his capacity as bishop of Dimitriada collaborated with the fundamentalist organisation *Chrysopigi* in a series of articles entitled "Greek-Orthodox self-awareness". The purpose of the articles was to denounce the rapid westernisation of Orthodox society as Greece was preparing to join the EEC: "There is a systematic effort to undermine the very foundational principles of our nation ... the people's enemies [i.e. the State] do not find it necessary for a couple to give their children the father's surname, they legalised homosexuality, and corrupt our youth in night-clubs... [Moreover], instead of protecting the people and imposing severe punishments on those who try to alienate them from Greek-

⁴³ Paraskevaides 1972.

Orthodox culture, the State is curtailing us [the Church] and subjugating us to those who will benefit from our demise.”⁴⁴

Between 1999 and 2000 the fundamentalists campaigned very actively and effectively. Working hand in hand with the Archbishop and “patriotic” political forces, several fundamentalist groups managed to resist the government’s intentions on subjects such as the pope’s visit to Greece, and the right of Greek Muslims to build a mosque.

It was bishop Anthimos of Alexandroupolis, who expressed objection to the government's intention to build the first mosque in Athens,⁴⁵ where there is no place of worship for the approximately 300,000 Arab and Albanian Muslim immigrants living in the capital. International concern having been expressed in the matter, seeing that Athens will host thousands of Muslims at the 2004 Olympics, the government authorised the building of a mosque, but met with vociferous protests from the Church and politicians belonging to the patriotic faction. They argued that Turkey does not allow Greeks to build churches, and there is no need for Greece to make unilateral concessions to Muslims. Besides, they perceived the growing number of Muslim immigrants as a threat, because they might join forces with the Greek Muslim minority of Thrace and incite Turkey to additional claims. In several days of intense media debate, the human-rights argument was muzzled, Muslims became synonymous with Turks, and the government was forced to back down in the matter of building a mosque in Athens. Concerning the Pope’s visit to Greece, fundamentalist groups, mainstream politicians like Papathemelis (PASOK), Psomiades (ND) and Kanelli (Communist party) plus of course the higher clergy and synod, strongly disapproved, on the grounds of the papal role in issues ranging from theological differences, the sack of Constantinople during the crusades, proselytism, the slaughter of Serbs by Croats in World War II, the Vatican-Mussolini association, and the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The Pope became a *persona non grata* in Greece, and his visit was cancelled despite the official invitation the Greek President had delivered to him personally during his visit to the Vatican.

⁴⁴ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 31 July 2000.

⁴⁵ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 13 October 2000.

CHAPTER 5

THE NEO-ORTHODOX MOVEMENT

5.1 Historical and Theoretical Perspectives

5.1.1 The Generation of the 1930s, and the Origins of Neo-Orthodoxy

The subject of the so-called Neo-Orthodox movement is part of the wider framework of the ongoing debate in Greek political culture about westernisation. There is acute disagreement between the modernising and “patriotic” factions over whether and how to integrate the eastern Orthodox heritage into the predominantly western, secular, and supra-national culture of the EU. Although historically the debate rests on the ideological infrastructure of Greece’s culture since the period of the (neo)-Hellenic Enlightenment and the foundation of the independent Greek State,¹ the origins of Neo-Orthodoxy can be loosely associated with the intellectual movement of the 1930s.

The so-called generation of the 1930s may be understood as part of the broad intellectual struggle among Greeks to define and experience their ethnic identity in the context of modernisation. For the most part born after the turn of the century, this generation of writers and critics saw their formative years coincide with the Balkan wars and World War I, and they finished their university studies shortly after the defeat of the Greek army in Asia Minor. Two of the most important men, Seferis and Theotokas, were both *tourkomerites* (born on Turkish soil), who moved to Greece in 1914 and 1922 respectively in the massive influx of Greek immigrants from Asia Minor to mainland Greece as a result of the Greek army’s withdrawal. They began writing in the late 1920s, a period of great social change and rapid modernisation.

Theotokas’ 1929 manifesto *Free Spirit*, written near the end of a two-year stay in France and England, may be considered the opening shot of the new generation’s campaign against the established intellectual debate between the entrenched traditionalists and the Eurocentric modernists. Theotokas embraced a new kind of patriotism that eschewed nativistic worship of Greek folk culture, especially the adulation of Christian-Orthodox authors like Papadiamantis. He enjoined new writers to respond to present conditions as free-spirited individuals open to European influence but alive to current Greek realities. Their advocacy of individual freedom, Orthodox spirituality and humanism distinguished them from the socialist camp that

¹ See chapter 1 on Historical Background.

was starting to increasingly associate itself with Soviet communism. On the other hand, their cosmopolitan admiration of European intellectual tolerance and flexible thinking differentiated them from the conservative Europeanism expressed by the Greek Right. Their cultural logic, therefore, espoused its own brand of patriotism, either to placate the Right, or to counter the communist's internationalism, which they saw as a threat to the distinctiveness of Greek-Orthodox sensitivity and culture.

Theotokas put it like this: "We have pro-German, pro-French, pro-English, and pro-Muscovite intellectuals, as we also have purely native intellectuals attached to our narrow local traditions, but we do not have many Europeans. The European spirit presupposes understanding of the harmony of the European whole. Superiority belongs to the whole. The great value of this whole is that it has managed to unite all the contrasts within it into a higher synthesis."² He is making the point that while European regional differences are fused and harmonised within the European context of a shared culture, in Greece they are overemphasised. For Theotokas, Greeks do not have the intellectual tolerance or flexibility of European thinkers, nor do they readily accept dissent, being totally engrossed in dogma and absolutism. He argues that each nation aspires to transcend its national identity in order to discover its human essence within itself, and realises that only in a larger supra-national community can a higher degree of democracy and progress be achieved. Nationalism and narrow-mindedness are for him the enemies of humanism and the main obstacles to human development.

The term "Neo-Orthodoxy" was coined in 1983 in order to describe an unprecedented spiritual quest by some left-wing intellectuals. This was a highly unusual phenomenon among the traditional leftist intelligentsia of Greece, who considered Orthodoxy a reactionary, conservative, obsolete, and irrational element bound to disappear in the long run. Much like the generation of the 1930s, Neo-Orthodoxy wants to move beyond the conventionalism of the official Church towards a spiritual renewal, and has attempted to reconstruct the Orthodox discourse on the basis of its authentic and rich heritage which represents a modern Orthodox alternative to the crisis of the western culture.

In order to understand this quest it should be remembered that there was a widespread feeling in Greece at the time that the official Church was not fulfilling its mission to preserve the integrity of the eastern-Orthodox community. There were

² Carabott 1995.

several reasons for this: firstly, the Church's subjugation to and later alliance with the interests of the State whose attitude to the Church was mainly one of political expediency; secondly, the Church's ineffectiveness in proclaiming the Christian-Orthodox message to the people, its purely decorative role in dealing with social issues and its consequently waning social image and significance; thirdly, the Church's bureaucratisation, legalism, and despotism in handling religious and social issues in general, which obstructed the expression of the rich Orthodox spirituality and its relational, communal character; and fourthly, the Church's overall conservatism, in exchange for which the State supported the Church not only economically but also by granting it the customary honours.

Neo-Orthodoxy put renewed emphasis on the rich patristic tradition and on the Christian-Orthodox mystics of the Byzantine period, as well as on the liturgical heritage of the East. The fundamental features distinguishing the Orthodox culture from the Roman-Catholic and Protestant ones were also stressed. The Enlightenment legacy that had given rise to the modern western ethic was sharply criticised for curtailing the free spirit of classical spirituality within the iron cage of capitalism. The monasticism on Mount Athos was considered a culmination of personal freedom, an unpredictable, uncontrollable, anarchic way of life, beyond all rules, prescriptions and totalitarian patterns of the established Church and of the secular-capitalist way of life. The movement's broader influence today can be seen in the work of intellectuals such as Lorenzatos, Yannaras, Zuraris, Ramphos; artists such as Savopoulos and Mikroutsikos (who also served as a minister of culture and education), and politicians such as the former ministers Papathemelis and Tritsis.

They all put forward a pro-modernist affirmation of Hellenism, turning the general debate between tradition and modernity into one of East *versus* West, and so giving a moral-spiritual dimension to aesthetic, cultural, political and above all national concerns. Their cultural discourse – synthesising elements of classical philosophy, Byzantine theology, and Marxist politics – is intended to contribute to the resolution of the current identity crisis which, in their view, grew out of an arbitrary and incompatible modernisation of Greek culture.

5.1.2 Intellectual Personalities and Basic Conceptualisations

As Lorenzatos pointed out,³ western rationalism is in sharp contrast to the metaphysical tradition of eastern Christianity. True Greekness resides in the eastern tradition of community welfare and reciprocal personal relationships, and imitating the western prototype is an error to be paid for dearly. Lorenzatos contends that for western culture the belief in human emancipation that once held civilisation together has been blinkered by its stubborn adherence to rationalism and the exogenous force of utility logic. He juxtaposes this with the mystical tradition of eastern Orthodoxy with its focus on the endogenous power of the spirit.

Having characterised the essential feature of the West as “in crisis” and the essential feature of the East as the antithesis of the West, Lorenzatos explores the relationship in which modern Greece stands to these two poles, and sees her moving further and further away from herself – away, that is, from the East towards the West. The 1821 war of Independence marks the crucial moment when Greece becomes trapped in a western debate about her own Greekness and concurrently moves toward western cultural values. “Whatever was meant to remain alive from the Hellenic tradition was channelled intact into the Orthodox one and there it lives on to this day in another form. That which we call Greece, that which was spiritually viable and therefore survived Greek antiquity, is not to be found in the values of western Enlightenment ... but in the sanctuary of the Christian spirit as it was passed on in our Orthodox heritage.”⁴

An anti-modern, anti-western Neo-Orthodox revision of the concept of Hellenism is found in the recent works by Ramphos. In his *Transcendental Territory*,⁵ he describes the spiritual conflict experienced by Greece from late Byzantine to modern times as she staggers between East and West seeking her proper identity. Caught in the stagnant waters of a mired present, Greeks have become absorbed in aberrant philosophising: the “archaeology of identity”, the *Megali Idea* of resurrection (i.e. cultural classicism and irredentism), and the Enlightenment with its ideologies of power and rupture. As Ramphos explains it, the West has appropriated Hellenism in the spirit of technical prowess and positivism, and now the blighted dialogue between

³ Lorenzatos 1976.

⁴ See Metallinos 1987, pp. 87-163.

⁵ Ramphos 1996b.

Greeks and western scholars produces only spurious approaches to modern Hellenism, a “progressive” (modernising) imitation of western prototypes that responds to no living Greek reality, and the reactionary “traditionalist” inhalations of the “dusty greatness of the past”. As long as Greece remains severed from her tradition, Ramphos asserts, her forces will remain divided and her future uncertain. The real Greece is not the Greece of borders and monuments, but a “conceptual territory”. Ramphos’ conception of Orthodox Hellenism is “the Other” of the western World, the alternative. The Hellenism re-appropriated from the Enlightenment legacy is an impoverished Hellenism that has been reduced to a system of ideas bounded within a rationalistic-impersonal western State, but “the Other” of the western world is the oriental Byzantine-Orthodox Christianity which, according to Ramphos, was born in Greece, the way for it prepared by Aristotle’s metaphysics and Stoic thought.

The problem for Ramphos is how to recover an authentic Greek space in a world that de-Hellenises in the name of Hellenism, and when Enlightenment thought and rationalistic political, religious, or cultural forms dominate the world. He is trying to find a tentative explanation for the fate of the Orthodox tradition. For him, tradition is the space where the Greek communicates with a Hellenism already extant. Tradition is not a concept, but the space of history, communion with an idea that pre-exists. Tradition is the insertion of the present into a hardly perceptible pre-existing framework, the persistence of the past in the formation of the present. Its transubstantiation takes place wherever it is venerated and observed, whether by the monks of Mount Athos or by Orthodox believers anywhere, whether in pure or distorted form.

According to Ramphos’ Neo-Orthodox discourse therefore, it is the Orthodox soul with huge reserves of feeling and spirit at its disposal that resists the provocation of the West. The soul of the believing Orthodox Christian is the territory where a continuous and self-creating history unravels, giving a temporary location to the transcendental spirit of a single, unified ancient philosophical and Byzantine Orthodox tradition, and becoming the site for the formation of an authentically Hellenic territory. The individualistic western tradition was confronted unavoidably by the communal eastern culture imbued by the Orthodox tradition, which remained untouched at the bottom of the Greek soul and inhibited the road towards individualisation. Communalism does not signify an undifferentiated mass society,

but a society in which family, neighbourhood, companionship, clan, and community play an important role in the formation of a person's self-awareness – which is not at all the same as having no individual identity. Individual thinking and judgment must emancipate itself from the established truths of the group. Individuals must be able to express the integrity of truth, themselves, and not always rely on established general authorities and opinions. Otherwise, the clash between personalism and communalism can become an obstacle to social evolution.

In other words, it is possible to avoid the Scylla of egocentrism and the Charybdis of irresponsible, amorphous group living. The Greek nation, Ramphos argued, must find a new “Great Idea” similar to the one held until 1922, a new strategic goal in the face of her full integration into the EU and the world community. What Greece has to offer to the West is not some technical achievements, but a new mystique bringing everything together in an integral, holistic perspective and giving meaning to the ongoing fragmentation of the contemporary world. From an optimistic point of view, the problem of Greece's acculturation in the contemporary world should follow this path if the country wants to avoid its perpetual disorientation in modern times and find an equilibrium between its own tradition with its universal appeal, and the modern exigencies. Greece belongs neither to the West nor to the East, but constitutes a point of convergence between them.⁶

According to Yannaras, an analysis of eastern Christianity must begin with Orthodox anthropology and the concept of personhood as developed in theology. The notion of personhood is critical to understanding how Orthodox doctrine is relevant to the emphasis on public community and pluralism as constituent aspects of civil society. The defining features of personhood are “relationality” (being in communion) and “dynamism” (growth). Personhood is experienced and realised only through the individual's relationship with others: “Man is an existential fact of relationship and communion.”⁷

Both in contrast to the authoritative Roman-Catholic culture and the Protestant ethic of individualism, the Orthodox doctrine is axiomatically concerned with the individual as part of the social community, which is the public realm of civil society.

⁶ See Ramphos 1990, Ramphos 1994, and Ramphos 1996.

⁷ Yannaras 1984.

An equal emphasis on *dynamis* or growth complements communalism and contributes to full personhood. Just as the eastern-Orthodox conception of personhood as relational and dynamic (i.e. context-sensitive and culturally specific) is not inherently incompatible with emphasis on the public sphere and the social collectivity of civil society, so the affirmation of personhood and freedom underscores a potential compatibility between eastern-Christian political culture and the pluralist dimension of civil society.

Yannaras clearly attempts here to refute the shared contention among modernists that the inward-looking Orthodox culture is incompatible with the Enlightenment legacy of pluralism and welfare democracy. The very dynamism that grows out of the individual's participation in the community is driven by the freedom that constitutes the essential mode of existence for each individual. Eastern-Christian doctrine assigns primacy to freedom as the condition reflecting an entire range of possibilities for personhood. Without freedom, personhood is unattainable. Personhood presumes the individual's conscious decision, by free choice and grace, to transform himself and the temporal community into the image of divine Christian benevolence. Freedom and conscious choice as the primary conditions of personhood also imply a distinctiveness that rejects the ordering of human existence according to putative universal objectives negating choice.

As Yannaras explains, communion or society (personal relationships which make up a living community) cannot possibly come into being when truth is an objective datum; when there are no specifically personal approaches to the truth to permit the distinctiveness and freedom of the person. By refuting the exclusive correlation between democracy and rationalism, Yannaras has sought to pave the way for an Orthodox route to prosperity and democracy. This was a part of the ancient Greek tradition that survived in the Byzantine ethos as a radical hierarchy of life's priorities. In Byzantium the political and administrative hierarchy was justified only to the extent that it created a true society of personal relations through the correct ranking of human priorities. The ancient Athenian concept of democracy survived in the Byzantine imperial administration as a form of politics that aimed at the attainment of truth and of authentic life, not of some utilitarian or conventional needs. Truth in ancient Greece and Byzantium was not a preconceived ideology, but an immediate empirical reality. The Greek and Byzantine understanding of religion was

a holistic attempt to find the essence of being, and to look for truth in communion with others rather than in a utilitarian, individualistic satisfaction of fragmented religious needs.

Yannaras states that it was Orthodoxy that, through the social dynamics of Christian Eucharistic fellowship,⁸ formed the communal way of Greek life in Byzantium over a span of a thousand years. Byzantium exhibited major differences from the western medieval societies under the deep class cleavages of feudalism; they were religious too, but lacked the Byzantine social and personalistic ethos. Byzantine civilisation was the individual road to a truth never transformed into an object that can be “verified”, controlled and manipulated by various authorities. These presuppositions differed radically from those developed in the West after the late Middle Ages (e.g. intellectualism, rationalism, objectification of truth), and had disparate social consequences. Byzantium, at times, had a strong centralised administration, but was never a totalitarian State. There was often great accumulation of wealth, but no capitalism. There was also no feudalism in Byzantium, for feudalism was imported from the West by the Ottoman Empire in the 17th century, in the wake of its economic dependency on western interests and the deterioration of its social structures. From the 14th century onwards, Yannaras argues, there has been a wholesale attempt to westernise the East, which finally resulted in the estrangement of the Orthodox peoples from their heritage, and signified the gradual penetration of western intellectualism, rationalism and utilitarianism into the Greek *milieu*.

Yannaras even goes so far as to say that, aside from apparent differences and conflicts, western political culture in its content and goals more resembles the Islamic than the authentic and undistorted Greek tradition. This also explains, in his opinion, western countries today “flirting” with Islamic ones (e.g. Turkey) to the detriment of Greek interests.

The Greek-Orthodox alternative to the western paradigm of social relations can be found in the autonomous village communities which preserved Orthodox sensitivity and real solidarity among the people, and paid as much attention to their spiritual as to their material welfare. It is these communities that represented the transformation of the communal ideals of Orthodoxy into reality, social praxis and justice, and allowed the cohesiveness, but not the differentiation, of the various social

⁸ See ch. 6.5 on the implications of this for today’s adherents to Christian-Orthodoxy.

strata. Communalism thereby became the way the Greek-Orthodox nation continued to exist, with foundations that were not rational or economic, but spiritual and Orthodox.

Like Byzantium, Yannaras argues, modern Greece lies at the crossroads between East and West. Although influenced by both, it retains its specificity and otherness. Modern Greeks should not feel inferior to the West, because they are in fact equal partners who can contribute a fresh cultural proposition concerning the meaning of existence and life, the correct ranking of life's priorities and needs, and the value of communal, social relations. Greeks, due to their long and rich heritage, have always had a certain sense of nobility. They have represented an aristocracy in the literal meaning of the term; they have known what holds priority in life, and have had a sense of measure.

In contrast, the Greek State constructed by the Bavarians and perpetuated by the westernised political elite is totally irrelevant to the actual needs, idiosyncrasy, and potential of modern Greeks. Here, according to Yannaras, lies the reason why the narrow-minded Greek State, manifesting the most decisive shrinkage of Hellenism in history, is dogged by misfortune. The Eurocentric ideology has led the country to understand the ancient Greek past as it is presented by the West, with no relation at all to Byzantium. Western humanism and the Enlightenment, which intended to transform the subjugated Greeks into direct heirs of the ancient Greek heritage, had also attempted this. Yet the encounter between Hellenism and Christianity (despite their conflicts) was a practical achievement, not a theoretical one, and it gave birth to a new civilisation which survives today in the worship, the language, and the people's customs.

While belonging to a community exclusively in terms of Orthodox eschatology may indeed constrain the possibilities for social transformation in purely pluralist terms (according to the western prototype), such reasoning fails to recognise that the choice for communion and growth involves respect for the undeniable freedom of each individual to choose a distinctive way of life. Insofar as pluralism rests on respect for and toleration of a multiplicity of interests and ideas, then the Orthodox emphasis on the individual's free will – on choice as a consequence of respect for oneself and others – is not inconsistent with the pluralist dimensions of civil society and democracy. According to Yannaras, therefore, policy makers should

not ignore the potential of Orthodoxy's emphasis on freedom, community, and choice as values compatible with a democratic culture.⁹

For Zouraris, another proponent of Neo-Orthodoxy, the enduring persistence of Greek Orthodoxy is evident in the apophatic reasoning in all domains today, from theology to politics. Zouraris applied his hermeneutic scheme to all periods of Greek history as we know about them from ancient Greek, patristic Byzantine, and modern texts and forms of life. What then are the distinguishing features of Greek-Orthodox ways and thought? First of all, truth was never objectified in rigid, set and unchanging definitions within iron-cast systems of intellectual reasoning as happened in the West, but was always defined approximately – on the basis of “almost”, “about”, “more or less”, *peripou*. Avoidance of tyrannically exacting definitions then enabled the Greeks to develop a special understanding of all situations as a fluid mixture between two antitheses. For example, good and evil are not two absolutely distinct categories, but coexist in every case. This coexistence implies the close entanglement of antithetical conditions which nevertheless always retain their individual character, a mutual penetration of conflicting states, rather than a synthesis or new creation. Finally, progress for humanity is not linear but cyclical, with both change and immobility coexistent. So each new situation means not only that earlier problems have been overcome or completely solved, but itself consists of positive and negative aspects and consequently presents new challenges. In Greek-Orthodox thought, politics does not and cannot solve problems definitively, but every new situation is subject to limitations and deadlocks.

In Zouraris' view it was these flexible presuppositions that helped Greeks to avoid the impasse created by the serious discrepancy between western progressive ideas with their absolute systems of thought, and their tragic failure to deliver the promise of emancipation. On the other hand, Greek apophatism, complemented by the virtue of discretion, of a person-centred sense of responsibility, fosters forbearance and indulgence in both theory and practice. Through interpersonal relations and handling contradictory situations on the basis of the aforementioned humble approach, Greeks avoid the pressures inherent in impersonal and authoritarian social

⁹ For a summary of Yannaras' ideas see Makrides 1996.

prescriptions aimed at eschatological happiness, and consequently also a sense of guilt when such granite precepts fail to bear fruit.

Greek disorderly behaviour and social disarray, as well as the modernisation deficits (e.g. in productivity and administration) can be accounted for in this way. According to Zouraris, Greece can never simulate other westernised modern States, for it cannot be subject to some imported reform program for creating a uniform rather than bipolar social system. Greek politicians without any understanding of the persistence of Greek-Orthodox thought, who attempted the wholesale modernisation of the country, in fact facilitated western dominance over the Greek nation. Yet Greeks belong neither to the West nor to the East; they have a distinct idiosyncrasy and a concomitant proposal for life, which must be preserved at any cost, and used as a catalyst in the European Union.¹⁰

5.1.3 Neo-Orthodoxy and Political Culture: From Marxism to Patriotism

The unofficial dialogue between Orthodoxy and Marxism/communism which began in the early 1980s has prompted several commentators to describe Neo-Orthodoxy as a liberation theology in the Greek style.¹¹ The dialogue was a marginal one to start with, with little outside appeal except for university students (for instance the *EXON* Greek Christian-Orthodox Socialist Youth), and neither the official Church, the State, nor the political parties supported it. It met with negative reaction from other Orthodox as well as political and intellectual circles, and began to fade in the late 1980s. The Orthodox-Marxist dialogue bore no fruit at all and was abandoned even before the collapse of communism in eastern Europe.

However, due to the radical changes in eastern Europe after 1989, which contributed to a considerable revival of Orthodoxy, there was renewed interest in it also in Greece during the 1990s. As a result Neo-Orthodoxy was incorporated into a generally positive appreciation of the Orthodoxy-nation concept, and its potential was reassessed more positively than in the past. In recent years, some Neo-Orthodox thinkers have taken a leading role in the quest for a fresh understanding of what it

¹⁰ For a summary of Zouraris' ideas see Makrides 1996.

¹¹ Liberation theology is a term coined to describe the involvement of certain Latin-American priests and theologians in the socialist revolutionary movements of their countries. See Clement 1985, pp. 69-71.

means to be Greek and Christian-Orthodox in the contemporary world. They see the revival of Orthodoxy as an all-encompassing scheme, as a meaningful and attractive Greek way of life for facing the challenges of the world system. For this reason some outsiders, have dubbed them Hellenocentric as opposed to Eurocentric intellectuals. In that way the movement transcended its religious boundaries and came to the attention of people who previously had little or no interest at all in Orthodoxy.

The bond that unifies the Neo-Orthodox is their patriotic opposition to enthusiastic westernisers, reactionary traditionalists and Orthodox hard-liners, as well as ignorant moderates. They see the so-called progressive Greek intelligentsia and political establishment as shortsightedly unable to discern the wealth of Greece's own tradition and heritage, and so perpetuating the country's disorientation in today's global environment. They themselves view and interpret the Greek-Orthodox history, politics, and culture introspectively, not based on imported western ideological presuppositions and objectives.

In order to legitimise their radical patriotism and participate in the ongoing debate concerning EU cultural integration, the Neo-Orthodox cite the enduring persistence of the Hellenic base under the Greek presence that owes nothing to western influences. They do not pretend an uninterrupted continuity of ethnic Hellenism over a span of 3000 years, but seek to highlight what are the features of the Greek identity that have contributed to this durability, differences and discontinuities notwithstanding. Neo-Orthodoxy rejects as superficial the conventional nationalist discourse of the "Helleno-Christian civilisation", and considers the harmonious relationship and union between Christianity and Hellenism that is embraced both by both Church and State as misleading and merely serving ideological goals and political expediencies.

Their ultimate objective is to pull the Greek political culture out of its present stagnation and orientation crisis by suggesting radical and realistic solutions based on the inherent dynamism in the Greek-Orthodox ecclesiastical tradition, and inviting the Church to play a more meaningful and dominant role in present-day society. The current crisis can be brought to an end only by a dramatic shift in orientation both in the realm of ontological concerns (the individual's existential struggle against the spiritually impoverishing and alienating ethic of capitalism), and in that of the collective consciousness (political, national and cultural sovereignty). A prerequisite

for this is to realise that Hellenism should not be confined in geographical borders, because it ultimately consists of a specific way of life.¹²

The movement underscores the Orthodox tradition of communal life structured around reciprocal interpersonal relations. This signifies freedom from prescribed laws and static patterns of rational human action, as can be observed in the local communities during the long period of Ottoman occupation as well as in the coenobite tradition of Mt Athos monasticism.¹³ By opposing western rationalism through the promotion of an apophatic understanding of truth or order as a communal, participational and non-utilitarian achievement founded on the ancient Greek and Byzantine-Orthodox tradition, the Neo-Orthodox challenge the inferiority complex of modern Greeks in order to restore the nation's aristocratic genealogy. This heritage entails a cosmopolitan universalism radically different from the imperialistic logic of western globalism. It implies also a specific mission in the contemporary world to provide solutions to dealing with the pernicious global influences and political deadlocks of the western world. This does not mean a wholesale rejection of the west. Rather, it intends a fruitful and symmetrical interaction with it in every domain by preserving the Greek-Orthodox otherness and offering an alternative way of life to that of the West's cultural imperialism.¹⁴

The reasons for the Neo-Orthodox shifting their emphasis from mainly theoretical and theological matters in the 1980s to a radical political patriotism in the 1990s should be understood in relation to the deep identity crisis and orientation problems of modern Greeks. This dilemma in civil society was intensified by the processes of EU integration and globalisation. Opposition to a mainly western and secular supra-European culture, and the socio-historical circumstances of the 1980s can be considered as the starting point for this gradual modification of the movement's political logic. The socialist rise to power in 1981 prompted several Neo-Orthodox to search for a road to socialism that is based on indigenous traditional elements (e.g. the autonomous local communities under Ottoman rule) instead of on mechanistically imitated imported western patterns. The attempt to found Greek

¹² See Yannaras 1998b, and Yannaras 1992.

¹³ See Metallinos 1988, pp. 113-122.

¹⁴ See Yannaras 1997, Yannaras 1998a, and Ziakas 1998.

socialism on western atheism and materialism, rather than on the eastern coenobite and communal tradition, was also criticised.¹⁵

This was more than a naive attempt to affect political outcomes, being followed by a much more active intervention facilitated by certain socio-historical and geopolitical circumstances of the 1990s. The first and foremost was the escalation of nationalism as a result of the Macedonian question as well as the geopolitical antagonism between Greece and Turkey. As we shall see later, such apparently political issues were perceived in the Greek political culture as conflicts in which religion and culture play a pivotal role. In this context the Neo-Orthodox movement sought to form alliances with powerful politicians, civil society groups, media barons, and the clergy to boost patriotic awareness. Concerning its involvement in the internal political polarisation and cleavage between the “patriots” and the modernists, here again an essentially political debate on how Greece should pursue her institutional and cultural modernisation came to involve civil-society groups and the media.

5.2 Orthodoxy versus a Supra-National Culture

5.2.1 Ethnic Identity and Politics

During the 1990s Greece’s political orientation shifted from Papandreou’s Eurosceptic socialism to Simitis’ Europhile modernisation, and this shift brought the country’s present political cleavage and intellectual polarisation between inward-looking patriotic factions and outward-looking modernists. Among major issues being debated were social dissatisfaction with the government’s austerity policy required for Greece joining the Economic and Monetary Union, and whether EU political and cultural integration was the best way to pursue Greece’s interests *vis-à-vis* the “national issues”. The old class-based ideological dichotomy between Left, Right, and Centre is increasingly affected by a new “civilisational” dimension that cuts across the political spectrum and brings alliances between old enemies over whether or not Greece should follow the Brussels directives.

In this turbulent atmosphere of political and cultural disorientation, certain Neo-Orthodox personalities enjoying unprecedented popularity had risen to powerful

¹⁵ See Kolmer 1982, pp. 19-21.

positions in the “patriotic” struggle against Simitis’ modernisation (see 5.3). This section focuses on the Neo-Orthodox positions regarding democratisation (e.g. Church-State separation), secularisation (e.g. reforms in education), and the prospects for the Greek-Orthodox identity in the EU’s attempt to forge a supranational culture.

When attempting to assess the Neo-Orthodox position on the above subjects it must be clarified that the movement’s ideology does not lend itself easily to analysis, because it posits an entirely new cultural logic designed to discredit the established ideological frameworks as parochial and obsolete. For example, although on certain matters (e.g. irredentism and national issues) Neo-Orthodoxy’s radical patriotism and the extreme Right’s chauvinist nationalism are very similar, it would be wrong to expect a consistent overlapping of interests in other areas (e.g. reforms in education). Neo-Orthodoxy is actually diametrically opposed to the conventional ideology of nationalism as it has grown out of Enlightenment rationalism: “The nationalist States in the Balkans are responsible for the disintegration of the multi-ethnic Orthodox ecumenicism, the uprooting of native populations from their ancestral lands, and the horrific genocide associated with the horrors of ethnic and religious cleansing.”¹⁶

Yannaras goes further and rejects the ideological manipulation of the connection between Christian Orthodoxy and Hellenism, traditionally treated by the Right as the backbone of Greek ethnic identity: “Look around you and see how Orthodoxy today is treated as an element of ‘ethnic homogeneity’. For most of us modern Greeks ecclesiastical tradition has nothing to do with its spiritual essence of giving meaning to life and death. Sterile imitation of the fusion between Christianity and politics in the west (i.e. Christian Democrats) gave us the dictators’ tragic slogan ‘Greece of Christian Greeks’... as a result, whoever dares today to advocate the paradigm of the Greek ecclesiastical tradition is automatically stigmatised as a ‘nationalist’, ‘Neo-Orthodox’, ‘anti-European’, or even a ‘neo-fascist’.”¹⁷

What, then, is Neo-Orthodoxy’s elusive political logic? Although its radical patriotism includes none of the conventional cultural strategies of relations between Greece and Europe (Eurocentrism, nationalism, etc.) it seems to appreciate the challenge of EU integration. Yannaras says: “There are westernised Greek-Orthodox fundamentalists whose Helleno-Christianity is a typically nationalist ideology. Their

¹⁶ Yannaras 1996, pp.18-19.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.20.

perception of Greekness and Orthodoxy is totally western, despite their claims of fighting against the west and the European Union. On the other hand our 'progressive' intelligentsia, this naive mixture of leftist internationalism and an Enlightenment of the Greek kind, observes with panic the provincial misery of the Greek State and asserts that only through unconditional Europeanisation can we reach a level of elementary reliability... Greek identity is not jeopardised in the context of a supra-national Europe simply because it ceased to exist at a collective level. Bavarian bureaucracy and the legacy of the Greek Enlightenment have institutionalised the Greek State's cultural alienation. They failed to make us 'Europeans' and here we are, left estranged from both Europe and what used to be a Greek way of life, a laughable derivative of omnivorous consumerism and narcissistic arrogance about our ancestral aura."¹⁸

Having rejected the two main poles of antagonism, Yannaras then explains why the challenge of political and cultural integration with Europe is necessary for the future of Greek identity. His belief is based on the firm Neo-Orthodox conviction that cultural identity forms the backbone of politics, inasmuch as it shapes the particular character of political decision-making in a given national context: "Since Greece has joined the EEC we have been obsessed by the prospect of rising to the same level as the flamboyant European idols of our admiration. Without being aware of it, this decision entailed an extremely valuable unintended consequence. We made the right choice not because Europe is our natural space, nor because Greece is the cradle of civilisation that gave birth to Europe. Beneath that populist rhetoric lies the inevitable consequence of the European challenge, a count-down that will determine whether we shall survive and integrate our Greek-Orthodox identity into the European 'unity in diversity', or witness the final demise and pseudo-westernisation of Hellenism."¹⁹

Yannaras considers that the Greek ethnic identity's estrangement and alienation is due to its deep inferiority complex versus western achievements: "The European challenge embodies a vitally important dilemma: either Greece becomes a miserable European province, or a cultural super-power ... there is no middle way... Greece cannot exist unless she offers her civilisational alternative and teaches Europe

¹⁸ Ibid., p.21.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.22.

how Orthodox Hellenism can challenge the deep spiritual and social crisis of the west.”²⁰

Moving beyond a strictly spiritual critique of the west, Neo-Orthodoxy’s cultural logic underscores the importance of ethno-religious identity in such diverse issues as the Greek State’s economic deficit, the inadequacy of its welfare institutions, the under-development of Greece’s civil society, and the clientelistic/corrupt nature of the professional and political establishments. As the movement is becoming more positively appreciated by a growing section of Greek society and can now claim proponents from the political Left, Right, and Centre, the modernists are accusing the Neo-Orthodox of undermining society’s rational modernisation and perpetuating conservatism.

Yannaras has reversed the charge and accusing the modernists of political shortsightedness due to having been estranged, “de-Hellenised”: “Conservatism is to close your eyes to the fact that for the past 170 years we have been desperately trying and failing to become Europeans. Have they not been properly educated in the modern values of Euro-American rationalism, all those Greek premiers who got Ph.D.’s and taught in leading western universities, only to return home in order to consolidate and enhance the status quo of populism? Did our internationally acclaimed economists and Ministers of Finance ignore western rationalism when they plunged our economy into black holes and huge deficits? What we are objecting to is the prolonged antagonism between State and society. The Greek State is foreign, irrelevant to the needs and sensitivities of our society. Structures, institutions, organisations and systems have all been imposed from above and do not correspond to our needs. They were imported and enforced by the Bavarian monarchy and are still maintained by a de-Hellenised, myopic political leadership.”²¹

With regard to concrete suggestions or reforms for the “re-Hellenisation” of the Eurocentric Greek State, Neo-Orthodoxy is quite careful not to offer solutions that are based on the secular grand narratives of emancipation (neo-Marxism, neo-liberalism, etc.): “There are no fixed recipes for bridging the gap between the citizen and the State. We must put aside all ideologies and revitalise the ways of our collective survival during the 3,500 years of Hellenism’s historical course. Beneath

²⁰ Ibid., p.23.

²¹ Ibid., p.24.

the ephemeral solutions of political decision-making lies the existential quest of identity. The Greek-Orthodox identity always reflected our heterogeneity, a mutually inclusive relationship with both the West and the East. Especially today this quest for heterogeneity is crucial to our future prospects.”²²

5.2.2 Neo-Orthodoxy and Huntington’s Civilisation Paradigm

Samuel Huntington’s civilisation paradigm has generated enormous interest in Greece and stirred up heated debates about whether or not he is right to position Orthodoxy and Greece on the non-western, non-democratic civilisational fault line.²³ Huntington bases his argument on the fact that Greece had no original experience of the defining historical phenomena of western civilisation: western Christianity, Scholasticism, Feudalism, the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment. In addition, all of the distinctive features of western civilisation (the classical legacy, separation of Church and State, rule of Law, social pluralism, representative bodies, individualism) have been imported from the west and imposed rather formalistically on Greek Orthodox culture. Huntington provides a clear-cut and convincing answer to the puzzle exercising West-Europeans: “Greece is not part of Western Civilisation, and despite being the geographical location of classical civilisation and intimately entwined with the West... (Greece) is also an anomaly, the Orthodox outsider in western organisations. It has never been an easy member of either the EU or NATO and has had difficulty adapting itself to the principles and mores of both.”²⁴

As Huntington’s ideas were becoming increasingly cited in the US and EU’s “Balkanist” policy-making during the Bosnian war and Greece’s support for Orthodox Serbia, the Greek public sphere responded in a vociferously defensive manner that reflected the eminent confusion about the country’s role in the West. In this climate of embarrassment Neo-Orthodoxy was perhaps alone in welcoming Huntington’s assertions, given that they confirm the movement’s views about the incompatibility between Orthodox culture and the Greek State’s western orientation: “As modern Greeks we should feel deeply grateful to Huntington. His challenge is quite a useful

²² Ibid., p.25.

²³ For a more detailed evaluation of Huntington’s ideas, see Chapter 7, Conclusion.

²⁴ Huntington 1996, pp. 162-63.

one. Can you imagine our ‘progressive’ intelligentsia’s astonishment when a widely acclaimed western commentator asserts that Orthodoxy is the definitive Greek characteristic determining the country’s place in the international political arena? So a marginalised or completely ignored factor, one we have desperately tried for 170 years to undermine as a secondary folkloric resource, is treated by a western scholar as our identity’s quintessential element.”²⁵

Both Huntington and Yannaras are agreed, therefore, that the persistence of Orthodox culture and Greece’s absence from the constitutive historical and intellectual features of western civilisation are pertinent to the country’s slow pace of modernisation. But whereas Huntington correlates Orthodoxy with an extensive democratic deficit, Yannaras conversely asserts that such shortcomings emanate from arbitrary modernisation and the Greek establishment’s stubborn adherence to the West.

For Yannaras, the difference between the Greek case and Huntington’s “Procrustean etiquettes” of fundamentalist or “torn countries”²⁶ is that Orthodoxy’s resurgence is neither theocratically imposed from above, nor reactionary popular traditionalism: “In this respect, Huntington’s paradigm is somewhat simplistic... Since the time of King Otto the profound Eurocentrism of the country’s intellectual and political establishment has had the consent of most Greeks. Nevertheless, repeated modernisation projects failed to instill the values and mores of western civilisation. So, despite their nominal political convictions, Orthodox Greeks find it very difficult to come to terms with rationalism, individualism, and the other western ethical principles. There is obviously an unconscious process at work manifesting the contradiction between what they profess and what they really are.”²⁷

The only way out of this is to recognise what lies at the root of the contradiction. Greeks should both deconstruct the reasons for their stubborn insistence on becoming veritable westerners, and reconstruct what it means to live life as an Orthodox: “Recognition of our civilisational identity will simultaneously resolve the apparent incongruity and the cleavage between politics and culture in Greece; being

²⁵ Huntington *et al*, 1998 p.167.

²⁶ See Chapter Seven (Conclusion).

²⁷ Huntington *et al*, 1998, p.170.

conscious of your identity means to become aware of the things that really matter to you, and to act accordingly.”²⁸

According to Metallinos, at the same time that Huntington is marginalizing Orthodoxy and Islam, the West embarks on merging its minor cultural differences so as to present a homogeneous Euro-American Christian superpower. This is to say that, parallel to a process of institutional-geopolitical integration, the west is forging an anthropological-ontological integration at supra-national, Euro-American level. For Metallinos this undermines the integrity of the one Orthodox culture in the EU and NATO by virtue of according the pope the privilege of being the chief spiritual representative of its cosmopolitan vision: “This new Euro-American anthropological model does not include us ... culturally we belong to the East ... in our case cultural integration leads to an inevitable civilisational holocaust, to a homogenisation of the European whole in which Orthodoxy was the only alternative voice for a more spiritual, and less individualistic existence ... Make no mistake, the *Pax Americana* today leads to a new *Pax Romana* with the pope and Bill Clinton walking hand in hand.”²⁹

Rather than rejecting unification *in toto*, Metallinos concludes that Orthodoxy can contribute its communitarian-spiritual alternative to the new order that has succeeded the grand narratives of emancipation and capitalism’s post-modern crisis: “Seeing that Amitai Etzioni and many others put forward a western communitarianism as the only viable social ethic after the collapse of communism and the post-industrial crisis of capitalism,³⁰ I believe the time has come for us to disseminate our Orthodox spiritual communalism. The Orthodox community model is the most perfect communism in history – a spiritual communism, not a materialistic one.”³¹

Huntington’s civilisation paradigm, therefore, confirms Neo-Orthodoxy’s conviction that there is antagonism and incompatibility between the Orthodox side of the Greek identity, and the EU’s attempt to forge a supra-national western culture: “It is one thing to feel Greek in Europe, and quite another to feel European in Greece. By

²⁸ Ibid., p.171.

²⁹ Elmazis 1998, pp. 34-35.

³⁰ Compare Tony Blair’s, “Back to basics!”

³¹ Ibid., p.37.

cultivating integration at the expense of our cultural sovereignty, EU internationalism presents a threat. Behind the EU's discourse on cultural pluralism and tolerance lies an organised attempt to de-Hellenise the very fabric of the Greek nation. So the Greek State is obliged to comply with Brussels directives giving equal status to several minorities on Greek soil that are diametrically opposed to our spiritual tradition. From marginal ideologies in Greece the Jehovah's Witnesses, Protestants, and Catholics are now promoted to the same Greekness as Orthodoxy. This condominium logic makes a mockery of Hellenism...."³²

Neo-Orthodoxy sees the future as bleak because it considers that we are witnessing the final stage of the disintegration of Hellenism: "Legal-formal acquisition of the Hellenic identity should not be confused with the spiritual one. Historically and spiritually all Greeks are Orthodox. But the confusion of spiritual and formal/nominal Hellenic identity, and its equation with a variety of foreign ideologies and subcultures, have contributed to Hellenism's alienation and spiritual demise."³³

5.2.3 Neo-Orthodoxy and Human Rights

The human-rights question exemplifies the idiosyncratic logic by which Neo-Orthodoxy approaches socio-political issues. The notion of human rights reflects how the post-Enlightenment paradigm of modernity informs individual and collective identities. The rights of the individual are considered a fundamental, natural presupposition for the realisation of a free and democratic society. Neo-Orthodoxy devotes much of its discourse to refuting the association between the exercise of individual rights (freedom) and a rational-meritocratic society (truth). Yannaras argues that priority of the individual over collective rights is an important factor in today's crisis of modernity. "The [western] interpretation of rights through an individual-centred utility logic institutionalises and unleashes a dynamic that disintegrates society."³⁴

The same Orthodox features that Huntington identified as a clear indication of a "human-rights deficit" Neo-Orthodoxy celebrates as forms of resistance to the alienating modern ethic of individualism – by giving priority to interpersonal relations

³² Metallinos 1987, p.37

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Yannaras 1998a, p.8.

over meritocracy, and the inability to integrate with impersonal organisational structures or with rationalistic productive relations. Neo-Orthodoxy's political ideology of radical patriotism must be seen as a variant of nationalism that places collective-majority rights above individual-minority ones. "The patriotic criteria are axiomatically subjective and partisan. Through the compatriots' privileged treatment, patriotism does away with the undifferentiated version of a natural, de-contextualised human agency of universal rights. This logic of national self-protection bears the inevitable consequence of marginalising or completely ignoring the rights of non-nationals."³⁵

Compared to a nationalist ideology from a Protestant or a Catholic background, (neo-)Orthodox radical patriotism is, according to Yannaras, not ideological-totalitarian, but ontological-anarchic: "Orthodox patriotism insists on an existential-ontological, rather than an ideological-pietistic social affirmation."³⁶ For Yannaras, the pejorative anti-Orthodox discourse of the West corresponds to no living Orthodox reality; it is the secular nation(alist) State, rather than Orthodoxy, that manipulates religious symbolism, and institutionalises Orthodox patriotism for the State's own geopolitical expediency. Historically, he concludes, Orthodoxy was always much more ecumenical and tolerant than the Protestant and Catholic cultures which, despite their contemporary facade of "supra-national political correctness", not only gave birth to chauvinist nationalism but were actually responsible for some of the worst atrocities ever committed against humanity.

Neo-Orthodoxy claims that it is erroneous and misleading to go on using the criteria of western rationalism and individualism to assess human rights in the Orthodox political culture. For Yannaras, Greek modernists doing so have caused a kind of cultural schizophrenia, so that the country vacillates between trying to overcome latent Orthodox predispositions and combining a nationalist/irredentist religious discourse with a Eurocentric modernisation project. This has resulted in a flamboyant if naively narcissistic enthusiasm for the Byzantine and classical era (in which modern Greeks are poorly educated) and an inferiority complex *vis-à-vis* western development.

³⁵ Ibid., p.154.

³⁶ Ibid., p.159.

The Neo-Orthodox cure for the present malaise prescribes resisting the hegemonistic western “new world order”. Such opposition is dictated by our alternative, spiritual needs rather than simply another rationalistic and impersonal ideology of emancipation: “An Orthodox Christian who does not comply with the individualistic, pietistic, and ideological western criteria only confirms the menace identified by Huntington... not because Orthodoxy is incompatible with the values of tolerance, pluralism and human rights, but rather because the person-centred³⁷ and communal Orthodox priorities reflect a universal need for a more meaningful and spiritual quality of Life. So it is neither freedom nor democracy that are challenged by (Neo)-Orthodoxy, but rather the ideological manipulation and de-contextualised projection of such principles on Greek Orthodoxy for the purpose of legitimising the ‘superiority’ of western civilisation.”³⁸

Implicit in the above Neo-Orthodox argument is a critique of the liberalist-political foundations of the human-rights notion: “Liberalism provides an impressive freedom of individual rights and choices, but minimises the citizens’ capability to engage in reciprocal, interpersonal relations ... [in] societies based on solidarity, brotherly love and altruism.”³⁹

Neo-Orthodoxy refutes yet another basic element in the human rights discourse: “Political correctness is the institutionalised tolerance and universal acceptance of the right to assert your difference. Diversity and pluralism have colonised the totality of social behaviour, from gender relations to religious convictions...every possible diversion or perversion is considered an inalienable natural right, regardless of whether the social context in which it is situated is inimical to such a behaviour.”⁴⁰ In other words, relativisation of ethics in an all-encompassing subjectivity, tolerance, and pluralism, is undermining the integrity of a hitherto dominant cultural tradition. Yannaras continues: “Pluralism imposes the mandatory ‘disarmament’ of society’s main body ... it strips community of its disposition to defend the endemic functions that would guarantee its coherence and dynamism.

³⁷ “Person-centred”: The human being as a unique personal consciousness rather than an undifferentiated agency of individualistic-utilitarian rights.

³⁸ Ibid., p.142.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 170-71

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 192-93.

Irrespective of whether a certain subculture resorts to propaganda or other sophisticated methods of ideological indoctrination or religious proselytism and bribery, the pluralist culture recognises no limits to establishing a sterile unity in diversity – at the expense of the richly endowed structure of familiar social and spiritual foundations.”⁴¹

The Neo-Orthodox critique on human rights is part of a wider intervention in matters affecting community and State relations. Their general theme is that the State’s economistic logic has gradually colonised all communal and interpersonal relations: “the Enlightenment utopia of civil society imagined the State as an institutional expression of the citizens’ collective rights to equality and meritocracy. In late modernity, however, the State Leviathan is an autonomous, uncontrolled entity and its relations with the citizens are mainly materialistic... State services do not work from the premise of consolidating and enhancing human rights and duties, but are primarily an impersonal technocratic network of financial transactions.”⁴² Many of the services and institutions that epitomise modern western democracy (the welfare State, human rights, political parties, the parliament) are repudiated by the Neo-Orthodox discourse as possessing mere formalistic value devoid of any emancipatory essence, and subjugated to the antagonistic logic of materialistic expediency, ending up “with a legalistic consolidation of nominal human rights that produces a paradoxical and dehumanising totalitarianism.”⁴³

The Neo-Orthodox quest for revitalisation of the preconditions of communal experience cannot advance unless society breaks the connection between three interrelated phenomena: the centralisation of State-economic services the increasing urbanisation and massive population concentration in metropolitan consumer Meccas, and the ecological and ontological implications of such degradation for the quality of life. Although the Neo-Orthodox ideal of a self-managed community has certain similarities with other attempts to challenge the capitalist way of life (e.g. communism, anarchy), Yannaras explains that because of their impersonal-rationalistic foundations those endeavours quickly manifested a totalitarianism of their

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 194-95.

⁴² Yannaras 1998a, pp. 210-11.

⁴³ Ibid., p.215.

own. By contrast, the human-community ideal in contemporary Greece can only have a spiritual, post-rational foundation... rooted in our people's long-lasting person-centred experience, the Greek-Byzantine tradition associates politics with ontology and permeates the impersonal State infrastructure with Orthodox sensitivity.”⁴⁴

Yannaras here follows the historian Svoronos, to substantiate the contemporary relevance of Byzantium's community-based social structure. Several features of the Byzantine world are brought into the Neo-Orthodox discourse as a modern alternative to capitalism's democratic deficit. For example, there is special emphasis on Byzantium's flexible interpretation of Roman law according to each local community's conception of right and wrong. Moreover, the interpenetration of religion and politics, “misunderstood by the West”, signifies Orthodoxy's immunity to the rationalistic absolutisation of truth. In contrast to the relentless western logic of an undifferentiated canon, the subjective and always contextual appropriation of political debate makes for a much more humane political system.

Turning now to how such convictions show themselves in the Neo-Orthodox stance on the government's educational policy, we find the government's attempts at modernisation challenged at four interrelated levels in order to (i) boost peoples' awareness of their “Hellenicity” as an alternative orientation to Eurocentrism; (ii) enhance their Orthodox cultural sensitivity in opposition to the alienating modern phenomena of consumerism, urbanisation, and individualism; (iii) protect the richness of the Greek language (archaic and Byzantine) and resist its infiltration by media colloquialisms, foreign words etc.; and (iv) capitalise on the Hellenic identity in the fields of aesthetics, architecture, music, literature, the arts etc.

The Neo-Orthodox critique of education starts from the premise that western-type State mechanisms responsible for education are essentially alien to the needs of the Greek people, and exacerbate the country's estrangement from its own social and cultural institutions. It opposes both the modernisation reforms undertaken by PASOK in the 1980s, and the corruption of civil servants who abuse State power for their private purposes.

A persistent Neo-Orthodox practice is to associate the main geopolitical tragedies of Greece's past with the arbitrary westernisation of the national education system: “The loss of northern Cyprus, the ongoing de-Hellenisation of northern

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 224 -25.

Epirus [southern Albania] ... are mere misdemeanours compared to the crimes committed against Greek education.”⁴⁵ Elsewhere, Yannaras advocates that “Greece should follow Israel’s example of compulsory military service at the age of eighteen... There are vital national reasons that necessitate this social preparation before entering the university.”⁴⁶

He is presumably implying that the learning experience of military service at the relatively immature age of eighteen is imperative as a preparation for the communal mores and patriotic values of the Greek-Orthodox way of life and as a protection against the iconoclastic influences of university education.

For Neo-Orthodoxy the contentious relationship between secularisation and patriotism manifest in the field of education. Its critique denounces the repeated and arbitrary projects to modernise Greek education that have deprived the country’s youth of its endemic cultural resources. Yannaras contends that this “de-Hellenisation” starts in primary school: “The ten volumes of primary-school language textbooks initiate the Greek child into a faceless society possessing neither identity nor tradition, neither history nor collective memory and metaphysical hope. The textbooks allude to an impersonal society, one that is deprived of the eternal verity of communal experience...The word ‘motherland’ is virtually absent and the main figures of the Greek revolution are conspicuously marginalised...”⁴⁷

The charge is, therefore, that the State is deliberately neglecting the virtues of self-sacrifice and patriotism in favour of its modernising discourse. For example, Yannaras says, the exuberant pride of texts about the heroic Greek wars has been replaced by carefully designed references to the modern imperative for peace, and the need to cut down the arms race with Turkey in order to meet EMU criteria.

When it comes to specific policies, however, Neo-Orthodoxy has kept its direct political interference exclusively for the “national issues”. Although education and Church-State separation do attract the movement’s interest, this has been confined to oratory and has not taken the form of active power politics. When in 1987 for example, PASOK included certain education reforms in its wider attempt to separate Church from State (Law 1700), Neo-Orthodoxy adopted a somewhat ambivalent

⁴⁵ Yannaras 1996, p. 138.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 144.

⁴⁷ Yannaras 1998b, p.114-15.

stance. On the one hand, its spokesmen praised minister Tritsis' readiness to go beyond the narrow private expediencies of his predecessors, and for envisioning the modern Orthodox message in its rich spiritual essence, rather than as a nationalistic ideological pretext. On the other, they criticised him for lack of integrity *vis-à-vis* PASOK, and for his excessive political rationalism. On Law 1700 Yannaras commented: "Just like the clergy so politicians have vested interests in the proposed rationalisation of the management of Church properties, but both have chosen to marginalise or completely ignore the ecclesiastical community, the only legitimate proprietor that created the property in the first place and now ought to benefit from it."⁴⁸

According to Neo-Orthodoxy, therefore, the aforementioned element of political manipulation undermined NS 1700's democratic features, and caricatured Tritsis' genuine intention to bridge the gap between State and society. Yannaras asserts that Greece's democratic deficit derives from the increasingly antagonistic relationship between the citizen and the State. Any political reform alien to Greece's cultural predispositions not only fails to bring democratisation, but also exacerbates the people's alienation from their collective representative. This viewpoint moves the emphasis from rational property management to Church-State interpenetration as the age-old bond unifying Hellenism and Greece's social cohesion.

Although in principle Neo-Orthodoxy is against the ideological manipulation of Orthodox symbolism, the movement tacitly promotes its own brand of the Church-nation-State triad, and opposes the separation between Church and State in mainly nationalistic terms: "While it is indeed erroneous to subjugate religious experience to the expediencies of national survival.... it nevertheless shows political wisdom on the part of the State to acknowledge and wish to incorporate in its structure the quintessential element of Greece's civilisational identity and national unity."⁴⁹

5.3 Neo-Orthodoxy as a Patriotic Political Intervention

In the late 1990s, several Neo-Orthodox personalities and some of the movement's basic convictions came to play important roles in Greek public life.

⁴⁸ Yannaras 1992, p. 107.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.237.

Political parties, civil-society groups, media barons and religious prelates all joined forces under the umbrella of the patriotic faction. Their joint advocacy of Hellenocentrism made them a powerful alternative to the governing Eurocentric faction. Now that Neo-Orthodoxy's basic goal seems to be realised, the movement may fade out. In stark contrast to the undisputed cultural Eurocentrism of the 1970s and 1980s, the question of the Greek people's civilisational identity has penetrated the mainstream political discourse and can no longer be ignored.

5.3.1 *Network 21* and Civil-society Politics

Neo-Orthodoxy's liaison with the civil-society group *Network 21* reflects the movement's political strategy and ideological profile. The relationship is particularly instructive because the Network represents a coherent body of ideas and practices that remains relatively independent from Church patronage or party structures. Its objective is to boost people's awareness of national issues, scrutinise geopolitical processes, and prevent Greece pursuing subservient policies. Prominent Neo-Orthodox personalities like Metallinos, Yannaras and Zouraris are among those associated with it, as well as senior army officers, politicians, businessmen, journalists, academics, diplomats, lawyers, and members of the clergy. Their *modus operandi* is to organise forums of discussion and subsequently try to address larger audiences through the media. Pursuing a lobby-group strategy, Network members are able to influence the decision-making centres in their different professional fields.

The group's insistence on the need for a "national awakening" is not due to conventional nationalism but a radical quest for Hellenism's self preservation in a (post)-modern, global geopolitical context. As its founding declaration expresses it: "With Hellenism surrounded by increasing military pressure, and resurgence of Turkish irredentism threatening to shrink it further, our national awakening seems to be an imperative."⁵⁰

The Network's appeal for supra-partisan legitimacy is based on the assertion that any escalation of hostility in the area would make Greece's awakening a matter of survival rather than a subject for discussion. Apart from geopolitics, the Network's founding declaration clarifies the group's stand towards the EU: "National awakening does not refute European Union, but is rather a precondition for Greece's equal

⁵⁰ *Network 21* 1998, p.4.

membership and integral participation. The EU is not a supra-national State substitute, but a family of sovereign nation-states with autonomous religious, linguistic, and civilisational heritages. EU integration serves the convergence of national interests, not their abolition.”⁵¹ Network 21’s *raison d’être*, therefore, is to fill the gap generated by “forces riddled with subservience”, reverse the patriotic deficit, and organise the citizens’ resistance to those “who have led Hellenism to the brink of extinction.”⁵²

By putting the stark alternative of “resistance or subjugation” before the Greek people, the Network sought to influence public opinion on a number of national issues: Greco-Turkish relations, the Cyprus conflict, the problems of Thrace and northern Epirus, the Macedonian question, the issue of the Pontus, and last but not least the creation of a Balkan-Orthodox alliance. Socio-cultural concerns such as education, language, the Greek diaspora, and demographic problems like Greece’s low birth rate are also considered questions of prime national importance. In the struggle against western cultural imperialism and Islamic aggression, special emphasis is given to the Orthodox spiritual heritage.

Relations with Turkey are the Network’s focal point and the common denominator in each of the above agendas. To break with the “defeatist” policies of the past, the group suggested radical political, military, and diplomatic strategies. Although its declaration sets out peace as their only motivation and an imperative condition for Greece’s progress and development, a brief assessment of the Network tactics will show that beneath the pretext of deterring Turkish aggression lurked the irredentist vision of a Greater Greece acting as a peripheral superpower. The most effective strategy was asserted to be identifying and exposing Turkey’s vulnerabilities, rather than granting concessions and working out solutions through dialogue and compromise. With respect to Cyprus the Network was quite uncompromising: “Either we fight to overthrow the result of the 1974 invasion, or we accept it. There is no third way.”⁵³

The group used religion and history as instruments to sensitise public awareness with regard to national issues. A certain country or community is identified

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 5.

⁵² Ibid., p. 6.

⁵³ Ibid.

as friendly or hostile depending on whether it has a culture compatible with Greek Orthodoxy (tactic of exclusion). The success of any stratagems for national security depends on the unifying power of a common religious-historical background (tactic of inclusion). We shall see later how Network 21 and the Archbishop worked hand in hand in the matter of the Thracian Muslims' high birth rate, and sought ways to increase the Orthodox population before it became outnumbered (tactic of exclusion). On the other hand, the ultimate goal of deterring Turkish intervention in that area was pursued by offering incentives for Muslim to integrate with Greek society (tactic of inclusion). Cultural geopolitics of this nature also informs the Network project to effect "strategic communication" with three Orthodox-Balkan countries – Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania. Given that NATO's "new order" remains neutral towards Greek-Turkish disputes, a complementary geopolitical alliance based on common Orthodox antecedents would be welcome. In stark contrast to the practice of compromise through dialogue supervised by the West, the Network asserted that a Balkan Orthodox liaison has no stake in pleasing Turkey, and can thus vindicate the Greek side. Moreover, such an approach would enhance Greece's role in the West as the only EU and NATO member trusted in the Orthodox countries.

Neo-Orthodox ideas have created a totally new perspective towards the strategic importance of the Greek diaspora. Traditionally, foreign affairs have always relied on the lobbying manoeuvres of prominent and wealthy Greek communities living in the West. Following the East Bloc's collapse however, Network 21 adopted Neo-Orthodoxy's stance concerning the remote, isolated, and poor communities of Greek origin living around the Black Sea. Seventy years of Soviet rule have virtually de-Hellenised those people in terms of formal education, language, and religion. Now following the Greek State's reliance on support from the prosperous Greek-American lobby, Network 21 turned to Neo-Orthodox interest in the Hellenism of the Black-Sea and Pontic region. In the Neo-Orthodox context, the persistence of Greekness there reflects the dynamism of the Orthodox way of life as a spiritual and communal experience rather than as a scale of materialistic progress. In parallel with this romantic notion of Hellenism, the Network also saw in it a formidable opportunity to gain specific geopolitical goals. By means of the cultural vehicle of Orthodoxy the region could be "re-Hellenised" and serve Greek interests in a number of ways. The resurgence of local identities now being viewed as a basic human right and enjoying

international support, such re-Hellenisation could enhance Greece's role in a particularly important key area (*à propos* of Caspian oil). It would also create another minority problem for Turkey, and further highlight her democratic deficit and lack of human rights. Lastly, a regular population flow to mainland Greece would help solve Thrace's demographic problem, and increase the number of Orthodox compared to Muslim inhabitants.

In May 1998 Network 21 help a two-day conference entitled "National defence, Leadership, and Public opinion". when Neo-Orthodoxy's leading figures (Metallinos, Yannaras, and Zouraris) were responsible for presenting the group's Helleno-centric political orientation. The conference's major objective was to denounce Prime Minister Simitis' supposedly conciliatory stance on national issues. Behind the government's subservient geopolitical strategy, they argued, stood a "de-Hellenised" elite whose blind devotion to their Euro-American patrons left no space for the development of a veritable Hellenic-Orthodox democracy. The alternative was neither conventional right-wing nationalism, nor anti-imperialistic socialism.

In terms similar to Habermas' concept of civil-society,⁵⁴ and congruent with the late-modern notion of a "third way", Neo-Orthodoxy stressed the importance of unfettered citizens, free, informed, and willing to set up alternative democratic groups to stand between the citizen and State. The difference between the two approaches is that Neo-Orthodoxy interprets freedom by a privileged historic-religious heritage and a pre-Rationalist, person-centred social structure, whereas Habermas' view is still indebted to the post-Rationalist human rights of the Enlightenment and the supra-national principles of globalisation. Supported by the powerful new Archbishop Christodoulos, Neo-Orthodoxy envisions a civil society made up of "free persons" in the authentic classical tradition (not in the western sense) and living the Orthodox spiritual paradigm. The combination of freedom as a classical democratic value with the cultural logic of entrenchment inevitably gave rise to some inconsistencies. For example, when Network 21 discussed membership eligibility, most participants favoured a flexible group, open to anyone interested. For all that, they reserved the right to refuse admission to individuals who either had expressed anti-Greek opinions,

⁵⁴ cf. Habermas 1989.

or defied the values of the democratic polity.⁵⁵ The fact that these two viewpoints might be mutually exclusive apparently did not occur to any of them.

A brief discussion of Network 21's position on specific geopolitical developments will further substantiate its striking affinity with Neo-Orthodox logic. According to the Network's consultant professor Yallouridis,⁵⁶ the major criterion of social legitimacy in today's Greece is how each political force viewed the NATO air strikes in Kosovo. The war's impact on the political culture, he argues, has introduced a totally new perspective whereby the old ideological dichotomies had to give way to new coalitions, depending on whether or not government and parties endorsed the NATO military intervention and its "new world order". Whereas socialist Europe adopted a much more cynical stance, epitomising the final demise of Enlightenment humanism and the resurgence of *Realpolitik*, Greece displayed remarkable uniformity in opposing what was perceived as proud (i.e. Orthodox) resistance against western imperialist aggression. Yallouridis welcomes this phenomenon of a Helleno-centric, anti-western alliance that for the first time brings together forces as diverse as the Neo-Orthodox, nationalists, conservatives, socialists, social democrats, Euro-socialists and hard-line communists. This remarkable patriotic upsurge, he argues, divides Greece's political culture into two factions, and the modernists will have to abandon their naive enthusiasm for globalisation, and reconsider the vaunted generalisations about Greece's "unproblematic" integration into the western world. The Network 21 commentator strongly denounced the modernists' subservient strategy that "goes as far as to welcome Greece's economic and geopolitical dependency."

Such questioning of national sovereignty is now a recurrent theme within the Greek political culture. In this sense, Yallouridis does not deviate from the conventional populist discourse that is particularly sensitive to how much of national sovereignty can be conceded to supra-national organisations. So Simitis' government was exposed to a wave of serious political dissent by forces claiming that he and the modernist faction showed a dangerous zeal in fulfilling their EU and NATO commitments at the expense of national interests. Inasmuch as such questions operate

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵⁶ Yallouridis was also special consultant to the ministry of defense, when he put forward and implemented the idea of a Unified Defense Doctrine between Greece and his native Cyprus.

as barometers of political costs and indicate the degree of the government's social legitimacy at any one time it is not erroneous to claim that one of Greece's main problems is a peculiar and confusing formalism *vis-à-vis* national issues and the country's international commitments. The opposition charges the government with treason and of cultivating an atmosphere of geopolitical insecurity in order to pursue its narrow power ploys. The government, on the other hand, adopts a Janus-faced, catch-all strategy aspiring to keep the domestic Cassandras dormant while hoping to prolong its international immunity on issues of modernisation.

There can be no doubt that the role NATO and the EU have played in former Yugoslavia has strengthened Helleno-centrism in Greece. Leading Neo-Orthodox personalities agreed with several parties and organisations (including PASOK's "patriotic" faction) that found the decision to endorse the air strikes fertile ground for systematically undermining the government.

What is the stand of Network 21 on the Neo-Orthodox geopolitical problematic?

In terms similar to Yallouridis', Yannaras has asserted that the pretext of the cold war was not enough reason to justify US support for Turkey's military regime. Even after it came to an end, he argued, US policy remains provocatively indifferent to Turkey's violation of western values (political liberalism, human rights, minority protection). He does not agree that the EU and NATO are a relatively homogeneous geopolitical entity, and charges that the US is trying to control the EU by bringing into Europe a country which is (a) inimical to its moral/cultural foundations, (b) democratically deficient and problematic, and (c) one of the US's most loyal and submissive allies. Henceforth, Greece should not put her faith in "earthquake diplomacy"⁵⁷ and should take whatever steps are necessary to disengage from her current subservient strategy.

Yannaras' style of critique is demonstrated by his scorn for foreign minister Gioros Papandreou's American-accented English, as if this proved him to be an

⁵⁷ A rapprochement between the people of Turkey and Greece was obtained as a result of two catastrophic earthquakes that had struck the two countries in 1999, and the mutual relief efforts. This was accompanied by renewed optimism regarding the geopolitical disputes.

American agent of some kind. Remote as this personal offensive may be from our real field of interest, it does reflect the Neo-Orthodox logic of merging culture with politics. Similarly Giorgos Papandreou's poor record in respect of Greek-Orthodox education was supposed to make him an agent of foreign interests. Modern Greece's disconnection from its solid Orthodox roots is held responsible for leaving the country without the necessary spiritual infrastructure to defend its inalienable sovereignty: "Just as NATO managed to present its horrific crimes against humanity as a triumph for human rights, Simitis describes Greece's geopolitical shrinkage as benevolent modernisation... How can we stand firm against NATO's brutal directives when our civilisation has given away its ability to be critical and to resist? ... The neo-nazi leaders of the new order insist that the Kosovo massacre will prevent a Greco-Turkish war. Let us not be so naive..."⁵⁸

Papandreou was criticised in much the same terms by Zouraris, who objected to his collaboration with NATO, the EU and Turkey to reach a viable solution for the country's national issues. The minister had called his strategy "aggressive", in the sense of breaking new ground and challenging long-lasting stereotypes of hostility, which triggered a vociferous reaction from the "patriots". Zouraris' comments also serve to epitomise Network 21's maximalistic position. He argued that "aggression" is indeed what Greek policy needs, and precisely what it lacks. In his view "aggressive" should mean demanding that Albania, NATO, and the EU permit Greek troops to leave the areas of secondary importance in Kosovo and be re-positioned in northern Epirus where the Greek-Orthodox minority needs immediate protection. Moreover, he declared that since Greece is the richest and most advanced of the Balkan nations, her troops should be given a larger area of responsibility. Aggression was also needed, he said, to put pressure on Turkey to finally compensate Greece for the genocide of the Orthodox population in Asia Minor in the early 1920s. By exposing Turkey's brutality Greece would enhance its negotiating position and could demand from the UN implementation of a special clause by which the Ecumenical Patriarchate will become autonomous from Turkey's military regime. A third point raised by Zouraris was to shift government priority from joining the EMU to solving the Cyprus problem: "If it is ostensibly democratic to remind the US and the EU that it took 25 days for the

⁵⁸ Yannaras, newspaper *Kathemerini*, 9 May 1999.

ethnic Albanians to return safely to their Kosovo homes ... then 25 years seems more than enough for the Cypriots to make the short journey back home.”⁵⁹

Although the Neo-Orthodox members of Network 21 have grown in popularity, the group as a whole suffered a major blow as a result of its dubious role in the arrest of the Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan. Together with Greek paramilitaries, several Network 21 members were allegedly involved in Ocalan’s protection against Turkey and the CIA. Following his arrest, the case evolved into an international fiasco for Greece’s foreign policy, and exposed Network 21’s scandalous participation in a case of international terrorism. In a domestic climate of unprecedented social opposition towards those responsible, the prime minister sacked several members of the government, including foreign affairs minister Pangalos. Subsequently the Network engaged in a relentless legal battle in an attempt to restore its public image. This still ongoing dispute has virtually eliminated Network 21’s political capability.

5.3.2 Neo-Orthodoxy and Socialism: PASOK’s “Patriotic” Faction, Charalambidis’ New Party, “Orthodox” Communists, and the “Red” Archbishop

The Ocalan case, as well as the clash between Orthodox Serbs and Muslim Albanians in Kosovo raised questions about Greece’s role in the West and, in the context of whether Greece should endorse Nato policy, set the climate for the 1999 Euro-elections. In the heated debates on these matters Neo-Orthodoxy played a major role. Virtually all the opposition parties as well as PASOK’s “patriotic” faction launched a concerted campaign against Simitis’ decision to remain with NATO.

The protagonist of the government’s internal opposition was former minister Papathemelis. Although he and the rest of the “patriots” may be viewed as part of the larger “presidential” faction, the leader of the “presidentials”, Tsohatzopoulos (defence minister, and number two in PASOK), has only rarely allowed himself to appear as an uncompromising patriot. In other words, whereas Tsohatzopoulos cares more about maintaining a catch-all ideology, Papathemelis is eager to confront the modernists, whatever the cost.

⁵⁹ Zouraris, newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 4 Aug. 1999.

Papathemelis is a very good example of an uninhibited Neo-Orthodox politician whose ideology aspires to synthesise Orthodoxy, socialism and nationalism. A prolific writer, he has published extensively about the liaison between Orthodoxy and socialist politics.⁶⁰ Before joining PASOK in the early 1980s, Papathemelis was involved with the small Christian Democratic party.

Denouncing Simitis' role in the Ocalan case and the Kosovo air strikes, the patriotic political faction managed to launch a quite effective campaign. Their chief target was to undermine the government's public legitimacy in its handling of the national issues. Collaborating closely with the Archbishop, Network 21 members, and other Helleno-centrists from the whole range of the political spectrum, Papathemelis wanted to create an anti-western patriotic front. Neo-Orthodoxy had now gone beyond its traditional class-based socialism to espouse "civilisational materialism". While maintaining their goal to emancipate the have-nots, they now emphasised how globalisation constitutes a new form of cultural imperialism – with western policy no longer aiming at peace or human rights, but at a new geopolitical arena where NATO's omnipotence will guarantee the interests of America and the most powerful of her allies.

Neo-Orthodoxy attracted PASOK's "patriots" in a discourse about Balkan independence and sovereignty. This stated that only the people's movement can consolidate human rights and bring about the end of national borders, and that modernisation/westernisation are alien concepts to the Balkan peoples who have an indigenous Orthodox civilisation far superior to that enforced by western military aggression.

The Helleno-centric Neo-Orthodox ideology brought together extremely heterogeneous political and cultural forces ranging from the far Right to extreme Left. In his capacity as leader of PASOK's patriotic political faction, Papathemelis epitomises this convergence. As a calm, cultivated, and experienced politician, having served in several ministries during the Papandreou era, Papathemelis is widely acclaimed for his integrity and benign personality, acclaimed by "patriots" from the entire political spectrum. The unprecedented popularity of Archbishop Christodoulos and his warm friendship with Papathemelis, Zouraris, and Yannaras, affirmed the Helleno-centric connection between political patriotism, the Church, and Neo-

⁶⁰ Papathemelis 1979.

Orthodoxy, so creating favourable circumstances for its social dissemination. Apart from their common liaison with Network 21, these influential individuals worked hand in hand to bridge the gap between religious indifference among patriots of the Left and the a-political clergy. In this direction, the Archbishop wrote an enthusiastic prologue to Papathemelis' patriotic manifesto "This homeland belongs to all of us".⁶¹

In his prologue Christodoulos points out that Greece is about to experience a period of escalating geopolitical aggression for which her political leaders are grossly unprepared. The solution to this unsatisfactory situation requires something more than individual skills and delicate political handling. The first and foremost ingredient of a successful geopolitical strategy depends, according to the Archbishop, on the extent to which Greek politicians possess the necessary patriotic ideals to reach a "nationally dignified solution". In Christodoulos' view, his dear friend Papathemelis epitomises such quality: "he is not susceptible to subservience, nor does he serve Graeculism."⁶²

Papathemelis applies the Archbishop's contentions to a specific geopolitical paradigm. He identifies Greece's contemporary situation as a crucial showdown between the advocates of "de-Hellenised internationalism" boosted by the dynamics of Euro-American interests, and a more context-sensitive force that does not hesitate to oppose globalisation in order to uphold Greece's national/historical rights. It does not suffice to put our faith in the power of international organisations that have consistently failed to vindicate the Greek side. The EU, UN and NATO are incapable of deterring Turkish aggression in Cyprus, the Aegean, Kurdistan, or elsewhere. Fostered by powerful western interests, Turkey's immunity to international law and order is equally alarming. America's myopic human-rights policy (i.e. double standards) demonstrates common interests with Turkey.

Papathemelis, is convinced that this bleak geopolitical picture can only change if Greeks rediscover their age-old essential self. The profound devaluation of Orthodoxy, patriotism, heroism, altruism, and communalism has left its imprint on the political culture. This deficit has resulted in a subservient political logic that renders Greece vulnerable to globalisation, consumerism, and Euro-American supremacy. In

⁶¹ Papathemelis 1998.

⁶² Ibid., p.10. As explained in previous chapters a "Graeculus" is a Greek who, as a result of behaviour incompatible with the true values and mores of being Greek, does not merit his Greekness.

stark contrast to Simitis' moderate/pro-European foreign policy, his party's "patriotic" faction boycotts any reconciliation between Turkey and Greece within the context of EU integration. Inasmuch as such integration is a pretext for western power interests, Turkey will use it as a formidable opportunity to offer strategic alliance with the West in exchange for permission to exercise her role as a regional superpower. Henceforth, Turkey will continue to demand that Greece grant concessions in what have been perceived by "patriotic" politicians as "Greece's inalienable rights in the Aegean and Cyprus." Prompted by the EU and US partisan decision to pamper Turkey, Papathemelis defied the established doctrine of Greece's perennial ties with the West, and sought to unify patriots from all parties through idiosyncratic political reasoning that could appeal to Greek spiritual sensitivity and national pride.

Religious exclusivity and cultural particularity are the two main Neo-Orthodox parameters appropriated by PASOK's "patriotic" politicians, both to criticise the shortcomings in the modernist policy and to suggest alternative geopolitical strategies. Papathemelis asserted that only a strategic alliance with Orthodox brothers from Russia could effectively deter Turkey's claims in the Aegean.⁶³

Apart from collaborating towards a "spiritually legitimate" geopolitical strategy, Neo-Orthodoxy and PASOK's patriotic politicians share an inflexible orientation with respect to Greece's claims regarding Macedonia and Cyprus. Their opposition to the more conciliatory (Europeanist) strategy of the modernists also extends to the latter's policy of imposing drastic cuts in rearmament in order to correct the welfare system's huge deficit and bring Greece in line with EC directives for peace and co-operation. In short, echoing Neo-Orthodoxy's political-cultural convictions, Papathemelis envisions the emulation of the Israeli model, where religion and history cement socio-cultural cohesion, while a robust military guarantees the country's geopolitical integrity and pride.

A second example of the affinities between Socialism and Neo-Orthodoxy involves former PASOK member Charalambidis. As a member of the group that founded PASOK and co-author of the movement's founding declaration, Charalambidis served continuously on PASOK's central committee from 1974 to 1995. He then left PASOK because of serious political disagreements, and

⁶³ Ibid., p.16.

subsequently founded the Democratic Regional Union in an attempt to create a patriotic-Socialist alternative to PASOK's alleged neo-liberalism and Eurocentrism.

The new party's programmatic declarations are strongly influenced by Neo-Orthodoxy. For example, Charalambidis envisions a supra-national alliance among the peoples of the Balkans and Asia Minor (Orthodox plus Kurds) against Turkish military aggression, Euro-American geopolitical imperialism, and cultural hegemony. Western countries, he asserts, prefer to have the Turks as regional interlocutors, allies, and business partners rather than such indigenous historical peoples of the region as Greeks, Armenians, and Kurds. They will not allow the autonomous historical and national re-establishment and re-composition of this particular geo-political and geo-economic sphere whose dislocation they began during the crusades. Charalambidis wonders whether western encouragement of the new sultanic Turkish barbarity will continue as a permanent pressure to compel the collaboration and compliance of "heretic" Greece. A solution to the new eastern question through an alliance of new crusaders and new sultans, he concludes, will once more precipitate a holocaust amongst the ancient indigenous peoples, and the destruction of the cultural centres of the region: "Unfortunately, due to Greek political and cultural inadequacies, this major issue concerning European foreign policy ... has been omitted from the Maastricht agreement⁶⁴ and the various NATO meetings."⁶⁵

Such bleak prospects create the pressing need for cultural and political initiatives towards a different type of historical consciousness. Indeed, Charalambidis' new party encompasses an unprecedented degree of Euro-scepticism "...without western European snobbery, egotism, and colonial slyness; without Greek provincial attitudes or the *Euro-greediness* that characterises the majority of a third-world type of Athenian political and intellectual 'elite'; and without emotionally charged and raw anti-West bombast or alibis."⁶⁶

In contrast to traditional right-wing irredentists, Charalambidis does not focus on a simplistic and populist manipulation of Greece's historical traumas in order to

⁶⁴ The treaty leading to a more economically and politically integrated European economy, signed in 1992 by Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Germany, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, and Great Britain.

⁶⁵ Charalambidis 1998, p.25.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 26.

evoke sentimentalism and attract votes. As a Neo-Orthodox, he asserts that Greece's unresolved national issues are a prelude to a new Hellenic political consciousness. He promised to introduce an indigenous socialist discourse, and reconcile the Left with the "tragic particularity" of Greece's socio-historic reality in relation to that of the West. Due to its cultural provincialism, the Left identified Greek socio-historic reality with that of northern Europe, and as a result socialism in Greece has failed to understand that Greeks do not enter politics the way Europeans do – through the conflicts, problems, and needs created in the process of capitalist accumulation. Greeks acquire their political consciousness in an atmosphere of foreign imperialist presence and intervention, social dynamics that dismantle their country, their economy, their civilisation, their environment, and their historic homelands.

The second and very similar Neo-Orthodox point of convergence between politics and culture is described by Charalambidis as the refugee nature of the Greek working class. The socialist cultural-political domain has failed to comprehend that the Greek proletariat did not develop through capitalist processes (e.g. in large factories), but by the people being driven out of their historic homelands and becoming refugees. Their tendency to import western discourses of emancipation rather mechanistically, or even to welcome European and American patronage, may be partially associated with their fear of yet another holocaust. Unaware of Greece's distinctiveness, the Greek working class came to believe that the country would automatically become European and would no longer have national problems. The Greek satellite-State, as ignorant of its own heritage as of the insidious western interests, failed to defend the integrity of eastern Hellenism: "Due to this (Eurocentric) doctrine, the patriarchate has been regarded by the Athens government as a parochial Church. Because this yielding cultural-political tribe pretends to be European, I suggest a comparison: imagine the Italians abandoning the Vatican and St Peter's the way we abandoned the Patriarchate and St Sophia!"⁶⁷

Charalambidis' ultimate hope is to pave the way for a political movement that can put an end to many years of kow-towing NATO's compromises on the national issues. Due to NATO's doctrine of the "integrity of Turkey", any cultural let alone political reference to the Greek-Orthodox homelands in Asia Minor was considered a threat to the Turkish State's integrity and the general security of the area: "We thereby

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 71.

underwent a national cultural mutilation. This explains why the history of Orthodox Hellenism in Asia Minor is absent from the textbooks in Greek schools. This doctrine created gaps in our own historical memory and knowledge... gaps that, in today's period of globalisation and integration, were papered over by re-writing history.”⁶⁸

In contradistinction to the establishment's Eurocentrism, Charalambidis saw an opportunity for important initiatives in the Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Middle East. He outlined a new national plan focused on how to check Turkish expansionism, and put it forward as the paradigm for “a new diplomacy course” and “a new line of resistance”. This defence against Turkish expansionism would include many peoples united either by common traditions (Slav Orthodoxy) or by their struggles to overthrow the Turkish yoke in the past (Armenians and Pontic Greeks) and present (Kurds). In this context, Charalambidis declares, the new moral role of Greece in the region is ecumenical and deeply humanistic. It is a patriotic course that intersects with a pacifist and internationalist arc.

Considering that PASOK's “patriotic” faction could not bypass Simitis, and that Charalambidis' new party was essentially a tentative political intervention, the marriage between Neo-Orthodoxy and the Greek communist party (KKE) is a spectacular confirmation that the civilisational debate penetrates all of Greek society, even the highest ramparts of political secularism. The KKE is one of the few remaining communist parties in western Europe that survived the collapse of the Soviet Union and the concomitant depreciation of Marxism-Leninism as a grand narrative of emancipation. Apart from a minor shift in orientation away from the imperative nature of a workers' revolution and towards complete recognition of parliament, the KKE has persisted in its basically class-based ideology, and its strategy of confrontation with the “privileged”. Denouncing discourses on tradition, the national issues and religion as the “opium of the masses”, the party has always considered itself the *avant garde* of progress. Specifically tradition was considered pure invention, disseminated by coercive States to break the unity of the proletariat and to channel its revolutionary energy into such false ideologies of obedience and conformism as nationalism and religiosity.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 72.

Recognising no religious authority, always suggesting a strategy of internationalism in Greece's geopolitical disputes, this atheist population, in favour of historical materialism that dared to dismiss the pomposity of the Hellenic myth was relentlessly persecuted by the right-wing establishment. Both sides claimed to have played a protagonistic role in a series of heroic Greek struggles. The communists did fight heroically against the German occupation, but their defeat in the subsequent civil war, and 25 years of cold-war anti-communism, left them with little social legitimacy. The party's failure to fortify the impersonal communist ideology with indigenous elements from the Greek-Orthodox past and tradition dramatically changed in the late 1990s, culminating in their historic decision to embrace Neo-Orthodoxy. The KKE's initiative to enlist leading Neo-Orthodox figures as candidates in the 1999 Euro-elections in more than an opportunistic alliance indicates the Greek political culture's polarisation between "patriots" and modernists. Almost overnight, the old brutal dichotomy between Left and Right had become a heterogeneous anti-western front (of communists, Neo-Orthodox, fascists, fundamentalists and Helleno-centrists confronting an equally heterogeneous Eurocentric establishment (of the dominant modernising factions within PASOK, ND, and the Coalition of the Left and Progress).

In the climate of tension after the government's endorsement of NATO's invention in Kosovo, the KKE organised public dissent against the air strikes into a coherent political protest. Daily appearances in televised debates and discussion panels of Zouraris, Yannaras, and Metallinos clarified the sophisticated Neo-Orthodox discourse at the popular level. The KKE also recruited, the ultra patriotic journalist Liana Kanelli. Through her daily programs on the TV-channel "Alter 5" and her magazine *Nemesis*, Kanelli is known for her uncompromising views on the national issues.

Bringing Zouraris and Kanelli into the KKE ranks strongly affected the party's public image. For one thing, freed of its "anti-Greek" stigma it appealed to a much greater section of the populace. Even the far-Right Golden Dawn was charmed by the KKE's Neo-Orthodox *volte face*, and noted that "only members of KKE stood against the NATO tanks."⁶⁹ At this time participants in numerous pro-Serbian anti-war demonstrations and concerts were reported to be holding red flags next to yellow Byzantine ones with the two-headed eagle. When in the city of Larissa, fascist

⁶⁹ Newspaper *Chrysi Avgi*, 2 July 1999.

demonstrators from Golden Dawn joined the KKE ranks and burned a Turkish flag, there was no reaction whatsoever.⁷⁰

On the other hand, the KKE's Neo-Orthodox affiliations prompted one of its most respected MPs to resign. Mitsos Kostopoulos justified his decision to abandon KKE in terms of upholding his integrity as a communist, active trade unionist, and one who suffered persecution and torture at the hands of nationalists and chauvinists: "It would be a mockery of historical truth to accuse communism, and the great thinkers who associated themselves with it, of nationalism and chauvinism...the communists never scorned our people's religious sentiment; they respected it and relied on dialogue to teach that every one of us is the 'creator'. But never did they give themselves away to fundamentalists and obscure 'Networks'... to those who relentlessly manipulate the religious sensitivity and pure patriotic feelings of our people to serve their narrow power games ... they never gave themselves away to those who cover their grandiose nationalism and imperialistic irredentism with a facade of Hellenic civilisation and spirit ... those zealots who pompously trumpet their 'progressive Orthodox discourse'."⁷¹

The KKE general secretary Aleka Papariga did not back down, however. Kanelli and Zouraris being able to attract votes from a sector of the population for which communism had had no appeal whatsoever, here was a unique opportunity for the KKE becoming a protagonist on Greece's patriotic political front. There were plenty of voters from all kinds of backgrounds ready to express their disaffection with PASOK and ND. Papariga considered Neo-Orthodoxy a formidable means for transforming the party's obsolete anti-Americanism into Helleno-centric, anti-western communism. During the election campaign of 2000 Zouraris questioned the patriotic foundations of the governing faction and said that "Yet once more the communists did not back down ... Just as they did against the nazis and their local collaborators, so the KKE is now leading the fight against Simitis and his pseudo-socialist NATO puppets."⁷²

⁷⁰ Newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 19 Sep. 1999.

⁷¹ Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 22 Feb. 2000.

⁷² Ibid.

The “patriotic” political faction could not have hope for a more valuable ally than Archbishop Christodoulos. Amid the tension and turmoil surrounding Kosovo, he pursued a twofold strategy of political interference. Although the higher clergy generally remained neutral and reluctant to engage in political debate, he took advantage of the fact that he was repeatedly voted the most popular personality in Greek public life. In his capacity as a media star, Christodoulos made daily headlines expressing partisan geopolitical convictions. His profound social appeal provided him with immunity from government censure, and enabled him to work hand in hand with Network 21 and Neo-Orthodox politicians. Neo-Orthodoxy, on the other hand, welcomed his interference and the idea of a politically active Archbishop.

Christodoulos introduced a totally new strategy of political interference. In appearances specially tailored for media consumption, he ignored the Church’s traditional attachment to the political establishment, and addressed the ordinary people on why modernity and globalisation are a threat to Greek culture. Borrowing from sources as diverse as Chomsky and Orthodoxy, he said that “Globalisation is nothing more than a synonym for American socio-economic and cultural imperialism. It paves the way for the end of ethnic identity and the disintegration of sovereign national states. American interests are like those of separatist terrorist groups ... both benefit from using human rights as a pretext for their pursuit of power.”⁷³

The Archbishop, commenting on the gradual colonisation by the mass media of politics and private economic interests, concluded that the increasing concentration of power in a handful of individuals facilitates the hegemonic control of ideology and cultural production. Up to a point Christodoulos’ quasi-Marxist observations are consistent with the spiritual values of emancipation, peace, and freedom, but his interpretation of them goes a lot further than spiritual guidance and cultural criticism.

The dispute over Thrace – between the “patriotic” forces (the Archbishop, Neo-Orthodoxy, Network 21, Papatthemelis, Charalambidis and other Helleno-centric politicians) and the government – shows the increasing polarisation in contemporary Greek political culture. The modernists, are becoming more Eurocentric and, in order to solve problems with Turkey, ready to make some concessions. The “patriotic” forces do not recognise any Turkish claims, feel betrayed by Europe’s tolerance of Turkish aggressiveness, and denounce Simitis’ conciliatory policy as making Greece a

⁷³ Newspaper *To Vima*, 18 Sep. 1999.

satellite of American and Turkish interests. With so many pending disputes and traumatic memories systematically blown out of proportion by both State and Church, these issues evoke strong emotions and are usually debated so heatedly that even one's public image as a proper Greek patriot may be affected.

Not surprisingly, the most vocal reaction against the government's intention to implement a more moderate policy towards Thrace's Muslim minority has come from the Church rather than the parliamentary opposition. Christodoulos, in an uninhibited political move, wrote to the education minister demanding revision of a clause introducing the Turkish language into the secondary-education curriculum in Thrace. Since the province also has two additional Muslim groups (Gypsies and Pomacs), the Archbishop also suggested the re-introduction of their languages so as to deter Turkey from annexing those populations into her control zone. Fear of the same kind of separatism as in Kosovo prompted him to approach the Network 21 group on joint educational projects designed to boost Gypsy and Pomac consciousness at the expense of a Turkish orientation.

Bypassing State jurisdiction, Christodoulos next attempted to alter Thrace's demographic composition. He offered a special grant from Church funds to Christian families with more than two children. Fear that Muslims will outnumber Christians prompted him to pursue an eclectic human rights policy. Thracian Muslim MP Moustafa criticised Christodoulos for undermining Thrace's peace and stability, as well as being guilty of discrimination. The Archbishop, he argued, shortsightedly ignored Thrace's social problems that needed a better welfare policy, not "ethnic cleansing" as a solution. The higher clergy considered Moustafa an apologist for the official Turkish line and replied asking him to account for a series of human-rights violations against Christians in Turkey: "Mr Moustafa should lecture on social cohesion to those who brutally violate basic human rights like freedom of speech and religious tolerance.... the Church is both older than and independent of the democratic Hellenic State, and among her constitutional rights are decisions on how to appropriately serve and protect the vast majority of the Greek people."⁷⁴

The Coalition of the Left and Progress Party defended its Muslim MP, and upheld the party's principles of secularism, democratisation, and Church-State separation: "The holy synod's practice of discriminating against non-Orthodox Greek

⁷⁴ Newspaper *Eleftherotipia*, 12 March 1999.

citizens is totally opposed to the objectives of the Greek polity, as well as to Christianity itself.”⁷⁵ Concerning Christodoulos’ accusations against Moustafa, the Coalition replied that such smear tactics are usually employed when there is unwillingness to address the real issue: “It is ludicrous to suggest that just because Moustafa is Muslim he is also an agent of Turkey’s military regime ... The sensitive region of Thrace has nothing to gain from Christodoulos’ partisan policies.”⁷⁶

Another characteristic example of Christodoulos’ extreme Neo-Orthodoxy was his objection to Pope John Paul’s intention to visit Greece. As already outlined in Chapter 3 the Archbishop’s stance created an awkward situation for the government. In the ensuing clash, Orthodoxy and the State once more competed for the consent of the people. Even the President of the Republic was drawn into the controversy. He declared that Eastern and Western Christianity constitute one unified world, and upheld Greece’s commitment to multiculturalism. Nevertheless, fear of anti-papal demonstrations led to the cancellation of the Pope’s visit. Yet again the Church prevailed over the State’s desire to be regarded by Europe as a westernised country.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

THE ORTHODOX ACADEMY OF CRETE

6.1 General Profile and Departments (EYC, ITE)

Founded in 1968, the Orthodox Academy of Crete (OAC) is a religious foundation. It reports to the Diocese of Kisamos and Selinon, and operates under the spiritual aegis of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.¹

OAC funding comes from neither Church nor State, and in fact the academy has no regular financial income but relies on contributions received from conferences and donations from its well-wishers. The land it stands on was a gift from the Gonia monastery, and in 1964 the Central Evangelical Office for Aid and Development in Bonn donated 1.2 million DM towards building the academy, and gave an additional 240,000 DM in 1968 for operating costs. The donation was a good-will gesture by Germany's Protestant Church as a form of compensation for the damage caused by German occupation forces during World War II. Currently there is an Athens-based, six-member financial committee responsible for raising funds for the OAC's running costs.

Members of the OAC are the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, other prelates and higher clergy of the Orthodox and other Christian Churches, as well as eminent personalities from Greece and abroad.

The main purpose of the OAC is to effectuate dialogues between Orthodoxy and the modern world, and the practical participation of the Orthodox believer in a dialogical manner of living and thinking, meeting with fellow citizens in self-reflection, interpersonal reconciliation, and a responsible attitude towards divine creation. According to the OAC director general, "the institution, consolidated in the Platonic tradition of *Symphilosophiein* and in the universality and ecumenism of Orthodoxy, does not set limits, nor does it accept restrictions in that dialogue." As an offering from the Orthodox Church to modern society, the academy remains open to all schools of thought and is accessible to everyone without discrimination.

¹ Like the monastery of St. John on the island of Patmos, the Dodecanese, and Mount Athos, the Church of Crete remained independent from the autocephalous (independent) Church of Greece, and is under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The Institute, which functions throughout year, has many areas of interest and activities. Listing them may help to provide a more specific context for the subsequent discussion of the OAC's attitudes to questions pertinent to the subject of this thesis.

Conferences are organised on the local, national and international level, each lasting from 2-3 days up to three weeks, and amounting to 250-270 conference days per year. In the first 30 years of its existence (1968-1998) more than 1,400 such conferences were held, 20% of them dedicated to the dialogue between science, ecology, and development on the one hand, and religious ethics on the other. Of the first 1000 (until 1988) 300 were local, 121 pan-Cretan, 137 pan-Hellenic, 310 bilateral (participants from Greece and one other country), and 132 international. At 346 conferences the subject matter was theological (ecclesiastical/inter-ecclesiastical/ecumenical), at 153 mixed (quasi-theological, quasi-socio-political), the remaining 501 were specialised.

Special programs for Christians of other confessions who wish to become familiar with Orthodoxy are coordinated by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as co-operation in inter-cultural and inter-religious matters of peace, ecology and social problems.

A program for the awakening of parish consciousness encourages active participation of the laity in the life of the Church at local level and more generally. Part of this program is the formation and promotion of the Fellowship of Cretan Theologians, which aims at a more effective testimony to Orthodoxy in education and society.

There is promotion of women's organisations and trying to motivate women to actively participate in Church and community life. Through active collaboration with women's groups in Crete the OAC's is working towards women's integration and equal participation in the professional and social life of the community.

A broad agriculture and cattle-raising development program, includes intensive training of farmers, the establishment of co-operatives, as well as the study of specific problems and the introduction of new forms of agriculture. In this direction, the OAC, the local diocese and the monastery of Gonia have established the Centre for Agricultural Development in the village of Kolymvari. assist farmers in the application of new methods of cultivation, the improvement of animal feed, and all their development initiatives.

The OAC advances new forms of alternative tourism (based on a deeper reflection of

development models) pursuing a higher quality of life in relation to the basic problems of social justice. The participants collaborate on a European and international level, and concern themselves with ameliorating North-South relations, special emphasis being given to third-world situations in their own society. Problems and perspectives in the relations between Greece and the EU are also discussed.

Seminars are held for Greek teachers living abroad, in co-operation with national services and other institutions. These programs include hosting children from the Greek diaspora, as well as supporting Greek workers abroad who wish to repatriate.

War-related problems are studied especially with respect to resolving crises in the Balkan and Mediterranean areas.

Critical consideration is given to Orthodoxy and other ideologies, proposals and challenges, and exchanges of views are arranged between conflicting groups through inter-party political participation.

The OAC organises international scientific conferences on the attitude of the Orthodox Church on developments in medicine, biology, genetics, physics and astronomy.

Education is the broadest area of OAC activities and includes a systematic higher-education program for adults. Co-operating with national and international high-school and university-student communities, the academy offers a variety of seminars for students and educators in several fields. It also organises specialised teachers' conferences, as well as establishing a foundation for financially supporting students from rural areas and young workers.

In the framework of inter-Church communication activities undertaken by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the OAC hosts official theological debates. It co-operates with the World Council of Churches, the Conference of European Churches, and the Association of European Academies. It has also developed a special educational program entitled Living Orthodoxy, designed for non-Orthodox clergy who wish to become familiar with Orthodoxy.

The basic features and lifestyle of the **Euro-Mediterranean Youth Centre (EYC)** resemble those of a traditional Cretan village – based on the principles of fellowship (*koinonia*) and creativity. The EYC exists to serve young people on the local, national

and international ecumenical level.

The name “Euro-Mediterranean” is not exclusive; it merely shows that the main purpose of the centre is the problems, needs and challenges of young people in Greece, and her general Mediterranean environment. The EYC devotes itself to today’s young people in the Euro-Mediterranean region who, according to the EYC committee, are confronted with new forms of spiritual and cultural identity that often result in ideological disorientation and confusion, social antagonism, unemployment, and insecurity. Unless they are given effective help to find a deeper meaning in life, they may reach for the ephemeral solutions of consumerism, chauvinism, and other escape mechanisms.

A great many of the young people are aware of this and ready to participate in projects designed to encourage a new life-style of real communication and the creative realisation of individual talents and mutual learning. They are ready to work for reconciliation, peace, brotherhood, justice, and responsible co-operation to protect all life on the planet. The EYC makes it possible for young people from different countries and cultural backgrounds to come together, to share, learn, confront problems together and look for suitable solutions. Specialised departments in the EYC focus on issues – i.e. family counselling, the care of marginalised or exploited young people, young handicapped, etc.

During the first eight years of the EYC’s existence, approximately 8000 young people from over 40 countries have participated in its various activities.

The **Institute of Theology and Ecology** (ITE) was founded by a 1991 decision of the OAC Board, following a proposal by director-general Papaderos in response to a request from Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew calling on everybody to become aware of the world’s ecological problems. The Institute works in collaboration with the Church, universities in Greece and abroad, and international organisations with similar objectives. The mission of the institute has been mainly:

- The publication of texts of ecological interest (lectures, studies) that have already accumulated at the OAC.
- A compilation of texts of ecological interest from the Holy Scriptures. A modern Greek translation and commentaries will accompany the original text so as to

make it more accessible to wider audiences, in particular students.

- Translation and publication of foreign theological and other texts with ecological content.
- Compilation of a comparative dictionary of theology and ecology. It will contain basic ecological terms, with analysis and comparison of their content as understood by the ancient Greek and the Orthodox tradition on the one hand, and modern science, technology, and political theory on the other. Such a dictionary is considered essential for the effective inter-scientific dialogue and the general study of ecological issues.
- Intensification of the ecological dialogue between theologians, technologists, economists, politicians and others, taking into account related inter-ecclesiastical and other initiatives and decisions (the ecumenical summits of Basel, Seoul, and Canberra, the World Council of Church's program on Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), similar programs of the UN, etc.).
- The development in particular of an inter-Orthodox dialogue on ecological issues under the guidance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.
- The endeavour to establish and develop inter-faith ecological dialogues – mainly between Christianity, Judaism and Islam – on the complexity of ecological problems of the Mediterranean so as to draw up a joint ecological charter of the Mediterranean, listing basic ethical principles and mutual affirmations for long-term co-operation toward the area's ecological protection.
- The teaching of ecological theory and practice, especially in the framework of the international-ecumenical activity of the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Centre.

This interlinking of theology and ecology mainly aims at encouraging Orthodox theologians to develop an interest in the protection of life in all its forms and of the natural environment generally, taking into account the relevant developments in science, technology, economics and politics.

It is also hoped that it will act as a creative challenge to scientists, technocrats, and politicians not to restrict themselves to a technocratic consideration of ecological problems but to look equally at the deeper ethical and spiritual dimensions – especially as

they affect the ecology of Crete and the broader Mediterranean region.

6.2 The OAC and Democratisation

Unlike other Orthodox organisations which define and justify their *raison d'être* in terms of restoring or protecting the true and exclusive message of religious life, the OAC's founding principles are by definition opposed to entrenchment, favouring a more inclusive and outward-looking strategy. This makes it more difficult to identify ideological and structural boundaries, since the more obvious ones are mostly rejected. However, the outward-looking strategy of the OAC is reflected by the parameters through which its affinities with democratisation will be assessed.

Although decision-making in the OAC is mostly controlled by high-ranking, middle-aged, (and of course all-male) Orthodox clergy and elites from the local and international community, the extent to which the laity is involved in its activities is significantly higher than one would expect in a relatively fixed and hierarchical institution. Both in the OAC's theological discourse and the multitude of its organised activities, a recurrent theme is the commitment to indiscriminate and popular participation. It seems more appropriate, therefore, to assess the concept of democratisation in relation to the inclusiveness of the opportunities provided for lay participation in the OAC's organised activities, rather than by looking at a possible democratic deficit in terms of accessibility to the internal administration.

The OAC's theological discourse makes frequent use of the key Orthodox term *diakonia* (service), which epitomises its approach to democratisation and the ground on which a variety of special programs are based. As we have seen, these include such varied concerns as the emancipation of women, ecological awareness (ITE), the integration of refugees and immigrants, poverty, racism, war and many others – diverse, but all concerned with social injustice. Let me clarify the active concept of *diakonia* before focussing on how such endeavours are realised and perceived by lay participants in the OAC.

The ancient Greek concept of *diakonia* means waiting at table and, in its extended

sense, providing for the maintenance of life. This was originally considered a lowly activity, suitable only for slaves. However, when it became related to the *polis* (as the service a citizen owed his city-state, or of a statesman carrying out the task entrusted to him without discrimination), to the cosmos (in the sense of what human beings as microcosm, must do so as not to disturb the unity and harmony of the whole world, the macrocosm), or to God (the wise man as God's servant, instrument, and witness), the term *diakonia* took on a broader meaning which soon appeared in early Christian writings and patristic literature. But *diakonia* in the sense of sacrificing oneself for the sake of another was still in its embryonic phase; to rule rather than to serve was still regarded as what best-befitted man. "How can a man who has to serve another possibly be happy?" asked the Sophists.

According to the OAC's director, what Jesus seeks is rather a service of spirit, a service by which men are declared innocent, which surpasses in glory anything known in the past. *Diakonia* as a basic Christian concept, means love for one's neighbour. It is itself the fruit of God's love for humanity, which in Jesus Christ and his sacrifice has revealed the essence of the true deacon. In this universal love *diakonia* is neither simply a distribution of alms nor service in the other's welfare, though this too is frequently recommended in the New Testament as an expression of love. True *diakonia* is the very essence of *Christian love in action*, a genuine service to all the human needs, material, emotional, and spiritual.

It is in this sense that *diakonia* applies to the Christian community's mission in the world. The OAC's ordinance for democratisation through the participation of the people as "Christ did not judge and discriminate. he identified himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the prisoner. 'Listen, you nations, listen carefully, you Christians! It is not with his own voice that the Lord speaks but through the mouth of slaves'." ²

An occasion in which such peoples' participation was most vividly demonstrated in the OAC's struggle for democratisation was during the summer of 1981. Ten years earlier the Greek Archbishop Ieronymos, appointed by and closely associated with the

² Basil the Great quoted in Papaderos 1978, p. 21

junta and a leading member of the brotherhood *Zoë*, had violated the independent status of the Church of Crete and transferred Eirenaios, the too liberal and troublesome director of the OAC, to Germany. The dictators' regime collapsed in 1974, and in 1981 the metropolitan seat of Kisamos and Selinon become vacant again.

Instead of Eirenaios, who was willing to return, the Cretan synod elected a less "radical" Bishop. This resulted in a strong wave of popular dissent, culminating in the occupation of the OAC, the headquarters of the diocese, and its several departments, by hundreds of villagers from the area. On 25 June Eirenaios' supporters elected a "struggle committee" and appointed representative groups from all villages to prevent access to the OAC on a twenty-four hour basis. Two days later the committee suspended services to the OAC and evacuated all employees from the premises. Greek and German television channels broadcast the events.³ A German news reporter commented: "The despots, as the Greeks call their Bishops, did not take the people into account. The people want Eirenaios. Only Eirenaios can open this door. Today, on Saturday the 30th of August 1981, in Kastelli, headquarters of the Bishop, there is agitation. Even in the Bishop's home it's the breath of conspiracy that's blowing, not the Holy Spirit. People have come in trucks from villages all over the province, ready to fight the Church of the despots on behalf of the Church of the people. "

The reporter then interviewed some of the demonstrators. They were adamant: "We want Eirenaios!", and "Only Eirenaios is going to be Bishop here", and "All the people want *him*... no body else. The entire diocese wants him. He's their father, their soul. He loves us. ... We all love him, he's done so much good!"

Eventually, pressure from non-ordained clergy and efforts by the local authorities, combined with the sheer determination of the common people, succeeded in restoring Eirenaios to his position as metropolitan.

Another democratic feature through lay participation are the monastic-communitarian interactions of the academy's life. Regardless of whether one of the conference participants is the President of France (as was the case when Mitterand visited) or a lay farmer from a nearby village, all may sit at the same table and share the

³ The German television company gave the OAC a videotape of the events.

same food. The conferences are designed in such a way that most of the time no scientific qualifications are needed to participate, so making them more accessible to lay people. A few examples will show how the OAC conferences promote democratisation, both in the choice of subject matter and in the way they are organised (i.e. by engaging and encouraging participation by ordinary people).

Of the approximately 700 conferences that took place between 23 January 1978 and 4 August 1988, no less than fifty were directly or indirectly related to finding ways of increasing women's participation in the economic and social life of the area. The OAC worked hard to ensure the practical implementation of conference resolutions by incorporating them in its projects. For example, in September 1980 the ministers of agriculture and foreign affairs came to the academy to address a congress on the introduction of a new, more productive species of olive tree. For thousands of years harvesting the olives was a particularly onerous task, undertaken mainly by women who were down on their knees in the winter rain, picking up the fruit. The question had been discussed at the regular meetings of Cretan women and the OAC, and eventually it was at the September 1980 congress that women, farmers, and politicians, reached a decision. Taking into account that the previous situation was against the dignity of women "who have the right to carry their heads as high as heroines of Crete", the old olive trees were replaced by a new "emancipated" type that can be harvested by men and women standing upright.

There are many other such examples of OAC initiatives concerning the general population – young people (EYC), the unemployed, foreign immigrants, the old, the poor and other underprivileged groups.

In the relationship of the OAC with other Christian denomination and religions, one of its founding principles is the promotion of inter-Church communication through the ecumenical endeavours of the Patriarchate, the World Council of Churches, and the Council of European Churches. For all that, things have not always gone smoothly. Papaderos, who considers the ecumenical movement a challenge second only to that of the godless governments in many countries today, compares it to a gadfly on the body of the Church, stinging, irritating and troubling it as Socrates once did the conscience of the

ancient Athenians. The reasons why the ecumenical movement discomfits Orthodox conventional wisdom have to do with the sensitivity historically surrounding relations between Orthodox East and Latin West, and the fact that the political outlook of ecumenicism challenges certain vested interests of Greece's religious, economic and political establishment.

The first point of friction is deeply rooted in the defensive nature of Orthodox nationalism, hardened in long historical experience. Since the crusades and then the Reformation, the meeting between Christian West and East have met mostly in the realm of proselytism, sometimes conducted by force or by exploiting the desperate conditions in which the Orthodox have found themselves since the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Given this historical background, the director-general explained, the process of reconciliation is, not surprisingly, sometimes undermined by those who view inter-Church communication and aid with suspicion and mistrust. The second point arises out of the first and concerns the political essence of inter-Church *diakonia*.

The OAC's ecumenical projects usually entail direct political implications (e.g. the fight for a better quality of life for the poor, for immigrants, etc.), which may occasionally clash with politico-economic forces and vested interests that depend for their own legitimacy on the prolongation of asymmetrical social relations and a status quo of prejudice. Let us give a few examples by way of illustration.

Between 1971 and 1975, the OAC invited a group of Mennonites from Europe and the US to cooperate with the local diocese in the establishment of a centre for agricultural development.⁴ Due to the specificity of their religion, the Mennonites rely almost exclusively on farming for their subsistence needs and have developed very sophisticated techniques of cultivation. The visiting groups found that the land that was to be brought under cultivation seemed ideally suited to growing cucumbers and tomatoes under glass. However, the area was practically depopulated because the one means of

⁴ The Christian cult of the Mennonites reject the culture of industrial and technological development and follow a life-style that has remained unchanged since the 18th century. One of the OAC's former scientific advisors devoted his Ph.D. thesis to relations between the Mennonites and the local population. See A. Vallianatos 1992.

survival for the people there was to find work abroad. The OAC invited the few farmers still living in the area to an initial information seminar for which they chose the title “Hope in the Desert”. A second seminar followed, then a third and many more, until the project had become a resounding success. Together with the European and American Mennonites and the local farmers, the academy formed a co-operative, hoping to persuade Cretans abroad to come home, now that there were jobs again and the chance to make a living. Many of them have done so.

The threefold orientation of the academy – ecumenicalism, ecology, development – met with considerable opposition from elites, wholesalers and even the middlemen who pocketed the bulk of the profits. This was the time of the military dictatorship in Greece, when any collective effort was regarded with suspicion as a possible communist plot. The wholesalers joined forces with a few junta sympathisers among the local clergy, and circulated a memorandum that charged the OAC’s co-operative with being crypto-communist, and their collaboration with Mennonites as anti-Orthodox and heretical.⁵ The charges were eventually dropped, mainly as a result of the co-operative’s enormous economic success and its popularity among the vast majority of the Cretans, as well as due to the fact that most of the alleged communists were US citizens.⁶

At the inter-Orthodox level, the OAC hosted numerous meetings and contributed to the general improvement of relationships among Orthodoxy world-wide, as well as between Orthodoxy and other religions. At the meetings of the Orthodox Task Force (in Crete, Nov. 1978), and Just Development for Fullness of Life: An Orthodox approach (in Kiev, 1982), the OAC representatives put forward a new concept of macro-*diakonia* (service to societies and their structures) and micro-*diakonia* (service by and to individual members) as a prolongation of the communion service, or as “a liturgy after the liturgy”.

⁵ The close relations between the archbishop of Athens and the junta allowed such accusations to take firm hold.

⁶ If the Mennonites were communist sympathisers, the CIA (which incidentally controlled the colonels in Athens), would not have allowed them be there in the first place. Once they had received permission, however, the heresy charge could do very little to send them away.

This new form of service is seen as part of the Church's influence on all aspects of society, social, economic, cultural, and political. "The Churches have a special God-given duty to work for the realisation of justice and peace, for the development of peoples and nations, and should be ready to defend human rights and condemn their violation."⁷

Moreover, such involvement challenges, at least in part, Huntington's increasingly cited civilisation paradigm which relegates the Orthodox political culture to the non-democratic civilisation fault line, mainly as a result of its absence from civil-society politics. It may be argued, of course, that the OAC, like the Ecumenical Patriarchate's outward-looking cultural logic, is an exception to the rule among the Orthodox Churches, with no significant resonance in the wider Orthodox context.

Concerning relations between the OAC and the official Church of Greece, the academy's strongest allegiances are with the Church of Crete, which includes five dioceses with their five Bishops. Interviewed by the author, director Papaderos said that the best relationships are with the Bishops of Chania and Heraklion, both of whom are OAC members. He also admitted that the two dioceses of Rethimno and Agios Nicolaos keep well away from the work of the academy, identifying more with the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece. Although none of the academy's members expressed any direct criticism with the Athens hierarchy, the OAC's overall practice and ideology stand as an indirect indictment of Church-State interpenetration, particularly since this prevents the Church from performing its democratic duties in civil society.⁸

With the Neo-Orthodox movement the OAC has had regular contacts, especially in the early 1980s when two conferences were held to examine the relationship between Marxism and Orthodoxy. The OAC president Bishop Eirenaios described them as a positive exchange of ideas with Greek intellectuals, and part of the academy's effort to "merge faith and *gnosis*".⁹

⁷ Vallianatos 1992, p. 102.

⁸ In my interview with the OAC scientific advisor Zorbas, I was told not to expect open criticism of the official Church ideology, since that might allow certain people to label OAC members as radical, heretics, or anti-Orthodox. Interview of 22 Jan. 1998.

⁹ Interview 24 Jan. 1998.

Later in the 1980s and during the 1990s, this communication was discontinued, largely as a result of the Neo-Orthodox shift of emphasis towards a more nationalistic interpretation of Orthodoxy. The OAC has had virtually no contact with the brotherhood *Zoë* or any other fundamentalist group in Greece, chiefly because of their close liaison with the junta regime.

Finally, under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the OAC organised two conferences on its premises, devoted to dialogue with Islam. The participants from both religions found it a very fruitful experience in terms of getting to know each other and breaking down the walls of prejudice and misunderstanding, but a more substantial mutual *diakonia* has not been possible because of the hidebound political strategy of the governments of both Greece and Turkey.

In addition to these intra-faith instances of working towards democratisation, the OAC is also arranging *activities beyond religion*, by making special efforts to bring about a more responsible and pluralistic presence of Orthodoxy in the social fields of ecology, science, the arts, and development.

Its Institute of Theology and Ecology (ITE) has consistently tried to find specific ways to increase people's awareness of the issues of ecology and peace. Its approach is interdisciplinary and ecumenical, because it believes that only through rapprochement of different areas of attention on a cross-cultural/ecumenical basis can there be a holistic and effective solution to both the ethical/spiritual and the technological/scientific dimensions of the problems in question.¹⁰

The late Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios (who was succeeded by Bartholomew in 1991), in a message on 1 September 1989 drew attention to the serious problem of the protection of the natural environment. He asked that every year the first day of September – already the start of the ecclesiastical calendar – be the day on which the Orthodox Church offers prayers for the protection of the environment. Two years later, in November 1991, the Patriarchate organised a pan-Orthodox conference on the

¹⁰ The ITE was the academy's response to certain pioneering initiatives by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to show that Orthodoxy cannot ignore ecological problems.

environment at the OAC. Apart from Bishops, theologians and environmentalists, the conference was also attended by various influential personalities including Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh, who delivered the opening address.

This was followed by two other major ecological symposia, one on the island of Patmos (1995) to commemorate the 1900th anniversary of St. John's Book of Revelations¹¹ and one on a ship travelling around the Black Sea (1997).¹² Both symposia attracted the participation of widely acclaimed scientists, environmentalists and theologians, all over the world, and were attended by leading members of the international community (e.g. Prime Ministers, Presidents of Republics, EU Commissioners, etc.).

Parallel with the worldwide reach of these symposia, much more localised and practical activities by the OAC combined Orthodox ethics with ecology, science, pacifism, the arts, and development. Apart from the awareness campaign undertaken by the ITE (mentioned earlier in this chapter), specific problems were tackled through the OAC's co-operatives at the Centre for Agricultural Development. For example, the small Cretan sheep were cross-bred with larger sheep from northern Europe in order to obtain a new type that is better adapted to the climate of the island, and which provides more milk, meat and wool than the indigenous breed. In another venture, Holstein cows were brought to Crete and fed not only on hay and straw (relatively scarce) but also on leaves from olive trees. Meanwhile products from the model farm are either sold through the co-operative all over Crete, Greece, and Europe, or they furnish the tables of the OAC, the EYC, and other episcopal establishments. According to German television, the OAC is comparable to Protestant and Catholic academies in Germany and elsewhere in terms of what subjects it concerns itself with and the manner of it doing so, but also quite different. As stated in its by-laws and the way it "serves", the OAC's *micro-diakonia*

¹¹ The proceedings of the symposium were published by the "Patmos Circle", a small but quite powerful and effective NGO in support of the Patriarchate.

¹² The title of the second symposium was "Religion, Science, and the Environment: The Black Sea in Crisis."

consists of a specifically Christian-Orthodox education of priests and ordinary people in the framework of patristic spirituality, so they can bear living witness to the Gospel in the modern world.¹³

On its 44 acres of land, thousands of young people from more than forty countries have come and gone to work and train in a variety of craft workshops, while living two central Orthodox concepts: fellowship and creativity. According to the head of the EYC, the guiding principle is to provide space and motivation for inter-faith and inter-cultural learning, and for the exercise of tolerance and mutual respect.

To much the same end the OAC has associated itself with the cause of demilitarisation and hosted the 44th Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs in June-July 1994, with the theme “Towards a War-free World”.¹⁴ The conference was attended by 139 natural scientists, social scientists, and public figures from 43 countries, as well as 25 members of student/Young Pugwash groups, and received papers to be read from then-UN secretary-general Boutros Ghalli, Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The OAC director in his own address described the academy’s objectives as parallel to those of Pugwash.

In this framework, the OAC also organised a specialist conference on Bioethics (Oct-Nov. 1997), to examine how advances in biomedical methodology have created bioethical dilemmas. The speakers were theologians, biologists, doctors, jurists, and sociologists, and special emphasis was placed on the Orthodox attitude to the human body.

A major interest of the OAC is the relationship between political ideologies and religion, as well as among one ideology and another. Many of its conferences focus on a critical consideration of ideological proposals and challenges, as well as on the facilitation of social dialogue between conflicting groups through inter-political

¹³ Information based on a videotaped German television documentary and a Greek translation of the German text.

¹⁴ Pugwash is a Nobel prize-winning scientific organisation devoted to the struggle against proliferation of nuclear weapons and the promotion of the ideals of pacifism.

participation. This pre-supposes a position of neutrality towards all the forces of the political/ideological spectrum which, combined with the OAC's active commitment and involvement in existing socio-political problems, becomes an extremely difficult and sometimes even dangerous task. In effect, the academy's commitment to social *diakonia* implies a rejection of a particular type of neutrality which, though it seems to be above parties, in fact is essentially partisan since it "allows the status quo to appear to be just as legitimate as the emancipatory basis of Christian commitment."¹⁵

According to Papaderos, "thanks to the social and political commitment of the World Council of Churches, and the theology developed as a result of wrestling with this commitment, many of us have come to see that Jesus' message was a clear rejection of the status quo and is directed to all human beings who are 'poor' or who have nothing and are nothing".¹⁶

An example will follow of how the OAC's political commitment to social liberation both encourages social dissatisfaction with those higher up on the social scale, and at the same time implicates the academy in a dangerous political game *vis-à-vis* the status quo. During the junta years, one of the OAC projects concerned the marketing system for citrus fruit. About 6000 families in Western Crete live mainly on the proceeds from growing the region's famous oranges. Both the farmers and the OAC were well aware of the fact that the market was controlled by wholesalers and middlemen who kept most of the profits for themselves, leaving the orange growers barely able to provide for their families.

When the academy began to discuss a co-operative marketing system with the farmers and organised a public vote in a number of villages to decide the matter, the colonels' government and the wholesalers unanimously condemned this action as un-Christian and crypto-communist. Several priests expressed doubts as to whether this kind of involvement was really Christian at all and, in the absence of American Mennonites to make nonsense of the charge of crypto-communism, the project had to be abandoned. It was as a result of this kind of political antagonism between the OAC and the dictatorship

¹⁵ Papaderos 1980, p. 90.

¹⁶ Ibid.,

that the President of the Academy and Bishop of the area was transferred to Germany.

Following the return to democracy in 1974, the OAC established communication with all parliamentary parties and organised regular meetings with party representatives in order to seek common solutions to the area's problems. In particular, the late Andreas Papandreou, founder of PASOK, and ND's honorary president and former Prime Minister Mitsotakis, were regular contributors to OAC conferences. With respect to the political Left, the academy initiated a constructive dialogue between Orthodoxy and Marxism, in which the stereotypes of Christian anti-communism and Marxist atheism were challenged in the context of Neo-Orthodoxy.¹⁷

6.3 OAC and Secularisation

The conflict between Church and State surrounding NS1700 on church property was essentially a bitter political dispute over the consequences of secularisation for Greece's national identity and political culture.

A crucial point that sets the OAC apart from the Church-State conflict is not that it avoids the issue of secularisation – which in fact occupies a central position in the academy's problematic – but rather that the OAC is relatively autonomous from both Church and State. It is instructive, therefore, to furnish not only the OAC's views on the secularisation debate, but especially to examine its position with regard to the political games of Church-State interpenetration. In doing so it should be remembered that, by not being economically and administratively dependent on either of the two institutions, OAC was able to adopt a much more moderate and objective position.¹⁸

This independence is in sharp contrast to the academy's position on questions that could challenge the Church-nation connection. Whereas for example the OAC is mildly critical of Church-State interpenetration inasmuch as it creates a democratic deficit in the Church's administrative structure, it is very much more so about the implementation of secularisation policies in education which might challenge the Church-nation connection

¹⁷ The minutes of these meetings were published in book form. See Makris 1983.

¹⁸ The OAC receives no financial support from the State and it is affiliated with the Church of Crete, which enjoys autocephalous status.

(i.e. the tradition that quintessentially Orthodoxy equates with the Greek national identity).

This is reflected in the views expressed by the OAC's monthly information bulletin *Dialogues of Reconciliation* (*Dialogoi katalagis*). The publication gave extensive coverage to the crisis of 1987, and an editorial in each issue stated the academy's views. The editor, who said nobody who was familiar with the real issues at stake and with the people involved was surprised by the conflict, then argued that it could be solved creatively only if the two sides committed themselves to a responsible and honest dialogue instead of seeking superficial arrangements and political deals (between Archbishop Serapheim and Prime Minister Papandreou). "There is no doubt that the crisis came as a result of accumulated ecclesiastical problems that had remained unresolved for decades. Vested interests in both institutions are responsible for the creation, prolongation, and accumulation of those problems, as well as a deep and extensive estrangement and alienation from our traditional and familiar institutions and way of life. This has resulted in a deep crisis in our national consciousness."

By shifting the emphasis to the Church-nation connection, he clearly suggests that, apart from problems related to the Church associating with the ideological-economic-political projects of the State (which Church-State separation would presumably end), the Church's role in the people's national consciousness and in "the fundamental institutions of this country" should be undisputed and inviolate. This implies that Church-State separation is not in fact feasible because historically the Greek people's national consciousness owes too much to the Church.

Reverting to his criticism of Church-State interpenetration, the editor urged the Church hierarchy to comply with the constitutional legislation, since failure to do so would be perceived by the public as a deliberate attempt to defy, not simply Law 1700, but the democratic process itself. Equally unacceptable to the State would be the enforcement of an obscurantist and outdated system of control over the Church's internal structure and administration. Invoking the decisions reached by the Cretan synod on the crisis, the editorial said this was "on the right track" and that its decisions reflect the views of "thinking Christians". The synod text echoed the academy's contention that

there are limits to secularisation. The OAC considered it misguided to reduce “this revolutionary opportunity for dialogue” to a legalistic debate about constitutional rights and political advantages. The integrity of the Church relies primarily on the “spiritual constitution” that is offered by the Holy Bible. This, the editor argued, is the highest criterion and reference that could “protect the leadership of the Church and the faithful against the highly attractive temptation to succumb to a completely secular set of criteria and motivations”.

The editorial concludes with two propositions: “Our Church, clergy and people, are called upon to reassemble their forces, not to fight a ‘battle of the giants’ with the State that is struggling to entrench its power and authority, but rather to revitalise the contemporary message of Orthodox spirituality and *diakonia*, which presupposes the modernisation of structures, methods, convictions, and mentalities in accordance with the only legitimate authority of the Church, Jesus Christ; and that the State should be obliged to rethink its own responsibility for the distressing state of our ecclesiastical affairs. We should dissociate ourselves from the sterile, legalistic way of dealing with the national and cultural identity of our people and ask: Where is secularisation to end? How far can they push the secularisation process of our ecclesiastical life without serious consequences to the life of the people and the future of the country?”¹⁹

6.4 The OAC and European Integration

The position of the OAC towards European integration – as that towards secularisation – again owes much to the academy’s relative autonomy from the position that informs the State-nation-Church interconnection. Affiliated with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the WCC and the local diocese, the OAC has been able to embrace an outward-looking strategy and a pluralistic logic on such issues as EU integration, foreign immigration, and the national issues. This does not mean that it openly opposes either the State or the Church approach to the above subject. It rather endorses a moderate version of the Church-nation liaison and clearly acknowledges the pivotal role of Orthodoxy in the survival of Hellenism through the centuries. On a more tactical note, however, the

¹⁹ Dialogues of Reconciliation, pp, 33-34, April 1987.

OAC is well aware of the fact that an overtly iconoclastic strategy and a complete failure to comply with the official, “national” line, would have serious repercussions and might result in the Academy’s marginalisation.

The comments and suggestions of its members, therefore, range from complete endorsement of the official political strategy (e.g. on the Cyprus question) to an indirect criticism of its implications for the political culture (e.g. re nationalism, populism, and racism). Overall, unlike the OAC’s direct involvement and active participation in other civil-society fields its strategy concerning the so-called national issues is on a more theoretical note.

While Huntington has pointed to a modern clash of civilisations as inevitable, the Ecumenical Patriarch as the spiritual patron of the OAC and a member, has invited representatives of many of those civilisations to a conference on peace and tolerance.²⁰ His opening address reflects very well also the academy’s line of reasoning. With respect to nationalism he noted that it “began as a positive force - it offered a new logic for the construction of democratic states. But it turned out to be ... the most destructive force in human history, killing 75 million human beings between 1914 and 1945 alone. We must ask ourselves boldly and honestly: Is it not time to rein in the excesses of nationalism?” At the time of this statement the war in Bosnia was in full swing.

On the role of the clergy the Patriarch said: “We are not immune to the forces of history but neither are we helpless before them. We must answer the fratricide and fragmentation of nationalism with the brotherly love and integration of ecumenicism. We must teach our people a tolerance that is ultimately based on respect for the sanctity and rights of individual human beings. Indeed, if there is one place where the spiritual and secular universes converge, it is in the individual, in the human person. We as people of faith have something to teach our secular colleagues: culture may be relative, but humanity is not. The modern way to bring about unity and peace is to extend the European Union, to open our borders to one another, and let people, capital, ideas and

²⁰ The global importance of this conference (in Istanbul, in Feb. 1994) can be seen in the messages of support from US president Clinton and Turkish president Demirel, as well as the secretary general of the UN.

products flow. Much has already been achieved in the political world, but politicians alone cannot heal the rifts brought about by extreme nationalism. Religious leaders have a central and inspirational role to play; it is we who must help bring the spiritual principles of ecumenicalism, brotherhood and tolerance to the fore. Indeed, this is a way that we of the cloth can help our colleagues in government. Our deep and abiding spirituality stands in stark contrast to the secularism of modern politics. The shortcomings of anthropocentric ideologies has left a void in peoples lives; the frantic pursuit of the future has sacrificed the stability of the past.”

The first occasion in the history of the Church when a synod was convened with nationalism/racism as the sole item on the agenda was as early as 1872 when the Great Synod of Constantinople officially condemned nationalism as a heresy and cause of schism.²¹ Of course, one can point to specific geopolitical and tactical reasons from both the past and present for the Patriarchate’s cosmopolitan outlook.²² Regardless of the historical details responsible for that condemnation, the decision is of particular interest for our study because in stark contrast to the State Orthodoxy of the Church of Greece, the OAC has a solid and legitimate theological, ecclesiastical and legal basis on which it could have safely and effectively answered the nationalistic interpretation of Greek Orthodoxy. It is true, of course, that the decisions of synods as well as the OAC’s functions in civil-society are bound to remain largely ineffective unless they touch the overall secular context and directly affect matters concerning the lives of peoples and nations. As the OAC director-general said, if these are to be vital forces for effecting major structural changes they must be appropriate to each circumstance”.²³

To this end, and while taking into account certain restrictions due to political

²¹ The concept which the synod used to describe this phenomenon was *ethnophyletismos*, a term which includes both nationalism and racism.

²² See chapter 1, Historical Background, on patriarchal opposition to Greeks and others who declared independent Churches and so stripped the Patriarchate of most of its power. Besides, since the Patriarch is a Turkish citizen and operates on Turkish soil this clearly rules out a more Greek-nationalistic approach.

²³ Papaderos 1978, p.36.

sensitivity, the academy has hosted numerous conferences on how to meet the evils of nationalism and racism. At the pan-Orthodox conference of 1978, the agenda included the following item: "The contribution of the local Orthodox Churches to the implementation of the Christian ideals of peace, freedom, fellowship and love among the peoples of the world, and to the elimination of racial discrimination." In February 1986 the inter-Orthodox preparatory commission dealt with the subject in depth, and prepared a paper in which, citing Biblical and patristic anthropology, it stated: "The Orthodox Church does not accept racial differences ... proclaiming the pressing need for total removal of discrimination and for ... combating all discrimination that is to the disadvantage of various minorities." The paper stresses that "appeals for solidarity among the peoples and for mutual fellowship remain empty words as long as hunger and absolute poverty destroy the dignity and sanctity of the human person, [while] the economically well-developed Christian world administers and distributes material goods unjustly, often even criminally, and so affronts not only God's image in all human beings, but God himself who has identified himself with them."

Recognising the extent of the OAC's efforts to promote tolerance and European integration without discrimination, the Greek Association of the United Nations has issued a *Cretan Declaration on Peace and Life* (March, 1992). Together with representatives from the OAC, the Churches of Cyprus, Germany, England and Australia, the association appealed among other things for "justice in the relations between East and West, especially after the rearrangement of large parts of Europe; and at the same time justice in the relations between North and South; and justice for the countless numbers of refugees and populations who have been uprooted from their ancestral land by poverty, injustice, violence and fear. We firmly believe that for the construction of the house of Europe, which we all envision and wish for, every 'stone', old and new, must find its proper place. If it remains based on these foundations and is built with the best that each one can provide, the house of Europe will be secure and spacious, and its people will be able to maintain their inner spiritual unity, without endangering their rich distinctiveness."

Our last example of conferences at the OAC for peace is "Peregrine Europe", a five-day international conference (March 1998) on migrants and refugees sponsored by

the EU program Giving a Soul to Europe. The problem it examined was the fact that, although EU member-states are legally obliged to protect the basic rights of all the peoples in their territory, in many instances they have not done so – especially when refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers are concerned. The broader meaning of European citizenship will be badly damaged and could even be lost if the tradition of Europe as a refuge for foreigners in need should be weakened. When the OAC was organising the conference it was in the hope that the participants would come to share the academy's belief "that beyond the necessary legislative and other measures, the first requirement is a philanthropic spirit."

The widely tolerant position of the OAC, must not however, be confused with syncretism or an acceptance of globalisation. Its director rejected both a discourse of cultural imperialism and the isolationism/entrenchment that born out of fear of cultural syncretism: "The whole world is exposed to a strong tendency towards cultural uniformity and appears to be moving in the direction of the so-called 'great society' which will undoubtedly be accompanied by serious cultural impoverishment. The initial phase of this process coincided with western colonial and cultural expansion, accompanied step by step by the western Church missions. Inspired by the dream of westernising the world, the deliberate intention was to spread the western pattern of civilisation and ideals of life."²⁴

Papaderos instead advocated a more realistic approach based on political pragmatism and Orthodox humanism. "[The point] that is important here is typically 'western': to escape from underdevelopment, the semi-peripheral nations must take a definite path, and this path involves the adoption of quite specific ideals, behaviour patterns, and methods – such as individual success, social advancement, material prosperity, an achievement-oriented educational system, expansion of levels and patterns of consumption, and so on."²⁵

With respect to the imperative nature of the aforementioned 'ideals', he emphasised the need for modernising Orthodox institutions to enable them to present a

²⁴ Ibid., p.37.

²⁵ Ibid., p.38.

meaningful alternative to the spiritual impoverishment and alienation that accompanies the culture of industrialisation, competition, rationalism, and individualism: “Politicians, technocrats and development strategists are quite uninhibited. They are undeterred by the inevitable human cost of such progress, by the destruction of traditional rhythms of life, expensive social structures, overstrain, the rat-race mentality, restlessness, insecurity, loneliness, subordination of all aspects of life to centres of power that are barely visible let alone amenable to control – in short, by the loss of the meaning of life. The threat is so radical that it calls for an equally radical change on our part if the Church is not to be pushed to the sidelines of history.”²⁶

6.5 The Theological Dimension

The OAC’s commitment to social action rests on elaborate theological premises. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the most recurrent concepts are those of *diakonia* (service) and *katalagi* (reconciliation): “Faith in Christ without *diakonia* loses its meaning... All other efforts to see Christ as a real presence, without coming into contact with the needy, is pure theory.”²⁷

According to the academy’s spokesman G. Lemopoulos, this missionary relationship with the needy, is an indispensable expression of Christian fellowship, a liturgy after the liturgy that could lead to the revitalisation of the testimony of each local Orthodox Church. It could mean the discovery of new forms of evangelism and testimony in missions to pluralistic societies, the diaspora, socialist contexts, developing Churches. This could be a starting point for deepening questions about the relationship between Church and society, Church and culture, faith and secularisation, and for more missionary initiatives like those of the OAC.

Always basing itself on the Gospels, the academy proclaims its commitment to social justice and liberation in theologically emphatic terms. This may be seen not only as a veneration of Orthodox theology, but also perhaps as a safeguard against interest groups that in the past have accused the OAC of adopting anti-Orthodox and even heretical

²⁶ Ibid., p.39.

²⁷ Maximos the Confessor PE 91 655, in Lemopoulos 1987.

positions and practices. This Christological consideration is evidenced in the way certain passages from the Bible have been rationalised in the context of the academy's views towards ecological awareness,²⁸ and of its denunciation of racial discrimination: "Orthodoxy utterly condemns the inhuman system of racial discrimination and the sacrilegious affirmation that is in harmony with Christian ideals. To the question, 'And who is my neighbour?' Christ replied with the parable of the Good Samaritan. Thus he taught us to abolish every dividing wall of hate and prejudice.... Every community should be free to develop its talents. Pluralism should be a rule in the life of every country. The unity of a nation, a country, or a state should be understood as encompassing the right for human communities to be different."²⁹

OAC director-general Papaderos describes the OAC's formative principle as the 'liturgical principle': "It expresses the quintessence of the Orthodox awareness of itself, of humanity, and the world. I realise, of course, that when isolated from the total context, such a concept can be misleading and even degenerate into a mere cliché and the fashionable use of certain words (e.g. 'eucharist', 'spirituality'). But I believe we can use the term 'liturgical' to show why and in what sense every Christian *diakonia* to the world, to culture, to politics, to human beings, must be a liturgical *diakonia*."³⁰

By the term liturgy Papaderos does not simply mean a form of public worship or the collection of formularies for its conduct, but a distinct life-style which while rooted in the holy-communion service of the Church, also embraces a person's entire life, being 'a liturgy after the liturgy'. He relates the academy's approach to the Church Fathers, saying that liturgy means bringing heaven to earth, as St John Chrysostom described after hearing the angels' heavenly choir in the very midst of the things of time. In the liturgical life-style "the Christian experiences in a very special way his or her personal participation in the *koinonia*, the fellowship of Christ. He knows that he is not to order his life around some 'law' or to carry out certain 'commandments', but to rise to a new way of living, in

²⁸ The OAC's interpretation of the Bible in a way that emphasises ecological awareness is available in the academy's Institute of Theology and Ecology.

²⁹ Lemopoulos 1987, p.369.

³⁰ Papaderos 1978, p. 22.

Christ... to be crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:19), to be raised and up and made alive by him (Eph. 2:6), to put on Christ like a garment (Gal. 3:27), to share as a child of God in the inheritance of God (Eph. 1:5, Rom. 8:15, Eph. 1:14, Pet. 1:4). He knows that he is embodied in a worldwide fellowship.”³¹

The OAC’s theological commentary puts forward a specifically Orthodox understanding of that fellowship without this affecting its ecumenical orientation. In the Orthodox liturgy after the liturgy “the Christian learns that she or he does not stand in the presence of God as an individual, concerned only with his or her own justification (Augustinian-Reformation anguish of mind). On the contrary, he/she stands as a person (*prosopon*) who exists in loving interpersonal communion with fellow human beings and therefore with God.”³² In functionalist terms, it is clear how the OAC adopted ancient forms and patterns of social life and filled them with new meaning in order to meet various needs and new social structures. The main characteristic of this rationalistic process is a solidarity in practical service which, despite the corrosive effects of secularisation and individualism, is perceived by the academy as a persistent feature of Orthodox social life that should be enhanced by a distinctively modern spiritual approach. The ancient Church, says Papaderos, and even monasticism, promoted a rich variety of forms and patterns of solidarity, whereby social as well as purely economic concerns could be satisfied in brotherly mutuality, often in surprisingly modern ways. In the Byzantine and post-Byzantine period of Ottoman occupation, “our people developed this coenobitic tradition further with remarkable success. Think of how even the modern co-operatives, so important for economic and social development generally, in many places originated and found their inspiration and creative power in precisely this coenobitic spirit and can still find it today, as a number of contemporary examples here in Crete can demonstrate.”³³

For the OAC, the commitment to social justice and liberation is best illustrated by the Church Fathers. Papaderos argues that the first lesson we must learn from them lies in

³¹ Ibid. p. 25.

³² Ibid, p. 26.

³³ Ibid, p. 27.

the very way their texts were written, “simply, directly, without high-flown rhetorical language.”³⁴

Then all of us should emulate the Church Fathers’ sense of *diakonia*. “They sided uncompromisingly with the hungry, the persecuted, the debtors, the oppressed, the deprived. They were not preoccupied with Church privileges, its stability, its good relations with the economic and political powers, not even with their own lives, which exposed most of them to persecution, martyrdom and death. A Church which is no longer willing to risk anything has perhaps already lost everything.”³⁵

The OAC also directly addresses the core of the rationalisation problematic that has for centuries polarised the Christian East and West with two opposing views on the mission of the Church – apophatic spirituality versus rational pragmatism. For the OAC the dilemma of contemplation versus commitment is a pseudo-dilemma: “To a false question no correct answer can be given.”³⁶ Papaderos clearly rejects the stereotypical view that Orthodoxy emphasises mysticism at the expense of missionary activity: “There is an over-readiness on the part of some to leave the theory, the contemplation, to us of the Orthodox persuasion, not without complicity on our part, and an equal readiness to corner ‘action’ for themselves.” He distinguishes between the ascetic-mystical values of Christian monasticism that are necessary for separating secular from everyday reality and obtaining a higher level of spirituality through contemplation, and the principles regarding the life of the Church as a whole, but recognises that “many of us make the mistake of turning such [monastic] recommendations into general principles.”³⁷

This does not mean that the OAC director subscribes to either position. His intention is to establish a “communicative bridge” between the monastic/ascetic life and the much more worldly vocation of the Church’s overall mission: “It cannot be said that this [contemplative] spirit is completely irrelevant to the solution of our problems. But on the other hand the cry of the hungry, the sick, the enslaved, the political refugees, the

³⁴ Ibid. p. 28.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 29.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 33.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 30.

disillusioned, the desperate of this earth gets louder and louder. Can the Orthodox Church ignore this cry, in the name of God? Is this a true dilemma or only an apparent one? Do we really have to choose between these two alternatives? When we Orthodox employ a Trinitarian terminology and speak of the mysteries of prayer, we often give the impression that we are irresponsibly turning our backs on the world, shutting our eyes and ears to it. Many of us when confronted with concrete tasks too easily take refuge in the twilight areas of mysticism and seek support for this in the monastic principles of apophatism, ignoring the testimonies of the opposing sense, also drawn from the ascetic life.”³⁸ Although he does not specifically mention it, the OAC director presumably here refers to, among other examples, the harmonious relationship between the ancient Monastery of Gonia and the academy, who have been working hand in hand in a Christian *diakonia* that is committed equally to spirituality and to action.

6.6 Biographical and Autobiographical Notes on Three Orthodox Leaders

Through personal narrative and biographical information this last sub-chapter gives an outline of three key personalities of the OAC whose life histories epitomise the academy’s approach to Orthodoxy and modernisation.

Alexandros Papaderos, director-general of the OAC (1968-), was born in Crete in 1933. As a ten-year old boy he witnessed the destruction of his village by the German occupation forces, and was captured and imprisoned for two years. In 1952 he graduated from the Ecclesiastical School of Crete and then studied theology at the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki (1952-56). In 1958 he was awarded a scholarship by the World Council of Churches and pursued post-graduate studies in the Theological School of the German University of Mainz (1958-64). The subject of his Ph.D. thesis was the intellectual debate between the Greek Enlightenment and Orthodoxy in the works of Koraïs and Oikonomos.³⁹

Throughout his studies, Papaderos participated in numerous missionary activities

³⁸ Ibid, p. 30.

³⁹ For details on this see chapter 1.

and developed strong ties with the WCC and the ecumenical movement. In 1965, he was appointed special advisor to the Pedagogics Institute of Greece, which is part of the culture ministry. In 1967 the junta suspended his duties there and he went back to Crete where he worked with his local diocese on setting up the OAC. In 1974 the new democratic regime appointed him to the post of special advisor for ecclesiastical affairs, a position he held uninterruptedly until his resignation in 1984.

We shall now draw on Papaderos' own account of certain formative experiences in his life, that are particularly pertinent to this study. The first one illustrates his early commitment to the values of ecumenicalism and *diakonia*.

"The day in October 1956 when I heard I had passed my final exam at the University of Thessaloniki was a red-letter day. What better excuse for a party! Some of my fellow students and I were enjoying ourselves thoroughly when another student suddenly burst into the middle of the fun shouting, "Buddha wants you! Hurry!" 'Buddha' was the nickname for our elderly professor of the history of religions who only a short time before had been congratulating me warmly on my final results. He had even awarded me a distinction. Somewhat surprised I went to his study, where I found a nervous group of fellow students, general agitation and a stern-faced 'Buddha' with nothing of nirvana about him. He was in a rage and shouted at me: 'you've failed my exam and you'll never pass it. Get out of my sight!'"

"What had happened? After two years it had belatedly come to the ears of our normally good-humoured professor that some of his students were working with Protestants, distributing clothing, food, medicine etc. to various parishes in the town. In his view this could mean only one thing: surreptitious infiltration, prosyletism of his own theological students, no less. For him it seemed that the hour of the Antichrist had come. When he questioned the other students about 'collaborators' and discovered that I, his favourite student, had actually been the instigator of the outrage, his disappointment boiled over. The background was this: A few years earlier some American Congregationalists had started an aid campaign in Thessaloniki. The city was struggling in the miserable aftermath of the war and the civil war that had followed it. As the Bishop of the city had entrusted me with the task of preaching in one of the worst hit areas of the city, I was confronted almost daily with an anomalous situation. I was trying with little

success to persuade the people to accept the strangers' gifts, which they feared would harm their immortal souls. With the Bishop's blessing I set about organising social work-groups among the students and continued to lead it until I finished my studies."

"After a somewhat stormy interview with me and a lengthy telephone call to the Bishop, he informed me not without visible signs of disapproval that I had passed after all. At that time, too, the American Farm School run by Quakers in Thessaloniki gave us eggs to distribute with the other goods. 'Buddha' was the first but certainly not the last to suspect these 'Protestant eggs' of proselytism and to paint the students social commitment 'red' even though those eggs came from 'capitalist sources'." ⁴⁰

The American writer Robert Fulghum, offers a vivid account of Papaderos' personality, and also provides a brief description of the rationale that permeates the OAC activities.

"An offer that comes at the end of college lectures and long meetings is 'Are there any questions?' I usually ask the most important question of all: 'What is the meaning of life?' You never know, somebody may have the answer and I'd really hate to miss it because I was too socially inhibited to ask. But when I ask, it's usually taken as a kind of absurd move, people laugh and nod and gather up their stuff, and the meeting is dismissed on that ridiculous note. Once, and only once, I asked that question and got an answer. One that is with me still. At the last session of the last morning of a two-week seminar on Greek culture, led by intellectuals and experts in their fields who were recruited by Papaderos from across Greece. Papaderos rose from his chair and made the ritual gesture: 'Are there any questions?' So I asked, 'Dr Papaderos, what is the meaning of life?' The usual laughter followed, and people stirred to go."

"Papaderos held up his hand and stilled the room and looked at me for a long time, asking with his eyes if I was serious and seeing from my eyes that I was. Taking his wallet out of his hip pocket, he fished into a leather billfold and brought out a very small round mirror, about the size of a quarter. And what he said went like this: 'When I was a small child, during the war, we were very poor and we lived in a remote village. One day, on the road, I found the broken pieces of a mirror. A German motorcycle had been

⁴⁰ Slask 1986, p. 92-93.

wrecked at that spot. I tried to find all the pieces and put them together, but it was not possible, so I kept only the largest piece. I began to play with it as a toy and became fascinated by the fact that I could reflect light into dark places where the sun would never shine. As I became a man, I grew to understand that this was not just a child's game, but a metaphor for what I might do with my life. I came to understand that I am not the light or the source of light. But light, truth, understanding, knowledge, is there, and it will only shine in many dark places if I reflect it. I am a fragment of a mirror whose whole design and shape I do not know. Nevertheless, with what I have I can reflect light into the dark places of this world, into the dark places in the hearts of men, and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise. This is what I am about. This is the meaning of my life'."

"Much of what I experienced in the way of information about Greek culture and history that summer is gone from memory. But in the wallet of my mind I still carry a small round mirror. Are there any questions?"⁴¹

Metropolitan Eirenaios (Galanakis), *President of the OAC* (1968-), was born in Crete in 1911. Eirenaios (which means 'peaceful' in Greek) studied theology at the University of Athens (1933-37). In 1940 he declined a scholarship for post-graduate studies in Germany in order to join the resistance against the Nazi occupation. In 1943 he was arrested by the Germans and sentenced to death, saved only by the personal intervention of the Bishop of Crete. In 1946 he became a priest and taught at the Ecclesiastical School of Crete. Between 1950 and 1954 he was in Paris and Germany on a scholarship for post-graduate studies in practical theology and sociology. Back in Crete, Eirenaios edited the ecclesiastic magazine *Anagenesis* ('Rebirth') and engaged in several missionary activities. In 1957 he was elected Bishop of the diocese of Kisamos and Selinon, where in 1965, prior to the OAC, he founded five ecclesiastical boarding schools, a school for agricultural education, a technical school, a school of printing and a school for the disabled.

In addition, Eirenaios associated himself with pioneering efforts to strengthen the

⁴¹ Fulgham 1989, p. 172-177.

Cretan economy through forming large co-operatives. Prompted by the disastrous sinking of the ferryboat *Heraklion* in Dec.1965, he spoke of the necessity for the creation of a Cretan shipping line, and led the discussions which finally resulted in ANEK, the Maritime Company of Crete. The venture proved to be an enormous economic success and the model for many more co-operatives that followed, bringing the management of Cretan economic resources closer to the people. Such overtly democratic convictions and practices prompted the junta to eject Eirenaios from the metropolitan see, which led to his fleeing to Germany. This triggered a wave of public dissent that ended with his eventual return and re-enthronement in 1981.

As early as 1962, at the third general summit of the WCC in New Delhi, Eirenaios voiced strong concern for the promotion of ecumenical dialogue. Since then most of his efforts have been realised through the framework of the OAC. Although in his late eighties, Eirenaios is still remarkably active and passionately committed to his responsibilities both in the diocese and the OAC. In a brief interview with this author he expressed the need to “re-enchant the world” through the co-operation of the people of faith and their dialogue with a new dynamic wave of Greek scientists and intellectuals who are “more open-minded than their seniors”, and therefore “more likely to find a space for Orthodox spirituality in the 21st century.”⁴²

Patriarch Bartholomew, *Member of the OAC*. His All Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch is first among equals of the branches of the Orthodox Church, whose world-wide congregation totals approximately 200 million believers. Son of a Greek barber, he was born Dimitrios Archondonis on Gokceada (*Imbros* in Greek), a Turkish island near the Dardanelles. Bartholomew, aged 59, was enthroned in January 1991 as the Church’s 270th Ecumenical patriarch. Like his predecessors Athenagoras in the 1960s and Dimitrios in the 1970s and 1980s, Bartholomew’s primary concern is to continue the dialogue and reconciliation with the western Churches, as well as the overall modernisation of the Orthodox Church’s outlook to society and *diakonia*. Although widely acclaimed as a remarkable

⁴² Interview conducted on 20 Jan. 1998

personality and a powerful orator whose agenda includes regular contacts with leading world figures (e.g. former President Clinton), his authority is strongly affected by two circumstances. The first is the fact that the Patriarchate is officially an institution of the Turkish state and is hence vulnerable both to anomalies in Greco-Turkish relations, and to manipulation by the internal political games of the Turks to sustain the nationalist contention that more freedom to Orthodoxy may jeopardise Turkish national sovereignty. The second serious obstacle is the tendency of the Orthodox Church, nourished by the idea of its nation-based autocephaly, to slide into intolerance and rabid nationalism. We have seen how even in Greece, for a long time the Church's western, non-communist outpost, Orthodox officialdom remains vociferously against any change to the country's constitution that would grant equivalent status to other creeds. The ability of the Patriarch to discourage such leanings gives him a critical role to play in Europe's future, and Bartholomew has indeed devoted himself to the enhancement of the Patriarchate's ecumenical outlook by speaking out strongly against nationalism and cultural intolerance.

The excerpts from various interviews that follow show that Bartholomew's basic positions have a striking affinity with the OAC approach.⁴³

On the dialogue and reconciliation with Rome, the Patriarch argued: "The dialogue clearly has as its further aim the union of these two ecclesiastical traditions. We reiterated it [this desire] in our meeting with the pontiff in Rome in 1993. The point at issue is not whether one or the other will compromise their position, but rather that we should come together on common fundamentals and try to expunge those factors which led to the separation in the first place. There are great expectations that the year 2000 should culminate in certain actions by Christian Churches. This expectation is directed with particular intensity to the Churches of the Elder [the Vatican] and the New Rome [Constantinople]."

To the question from *Time magazine* "What are some of the major challenges the Orthodox Church faces as it heads into the third millennium?" the Patriarch replied: "The greatest problem for the Churches in the hitherto communist countries is that they must

⁴³ Excerpts from interviews with *Time magazine* (5 May 1997), Greek television, channel 1 (14 Jan. 1996), and from Olivier Clement's book *La Verité vous rendre libre* (1996).

encompass whole masses of people who have been saturated with the ideology of an atheistic totalitarianism. Our venerable brother Patriarch Pavle of Serbia has recently spoken on this very point, saying if his country and his Church have been living in tragedy as a result of the fratricidal war in the former Yugoslavia, it is because these same people lived for decades without any Christian ideals. We want to make clear that the Orthodox perception of 'nation' contains no element of aggression and conflict among people. We condemn all nationalistic fanaticism as it can lead to divisions and hatred among peoples, the alteration or extinction of other people's cultural and religious particularities, and repression of sacred rights and human dignity."

Later the Patriarch was asked to comment on where the Orthodox Church stands on issues that attract so much attention in the Catholic Church such as contraception, abortion and the ordination of women. He said: "According to a long-held tradition, the Orthodox Church avoids dictating or making categorical decisions of a social or ethical nature." Elsewhere, he rejected "the dictation of ethics, the prohibitions, the indiscreet invasion of unmarried elders in the private life of couples." Such positions "cannot but negatively interfere between contemporary people and the message of the Bible." Regarding abortion he suggests that it is better to avoid it, but he acknowledges that in certain circumstances of extreme despair, an abortion might be the less damaging solution.⁴⁴ As concerns the ordination of women, Bartholomew referred to an OAC conference in 1989 which focused on the position and role of women in the Church: "Among a variety of perspectives was an advocacy for the reinstatement in our liturgical practice of the order of deaconesses. However, the ordination of women presents a problem that extends across historical, canonical and theological considerations. Therefore, the Orthodox Church is not in a position to accept it." Time journalist Wilde then asked, "Why are you called the 'Green Patriarch'?" Answer: "We are deeply troubled by the paradox that although global consciousness has been raised and numerous efforts are in progress, the environmental crisis has reached alarming proportions. We must choose, either to make it [the environment] reflect greed and ugliness, or to use it in such a way that its beauty shows God's handiwork through ours." He then referred to the

⁴⁴ Interview in *Le Monde* and Clement, 1985 see 6.2 above.

various initiatives undertaken by the Patriarchate, like the proposition that September 1st each year should be a special day of prayer for the environment, and the two large international ecological symposia that have been held.

Finally, Bartholomew was asked to comment on relations between the Patriarchate and the Turkish government. At a time when there is an alarming resurgence of institutionalised nationalism in Greek political culture as well as in the Greek Church itself, his reply presents a challenge: “We have lived side by side with Muslims and Jews and we have developed trusting relationships with both. It is our belief that Orthodox Christians have a special responsibility to assist in East-West rapprochement. Like the Turkish Republic, we too have a foot in both worlds.” Later on, referring to certain unresolved issues, such as the closing-down of the theological seminars on the island of Halki near Istanbul, he expressed the idea that the seminary’s reopening would be very positive for the European image of Turkey, a sign of genuine respect for religious freedom.

The final question was: “There was a time when the Patriarchate operated in a state of paranoia *vis-à-vis* the Turkish state. Is this still true?” And the reply: “I am for *glasnost*. I have created good relations with the Turkish people, businessmen, journalists, artists, and politicians. Why not? I speak freely and openly. If the Church faces a threat in Turkey today, it comes not from the State or from the Muslim mainstream but from the handful of fundamentalists. Fundamentalism is a danger not just in Turkey, but in Oklahoma City, Paris and Tokyo. A war in the name of religion is a war against religion. Religious extremists and terrorists may be the most wicked false prophets of all. They steal more than life itself; they undermine faith, which is the only way to break the cycle of hatred and retribution.” Of course, when the Patriarch addresses a Greek public his moderate views are cautiously presented in a framework of *Realpolitik* negotiations, rather than solid faith in the Christian ideals of peace and reconciliation. For example, in an interview on Greek television, he spoke on the advantages for Greece in the political and economic sphere if a more moderate policy *vis-à-vis* Turkey is sought and implemented. When the interviewer noted, “You spoke openly in favour of Turkey’s entry in the EU, but this has met with rather ambivalent sentiments in Greece,” the Patriarch replied: “Simply with Turkey in the EU, automatically, or at least quite easily,

all the big and serious problems troubling the Patriarchate and the Greeks in Constantinople would be resolved. [With Turkey in the EU] we shall see many more Greeks coming back to rejuvenate the ancient *Polis*⁴⁵, a community now on the brink of extinction.” He also mentioned the Greek entrepreneurs who would be able to take advantage of a new and vast market. Finally, Bartholomew praised the late Turkish president Ozal for his actions in this direction and invoked his contention that “friendship and cooperation” between Greece and Turkey must start with the commercial and tourist branches and then gradually move to cultural exchanges and finally to political progress.

⁴⁵ Greeks refer to Istanbul either by its Greek-Byzantine name *Constantinoupolis* or simply as *the polis*, expressing their perennial conviction that Constantinople is the greatest and so the prototype *polis* (city) for the whole world.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: GREEK-ORTHODOX POLITICAL CULTURE
AND MODERNITY

The aim of this last chapter is to furnish an up-to-date account of modernity with respect to the Greek-Orthodox political culture. Based on our empirical research, it will show how the integration of political culture and religion, specifically eastern-Orthodox Christianity, is affecting the process of modernisation in Greece.

We shall begin with a summary and comparison of the arguments presented in Part I and Part II, explore how they link up with each other, and finally examine the extent to which our findings raise broader issues concerning the three basic concepts employed throughout –secularisation, democratisation, and westernisation. The following questions will be asked:

- What is the relevance of our findings on Greek political culture for a general theory of secularisation?
- What is their relevance for a general theory of the nature of democracy in modern Greece?
- To what extent are religion and Orthodoxy responsible for the existence of a wider democratic deficit in the Greek political culture?
- Similarly, to what extent is political interference responsible for a lack of institutional differentiation in the Greek political culture, and by extension for the inability of the Greek Church to play a more constructive role in the development of civil society along modern, democratic and pluralist terms?
- What is the relevance of our findings for the general concept of modernity and modernisation? Should modernisation and westernisation be differentiated?
- Is there any inherent incompatibility between eastern Orthodoxy as a religious system, and civil society as an ideal-typical communicative logic in a modern democratic pluralist discourse?

Last but not least, the concluding chapter will attempt to identify new topics for research by identifying new opportunities in the analysis of Greek political culture.

7.1 Concise comparison of Part I and Part II.

The overriding theme in both parts of the thesis is to show major interconnections between Church and politics in post-dictatorship Greece, and perhaps contribute to a dialogue on how Orthodoxy can constructively participate in Greece's future within Europe.

The most important theoretical implications of the thesis for the Greek case are (i) revision of the secularisation and modernisation project and (ii) the primary importance of the concept of political culture, and the need for a rigorous analysis of the role religion plays in political culture. These questions were analysed in terms of their theoretical presuppositions and empirical reality.

In *Part One*, the historical background of the Greek-Orthodox political culture and the subsequent analysis of Church-State relations during the 1980s and 1990s demonstrate that the origins of today's complex relationship between Orthodoxy, politics and the West go back to Byzantine and Ottoman times. Some of the historical events and traumas that unfolded during that period are still reflected in the modern Greek political culture.

As the Greek-Orthodox culture gradually became estranged from its Latin western counterpart, and while religion affected the constitution of other institutions including the State, the tenets of Orthodoxy were manipulated to cement social order and promote nation-building. The religious and ethnic nationalism that emerged in the Ottoman period and brought Europhile modernists and Orthodox traditionalists into conflict during the Greek Enlightenment is still alive as part of the cultural-identity debate (western versus Orthodox) that has been going on for the last 60 years and today affects the issues of secularisation, democratisation, and westernisation.

More specifically, although the PASOK socialist government attempted to change Church-State relations through liberalising social legislation and restructuring the organisation of the Church along participatory, democratic lines its catch-all tactics limited its success. It proved too confusing to combine deep and profound changes towards socialism with keeping intact Orthodoxy's traditional role in the national constitution of Greek society. The situation has become even more difficult for the State since 1995, when a spectacular change in the leadership of the Church coincided with a change in the leadership of the government and its orientation towards a more Eurocentric political and cultural strategy. The charismatic new Archbishop is openly defying the government's purview to define the nation's eurocentric strategy, and by advocating

nationalistic political ideas leaves no doubt of the political power of the Church to influence Greek public life.

The Archbishop's uncompromising tactics have brought to the surface the power-balance between Church and State, the two most important Greek institutions, and has provoked a profound re-examination of the meaning of national identity in contemporary Greece. In short, the Simitis government's modernisation and Eurocentric stance has engaged the Archbishop in a major debate over his right to express political views, and pointed the need for reforms within the Church towards democratisation, modernisation, and harmonisation with the rest of the EU. His successful resistance to Eurocentrism and secularisation has made it very clear, however, that modernisation and Europeanisation in Greece cannot avoid the involvement of the Church and cannot disregard the privileged position of the Orthodox religion in the people's consciousness.

In *Part Two* these historical and theoretical presuppositions and observations were evaluated in the context of three case studies of contemporary Church-related movements, fundamentalist, Neo-orthodox and cosmopolitan respectively. Analysis of these three versions of the Orthodox political culture again illustrates how in Greece politics and religion are inextricably interconnected, with Church and State the primary institutional fronts for defining what it means to belong to the national collective.

As the result of interrelated reasons – such as the unprecedented popularity of the Archbishop's eurosceptic nationalism, public insecurity with regard to globalisation and EU cultural integration, and the effects of a massive influx of non-Orthodox immigrants into Greece – fundamentalist politicians and religious groups no longer identify only with the extreme Right, and have become incorporated into the mainstream political and cultural picture, under the new umbrella of the “patriotic” social faction that cuts across the political spectrum. This introduces a totally new dimension, inasmuch as the traditional parties, ideologies, coalitions and rivalries are reshaping themselves according to their position on the role of the Church in Greek politics, and the role of Orthodoxy in foreign policy.

This merging of political culture and religion in Greece means that identity issues and cultural dilemmas have become entwined with ideological and extraneous issues, such as foreign policy. Inasmuch as the Archbishop and the patriotic political faction manage to attract popular support and media attention, forces claiming allegiance to political Orthodoxy will inevitably influence relations between Greece and the West.

Under the Archbishop's leadership and the patriotic political umbrella, the Neo-Orthodox thinkers and their concepts also provided support for opposition against the prevailing attitude within the government to resort to what is criticised as a conciliatory strategy on national issues (e.g. reaching a compromise with Turkey over Cyprus, or closing the "Macedonian question").

Perhaps the most striking instance of Greece being a prime example of the interpenetration of religion and political culture is the transformation of the hitherto internationalist communist party into part of the "patriotic" Helleno-centric faction. Neo-Orthodox politicians and intellectuals mediated this transformation, seeing it as the combination of a critique of the western paradigm with a leftist quest for independence and a nationalist quest for a pure authentic culture. As a leading member of this coalition, the Archbishop cultivates strong ties with Neo-Orthodoxy and has no compunction to unite with communists, nationalists, and anarchists in an "unholy" front against westernisation and globalisation.

A different embodiment of the Orthodox political culture, not negative *vis-à-vis* the West and fostering a positive role for the Church in a largely secular and multi-cultural environment, is the Orthodox Academy of Crete (OAC). Independent of both the Athens Church hierarchy and the State, it co-operates closely with the Patriarchate, the World Council of Churches and the Council of European Churches.

As regards secularisation and democratisation, the OAC encourages lay participation in its activities and has developed a wide network of co-operative efforts with civil-society on matters of ecology, science, education, and gender equality. It strongly advocates the concept of Christian fellowship as an antidote to nationalism. The academy's inter-faith dialogues make it a mediator between the Orthodox Church and international politicians, and this alternative aspect of the Orthodox political culture is endorsed by the Greek government's Eurocentric forces.

The OAC's version of Orthodoxy is less influential however than the one championed by Archbishop Christodoulos. Fear of political costs and the clientelist structure on which most Greek politicians rely means that Orthodox activism that does not base itself on Church-nation-State interpenetration will not receive the political support it needs to have any real impact on the Greek political culture.

7.2 The Secularisation Thesis in the Greek Context

What is the relevance of our findings on the Greek political culture for a general theory of secularisation? In brief: they affirm the increasingly cited contention that secularisation constitutes a “doctrine more than a theory”, based on “presuppositions ... rather than a systematic set of interrelated and empirically tested propositions.”¹ We have seen that in Greece religion plays a strong role in a supposedly secular society and that secularisation is far more useful as an ideal type than as a description of Greek reality. As Casanova has shown, religion has re-emerged as a vital force in the world political order which is a further indication that “... religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatised role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularisation had reserved for them.”²

The main problem explored in the thesis is the Church’s ability to control the government’s secularising policy, and the tendency of major political forces to rely on Church support in return for professing anti-secular political convictions. The political development that encapsulates the secularisation debate relates to Church-State separation, which involves socialisation-nationalisation of Church property, liberalisation of the Civil Code (e.g. introducing civil marriage), and implementation of reforms towards a more secular education.

Secularisation in terms of institutional differentiation through Church-State separation in Greece has until now been conducted so equivocally that Church and State here managed to reach a compromise: the official bond between the two institutions remains unimpaired, while some reforms are conceded in line with EU policy. Another interesting circumstance in attempting institutional differentiation between Church and State in Greece is that the threat of abolishing the Church’s official status has actually strengthened its position in politics, so that it can successfully mobilise its resources to oppose certain reforms.

This raises concern over the desired outcome of separation, given that the Church’s campaign against secular reforms was based on the mainly political sentiments of patriotism and the Orthodox identity of the Greek political culture. This means that if the Greek government decided to implement Church-State separation, it could unleash a

¹ Hadden 1987; cf. Casanova 1994, p.7.

² Casanova 1994, p. 5.

reaction in the relations between religion and the Greek identity that might result in unprecedented political interference of the Church in public life. The Greek case seems to confirm Dahrendorf's contention that, compared to the USA, the entire European political system was characterised by state superimposition, wherein one institutional system overlays another and each had a hand in the other.³ Church, state, education, welfare, the law, and the like were so intertwined that separating them caused a significant shock to all sectors of the system from which religion was not immune.

The interpenetration of religion, the state, and civil society has had a profound impact on religious movements and organisations arising in Greece, not surprisingly from within the existing political and cultural framework. Their advocates did not attempt to denounce worldly affairs in favour of religious practices but actually attempted to redefine and control politics. Contrary to the situation in western Europe and the U.S., the three case studies of Part Two are not new religious movements expressing a new wave of religious pluralism (e.g. New-Age groups), but principally quasi-secular reform movements addressing essentially political issues through Greek-Orthodox viewpoints. Greek secularisation, therefore, does not mean institutional differentiation and the independence of civil society from religion, but the collision of the secular and the religious, and the concomitant colonisation of the spiritual by the political and vice versa.

It is not that the findings of the thesis invalidate the effects of secularisation, but rather that they situate the debate in the context of advanced modernity. Officially, the Greek Church may no longer presume to impose its views either in public affairs or concerning individuals. To ensure that he is heard, Archbishop Christodoulos introduced a new, quasi-religious/quasi-political discourse to match the political and cultural dilemmas. The Orthodox Church and its affiliated movements have had to explore new alliances, particularly with the political Left and the anti-globalisation group, on the basis of their mutual aversion towards capitalism, consumerism, and the "new world order".

The literature on post-dictatorship Greek politics and history largely endorses the assumption that Orthodoxy and the Church were relatively insignificant in affecting the nature of Greek modernity and democracy. In this view modernisation equals secularisation and the concomitant marginalisation of religion. In short, secularisation emancipates society from religious and irrational control over human reason by

³ Dahrendorf 1959.

marginalising traditional values and replacing them with rational concerns and efficient, meritocratic, and specialised forms of social life. With its rational, structural and functional differentiation of the social system, secularisation renders faith a matter of individual choice from among a range of worldviews and belief systems.

Implicit in the secularisation thesis is the normative assumption that secularisation and the reduction of the Church's authority are outcomes of politics and a result of the growth of civil society. Notwithstanding the formative influence of the secularisation project on the understanding of Greek history and politics, the prevailing conditions of secularity and modernity are not peripheralising religion. On the contrary. The historical and contemporary affinities between religion, the State, and the political culture have allowed their deep interpenetration and initiated a process of dynamic transformation resulting from their mutual interaction.

Moreover, due to their common participation in the construction of a concept of collective identity that includes unresolved inconsistencies related to the imperfect co-existence of secular and religious aspects, any attempt by either State or Church to change its role *vis-à-vis* the other could be interpreted by the public as a destabilisation of those psychological, emotional, and cognitive bonds that constitute the national collectivity. As the thesis has shown, the most contentious episodes in Church-State relations under PASOK were interpreted precisely in these terms by the principal actors on each side, which helps to explain the failure to bring about institutional change and emphasises the capacity of Orthodox culture to determine Greek politics.

7.3 Democratisation, Westernisation and Modernisation

What is the relevance of our findings for a general theory of the nature of democracy in modern Greece and to what extent are religion and Orthodoxy responsible for a wider democratic deficit in the country's political culture? How do these findings affect the general concept of modernity and modernisation, and should we differentiate between modernisation and westernisation?

Similarly, to what extent is political interference responsible for a lack of institutional differentiation in the country's political culture, and by extension for the ability of the Orthodox Church to play a more constructive role in the development of Greek civil society along modern, democratic and plural terms?

The above questions were assessed by exploring the concept of Greece's democratisation at three levels. Firstly, an internal dimension concerns the reaction by the Church and its associated movements to the government intention to upgrade the role of laity, and promote a gradual Church autonomy from the State and a generally more inclusive internal Church structure; secondly, an external dimension of democratisation relates to the degree of Church tolerance towards religious and ethnic minorities; and thirdly, a purely political dimension of democratisation intended to reduce political interference in Church issues.

This four-way interpenetration of Church, nation, State, and political culture means that human and civil rights derive from the State and are not inherent in individuals. The limited conception of citizenship and the rights of the individual, which results from such an inflated understanding of the role of the State has commensurately affected the Greek culture's attitude to democracy and politics. Implicit in the logic of the powerful State-Church relationship is a conception of democracy that accords limited value to the role of institutions as structures mediating between the state and the citizen (i.e. an active civil society), shows a distinct preference for small and familiar structures compatible with reciprocal personal relationships (clientelism), and has a formal rather than a substantive understanding of the mores and values of democracy (formalism). This idiosyncratic view of democracy and the defensive modernisation of Greek society are common characteristics of late-developing societies. They reflect the political culture's ambivalence towards the liberal, western model of socio-economic change, and manifest themselves in a search for "alternative" routes to modernity, giving further credence to Eisenstadt's assertion that "Modernity and Westernisation are not the same thing."⁴

Another basic conceptualisation relates to the position of the Church and of Church-related movements towards westernisation, which was again investigated at three levels – the complex issue of modern Greek cultural and religious identity as it emerges from the wider affinity between tradition and modernity; the position of the Orthodox political culture *vis-à-vis* the prospect of EU integration and globalisation; and specific foreign policy issues (i.e. the so-called "national issues") – in order to assess whether Orthodoxy has an important role in Greek political culture, and the extent to which the

⁴ Eisenstadt 2002, pp. 2-3.

existence of an Orthodox political culture presents serious obstacles to the country's western political orientation (i.e. commitments within NATO and the EU).

While partially overlapping, these three levels are analytically distinct and may vary independently. For example, Church-State separation is not an essential precondition for democratisation of the Church and vice versa, and westernisation does not inevitably lead to the marginalisation of religion. In Greece, the links between religion and politics are reflexive and mutually transformative as the interpenetration of religion and politics makes itself strongly felt in informing and articulating cultural concepts of collective identity.

7.4 The “Civilisation Paradigm” in the Greek Context

On the model of the ancient Greek *polis* and Habermas' notion of the public sphere, civil society may be defined as a “non-state sphere comprising a plurality of public spheres which are legally guaranteed and self-organising”, and as the “public space where citizens discuss politics and form public opinion, [and which] acts as a control upon the ruling structure organised in the form of the state”. In other words, civil society has three constitutive features: autonomy from the state, emphasis on the public rather than the private, and conscious pluralism or toleration of a multiplicity of organisations and interest groups representing a range of worldviews.⁵

Assuming that civil society is of pre-eminent concern for democracy and taking the above three elements as necessary for the construction of a vital civil society, it is possible to explore the question of whether or not there is any inherent incompatibility between eastern Christianity as a religious system on the one hand, and civil society and democracy on the other. Moreover, careful consideration of this issue might generate some useful alternatives to Huntington's “civilisational paradigm” which, although it barely pays attention to eastern Christianity, still manages to locate societies with an Orthodox tradition on the negative side of the democratic/non-democratic fault line.

Huntington's basic hypothesis is that, now that the cold war is over, the fundamental source of conflict will be neither ideological nor economic, “The great

⁵ Prodromou 1994, p.120.

divisions among humankind will be cultural.”⁶ Among the factors that differentiate one culture and one civilisation from another he identifies religion as the most important of all.

The growth of civilisation-consciousness is enhanced by the ambiguous role played by western values. The West today is faced with a non-West that increasingly has the desire, the will, and the resources to shape the world in non-western ways. In the past, the elites of non-western societies were usually people who had been involved with the west through having been educated at western institutions where they absorbed western attitudes and values. At the same time the ordinary people in those non-western countries often remained deeply imbued with the indigenous culture. These relationships are now being reversed, and a de-westernisation and indigenisation of elites is occurring in many non-western countries, at the same time as western cultures, styles and habits are becoming more popular among the mass of the people. As argued earlier in the Historical Background chapter and in two of the case studies, to a certain extent this progressive de-westernisation of the intellectual elite has indeed been the case in Greece.

Another point mentioned by Huntington is that cultural characteristics and differences are less mutable and hence less easily conciliated and resolved than political or economic ones: “In class-and ideological conflicts, the key-question was ‘Which side are you on?’ and people could and did choose sides and change sides. In conflicts between civilisations the question is, What are you? That is a given that cannot be changed. Even more than ethnicity, religion discriminates sharply and exclusively between people. A person can be half-French and half-Arab; it is more difficult to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim.”⁷

The central theme of Huntington’s ideas is that culture and cultural identities are currently shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict. Global politics are both multi-polar and multi-civilisational; modernisation is distinct from westernisation and is producing neither a universal civilisation in any meaningful sense, nor the westernisation of non-western societies. Non-western civilisations generally are reaffirming the value of their own cultures and choosing their own route to modernisation. The less governments and groups are able to mobilise support or form

⁶ Huntington 1998, p.22.

⁷ Ibid., p.27.

coalitions on the basis of ideology, the more they will attempt to do so by appealing to common religious and civilisational identities.

À propos the Greek political culture Huntington has argued that with the disappearance of the ideological division of Europe, the continent's cultural division between western and eastern-Orthodox Christianity has re-emerged: "The velvet curtain of culture has replaced the iron curtain of ideology as the most significant dividing line in Europe. As the events in Yugoslavia show, it is not only a line of difference; it is also at times a line of bloody conflict."⁸

As we have seen, public opinion as well as the media and the political establishment in Greece have on a number of occasions adopted a quite similar logic. Several examples have been discussed. For instance, the fervent support of Serbia, despite the damage it inflicted on Greece's relations with the EU, was internally legitimate for reasons of historical, cultural, and religious empathy. The shelving of the "Macedonian question" is due to the fact that its resolution seems to entail too high a price for any Greek government ready to "dare to consent to a non-Greek people who will bear the sacred name of Macedonia." The perennial conflict between Greece and Turkey is handled by both governments in such a way that it will not upset the fragile status quo of internal legitimisation that rests on historical, religious, and cultural sentiments of difference, pride, and hatred.

Huntington agrees that much of western culture has indeed superficially permeated the rest of the world, but at a more basic level western concepts differ fundamentally from those prevalent in other civilisations. Western ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, the rule of law, democracy, the separation of Church and State, often find little resonance in, for instance, Orthodox cultures.⁹ In fact, efforts to propagate or enforce such ideas produce a reaction against what is seen as Euro-American cultural imperialism and reaffirm traditional values instead. This can indeed be seen in Greece in the support for religious spirituality among a growing section of the younger generation.

According to Huntington, some countries have a fair degree of cultural homogeneity but are divided over whether their society belongs to one civilisation or

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

another. These are “torn countries”, and their leaders typically wish to pursue a bandwagon strategy and make their countries members of the West, yet the history, culture, religion, and traditions of these countries are non-western. He points out Turkey, Mexico, and Russia as characteristic examples of such torn countries. To redefine its civilisation identity, a torn country must meet three requirements. First, its political and economic elite has to be generally supportive of and enthusiastic about this move; second, its public has to be willing to acquiesce in the redefinition; third, the dominant groups in the receiving civilisation have to be willing to welcome the new convert.

To what extent is Greece a “torn” country?

Greece, 98% eastern-Orthodox and with a culture that is proud to declare her Byzantine heritage, occupies an ambivalent position in Huntington’s schema. For the 45 years the iron curtain was the central dividing line in Europe, Greece belonged to the ideological and geo-political camp of the “free” world, to western civilisation.¹⁰ “This line has moved several hundred miles East. It is now separating the peoples of western Christianity on the one hand, from Muslim and Orthodox peoples on the other.”¹¹ Greece’s Orthodox affiliations render her non-western and non-democratic, according to Huntington. The development of a plural-democratic political culture (i.e. autonomous modernisation) is clearly mediated by religio-cultural conditions: “Developments in the post-communist societies of eastern Europe are shaped by their civilisation identities. Those with western-Christian heritages are making progress towards economic development and democratic politics; the prospects for economic and political development in the Orthodox countries are uncertain; the prospects in the Muslim republics are bleak.”¹² This is a reversal to the well-known core, semi-periphery, and periphery typology, redefined in terms of religious and cultural affiliations. At the bottom of the evolutionary ladder is Islam, in the middle stands Orthodoxy, and at the top western Christianity. Although his reference to post-communist countries does not include Greece *per se*, Huntington clearly identifies the Orthodox culture as an obstacle to the development of civil-society.

¹⁰ Huntington (1996), Map 1.2, p.24-25.

¹¹ Ibid., Map .3, p.27 and 1.1 p.29.

¹² Ibid., p.29.

In modern-Greek, official historiography classical Greece, Byzantine Orthodoxy and modern Greece constitute a continuum conditioned by the language and the culture of Hellenism, but Huntington's categorisation of Greece as Orthodox = non-West = undemocratic sharply differentiates between ancient and modern Greece. As a result he does not see any compatibility between the cultural classicism of the western Enlightenment and the attempt by the Greek Enlightenment to appropriate it meaningfully. By identifying the divergence of cultural traditions as the common denominator that gives rise to heterogeneous types of modernisation, Huntington's civilisation paradigm does, however, recognise that there are different roots to different modernities.

As was repeatedly observed throughout the thesis, there is an increasing tendency in Greek politics, media, and the public discourse to put forward a type of nationalism that consists of Neo-Orthodox, neo-classicist as well as Eurocentric aspirations to modernisation as equally important elements. The dynamics between such diverse cultural strategies operate as a political barometer of legitimisation and consent for the government's handling of the "national issues". Indeed, as was noted in the context of the "patriotic" Helleno-centric political/cultural faction, such historical sensitivities constitute a major means of internal legitimisation. The interesting point is that in modern Greece such seemingly contradictory values are compatible and constitute an ensemble, whereas for Huntington they are incompatible, mutually exclusive, and inherently problematic as regards the development of civil society and democratic modernisation.

Another distinctive feature of the West is the rule of law. It is this which, according to Huntington, has laid the basis for constitutionalism, meritocracy, and the protection of human rights. In the Greek-Orthodox culture, however, law and rationalism have been much less important factors in shaping thought and behaviour than reciprocal personal relationships, community welfare, honour and kinship.¹³

Lastly, there is social pluralism. Most western-European societies historically consisted of a relatively strong and autonomous aristocracy, a substantial peasantry, and a small but significant class of merchants and traders. Together they formed a unique type of associational pluralism that was later supplanted by class pluralism. The strength of

¹³ More is found on the Orthodox anthropology of personhood in chapter 5 on Neo-Orthodoxy.

the feudal aristocracy and the merchant class was particularly significant in limiting the extent to which absolutism was able to take firm root in most European countries. For Huntington, this European pluralism contrasts sharply with the poor civil societies, the weak aristocracies, and the strong centralised bureaucratic empires that existed in Orthodox Russia and the Ottoman territories (including that of the occupied Orthodox Greeks). Huntington concludes that many of the above features of western civilisation contributed to the emergence of a unique sense of individualism and a tradition of individual rights and liberties.

On the subject of how non-western societies responded to the West and modernisation, he notes that the political and intellectual leaders of these societies either rejected both modernisation and westernisation, embraced both, or embraced the first and rejected the second. Huntington understands “rejectionism” as a non-western strategy that permits only limited forms of modernisation. He also describes a second possible response to the west (which he calls “Kemalism”)¹⁴ which is based on the assumption that, although modernisation and westernisation are both desirable and necessary, advocates of the cultural logic assert that the local culture is incompatible with modernisation and must be radically transformed and fully westernised if it is to modernise successfully.

A third choice is to attempt to combine modernisation with preservation of the central values, practices and institutions of the society’s indigenous culture. This is the strategy of “reformism” and has understandably been the most popular one among non-western elites and intellectuals.¹⁵

Having set his theoretical framework – modernisation does not necessarily mean westernisation; non-western societies can and have modernised without abandoning their own cultures and adopting wholesale western values, institutions and practices: and in fundamental ways the world is becoming more modern and less Western¹⁶ – and having already situated Greek Orthodoxy on the non-western, non-democratic fault line, Huntington then attempts a more direct assessment of certain cultures. If indeed Orthodoxy and modernity are mutually exclusive, must we conclude that Greece too is a

¹⁴ Huntington 1996, p. 73.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.78.

torn country? Huntington is either reluctant or uninterested to examine this correlation in the case of Greece. The uneasy symbiosis of an elite fixation with the classical legacy, a traditionally Orthodox popular sensitivity, a western-oriented geopolitical/ideological project, and an Ottoman-founded institutional structure, combined with the more recent experiences of consumerism, the proliferation of media culture and the resurgence of nationalist chauvinism and traditionalism, suggest a type of modernity which it seems almost impossible to imagine.

In Huntington's view the defining historical phenomena of western civilisation (western Christianity, Scholasticism, feudalism, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment) together with their distinctive features of religion, Western culture, separation of Church and State, rule of law, social pluralism, democratic representation, and individualism, were imposed on the Greek people quite mechanistically and formalistically. The one possible exception, he says "is the classical legacy which, however, came to Greece via Byzantium and hence was quite different from that which came to the West directly from Rome."¹⁷

An assessment of Huntington's comments on the Greek-Orthodox culture must recognise that his civilisation paradigm gives a simple and unequivocal answer to the question asked by western Europeans: "Where does Europe end? Europe ends where western Christianity ends and Islam and Orthodoxy begin. Greece is not part of western civilisation, and despite being the geographical location of classical civilisation, and intimately entwined with the west, is also an anomaly, the Orthodox outsider in western organisations. It has never been an easy member of either the EU or NATO and has had difficulty adapting itself to the principles and morals of both."¹⁸

7.5 Proposals for Future Research

In conclusion of this thesis it is suggested that future research might make a more systematic study of the concept of political culture, or rigorously analyse the role of religion in the country's political culture.

Ever since modernity and modernisation became sociological concepts they have been criticised for their emphatically Eurocentric nature. Whether one looks at Parsonian

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 140.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 162-163.

neo-evolutionism and its application to the study of third-world development, or at more recent works of Giddens and S. Hall, all of them manifest a strong tendency to view non-western developmental trajectories in terms of “what happened in the West.”¹⁹ Commentators who react against Eurocentrism may loosely associate with E. Said’s key-work, *Orientalism*, which has exerted considerable influence on critical perspectives of modernity as a political project. This brings up the question whether one can have modernisation, technology, urbanisation and bureaucratisation but without the cultural baggage that goes with it, this baggage being essentially a post-Enlightenment system of thought. Generally, the Eurocentric view of the Christian-Orthodox political culture can be encapsulated in the notion that the social structure of the Orthodox world was characterised by the absence of a civil society, that is by the absence of a network of institutions mediating between the individual and the State. It was this which created the conditions for clientelism, patronage, despotism, statism, populism and other indicative features of a “democratic deficit” in the Greek political culture. The ideal type of civil society would entail a prolific network of institutions – Church, family, club, guild, association and community – lying between the State and the individual and simultaneously connecting the individual to authority while protecting him/her from total political control and ideological manipulation. The notion of civil society is therefore fundamental to the definition of political life in democratic societies.

In speculating about the origins of the modern (western) world, social philosophers from David Hume onwards have been impressed by the impact of world religions on shaping the modern cultural identity. Within the sociology of religion, the ascetic Protestant sects were regarded as fundamental in the push towards rational modernity. Max Weber has shown us how the inner-worldly asceticism of Calvinistic Protestantism transformed western culture towards a rational, disciplined life-world. He dealt with two major issues in his famous thesis. First, he tied the idea of instrumental rationality to modernity. To become modern, a society had to undergo and embrace the disciplines of goal-directed rational conduct. Second, he gave a privileged position to north-western Europe as the cutting edge of this global process, and by casting the West in that role, the Orient became “the other”. In terms of our own study, the consequence has been to place Orthodoxy in a problematic relationship to rationalist modernity and to

¹⁹ Mouzelis 1997, p.1.

the Christian West. This has been evident from accounts of attempts at the modernisation/westernisation of the Orthodox Church, as well as in showing how Greeks view the West when discussing the official (i.e. pro-western) State ideology and anti-western discourses.

Bearing in mind Huntington's explicit categorisation of Orthodoxy in the non-western-democratic fault line (due to specific historical and cultural conditions "which happened in the Christian West and did not happen in the Orthodox East"), it is appropriate to examine further the logic of Orientalism in the context of future research into the Greek political culture. Even more important is an examination of the flip-side of Orientalism – of how Greeks perceive the West (Occidentalism).

The analysis of power/knowledge in the work of Foucault provides the basis for Edward Said's influential study of Orientalism as a discourse of difference, in which the apparently neutral Occident-Orient contrast is an expression of power relationships. Orientalism is a discourse of "what happened in the East" as a comprehensible, intelligible phenomenon, within a network of categories and concepts by which the Orient is simultaneously defined and controlled. Orientalism created a typology of characters from the rational westerner at one end of the scale to the lazy Oriental at the other. In Said's analysis, the crucial "fact" about the orientalist discourse was that we know and talk about the Orientals while they neither comprehend themselves nor talk about us. This language of difference apparently had no equivalent discourses of Occidentalism. Western society has a privileged possession of a set of essential features – rationality, progress, democratic institutions, economic development – which other societies lack or possess only rudimentarily. These features account for the particular character of western society and explain the defects of alternative social formations. One of the formative questions of classical sociology, why industrial capitalism first emerged in the West, is consequently an essential feature of an "intellectual accounting system" that hinges on the basic otherness of East and West. Within this occidental-oriental contrast, Orthodox Greece constitutes a politically and culturally idiosyncratic entity for the western accounting systems. Considering Eisenstadt's notion that the best way of explaining the contemporary world is to regard it as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs and cultural patterns of modernity,²⁰

²⁰ Eisenstadt 2002, pp. 1-2.

the cultural implications of Greece's interjacent position between Occident and Orient deserve the full attention of future researchers as an interesting example of an alternative path to modernity.

Greece embarked on its course of modernisation almost two centuries ago, and since its foundation as a modern nation state has been organically connected to the West. Yet the dialogue between tradition and "change", between Orthodoxy and westernisation, has occupied and still occupies a central role in intellectual political discourses. Various forms of Occidentalism have emerged since the Schism 600 years ago, the latest of which has been named "Modernisation Now!" by Prime Minister Simitis. However, Huntington is right in saying that the Greek political culture with its Orthodox tradition, "The Orthodox outsider who had and has difficulty adapting itself to the values and mores of the West", is an anomaly.

The resurgence of religion in political culture is a phenomenon of vast consequences and has not yet been thoroughly investigated. As a concept, political culture is identified with growing interest in the study of political systems by means of analysing their "irrational" character – essentially, the role of the unconscious in politics to the detriment of reason. The purpose of employing the conceptual tool of political culture is to make more context-specific use of theoretical insights, and to enhance our understanding of important but little explored aspects of both western and non-western political systems that focus on values, symbols, and beliefs.

Forces as distinctive as the recrudescence of Islamic fundamentalism and Christian-Orthodox nationalism have shaped the politics of developing or recently emerged countries. The pervasive vitality and dynamism of religion in the constitution of political culture has created a new challenge for sociologists who try to understand the affinity between religion and political transformation, and for politicians trying to manage the tension and turmoil around this dynamic affinity.

Changes in the conceptualisation of both religion and politics have generated a renewed interest in the meaning of secularisation and modernisation, the secular and religious sources that inform and articulate national culture. The Greek case is a prime example of a situation where the secular and modernising forces proved unable to overcome the resistance of potent rival interests associated with the traditionalist order and to dislodge them from many of their centres of power. The inability of either side to prevail and the resulting co-existence of two separate cultures, each with its own universe

of meanings, shared assumptions, and symbolic content, has produced a deep and enduring division in Greek society and politics.

The complex nature of the transition to modernity may be better understood via the concept of “critical juncture”.²¹ The term refers to a disrupting and disorienting encounter by a prevalent order with a novel force, which has a long-term impact on the development trajectory of a given society. The utility of the concept is that it helps to underscore the importance of particular sequences in the unfolding of change, and to heighten appreciation of successful strategies or, conversely, missed opportunities on the part of the actors involved in the process. A “critical juncture” helps to conceptualise a reorientation in the developmental trajectory of a given society, and the creation of a new trajectory, distinct from the old one but obviously interacting with it. The case of Greece, and her dual, catch-all political and cultural strategy towards secularisation and modernisation fits well into the general paradigm of “critical juncture”. Given the fundamental political and cultural reorientation in State-society relations entailed in the process of European integration, it generated intense social, political and cultural struggles in which potential beneficiaries and potential losers in the redefinition of power relations within Greece played the central role.

The lasting historical and political legacy generated by this critical juncture was the emergence of two powerful and sharply conflicting cultural traditions, embedded in the novel (western) and antecedent (traditional) elements of modern Greece which reproduced themselves through ongoing and overlapping processes of interaction, accretion, assimilation, and adaptation. A major distinctive feature of this dual political culture is their traversing character, their tendency to cut across Greek institutions, classes and political parties and not become exclusively identified with any particular structure. The older of the two co-existing political cultures reflects the historical experiences of Greece. It is a culture marked by pronounced introvertedness; an occasionally militant anti-western stance; a powerful Statist orientation coupled with profound ambivalence towards capitalism and the market mechanism; a decided preference for paternalism and protection and a lingering adherence to pre-capitalist practices; a multitude of moral sentiments, including parochial and primordial attachments and intolerance of anything

²¹ As expounded by Lipset and Rokkan 1967 and elaborated by Collier and Collier 1991, pp. 27-39; cf. Diamandouros 1994.

alien; a latent authoritarian orientation fostered by a powerful historical legacy that Weber aptly termed a “sultanistic regime”; and a diffident attitude towards innovation.²² The significance of the history of Orthodoxy for the development of this political culture has been stressed throughout the thesis. As we have seen, its the main feature is a pronounced xenophobia that involves a conspiratorial interpretation of events that is rooted in a defensive perception of the international environment and divides the world into “phil-Hellenes” and “Greek-haters”. A sharp sense of cultural inferiority towards the western world is coupled with an inflated and distorted sense of the importance of Greece in the history of western civilisation; and there is a tendency to identify with other collectivities perceived to have suffered from western inequality.

A direct by-product of this is the shared contention among most politicians and commentators with only a superficial knowledge of Greek Orthodoxy that, because of its close continual collaboration with the State, the Church has not been able to claim an independent political stand against the secular authorities. The State, by means of constitutional provisions and historical precedent, is supposed to have exerted such pressure on the Church as to render it politically almost entirely subjugated. While measures of this kind have indeed curbed the power of the Church as an official *political* institution, they have not eliminated its indirect ability to influence Greek politics. In fact, because of its resources and its unique position in Greek society, the Church is re-emerging today as a powerful and extremely popular institution that intends to play a crucial role in Greece’s future within Europe.

This study has shown that without a doubt the Greek Church, both through obstruction and co-operation, has affected the socialist government’s initial aspirations to implement radical changes towards secularisation, as well as the ostensibly Eurocentric orientation of Greek foreign policy. Conversely, the government has been unable to present a consistent and uniform strategy with respect to the Church’s role in Greece’s political culture. Its ambivalent dual strategy of tolerating or even enhancing the Church-nation-State triad, while simultaneously upholding the country’s character as that of a modern secular EU democracy, affirms and perpetuates the problem.

The weakness of Greece’s civil-society, and its minimal autonomy from the State, together with the equally important weak capacity of the State to respond to the political-

²² Diamandouros, Ibid

economic and cultural exigencies of modernity, have generated a legitimacy crisis for both institutions. As the institutional representatives of this collective identity, the Orthodox Church and the State were linked in a symbiotic relationship that, in balance-of-power terms, avoided giving one institution priority over the other, and so made the legitimacy of both conditional. The autonomy of Orthodoxy as an actor in civil-society was severely circumscribed because of its institutional dependence on the State. Achieving some degree of ecclesiastical autonomy became a condition for the Church to collaborate with the State in both domestic and foreign-matters. In short, Church legitimacy was compromised when its spiritual message and ecclesiastical development were subordinated to secular-political prerogatives and ideological considerations.

Therefore, the civil society distinction between Church-State and Church-nation, and the conflation of them in the case of Greece, have constrained the public place of Christian-Orthodoxy in democratic Greece and encompassed both institutional and cultural considerations.

The 1980s and the PASOK government's approach to Orthodoxy made a very clear distinction between the need for Church-State separation and the preservation of the identities of Church and nation. The dual nature of this approach helps to explain the government's legislative change to the civil code, and also underlies the stagnation in the matter of the controversial Bill 1700,²³ the centrepiece of PASOK's Church policy. As a result, the Church-State and Church-nation distinctions were unsuccessful in resolving the legitimacy questions embedded in the history of Church-State interpenetration in Greece within the context of building a pluralist democracy.²⁴

Since both Orthodoxy and the Greek political culture in general are increasingly defined and understood in alarmingly nationalistic and chauvinistic terms, it is extremely important to avoid the Eurocentric notion of modernity that opts for a radical reformulation of Greek-Orthodox identity along the cultural lines of globalisation and supra-nationality. This is, quite simply, irrelevant to the Greek case, and rather misleading from both the point of view of academic research and political implementation. In quite schematic terms, a conceptually sound, context-sensitive and

²³ Prodromou (1994), p. 134. The aim of the Bill 1700 was to rearrange the vast Church property in favour of State ownership.

²⁴ Ibid.

empirically viable study of Orthodox culture in modern Greece should first and foremost recognise and interpret the instrumental role played by the political project of nationalism in the make-up of modern Orthodox institutions and discourse. In doing so, the focus should be on Greek nationalism. This being the key defining feature of modern Greek identity, nationalism should be carefully investigated to reveal what social forces facilitate its power and what forces resist it.

Of course, the process of making a civil-society entails a variety of elements, all of which should be dealt with. However, the extent to which Greek society is vulnerable to sentiments of nationalistic chauvinism seems to me a key feature determining the quality and type of modernity in the country's conduct of both foreign affairs and domestic ones.

If, therefore, we assume that Huntington's civilisation paradigm adopts an Orientalist-Eurocentric standpoint which rejects *in toto* a potentially compatible relation between Orthodoxy and democracy, then it would have to be recognized that key institutional elements of the modernisation process can be found in less developed form in several non-western civilisations. In this sense western modernity is neither unique nor necessarily the model which should be emulated, for it is precisely the futile attempt to emulate "western superiority" and its inevitably unsuccessful, belated, arbitrary, and ultimately disuniting outcome that informs the non-democratic cultural forces of national chauvinism and reactionary localism (i.e. the "torn" countries). At the same time however, regardless of whether the West is more democratic or not, it is a fact that certain elements of western modernity tend to have (in their centralised nation-State system), and perhaps ought to have (in the concept of civil society) a trans-cultural character today.

There are several interconnected factors that may account for the existence of this kind of political domination in Greece and other late-developing countries (such as a history of subservient relationships with the West, or absence of an indigenous middle-class), but for us the focal point is how the Orthodox tradition and Enlightenment nationalism collided in the field of Greek political culture. As far as the affinities between cultural populism and Orthodoxy are concerned, we have reiterated throughout this chapter that Church-State interpenetration has affected the legitimacy of both institutions, and tied them both to the ideological aims of nationalism, political manipulation and control.

We have argued that the standard western conception of Orthodoxy as the motive force in the development of reactionary nationalism and traditional non-democratic political culture suffers from a methodological weakness, which undermines larger theoretical claims about the incompatibility of Orthodoxy and democracy. In the form of a critical response to the arguments of Samuel Huntington, who has laid out a conceptual framework which classifies Orthodoxy on the non-democratic civilisation fault-line, the chapter points to methodological and empirical factors which suggest that past and future possibilities for a constructive engagement between Orthodoxy and democracy in Greece depend on the application of a conceptual framework for analysing the Orthodox political culture in terms of civil society; the ways in which the nationalist projects of the Greek State have led to the appropriation of the Church and Orthodoxy for political purposes; and finally, the ways in which different groups and organisations within the Greek-Orthodox realm have attempted to renegotiate Orthodoxy's role in the public domain in Greece.

List of Abbreviations

CEC	Council of European Churches
DD	Democratic Defence
DIKKI	Democratic Social Movement
EEC	European Economic Union
ELKIS	Greek-Orthodox Salvation Movement
EMETH	Committee for the Study of Religious Issues
EMSPE	Committee for the Study of Church-State relations
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union.
EU	European Union
EXON	Greek Christian-Orthodox Socialist Youth
EYC	Euro-Mediterranean Youth Centre, (in the OAC)
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
ITE	Institute of Theology and Ecology, (in the OAC)
JPIC	“Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation”, a WCC program
KKE	Greek Communist Party
LAOS	Popular Orthodox Alert
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
ND	New Democracy Party
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAC	The Orthodox Academy of Crete
ODEP	Organisation for the Administration of Ecclesiastical Property
PAK	Pan-Hellenic Liberation Movement
PAM	Pan-Hellenic Liberation Front
PASOK	Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement
UN	United Nations
VPRC	Institute V for Project Research Consulting
WCC	World Council of Churches

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HISTORICAL TIMELINE

313	Conversion of Emperor Constantine the Great to Christianity.
324	Transfer of capital of the Roman empire from Rome to Constantinople.
800	Pope Leo III crowns Charles the Great Emperor of Rome in the West.
858	Schism between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople as a result of the dispute over the appointment of Patriarch Photius (Photian Schism).
1054	Final Schism between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople. Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael Cerularius excommunicate each other.
1071	Byzantine army led by emperor Romanos IV Diogenes decisively defeated by the Seljuk Turks at Manzikert.
1096	First Crusade roused by the preaching of Pope Urban at the Council of Clermont.
1147	Second Crusade.
1190	Third Crusade.
1204	Fourth Crusade results in the capture and sack of Constantinople.
1274	Union of Lyons. Emperor Michael VIII pledged ecclesiastical union with the West and acknowledged Papal supremacy, despite popular and Patriarchal opposition.
1393	Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I, son of Murad, besieges Constantinople.
1397	Ottomans capture Thessaloniki and Athens.
1439	Attempted union of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches at the Council of Florence.
1453	Fall of Constantinople to Ottomans under Sultan Mehmet II.
1454	The Byzantine scholar George Scholarius (Gennadius) becomes the first Patriarch under Ottoman rule. Sultan Mehmet II reaffirms and even extends the prerogatives of the Orthodox Church.
1571	Battle of Lepanto and destruction of the Turkish fleet.
1589	Patriarchate of Moscow is founded.

1821	Uprising against Ottoman rule in the Peloponnese. Beginning of Greek War of Independence.
1822	Greek declaration of Independence – First provisional constitution.
1833	Autocephalous Church of Greece created.
1833	Arrival of Bavarian Prince Otto as Greece's first King.
1834	Capital of Greece moved from Nauplion to Athens.
1843	Greece becomes a semi-constitutional monarchy after popular demands for a constitution.
1862	King Otto deposed and replaced by the Danish prince King George I.
1897	Brief war between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, which Greece loses.
1907	The Orthodox brotherhood Zoë is founded.
1911	Eleftherios Venizelos becomes Prime Minister.
1912-1913	Balkan Wars.
1914-1918	First World War.
1919-1922	Greco-Turkish War.
1923	Treaty of Lausanne. Population exchange between Greece and Turkey.
1936-1940	Metaxas dictatorship.
1941-1944	Germany and Italy occupy Greece.
1944-1949	Civil War between communist and government forces.
1952	Greece becomes a member of NATO.
1965	Catholic and Orthodox churches lift excommunications of 1054.
1967	Coup of army colonels leads to the establishment of military dictatorship (junta) in Greece.
1967	Ieronymos appointed as Archbishop of Greece by the junta.
1968	Orthodox Academy of Crete (OAC) is founded.
1973	Student occupation of Athens Polytechnic protesting against the junta is terminated by armed force.
1973	Power struggle within the junta leads to the appointment of Serapheim as Archbishop of Greece.
1974	Attempted coup in Cyprus leads to Turkish invasion.

1974	Greek junta falls and democracy is restored. Referendum held on the future of Monarchy – 70% vote against.
1974	Nea Demokratia under Konstantinos Karamanlis wins the elections.
1981	Greece becomes a full member of the EEC.
1981	PASOK under Andreas Papandreou wins the elections.
1985	PASOK under Andreas Papandreou wins once again the elections.
1989	Coalition government.
1990	New Democracy Party under Konstantinos Mitsotakis wins with a slight majority after three attempted elections.
1991	Bartholomew enthroned as the 270 th Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul.
1992	Greece signs the Maastricht Treaty.
1993	PASOK Party under Andreas Papandreou wins elections.
1996	Death of Andreas Papandreou. PASOK, led by Konstantinos Simitis wins the Elections
1998	Death of Archbishop Serapheim. The Holy Synod elects Christodoulos in his place. Death of Konstantinos Karamanlis.
1999	Greek and Turkish political leaders initiate a new era of friendship and cooperation
2000	PASOK Party under Konstantinos Simitis wins elections again.
2000	Schengen Agreement ratified by Greece.
2001	Greece joins the Eurozone.

POLITICAL MAP OF GREECE

