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FROM AGATHANGELOS TO THE MEGALE IDEA:  
RUSSIA AND THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN  
GREEK NATIONALISM

“For the middle class audience that responded so enthusiastically to the historians, national history served as a kind of collective and flattering genealogy”—wrote Fritz Stern of nationalism and the great national historians, its high priests<sup>1</sup>. The Greeks, of course, needed no special prodding in this direction: the study and writing of history in an ostentatiously Attic manner had been the distinguishing characteristic of literary activity throughout the Byzantine period, and a status symbol assiduously sought after by successive classes of affluent Greeks during the centuries of Ottoman domination.

This preparation enabled the Greeks to put to prompt and excellent use the European intellectual currents of rationalism, neo-classicism, and subsequently romanticism, in the interests of their national revival. This process has been described particularly well by C. Th. Dimaras and the group of cultural historians working around him<sup>2</sup>. There is, however, an aspect of this process which has not yet received adequate attention. This may best be referred to as a special relationship, consisting of both parallel and interaction, between the cultural-ideological scene of emerging Modern Greece and that of Imperial Russia.

The socio-economic and political processes which forged strong links between the Greeks and Russia in the course of the 18th and 19th centuries have also been adequately described<sup>3</sup>. The Greeks were prominent in the

1. Fritz Stern, *The Varieties of History*, Cleveland, 1956, p. 19.

2. C. Th. Dimaras' indispensable *History of Modern Greek Literature*, English translation by Mary Gianos, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1972. I have used the second and fourth Greek editions, Athens, 1954 and 1968. Cf. also the journal of the Group for the Study of the Greek Enlightenment (OMED) *Eranistes*, Athens. Mr. Dimaras and several of his collaborators at the Center for Neo-Hellenic Studies of the Royal Research Foundation (KNE/EIE) are now living and working in Paris, at the Sorbonne and the CNRS.

3. Cf., for example, G. L. Arš, *Eteriskoe Dvizhenie v Rossii*, Moscow, 1970, especially chapter III; another interesting recent work is Norman E. Saul, *Russia and the Mediterranean*,

settlement of the new Russian Black Sea ports and the development of the grain export trade, which transformed the economy of South Russia. At the same time, important Greek elite clusters were formed in the Russian military and diplomatic service in the period of intense Russo-Ottoman confrontation from 1770 to 1812. The resulting social formations attained political expression in the Hetairia, which, in the course of the general depression following the Napoleonic wars, brought about the convergence of bureaucratic, petty-bourgeois and bourgeois groups in the name of Greek national liberation. This feat was largely accomplished by the assiduous cultivation of the myth of unconditional Russian support, which had been current in the Greek world at least since the time of Peter the Great. It is this myth and its ideological repercussions and consequences that will receive special attention in this paper.

The idea of a Christian crusade to save or restore Byzantium had sustained the Greeks for centuries—but never more so than with the Orthodox Russian Emperor, bearing aloft the Byzantine standard of the two-headed eagle, in the leading role. It is important to understand that we are not dealing here with a Russian propaganda ploy: it was the Greeks themselves who had the initiative, and this was manifested concretely as early as during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, the first Grand Prince of Muscovy to assume the title of Tsar<sup>4</sup>. Peter the Great, as we shall see, transformed Greek hopes into a fever of anticipation; this became firm certainty with Catherine II's project of a restored Byzantine empire under her Greek-speaking grandson, Constantine; and the plan's failure to materialize was only seen as a postponement, to be dealt with in the reign of Catherine's other grandson, Alexander, bearing a Greek imperial name perhaps even more evocative than Constantine.

The fascination which the Greeks felt for Russia in this crucial period of their modern history was clearly too strong, too mythopoetic to be attributed to mere tactical considerations in their struggle for personal and collective emancipation. Using the Orthodox and Imperial symbolic guideposts of

1797-1807, Chicago, 1970. On the socio-economic position of the Greeks in South Russia cf. the works of E. I. Druzhinina, *Kiuchuk Kainardjiiskii Mir 1774 g.*, Moscow, 1955, and *Severnoe Prichernomor'e, 1775-1800gg.*, Moscow, 1959, completed by her *Yuzhnaia Ukraina, 1800-1825 gg.*, Moscow, 1970. There is an unpublished doctoral dissertation on the grain trade: "Russian Grain and Mediterranean Markets, 1774-1861", by Patricia Herlihy, University of Pennsylvania, 1963.

4. Gregorios Malaxos, self-described "nobile péloponense et crétense", played a major role in a Venetian attempt to draw Moscow into an anti-Turkish coalition in 1570-1572. He acted as an intimate of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Cf. Vladimir Lamansky, *Secrets d'état de Venise*, St. Petersburg, 1884, vol. I, pp. 077-081, 082, 088-089.

popular imagery, we must search for deeper and more abiding motivational layers. As a general hypothesis, I would suggest that beyond the admittedly vital logistical support provided by the economic and political resources of the Russian empire to two generations of rapidly modernizing Greeks, Russia offered them an irresistible model for the necessary transition from Byzantine universalism to modern nationalism with the least possible psycho-social dislocation.

The process of transition paralleled ideological developments in Russia and was completed by the middle of the nineteenth century, with the emergence of the secular panhellenism of the *Megale Idea*<sup>5</sup>. Romantic panhellenism developed in counterpoint to panslavism, itself a reflexion of romantic pangermanism, and shared the oppositional or “revolutionary” overtones of its model. These tendencies, however, as in the case of panslavism, were rapidly contained by the development of an “official nationalism” along the lines of pseudo-populist authoritarianism as it was formulated in Russia under Nicholas I<sup>6</sup>. Henceforth, all opposition to the integral consensus could be considered anomalous and branded as a manifestation of unfortunate hereditary deficiencies of the Greek national character, whose “tendency towards anarchy” was regularly castigated by nationalist ideologues, beginning with the historian Constantine Paparrigopoulos, the great genealogist of the Greek bourgeoisie<sup>7</sup>.

Official panhellenism measured up to its Russian model as an instrument of social control during the formative period of the modern Greek state. The bulk of social protest was channeled to the self-defeating super-patriotic fringe on the Right, in a monotonous repetition of the Hetairia pattern: rebellious

5. D. Obolensky, “Russia’s Byzantine Heritage”, *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, I (1950), p. 60; C. A. Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821-1852*, Cambridge, 1969, p. 197.

6. The well-known formula “Orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality” was coined by Nicholas’ minister of education, S. Uvarov, in 1833. Cf. N. V. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855*, Berkeley, 1967, p. 73.

7. *Historia tou Hellenikou Ethnous*, vol. I, p. clxxix. The sentiment is expressed in the last paragraph of his introduction, written in 1885. Paparrigopoulos, the son of a Peloponnesian banker and *vekil* in Constantinople, received his formal education at the Lycée Richelieu (later University of New Russia) in Odessa. According to Theobald Piscatory, French minister in Athens, “it was through the generosity of official Russia that he was able to buy up vast estates in Euboea and Attica” (John Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece, 1833-1843*, Princeton, 1968, p. 118). For Paparrigopoulos’ audience, both in Greece and the diaspora, cf. C. Th. Dimaras, “Historia tou Hellenikou Ethnous: bibliographiko semeioma”, *Eranistes*, VII, 42 (December 1969), pp. 198-201. The work was a commercial success and went through repeated editions.

elements, both patrician and plebeian, converged in a series of irredentist societies, tolerated and co-opted by the state when weak, allowed to exhaust themselves in private guerrilla wars against the Ottoman empire when they appeared more powerful<sup>8</sup>. The next result was more than half a century of remarkable stability and continuity in Greek politics and unhampered development of the country's socio-economic structures. At the same time, the new Athenian intelligentsia elaborated the national myth of the "Hellenic-Christian civilization" and its mission in the Eastern Mediterranean, as a functional parallel to the Slavophiles' "Holy Russia"<sup>9</sup>.

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The panhellenic idea, which found its most complete expression in Constantine Paparrigopoulos' monumental *History of the Greek Nation*, marked the culmination of the process described above. In order to gain some understanding of the process itself, we must turn back a century and examine some of the first ideological writings which enjoyed wide distribution among the Greek mercantile communities<sup>10</sup>.

The climate of expectation of deliverance through the Russians, shared as it was by all classes and categories of Greeks, was reflected in popular media like folksongs and decorative art, as well as in more literate forms, ranging from religious apocrypha to historical chronicles<sup>11</sup>. A curious pamphlet,

8. It is interesting, from the point of view of the comparative study of millenarian movements, that Greek rural millenarianism had a strong political element in its ties to the Russian Party and the urban, diaspora origin of many of its leaders. Cf. Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, New York, 1959, especially chapter IV, on the Italian Lazzaretti. The links between Italy, the Ionian Islands (particularly Cephalonia), the Peloponnesus, and Russia should be explored further. Kosmas Phlamiatos, who will be mentioned below, is a case to the point. I would like to thank Prof. George Frangos for having drawn my attention to this type of study.

9. My ideas in this area come from Michael Cherniavsky's masterful *Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths*, New York, 1969 (second edition).

10. For an account of the eighteenth-century publishing boom in the Greek diaspora cf. C. Th. Dimaras, *History of Modern Greek Literature*, chapter VIII: "The Fascination of the Word. The Writer and his Public".

11. The prophetic genre was a direct continuation of similar literature of the Byzantine period; there are many surviving examples from the 15th-16th centuries: cf. Asterios Argyriou, *Les exégèses grecques de l'Apocalypse à l'époque turque (1453-1821): esquisse d'une histoire des courants idéologiques au sein du peuple grec asservi*, Thessaloniki, Etaireia Makedonikon Spoudon, 1982. Historicism asserted itself vigorously from 1750 on with translations of

combining the apocryphal and historical genres, enjoyed extraordinary popularity from the mid-eighteenth century on, going through a number of reductions and editions, in manuscript and in print, and finding its way into all manner of Greek homes from the towns and villages of Greece to the remotest reaches of the diaspora. I am speaking of the famous *Agathangelos*, a pseudonymous collection of prophecies superficially calqued on the Apocalypse, attributed to Theokletos Polyeides (c. 1690 to c. 1759)<sup>12</sup>. This pamphlet is mentioned in passing in all the literature on the period, usually in connection with the expression “the fair nation” (*to xanthon genos*), a common circumlocution for the Russians in this type of literature, which, however, does not occur in the text of *Agathangelos*. This text, in effect, is far more precise in its terminology and much more structured and deliberate in its ideological content than it has been given credit for. I think it is definitely worth our while to take a closer look at it<sup>13</sup>.

The narrative begins appropriately with the fall of the Byzantine empire, for its sins, “for God wants the People to know his justice and to feel the weight of his almighty hand, and repent, and return to him”, following which they would be welcomed and distinguished even more than before, for “under the same wordly state which will be destroyed, God will newly subject endless young nations...”<sup>14</sup>. The Turks are considered the instrument of God’s will, to be accepted as such, and their domination, which with considerable accuracy is predicted to last for “almost four entire centuries” is compared to the Babylonian captivity of the people of Israel. This biblical parallel is the essential

western works like Rollin’s ancient history. From 1770 on there are several histories of Russia and of the Russo-Turkish wars, beginning with a translated *History of the Present War Between Russia and the Ottoman Porte* in six volumes, by Spyridon Papadopoulos, published in Venice in 1770-1773. Cf. C. Th. Dimaras, *op. cit.* (4th edition), pp. 157-158.

12. Polyeides was born in Adrianople; he started his career as an Athonite monk; he was pastor of the Greek church at Tokay in Hungary from 1719 to 1724; served as assistant bishop in the same area from 1725. He founded the first Greek Orthodox church in Leipzig, and travelled in Germany and Russia. He published a work on Orthodoxy in Latin, which was also translated into German (Leipzig, 1736). Cf. Papyros-Larousse, *Genike Pankosmios Enkyklopaideia*, Athens, 1963, vol. XI, p. 267 (hereafter *Papyros-Larousse*). For a portrait of Polyeides (from his 1736 book) cf. C. Th. Dimaras, *op. cit.*, opp. p. 144.

13. I am using the text of the first printed edition, Vienna, c. 1790-1791; recently discovered in the folklore collection of the University of Thessalonike Library, the only extant copy of the pamphlet was photographically reproduced by Alexis Politis in *Eranistes*, VII (1969), 42, pp. 173-192 (hereafter *Agathangelos-Eranistes*). In his evaluation of the content of *Agathangelos*, Politis emphasizes the incantatory or hypnotic element.

14. *Agathangelos-Eranistes*, p. 7 of pamphlet (photo-reproduction on p. 180).

framework of *Agathangelos*. The rest of the contents are an elaborate attempt to fit European history into this scheme.

Polyeides wrote his tract from the vantage point of the Greek diaspora in Central Europe, in perpetual motion between Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia. With this in mind we can understand why the historical material he used tends to form three sections or areas of roughly equal emphasis and length, which we can label Catholic West, Protestant North, and Orthodox East. And there is nothing nonsensical or haphazard in the articulation of the prophesies concerning these areas: the message comes through very clearly that Protestantism will crush Catholicism and prepare the way for the ultimate triumph of Orthodoxy. "You will destroy latin pride", he apostrophises Germany, "and will see her arrogance humbled, and she will painfully fall on her knees to sing with you the hymn to the East..."<sup>15</sup>.

And in the East, of course, he celebrates the rising star of Russia: "Another Lord, another Macedonian, the monarch of the Russians is victorious over distant lands, subjugates barbarians, widens his domains, acquires new provinces with his arms and makes his Kingdom Terrible and necessary to the whole world. It becomes a new Terrible Imperium. The world sees: he is now able to crown others and to give sceptres to his friends..."<sup>16</sup>. This is Peter the Great with an aura of Ivan IV. He then gives a brief account of the Romanov dynasty, through the "adoption" of Peter III as heir to the throne by Elizabeth (1742). There follows a passage which has been considered an interpolation to the original reduction: "The fourth Peter begins glorious deeds. And the fifth will spread Christ's victorious banner over Byzantium, and will destroy the power of the Ishmaelites"<sup>17</sup>. This passage clashes stylistically with Polyeides' "prophe-sies", which fall unerringly into two categories: either veiled but exact references to events up to c. 1745, or vague, lyrical visions of the triumph of Orthodoxy, without mention of specific agents. An alternative version of the liberation of Constantinople, missing from the first printed edition, is closer to the spirit of the author: "...Then all will be milk and honey...Truth will triumph. And the heavens will rejoice in the true glory. The Orthodox faith will be raised high and will spread from East to West... The barbarians will shudder, and

15. *Ibid.*, p. 23; cf. also p. 17: "Your happiness [O Germany] is in the East..." Polyeides conveniently ignores the alliance between Russia and Austria. He refers to the Habsburg empire as "miserable Austria" and predicts its dissolution with great relish (p. 30).

16. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

17. Attribution by N. G. Politis. *Ibid.*, p. 177. This passage, missing from most manuscripts, will cause considerable trouble later, as we shall see.

trembling will retreat in panic, abandoning the metropolis of the world. Then God will be in his glory. And men will see the works of his almightiness. Thus it should be and will be, amen". This is immediately followed by a lyrical passage about Russia, which is certainly Polyeides', because it only works itself up to the "prediction" of the Russian victory over the Turks in the war of 1736-1739: "I heard a voice coming from the North, saying: O Russia, awaken from your slumber. It is to you that the Angel of the Lord is speaking. And in the morning of the Sun your lamp will be filled with pure oil. And before the Sun reaches the Eastern zodiac it is you who should appear, o beloved friend. Hark, your excellent military music fills the air. Your warriors and heroes already intone the paeans of victory. They invite you to reform the immaculate wafer with the true stamp of Christ; who saved you one day from the darkness of perverse idolatry. Take up arms quickly, o my sister. Go, support His eternal truth. For in you the sign of such brilliant glory was preserved. But listen, my beloved sister. Know that you will be disturbed by the Agarenes in the seventeen hundreds, and count to nearly the fortieth. And know that you will be triumphant"<sup>18</sup>.

We can say then that originally *Agathangelos* carried a fairly sophisticated panorthodox message in a European political frame of reference, linking the emerging modern Greek bourgeoisie with the Orthodox party of the Palaeologian period. There is no ideological break: the new elements are of a tactical nature. Whereas fifteenth-century Orthodox had to acquiesce to Ottoman rule as the lesser evil, the eighteenth century presented conditions leading to a decline of the "latin" West and a revival of the Orthodox East which made the Turks irrelevant. In this context, Peter the Great and Frederick the Great were seen as instruments of Providence, harnessed to the mystical continuity of the East Roman Empire. The role of the Greeks themselves was not spelled out clearly yet, but the feeling that all this was being done for their sake was there.

All this is quite normal from the point of view of the well-known conservatism of medieval Greek culture. Byzantium was the product of gradualism—not revolution. What is interesting is that the movement of transition from panorthodox millenarianism to Greek nationalism in the modern period has been so slow, that the dividing line between these two modes has remained fuzzy to this day. The confusion was enhanced by the apparent restoration of the Byzantine contrapuntal pattern of zealot versus official Orthodoxy, with the ultra-Orthodox revivalist movement, which, from the end of the very

18. *Ibid.*, p. 192. The missing passage is supplied from the 1838 Hermoupolis (Syra) edition by "Zeloprophetes".

first decade of national independence, took up the opposition to official panhellenism. It should come as no surprise that the new zealots appropriated *Agathangelos* as a favorite medium for their propaganda.

These very same ultra-Orthodox militants acted, in the political arena, as the spearhead of the various oppositional enterprises to which I alluded earlier. Their first organizational umbrella was the “Russian Party”, led by a coalition of the remnants of the Capodistrian bureaucracy, disgruntled military leaders of the Revolution, and senior members of the clergy<sup>19</sup>. The pattern for subsequent action was set by the “Messenian” revolt of 1834, which was essentially an abortive power bid at the center of government overtly expressed as a primitive rebellion in the backward Arcadian and Northern Messenian highlands of the Peloponnesus. “The peasantry”, reported the British Minister in Greece, “had been persuaded by their priests that the Regency and all Bavarians were Jews, and told that the King was kept a prisoner at Argos by the regency, and that it was the duty of every good subject to deliver him”<sup>20</sup>.

The publishing history of *Agathangelos* parallels the outbreaks of Russian Party activism and provides us with an interesting thread of ideological continuity. As we have seen, the first printed version of the pamphlet appeared at the Poullos press in Vienna sometime between 1791 and 1796, and has been tentatively attributed to Rhigas. A second edition was made by “enterprising Greeks” in Missolonghi during the siege, in 1824. Then we have two Athens editions, in 1837 and 1838, a “critical” edition in Syra in 1838, and an edition in Bucharest, also in 1838. After this remarkable cluster there are two more Athens editions, in 1849 and 1853<sup>21</sup>.

The 1837-1838 editions of *Agathangelos* coincide with the beginning of the political ascendancy of the Russian Party. King Otho, belatedly realizing that this was the party of the rising middle classes and that through the clergy it also controlled the peasantry, decided to work with it<sup>22</sup>. His turn-about, however, merely accelerated the Russian Party’s power drive, culminating

19. On the origins and structure of the Russian Party, cf. John Petropulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-119. Petropulos’ monumental study of the 1833-1843 period is a veritable break-through in modern Greek historiography, opening up, among many others, the direction which I am exploring in this paper.

20. Dawkins to Foreign Office, Nauplion, 25 August 1834; cited by Petropulos, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

21. Dimaras, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-127 (second edition).

22. Petropulos, *op. cit.*, p. 303.



in a revolution of rising expectations led by the prime minister and leading figure of the party Glarakis himself. This was the famous "Philorthodox" plot of 1839<sup>23</sup>. The Anatolian crisis, which erupted in the summer of the same year, created an atmosphere of anticipation of the imminent dissolution of the Ottoman Empire: the apocalyptic visions of *Agathangelos* seemed about to materialize.

The regular meeting place of the conspirators was the residence of the Russian deputy chief of mission in Athens, Lelly (Leles), who, like his chief, Cataczy (Katakazes), was really a Greek in the Russian service. The cover provided by the Russian mission revived the myth of Russian support which had guaranteed the phenomenal success of the Hetairia in 1819-1820, with the result that the Philorthodox Society (*Philorthodoxos Hetairia*), the front organization set up by the conspiracy, attracted over one thousand members in Athens alone<sup>24</sup>. The Austrian minister was, appropriately, among those few who understood the nature of the discrepancy between myth and reality. The Russian Government, he reported to Metternich, "had least control over its adherents...and over its own representatives". This is how the Russian Party in Greece could stand for policies in regard to the Ottoman Empire conflicting with the official line from St. Petersburg<sup>25</sup>.

The movement was organized along para-Masonic lines, like the Hetairia. The members were assigned to three ranks or grades: the "simple", consisting of the rank and file, who were indoctrinated only in ostensibly Russian-sponsored irredentism; the "grand", reserved for clergymen dedicated to the "restoration" of Orthodoxy; and the "terrible", the elite of the movement —i.e. the political leaders of the Russian Party, military figures, and high clergy. Only the latter category were to be initiated to the true purpose of the operation, which was to establish a Russian-type oligarchical-bureaucratic

23. *Ibid.*, 329-343 and 519-533 (Petropulos' translation of a unique document concerning the Philorthodox affair). In the archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs I ran across a document in Greek with marginal notations in French and the heading "Organisation de l'Hétairie Philorthodoxe", marked "annex to the dispatch of 10 January 1840" (Serie Mémoires et Documents, Grèce, vol. II, ff. 245-258). The documents used by Petropulos were dispatched from Athens to London on the same day.

24. Petropulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 336 and 519. The Russian diplomatic personnel in Greece, the leaders of the Russian Party and a great number of clergymen and officers were believed to be, respectively, "members", "pensioners", and "recipients of stipends" of a Russian Orthodox society "under the patronage of the Emperor" in St. Petersburg.

25. Barbara Jelavich, "The Philorthodox Conspiracy of 1839", *Balkan Studies*, VII (1966), 1, p. 92.

Orthodox state under themselves. The means to this end would be the convocation of a national assembly, in which they expected to have a majority, and in the case of stubborn opposition from the King, a palace coup backed by popular insurrection<sup>26</sup>.

As it turned out, the denouement of this particular plot resembled that of a comic opera—a bourgeois genre par excellence. The Hetairia libretto called for an “*Arkhe*”, a mysterious and awe-inspiring supreme authority, the “*megas platanos*” (great plane tree) of more recent conspiracies, whose sturdy branches and deep shade would protect the more vulnerable upwardly mobile shoots. It was decided, therefore, in response to intense pressure from below, to establish an “*Arkhe*”, which, of course, under the circumstances could be nothing but a figure-head. Predictably, the person chosen was one of the brothers of the late president and former foreign minister of Russia, John Kapodistrias. Lacking the qualities of his illustrious brother but filled with vanity and confused ambition, George Kapodistrias proceeded to play the role of an Alexander Ypsilantis, fancying himself “the actual leader of the nation”<sup>27</sup>. It remained for a young protégé of G. Kapodistrias, Emanuel Papas, related to the famous Macedonian Hetairist of the same name, to play the role of Nicholas Galates as a frenetic activist whose irresponsibility would lead him to expose, blackmail and finally betray the conspiracy to the King<sup>28</sup>. In the ensuing panic the plans of the society were shelved, Kapodistrias theatrically offered himself up as the expiatory victim, there was a confused and inconclusive trial ending with the acquittal of all concerned on a technicality, and political initiative was allowed to pass into the hands of the moderate constitutionalist reformer, Alexander Mavrokordatos. Not for long, however: after only six weeks in office, Mavrokordatos was forced to resign by a combination of royal intransigence and “Philorthodox” intrigue<sup>29</sup>.

The chief ideologist of the Russian Party throughout this period was Constantine Oikonomos, a clergyman and scholar of the highest caliber. Having

26. Petropulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 334-335, 521-522. I prefer the translation “terrible” to Petropulos’ “awesome” for the Greek “phrikos”. It is the same word that is applied to the Emperor of Russia in *Agathangelos*. The context is the myth combining Byzantine and Turko-Tatar majesty that gave us Dracula and Ivan the Terrible. Cf. Cherniavsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 93, 221-222.

27. Petropulos, *op. cit.*, p. 523.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 331 for Papas; for Galates cf. Arsh, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-200. He has a whole chapter entitled “The Galates Affair” with new archival material which is highly entertaining, but also indicative of the power of the Greek networks within the Russian bureaucracy.

29. Petropulos, *op. cit.*, pp. 398-399, 400 (n129).

spent more than a decade in Russia, where he added his name to the list of erudite Greek churchmen to have enjoyed Imperial favor, he returned to Greece in 1834 and immediately became the principal spokesman of conservatism<sup>30</sup>. We can argue that Oikonomos is indeed the central figure in Greek history at the middle of the nineteenth century. It was largely through his coordinating skills and formidable polemical nerve that the fundamental Greek bourgeois

30. In view of Oikonomos' special relationship with Russia, I am giving his biographical data from the Russian point of view, as it was entered in the *Russkii Biograficheskii Slovar'* (Russian Biographical Dictionary), St. Petersburg, 1896-1913: "He was born in Tsaritsani, in Thessaly, in 1780. His parents were the priest Kiriakos and Anthi. Before the age of twelve he could write imitations of Homer in hexameter. At the age of twelve he was appointed anagnostes in the church of Tsaritsani, for which occasion he delivered a sermon of his own composition. At the age of twenty-one, already married, he was consecrated a deacon... he was soon promoted to presbyter. Upon the death of his father, he was appointed to his father's position of oikonomos. At the age of twenty-five, he was raised to the dignity of Hierokeryx of the eparchy of Elasson. In his wanderings about Thessaly and Macedonia he took an interest in ancient inscriptions. In 1806, during the Vlachavas uprising, he was imprisoned at Yannina. A person was found to pay 50,000 piastres for his release. He was then transferred to Thessalonike by Gregory V, to stand in for the Metropolitan, who lived in Constantinople. In 1808 he was invited to teach in Smyrna. In 1819 he went to Constantinople as Grand Predecessor. In 1821, in Odessa, he preached one of his best sermons over the bier of Gregory V. His fame reached St. Petersburg, where he was brought by order of Alexander I. There he published two of his works, *Aristotle's rhetoric*, first printed in Vienna in 1813, and *Poetic Grammar*, which had also been printed in Vienna, in 1817. In 1825 he wrote, at the command of the Emperor, a work *On the Close Relationship Between the Slavic-Russian and Greek Languages*, published by the Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences in Greek and Russian translation, St. Petersburg, 1828. He also wrote on the pronunciation of Greek, repudiating the system of Erasmus. In 1831 he went to Germany, where his family lived and his children were being educated. There he was made a member of the Berlin Academy of Sciences. In 1834 he returned to Greece, where he was given a triumphal reception. Not a single decision was made, thereafter, in Jerusalem or in Constantinople, without his agreement and his influence. As for his house in Athens, it became an Academy. He wrote an *Objection to the Propagation of the Bible in the Modern Greek Language*, and many other works. He died in 1857. The whole city was plunged into mourning. The newspapers came out framed in black..." The notice has been slightly compressed, but the hagiographical cast remains unmistakable. For heightened relief, let us consider the point of view of a contemporary western observer: "*Il y a ici un certain Constantin Iconomos, célèbre autrefois par son collège de Smyrne et ses connaissances philologiques. En 1821 il s'était réfugié à Odessa et avait été nommé prédicateur salarié du Czar dans toutes les églises de l'Empire. Depuis son arrivée on remarque une tendance à l'intolérance, aux discussions religieuses, qui n'existait pas auparavant, et une persécution extraordinaire contre les membres éclairés du clergé...*" (Edouard Grasset to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens, 19 December 1839. *Mémoires et Documents, Grèce*, vol. II, folio 240).

objective of avoiding rapid secularization with traumatic consequences was attained.

In view of the above, it is intriguing to note that it was precisely Constantine Oikonomos who preserved the bibliographical information about the first two editions of *Agathangelos*<sup>31</sup>. And it is not unreasonable to suppose that as propaganda chief for the Russian Party and a key member of the Philorthodox conspiracy he encouraged or even was responsible for the cluster of editions of 1837-1838. This would account for the initials "O.I.K.," which appear on the 1837 Athens edition<sup>32</sup>.

The banner of Agathangelism, as I have already pointed out, covered two classes of rebels to the Othonian regime. The Philorthodox Society institutionalized the distinction with the ranks of "simple" and "terrible", and an intermediary rank restricted to the clergy as a link between the two. We should note now that from the middle of the nineteenth century on, as the goals of the "patrician" element were progressively reached, the rebellious fringe at the top became narrower. And Agathangelism became increasingly the medium of protest of the "plebeian" base of the Russian Party, especially—and spectacularly—the Peloponnesian peasantry. It is interesting to recall, in this connection, the incident which precipitated the fall of the Mavrokordatos cabinet in 1841. The abbot and two monks of the Megaspelaion monastery in the Aroania mountains, near Kalavryta, in the north-central Peloponnesus, circulated a manifesto accusing Mavrokordatos of undermining the king and urging the people to rally in defense of the throne. Otho's advisers prepared a decree awarding to these monks the royal Order of the Savior, and presented it to Mavrokordatos for his signature. Of course, he resigned<sup>33</sup>. The incident is a good illustration of the loss of control of the base of the Russian Party by its nominal leadership, which at this time supported Mavrokordatos. It also marks the appearance of the Megaspelaion monks on the ideological stage. Henceforth, they were to play a prominent role.

Megaspelaion, in effect, became the pivotal point for the activities of a

31. Dimaras, *op. cit.* (second edition), *Parartema*, pp. 40, 50. The information in question is in Oikonomos' *Epikrisis eis ten peri neohellenikes ekklesias syntomon apantesin tou Neophytou Vamva*, Athens, 1839, p. 331. The 1824 edition was also mentioned by Philemon in 1834, in his *Dokimion Historikon peri Philikes Hetairias*, p. 68.

32. Politis, *op. cit.*, p. 176. There seems to be a sardonically playful side to this conspiracy-mongering. Note that after the discovery of the Philorthodox plot, the Russian Party press tried to blame the whole affair to a certain Agathangelos, dethroned bishop, who supposedly had planned the entire operation from Trieste (Petropulos, *op. cit.*, p. 333).

33. Cf. note 29.

fascinating series of religio-political revivalist demagogues, the first of whom seems to have been Kosmas Phlamiatos, a lay preacher from Cephalonia. Phlamiatos, banished from the Ionian Islands for anti-British activities, settled in Patras in 1839 and began publishing a journal appropriately named *The Voice of Orthodoxy* in 1841. He was a member of the Philorthodox Society. He brought out the 1849 Athens edition of *Agathangelos*. He died in jail in 1850<sup>34</sup>.

Phlamiatos' work was continued by a disciple who became firmly established in popular mythology: the illiterate but talented hermit from the Megaspeilaion area Christophoros Panagiotopoulos, better known as Papoulakos. Papoulakos barnstormed around the Peloponnesus in the manner of Kosmas Aitolos, rousing the people in opposition to the Synodal Tome of 1850, which normalized relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the autocephalous church of the Greek Kingdom. When the Athens Synod tried to restrain him, he replied that "he recognized no sovereign but the Emperor of Russia", that King Otho was the Antichrist, and that the Synod was made up of Jews, bent on separating the Greek church from the Patriarchate. At this point he had a following of a thousand men, and it took a considerable armed force to track him down and arrest him in 1852<sup>35</sup>. It was ironical that this force was commanded by Gennaios Kolokotronis, the "legitimate" leader of the Russian Party<sup>36</sup>. The Synod exiled him for life to the Panachrantos monastery on the island of Andros, where he died in 1861. His place of exile, according to an anonymous encyclopedia article, became a "panhellenic shrine"<sup>37</sup>.

In this manner the Greek ultra-Orthodox dissenters acquired a somewhat

34. *Papyros-Larousse*, XII, p. 768; Politis, *loc. cit.*; Peter Hammond, *The Waters of Marah: The Present State of the Greek Church*, London, 1956, p. 117. Hammond attributes Phlamiatos' difficulties both with the British protectorate authorities and the Greek Government to his "reckless denunciation of Masonic propaganda". Attacks on the Free-Masons, of course, are a form of anti-Westernism. For the special ideological climate of Patras and that city's prominent role in Greek ultra-nationalism, cf. Dimaras, "He Patra idiotypo kytaro paideias", *Nea Hestia*, vol. 81, 48 (1 January 1967), pp. 15-23. This milieu is responsible for Pericles Yannopoulos, the Greek Yukio Mishima.

35. Frazee, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

36. Gennaios had been formally designated to this position by his father Theodore (Petrooulos, *op. cit.*, 295).

37. *Papyros-Larousse*, X, p. 1009. The Papoulakos cult has been recently revived in the writings of Demetrios Tsakonas. For example: "Wherever His (sic) personality dominated in the Morea, there was no trace of cattle-rustling or crime... The Orthodox women of Maina fought the troops that came to arrest him with stones..." (*Koinonia kai Orthodoxyia*, Athens, 1956, p. 83).

paradoxical Avvakum: paradoxical, because the protomartyr of the Raskolniki had no true Tsar to turn to. He was stuck with the Antichrist in St. Petersburg, who was destined to become the God-resembling Emperor for the Old Believers among the Greeks.

Papoulakos' "image d'Epinal" style represents only one side of the Megaspelaion succession. Another disciple of Phlamiatos, Ignatios Lambropoulos, was destined to set the foundations of a much more solid structure. Ignatios, born in Megalopolis in 1814, became a monk and was ordained a priest at Megaspelaion. He met Phlamiatos in 1842 and for seven years thereafter was in close collaboration with him. He spent a few months in jail at the time of Phlamiatos' arrest in 1850, and was confined to Megaspelaion until the expulsion of Otho in 1862, at which time he was permitted to resume his activities. He was offered the episcopal see of Trifylia in south-western Peloponnesus, but he declined. Among his disciples was Hierotheos Metropoulos, uncle of Eusebios Matthopoulos<sup>38</sup>.

Eusebios Matthopoulos, the successor of Ignatios, was born in the Gortynian village of Grestaina in 1849. He represents the second generation of zealots from the Peloponnesian highlands since the Revolution: the generation that moved to Athens. In this he was assisted by a new and much more imposing Phlamiatos-like figure, Apostolos Makrakis. Makrakis, born on the island of Siphnos, had lived in Constantinople, from where he had gone to Paris for two years as a private tutor (1862-1864). There, he published three dogmatic, anti-western works in French. In 1866 he appeared in Athens. Great crowds gathered at Omonoia square to listen to his disquisitions on "national-religious questions", which were also printed in his newspaper *Justice: a Journal of Hellenic Principles*, replaced in the following year by *Logos: a Journal of Religious, Political and Philosophical Principles*<sup>39</sup>. In 1876 he founded the "School of Logos", a spiritual commune to which he brought Matthopoulos, whom he had met in the course of a visit to Megaspelaion, as chaplain and confessor. The Synod closed down the "school" two years later and exiled six Makrakist priests, including Matthopoulos, for near-heresy. In the same

38. Hammond, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

39. *Papyros-Larousse*, IX, p. 831 (for Matthopoulos); pp. 668-669 (for Makrakis). For Makrakis cf. also Papanoutsos, *Neohellenike Filosofia*, Athens, 1953, vol. II, p. 24; and Constantine Cavarinos, *Modern Greek Thought*, Belmont, Mass., 1969, pp. 23-24; and the Tsakonas cultist approach: "Apostolos Makrakis, a guileless and Prophetic (sic) nature... suffocated by bourgeois society...an object lesson for the Modern Greek Regeneration, which cannot come from the People but only from exceptional personalities..." ("He koinonike theoresis tou Makraki", *Dokimia Epanastaseos*, Athens, n.d., pp. 135, 140).

year Makrakis formed a “Panhellenic Society of Constantine the Great”, announced the impending recovery of Constantinople and the end of the “Kingdom of the Antichrist Mohamed”, and regressed to the cruder forms of Agathangelism. Matthopoulos, rehabilitated in 1883, disassociated himself from Makrakis and struck out on his own. For the next two decades—and since 1895 under the auspices of the Holy Synod—he covered the whole country as an itinerant preacher, and in 1907 he founded the brotherhood *Zoe* as an “instrument for the continuous regeneration of the Greek church”<sup>40</sup>.

Matthopoulos and *Zoe* took a socio-religious direction which was politically inward-looking. Makrakis continued in the tradition of irredentist millenarianism, adding a new, even more utopian note which reflected the impact of San Stefano and the Treaty of Berlin of 1878: original Agathangelism stressed the triumph of Orthodoxy over the West, which would naturally bring about the liquidation of the Ottoman Empire and the withdrawal of the Turks into Central Asia; while Makrakis also foresaw the Christianization and Hellenization of the Turks, thus injecting a new theme into Greek ultra-Orthodox ideology which was to have considerable repercussions later<sup>41</sup>.

In spite of panhellenic utopias bred of the rapidly developing Russophobia of the irredentist ideologues after 1878, grassroots pro-Russian Agathangelism did not disappear. An annotated edition of *Agathangelos* published in New York in 1914, which I found in the Library of Congress, has the Russians winning not only World War I but also the Crimean War<sup>42</sup>: Nicholas II is

40. Hammond, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-123. Cf. also John Campbell and Philip Sherrard, *Modern Greece*, New York, 1968, p. 213; and an excellent article from *Herder's Correspondence*, reprinted in the *Hellenic Review*, London, September 1968, pp. 25-27.

41. Tsakonas, for example, deploras the idea of an independent Greek state as a product of the French Revolution, while he blames Russia for having spoiled Turko-Phanariot collaboration. He considers the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire “a misfortune”, and the Treaty of Lausanne a worse disaster than the fall of Constantinople in 1453, because it foreclosed the possibility of the establishment of “a dual Greco-Turkish Empire” (*Radioprogramma*, Athens, 6 July 1971, pp. 11-13; “Politikoi prosanatolismoi kai theseis tes Ekklesias epi Tourkokratias”, *Theseis kai Ideai*, March 1968, pp. 32-37. The former prints lectures delivered over Athens radio, and the latter was the monthly ideological organ of the Colonels' regime, published by the Office of the Prime Minister). Tsakonas served as Deputy Foreign Minister, after having served as Deputy Minister for Press and Information. The top slots in both ministries were reserved for Papadopoulos himself. It is in this climate that the latter revived the idea of a Greco-Turkish federation (*Ethnikos Keryx*, New York, 3 June 1971). The idea has always been utopian: on the left, because of the insufficient secularization of the people involved, and on the right, because it has always been a camouflaged dream of hegemony.

42. *He apokalypsis tou Agathangelou, hetoi propheteiai peri tou mellontos kai tes tyches ton ethnon, meta photographikou apospasmatos ek tou archaiou cheirographou kai semeioseon ton mechri toude epauletheusason propheteion. Ekdosis epimelemene, Nea Yorke, typographeion Chel-*

described as “the leader and protector of Orthodoxy, whose countless and mighty armies have poured like a great flood over the borders of Austria and Germany...advancing impetuously, spreading panic all around him, triumphant, vanquishing and crushing his faithless adversaries”. The Greco-Russian rivalry over Constantinople is dealt with in the traditional manner, as an afterthought: “What will momentarily sadden the soul of the Greek is the prophesy of the taking of Constantinople by a certain Peter V, future Emperor of Russia. Let us hope, and we are certain of this, that until the fifth Peter—who would probably be preparing the ground for Hellenism at any rate—ascends the throne of Russia, the Greeks will have swept with their conquering armies to the very banks of the Danube, so that the ancient glory and renown of the Byzantines might be revived”<sup>43</sup>. And for good measure we are given an additional prophesy by “Tarasios to the island of Hydra”, according to which “with Russia’s help we will recover the Queen of cities, Constantinople; the Turks will be chased beyond the red apple tree, to be put to sleep and to rise no more”<sup>44</sup>.

By this time, however, the Peloponnesian tradition, which survived in the Greek-American diaspora which was largely of Peloponnesian origin, had become marginal in Greece. The treaty of Lausanne in 1923 marked the end of irredentism as a significant factor in ideology. Urbanization and economic development changed the terms of reference of social and political conflict, and emigration depopulated the focal areas of primitive rebellion.

Yet, the compromise inherent in the adoption of the Russian model of transition into modernity left a basic cultural weakness which we can best describe as defective secularization. The implications of this flaw became painfully apparent in recent years, when a malcontented state church, a heavily Peloponnesian officer corps, and an unexpected irredentist crisis over Cyprus sufficed to topple the achievements of a century of development and to precipitate an ideological and institutional regression of catastrophic enormity<sup>45</sup>.

*me*, 1914. Note that the 1853 edition appeared during the opening phase of the Crimean War.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 17.

44. Rather loose demotic translation of the pseudo-classical original by the editor.

45. In the words of Tsakonias, the chief ideologue of the Papadopoulos dictatorship, “in the life of the family, of the village particularly, but also of the Byzantine city, we shall find the coenobitic regime of Orthodoxy, the regime which we abandoned, in order to make the routine compromises of industrial cities the basis of our lives. The latter fact also expresses the influence which the secular doctrines of the West have had in the development of our values” (*op. cit.* p. 11). The great majority of Greek intellectuals, who oppose the regime, are dismissed in the following terms: “The social thought of Orthodoxy...has been identified with the woefully naive liberalism of the nineteenth century. That even to dare express such a thought amounts not only to a scientific but to a national crime, needs no special proof at this moment” (*Theseis kai Ideai*, April 1969, p. 28).