Lora Gerd

Russian Policy in the Orthodox East: The Patriarchate of Constantinople (1878-1914)
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Preface

What is the Eastern Question? The competition of European powers—Great Britain, Austria (Austro-Hungary), and France on one side; Russia on the other—in the Near East and European Turkey, their struggle for domination, political and economic penetration of the weakened Ottoman Empire of the 19th and early 20th centuries, is the complex of problems that is usually referred to as the Eastern Question. The Ottoman Empire, that “sick man” as it was once called, was of special interest because of its geographical and strategic position. It lay enroute to the British colony of India, to the countries of Central Asia and China and to Palestine which had always been a land of special religious and political interest to the Europeans since the Crusades. The gateway to the Ottoman lands were the Dardanelles and Bosporus Strait (hereafter the Straits), and the Ottoman capital, Constantinople, the legendary and symbolic city in the history of Christianity. The Ottoman Empire in this situation became a genuine actor in contributing to its own fate rather than a passive recipient of European decisions.

After the successful wars of the 1760s-1790s, Russia gained access to the Black Sea. Its further task in this direction then was to procure access to the Mediterranean, and thus to establish new routes for trade and export of raw materials. In addition to economic reasons, Russia had strategic interests as well: the South Russian territories needed protection from the encroachment of Turkey and its European rivalries. The Balkans were the key to the success of this program.

The existing historiography of the Eastern Question usually focuses on the political, military and economic aspects of the problem and ignores the religious dynamics\(^1\) in spite of the fact that the Near East has been at the crossroads of religious and political interests of Christian states since the Middle Ages. Jerusalem, with its Holy Sepulchre, was a center of pilgrimage beginning in the first century CE. The Crusades, aimed at liberating the Holy Sepulchre from the Saracins, led to the formation of several states in the Near East ruled by western Europeans which in turn led to the first serious clash between the west and the Byzantium Empire, the most influential state in eastern Europe. The capture of Constantinople by the Latins in 1204 CE ended the Byzantine monopoly and began a new era in which separate states in the Balkans were formed. As Byzantium’s decline began and its territories taken over by the Ottomans, the Russian state was consolidated and strengthened. Having adopted the

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\(^1\) See, for example, F. I. Uspensky, *Kak voznik i razvivals’a v Rossii Vostochnyj vopros* (St. Petersburg, 1887); B. A. Dranov, *Chernomorskie prolivy* (Moscow, 1948); N. E. Saul, *Russia and the Mediterranean* (Chicago, 1970); B. Jelavich, *The Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers and the Straits Question, 1870-1887* (Bloomington; London, 1973); Eadem, *St. Petersburg and Moscow: Tsarist and Soviet Foreign Policy 1814-1974* (Bloomington; London, 1974); B. H. Sumner, *Tsardom and Imperialism in the Far East and Middle East* (London, s. a.); N. S. Kiniapina, *Balkany i prolivy vo vneshney politike Rossi v konce XIX v.* (Moscow, 1994); *Rossia i Chernomorskie prolivy (XVIII-XX stoletija)* (Moscow, 1999); Ju. V. Luneva, *Bosphor i Dardanelly. Tajnye provokacii nakanune Pervoj mirovoj vojny (1907-1914)* (Moscow, 2010), etc.
Christianity of Byzantium, Russia also borrowed its universalist state-political ideology. Byzantium traditionally regarded itself as heir to ancient Rome, which dominated the entire cultural world or Oecumene. Constantinople was the New Rome, and the inhabitants of the state were Romaioi, i.e., Romans. Roman state ideology took on a new meaning with the adoption of Christianity as the official religion. Now the barbaric peoples were regarded as an object of missionary policy. Baptizing barbarians drew them into the sphere of Byzantine political and cultural interests, and led to their territories being incorporated into the Empire.2

The Byzantine imperial political concept was taken over by Russia. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Russian state viewed itself as the heir to Byzantium. These ideas were theoretically based on Moscow being the Third Rome, at first, in a purely eschatological sense, and much later in a political sense. Like the Byzantines, the Russian political and intellectual elite of the Moscovian period regarded their state a New Israel.3 The moral right of Russia to be considered the heir to Byzantium was confirmed by the Eastern patriarchs and the numerous clergy who visited Moscow in the 16th and 17th centuries soliciting aid for their monasteries. During the 18th century, Russia’s imperial ambitions became more pronounced, and by the beginning of the 19th century the Balkan and Near Eastern dimension became one of the central in the foreign policy of the country.

During the 19th century the Great idea (Megali idea) or Greek national identity developed with the goal of restoring the Byzantine Empire and uniting all historic Greek lands into one state with Constantinople as its capital. The first concrete step in the realization of the Great idea was the war of Greek independence of 1821-1829 and the foundation of an independent Greek state. Up until the early 19th century, the Greeks expected their liberation to be brought about by Russia, but beginning in the 19th century, they relied upon the support of the western powers, primarily Britain. The result was a confrontation of two imperial ambitions for the formation of an Orthodox Empire, the imperial Russian one and the national Greek one.

The 19th century was a period of independent state formation in the Balkans and rising Balkan nationalism. The ideological basis for this was the establishment of autocephalous national churches, independent from Constantinople. This process usually followed political independence, though not always.

Beginning in the 1950s, the problem of nationalism and national states has been the subject of much research. E. Gellner linked the appearance of nationalism with

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the historical development of capitalism. “Nationalism is not [the] awakening of
tions to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist”, he postu-
lated.4 The theory of “imagined communities”, as such nations have been called by
scholars, found further development in the work of B. Anderson.5 Usually modern
scholars create a universal system in their theories of nationalism but this provides
only a partial analysis of concrete historical events, which can lead to false conclu-
sions. Much more convincing in reference to the Balkans is the research of M. Hroch,
who studied nationalism using southeastern Europe as his example. Without reject-
ing Gellner’s main thesis about the creation of nations, he showed that his theory was
not plausible for understanding the Balkans. Nationalism here is not connected to
industrialism as the Balkans in the 19th century were an agrarian region. According to
Hroch, three main phases in the development of nationalism can be identified in the
Balkans: 1) a small circle of intellectuals defined the national culture and formulated
the idea of a nation; 2) professional agitators spread nationalism and politicized cul-
tural nationalism in the growing cities; 3) ordinary citizens joined in and nationalism
became a mass movement.6

The principle of succession which grew out of the millet system (applicable to
the non-Muslim autonomous communities in the Ottoman Empire) was replaced by
separatism, i.e., the reconstruction and formation of national autocephalies.7 This
shift dismantled the fundamental organizational base of the Eastern Christian world.
Although justified by the historic memory of the late Byzantine period, it was opposed
by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Russian reaction to this national-political
struggle in its ecclesiastical form and the use of canon law and medieval patterns
of the Byzantine and Ottoman periods for achieving pure political goals is an under
studied page of late 19th- and early 20th-century diplomatic history and political con-
sciousness.8

With the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji of 1774, Russia strengthened its influence on
the Ottoman Empire. Its strategic and political initiatives in the Near East were imple-

mented through ecclesiastical avenues; supporting Orthodoxy was the justification of these initiatives. The wide-spread old thesis about the right received by Russia to protect the Orthodox population of Turkey is now completely reviewed; nevertheless, it was that opinion which was dominating in the Russian diplomatic texts up to 1914. Thus Jerusalem and Constantinople became the two main objects of interest for Russia—the first as the city of Christ, and the second as the symbol of Christian monarchy. The old messianic medieval ideology was used by Russian diplomats of the 19th century as an influential political weapon, and gave Russia an indisputable advantage when compared with the western powers. The shared Orthodox faith of a large part of the Ottoman Empire was a strong support for the Russian Foreign office in the Near East. At the same time it resulted in political blindness and many mistakes, which in the end cost Russia the loss of its extraordinary influence in the affairs of the Orthodox East. The Crimean War was an adventure in the style of the Crusaders. The attempted return of the Holy Sepulchre to the Orthodox Church resulted in a tragic defeat for Russia and the loss of its Black Sea fleet. The generous assistance Russia offered to the Eastern churches and monasteries was given, in many instances, with no strings attached and without demanding an accounting for how the money was spent. The diplomatic support extended to the Eastern churches was given in order to help the Orthodox churches in their resistance of Catholic and Protestant missionizing.

In the second half of the 19th century, Russia looked to develop a new policy for the Near East and a new solution of the Eastern Question. After the Crimean War it turned first to fostering a pan-Slavic orientation, and after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, to developing a national imperial policy. The Byzantine ideology of the 1880-90s prevailed in Russian policy; it was supported by scholars, journalists and a flourishing school of Byzantine studies. The theorists of neo-Byzantinism at the end of the 19th century asserted that Russia was the only great power with an Orthodox tsar. For this reason, it should rule over the entire Orthodox world, including eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Near East. This was a modification of the messianic idea of the Third Rome, combined with the imperial colonial ambitions of one of the great powers of modern times.

By the beginning of the 20th century, cracks began to appear in this ideology. On the one hand, supporters of immediate action in the Near East raised their voices, and on the other, involvement in Russia’s Far East policy was increased. There were many opponents to shifting the focus of Russian policy from the Near East to the Far East. Russia’s defeat in the war with Japan confirmed that it really had been a significant strategic error. Meanwhile the freezing of Russia’s activities in the Balkans due to the Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution of 1905-07 led to Russia’s retreat from this


region. Inspired by the idea of a pan-Orthodox union, the Russian foreign office succeeded in creating the Balkan League in 1911-1912, though it did not follow the orders from St. Petersburg, as its organizers had hoped. The Balkan states that wanted to unify Constantinople and the Straits were stopped by Russia who did not want to see another master of the banks of the Bosporus. The First World War saw the height of Russian imperial ambition and the development of Byzantine ideology; the realization of the dream seemed very close. The Revolution of 1917, however, crushed these plans and put an end to Byzantinism in Russian policy.

In comparing the beginning of the 20th century with the previous two decades, one should note the further politization of the Byzantine ideology in the consciousness of the Russian ruling elite. The theoretical idea of the Third Rome now became a program of practical action and aggression in the Near East. On the other hand, the gap between the grandiose scheme underlying Russia’s policy and the viability of its realization become more and more obvious. The imperial slogans propagating domination over the entire Orthodox East and the standard phrases supporting Orthodoxy were at odds with Russia’s political weakness in the face of the hostile Balkan states and the European Great Powers that backed them. The success of Russian diplomacy in some areas and the ongoing efforts of such Russian institutions as the imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, the Russian monasteries on Mt. Athos and elsewhere, the Russian Archeological Institute in Constantinople of course bore some fruit, but seemed to be islands in the sea of general unfavourableness toward Russia’s handling of the Eastern Question. The crisis came to a head in the middle of the 1910s and erupted as the First World War.

This book traces the development of neo-Byzantine ideology in Russian political consciousness in 1878-1914 and its influence on Russian policy in the Balkans and the Near East. The second goal of my research is to bring to light unedited archival materials from Russia, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Turkey which reveal little-known or even completely unknown pages in the relations between Russia and the Patriarchate of Constantinople during these decades. Several dimensions of Russian policy relating to the Diocese of the Ecumenical Patriarchate are examined: the direct contact between the Russian government and the patriarchate and its head, the patriarch; and the position of Russia in relation to matters of import for Constantinople (the question of the rights and privileges of the church in the Ottoman state, the role played by Russian diplomacy in the ordination of a Serb metropolitan in Skopje, relations with the Anglican Church). Special attention is also paid to the most important ecclesiastical-political topics of the time—the Bulgarian ecclesiastical question and Russian monasticism on Mt. Athos. The chronological frame of the book is bounded by the two most important events of the era—the end of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 and the beginning of the First World War.
1 Russian Policy in the Balkans, 1878-1914

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the Balkans were the most turbulent region in Europe. On the one hand were the Balkan peoples with their aims of creating their own national states with the broadest borders possible, and on the other, the ambitions of the Great Powers to gain spheres of influence in the European territories of the Ottoman Empire. This led to a continually strained and unstable situation.

1.1 Between the Two Wars: 1856-1877

The Crimean War proved to be the turning point in the relations between Russia and the Near East. After this first serious defeat of the Russian army in a war with the Ottoman Empire, Christians of the Near East and the Balkans looked more and more towards Europe. The image of Russia as the liberator of the Orthodox inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire faded and the authority of the Russian tsar was to a great extent lost. Russian diplomacy after 1856 focused totally on the restoration of Russia’s former authority. Of great significance in this process were the activities of Count N. P. Ignatiev, the ambassador to Constantinople from 1864 to 1877.11 His idea of creating ‘Greater Bulgaria’, a large south-Slavonic state in the Balkans, as a base for Russian interests and further penetration towards the Straits, received the support of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and coincided with the intentions of Tsar Alexander II. In 1870, the Russian government declared that it would no longer comply with the restrictions of the Paris Treaty of 1856. The declaration of the tsar was ratified by the London Conference of 1871.12


12 L. I. Narochnickaya, Rossija i otmena nejtralizacii Chernogo moria 1856-1870 gg. (Moscow, 1989).
The 1840s-1870s was a period of reform (Tanzimat) in the Ottoman Empire. The hatt-i-humajun of 1856 guaranteed all non-Muslim subjects of the sultan equal rights with the Muslims. A reform of the legislation and of the judicial system would follow, it was promised. However, the reforms were never fully implemented and this provoked further action on the part of the liberation movement of the Balkan peoples. By the mid-1870s, the situation became so tense that revolts erupted in different parts of the region. In April 1875 the Russian government proposed that the fleets of the Great Powers should assemble at Constantinople on both the European and Asian coasts of Turkey. However, the proposal was turned down by Great Britain.

The Russian government realized that Russia was not sufficiently prepared for war. In the event of naval operations, Britain would clearly dominate. A number of attempts at peaceful negotiation of the Eastern crisis failed (for example, the Constantinople Conference of 1876). On January 15, 1877 an agreement on the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austro-Hungary was signed. This was the condition needed for Britain to guarantee its neutrality. In March 1877 at a conference in London, Britain demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from Bessarabia, and on April 12, 1877 Alexander I signed a manifest of war which began the Russo-Turkish War. Both the tsar and his minister of foreign affairs, Gorchakov, agreed to the demands of the other powers that there would be no territorial changes in the Balkans and Russia would not occupy Constantinople. Gorchakov intended to create a Bulgarian state extending to the Balkan mountains; Serbia, Montenegro and Romania would receive some new territories; Russia would reclaim Southern Bessarabia and occupy Batumi. As Russia's victory became a surety, the Russian command came to the opinion that dividing Bulgaria into two parts would not be advantageous. At the same time, in January 1878, a British squadron entered the Sea of Marmara. Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich received an order to enter Constantinople, but this meant open confrontation with Britain. So it was decided to halt the advance in the suburb of the capital, San Stefano, where the preliminary treaty was signed on February 19, 1878. According to this treaty, Greater Bulgaria, including the territories of Northern and Southern Bulgaria extending as far as the Aegean, would be created. As the initiator of the

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treaty, Ignatiev stressed that such a territorial division would prevent further conflict between the Slavs and Greeks in Macedonia and help mend the Bulgarian Schism.

However, the final treaty signed four months later was not favourable to Russia. The Congress of Berlin (June 14-July 14, 1878) remains one of the most unpleasant episodes in Russian diplomacy. The conditions of the treaty were the creation of a vassal Bulgarian Principality, the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austro-Hungary, the independence of Serbia, Montenegro and Romania. Eastern Rumelia received some rights of autonomy while Macedonia and Thrace still remained Ottoman territory.14

1.2 After the Congress of Berlin: Fin de Siècle

The reconstruction period after 1878 was a time of reflection for Russia. The Congress of Berlin had leveled a serious blow to pan-Slavic ideas and to Russian imperialism which firmly backed them. The lack of support from the South Slavs became the target of serious self-reflection by diplomats and politicians for the next twenty years. They tried to understand the reasons for the failures of Russia during the last decades. S. S. Tatischev wrote some years later:

Our policy in the east right up to recent times was implemented with a persistence that could have been put to better use, but continued to be focused on one goal, the happiness and well-being of our fellow-countrymen and co-believers. The Russian diplomats did not even ask themselves what Russian needs were in the Balkan states, which owed their existence to Russia, i.e. they did not do what they should have done.15

Russian policy of the 1880s-1890s was concentrated in two areas: first, to build up the armed forces; second, to find a solution to the Eastern Question. In the first years following the Congress of Berlin, Russian politicians kept in mind the following major considerations: avoidance of diplomatic isolation, security of the Straits, and protec-
tion of the Russian position in Bulgaria. After the unfavourable results of the Congress, nothing remained for Russia but to preserve the status quo in the Near East. Despite its great success in the war, Russia was isolated by the other Great Powers, each of which had its own goals in the Balkans. Up until 1881 it enjoyed favour in Bulgaria and Montenegro, but after it lost its standing in Bulgaria, only tiny Montenegro remained sympathetic towards Russia.

Conquering the Straits was considered the most important political task and opinions differed only on the terms of its realization. The main opposition to these Russian aspirations after the 1870s was Great Britain. As D. A. Miliutin, the Russian minister of defense wrote, England was the master of the Straits and of Constantinople; if the British fleet had entered the Black Sea, nobody could have prevented it. Russian-German negotiations at the end of the 1870s and beginning of the 1880s and the signing of the Dreikaiserbund in 1881 were aimed at protecting the Black Sea from British invasion.

In the years immediately following the Russo-Turkish War, Russia still hoped to form a buffer state in the Balkans which would serve its interests. On October 5, 1880 Miliutin proposed a confederation of several Balkan states under a European protectorate. Such a confederation would include Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Albania, and Greece. Constantinople and the vilajet of Adrianople would also be included in the confederation, remaining at the same time Ottoman. Miliutin did not believe that Constantinople should become an international city. Its internationalization, in his opinion, would lead to British domination. It suited Russian interests better to have it remain in Ottoman hands. It was however, impossible to realize the confederation because the controversies in the Balkan states were not adequately taken into consideration.

16 Ch. Jelavich, Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism. Russian Influence in the Internal Affairs of Bulgaria and Serbia, 1879-1886 (Berkeley; Los Angeles, 1958), 1.
17 On Russian policy towards Bulgaria and Serbia after 1878 see: ibid.
18 The Straits question as the key one of the more general Eastern question is discussed in most of the studies on Russian Near East policy of the XIXth century. See: S. Goriainov, Le Bosphore et les Dardanelles (Paris, 1910); B. H. Sumner, Tsardom and Imperialism in the Far East and Middle East, 1880-1914 (London, s. a.); N. E. Saul, Russia and the Mediterranean (Chicago, 1970); Ch. & B. Jelavich, The Establishment of the Balkan National States 1804-1920 (Seattle, London, 1977); B. Jelavich, The Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers and the Straits Question, 1870-1887 (Bloomington, London, 1973); idem, St. Petersburg and Moscow: Tsarist and Soviet Foreign Policy 1814-1974 (Ibid., 1974); N. S. Kiniapina, Balkany i prolivy vo vneshej politike Rossii v konce XIX veka (Moscow, 1994); S. McMeekin, Russian Origins of the First World War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011); R. Bobroff, Roads to Glory: Late Imperial Russia and the Turkish Straits (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006).
19 P. A. Zajonchkovskij ed., Dnevnik D. A. Miliutina, 3 (Moscow, 1950), 127.
20 See Miliutin’s note “Thoughts about the possible solution of the Eastern question in case of final disintegration of the Ottoman Empire” in: N. S. Kiniapina, Balkany i prolivy vo vneshej politike Rossii v konce XIX veka (Moscow, 1994), 15-20.
In May 1883, Nelidov was appointed the new Russian ambassador to Constantinople. He supported immediate action in the Near East and political revenge in the matter of the Eastern Question. In the growing tension of the situation in the Near East, some Russian politicians thought if Russia would turn a blind eye to the British occupation of Egypt, Great Britain, in return, would allow Russia to enter the Straits. As Nelidov wrote on December 6, 1882 to the Russian foreign ministry:

One could easily see that the Turkish Empire will disintegrate in the same way that the Byzantine Empire did. Unless the capital can be conquered, the stronghold of the Empire will be transferred to Asia and slowly die out. Russia needs to conquer the capital because all its political, commercial and military interests depend on its occupation of the Straits.\(^21\)

Nelidov proposed several options on how to achieve the goal of conquering Constantinople. In keeping with the general passive political stance of Russia during the reign of Alexander III, the more peaceable one was adopted: to develop the closest possible relations with the Ottoman government and exert increasing pressure on it. In 1885 Nelidov, in a note entitled, “Concerning Russian policy in Turkey”, again stressed that the main goal of Russian policy in the east should be to establish a presence on the banks of the Bosporus.

By the mid-1880s, the Balkans again became the focus of international attention. On September 6, 1885 the union of Northern and Southern Bulgaria was proclaimed. This event was accepted in St. Petersburg with bad grace, as by that point relations between Russia and the Bulgarian prince, A. Batenberg, had become strained; Bulgaria, instead of providing a base for Russian access to the Straits, now became an obstacle.\(^22\) Batenberg abdicated in 1886 and soon afterwards diplomatic relations between Russia and Bulgaria broke off. This lasted for seven years.\(^23\)

Following this crisis, two more documents were written on the matter of the Straits. The first was a letter from Alexander III addressed to the chief of the general staff, Obruchev (September 12, 1885). “I suppose”, the emperor said, “that we should have one main goal: the occupation of Constantinople in order to establish ourselves in the Straits forever and know that they will always be in our hands. This is in the interests of Russia and should be our aspiration. Everything else which happens in the Balkans is of secondary interest to us”. The second document was a letter from Obruchev to Miliutin, the minister of war, dated July 2-9, 1886. It outlined the two

\(^{21}\) “Zapiska A. I. Nelidova v 1882 g. o zan’atii prolivov”, introduction by V. Chvostov, Krasnyi Archiv, 46 (1931): 182.

\(^{22}\) Ch. Jelavich, Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism, 203-236.

\(^{23}\) S. M. Goriainov, “Razryv Rossii s Bolgariei v 1886 godu,” Istoricheskij vestnik, CXLVII (1917); Ch. Jelavich, Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism, 237-274; Ch. & B. Jelavich, The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 158-169; V. I. Kosik, Vremia razryva: politika Rossii v bolgarskom voprose, 1886-1894 gg. (Moscow, 1993).
matters that were of greatest importance to Russia: the Polish question and the Bosphorus one. Both of them were to be solved by force of arms, though the time had not yet come.\textsuperscript{24}

The death of Alexander III in 1894 became an opportunity for the advocates of an active policy in the Balkans to push their agenda although they waited to see what stance the new emperor would take. The first efforts of Nicolas II in foreign policy in October 1896 were not a great success and resulted in action being taken more quickly. The Near East crisis in the second half of the 1890s also spurred Russia on to take action.

The policies of the European powers in the first half of the 1890s continued to depend on their rivalry with each other as they tried to maintain the status quo when it came to the Eastern Question. The Armenian massacre in 1894 brought further strain on the situation when a disagreement arose among the three powers on how to regulate it. Britain wanted to pressure the sultan, while Russia and France were inclined to minimalize their demands. In light of these events, a conference on the construction of a Russian Black Sea fleet took place in St. Petersburg in June 1895. Obruchev stressed that the occupation of Constantinople itself would not profit Russia in any way; the Bosphorus and the entrance to the Black Sea were what Russia needed. If Russia occupied the Bosphorus, Britain would be paralyzed and Russia would become the master of the Balkans; in that case it need not worry about the Caucasus and the Black Sea coast. The Naval office was much more skeptical about this plan unless a strong Black Sea fleet could be built.\textsuperscript{25} After the Armenians captured the Ottoman bank in August 1896, the threat of the British navy entering the Sea of Marmara was very real. The Russian government in its turn declared that at the moment when the British fleet entered the Dardanelles, the Russian one would enter the Bosphorus.\textsuperscript{26}

On November 18, 1896, Nelidov, the Russian ambassador to Constantinople once more proposed the immediate occupation of the Straits. A decisive role in defeating this proposal was played by S. Yu. Witte, the minister of finance, who insisted on developing Far East policy instead. As a result of the failure of his proposal, Nelidov was dismissed from his position in Constantinople.\textsuperscript{27} After wavering in October 1896, Russia returned to its previous line: strengthening its union with France, cooperating

\textsuperscript{24} “Zapiska A. I. Nelidova v 1882 g….”: 180-181.
\textsuperscript{26} See on the British policy of this period: G. S. Papadopoulos, England and the Near East, 1896-1898 (Thessaloniki, 1969); A. Pantev, Anglija sreshtu Rusija na Balkanite 1879-1894 (Sofia, 1972).
with Germany in some aspects and “freezing” the Near East question by supporting the sultan. At the beginning of the new century, however, desire for revenge once again dominated Russian policy. On January 25, 1900, Nicolas II approved the memorandum of the minister of foreign affairs concerning the immediate activity of Russia in Turkey. The primary aim was still the occupation of the Straits, Constantinople and a part of Asia Minor in order to strengthen Russia’s position. The minister of war, A. Kuropatkin, was rather categorical on this point, while Witte was concerned that immediate military actions in the Bosphorus would have a negative impact on Russia’s positions elsewhere. The final decision was the following:

The promise expected from Turkey not to construct railways along the Black Sea coast is a sufficient guarantee for Russia to proceed with its plan to occupy the Straits. This is the achievement of diplomatic work. Only later should military force be used.28

No opportunity for a peaceful solution of the Eastern Question was discussed again. German influence on Ottoman affairs intensified at the end of the 19th century. Germany officially defended the integrity of Turkey and held the chief positions in its economic and military affairs. Having received concession to build the Bagdad railway, Germany advanced to the Persian Gulf. In this situation, Russia could only neutralize the most threatening initiatives, for example the building of the north line of the Bagdad railway to Diyarbakir-Van, which was to run near the Russian-Turkish border in the Caucasus.29 The efforts of Britain and France were also aimed at halting German ambitions. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Balkans continued to be a source of antagonism between Russia and Austro-Hungary, as both had their own interests there. Russia needed unfettered access to the Mediterranean and Austro-Hungary aimed to control the western part of the peninsula and the Aegean port of Thessaloniki. The Vienna government was supported by the prince of Bulgaria and the king of Serbia as well as by Bulgarian and Serbian merchants interested in active trade along the Danube. These circumstances created a real threat to Russian penetration of Slavonic countries and the strengthening of its positions enroute to the Straits and Constantinople. Both Russia and Austro-Hungary used political agents and religious propaganda. Catholic missionaries from Austria, supported by Rome, carried out a wide-scale campaign among the native population, both Slavonic and Albanian,30 while Russia continued its traditional line of supporting Orthodoxy.

29 G. A. Bondarevsky, Bagdadskaja zhelezjnaja doroga i proniknovenie germanskogo imperialisma na Blizhnij Vostok (1888-1903) (Tashkent, 1955); A. S. Silin, Ekspansija germanskogo imperialisma na Blizhnem Vostoke (Moscow, 1976), 178-188.
1.3 The Macedonian Question

The central unresolved political question in the Balkans was the Macedonian one, which intensified greatly at the end of the 1890s. The Congress of Berlin left Macedonia within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. Thus it became an object of competition for the three Balkan states: Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. Its population was mixed: Greeks lived mostly in towns along the sea coast, while the interior was inhabited by Slavs. Definitive distinctions between the Slavonic dialects did not exist, and their national self-identity depended on the propaganda of political agents and their church orientation.31 The Russian government did not have a firm opinion on the nationality of the Macedonian Slavs; it depended on the political situation of the moment. After the Russo-Turkish War, Russia counted on the Bulgarian element in the Balkans for support while at the beginning of the 20th century it was inclined to support the Serbs. The Russian diplomat G. N. Trubetskoj asked:

Is Macedonia a Bulgarian province? For a long time Russia, Britain and other European countries responded with a positive answer to this question. However, many of our consuls who have studied this question in situ gave a different answer. Macedonia is neither a pure Bulgarian nor a Serbian region, but the Slavs who live there are a kind of raw material which can be transformed into either Serb and Bulgarian.32

At first the general population did not show much enthusiasm for Bulgarian political propaganda, carried out by a narrow circle of priests, teachers and merchants. Later, however, it paid off, and by 1912, as Trubetskoj concluded, one could speak not about Macedonia, but about Bulgaro-Macedonia.

The tensions between the Greek and Slavonic population of Macedonia began in the first half of the 19th century with the rise of the national consciousness of the Balkan Slavs. Later they grew into open conflicts. In the 1860-70s an independent Bulgarian church was established. According to the leaders of the Bulgarian liberation movement, who were supported by Ignatiev, the Russian ambassador to Constantinople, the Bulgarian exarchate was supposed to include most of the Macedo-

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31 The ethnic map of Macedonia was a subject of research of a series of Russian expeditions. In the 1880s most Slavs called themselves simply raya, i. e. subject of the Sultan. One or two decades later their ethnic identity was determined by church borders: the Exarchists called themselves Bulgarians while the Patriarchists did not emphasize their ethnicity. See: H. R. Wilkinson, Maps and Politics: A Review of the Ethnographic Cartography of Macedonia (Liverpool, 1951); H. N. Brailsford, Macedonia: Its Races and their Future (London, 1906) (the Bulgarian point of view); T. R. Georgovitch, Macedonia (London, 1918) (the Serbian point of view); D. Dakin, The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913 (Thessaloniki, 1966) (the Greek point of view).

32 A note of G. Trubetskoj on the tasks of Russia in the World War. January 10, 1917, AVPRI, f. Politarchiv, op. 482, d. 4313, l. 11. G. N. Trubetskoj was a vice-director of the First Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at that moment.
nian eparchies with mixed Greek and Slavonic populations. Following the Bulgarian Schism of 1872, these eparchies were considered independent both by the Bulgarian exarchate and the Patriarchate of Constantinople. As the 1878 Congress of Berlin had ended the possibility of a “Greater Bulgaria” and Macedonia still remained in the Ottoman Empire, the struggle could be legally continued only at the ecclesiastical level, which disguised the national and political controversy. The exarchists wanted to include the churches in those villages where the Slavonic element dominated and regarded them as potentially Bulgarian. The patriarchists on the other hand tried to keep them under the control of Constantinople, which would ensure their future in the territory of the Greek kingdom. Uskub, Bitola, Adrianople, Drama, and Kavala became centers of the struggle. For two decades Macedonia was a battlefield of guerrilla action between Bulgarian and Greek armed bands, who terrorized the peasants and demanded loyalty from them.

In October 1893 a Bulgarian Macedonian revolutionary organization was founded in Thessaloniki. Its main goal was the autonomy of Macedonia as a first step to union with Bulgaria. It is interesting to note that the founders of the organization supposed that Macedonia could become a unit in the formation of a Balkan federation. The further actions of armed bands, however, ended such an opportunity. From 1893-95 other revolutionary organizations were formed in Bulgaria such as the Macedono-Odrin Brotherhood and the Superior Macedonia Committee. The chetniks (members of the Bulgarian armed guerilla bands) were not strong enough to engage the Ottoman army militarily and so they resorted to guerilla tactics. By provoking Muslim fanaticism against the Christian population, they hoped to attract the attention of the European Powers. In 1902 they organized a revolt in Gorna Dzhumaya. There were several hundred fatalities, and about three thousand refugees crossed the border into Bulgaria. In the first half of 1903 the numerous terrorist acts of the chetniks provoked a massacre of the Bulgarian population in Thessaloniki and later in Bitola by the Ottomans. In January 1903 preparations for the Ilinden Uprising began, which was the height of the liberation struggle of the Macedonian Bulgarians.

Similar activities developed among the Greeks. Propaganda of national ideas in schools and cultural societies was combined with the armed struggle of guerilla groups. For the Greeks, Macedonia was the most important region in the fulfillment of the Great idea, the union of all the Greek lands and the restoration of the Byz-

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33 Patriarch Bylgarski Cyril, Graf N. P. Ignatiev i Bylgarskiyat cyrkoven vypros. Izsledvane i documenti (Sofia, 1958); Z. Markova, Bylgarskata Ekzarhija. 1870-1879 (Sofia, 1989); V. Boneva, Bylgarskoto cyrkovno-nacionalno dvizhenie 1856-1870 (Sofia, 2010).
34 By 1896 it was called the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, by 1902, Bulgarian Macedono-Odrin Revolutionary Committee, in 1902-1905 The Secret Macedono-Odrin Revolutionary Organization, from 1905 The Internal Macedono-Odrin Revolutionary Organization (VMORO). J. Swire, Bulgarian Conspiracy (London, 1939).
antine Empire. In 1894 *Ethniki Etaireia* (the National Society), a patriotic organization, was founded in Greece. It aimed to strengthen Hellenism in Greek regions under Turkish domination. Its first efforts were directed towards Crete, but from 1896-1897 it also sent detachments to Macedonia. Many well known people were members of this society: the byzantinologist S. Lambros, Professor N. Poltiis, and A. Matesis, a lawyer, among others. The most active members were, however, professional members of the military: K. Mazarakis, Pavlos Melas and others. In 1892 one more secret organization was founded, Amyna (Defense), aimed at supporting the Greek communities in Macedonia and the centralization of the Greek forces there.

The Greek influence in Macedonia was proliferated by diplomats, the clergy and school teachers. After his second election in 1901, Patriarch Joachim III supported the young, educated and energetic metropolitans recently appointed to Macedonia: Germanos Karavangelis of Castoria, Chrysostomos Kalafatis of Drama, and Joachim Foropoulos of Bitola. They worked in cooperation with Greek diplomats and often undertook the organization of armed struggle against the exarchists. Germanos Karavangelis (1900-1908) became a real symbol of the ecclesiastical-national struggle. He was in close contact with armed detachments sent from Greece. He himself travelled throughout Macedonia, accompanied by a group of militia who forced the exarchists to give them the keys to their churches. Germanos also had a whole network of agents who formally belonged to the Bulgarian Internal Organization, but in fact served the Greeks and were paid by the metropolitan.

The Greek organization quickly developed after the appointment of Ion Dragoumis as vice-consul to Bitola (Monastir). The first Greek fighting detachment was formed from Cretans and was sent from Athens against the Bulgarian chetniks during the Ilinden Uprising. At a meeting between General inspector Hilmi Pasha and the Metropolitan of Thessaloniki, Alexandros Rigopoulos, held in the Greek Consulate in the summer of 1904, the mutual support between the Greek clergy and the Ottoman government was emphasized.

In August 1904, P. Melas was appointed head of all the Greek groups in the region of Castoria and Monastir. Within a year he was killed and his name became a symbol of the Greek struggle in Macedonia. The guerillas in fact used the traditional methods of the Greek *klefths*, attacking the enemy unexpectedly and then hiding in the woods.

38 Moskovskie Vednosti, no. 230 (21 August 1904).
and mountains. However, the leaders of the struggle disapproved of such tactics. For example, L. Koromilas, the Greek general consul to Thessaloniki, preferred using trained detachments, formed both from natives and Greeks from the Greek kingdom. Such groups had to be commanded by specially trained Macedonian officers. At the same time weapons were being sent from Greece, which were stored in Greek monasteries, metropolitanates and private houses. The prohibition of incorporating villages into the exarchy after the Ilinden Uprising and the activities of the Greek bands resulted in the Slavonic population preferring to remain under the patriarchate. In 1907 the Russian Consul of Bitola asked the inhabitants of the village of Skochivir why they preferred to be patriarchists, since they did not know Greek. The peasants replied that while they were not Greek they would like to remain in the faith of their fathers and grandfathers and wanted only to live in safe and quiet.\footnote{K. Bitosky, \textit{Dejnostta na Pelagoniskata mitropolija}; 287; O. E. Petrunina, \textit{Grecheskaja nacija i gosudarstvo v XVIII-XX vv.}, 433-443.}

In 1905-1906 the activities of the Bulgarian chetniks ceased and the activities of the Greek and Serbian groups began. The guerilla war continued until the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, while the mutual opposition of the Greek and Slavonic populations in Macedonia ended only after the final determination of borders and an exchange of population.

\section*{1.4 Russian Cooperation with Austro-Hungary}

By the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, Russia could not count on the support of any Balkan state except Montenegro. Bulgaria, though less hostile toward Russia after the reconciliation of 1896 than it had been, maintained strong ties to Austro-Hungary. Serbia, after the Russo-Turkish War, also maintained a pro-Austrian position and only after the Revolution of 1903 turned to Russia.\footnote{N. Vucho, \textit{Privredna istorija Srbije} (Beograd, 1955); O. B. Pavliuchenko, \textit{Rossia i Serbija 1888-1903} (Kiev, 1987); M. Vojvodich, \textit{Srbija u meždunarodnim odnosima krajem XIX i početkom XX veka} (Beograd, 1988); M. Ekmečić, \textit{Stvaranje Jugoslavije 1790-1918} (Beograd, 1989); N. B. Popović, \textit{Srbija i carska Rusija} (Beograd, 2007).} As for Greece, in the decades following the Crimean War, it aligned itself mainly with Great Britain and relations with Russia were strained. Beginning in the 1880s, the Russian government chose the only reasonable option: support for the status quo in the Balkan region and in the Near East in general.\footnote{All the proposals for immediately conquering the Straits were considered undoable. See, for example, the account of A. Nelidov’s efforts in 1896.}

In order to prevent independent action from Austro-Hungary, the Russian government signed an agreement with the Vienna cabinet. Austria also seemed ready to abandon its anti-Russian policy. In 1896, during the visit of Nicolas II to Vienna,
the foreign ministers A. Lobanov-Rostovskii and A. Goluchowski agreed to remain in contact. The agreement, signed in St. Petersburg in 1897, stressed the “need to keep the present status quo as long as circumstances allow”; it determined the peaceful development of Russo-Austrian relations for ten years. Both sides agreed to remain non-aggressive in the Balkans and that the question of Constantinople and the Straits should be a matter of international discussion by the Powers. In the event of any change to the present agreement, Austro-Hungary declared that it would end the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and annex it, as it would the Novi Pazar Sanjak, and would entertain the possibility of the formation of an independent Albania. These measures were intended to prevent the creation of a large Slavonic state in the Balkans, which could serve as a base for Russia.

During the first years of the 20th century, Russia was preoccupied with its Far East affairs, and left alone, Balkan matters languished. Finding a solution to the Macedonian Question was postponed for years and St. Petersburg was in no hurry to help the revolutionary movement. Nevertheless, Russia did not reject its traditional course of supporting the South Slavs. In order to guarantee the support of Bulgaria, the Russian government signed a military convention with it in 1902.° That same year Russia raised the question of reform in the three vilayets, Thessaloniki, Kosovo and Monastir. Britain and France put forward identical proposals. On December 8, 1902 the sultan signed a decree on reforms in Macedonia. At the beginning of 1903 during the visit to Vienna of Lamsdorf, the new Russian minister of foreign affairs, the so called Vienna Program was signed. It did not differ much from the December Ottoman initiative.

1.5 Russo-Austrian Attempts at Reforms in Macedonia: The Mürzsteg Agreement

The Ottoman porte, however, did not undertake any measures to extend the reform. In the summer of 1903, the famous Ilinden Uprising broke out (August 2). The Greek population did not take part in it and the revolt was soon suppressed by the Ottoman authorities.° These events marked an end to the Vienna Program and made Russia and Austro-Hungary recommence discussions on the reforms. In September 1903 during the meeting of Nicolas II and Franz-Joseph in Mürzsteg Castle, an agreement about further reforms was reached (signed on October 2). In the main, it reiterated the items of the February agreement. The most important one was the appointment of two civil agents by either side. Under the auspices of the two states, reforms of the gendarmerie and of administrative and judicial institutions took place; Christians were to be a part

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44 Ch. Silianov, Osvoboditlnite borbi v Macedonia, I. Ilindenskoto vyzstanie (Sofia, 1933).
of all these institutions. On November 24, 1903 Sultan Abdul-Hamid accepted the proposed reforms. Britain, unhappy at the Russo-Austrian initiative put forward its own project of reform in which each province should be headed by a Christian or a Muslim under the control of European officials. This in fact meant collective control over Macedonia. Near the beginning of 1904, two civil agents, N. Demerik on the Russian side and G. Müller on the Austrian, began their assignments under Hilmi Pasha, the general inspector. They were to accompany him and gather information in the vilayets concerning cases of abuse of the local authorities and the needs of the Christian population. Another branch of the government was to control the reorganization of the gendarmerie. The project of military reforms would not be adopted for a long time. Each Great Power received its own sanjak in order to control the implementation of the reforms (Austro-Hungary Uskub, Russia Thessaloniki, Britain Drama, France Serres).

The reforms did not progress well due to the resistance of the Ottoman authorities. Financial reform proved especially difficult to carry out. After the defeat of Russia in its war with Japan, the British government changed course and strengthened relations with Russia which it saw as a potential ally against Germany. The pressure of the British Foreign Office in St. Petersburg led to the signing, in January 1905, of an agreement on financial reforms. Further events were centred on the guerilla actions of the Greek and Bulgarian bands. In a number of memoranda sent in 1906 and 1907 by the foreign ministries of the Powers to the governments of Greece and Bulgaria, it was stressed that no reforms could be carried out because of the illegal activities of the armed bands. Similar correspondence was sent to the Ottoman government, accusing it of not suppressing the guerillas zealously enough. At the same time Christians took little part in the administration due to their poor knowledge of Turkish and restrictions on their activities.

By 1907 the idea of the Mürzsteg reforms was already obsolete. The cooperation of Russia and Austro-Hungary which had in fact been a more or less veiled rivalry, came to an end. in St. Petersburg suspicions arose that Austro-Hungary, through its new minister of foreign affairs, A. Aerenthal, was concentrating more on preparations to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina than on the reforms. The formal break between the two sides was complete when, near the end of 1907, Austro-Hungary refused to support the judicial reforms which had been previously agreed upon. The final event in the collapse of relations, was the approval by the sultan of the construction of the Novi Pazar (Mitrovica) railway leading to Thessaloniki at the end of January 1908. This approval was in direct violation of the Mürzsteg Agreement and made it obvious

that the sultan gave priority to the Habsburg Empire. The official end of the reform program can be considered to be May 1909 when the porte asked the approval of the Powers to close the international financial commission.

The new Russian minister of foreign affairs, A. Izvolskii, aimed at a more active policy in the Balkan region in cooperation with Britain. In August 1907 a Russo-British agreement was signed on the demarcation in Iran, Afghanistan and Tibet. Russia’s primary goal was to obtain British sanction for a more favourable solution to the control of the Straits. Britain, however, did not make any concessions in this respect. The rapprochement of Russia with Britain and France at this time formed the basis for the later division of the Powers into the Entente and the block of the Central Powers (Germany and Austro-Hungary).

### 1.6 The Bosnian Crisis (1908-1909)

According to the 25th article of the Berlin Treaty, Austro-Hungary occupied the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Officially, it was a temporary occupation with the sultan being the supreme sovereign. An Austrian garrison was placed in the sanjak as well, which Austro-Hungary also regarded as a future Austrian territory. Austro-Hungary did not have any colonies and the only way it could acquire further territory was expansion into the Balkans. Its encouragement of Russian activities in the Far East had as its main goal the neutralization of Russia in the Balkans, which would allow for the full range of Austrian actions.46

In 1906 the Russian minister of foreign affairs, Lamsdorf, was replaced by Izvolskii and his cautious Austrian colleague, A. Goluchowski, was replaced by A. Aerenthal. In the years 1899-1906 Aerenthal had been ambassador to St. Petersburg and had sufficient opportunity to study Russian financial and military matters in situ. He could be sure that Russia would not start hostilities in the Near East. So, while still in St. Petersburg, in 1904, Aerenthal proposed to his ministry that they annex Bosnia and Herzegovina while Russia was occupied in the Far East. If Russia would agree to allow the annexation to proceed, Austria would not object to Russian forces occupying the Straits. In 1907 he again proposed this plan. It is obvious that a preliminary agreement had been reached by Aerenthal and Izvolskii in Vienna in September 1906. The construction of the railway from Uvac to Mitrovica which would have provided Austrian access to Thessaloniki, came as a surprise to Russia and strained relations between the two states. By February 1908 the Mürzsteg Agreement was abandoned. However in a memorandum sent to the Russian government on May 1, 1908, the Austro-Hungarian government hinted that it would like to see the agreement of

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1897 revised. The negotiations in Revel held June 9-10, 1908 strengthened Izvolskii’s illusions concerning the readiness of the British government to support Russia in its aspirations for the Straits. On July 2 Minister Izvokskii wrote a memorandum to the Austrian government expressing his hope for further negotiations on this matter.

The revolution of the Young Turks in July 1908 precipitated the end of Russo-Austrian cooperation and the Bosnian crisis. The next task of Aerenthal was to isolate Serbia, which was successfully achieved by exacerbating Serbia’s tense relations with Bulgaria and proclaiming Ferdinand, Tsar of Bulgaria in September 1908. At the meeting with Aerenthal in Buchlau on September 15-16, 1908, Izvolskii gave his final approval of the annexation, while trying to discuss “some compensations” for Russia and the Balkan states. In fact Aerenthal presented Izvolskii with a fait accompli. On October 8, 1908 the annexation was officially proclaimed in Budapest. It was out of the goodness of their hearts that the Austrians granted Turkey the sanjak, they stressed. In October 1908 both France and Britain refused to continue negotiations concerning the Straits. Holding a European conference on this question, as proposed by Russia, was also rejected. After this “diplomatic Tsushima” of Izvolskii, the old idea, i.e., the formation of a league of Balkan countries was revived in Russian policy.47

1.7 Preparation of the Balkan League

In 1909 Russian policy made a radical change in direction: Russia abandoned the idea of being compensated by Japan in the Far East and of progress towards India. It concentrated now on counter-measures against Austro-Hungary and Germany. In Autumn 1910 some changes took place in the Russian foreign ministry: A. P. Izvolskii was replaced by Sazonov, and the assistant minister, N. V. Charykov, was appointed ambassador to Constantinople. During his six years of service, the new minister kept his link with the Entente.48

On his arrival in Constantinople, Charykov tried to form a pan-Balkan conference with the participation of Turkey, as a basis for Russia’s action against Austro-Hungary. At the beginning of August 1909, he organized a meeting of Nicolas II with Abdul-Hamid. In 1911 Charykov began negotiations to change the regulations governing the Straits. This effort also failed because British diplomats sabotaged it. The Italo-Turkish War was a stimulus for the Balkan states to unite against their common enemy, Turkey. The Russian diplomats actively supported these aspirations, though they did not fully agree on this issue. Izvolskii attempted to form a block of Slavonic

48 The last attempt of the Russian government to enter into agreement with Germany on the eve of the WWI was the meeting of Nicolas II with Wilhelm II in Potsdam on November 4, 1910.
states; he proposed that the San Stefano Treaty of 1877 should again become the basis of Russian policy, with some changes in respect to Serbian interests.49 P. A. Stolypin, Sazonov and Charykov believed it would be more expedient at this stage to form a pan-Balkan confederation with the participation of Turkey.50 The direction of Russian policy changed several times during 1908 and the beginning of 1909. Russia finally decided to support, as more realistic, the formation of a league of Christian Balkan states, which coincided with traditional Russian policy in the Near East.51

On April 18, 1909 there was a meeting of the Serbian and the Bulgarian kings, and in February 1910 a Bulgarian delegation with Ferdinand at its head arrived in St. Petersburg. The goal of the visit was to discuss future Bulgarian borders. Meanwhile, the Bulgarian prime minister, I. Geshov, started the militarization of the country by increasing its army. In August 1911 the Bulgarian Prince Cyril visited Kiev where he attended the inauguration of the memorial of Alexander II and met Nicolas II.52

The most active supporter of the Serbo-Bulgarian rapprochement was the Russian ambassador to Belgrade, N. G. Gartwig. He stressed the need to strengthen its positions on both sides of the Bosphorus, the gate to the “Russian Lake”, i.e. the Black Sea. Russia should help the Slavs achieve their ideals, and to divide the Turkish territory in the Balkans.53 His colleagues in Sofia, A. V. Nekliudov and L. V. Urusov, were more cautious. In April 1912, on the eve of the signing of the treaty, the Bulgarian delegation headed by S. Danev went to Livadia to meet Nicolas II. They then visited St. Petersburg and met with Sazonov. A Greco-Bulgarian treaty was signed on May 29.54

Having played a key role in the formation of the Balkan League, Russia did not want to rush headlong into hostilities. The Russian government in St. Petersburg was afraid that hostilities would lead to Austro-Hungarian and German aggression, while Russia, weakened by the Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution of 1905-07, was still not prepared for active war in the Balkans. In order to stall the advent of war,

49 M. Vojvodic, Srbija u mezhunarodnim odnosima krajem XIX i pochetkom XX veka (Beograd, 1988), 57.
50 I. V. Bestuzhev, Bor’ba v Rossii po voprosam vneshej politiki 1906-1910 (Moscow, 1961), 336-354.
52 A. Malinov, Stranichki iz nashata nova politicheska istorija. Spomeni (Sofia, 1938), 83-88, 147, 162.
53 Ibid.: 162.
the Russian foreign ministry, in September and October of 1912, sent declarations to
the governments of the Balkan states accusing them of taking measures which could
lead to hostilities.

The declarations, however, produced no results. On October 9, Montenegro
attacked Turkey, followed by Serbia and Bulgaria on the 17th and Greece on the 18th.
The Ottoman army was soon defeated on all sides. The progress of the Bulgarian
army to the line of Chataldji (45 kilometers from Constantinople) raised the matter of
the Straits. The Russian government was afraid, on one hand, that the Straits would
be closed to all foreign ships, and on the other, it could not allow the Bulgarians to be
installed in Constantinople. So Russia appealed to Britain and France to prevent the
further progress of the Bulgarian army. This appeal, however, met with no support.
The British cabinet saw in these developments the opportunity to mount an interna-
tional patrol of the Straits which would ensure the domination of Britain in the
eastern Mediterranean. The Russian government then insisted that Constantinople
should remain in Turkish hands, hoping for a solution more favorable to Russia. The
cautious position of Sazonov was opposed by the war party of the neo-Slavophiles
in the state council led by the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich. However, no action
was initiated.55

In November 1912, Serbian troops reached the Adriatic. They met strong coun-
ter-action from Austro-Hungary, who did not wish to see the creation of a strong
South-Slavic state in the Balkans. Together with Italy, Austro-Hungary proposed the
formation of an independent Albania which would be a bulwark against Serbia and
Russia. On December 3, 1912 a conference of the Powers opened in London intended
to review the results of the war. The initiative came from Russia who was interested
in a quick end to the war. Moreover, Russia hoped to create a new union of Balkan
states, including Romania, in order to solve the matter of the Straits and to neutralize
the Central Powers.

A new turn of events developed with the Bulgarian advance towards Constan-
tinople in the Spring of 1913. Britain proposed bringing an international fleet to the
Straits; France wanted a collective maritime demonstration; Austro-Hungary did not
oppose the entry of Bulgarian troops into Constantinople believing that this would
lead to a Bulgarian collapse. Russia did not see a suitable opportunity for it to occupy
the Straits and for this reason persuaded the Bulgarians not to attack Chataldji and
instead offered to support Bulgaria in Macedonia.56 The treaty was signed on May
30. Turkey conceded the Balkan territories up to the Aenos Mydia line to its enemies,
Adrianople passed to the Bulgarians, Thessaloniki, Epirus and Crete became Greek.

56 M. Vojvodich, Srbija u mezdunarodnim odnosima, 59-61.
The question of the islands, Lemnos, Tenedos and Imbros, occupied by the Greeks remained unresolved, as did the status of Mt. Athos.\footnote{A. Goshev, *Balkanskite vojni*, II (Sofia, 1931), 483-484; V. A. Zhebokrickii, *Bolgarija v period Balkanskikh voijn 1912-1913* g. (Kiev, 1961), 117420; E. Chr. Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 269-340.}

The results of the war, however, did not satisfy the Bulgarian government. Incited by Austro-Hungary, Tsar Ferdinand started a new war against his former allies on June 29, 1913. It ended with the complete defeat of Bulgaria: Turkey occupied Adrianople; Romania, South Dobrudja; the port of Kavala passed to Greece; the territory of Serbia increased by 39,000 square kilometers. The final outcome of the Second Balkan War was fixed by the Bucharest Treaty of August 10, 1913 and the Constantinople Treaty of September 26.

The Balkan Wars were only a prologue to the First World War. The Balkan peoples were liberated from Ottoman sovereignty, but this did not solve the problem of their relations with each other. The ambitions of the Great Powers were not satisfied, and the Eastern Question also remained unresolved. As revealed by documents from the end of 1913/beginning of 1914, the Russian government still believed the country was not ready for a war with Turkey although it was obvious that war could not be avoided: Germany was reorganizing the Turkish army and Britain was enhancing its fleet. On November 23, 1913 the Russian minister of foreign affairs, S. D. Sazonov, wrote to Nikolas II: “The Straits in the hands of a strong state mean full economic domination of this state in southern Russia... The state which occupies the Straits will receive not only the keys of the two seas, the Black and the Mediterranean. It will receive the keys for gradual progress into Asia Minor and hegemony in the Balkans.”\footnote{A. N. Shebunin, *Rossija na Blizhnem Vostoke*, 108-111.} On February 21, 1914 one more conference was held in St. Petersburg concerning the Straits. The possibility of a landing operation was discussed, though delayed until 1916 or 1917.\footnote{M. Vojvodich, *Srbija u mezdunarodnim odnosima*, 65.}

At the same time Russia was looking toward creating a new South-Slavic state in the Balkans which would be a basis for future actions. According to the words of the chief of the first department of the foreign office, A. Petriaev, the best option for the Russian government would be the creation of “Great Serbia”, a united Serbo-Croatian state.\footnote{Ju. A. Pisarev, “Jugoslavianskij vopros v balkanskoj politike Rossii v 1913-1915 gg. (Po neizdannym i maloizvestnym dokumentam)”, in *Issledovanija po istorii stran jugo-vostochnoj Evropy v novoje i novejshee vremja* (Kishinev, 1983): 108-120.}

Taken as a whole, Russian policy in the Near East and in the Balkans after 1878 was passive and cannot be called independent. The Russian government was tied by its treaties with Austro-Hungary, preoccupied by the war with Japan and the Revolution of 1905-07. That is why up to 1908 it avoided any interference in the conflicts and aimed at preserving the status quo in the Balkans. From 1909 to 1912, while continu-
ing to support the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, Russia “turned its face to the Near East”. The ministry of foreign affairs supported the creation of the Balkan League, and by 1914 Russia, as well as the other Great Powers, was faced with a new map of Europe. Russia’s first concern in the Balkan region remained the problem of the Straits and Constantinople and the solution of the Eastern Question. This matter was to be resolved by the First World War.\(^\text{61}\)

2 The Byzantine Legacy in Russian Foreign Policy in the Second Part of the 19th and the Beginning of the 20th Century

2.1 Historical Background

The Russian foreign policy in the Near East in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was based on one main idea, the union of the Orthodox world under Russia. This neo-Byzantine political conception was rooted in the old ideas in which Moscow was considered to be the Third Rome. It became a political ideology in the second half of the 17th century, when the question of Russia’s expansion to the Black Sea and the Straits arose. After the Azov Campaign of Peter I and especially after the victorious wars of Catherine II in the second half of the 18th century, further progress towards the Balkans and the Near East became the top priority for Russia when it came to the Eastern Question.

The concept of the Third Rome was developed by the monk Philothei of the Pskov Eleazar Monastery in the 16th century. He stated that after the fall of the Second Rome, Constantinople, Russia remained the only Orthodox kingdom in the world. At first this ideology had no political connotations, but it became a fertile soil for the development of political and military goals. For Russia it was the restoration of the Byzantine Empire, which had dominated over the entire Orthodox world. Now Russia wanted its empire and capital to be the centre of this world. The coronation of Ivan the Terrible who was recognized by the Eastern patriarchs in 1560 and the establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate in 1589 would come to confirm Moscovian Russia as the heir to Byzantium. This variant of the idea of translatio imperii was the basis of a strong stream in Russian philosophy of history up to the middle of the 20th century.62

The further development of these views was supported by the regular visits of Eastern Orthodox clergy to Russia for material aid in the 16th century and especially in the 17th. Russia was regarded by Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman Empire as their future liberator from the Turkish yoke. Some Eastern high clergymen, for example, the well known Patriarch of Jerusalem, Dositheos, voluntarily helped the Russian government and sent it political and military information.63


63 The history of relations between Russia and the Orthodox East in the 16th and 17th centuries and the formation of Byzantine political ideology in Russia was systematically studied by N. F. Kapterev: N. F. Kapterev, “Charakter otnoshenij Rossii k Pravoslavnomu Vostoku v XVI i XVII stoletijah”, 2d ed. (Sergiev Posad, 1914); idem, Snochenija ierusalimskogo patriarha Dosifeja s russkim pravitel’stvom (1667-1707 gg.) (Moscow, 1891); idem, Snoshenija ierusalimskih patriarhov s russkim pravitel’stvom
Historical Background

The aspirations of Eastern Christians for liberation with the help of Russia at first existed only in prophesies and folk songs. They began to be realized in the 18th century when Russia undertook military campaigns in the Mediterranean. As a result of successful wars of the second half of the 18th century Russia acquired large territories on the Black Sea coast. In the terms of the Kuchuk Kainarji Treaty of 1774 it gained more influence on the Ottoman Empire. The first attempt to restore the Byzantine Empire was the so called “Greek project” of Catherine II. In it, the Balkan Peninsula was to be divided between Russia and Austria into spheres of influence and an independent Greek kingdom was to be created.64

Russia’s Near East policy was for a long time mostly concerned with the Orthodox Church. The support of Orthodoxy in that region became the rallying cry of Russia up until the beginning of the 20th century. The reliance of the Greek and Slavonic clergy on Russia and the common faith with the multinational Orthodox population of the Ottoman Empire was a strong ideological weapon at Russia’s disposal which gave it a great advantage over the other Powers. That is why Russian policy in the east Mediterranean up to 1917 was to a great extent, religious in nature and prompted by ecclesiastical matters. Uvarov’s formula of “Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality”, which was proclaimed as official doctrine of the Russian Empire since 1832, could be—with certain more special modifications in the 1860-s and 1870-s – as a whole applied to its foreign policy as well, with the only alteration being that instead of nationality, the notion of a pan-Orthodox union of nations was used.

The success of this political concept was based on the organization of the non-Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman conquest created the so-called millet system, the organization of Christian and Jewish communities along religious lines. Every millet had the right of self-government and a kind of autonomy.65 The Orthodox millet was called “Greek” (Rum) and was subordinate to

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65 Braude B., “Foundation Myths of the Millet System”, Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire, 1 (N. Y., 1982): 69-88; R. Clogg, “The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire”, ibid.: 185-208. In the
the Patriarchate of Constantinople; at first relations in the millet were harmonious enough, though Slavs, Moldavians and Vlachs were included in it as well. The centralization of the church administration was to the benefit of the Ottomans and coincided with Greek interests. As a result the Slavonic and Arab population were Hellenized. The patriarch became an Ethnarchos, leader of the nation, and concentrated both ecclesiastical and civil power in his office. The Orthodox community lived according to the Byzantine law and the patriarch was responsible for the obedience of his people. Thus, the Ecumenical Patriarchate became a kind of semi-autonomous “state within the state”. With the rise of national consciousness and the liberation movements of the Balkan peoples, the concepts of nation and religion became synonymous. As a result, political questions were not separate from religious ones. The church became the rallying point and tool of political struggle, and the clergy took an active part in it. That is why it was in Russia’s interest to support the Orthodox faith and clergy and to create a basis for the future union of eastern European nations under its control.

At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, Russia’s foreign policy as an expression of this political conception was counteracted by the other European Powers, namely, Britain, France and Austria, who had their own economic and political interests in the eastern Mediterranean. Russia tried to come to an agreement with Austria over the “Greek issue”. The plan of how to partition European Turkey was elaborated. At the beginning of the 19th century, the opposition of the Powers became more definite: the goal of the European governments was to prevent the domination of Russia in the Straits and Balkans. In order to ensure for themselves a hold in the Balkans, the Europeans exploited the national trends in the region by offering material and military support, and by fostering political and religious agitation.

In the beginning of the 19th century Russia made a serious mistake in its Near East policy: Alexander I, true to the ideas of the Holy Alliance, did not support the Greek uprising and thus averted the sympathies of the Greeks from Russia even though the Greek revolutionary organization Filiki Etaireia originated in Russia and received financial support from Greeks living in Russia. In contrast, Britain paid serious attention to the Greek ferment and gave active support to the Greek insurgents. As a result the young Greek state, in spite of the great Russophile sympathies of the population,


66 See more about it in: I. I. Sokolov, *Constantinopol’skaja cerkov’ v XIX veke* (St. Petersburg, 1904).
from the very beginning of its existence was orientated towards the western powers and its government assumed a pro-French and later pro-British attitude.67

The Crimean War of 1853-1856 became a crucial event in the history of the Eastern Question. The defeat in Sebastopol signaled to a large extent, the collapse of Russia’s ambitions in the Near East. After Russia’s loss of its fleet in the Black Sea in 1856, it also lost a great deal of its authority among the Christians of the Ottoman Empire. During the decades after the Crimean War, Russia struggled to restore its previous position. Diplomatic activity, in particular that of Ignatiev, the ambassador to Constantinople in the years 1864 to 1877, made it possible to later resolve the Eastern Question through military means. Russia’s victory in the Russo-Turkish War resulted in the creation of a semi-independent Bulgarian Principality, which was to become the basis of Russian policy in the Balkans. Nevertheless, the Congress of Berlin of 1878 demonstrated that Russia was unable to use the advantage of its victories and carry out its own policy in the Balkans. The Great Powers did not allow a strong Slavic state under Russia to develop.

2.2 The Greek Megali idea

Beginning in the mid-19th century, Russian imperial aspirations came into conflict with the Greek Megali idea (Great idea), another expression of imperial aspirations of Byzantine origin, which aimed to reunite all historical Greek lands into one state with the capital in Constantinople. The Greek idea originated in the 13th century when Byzantium, devastated by the Crusaders and Seldjuks, realized the need to unite all its lands under the Greek Byzantine emperor. Byzantium was becoming increasingly identified only with Hellenism, and the empire lost its universal significance. The terms “Greek” and “Orthodox” became synonymous and the task of the Byzantine Empire now was not to acquire new territories, but to recover its historic lands. This ideology dominated in the minds of Greeks throughout the entire Ottoman period. The Greek nationalistic idea developed and was strengthened as a result of the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the Russo-Turkish War, and especially after the creation of an independent Greek state in 1830. The mid-19th century saw the growing self-consciousness of Balkan nations, which very soon transformed into aggressive nationalism. The Ottoman Empire and the Balkans provide an example of how an old ideology—one based on religion—can be replaced with a new nationalistic one. At the same time, it was the Orthodox faith that became the banner of nationalistic struggle, and this led to nationalistic ideals replacing ecclesiastical ones.68

67 G. L. Arsh, Eteristskoe dvizhenije v Rossii (Moscow, 1970); O. E. Petrunina, Grecheskaja nacija i gosudarstvo v XVIII-XX vv., 223-370.
68 P. Lekkas, I ethnikistiki ideologia. Pente ypoheseis stin istoriki koinonioLOGiA (Athens, 1992); G. Metallinos, Orthodoxia kai ethnikotita (Athens, 1992); K. Karpat, An inquiry into the social foundations of
At the same time the intellectuals in Athens were busy developing the ideological grounds of the Great idea: Greece was seen as the cradle of European culture and of Byzantine civilization; Christian nations everywhere had received their faith from the Greeks. Recovering Greek domination in the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkan region was considered a victory of historical justice and culture over barbarism. British philhellenes, both romantic admirers of Ancient Greece and realistic politicians, who, step by step, subordinated Greece to British political influence, played a major role in strengthening this ideology. By the second half of the 19th century, Greek political leaders, assured of the implementation of the Great idea with the help of the western powers, considered Russian imperial ideology an immediate threat to Hellenism. They called this ideology “pan-Slavism”.

2.3 From Pan-Slavism to Imperial Nationalism

Up until the middle of the 19th century, the Slavophile movement in Russia was a theoretical one, originating in German Romanticism. It was given no attention in the foreign policy of Nicolas I, since every proposal to liberate the Balkan nations would be seen as an encroachment upon the sovereignty of the Austrian and Ottoman Empires. After Russia’s defeat in the Crimean War the new tsar, Alexander II adopted Slavophilism as the official ideology of Russian foreign policy. Thus since 1856 theoretical Slavophilism was replaced by practical pan-Slavism, adopting the philosophical basis of the first one. The sympathies towards the South Slavs and the readiness of the Russian society to help them were used by Russian officials. It was hoped that the nations which shared their faith and Slavonic origin with Russia would provide basic support in any future Russian activity. In 1858 the first Slavonic philanthropic committee was founded in Moscow; similar committees were organized in other Russian cities. Pan-Slavism was at its height in the 1870s, on the eve of the Russo-Turkish
War but the failure of Ignatiev to create a “Greater Bulgaria”, which was to become a strong South Slav state under Russian control, resulted in Russian society’s disappointment in Slavonic ideas. After 1880 it would be incorrect to speak of pan-Slavism as a Russian foreign policy ideology.

After the Russo-Turkish War and especially after the murder of Alexander II in 1881, pan-Slavic ideology was replaced by a nationalistic one. The peace-making, non-interference policy of the 1880s to 1890s was partly caused by the impossibility of immediate further actions in the decision of the Eastern Question. In the twenty years following 1878, Russia waited and prepared more active policy—both diplomatic and ideological—which it expected to implement in the future. During this time, Russia also attempted to reverse some negative trends in the Orthodox East, primarily regarding the Bulgarian Schism. In 1882 the imperial Orthodox Palestine Society was created, which promoted research on the history of Eastern Christianity, actively supported Orthodox Arabs of Palestine and Syria by establishing schools, and organized pilgrimages of Russians to the Holy Land. In the 1880s and 90s the idea of a Byzantine legacy took hold in the conservative elements of Russian society and the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome developed in a new direction. Now the emphasis was put not on Russia’s mission of liberating the peoples of the Ottoman Empire, but on the idea of *translatio imperii*. The Russian School of Byzantine Studies, which flourished at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, greatly contributed to the strengthening and development of the neo-Byzantine ideology. Of course, these Byzantinists held differing political views and did not act upon a state order. But many of them were convinced monarchists and saw the Byzantine model as a possible one for the Russian Empire. Church historians especially played an active role in the church and political life of Russia at that time. I. E. Troitskii, a professor at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy for more than twenty years was the closest advisor of the over-procurator of the Holy Synod in the Eastern ecclesiastical matters. The activities of...

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73 The history of Russian byzantinology was a subject of research of a group of specialists in the program “Archives of the Russian Byzantinologists in St. Petersburg” which resulted in the publication of three volumes: I. P. Medevedev, ed. *Archivy russkih vizantinistov v Sankt-Peterburge* (St. Petersburg, 1995); *Rukopisnoe nasledie russkih vizantinistov* (St. Petersburg, 1999); *Mir russkoj vizantinistiki* (St. Petersburg, 2004).

74 L. A. Gerd, “I. E. Troitsky: po stranicam archiva uchenogo” in: *Mir russkoj vizantinistiki*: 8-40; Troitskii received letters from his correspondent in Constantinople, G. P. Begleri, which were an important source of information. See the edition of these letters: L. A. Gerd, ed., *Rossija i Pravoslavni...*
the Russian Archaeological institute in Constantinople (founded in 1894)\textsuperscript{75} were of great significance in establishing the authority of Russia in the Orthodox East. Though the institute had no political aims, politics was not alien to its director, F. I. Uspenskii, who took an active part in all ecclesiastical matters of the Russian embassy.

The post-1878 ideologues drew on developments of previous decades. Prior to the Crimean War, the poet and diplomat, Feodor Tiutchev, wrote of the place of Russia in world history. He stressed that Russia was more an Orthodox than a Slavonic state, and that the Byzantine Empire had found its fulfillment in Russia, which remained tied to Constantine’s heritage. Only as the Emperor of the East would the Russian tsar be a Russian emperor.\textsuperscript{76}

Among the immediate precursors to the ideological developments of the 1880s and 90s the most important one is N. Ja. Danilevskii. His book, \textit{Russia and Europe}, published in 1868, would, in later decades, serve as the ideological basis for the ideas of the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{77} Danilevskii’s thesis, which concerns cultural-historical types, sets him apart from other pan-Slavists of his time. He did not advocate the superiority of the Slavonic world over other groups, but attempted only to explain its position in history. His main thesis—the necessity of countering Europe’s influence in order to ensure Russian identity—coincided with the policy of Alexander III. The solution to the Eastern Question was for Danilevskii the creation of a pan-Slavic federation under Russia with Constantinople as its capital.

On the eve of the Russo-Turkish War another voice spoke to the Eastern Question—that of the great writer, F. M. Dostoyevskii. Sooner or later Constantinople should become Russian, he wrote.

So in the name of what moral right could Russia seek Constantinople? ... As the leader of Orthodoxy, as its patron and protector—the role that had been assigned to it since Ivan III, who placed the two-headed eagle of Constantinople above the old emblem of Russia. it became possible to play this role only after Peter the Great, when Russia was strong enough to fulfill its assignment ... The political relations of Russia with other nations would be clear: it should be their mother, but not owner. That would be the last word of Christ’s truth.\textsuperscript{78}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{75} K. K. Papouldiis, \textit{To Rosiko Arhaiologiko Instituto Constantinoupoleos (1894-1914)} (Thessaloniki, 1987); E. Ju. Basargina, \textit{Russkii archeologicheskii institut v Constantinopole} (St. Petersburg, 1999).
\item \textsuperscript{77} N. Ja. Danilevskii, \textit{Rossija i Evropa} (Moscow, 1991).
\end{itemize}
In the messianic dreams of Dostoyevskii, we can find neither a denial of the role of Peter I, which was characteristic of the old Slavophiles, nor a construction of “pan-Slavic unity”, but a broadly defined program, which as a whole coincides with the ideas of the 1880 and 90s.

During the 1880s another philosopher and writer, Konstantin Leontiev, was also active. He can be considered the most original Russian intellectual of his time. Leontiev was a professional diplomat: in the 1860s and 70s he served as consul to Crete, Adrianople, Tulcea, Ioannina and Thessaloniki. His long term stay in the Orthodox East determined his character as a writer and politician. He realized the difficulty of implementing a peaceful solution to the national controversies in the Balkans. During his service in Ioannina, Leontiev came to the conclusion that a Russian consul to every Turkish town could result in Russia having much greater influence than that of the British, Austrian or French. Two conditions were necessary for this to work: good relations with the Ottoman authorities and the ability to please the Christians. Leontiev himself demonstrated these skills in his relations with the Greek Metropolitan of Ioannina, Sophronios, who considered the Slavs more dangerous for Hellenism than the Turks. Leontiev was one of the first among the Europeans who noticed the religious indifference of the Balkan nations; Orthodoxy was first of all a vehicle for realizing their national ambitions. The esthetic beauty of certain facets of life in the Ottoman Empire together with his talent as a writer and his deep historio-philosophical thinking attracted the attention of the Russian reading public for few decades. In 1871 Leontiev underwent a great emotional crisis and decided to become a monk on Mt. Athos. Due to his social status and lack of spiritual qualities he was not accepted; he spent the next few years in Constantinople in close contact with the clergy of the theological school on Chalki island. It was here that Leontiev’s views, which reflected his decision to support the Greek side in the ethnic confrontation, were formed. After the Russo-Turkish War, Leontiev, together with his friend, Filippov, developed the idea of Byzantinism as the only possible basis for the future of east European nations. For him Byzantinism was at the same time “our Russian Orthodoxy, our Russian autocracy, sanctified by Orthodoxy, and many reflections of Orthodoxy and our Orthodox political system in literature, poetry, architecture and so on”.

In the 1880s and 90s the history of Russian socio-political consciousness entered a new era. The pan-Slavists were finally replaced by nationally orientated monar-
chists. One of the main politicians and ideologues during the rule of Alexander III was Michail Katkov (1818-1887). Following the reforms of 1861, he began to resist leftist extremism. During the Polish Revolt of 1863-1864 he openly opposed the revolutionaries and wrote some Russian patriotic articles for the newspaper, Moskovskie vedomosti. During March and April of 1881, after the murder of Alexander II, Katkov and Pobedonostsev led the anti-liberal opposition which managed to organize the defeat of the liberals. In Katkov’s opinion, Russia would be saved only by strengthening absolutism as no models of constitutional monarchy existed that would be suitable for Russia.82 Leontiev took the monarchist idea romantically, and Katkov, realistically.83 In Katkov’s articles we find a consistent reflection of the power of the state. He contrasted Russia, where trust and love of the tsar, a monarch appointed by God, motivated people’s actions, with the west. In Russia every citizen was to serve the tsar which united them; every service was a service to the monarch and by extension, the state. Such ideology led to the formation of the tsardom of Muscovy as the ideal. Katkov’s political sympathies with the pro-Peter period were still more definitively reflected in his views on questions of church policy. Katkov, who did not separate church, faith and policy, revived the idea of the Third Rome on a new level and applied it into the political reality of his time.

The Russian tsar was called the head not only of his people, but also of his church. The practical political consequences of such a belief were evident. The dignity of Russia, Katkov said, demanded its complete independence and the absence of any alliances.84 Here for the first time in Russian history of the 19th century we meet a declaration of pure national principle in foreign policy: Russia had no friends, it need rely only on itself. And he specially stressed that the first task of Russian foreign policy was the capture of the Straits, especially of the Bosporus.

Another theorist of Russian monarchism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was Lev Tikhomirov (1852-1923). He started his work as a publicist in the 1880s and developed a comprehensive theory of the Russian monarchy with Byzantine monarchism as its immediate forerunner. At the end of the 1870s, Tikhomirov, who earlier had been a revolutionary (narodnik), adopted extreme conservative views; he became a regular contributor to Moskovskie vedomosti and wrote articles and books on monarchism. The government used his works to support its ideology in the 1880s and 90s. His book, The Political System of the Monarchy, was first published in 1905, although he formed the ideas for this book during the last

two decades of the 19th century.\textsuperscript{85} Having studied the literature on Byzantinology, Tikhomirov proposed his own theory for the reason Byzantium fell. He wrote:

> Only to a very small extent was the Byzantine political system built on the idea of the emperor as a servant of God. This idea only sanctified the absolute power, which nevertheless preserved its ancient Roman sense without being modified by Christian ideas.\textsuperscript{86}

The defects of the Roman state system which did not allow a new social organization to be created, meant that Byzantium was unable to assimilate foreign people, and the emperor did not become a real supreme power.

> The real type of monarchical supreme power which determined political life established the administration of the state upon an active and well-organized nation. This type of political system was later developed by Moscow, based on Byzantium, when it adopted the monarchical governmental system as a basis of the state, and found new nationalistic strength for its social organization.\textsuperscript{87}

Russia, in Tikhomirov’s opinion, was the state most suited to establish an ideal monarchical supreme power. The Russian empire, he stressed, was founded on the national ethical ideal, which, for several centuries guided the Russian people in their pre-eminent role in the Christian world. The rule of Alexander III of course was a fulfillment of monarchical ideals for Tikhomirov. In his article on the occasion of the death of the emperor, he wrote:

> Two great men created the Christian state: Constantine the Great and Charles the Great. But history has strangled the creation of the first and modified the creation of the second. in our time we have seen the third ruler [Alexander III], who has made known the meaning and import of the first two.\textsuperscript{88}

Here we see not only a continuation of the idea of the Third Rome. In Tikhomirov’s opinion, Alexander III embodied a higher, better form of monarchical power. A strong independent church should be the basis of support of the monarch. Tikhomirov was a follower of Leontiev and in his opinion, Leontiev regarded Russia not as just an heir and restorer of Byzantium, but as a state in which byzantine ideas served as a model to be used to develop its own type of empire. According to Tikhomirov, the slavophiles marked the first phase of national revival and Leontiev the second.\textsuperscript{89}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{85} L. A. Tichomirov, \textit{Monarchicheskaja gosudarstvennost’} (St. Petersburg, 1992).
\item \textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 193-195.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{88} L. A. Tikhomirov, “Konstitucionalisty v epohu 1881 goda”, in: L. A. Tikhomirov, \textit{Kritika demokratii} (Moscow, 1997), 213-253.
\item \textsuperscript{89} L. A. Tikhomirov, “Russkie idealy i Konstantin Leontiev”, in: \textit{Kritika demokratii} (Moscow, 1997), 515-516.
\end{itemize}
So, while the liberals regarded Danilevskii and Leontiev as representatives of the end and decline of the Slavophile movement, in Tikhomirov’s opinion their works were the next stage of the development of Russian national consciousness. In 1909 Tikhomirov became editor-in-chief of *Moskovskie vedomosti*, the mouthpiece of conservative Russian society.

The political course aiming at preserving the status quo in the Balkans paralyzed the development of messianic ideas in Russia. The stimuli to get rid of stagnation were the defeat in the war with Japan of 1904-1905 and the revolution in 1905-07. The proclamation of freedom of print and speech, the appointment of Izvolskii as minister of foreign affairs—these events helped to revive the idea of Russian expansion to its former “historical ancestral lands”, Constantinople. A new wave in the development of neo-Byzantinism came after the speech of Izvolskii in the Duma (Parliament) on April 4, 1908, in which he used for the first time, the term “national policy”. The failure of Izvolskii in the matter of Bosnia and Herzegovina dampened for some time the development of a hawkish spirit. In April 1909 P. B. Mansurov, a diplomat and authority on Russia’s Near East policy, published an article in which he outlined the ideology of imperial Byzantinism and Russian policy in the eastern Mediterranean in the first decades of the 20th century. Russian society, wrote Mansurov, does not want to reconcile itself to diplomatic defeat and the humiliation of the motherland. Russia’s first task at the moment, in his opinion, was to defend the Balkans and Asia Minor from German aggression. Mansurov paid special attention to the traditional direction Russian policy had taken, i.e., union with all Orthodox nations of the Balkans. Directing the focus to Slavonic nations had been a mistake as it turned away the sympathies of Orthodox Romania from Russia. Mansurov supported the idea of the primacy of the Greek nation among the Orthodox nations. He wrote: “The time is soon coming when the separate efforts of the churches will not be adequate to serve the truth of Orthodoxy”. Thus, in his opinion, the need of an ecumenical council was obvious.90

## 2.4 Russian Philhellenists

Besides the dominant neo-Slavophile Russian nationalist views, there was also a pure philhellenic trend in Russian political thought at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. It was introduced by A. S. Norov, a romantic and admirer of Eastern Christianity, and developed by Tertii Ivanovich Filippov (1825-1899), state controller of Russia in the 1880s and 90s. Due to his high administrative position, Filippov could afford to take an independent pro-Greek stance in the Greek-Bulgarian ecclesiastical question. Even though the Russian government in the 1870s did not

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90 P. Mansurov, “Rossija i Blizhnij Vostok”, *Moskovskie vedomosti*, no. 90, 22 (April 1909); no. 92 and 93 (April 24 and 25, 1909).
adopt them, he supported the decisions of the church council of 1872 which proclaimed the Bulgarian Schism. Filippov maintained extensive correspondence with the Greek patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem and was even given the honorary title Guardian of the Holy Sepulchre. Many Greeks wanted to see him appointed the over-procurator of the Russian Holy Synod. In 1892 rumors spread that Pobedonostsev was leaving that office and *Nea imera*, a Greek newspaper printed in Trieste, published an article advocating for the election of Filippov as over-procurator; he was “a friend of Greece, the Greek church and the Greek language”.  

The differences between the position of Filippov and that of the Russian Holy Synod in the 1880s and 90s can be clearly traced in the discussion of the celebration of the millennial anniversary of the famous Byzantine patriarch, Photios, who was proclaimed a saint in Constantinople in 1848 by Patriarch Anthimos VI. Anthimos VI had issued anti-Russian statements during the Crimean War and later proclaimed the Bulgarian Schism in 1872 and as a result, Patriarch Photios was not included in the Russian church calendar. The anniversary was officially celebrated at the Greek Theological School on Chalki island and by the Slavic Philanthropic Society in St. Petersburg, albeit very modestly. Filippov condemned the organizers of the modest commemoration and the Russian church for not recognizing Photios. The Russian church should remember that it is only a daughter of its great mother, the ecumenical church of Constantinople, he stressed.

Filippov’s ideas met with strong opposition from the ideologues of the Holy Synod. I. E. Troitskii, a professor at St. Petersburg Theological Academy, for one, opposed Filippov, and wrote severely critical remarks about his stance in his diary. He accused Filippov of lacking in patriotism and creating a papism “worse than the Roman one”. Filippov, in his opinion, called the Patriarch of Constantinople “Ecumenical” because he wanted to stress that he had absolute power in the church, as the *plentitudo potestatis* of the Pope of Rome. Meanwhile the Russian church felt itself insulted because it had not received an official message about this canonization; neither did it receive an invitation to the anniversary celebration on Chalki island. At the request of Pobedonostsev, the over-procurator of the Holy Synod, Troitskii published an article in his defense in *Moskovskie vedomosti*, in which he stressed that the Patriarch of Constantinople had had his privileged position in Byzantium only because he was the head of the church of the Empire. If Peter the Great had not abolished the Russian patriarchate, it would have had the pre-eminent place among Orthodox archbishops. The posi-

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91 *Nea Imera*, no. 937 (1925) (14 November, 1892).
92 *Grazhdanin*, no. 38 (7 February 1891).
93 12 February 1891. CGIA SPb, f. 2182, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 22-27.
94 “Nechto po povodu stat’i Grazhdanina (No 38) po slučaju chestovnija pamiati patriarha Fotija v Slavianskom blagotvoritel’nom obchestve 6 fevarlia 1891 g.”, *Moskovskie vedomosti*, No 59 (17 February, 1891).
tion was not shared by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs which found the activities of Filippov useful in lessening the tension between the churches. According to the consulate in Constantinople, it was due to his peaceful position that the patriarchate did not interrupt its contact with the Russian Holy Synod by reason of the Bulgarian Schism.

Filippov is also connected with the estate questions of the Eastern Orthodox monasteries in Bessarabia. In the 18th century the gospodars (rulers) of the principalities Moldavia and Wallachia granted the largest Orthodox monasteries in the East (on Mts. Athos, Sinai, Patmos), large estates in the principalities. In 1863 the incomes from these lands in the United Principalities were confiscated by Prince Alexander Kuza. Those estates which were in Russian Bessarabia were confiscated by Tsar Alexander II in 1873, in response to the Bulgarian Schism. After these events, the monastic owners received only two-fifths of the income generated by the estates. In 1891 Filippov proposed that some extra money be set to the monastery on Mt. Athos in order to assist the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This proposal was rejected. On March 17, 1893 Filippov proposed further measures to enhance the holy sites in the Orthodox East. These were passed on to Troitskii and of course he rejected them. Troitskii also sought to influence the situation with the help of his unofficial agent in Constantinople, Begleri who convinced Patriarch Neophytos VIII not to give Filippov an official reception on his arrival to Constantinople on March 21, 1894. Filippov died in 1899 without having seen an improvement in the relations between the two churches.

96 A. I. Nelidov to N. K. Giers, July 8, 1891. AVPRI, f. Grecheskij stol, op. 497, d. 790, ll. 1-3v.
97 Ibid., ll. 44-64v.
98 G. P. Begleri to I. E. Troitskii, March 24, 1894, in: L. A. Gerd, ed., Rossija i pravoslavnyj Vostok. Constantinopol’skij Patriarchat v konce XIX v. Pis’ma G. P. Begleri k prof. I. E. Trotskomu. 1878-1898 gg. (St. Petersburg, 2003), 290-291, 301-302. George Begleri was born in 1850 in Constantinople to a Greek family with close relations to the Phanar clergy and at the same time friendly to Russia. One of his uncles had been Metropolitan of Derkos, another, priest of the Greek Church in Odessa. Begleri finished gymnasium in Odessa, then studied in Constantinople and St. Petersburg. Beginning in 1867 he served in the guard of Tsar Alexander II and in 1872 uncovered a plot against the tsar. Since remaining in St. Petersburg was dangerous for him, he was sent to Constantinople as an agent of ROPIT. During the war of 1877-1878, Begleri was a translator in the Russian army and provided information to the chief of the gendarmerie, N. V. Mezentsev. In 1878-1899 he lived in Constantinople and wrote articles on church policy for Greek and Russian journals. At the same time he composed detailed reports about the situation in the Patriarchate for I. E. Troitskii, professor of the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg, who was the main adviser of the over-prosecutor, K. P. Pobedonostsev in Eastern church policy.
The philhellenic sentiment in Russian public opinion was picked up by I. I. Sokolov, a professor at St. Petersburg Theological Academy.\textsuperscript{99} Being a Byzantinologist and church historian, Sokolov concentrated on the history of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{100} The credo of Sokolov’s views was a revival of an ideal Orthodox monarchy after the model of Byzantium which he articulated in his introductory speech at the Department of History of the Eastern Greek Church, delivered at St. Petersburg Theological Academy on November 1, 1903.\textsuperscript{101} Byzantium, an ideal state in his opinion, “embodied the idea of mutual dependence between the state and the church. Legally the church and the state in Byzantium were independent, but in fact they composed one body and were interconnected.”\textsuperscript{102} The Palaeologus period of Byzantine history demonstrated a decline of byzantinism in civil history, but at the same time its revival in the ecclesiastical sphere. It survived up to the fall of the Empire “and even after this historical event, passed some of its elements to modern Hellenism”. Sokolov came to the conclusion that it was Byzantium “that first elaborated the system of a church-orientated state, and in line with this, established principles of private and public life, and created cultural and historical ideals, which in their practical fulfillment could give humankind lasting happiness”.\textsuperscript{103} This ideal inspired Sokolov in his activities as a historian, professor, and first of all, as a church politician and writer.

Sokolov was editor-in-chief of the journal \textit{Tserkovnyj vestnik} and for fifteen years regularly published notes and articles on the current events of church life in the Orthodox East. On the pages of \textit{Tserkovnyj vestnik}, Sokolov often expressed ideas which did not coincide with the official line of the Holy Synod. After 1906, when A. A. Dmitrievskii was appointed secretary of the imperial Palestine Society, Sokolov wrote extensively for its periodical, \textit{Soobshchenija imperatorskogo Pravoslavnogo Palestinskogo Obshchestva}, and the journal moved from its pro-Arabian position to one more


\textsuperscript{100} I. I. Sokolov, \textit{Constantinopol’skaja cerkov’ v XIX veke}, St.-Petersburg, 1904. This fundamental research was a result of his work for eight months in the archives of the Patriarchate. About Sokolov see: “25-letie uchenoj pedagogicheskoj dejatel’nosti prof. I. I. Sokolova”, \textit{Tserkovnyj vestnik}, 33 (1915): 992-997; G. E. Lebedeva, “Iz istorii vizantinovedenija i neoellinistik i v Rossii: I. I. Sokolov”, \textit{Moskhovia. Problemy vizantijskoj i novogrecheskoj filologii} (Moscow, 2001), 229-246.

\textsuperscript{101} I. I. Sokolov, \textit{O vizantinizme v cerkovno-istoricheskom otnoshenii. Vstupitel’naja lekcija po kafedre istorii greko-vostochnoj cerkvi (ot razdelenija cerkvej), prochitannaja v Sankt-Peterburgskoj Duhovnoj Academii Igo nojabr’ja 1903 g.} (St. Petersburg, 1903).

\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Ibid.}, 12.

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Ibid.}, 42-43.
sympathetic towards the Greeks. It was in this journal that Sokolov published the following words:

> We cannot help admiring the past glory of Byzantium! Everybody who knows the depth and strength of the national and political genius of Byzantium, the wonderful spirit of life, love, light, that the Byzantine church had, who has realized the bright ideas and universal ideals of Byzantine culture, the brilliance of which lit up both the west and the Orthodox Slavonic East—such a person cannot but help support the national-political aspirations of the Greeks.\(^\text{104}\)

In all controversial matters concerning the national question of the Balkans or Palestine, Sokolov sided with the Greeks and their clergy. Thus he maintained the attitude toward the Orthodox Greek East which had been held before by Norov and Filippov.\(^\text{105}\)

The dysfunction in church life in the East was seen by Sokolov to be a result of dynamics between the western powers and the hostile Ottoman government and not the result of internal dynamics. In his view all aspirations of the Balkan peoples to create church autonomy were illegal and uncanonical. He could not help sympathizing with the Greek Great idea, i.e. the union of all Greek lands into one kingdom. At the same time he remained a Russian patriot and supported Russian aspirations in the Near East, dreamed about a Russian cross on St. Sofia and the union of all Orthodox nations under Russian domination.

Sokolov did not allow for conflict between the Greek and the Russian imperial aspirations, nor the possibility of Greek-Slavonic conflicts in the future ideal Empire of Christ on Earth. In his desire to see his Byzantine ideal fulfilled he sometimes overlooked historical facts, or misrepresented them. An example of such an interpretation is evident in his article on the liberated Mt. Athos (November 2, 1912).

> Hellenism, transformed by the genius of the people into Byzantinism, has reached a wonderful level on Mt. Athos ... Hellenism reconciled all the inhabitants of Mt. Athos irrespective of their nationality, subordinated them to its stream, introduced them into the circle of common monastic ideals and motivated them to live and to pray according to rules and orders they established.\(^\text{106}\)

It is difficult to find a statement that would contradict the reality more than this one. Of course, Sokolov was aware of the ongoing controversies between the Greek and the Slavonic monks on Mt. Athos, and the conflicts between the Greeks and the Russians.

\(^\text{105}\) Sokolov had especially close relations with Patriarch Joachim III who granted him the title “Archont and Iеромнимон of the Apostolic Ecumenical See”. Patriarch Damian of Jerusalem granted him another title, “Archont protonotarios of the Apostolic Patriarchal See of Jerusalem” and a golden cross with relics of the Holy Cross. The King of Greece awarded him the Order of Savior, third degree.
\(^\text{106}\) “Vesti s Afona”, Tserkovnyj vestnik, 42 (1912): 1317-1318.
In this case we have an example of the mythologizing of consciousness in which the desired is taken for—or at least represented as—real.

The beginning of the 20th century was a period of church reform in Russia. As an active participant of these events, Sokolov spoke many times about the possibility of adopting the Greek experience in the future church organization in Russia. In 1906 he reported on the reasons for divorce in Byzantium; he realized that in Russia not all forms of Greek communal life were suitable. It is not surprising that Sokolov was one of the most ardent defenders of the restoration of the Russian patriarchate. On October 23, 1917 he made a public speech to this end. A combination of patriarchal and synodical principles, in his opinion, would be a solid, as well as the only possible basis for future church organization. In his opinion, a union of Orthodox churches was more than ever needed.

When the separation of church and state takes place, the position of the church will be similar to that of the position of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The government there is not Christian, but we should not expect any favors from our government either.

It is interesting to note that these words were pronounced two days before the revolution, after which the Russian church found itself in much more difficult circumstances than those of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The monarchists among the church politicians in Russia at that time could not imagine a church in a democratic state; the only model of relations between church and state that they were familiar with was that of Byzantium in the Ottoman Empire.

Another philhellene in Russian church and political life was the priest of the church of the Russian embassy in Constantinople, Iona Vukolov (1899-1913), the author of numerous articles and brochures supporting the Greek Church in the east. He supported interest-free aid for the Greek schools, churches and monasteries. In contrast with the pro-Slavic ambassador, I. A. Zinoviev, Vukolov was an admirer of Greek clergy and Greek church practices. He idealized Greek ecclesiastical life and thought that it would be useful for Russia to adopt the Eastern experience even in such things as the短ening of the divine service or modernizing the liturgical language.

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107 Sokolov’s journeys to the East during the last years before the First World War were aimed at researching the current situation in the Greek parishes and church administration. See his articles: “Приход в Константинополе”, Терковский вестник, 38 (1912): 1189-1193; “Епархии Константинопольской церкви настоящего времени” (Петербург, 1914); “Терковский суд в Константинопольском Патриархате в современном его состоянии”, Терковский вестник 39 (1914): 1181-1188.

108 Деяния священного sobora Pravoslavnoj Rossijskoj cerkvi 1917-1918 gg., 2 (Moscow, 1994), 390.

109 Iona, Archim., Svet s Vostoka. Pis’ma archimandrita Iony, nastojatel’a posol’skoj cerkvi v Constantinopole, o cerkovnyh delah pravoslavnogo Vostoka, (St. Petersburg, 1903).
The journal of the Russian Holy Synod, *Tserkovnye vedomosti*, reflected the official views of the Russian church concerning Russia’s policy in the Orthodox East. They were balanced and conservative. In fact the Russian church took up a position of non-interference and maintenance of the status quo. At the beginning of the 1900s some articles by Sokolov were published in the journal, but later it became more closely aligned with neo-Slavophile aspirations. This reflected, of course, the dominant tendency in the government. The stance of the journal was determined by the canonist, S. V. Troitskii, who wrote most of the articles on the Orthodox East in the “Supplement” to *Tserkovnye vedomosti*. Several of the 1903 issues included articles on Russian church policy in the East.\(^{110}\) According to these articles, one of the main weaknesses of Russian religious aspirations in the East was that educated society had lost interest in monastic life. The weakness of Russian pilgrimage to Palestine was that only common people took part in it. The lack of educated men among the Mt. Athos monks led to their being uninterested in the general needs of Orthodoxy in the East, and caring only about strengthening their own position there. Aid to Eastern Orthodoxy was regarded in these articles in a purely philhellenic way. The success of Catholic and Protestant propaganda, Catholic aid to the Ecumenical and Jerusalem sees, the attempts of Anglicans to establish closer ties with the Orthodox, the danger of spreading Russophobic feelings among the Greeks—all these facts should not result in Russian society blaming the Greeks, but supporting them in any possible way.

From 1908 to 1914 the ecclesiastical matters of Russian policy in the Near East, which was considered highly important by the diplomats, was of interest only to the conservative wing of society. Neo-Byzantine ideology found fertile soil especially in the monarchic and church-oriented circles. The liberal and left parties, which fought for the secularization of the Russian state and society, did not pay much attention to church policy; their journals vividly demonstrated the absence of articles on these topics. Nevertheless, the national and political ideals of the monarchists and liberals in the Near East overlapped to a great extent. This became particularly obvious during the First World War.

### 2.5 Plans for a Russian Constantinople during the First World War

The union of the Orthodox Balkan nations was achieved with the help of Russian diplomacy in 1912 with the formation of the Balkan League (though this was not just the union that the Russian ideologues of Orthodox union dreamt of). The Second Balkan War demonstrated the instability of the Balkan League and its dependence

on the ambitions of the Balkan nations on the one side and of the Great Powers on the other. It became clear that the Balkan Wars were only a prologue to a great war that would determine the final solution of the Eastern Question. The development of imperial byzantine ideology in Russia peaked in 1914-1915; it seemed that the political dreams of the last two and a half centuries would finally be fulfilled. From the very beginning of the war Russian periodicals were full of articles declaring that this war was the Great War for liberating all Christian peoples of the East. When Turkey entered the war in October 1914, the Russian press demonstrated a real triumph of political romanticism. For the conservative and church politicians, the capture of Constantinople was the fulfillment of the old messianic dream of the Russian people, the restoration of the Orthodox kingdom. For the liberals and democrats it meant new economic opportunities for Russia, the interaction of eastern and western cultures.

Constantinople and Palestine were two ecclesiastical and political centers for Russia. By 1915, when it seemed a near reality that the war would end favorably for Russia, many articles appeared on the future Russian Constantinople. Constantinople was regarded as “the key of our home”; Russia could not afford to be neutral. Only possession of the Straits could guarantee that Russia’s southern borders would be safe. Moreover, in order to assure itself a land connection with both straits, Russia should include in its borders the southern coast of the Black Sea as well, one of the articles stated.\footnote{G. F. Chirkin, \textit{Kolonial’nye interesy v sovremennoj vojne i nashi zadachi na Blizhnem Vostoke} (Petrograd, 1915), 20-21. See also: N. A. Zacharov, \textit{Nashe stremlenie k Bosphoru i Dardanellam i protivodeistvie emu zapadno-evropeiskih derzhav. Doklad, chitannyy v petrogradskom klube obschestvennyh dejatelej 23 janvar’a 1915 g.} (Petrograd, 1916); S. Gagarin, \textit{“Konstantinopol’skie prolivy. Istoriko-politicheskij ocherk"}, \textit{Russkaja mysl’}, (April 1915): 96-122.} Obviously Russian claims to Constantinople in 1915 were in large part the result of their legitimate fear that the British and French would take it. In the atmosphere of excitement that spread throughout Russian society in the first half of 1915, some absolutely fantastic ideas were projected. For example, the author of one of the articles wrote that as Russia was bigger than ancient Byzantium, it would have not one, but several patriarchs: such cities as Moscow, Kiev, Petrograd, Vilna, Kazan, Tiflis and Irkutsk would become patriarchal sees. Questions common to all churches would be resolved at councils of Russian and Eastern bishops, and the Russian bishops would take the pre-eminent place.\footnote{M. L. “K chemu tserkovnym sferam nuzhno gotovit’sia? (K voprosu o buduschej organizacii otoshenij mezhdu vostochnymi cerkvami)”, \textit{Kolokol}, no. 2630 (February 11, 1915).} Liberated Constantinople would become the cradle of the Kingdom of Christ on Earth; after the appearance of the cross on St. Sofia the division of the Christian world will cease, said another church writer.\footnote{“Buduschaja kolybel’ carstva Christova”, \textit{Kolokol}, no 2660 (March 18, 1915).} It is not surprising that in this atmosphere ideas about collecting money for the cross on St. Sofia were proposed in order that everything would be ready for the moment when Russian troops would enter the city.
The dream of conquering Constantinople seemed to be realized not only for those who were swept along by mass nationalistic hysteria, but even by the very heads of Russian foreign policy. At the beginning of 1915, during the operation of the allies in the Dardanelles, Britain and France needed additional support from Russia. That is why they proposed to Russia a plan to divide Turkey in case of a successful end to the war. According to the secret treaty signed on March 18, 1915, Russia would be given Constantinople, the Straits and the adjacent territories. In the same month the Russian fleet began to move towards the Bosphorus. On this occasion official notes in different state departments were written, concerning the future governing of Constantinople. The notes for the Holy Synod were written by I. I. Sokolov and Archbishop Antonii Chrapovitskii. Sokolov created a long text with a detailed historical preface concerning the position of the church in Byzantium. The present state of affairs was estimated by him as a restoration of the Byzantine Empire under the rule of the Russian tsar with which the restoration of the Russian patriarchate should be connected. The Russian patriarch should occupy second place after the Ecumenical Patriarch. Constantinople could be one of the residences of the Russian tsar. Archbishop Chrapovitskii, who was well known for his philhellenic views, proposed that the liberated Constantinople be given to the Greeks as a token of gratitude for the conversion of Russia by the Byzantines in the tenth century.

Another note was written on March 23, 1915 by the director of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople, F. I. Uspenskii. He rejected as utopic all plans of uniting the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the Russian Synod, with Mt. Athos or with Greece, and called for “a strict application of the Byzantine canon rules and church practice from the times of the Byzantine emperors”. Uspenskii did not exclude what he considered the most favourable option for Russia: that the patriarch, as a Turkish government official, would retreat with the sultan’s government to central Asia Minor, all that remained of Turkey’s former glory and there install himself.

The authors of some texts insisted on including a Russian archbishop in the Constantinople Synod and others thought that only fraternal relations could exist between the Russian bishop in the city and his Greek colleagues. There were pro-

114 See the edition of these documents: E. A. Adamov, ed., Constantinopol’ i prolivy. Po sekretnym dokumentam byvshego ministerstva inostrannyh del (Moscow, 1925), 221-304; Prolivy (sbornik), Introduction by F. Rotshtein, article by E. Adamov (Moscow, 1924), 88-93.
proposals for the full russification of the city, turning it into one of the Russian eparchial towns with its own bishop.

One can get some notion of the possible attitude of Russian authorities to the Ecumenical Patriarch given how the Russians behaved during the occupation of Trapezund in 1916 and 1917. In spite of the numerous warnings from the Holy Synod that their attitude towards the Greek metropolitan and clergy should be cautious, the Russian military, with its nationalistic euphoria was far from delicate and was not welcomed.118

By the summer of 1915 it was clear that the Allies’ Dardanelles operation could not be ended quickly nor successfully, and the discussion of a Russian Constantinople began to fade away. They were extinguished entirely in 1916 when the deputy of the Duma, P. N. Mil’ukov, revealed the secret treaty of March 1915. As the Russian troops were advancing toward the Caucasian front, the boldest of the Russian thinkers spoke not only about domination in Constantinople and the Straits, but also of the annexation to Russia of the whole of Asia Minor—Anatolia, Kilikia, northern Mesopotamia, and the Gulf of Alexandretta.

Owning the whole of Asia Minor will assure us not only the Straits and a direct access to the Mediterranean, but will bring us a very profitable province. We shall find there a fine and suitable place for our colonization, but also an extraordinary wealthy source of agricultural products and raw materials.119

In only a year all these fantastic dreams of almost universal domination of the Orthodox empire by the Third Rome were ruined first by the February and then by the October revolutions. In 1917 the Russian monarchists, however, still had not realized what had happened. The byzantinologist, Dmitrievskii, even after the February Revolution continued propagating the traditional ideas in the Church of St. Nicolas in St. Petersburg.120 A few days before the October Revolution, the former consul general to Thessaloniki, A. K. Bel’aev, assured the Greek ambassador in St. Petersburg of the devotion of Russia to its historic mission, i.e., to protect the Orthodox peoples of the East and help them in any possible way; the disorder in the political life of the country was expected to be a temporary in nature.121 Only the events of October-December of 1917 put an end to the byzantine period in Russian political thought and to the epoch of political romanticism in Russia as well.

119 A. Jaschenko, Russkie interesy v Maloj Asii, (Moscow, 1916).
121 A report of the ambassador in Petrograd to the Minister of foreign affairs N. Poltiis October 19, 1917. AYE, f. 8956, 2.
3 Russia and the Patriarchate of Constantinople: Official and Unofficial Relations

3.1 Reforms in the Patriarchate

The reforms in the Ottoman Empire of the 1850s and 60s had a direct bearing on the Orthodox Church. Up to the middle of the 19th century the church, as the head of the Orthodox millet, enjoyed relative independence in the Ottoman state. The contacts between the Russian government and church and the Greek high clergy were out of control of the Subleme Porte and thus seemed unsuitable both to the Ottomans and to the western powers. The Tanzimat, by contrast, intended to gradually secularize the state and deprive the church of its privileged position. On one hand, it sought the transfer of church real estate to the Ottoman state, on the other, to lessen Russian influence on Turkish affairs. The first attempt at administrative reform of the Patriarchate of Constantinople was made in 1847. The author of the reforms at that stage was the British ambassador, Stratford Radcliffe, who proposed including three laymen in the Patriarchal Synod. In 1848, however, these reform proposals were turned down and declared uncanonical.122

Further movement towards reform started after the hatt-i-humajun of 1856. As the Russian ambassador in Constantinople, A. P. Butenev, stressed:

This false and poorly composed document was created and imposed on the Turks by the western powers more because of their hatred of Russia and fears of her political and ecclesiastical influence in the East than because of their real care for the Christian population in the Ottoman state. This has caused great confusion in the Patriarchate of Constantinople.123

In April 1857 the Sublime Porte demanded that the patriarchate implement the reforms. The first step should have been the formation of a national church council with the participation of a Turkish official. Nonetheless, the activities of the council, though met with strong resistance from the elder members of the Synod (gerontes) and from the rising Bulgarian nationalists, finally led to the adoption, in 1860, of new rules for church administration (Genikoi kanonismoi).124 The most discussed questions during the preliminary sessions were the swearing of oaths to the state by the newly-appointed bishops and the adoption of salaries for priests. Both were

123 Sobranije mnenij i otzyov Filareta mitropolita Moskovskogo i Kolomenskogo po delam pravoslavnoj cerkvi na Vostoke (St. Petersburg, 1886), III.
124 Edition: Genikoi kanonismoi peri dieuthetiseos ton ekklesiastikon kai ethnikon pragmaton ton ypo ton oikoumenikon thronon diateLounton othodokson christianon ypiKoon tou soultanou (Constantinople, 1900). See more on the reforms: D. Stamatopoulos, Metarrythmisi kai ekkosmikeusi, 77-152.

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deemed uncanonical and thus were not adopted. The most effective modernization was the creation of the Mixed Council, the second chamber in the patriarchate in addition to the Synod. It would consist of twelve members, bishops and laymen equally, and according to the new rules, the members of the Synod would change every two years.

The patriarch was thus limited in his previous unlimited de jure power. He would be answerable henceforth to the Synod in church affairs and to the Mixed Council in the civic ones. The Synod would not include members with central administrative experience because they would be elected for two years only. The changes in both chambers led to intrigues and internal struggles between factions. The patriarchal see remained unstable in spite of the reforms: in the years 1860-1912 ten patriarchs held the position and two of them were in office twice. The Mixed Council allowed for more lay influence in church policy. The Church of Constantinople shifted towards further politicization and nationalization. Extreme Greek nationalism, far from the traditional super-national ecumenical character of the patriarchate, was the new guiding spirit, made possible by the Mixed Council. It resulted in sharpening the other nationalistic sentiments in the church, Bulgarian, Antiochian, etc.\textsuperscript{125}

The attitude of the Russian foreign office to the reforms was at first positive. The diplomats, especially the ambassador, Lobanov-Rostovskii, found them useful for restoring legality and guarding against corruption in the church. Some diplomats at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century also approved the reforms and said that they had been “conservative in the best sense of the word”.\textsuperscript{126} Others were much more skeptical and supposed them harmful for the Orthodox church in the East. “A strong power is needed for church administration, and its position should be above internal factions”, wrote G. Trubeckoi.\textsuperscript{127} The Metropolitan of Moscow, Filaret Drozdov, the head of Russian church policy in the 1850s and 60s was an opponent of these reforms. Without discussing the political side of the question, he stressed the uncanonical character of the reforms.\textsuperscript{128} If the Mixed Council controlled the finances of the patriarchate and adopted salaries for the clergy, that would, in his view, weaken the church, as well as the national unity and strength of the Greeks.

Although the church administration implemented by the reforms was in place in the decades prior to the First World War, other changes were also made. In 1869 Patriarch Gregorios VI began the practice of appointing six of the twelve members of the Synod according to his own preferences (\textit{kat’ aristindin}); this right was preserved

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 229-349.
\textsuperscript{126} P. Mansurov, \textit{Konstantinopol’skaja cerkov’}. \textit{Ocherk osnovnyh nachal stroja ee v XIX veke, chast’ I. Central’noje upravlenije} (Moscow, 1909), 66.
\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Sobranije mnenij i otzyov Filareta}, 9, 14-15, 20, 29.
by his successors. By the 1880s one can see that the same experienced archbishops tended to hold sway in the patriarchate. This partly recalls the period of *gerontismos*, which dominated to the end of the 1850s. Additional committees were also formed: the Patriarchal Central Committee, the Patriarchal Central Pedagogic Committee, the Committee of the Estates, and so on. This can be regarded as a reaction to the compensation to the general Kanonisms.

Up to the middle of the 19th century the Patriarchate of Constantinople was a supra-national religious organization of different nations—Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians and Arabs. In the middle of the 19th century it began to disintegrate province by province as a result of the formation of national states in the Balkans. In 1833 the independent Greek Church was proclaimed (recognized by Constantinople only in 1850), in 1865 the Romanian (recognized in 1885), in 1870 the Bulgarian. The Bulgarian Schism of 1872 was the peak of the hostilities between the Greeks and the Bulgarians. The two churches broke off relations and the Bulgarians were treated by the Greeks as heretics up to 1945. By the middle of the 1870s, the patriarchate had lost most of its European dioceses, and as a result its financial problems increased, its authority diminished and it became the church of the Ottoman Greeks. With the formation of the Mixed Council its national character increased. The neophanariots of Constantinople, represented by the lay members in the Council, were more or less patriots of the Great idea. The same could be said about most of the Greek metropolitans at the end of the 19th century. Nevertheless, the old Byzantine ideology of Constantinople’s domination over the whole Orthodox world continued to live on in the consciousness of the patriarchal clergy. This provoked indignation in St. Petersburg, where an alternative ecumenical ideology prevailed, that of the pre-eminence of Russia in the Orthodox world. In the 1960s, Metropolitan Filaret Drozdov took up the matter of the Russian Synod with Patriarch Sophronios. He found fault with the title, “Ecumenical See of Constantinople”. “The Ecumenical See”, he wrote, “has the connotation of ecumenical power; but the patriarch does not have that power. The title “Ecumenical” belongs to the patriarch only as an honorary one. St. Basil the Great is also called ecumenical teacher, but we cannot, on that basis, call the See of Caesarea ecumenical.” Later, in the 1880s, the Russians avoided the term “ecumenical” altogether.

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129 Ch. A. Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece 1821-1852* (Cambridge, 1969).
130 Sobranie mnenij i otzyvov Filareta, 155.
131 See, for example, a letter of the priest of the Russian embassy to Professor I. Troitskii (April 17, 1888), CGIA SPb, f. 2182, op. 1, d. 168: 17, and the polemics between I. Troitskii and T. Filippov in 1886 (in the previous chapter).
3.2 Joachim III: First Patriarchate

The first patriarch after the Russo-Turkish War was Joachim III (1878-1884). Joachim had been metropolitan in Varna (Bulgaria) and Thessaloniki (Macedonia), so he was well acquainted with the national issues of church life. After the war he worked enthusiastically to improve the position of the church and addressed its difficulties, both financial and ethnic. Russia’s place in the church was one of the important points in his political program. His pro-Russian position caused an open conflict with the Greek prime minister, Charilaos Trikoupis. Russian diplomats, in turn, supported Joachim in his struggle against the sublime porte in support of the rights and privileges of the patriarchate.

The period after 1878 is known in the history of the Constantinople Church as the first stage of the struggle for its rights and privileges (Pronomiakon zitima). The privileges were based on the legendary rights granted to the Christians by the sultan, Mehmed the Conqueror. The Church’s struggle was in fact a struggle to preserve the privileges of the millet system and its autonomy in the Ottoman state. The limit of the Church’s autonomy became evident in the case of the Christian, Makarios Minas. When Minas died he left his property to charity. His brother appealed to the Turkish court, and as a consequence the minister of justice in 1880 signed an edict that all acts concerning heritage should henceforth be examined by Ottoman courts and taken out of the jurisdiction of the eparchial bishops. The protest of Joachim III was silenced.

In 1881 the Ottoman government began taking measures against the Christian Greek press and the school system, which had been entirely under the control of the patriarchate. The first victim of these actions was M. Chamoudopoulos, the editor of the patriarchal newspaper, Ecclesiastiki Alitheia, who was found to be politically unreliable. In June 1881 the minister of education demanded an explanation from the
patriarch for the patriotic heroic poems written by Poumos in the school textbooks.\textsuperscript{136} In March 1882 the Ministry of Education seized the manuscript of \textit{The Siege and Fall of Constantinople} by the historian A. Paspatis. The book would not be published unless the author agreed to make all the changes recommended by the censure committee.\textsuperscript{137} Two other textbooks were also censured by the Ministry: \textit{Geography} by Antoniadis and \textit{Christian Catechesis} by D. Kyriakos. They too were to be sent for approval to the Ministry. In the future, all school programs and textbooks had to pass the censure of the Ministry.\textsuperscript{138} In addition to the censure, the sublime porte also appointed an Ottoman inspector for Orthodox schools.

The next step taken by the Ottoman government to limit church autonomy concerned the privileges of the metropolitans as outlined in berats, i.e. documents granting them certain administrative rights. This measure was politically motivated, and, first of all, it was aimed at the Greek metropolitan of Macedonia. In October 1882 the newly appointed Metropolitan of Sisania, Athanasios, was issued a berat which stated that he would be judged, not by the patriarchal, but by the Ottoman court. In February 1883 the Metropolitan of Castoria, Constantios, was issued the same berat. Joachim III demanded the restoration of the status quo ante when clerics had been judged in civil affairs by the patriarchal court.\textsuperscript{139} The patriarch pointed out all the areas in which the rights of the Christians had been violated: hereditary law, the right to free construction of church buildings, schools and charity institutions, administration of schools and punishment of clerics. As a result of this defense, the first stage of the \textit{Pronomiakon zitima} ended successfully for the church, and Joachim received a berat identical to that of his predecessor. An additional \textit{teskere} was issued by the Ministry however, ordering that in the case of a crime committed by a priest, monk or nun, the guilty one would be kept in the state prison. The Synod did not accept this order, and on March 30, 1884 Joachim III abdicated.

The Russian embassy supported Joachim at this stage of the struggle beginning in 1883, while the representatives of the other Powers kept silent. On July 16, 1883 Ambassador Nelidov visited the minister of foreign affairs, Aarifi Pasha, with an official protest. In November 1883 he advised Joachim III and the Synod to wait for his diplomacy to have effect. In June 1883 the Russian minister of foreign affairs, N. K. Giers, addressed the porte through the Turkish ambassador in St. Petersburg appealing to the Ottoman government to stop its measures against the Church as soon as possible if it wanted to maintain peaceful relations with Russia. The active position of

\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Ibid.}: 73.
\textsuperscript{137} G. P. Begleri to I. E. Troitskii, 1 April, 1882, \textit{ibid.}: 78-79.
\textsuperscript{138} I. I Sokolov, \textit{Constantinopol'skaja cerkov' v XIX v.} (St. Petersburg, 1904), 379; Ch. Kardaras, \textit{I politiki drasi tou Ioakeim III}, 350.
\textsuperscript{139} \textit{To kata to zitima ton ecclesiastikon pronomion apo tis 19 febrouariou 1883 mehri tis epibrabeuseos tou arhaiou kathestotos} (Constantinople, 1884).
Russia at this time was in contrast to the indifference of Germany and France and the unfavourable, yet less hostile position of Austro-Hungary.  

Another serious problem that faced Joachim III during his patriarchate was the position of the Orthodox Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Before 1879 these provinces were under the jurisdiction of Constantinople as a part of the semi-independent Serbian Church. After the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austro-Hungary the possibility of reorganizing jurisdictions so that they would be subordinate to the Metropolitan of Karlowitz was discussed. At the end of 1879 and the beginning of 1880 secret negotiations between the Austrian government and Joachim III were held. Onou, staff at the Russian embassy, concluded:

> The new political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina will separate them step by step from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. On one hand, one should be cautious because the Austrian domination can be favourable for the Catholic propaganda in these regions. On the other hand, anything will help the formation of a Bosnian national church, which will naturally gravitate to the Serbian church.

At first the Vienna cabinet did involve itself in the religious affairs of its new territories. The Serb, Savva Kasanovich, was elected to the Sarajevo Metropolitan See. Shortly thereafter, however, news about the violation of the rights of the Orthodox population spread: new taxes were introduced, the German language was spread, and in 1881 Pope Leo XIII founded an eparchy of the Vatican in the provinces to ensure more successful Catholic propaganda. In June 1881 the representative of the Austrian government, Count Miarockowski, attempted to convince Kasanovich to submit to the jurisdiction of the Pope, as the power of Constantinople was nominal and Russia was passive. On September 8, 1881 Pobedonostsev wrote to the minister of foreign affairs, N. K. Giers that Metropolitan Savva should be supported. The next attempt of the Austrian government to overcome the resistance of Savva in order to unite Bosnia and Herzegovina with the See of Karlowitz was undertaken in 1883. At this point the patriarch had to yield. On March 8, 1883 under pressure from the Austro-Hungarian embassy, Joachim III signed a concordat, according to which Austro-Hungary received the right to appoint candidates to the metropolitan sees of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the patriarch would only approve them. The Austrian government agreed to compensate the patriarchate 58,000 Turkish lires for the loss of church revenue from these

140 Chr. Kardaras, I politiki drasi tou Ioakeim III, 370-379.
141 Dispatch by A. B. Lobanov-Rostovkii, October 4, 1879, RGIA, f. 797, op. 49, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 252, ll. 2-4; Dispatch by M. K. Onou, January 24, 1880, RGIA, f. 797, op. 49, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 252, ll. 9-10.
142 Ibid., I. 9-10
143 Bakunin to Giers, November 12, 1880, RGIA, f. 797, op. 49, 2 otd. 3 st., l. 17-28; E. P. Novikov-to N. K. Giers, April 27, 1881, ibid.; Bakunin-to Giers, June 1881, ibid., II. 49-53.
144 Ibid., II. 71-73.
145 Bakunin to Giers, April 13, 1883. Ibid., op. 53, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 170, ll. 2-4.
provinces. Joachim signed it without enthusiasm. Afraid of the Synod’s indignation, the patriarch presented it as a fait accompli and did not allow discussion of it. He was bitterly criticized for agreeing to the terms in both the Greek and Russian press.

Despite the hopes of the Russian government and church that the Bulgarian Schism could be mended and the nationalist tendencies in the church overcome, they were not able to achieve these. Just prior to the abdication of Joachim III, A. E. Vlangali, a member of the Russian foreign office, formulated Russia’s position on Greek nationalism in the church.

Under the general name ‘Greeks’ we mean the Athens government, the inhabitants of Turkey of Greek origin, the patriarchate and the clergy, and finally the Greek monks of Mt. Athos … As for the patriarchate and the main spiritual leaders of the Orthodox church, many times I had the opportunity to express my opinion in no uncertain terms. Our duty is to protect the rights and independence of the Eastern church. But we must draw a strict line of demarcation between the interests of this church and the national interests of the Greeks of Athens, because the Ecumenical Patriarch is not called to serve as a stronghold of Hellenism in any sense … Many of the high clergy here and many Greeks are infected by the ideas of Hellenism and are more attuned to the inspirations of the policy of Athens … Against these people we should fight, while defending the independence of the Ecumenical Church.

The abdication of Joachim III in 1884 was to a great extent a result of the intrigues of his opponents who were displeased with his close relationship with Russia. During the years following his abdication, first in Constantinople and then on Mt. Athos, Joachim continued to maintain relations with Russian diplomats. So, for example, in 1886 he was visited by I. E. Troitskii, professor at St. Petersburg Theological Academy, who wrote a detailed report about this meeting to the over-procurator of the Russian Holy Synod, Pobedonostsev.

3.3 Struggle for Church Privileges (1884-1890)

During the patriarchate of Joachim IV (1884-1886), the question of church privileges was never discussed. The Russain foreign ministry and church did not trust

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146 AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 3426, ll. 3-4; Bakunin to Giers, Sarajevo, November 12, 1880, RGIA, f. 797, op. 49, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 252, ll. 13-16.
147 See: Moskovskie vedomosti, (no. 104, 14 April 1880).
148 December 28, 1883, No 238, AVPRI, f. 180 (Embassy in Constantinople), op. 517/2, d. 3212: 19-23.
150 B. F. Stauridou, Oi oikoumenikai patriarchai 1860-simeron, 285-316; K. P. Spanoudi, Istorikai selides. Ioakeim III (Constantinople, 1902), 53-62; G. I. Papadopoulou, I syghronos ierarchia (Constan-
Joachim IV. In his enthronement message he asked other autocephalous churches to “address him ... in the event of any difficulties”. This was humiliating for the Russian church. As Metropolitan of Derkos, Joachim had travelled to Italy in 1883 at the invitation of Pope Leo XIII. When he became patriarch, he exchanged visits with the Pope’s nuncio, Rotelli in Constantinople. This diplomatic game was advantageous for neither side, but it opened a path for Catholic propaganda in Macedonia. Comparing the “papal tendencies” of the two Joachims, Professor E. I. Troitskii stressed that Joachim III aimed only at strengthening the ecclesiastical discipline after a Roman model, while Joachim IV tried to assume the role of an Eastern pope. During the two years of his patriarchate, Joachim IV approved the autocephaly of the Romanian church (1885), restored ecclesiastical communion with the Patriarch of Karlowitz, and recognized the election of the Serbian metropolitan, Theodosii Mraovich. St. Petersburg was not pleased with any of these actions. The autocephaly of the Romanian Church could not be approved, the Russian government maintained, because of the uncanonical confiscation of church properties by the Romanian government, and the restoration of communion with the Metropolitan of Karlowitz was viewed as an attempt to create an anti-Russian coalition of Slavonic states under Austrian auspices. In Serbia after the pro-Austrian prince Milan came into power, the pro-Russian Metropolitan Michail was exiled, the Serbian Church was subordinated to the Patriarchate of Karlowitz and Theodosy Mraovich became its head. Metropolitan Michael was invited to Russia. Russia did not send any official protests, and the Russian church and government remained neutral, preferring the line of non-interference. One matter, however, provoked open indignation, the divorce proceedings of the Gorchakov couple. In 1886 Maria, the daughter of the Moldavian prince Michael Sturdza, began divorce procedures against her husband, Constantine, son of the famous Russian minister of foreign affairs, A. M. Gorchakov. She addressed her appeal to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and it was accepted on the basis that the marriage had taken place in France, a country which did not have an autocephalous church. Taking into consideration the high social rank of the couple and the fact that the process had not been approved by the Russian Church (St. Petersburg Consistory), the Russian government officially protested to Joachim IV. The patriarch responded

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151 Dispatch of A. I. Nelidov, March 7, 1885, No 50, CGIA SPb, f. 2182, op. 1, d. 165, ll. 9-10. On Nelidov’s opinion, the Patriarch made a mistake not answering the accusations.
153 Resolution of the meeting of the Holy Synod, April 10/July 7, 1885, RGIA, f. 797, op. 55, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 92, ll. 4-6.
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according to the traditional Byzantine notions of the primacy of the See of Constantinople in the Orthodox world.\textsuperscript{154} 

Dionysios V as the next patriarch, was elected in 1886.\textsuperscript{155} This election was regarded very unfavourably in Russia for several reasons. First, Dionysios was the choice of the Athens government and the opponents of Joachim III. Second, during the Russo-Turkish War, Dionysios, as Metropolitan of Adrianople, was known to have cursed the Russian troops.

In the course of the election campaign, the Russian ambassador, Nelidov, undertook to warn the Turkish government and to prevent the election of Dionysios. The unwillingness of Russia to see him as patriarch was stressed by the ambassador in his negotiations with influential civil and ecclesiastical Greek authorities. Moreover, Nelidov openly stressed that this election would be perceived as a hostility towards Russia.\textsuperscript{156} Nelidov hoped that thus he could ensure, if not the re-election of Joachim III, then at least the election of a third candidate, Constantine, the metropolitan of Metilena.

All preventative measures from the Russian side failed, and many Russian intellectuals blamed the Russian embassy for this reverse. In response to the failed efforts, the official journal of the Synod, \textit{Tserkovnyj vestnik}, published an article in which the author wrote that “Dionysios could not prevent us from entering Adrianople, he will not prevent us entering Constantinople. We don’t need the support of the patriarchs either in our political or in our church affairs. The Russian church is not aiming at domination over other Orthodox churches. It wants only respect for the autonomy and the rights of the others.”\textsuperscript{157}

It was not surprising that the contacts of the Russian diplomats with Dionysios were minimal. Again, the embassy would only be a passive observer of the events. This mood is well reflected in one of the diplomatic notes, written on June 10, 1887.\textsuperscript{158}

Since the Treaty of Paris, our relations with the Christians in Turkey have changed radically, and we cannot influence them and their clergy at the level that we used to. Meanwhile, for political reasons and by habit we continue in our relations with them, supporting their proposals and at

\textsuperscript{154} See the correspondence on this subject: K. P. Pobedonostsev to N. K. Giers, April 25, 1886, RGIA, f. 797, op. 56, d. 84, 2 otd. 3 st., ll. 33-34; A. I. Nelidov to N. K. Giers, March 17, 1886, \textit{ibid.}, ll. 27; N. K. Giers to K. P. Pobedonostsev, April 19, 1886, \textit{ibid.}, ll. 29-30; AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 2922, ll. 12-12; 13-13; 27; M. K. Onou to A E. Vlangali, May 28, 1886, \textit{ibid.}, ll. 14-14; 26-26.


\textsuperscript{156} Dispatch by A. I. Nelidov, 29 December/10 January 1887, No. 250, RGIA, f. 797, op. 56, d. 142, 2 otd. 3 st., ll. 8-10.

\textsuperscript{157} [I. E. Troitskii], “K patriarshemu voprosu v Constantinopole,” \textit{Tserkovnyj vestnik}, (no. 9, February 28, 1887): 162-164.

\textsuperscript{158} AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 2923, ll. 6-16.
times asserting our support. Because of our position in relation to the Slavonic nations of the East, we have no means either to insist on the fulfillment of these demands, or to support them. The Constantinople church understands this very well and finds our tutelage cumbersome.\footnote{159 AVPRI, F. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 2913, l. 13v.}

As nationalistic ideas prevail in the patriarchate, continues the note, Russia should change its strategy, and strengthen relations with the Greek clergy, turning a blind eye to all their abuses. Thus peace would be maintained in the church and the support of the clergy ensured “at the moment of our historically inevitable confrontation with Hellenism on the ruins of Turkish domination.”\footnote{160 Ibid., ll. 15v-16.}

Soon a new phase of the Pronomiakon zitima began. At the end of 1887 the Ottoman government demanded that the church should present documents confirming its possession of real estates. As such documents did not exist in most cases, the porte threatened the patriarchate with confiscation of lands.\footnote{161 G. P. Begleri to I. E. Troitskii, November 9, 1887, in L. A. Gerd, ed., Rossia i Pravoslavnyj Vostok, 113-114.} Then, in 1888 the matter of judging the bishops in the civil courts arose again. This issue first appeared in connection with the situation in Macedonia. At the beginning of 1888, a Greek teacher from Kastoria was arrested, and in his correspondence which was revolutionary in content, he named Metropolitan Cyril. He was immediately called to Constantinople to give an explanation, but refused to appear before the court. After a session of the Synod it was decided that the metropolitan would visit the minister of justice on the condition that it would not be an interrogation.\footnote{162 G. P. Begleri to I. E. Troitskii, February 8 and 12, 1888, ibid., 121-122, 123-125.} When the protosingel of the same metropolitan was arrested, the patriarch officially protested to the porte asking that he be released from prison.\footnote{163 G. P. Begleri to I. E. Troitskii, March 7 and 21, 1888, ibid., 125-127, 130-132.}

Following on the heels of the arrest of the protosingel, was the dismissal of the Metropolitan of Serres, Lucas Petrides. One of the most active members of the patriarchal synod, the Metropolitan of Derkos, Kallinikos, asked the Russian ambassador, Nelidov, for help but the Russian embassy was in no hurry to support the patriarchate.\footnote{164 G. P. Begleri to I. E. Troitskii, April 3, 1888, ibid., 137-138.}

Russian diplomats followed all the cases of violence against the Christians, and they noted that the disparity between the notions of central power in Turkey and the autonomous position of the church had become the reason for the abdication of Joachim III. By electing Dionysios V, the Greeks of Constantinople hoped to protect the church from further encroachment upon its rights, as he had close relations with the Ottoman authorities. But the sublime porte had begun a systematic persecution of the bishops in Macedonia. Onou, a member of the embassy staff wrote:
During this struggle the imperial embassy maintained its distance, despite our continued sympathy for the destiny of Orthodoxy in the East and for the defense of the rights of the church. Our restraint was caused by Dionysios’s close relations with the Ottoman government, and as a result he avoided seeking our support. To offer him help without his request would insult the dignity of the imperial embassy and would lack authority in the opinion of the Greeks and the Turkish government.\textsuperscript{165}

At the same time the Ottoman government continued its attacks. In January 1889 the matter of introducing wages for the clergy was again raised, and a special order prohibited the patriarchate from taking any official decisions on juridical matters.\textsuperscript{166} These circumstances, and the fact that the protests of the patriarchate were not heard by the porte, led the Russian diplomats to the conclusion that a new patriarchal crisis would soon erupt.\textsuperscript{167} As the patriarch had officially approached the office of the great vizier for assistance, he was not free to officially address the Russian embassy for fear of offending the porte. He sent his representative to Nelidov to inform the ambassador that if his attempts did not bring any results, he would have to ask for help from Russia, the constant supporter of Orthodoxy. Nelidov, in turn, stressed the economic difficulties the patriarchate was experiencing after uniting the eparchies of Thessaly and Epirus with the Greek church. This was also the subject of his private discussion with the Ottoman minister of foreign affairs, Said Pasha. At the same time Nelidov proposed a grant of 10,000 rubles for the Ecumenical See. This would strengthen Russian influence and would offset the compensation sent from Athens to be used to further its political aims in Macedonia.\textsuperscript{168}

In the second half of 1889, the Russian embassy in support of the patriarchate initiated informal talks with the porte, though nothing came of it. During the first half of 1890 the question of church privileges remained unresolved and was connected with the intention of the porte to issue berats to the Bulgarian bishops of Macedonia and Thrace. On the 2nd of July, 1890 the patriarch protested against these berats, but the berats for the exarchate bishops of Skopje and Ochrid were nevertheless issued at the end of that same month. The Russian embassy was rather passive in this situation and did not support the Bulgarians, which can be explained by its worsening relations with Bulgaria at that time.

These events caused a patriarchal crisis. On October 3, 1890 Dionysios V, together with his Synod sent a communiqué to all the autocephalous churches calling on them to halt all church services throughout the patriarchate. The next day the sultan ordered a new commission, consisting of four Greek governmental officials with the task of pacifying the situation and halting the patriarch in his communication with foreign institutions. The sending of the document was thus stopped. In a few days the grand

\textsuperscript{165} Note of April 9, 1888, RGIA, f. 797, op. 58, 2 otd., 3 st., d. 128, ll. 2-4.
\textsuperscript{166} G. P. Begleri to I. E. Troitskii, January 17, 1889, in Rossia i Pravoslavnyi Vostok, 150-152.
\textsuperscript{167} Dispatch by A. I. Nelidov, November 7/19, 1889, RGIA, f. 797, op. 58, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 128, ll. 8-9.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., ll. 10-12\textsuperscript{a}. 
Vizier invited the members of the synod to meet, and the rights and privileges of the church were officially restored to their previous form. In this situation the patriarchate counted on support from the Russians. The advisor to the Holy Synod, E. I. Troitskii, however, proposed that Russia not hurry to support the patriarchate and even called it an act of ‘national suicide’, all for the sake of a nation which regarded Russia as the main obstacle to its restoration of the Byzantine Empire. The Russian embassy in Constantinople, however, favoured supporting the church. The debate continued until the end of December, 1890. Just before Christmas the sublime porte was forced to yield, as it was afraid of mass insurrection. The leaders in the struggle, the Metropolitans Germanos of Herakleion and Kallinikos of Derkos, were called to the patriarchate and received the sultan’s irade which affirmed the rights and privileges of the church as they had been.

3.4 Vacillating Relations (1891-1901)

The next patriarch of Constantinople was Neophytos VIII, elected on October 27, 1891. The Russian embassy hoped that Joachim III would be elected. But the opposition decided to propose a neutral candidate in order to isolate Joachim, Metropolitan Neophytos of Nikopolis. Russian politicians founded him suitable for several reasons. The Russian ambassador supposed that the election of Neophytos as a compromise would quiet the turbulent Greek communion though. Also, Neophytos, usually considered to be an obedient pawn in the hands of Germanos of Herakleia, could, nevertheless, demonstrate an independent streak. Finally, he had supported the Russian army during the Russo-Turkish War and had opposed the Bulgarian Schism.

Surprised by his unexpected election, Neophytos sought the advice of those more competent in current policy such as the above mentioned Begleri, agent of the Russian Shipping and Trade Society (Rosskoye Obshchestvo Parochodstva i Torgovli, ROPIT), who was very familiar with church policy in Constantinople in the 1880s and 90s.
The new patriarch asked Begleri for advice on many matters of church policy. He complained about the pressure from Greek nationalists and the Greek government, which used its annual payment to the patriarch for political leverage, the demands of the laic members of the Mixed Council concerning the prohibition of Slavonic services in the churches of Macedonia, etc. During the short patriarchate of Neophytos VIII, relations between the Russian church and Constantinople were reestablished: a positive step was made in resolving the controversy about the skete of St. Elias at Mt. Athos, the debts of the Moscow metochion of the patriarchate were liquidated, and the first steps towards the solution of the Myra-Lycian affair were undertaken in favour of Russia. Nevertheless, Patriarch Neophytos was not absolutely free and independent in his activities. In January 1894 the Synod was reorganized: the porte succeeded in excluding the Metropolitan of Heraklion, and together with him three other members left the Synod. A new patriarchal crisis was imminent. “I will exert my influence to ensure that the present Ecumenical Patriarch remains. He is a kind, honest, person of goodwill”, wrote Ambassador Nelidov. “But I am very afraid that his obvious weakness and lack of experience together with the absence of support and help from his former confidants, especially the Metropolitan of Heraklion, will soon make him a victim of the quarrels and passions which are tearing the church apart.” In September 1894 a commission on the Bulgarian question completed its work. However, the commission’s protest was not sent to the autocephalous churches because of the patriarchal crisis.

The struggle ended with the election of Anthymos VII on January 20, 1895. Joachim III again was not elected, and this caused disruption in Constantinople. The new patriarch began his reign by extending an olive branch to Russia; in his first meeting with the Russian ambassador he asked for his support, both moral and economic. Anthymos sent representatives to the coronation of Tsar Nicolas II, and this

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175 According to the Congress of Berlin, Thessaly and part of Epirus were ceded to the Greek Kingdom and hence were under the jurisdiction of the Church of Greece. As compensation for lost revenues, the Greek government sent a fixed annual sum to the Patriarchate. This gave the Athens government political leverage over the Patriarchate.

176 Ibid., 209-211.

177 In 1870-90s there was a project of creating a Russian monastery in the historical place connected with the memory of St. Nicolas of Myra in Lycia (Asia Minor). See: L. A. Gerd, Constantinopol’ i Peterburg. Tserkovnaja politika Rossii na pravoslavnom vostoke (1878-1898) (Moscow, 2006), 360-395; N. N. Lisovoi, Russkое duhovnoе I politicheskое prisutstvie v Sviatoj Zemle I na Blizhnem Vostoke v XIX-nachale XX veka (Moscow, 2006), 271-279.

178 Dispatch by A. I. Nelidov, January 13/25, 1894, No. 7, RGIA, f. 797, op. 64, 2 otd., 3 st., d. 49, l. 9.


180 Dispatch by A. I. Nelidov, February 23/March 7, 1895, no. 29, AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 5172, d. 3460, ll. 13-14. During the Russo-Turkish war, being the Metropolitan of Ainos, Anthymos supported the Russian troops. See the letter by the Russian consul to Joannina N. Skryabin, January 26, 1895, No. 7, ibid., ll. 10-12.
was greatly appreciated by the Russian embassy, as was his circular letter to the Eastern churches concerning the union with Rome. Pope Leo XIII sought to build closer relations with Orthodoxy with a future union in mind. According to the pope, a Catholic seminary was needed in Constantinople where members of the Greek clergy could study. Patriarch Anthymos complained that he had no measures to resist Catholic propaganda. For his part, Nelidov proposed that in addition to the 5-6,000 lyres which were received by the patriarchate annually for sending preachers to parishes throughout Turkey, another fifteen bursaries in Russian theological academies could be arranged specially for Greeks. This would give Russia an additional opportunity to influence the Greek clergy, Nelidov stressed in his dispatch. Russian diplomats approved supporting the patriarchate through Serbia and Romania in order to neutralize the influence of Greek nationalism. Russian support was seen to help the patriarchate’s relations with the Slavs. Showing sympathy to Anthymos VII in his resistance to Catholicism, the Russian foreign office, nevertheless, was much more constrained in its estimation of his actions in other matters, i.e. the Bulgarian crisis, Old-Catholics, and the patriarch’s relations with Russian Old Believers. He was very deliberate about ensuring his own wellbeing, stressed the diplomats. Anthymos proclaimed that there should be only one head of the church, and that was regarded by St. Petersburg as a pretentious claim of ecumenical power in the Orthodox world. A new patriarchal crisis however was erupting. Anthymos tried in vain to suppress the rebellion against him, enlisting both the help of the Ottoman government and the support of the Russian embassy.

The next patriarch, Constantine V, was elected on April 2, 1897. Ambassador Nelidov welcomed his election and praised the education of the new patriarch. Though Russian diplomatic policy had been inclined to support him during previous patriarchal elections (for example in 1887), Constantine V was by no means a Russophile. Nor did he express any sympathies towards the Slavs; in 1872 he was the secretary of the council at which the Bulgarian Schism was proclaimed. In the Uskub church question (concerning the election of a Serb metropolitan) he did not support the Serbs. Like many other Eastern patriarchs he wanted good relations with Russia and to receive material support from it but without supporting Russian policy in the Near East. The expectations of Nelidov concerning the peaceful attitudes of Constantine V

181 Dispatch by A. I. Nelidov, August 24, 1895, No. 137, APRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 3427, ll. 1-3.
182 Note of the Russian embassy in Constantinople, March 25, 1896, ibid., ll. 35-45.
did not materialize. In a letter to Filippov (March 1899) the patriarch complained about the failure of the plan for the annual material support of the patriarchate from the incomes of the Bessarabian estates.\(^{185}\) After the arrival in Constantinople of the new ambassador, I. A. Zinoviev, who was a strong supporter of the Slavs, relations between Constantine V and the Russian embassy could not be called friendly at all. On November 7, 1900 the patriarch sent a letter of protest to Tsar Nicolas II complaining about the active Russian presence in the Orthodox East and the ‘plans of pan-Slavism’. The main accusations concerned the activities of the Palestine Society and the Russian monks on Mt. Athos. At the same time he stressed the privileged position of the See of Constantinople. “While fulfilling our sacred duty to leave untouched the church system and not to violate the decision of the church fathers,\(^{186}\) we have unexpectedly encountered variant opinions and resistance from some representatives of the Orthodox and pious Russian Empire, whose intent is to help their government. Nevertheless they are causing great harm to Orthodoxy,” wrote the patriarch.\(^{187}\) Patriarch Constantine refused to show the Russian ambassador Zinoviev the text of the letter. At the meeting of the Synod on January 8, 1900 the patriarch was speaking about a certain “mystical power” which counteracted the Great Church in its struggle against the closing of churches in Macedonia and confiscation of church estates by the Muslims. Ambassador Zinoviev was sure that by this “mystical power” the patriarch meant Russia.\(^{188}\)

### 3.5 Joachim III’s Second Patriarchate

In this situation the Russian embassy hoped for another patriarchal crisis in order to again support the election of Joachim III. On October 6, 1900 Ambassador Zinoviev reported on the instability of the position of Constantine V. The party of Joachimists started agitating in March 1901, counting on Russian support.\(^{189}\) In the 1880s Joachim had been opposed by Prime Minister Trikoupis in Athens; now the Greek government favoured his election.\(^{190}\) It was now evident that Joachim was the favoured candidate. The only concern of the Russian embassy was that he would be excluded by the porte from the electoral list. A few days before the elections the chargé d’affaires of the Russian embassy, Ju. N. Scherbachev had a meeting with the Grand Vizier, the minister of foreign affairs and the sultan’s first secretary, “in order to make them aware of

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185 Constantine V to T. I. Filippov, March 26, 1899, GARF, f. 1099, op. 1, d. 2129, l. 12.
186 The decision made at the 4th Ecumenical Council in Chalkidon (451) to honour the primacy of the See of Constantinople.
187 RGIA, f. 796, op. 180, d. 3690. The Greek letter of the Patriarch, ll. 2-9; Russian translation, ll. 10-25.
188 Dispatch by I. A. Zinoviev, January 14/26, 1900, No. 8, RGIA, f. 797, op. 69, 2 otd., 3 st., d. 338, ll. 32-34.
189 Dispatches by I. A. Zinoviev, October 6/19, 1900, March 23/April 5, 1901, RGIA, f. 797, op. 70, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 18, ll. 159-162; op. 71, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 133, ll. 2-4.
190 Dispatch by M. N. Onou, Athens, April 18, 1901, no. 18, RGIA, f. 797, op. 71, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 133, ll. 13-14.
the fears of the Greeks there, concerning the possibility that the porte would exclude St. Joachim from the list of candidates”.\textsuperscript{191} The efforts of the Russian embassy were successful, and on May 27, 1901 the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Moscow, Archimandrite Iakobos, reported to Pobedonostsev about the second election of Patriarch Joachim III.\textsuperscript{192}

The Russian foreign office placed great hopes on Joachim III. All the previous patriarchs had been either hostile towards Russia, or at a minimum, neutral. Their contacts with Russia were episodic and minimal. Joachim was expected to take steps in mending the Bulgarian Schism and pursue a balanced national policy in the patriarchate. His first significant act was his circular letter to all autocephalous churches sent on July 30, 1902. Joachim appealed to the other Orthodox churches to maintain ongoing contact for the purposes of discussing dogmatic and other questions. He put to them questions about the attitude to the Catholics, Protestants, Old Catholics and the adoption of the Gregorian calendar.\textsuperscript{193} The Russian Synod applauded the idea of closer relations between the churches, but in the matter of the Catholic church, the Russian Synod warned the Orthodox church to be careful because of active Catholic proselytism in the East. The Anglicans, on the other hand, did not aim to convert the Orthodox and even supposed them keepers of the ancient church tradition, so church union with them might be possible in the future. As for the Old Catholics, a commission was appointed in Russia to study the possibility of union with them.\textsuperscript{194} The Russian church viewed this movement with some anxiety because the older members of the Old Catholics with whom union might have been possible were gone, and the younger were inclined to Protestant ways of thinking. As for the new calendar, two commissions worked on this in Russia, one scholarly and other ecclesiastical. They came to the conclusion that adopting the new style without changing the Easter cycle would not be harmful for the church. The old style, nevertheless was still seen as preferable. In conclusion, the Russian church called on the patriarch to draw back into the church those who shared morals, customs and traditions, i.e. to mend the Bulgarian Schism.\textsuperscript{195}

The other Orthodox churches sent their replies after the Russians. It is not surprising that the message of the Church of Montenegro coincided with the Russian one. The fear of Catholic propaganda did not allow the Serbian metropolitan to affirm

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{191} Dispatch by Ju. N. Scherbachev, May 26/June 7, 1901, \textit{ibid.}, ll. 28-32.
\item \textsuperscript{192} \textit{Ibid.}, 26-26v.
\item \textsuperscript{193} See the original of the Patriarch’s message to the Russian Holy Synod: RGIA, f. 796, op. 183, 6 otd. 1 st., d. 4589, ll. 1-5v.
\item \textsuperscript{194} This commission was formed on December 15, 1892. Its resolution was read at the conference of Old Catholic bishops in Rotterdam. In 1897 another decision of the St. Petersburg commission was adopted with the intent to fulfill the union of churches in a short time.
\item \textsuperscript{195} See a copy of the answer of the Russian Holy Synod to Patriarch Joachim III: RGIA, f. 796, op. 183, 6 otd., 1 st., d. 4589, ll. 29-34v.
\end{itemize}
contact with the Old Catholic movement, while anxiety because of internal national
troubles made him very cautious in the matter of the calendar. The Romanian
church refused to discuss the items proposed by Joachim III. All discussions, it said
in its answer, would bring only doubt and would strengthen anti-religious feelings
among the people. The changing of the calendar would also cause harm.

Expecting positive action from the patriarchate, the Russian church made a small
show of support: it allowed a new chapel to be built in the patriarchal compound in
Moscow. This measure was intended to bring in new income to the Church of Con-
stantinople. The hopes of the Russian church and foreign office, though, did not
materialize. On May 12, 1904 Joachim III sent another message to the autocephalous
churches. Because of Protestant and Catholic efforts, it said, the spirit of controversy
is spreading, and “the united and ecumenical church is being divided on the basis of
ethnic and linguistic differences”. This divisive spirit, continued the patriarch, serves
only political ends rather than spiritual. A shared effort would be needed to fight
against it. Joachim called for maximum caution in relations with Anglicans and Old
Catholics; the reform of the calendar was regarded as untimely. The patriarch also
proposed organizing theological meetings every three years.

The answer of the Russian Holy Synod was sent only on March 18, 1905. The
Russian church expressed its regret at the absence of the “choir of sister churches”
which responded to the call of the patriarch, the Sees of Alexandria, Antioch, Cyprus
and Sinai, the Orthodox Church of Austria and other countries. The absence of the
Bulgarian church was most regrettable to the Russians. The Russian Synod was very
anxious about the rise of nationalism in churches; the heads of the churches should
be above ethnic passions, the Russians wrote. The commissions on dialogue with Old
Catholics and Anglicans should be preparatory, without any concrete negotiations
on church union taken. As for Catholic and Protestant churches, no positive dia-
logue with them could take place at the present moment for political reasons. The
regular meetings to discuss theological and practical matters would, of course, be a
step toward reconstructing the custom of the ancient ecumenical council, which had
taken place in the golden age of Christianity.

Despite the similarity of the topics of both circular messages, one can easily notice
differences in the texts of the patriarch, and especially in the Russian answers. The

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196 Dispatches by P. B. Mansurov, August 13, 1902, no. 75 and 76, RGIA, f. 797, op. 72, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 26:
75-75v, ll. 77-77v.
197 Dispatch by M. N. Giers, Bucharest, May 22, 1903, no. 35, RGIA, f. 796, op. 186, 6 otd. 1 st., d. 5902,
ll. 38-39.
198 Letter of Joachim III, 1 May 1903, RGIA, f. 796, op. 184, 6 otd. 1 st., d. 5373, ll. 3-3v; Permission of
the Russian Holy Synod, January 30, 1904, ibid., ll. 11-11v.
199 The original message of Joachim III, May 12, 1904, RGIA, f. 796, op. 183, 6 otd. 1 st., d. 4589, ll. 39-41v.
200 Answer of the Russian Holy Synod to Patriarch Joachim III, RGIA, f. 796, op. 183, 6 otd., 1 st.,
d. 4589, ll. 58-62v.
first circular of 1904 was a program document, marking the main directions of church administration, which were as a whole supported by Russia. The second was written two years later, when Russia was already somewhat disappointed in the policy of Joachim III. In the tense political and nationalistic atmosphere in the Balkans at the beginning of the 20th century, he could not continue the same peacemaking agenda which was expected of him by the Russian government. Willing or not, Joachim had to support the Greek element and act against the Slavs in the growing nationalistic conflicts. Russia was not satisfied either by his position on the Antiochian or on the Bulgarian question. Owing to Russia’s political isolation in the Balkans at that time, the new policy of Joachim ruined Russia's hopes of influencing the affairs through the patriarchate. That is why the tone of the answer of 1905 was cold and didactic, and the ideas expressed in it obviously did not take into consideration the dangerous situation in the Balkans at that time.201

The Young Turk revolution of 1908 was at first welcomed by the Christian population of Turkey. Patriarch Joachim, however, was less enthusiastic. It did not take very long before the new regime which proclaimed pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism, revealed its unfavourable position towards the Christians. At this time a new stage of the struggle of the church for its rights and privileges began. Obligatory military service for Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire demanded by the Young Turks was one of the concerns. Christian soldiers were at times forced to work on Sundays and to celebrate Friday as a holy day; in some instances they were even forced to convert to islam. Joachim III protested against this and proposed the formation of special detachments for Christians.202

Near the beginning of 1911 the patriarch sent the government a *takrir* on the education of Christians and protested against government control of the schools. At the same time he protested the expulsion of teachers and foreign subjects (i.e. Greeks) from the schools. Near the end of 1911 both matters (that of military service and the educational one) were included in a joint letter of protest sent to the Porte by the heads of all the Christian nations (Joachim III, the two Armenian patriarchs, the Bulgarian exarch and the representative of the Chaldean patriarch). The Russian press welcomed this initiative and stressed that given political environment, a church union might be expected.203 The Young Turk government made some concessions:

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202 All facets of this conflict were watched attentively by both Russian diplomats and journalists. There is no evidence of official interference by Russia at this stage. The most detailed report on the events were published by I. I. Sokolov in the journal of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy: *Tsarkovnij vestnik*, no. 41 (1909): 1275-1277.

203 Ibid., no. 32 (1911): 1001.
Christian soldiers were allowed their own priests and were guaranteed the right to perform the rites of their religion; the patriarchate would have control over the educational affairs of Christians; students at national schools would be allowed to study in their native languages and their credentials would be equal to those granted by governmental schools.\footnote{AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 3475, ll. 4-5.}

Despite the pressing political questions, some purely ecclesiastical items were also raised by Joachim III. Early in 1910 he addressed the Russian Synod concerning marriages between relatives. The Byzantine church prohibited such marriages up to the sixth generation of blood relationship and to the fifth of spiritual relationship. In his answer dated March 13, 1910, the metropolitan of St. Petersburg wrote that the Russian church prohibited marriages across any generation of direct descendants and in the first three generations of lateral relation (e.g. aunt to nephew).\footnote{Message of Metropolitan of St. Petersburg to the Patriarch of Constantinople, March 13, 1910, no. 3554, RGIA, f. 797, op. 80, 2 otd., 3 st., d. 134, ll. 2-4.}

In 1910 the Archbishop of Karlowitz, Lukian, addressed the Ecumenical Church concerning the second marriage of widowed priests. The Serbian national church congress at its session on December 20, 1906 decided to forward this matter to all autocephalous churches. On December 4, 1910 Joachim III, as a mediator of the negotiations, sent the question to the Russian Holy Synod. Its answer, however, was negative: a second marriage for priests was considered anti-canonical.\footnote{RGIA, f. 796, op. 191, 6 otd., 1 st., d. 183\(\text{v}\): 13.}

### 3.6 The Question of the Metropolitan of Skopje

After Joachim III returned to the patriarchal see, Russian diplomacy succeeded in solving of one further question of church policy: the appointment of the Serb metropolitan, Firmilian, to Uskub (Skopje). This town had a mixed Christian population (Greek, Serb, Bulgarian) and because of this was a center of nationalistic struggle. The Bulgarian exarchy had its own metropolitan, while the Serbs and Greeks were subordinated to the Greek metropolitan sent by the Patriarch of Constantinople. In 1896 Metropolitan Ambrose, with the help of Turkish gendarmes, drove out the Serbian priest from the Church of St. Savoir and celebrated the liturgy in Greek.\footnote{N. Duchich, archim., Vselenska patriarshija i Srpsko crkveno pitanje (Beograd, 1897), 16.} The appointment of another Greek metropolitan, Methodios, could not solve the nationalistic question. The Serbs regarded the western part of Macedonia as their own territory and wanted to have Serbian bishops there. After the death of Methodios, the Serbs elected their candidate, Firmilian, who became administrator of the eparchy.
The Question of the Metropolitan of Skopje

on October 4, 1897. This appointment met with strong opposition not only from the Bulgarians and the Greek and Bulgarian governments, but also at first from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. For a few years Firmilian remained only a temporal administrator, and the see had no archbishop.

The Serbs were quite active in securing Russian support. The Serbian ambassador in St. Petersburg, S. Novakovich, who arrived there in 1900, appealed to the Russian minister of foreign affairs, Lamsdorf, for help in the affair of Firmilian. He regarded the successful solution of this matter to be of national significance for the Serbian state.

Russian diplomatic policy and Russia’s ambassador to Constantinople, Zinoviev, supported the Serbs. Pro-Serbian policy in Macedonia was traditional for the Russian government. The Russian consuls in Macedonia in the 1890s supported the Serbs in their struggle against the Bulgarian exarchists, whom they regarded as revolutionaries and accomplices of the guerillas. This position can be explained not only by the relations between Russia and Bulgaria, but also by the fact that the Serbian church always sided with Constantinople, which, in turn, attempted to mend the schism. The peaceful resolution of the Greek-Serbian conflict in Macedonia with Russian help could serve as an example for the aggressive Bulgarians. Russia was interested in securing a stable pro-Russian government in Belgrade because of plans for future aggression in Macedonia. In December 1900 Zinoviev informed the Serbian ambassador in Constantinople, S. Gruich, that he had appealed to the sultan on Firmilian’s behalf. The Serbs explained that in order to secure support from the patriarchate, the Bulgarian chetniks (armed guerilla groups) would need to be neutralized which the appointment of Firmilian would ensure. At the same time, Novakovich convinced Lamsdorf in St. Petersburg that in this way “one of the main controversies will be taken care of”.

As the Ottoman government was in no hurry to grant official permission for Firmilian’s ordination, the Russian ambassador devised a plan by which the patriarch would ordain Firmilian on his own authority, after which the Turkish government would have to accept it as a fait accompli. Only few months later Zinoviev managed to acquire the berat authorizing Firmilian’s ordination from the sultan. The text of the document had been rewritten several times. Initially the Porte insisted that the

208 Ch. Sliepchevich, Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve (Munich, 1966), II, 490-493; R. Gruich, Skopska mitropolija, istorijski pregled do obnovljenia srpske patriarchije 1920 godine (Skopje, 1933); P. Orlovich, Skopal’sko vladichansko pitan’e 1897-1902 (Beograd, 1902); D. Dimevski, Istorija na macedonskata pravoslavna crkva (Skopje, 1989), 598.
209 M. Vojvodich, Petrogradske godine Stojana Novakovicha (1900-1905) (Beograd, 2009), 44-49.
210 Dispatch by N. V. Charykov, Belgrade, RGIA, f. 797, op. 72, 2 otd., 3 st., d. 26, ll. 9v-10.
211 S. Gruich to A. S. Jovanovich, December 30, 1900, No. 1048, AS, f. MID PPO, 1901.
213 S. Gruich to M. Vuich, February 14, 1901, ibid.
ordination take place in Thessaloniki, but this was rejected by the patriarchate and the Russian embassy because of the opposition of the Greek population of the city. An alternative plan was to carry out the ordination in the Russian Monastery of St. Pantaleimon on Mt. Athos. The final decision of the Patriarchal Synod was for Firmilian to be ordained in the Skaloti Monastery near Aenos in Thrace.

### 3.7 Contacts with the Anglican Church

The beginning of the 20th century was a time of active negotiations between the Orthodox churches and the Anglican Church. In 1897 the Fifth Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops decided that a commission of three members—the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishop of London—should negotiate with the bishops of the Orthodox East concerning closer church relations. In 1898 the Bishop of Salisbury, John Wordsworth, visited Greece, Jerusalem and Constantinople and delivered the decisions of the Lambeth Conference to Patriarch Constantine V. A correspondence between the patriarch and the Archbishop of Canterbury was initiated. Bishop Wordsworth prepared a brochure in Greek in the form of questions and answers, produced especially to inform Orthodox Christians about the doctrines and practices of the Anglican Church. A cleric of the patriarchate, Archdeacon Hierotheos Teknopoulos was sent to Oxford to become better acquainted with the teachings of the Anglican Church. Printing presses were sent from England to Constantinople to help in the printing of the Holy Scriptures. Initially the patriarchate looked on this initiative with suspicion and protested the spreading of the Bible by the agents of the Bible Society. He also appointed a commission to examine the affair. But in 1901, the new patriarch, Joachim III, initiated contact with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Frederick Temple. In 1903 Archdeacon Hierotheos began editing the journal, *Enosis ton Ekklesion* (Church

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214 Joachim III to the abbot of the Russian monastery, June 5, 1902, AKP KPA, cod. 962, 1902, no. 3843, 222.
215 A neutral place of ordination was the condition put by the patriarchate, as it was afraid of disorder. Firmilian arrived in Aenos accompanied by the Russian and the Serbian consuls in Thessaloniki. See: *Ecclesiastiki Alitheia*, no. 31 (1902): 324-326.
Union) in London. In 1907 Joachim III appointed an official representative of the patriarhate to the Anglican Church in London.\textsuperscript{217}

There were several reasons for such a favourable attitude of the upper echelon of the Greek clergy towards the Anglicans. Firstly, the Eastern patriarchs were interested in receiving political support from Britain. Secondly, the Anglicans demonstrated religious tolerance of Orthodox clergy and population. Early in the 1900s the English in Syria proposed to the Greeks, who were upset by Russian support of the Arabs, that they could “during periods of disorders”, attend the Anglican Church. In Beirut the Anglican priest rejected the efforts of some Orthodox Christians to become Anglicans. He allowed them to attend the services and to baptize their children in case of necessity, but he refused to rebaptize anyone. The Patriarch of Antioch, Gerasimos, and the Patriarchate of Constantinople approved of this.\textsuperscript{218} Joachim III, wishing for canonical clarification on whether Orthodox parishioners could call Anglican priests if an Orthodox priest was not available, turned to the rector of the theological school on Chalki island, Apostolos for a ruling.\textsuperscript{219}

In the same years regular contacts between the Anglican and the Russian churches began. in 1895-97 three Anglican bishops visited Russia, and in 1897 the Russian Orthodox Archbishop of Finland, Antonii Vadkovskii, attended the Lambeth Conference. In 1903 the priest of the Anglican mission in Jerusalem, Dowling, visited St. Petersburg. The Exarch of Georgia assured him that a special commission would be appointed to further discussions on maintaining closer relations between the churches. In 1912 a British parliamentary delegation arrived in St. Petersburg. At the end of this visit on January 17, 1912 a society for rapprochement of the Anglican and the Orthodox churches was founded. Its members became professors of the Theological Academy and stressed the difference between the moderate activities of the Anglicans and the aggressive policy of the Vatican. Professor I. I. Sokolov, for one, enthusiastically supported the journal of Archdeacon Teknopulos.\textsuperscript{220}

At the same time, other Russian politicians were less optimistic about the Anglican initiatives. In the Near East, they said, there was no place for purely spiritual or church policy; all church activity was political and implicated the struggle for the partition of the Ottoman empire. Anglican activity was perceived as one more attempt to lessen Russian Orthodox influence and to gain the goodwill of the Greeks. They

\textsuperscript{217} The Russian church press traced these events with great attention. See: Tserkovnyj vestnik, No. 46 (1901): 1700-1701; No. 7 (1907): 324; A. Smirnov, “K voprosu o sbлизhenii cerkvej”, Tserkovnye vedomosti. Pribavlenija, no. 38, September 21 (1903): 1464-1470.

\textsuperscript{218} Ecclesiastiki Alitheia, no. 8 (1902). Officially permission to baptize Orthodox children “in cases of emergency” was given to Anglican priests only by the next Lambeth conference in 1908; it also allowed administration of the Holy Eucharist to Orthodox who did not have access to an Orthodox priest.

\textsuperscript{219} 24 August 1902, no 5340, AKP, KPA, cod. 962.

\textsuperscript{220} [Vizantijskii] [I. I. Sokolov], “Novyj bogoslovskij grechesko-anglijskij zhurnal”, Tserkovnye vedomosti. Pribavlenija, February 22 (1903) no. 8: 296-298.
were especially worried about Cyprus which was governed by the British. One church scholar wrote:

England for a long time has conducted a policy of support and defense of the enslaved Christians, though in fact she is more concerned with broadening her own territories. Now, when so much Russian blood has been shed in wars with Turkey... the sympathies of the Greeks and their support should be behind us. Unfortunately often we cannot benefit from that to which we are entitled, and our rights are spurned by other people.221

Those two points of view on Anglican activities in the east continued to have supporters among Russians during the First World War. In 1915, in the course of a discussion about the future status of Palestine after the end of the war, Professor Dmitrievskii publicly stated in St. Petersburg, that English domination in Palestine was preferable to French because the Anglicans demonstrated religious tolerance towards the Orthodox and did not aim at converting them. For this reason Russia should not oppose the British Protectorate in the Holy Land.222

### 3.8 The Cyprus Ecclesiastical Question

Another ecclesiastical issue arose in the Greek world in 1908, this time regarding Cyprus. After the death of Archbishop Sophronios two candidates were put forward for the see: Metropolitans Cyril of Kition and Cyril of Cyrenia. While the first was supported by Britain, the population was divided. The Synod of the Church of Cyprus turned for help to Joachim III. The patriarch decided the question in favour of Cyril of Cyrenia and was immediately accused by his opponents of interfering in the affairs of another autocephalous church. This was, for example, the opinion of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Damianos. On May 12, 1908 the Russian ambassador, Zinoviev, put the question of the position of the Russian church to the Synod. The resolution on this issue was written by Professor Sokolov who wrote that the opinion of Joachim III was not to be seen as interference in the affairs of another church, but only as assistance in a difficult situation. The British authorities, as representatives of a non-Orthodox church, had no right to press the Church in this election. That is why the Russian church should recognize the election of Cyril of Cyrenia as legal and “ask the minister of foreign affairs to take all measures to convince the British government to stop sup-

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222 A speech in the Slavic Philanthropic Society, March 2, 1915, Russian National Library, Manuscript department, f. 253, d. 37, l. 33.
porting the masterful and ambitious Metropolitan of Kition, Cyril, and to refrain from any interference in the affairs of the autocephalous church of Cyprus”.

### 3.9 The Bosnian Ecclesiastical Question

In 1903 the ecclesiastical affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina took a new twist. These two provinces, which were under an Austro-Hungarian protectorate, were connected to the patriarchate only nominally. The Orthodox church there had to struggle for the independence of the church communities from control of the Austrian authorities. The two issues up for discussion, namely the rights of the laity in the election of metropolitan, and the payment of the salaries to the members of the consistories, were sent to Joachim III for resolution. Russian diplomats welcomed such a measure and they considered it to be favourable for the communities as it strengthened their links with the spiritual centre. The patriarch, in turn, appealed to the Austro-Hungarian embassy and the embassy was required to provide detailed explanations of these two matters. By the beginning of 1904 Austro-Hungary had addressed some of the concerns; according to its new regulations, dioceses could control their own finances. The new regulations were sent by the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Joachim III for approval in June 1904.

However, instead of helping Orthodoxy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the new regulations caused a patriarchal crisis. Both the Austrian and the Russian ambassadors tried to press the members of the Synod to stop their opposition and approve the regulations. Nevertheless, the situation remained tense for many months. The opposition demanded the abdication of the patriarch. Only the intervention of the sultan could resolve the conflict, which was what Joachim III was expecting. The Austro-Hungarian ambassador even tried to bribe the opposition, but without result. The porte meanwhile waited for the opinion of the Russian embassy. Zinoviev, however, preferred to wait and be cautious. He wrote that the patriarch did not deserve support from Russia, as “not one of the genuinely ‘Orthodox’ questions has been resolved by him, and the Church of Constantinople during his patriarchate continues to concentrate on other things, chiefly that of the struggle against common believers, Serbs, Bulgarians and Kutso-Valachs”. The real interests of religion are alien to the Phanar, the resolution of the foreign ministry stated. Zinoviev remained neutral during

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223 Extract from the resolution of the Holy Synod, May 21-June 4, 1909, no. 4377, RGIA, f. 797, op. 78, 2 otd., 3 st., d. 12, ll. 38-40.


225 Report of the 1st department of the Ministry of Foreign affairs, 1904, AVPRI, f. 137, (Reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, op. 475: 18-20. See also dispatches by I. A. Zinoviev, August 28/September
the next months as well. Finally into March 1905 the situation changed in favour of Joachim III. This can be explained by the sultan’s government’s fear that mass disorder might break out among the Christian population of Constantinople. In the light of the new events the patriarchal journal *Ecclesiastiki Alitheia* published an article in defense of Joachim III. With the intervention of the porte the question was finally resolved, though some of the provincial bishops did not approve of the behavior of the patriarch.\footnote{Dispatches by I. A. Zinoviev, March 10/23, 1905, No. 69, *ibid.*: 40-42; No. 70, *ibid.*: 43-44v.} The new church regulations for Bosnia and Herzegovina were signed on July 3, 1905; the Orthodox population received rights for the autonomy of churches and schools. Having turned to the government for support, Joachim was now more than before indebted to it and had to abide by its requirements.

3.10 The Question of the Bessarabian Monastic Properties

The old matter of the Bessarabian estates of the Eastern churches and monasteries raised its head again at the beginning of the 20th century. Confiscated by the Russian government in 1873, the income from these estates were divided between several parties, with the owners receiving two-fifths of the profits. In October 1909 Joachim asked the Russian Holy Synod if the sum given to the Mt. Athos monasteries be increased to three-fifths so that two-thirds from these funds could be used for the needs of the Ecumenical Church. A copy of this document was sent to the Russian ambassador, Charykov.\footnote{APK KPA, cod. 83 (970), no. 7472.} As in the decision of 1891, the patriarch’s appeal was rejected. “At the present time, granting the Ecumenical Patriarchate the desired amount is not considered appropriate in light of our estimation of its activities towards Russia”, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concluded.\footnote{Proposal of the Foreign Ministry to the Holy Synod, April 10, 1910, no. 11683, RGIA, f. 796, op. 191, 6 otd. 1 st., ll. 1-5v.}

Rumors about a future redistribution of the income by the Russian government caused a stormy discussion in the Greek press, first of all in *Ecclesiastiki Alitheia*. The journal expressed apprehension that the Russian government would not send the incomes to the Holy Sepulchre brotherhood, but use it for the needs of the Arab population in Palestine. On March 2, 1911 Joachim III sent a diplomatic note to the Russian embassy, repeating his request that another fifth of the income be designated for the support of the patriarchate. He reiterated the needs of the patriarchate: it had to maintain the Great School, and the Chalki Theological School needed reorganization.
On July 1, 1912 a new law on the administration of the Bessarabian estates was adopted by Russia. The sums given to foreign spiritual institutions was to be increased to three-fifths of the total income. In reality, however, the law redistributed the sums in favour of the imperial Palestine Society. In its explanation to Joachim III, the Russian Synod stressed that the incomes from the estates were constantly increasing (a 21 per cent increase for the period of 1902-1911), and correspondingly the sums sent to the east were increasing too. The law of 1912 brought protests from the Eastern patriarchs. On January 9, 1914 Damianos of Jerusalem sent a letter to the Russian Synod and on May 12, the Patriarch of Antioch did likewise. On behalf of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, his representative in Moscow also asked for the abrogation of the law. Another attempt to increase the income of the patriarchate was undertaken during the discussion of the proposed law. in 1910 Archimandrite Iacobos asked the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg for a loan of 500 rubles from the reserve capital of the Bessarabian estates to be used to construct a new house with flats for rent. A decision on the request was delayed until the final resolution of the regulations on the estates, and in fact approval was never granted. So, the Russian government in the 1910s was even less inclined to support the Eastern patriarchates than before. The reason for such restraint was obvious: Russia could not count on political support from the church in the Near East in its political aspirations concerning the Eastern Question.

3.11 Supporting the Chalki Theological School

One cannot say, however, that the material support sent by Russia to the church institutions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople had ceased. One of the first objects of such support had always been the theological school on Chalki island. Founded in 1844, it received an annual sum of a thousand (later 2,000) rubles from Russia. Under certain circumstances (for example the earthquake of 1894) additional support was sent. Many of the students of the school continued their studies in Russian theological academies and later became bishops of the Constantinople Patriarchate. Liturgical Slavonic was taught in the school beginning in the middle of the 19th century and from 1905, Russian. Russia always sought to exercise influence on the educational system of this school, since for many decades it was the only institution for preparation of the clergy of the patriarchate. In 1902 Joachim III asked the Russian government for an additional subsidy of 25,000 rubles for the school. The request was sent

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229 Extract from the resolution of the Holy Synod, July 13/August 2, 1912, no. 6231, RGIA, f. 797, op. 82, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 437, ll. 12v.
230 Archim. Iacobos to the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, October 3, 1910, RGIA, f. 796, op. 191, 6 otd. 1 st., d. 268, ll. 2v.
again in 1904, when the patriarch asked for an annual subsidy of 9,000 rubles. The appeal was not supported by Ambassador Zinoviev for the reason that the growing nationalism among the Greek clergy led to anti-Russian postures and most of the students of the Chalki school preferred to continue their studies at European universities, not in Russia. Under such conditions Russian aid would not lead to closer relations between the two churches. According to internal Synod correspondence, aid for the Chalki school should be sent only on the following conditions: 1) that a deputy of the Russian government sit on the school committee; 2) that the Russian ambassador have the right to appoint ten students, Russians and Slavs; 3) that students again would be sent to Russian theological academies. Nevertheless, even with these conditions Ambassador Zinoviev rejected the request for a subsidy. The final discussion on help for Chalki was held in the Russian embassy on March 7, 1913. An annual subsidy of 30,000 rubles was proposed on the following conditions: 1) 30 or 40 per cent of the bursaries would be spent at the discretion of the embassy; 2) the embassy would control the program of the school; and 3) the embassy would be involved in the finances of the school. It was felt that such a step would make for closer relations between the churches of Constantinople and Russia. On May 26, 1913 Patriarch Germanos wrote a note to the Russian embassy outlining the needs of the school, but further negotiations ceased because of the war.

3.12 After Joachim III: Patriarch Germanos V and Russia

The death of Joachim III on November 13, 1912 marked the end of an era in the history of the Church of Constantinople. Chief among the candidates for the patriarchal see was the Metropolitan of Chalcedon, Germanos, who was known to have been a jealous defender of the rights of the church in the 1890s. In addition to him, other candidates were Filaret, the Metropolitan of Dimotika, and Irinaios, the Metropolitan of Kassandria. The latter attracted the attention of the Russian embassy because he was educated in Russia and was known for his moderate position on national questions. The very fact of his nomination among the candidates for the patriarchal see was seen by the Russian Foreign Office as a sign of a more conciliatory attitude from the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In the opinion of the Russian ambassador, Giers, it could be attributed to the political circumstances surrounding the Balkan War and its con-

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231 Archim. Iacobos to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, July 24, 1904, AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 3476, ll. 22v.
232 I. A. Zinoviev to K. P. Pobedonostsev, November 27, 1904, No. 844, ibid.: 12-18; RGIA, f. 796, op. 185, 6 otd. 1 st., d. 5890, ll. 2-3.
233 AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 3476, ll. 19-20v.
234 K. P. Pobedonostsev to I. A. Zinoviev, January 28, 1905, no. 2772, AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 3476, ll. 10-10v.
After Joachim III: Patriarch Germanos V and Russia

sequences for the patriarchate. Both the Greek and Russian press discussed the candidacy of the Metropolitan of Kition, Meletios Metaksakis, an active politician and committed opponent of Russia. His supporters hoped for the realization of the Great idea. A contributor to the Russian ecclesiastical journal wrote:

Some members of the Mixed Council, while including his [Meletios Metaksakis’s] name on the electoral list, wanted to work towards a union of the churches of Cyprus and Athens with Constantinople, in order to create a united ecumenical patriarchal see, because of the recent political events in the Balkans. That plan, however, failed owing to both conscious and unconscious resistance by the other members of the church national council.

Germanos was elected. (Metropolitan Meletios became patriarch a few years later (1921-23)). His election was met by many Russians with pessimism; they remembered his negative posture towards Russian interests in the Myra Lycian matter. Professor Sokolov, however, who was always optimistic about the Ecumenical Patriarchate, did not think Germanos V’s election would have unfavourable results for Russia. His activities as a bishop were one thing, those as a patriarch another, he said. The first meetings of the new patriarch with Russia’s ambassador Giers had a friendly tone. The telegram sent by Tsar Nicolas II to the patriarch thanking him for his congratulations on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov house, was also seen as a positive sign in Constantinople.

The Balkan War of 1912 further eroded the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople; it lost the provinces of Macedonia and Thrace. Only the poor and sparsely populated eparchies of Asia Minor remained under the control of the patriarchate, and this further diminished its income. An exception was made for the Greek communities in Bulgaria. It was widely thought in church circles in Constantinople that because they could not commune with the “schismatic” Bulgarian church it would be best for them to remain under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. “But this pure ecclesiastical point of view”, commented a Russian church journalist, “cannot be the only one, as the Ecumenical Patriarchate is a political power as well. The Greek communities in Bulgaria and Serbia, as well as the Bulgarian and Serbian communities in Greece, should be given one year to decide whether they would receive Greek, Bulgarian or Serbian naturalization, without changing their place of residence.” Such a peaceful resolution of a national question, as further

235 Copy of the report of M. N. Giers, November 26, 1912, RGIA, f. 797, op. 82, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 583, ll. 4-5.
236 Referring to the loss of the Patriarchate’s European dioceses and their incomes. Church union would help to restore some of the Patriarchate’s lost income.
237 Tserkovnyj vestnik, 18 (1913): 411-412.
events showed, was a pipe dream. The Second Balkan War of 1913 put an end to all negotiations to mend the Bulgarian Schism.

The Greek patriots discussed whether the previous number of eparchies of Constantinople could be preserved. A proposal was made to unite the Greek church with the patriarchy, so as to fulfill a kind of church prototype of the Great idea. This attempt, however, failed when the Ottoman government demanded that those archbishops whose dioceses were outside the new borders of the state be excluded from the Patriarchal Synod.240

In the first half of 1914 the Ottoman government started a systematic persecution of the Christian population; the Greeks from the coastal areas were forcibly resettled to central Asia Minor. In Thrace and Asia Minor, especially in the vilayet of Smyrna, 345,000 Christians suffered from Turkish persecution. The patriarchate protested by announcing an interdict to halt services in all churches on May 29, 1914. The same day Germanos V sent an appeal to the Russian Synod and to the other autocephalous churches for help.241 A deputation was sent from Constantinople to St Petersburg, to acquaint the Russian Holy Synod with the situation and to seek help. The first reaction of the Russian church was to express sympathy to the suffering Church of Constantinople and to report on the actions of the Tsar.242 Further negotiations, however, were interrupted by the First World War.

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241 Message by Patriarch Germanos, 29 May 1914, No. 5002, RGIA, f. 796, op. 199, 6 otd. 1 st., d. 221: 13
242 See the official resolution of the Holy Synod with a project of the answer, August 4, 1914, No. 6906, ibid., 8-10°.
The 19th century in southeastern Europe is usually referred to as the age of nationalism. As has already been said, the traditional Ottoman millet system, in which religious communions existed inside the dominant Muslim state, was replaced step by step by independent national states. Serbia, Greece, Romania, Montenegro and Bulgaria appeared on the map of Europe during the 19th century. The armed struggle of these nations followed a preliminary period of awakening of national consciousness. The historical memory of the medieval kingdoms of Serbia and Bulgaria and the Byzantine Empire contributed to this process. For the Greeks the more recent memory of Byzantium fanned by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and their dominant position among the Orthodox populations of the empire paved the way for nationalism. Inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution and romantic European philhellenism, as well as by the material resources of the Greek diaspora in Russia, this historical memory developed into the Great idea (Megali idea), i.e., uniting all Greek lands into one kingdom. The revolution of 1821 and the formation of an independent Greek state was the first step in that direction.

The situation with the Bulgarians was different. Up to 1393 the Patriarchate of Tarnovo was the spiritual centre for Bulgarians. During the Ottoman period, the Archbishop of Ohrid was the head of the Bulgarian people, but in 1767 his seat was subsumed under that of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The national self-consciousness of the Bulgarian people was by the end of the 18th century in decline; the Bulgarian language was used in remote areas only, while the townspeople readily adopted the Greek language and culture. After the publishing of Istorija Slaveno-bulgarska (The History of the Bulgarian Slavs) by Monk Paisii, the nationalistic revival of the Bulgarian people began. Bulgarian nationalism was to a great extent

imported from Russia where Slavophilic romanticism spread in the 1830s and 40s.\footnote{246} The first phase of Bulgarian nationalism (growing awareness of the historical roots of the Bulgarian nation) lasted for the duration of the 1830s and 40s. This was followed by the second phase (1850s and 60s), in which nationalism spread by professional agitators. The second stage was soon replaced by the third one, a mass nationalistic movement.\footnote{247} The peculiarity of Balkan nationalism was its close connection with the church hierarchy. The religiously-oriented millet system as the only legitimate form of autonomy in the Ottoman Empire provided the groundwork for political independence; church organization and church autonomy served as a model of future political organization. In this process the Bulgarians had two major opponents—the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Ottoman government. The nationalist movement, ecclesiastical in its form, was purely national and political in its content. Orthodoxy was used by the Bulgarian political elite as a means to gain other pragmatic goals.\footnote{248}

As the reforms of the Tanzimat (after 1856) did not bring the Bulgarian leadership the results they expected, the most radical wing began to take more overt action. In 1860, the Bulgarian Metropolitan Ilarion for the first time did not mention the patriarch in the Easter liturgy in the Bulgarian church in Constantinople. This was commonly perceived as an open declaration of disobedience.\footnote{249} Indeed, from then on, all the Bulgarian provinces stopped paying their fees to the patriarchate. Greek bishops were no longer recognized as church principals in many places. The final stage of the conflict was the establishment of the autonomous Bulgarian church in 1870, approval having been received from the Ottoman government. In 1872 the Patriarch of Constantinople called a council of the heads of the Eastern Orthodox churches at which the Bulgarians were condemned as heretics. This is known as the Bulgarian Schism. The development of the conflict prior to 1872 is closely aligned with the Bulgarian movement for national liberation.\footnote{250}

\footnote{246} A. Smith, \textit{Nations and Nationalism} (London, 1998). Here one can observe an interesting modification of the formation of an “Imagined Community” (following B. Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism} (London, N.Y., 2006)). The national idea was imported to the south Slavs and especially the Bulgarians in two ways—immediately from Western Europe by European intellectuals, and via the Russian Slavophile movement, which also had European (German) roots.


\footnote{248} This kind of nationalism, different from that in western Europe, developed in pre-industrial societies and was not connected with disappointment in religion as a basis of life: E. Kedourie, \textit{Nationalism} (London, 1960): 6, M. Hroch, \textit{Social Preconditions of National Revival}; A. Smith, \textit{Nations and Nationalism}: 109-113. Here the main thesis of E. Gellner’s construction about the connection between capitalism and the rise of nationality does not work (E. Gellner, \textit{Nations and Nationalism} (Oxford, 1983)).

\footnote{249} T. Zhechev, \textit{Bylgarskijat Velikden ili strastite bylgarski} (Sofia, 1975).

\footnote{250} V. Teplov, \textit{Greko-bolgarskij vopros po neizdannym istochnikam} (St. Petersburg, 1889), 35; V. F. Kurganov, “Istoriicheskij ocherk greko-bolgarskoj raspri,” Pravoslavnyj Sobesednik (1873): 187-260; I. F. Maka-
The Greek-Bulgarian ecclesiastical schism remained one of the key problems in the political life of the Balkans from the second half of the 19th till the beginning of the 20th century. The decision of the Constantinople Council of 1872 put Russia in a very difficult position. On the eve of the war against Turkey, 1877-1878, Russia could not turn away from the Bulgarians who were its main ally in the Balkans. Yet Russia could not break off its relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the most influential church in the Orthodox East. That is why the Russian government chose to keep silent and to avoid any official statements as suggested by the Metropolitan of Moscow, Filaret Drozdov. Nevertheless, the Schism was the main obstacle for Russia in implementing its desired policy in the Balkans. Using ecclesiastical affairs to shape its policy in the Middle East had always been an effective strategy for Russia, but the Bulgarian Schism paralyzed Russia’s ability to advance its interests in gaining control of Constantinople and the Straits. As a result, all the efforts of Russian diplomacy in the next decades were directed towards mending the Schism.251

The war of 1877-1878 created a new state in the Balkans—the Bulgarian Principality. But hundreds of thousands of Bulgarians continued to live in areas controlled by the Ottoman Empire. In most places the Bulgarian population were mixed with Greek, Serb, Turk and Valach. Because of these mixed populations the Ottoman provinces in Europe, primarily Macedonia and Thrace, remained ripe for potential revolts and disorder. The leaders of the most volatile nations—the Greeks and the Bulgarians—supposed that an ecclesiastical division of Macedonia between the patriarchate and the Bulgarian exarchate would anticipate a parallel political division. To this end, the leaders of the Greek kingdom and the Bulgarian government focused their attention on spreading propaganda among their citizens to shore up support. Initially for the Greeks, this was carried out by the Greek metropolitans and educators, supported by Greek consulates.252 The Bulgarians attempted to restore their ecclesiastical system in Macedonia, which had been destroyed by the war. In 1878 a new exarch was nomi-
nated to Constantinople, Iosif Bobchev. He devoted 35 years of his life to the realization of Bulgarian interests in Macedonia. His main goal was to have the Ottoman government issue berats for the Bulgarian bishops of the province which would secure their positions, and to create a sustainable and effective system of Bulgarian national schools, which were considered to be the main ideological weapon in nationalistic propaganda. Bulgarians hoped that all Macedonian Slavs would, one region after another, join the Bulgarian exarchate.²⁵³

Throughout his reign, Patriarch Joachim III (first term 1878-1884) maintained a moderate pro-Russian position. His ideal of a supra-national Ecumenical Patriarchate was supported by the Russian embassy, but was met with strong opposition from the Greek government.²⁵⁴ The first tension to develop after the war had to do with Bulgarian and Russian priests serving the Eucharist together in the territories occupied by the Russians (the concelebration). The patriarch warned the Russian embassy that he would prohibit Greek priests from having ecclesiastical relations with Russian priests who concelebrated with Bulgarian clergy. This position put Ambassador Lobanov-Rostovskii in a difficult position:

> It is the first time since this regrettable Greek-Bulgarian conflict that our clergy is called to openly interfere in this affair. Up to now we managed to keep the role of peacemaker and serve as an intermediary between the competing claims of the Greeks and Bulgarians.²⁵⁵

An official of the embassy, Onou, was in charge of the negotiations regarding this matter. Despite reconciliatory talks with the patriarch, Onou held a rather pessimistic view:

> The Bulgarians are preoccupied with their national interests. The Bulgarian hierarchy is not held in high regard by the Bulgarians, it has no traditions independent of Constantinople, and it is not interested in reconciling with the patriarchate, especially given the changing circumstances and the fact that after the last war [the Russo-Turkish War] the Bulgarian church, is de facto, recognized by our hierarchy.²⁵⁶

The official answer of the Russian Synod was very pointed. It stressed that the Council of Constantinople in 1872 involved only the Greek church of the Ottoman Empire, so its decisions were not binding for the Russian church. Moreover, the accused party,

²⁵⁵ Dispatch of Lobanov, December 25, 1878, RGIA, f. 797, op. 48: 2otd. 3 st., ll. 13-14v.
²⁵⁶ M. K. Onou—to T. I. Filippov, December 17, 1878, GARF, f. 1099, op. 1, d. 2323, ll. 5v-6.
the Bulgarians, was not invited to the session of the Council, and the resolution had been signed under pressure. The Russian Synod rejected the main argument of the Greeks, the charge that Bulgarians were guilty of the heresy of philetism, i.e. ethnic distinction. In 1833 when the Greeks of the Greek kingdom had proclaimed an independent church they had not been accused of any heresy. Therefore the Russian Synod refused to prohibit its priests from concelebrating with Bulgarian priests.257

A preliminary document was sent to the ambassador, but it looks like the definitive document was never given to the patriarch; according to the additional instruction Lobanov received, he could do with it as he pleased.

The relations of the Russian embassy and the exarchate in the period 1879-1885 were rather tense. The Russians insisted on mending the divide; as a first step, Russia insisted that the Bulgarian church had to be contained within the borders of the principality. The patriarchate shared this position. “The appointments to the episcopal sees in Macedonia is one of the main reasons that a peaceful solution to the Greek-Bulgarian conflict remains unattainable, which is so undesirable for us”, Ambassador Novikov wrote in 1880.258 In his further dispatches Novikov stressed that the gulf between the patriarchate and the exarchate widened every day.

The next Russian ambassador to Constantinople, A. I. Nelidov, maintained the same policy. In 1883 he advised the exarch not make stringent demands on the patriarch, and added that if the patriarchate required the Russian Synod to take an official position it would not side with the Bulgarians.259

In Macedonia, where the situation was tense and the anti-Bulgarian activities of the Greek population growing, Russian diplomacy worked to calm both sides without favouring either. Russian policy was to maintain the status quo in Macedonia. This stance was reflected in a private document written for the Holy Synod in 1883. Its author stressed that the prevalence of political aspirations in Bulgaria led to the situation that most people regarded the church as a mere political tool; Greek clergy also held this view and were supported by Greek bankers and politicians. The western Powers, he wrote, were interested in inciting hostility, because they support Catholic and Protestant efforts to direct its propaganda at the Orthodox population. Therefore, the author of the note continued, Russia could not remain an indifferent spectator; it had to keep to its traditional course in foreign affairs. It could not afford to alienate the Ecumenical Patriarchate which was still the stronghold of the Greeks. At the same time Russia was not able to abandon the Bulgarians. The best chance for reconciliation was if the Athenian government would mediate, according to Russia. The author proposed the follow-

257 Extract from the resolution of the Holy Synod, February 22/March 2, 1879, RGIA, f. 797, op. 48, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 156, ll. 39-42.
258 RGIA, f. 797, op. 50, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 131, ll. 6-6v. See also: Nacionalno-osvoboditelnoto dvizhenie na macedonskite i trakijskite bylgari 1878-1944 (Sofia, 1994), 121-123.
ing plan: the Bulgarians were to send delegates to the patriarch asking for pardon; the ecclesiastical borders would be determined on an ethnographic basis—the eparchies of Pelagonia, Melnik, Ochrid, Skopje, Strumica, Moglen, Veles and Poliana were to create a separate district, independent from Constantinople, as 1,002,700 Bulgarians lived there and only 2,218 Greeks; the bishops in this district would be elected by the population and one or two of them would have a seat in the Patriarchal Synod. Of course this proposal was doomed as it did not satisfy the main demand of the Bulgarians, namely, the ecclesiastical integration of Macedonia and the eparchies of the principality, which Bulgaria insisted had to precede political union.

During the struggle to preserve the rights and privileges of the church in the Ottoman Empire from 1883-1884, the Greek clergy in Macedonia organized anti-Bulgarian demonstrations meant to demonstrate their loyalty to the Ottoman government. Based on the reports of the Russian consul to Thessaloniki, A. Jakobson, the embassy sent a communiqué to the patriarchate asking for an explanation of the anti-Bulgarian demonstrations. In its reply, the Ecumenical Church stated that the disorder was the result of Bulgarian nationalists acting on the instigation of agents of the Roman Pope. Russian diplomats were frightened by the prospect of growing Bulgarian sympathies for union with Rome. Wishing to maintain an equilibrium in Macedonia the ambassador worked to have berats issued for the Bulgarian bishops in the area. Russia in the 1880s preferred not to support either side as a secret instruction sent to the new consul to Thessaloniki, Iastrebov, in 1886 makes evident: “We must ensure that the opportunity to use the assistance of all the different elements which are gathered in Macedonia remains and to lean on them only because each of them can be useful for our own political aims”. It may be that these words provide the best explanation for the national or pan-Slavic orientation of the Russian policy in the Balkan region in the 19th century.

During the time leading up to the complete cessation of relations between Russia and Bulgaria in 1886, the tone of the Russian embassy dealing with the exarch changed. Now Nelidov advised Iosif to leave Constantinople for Sofia. In these difficult circumstances, given the ingratitude of the ‘bratushki’ (i.e. the Bulgarians), some politicians in Russia insisted that diplomacy had been short-sighted in challenging the patriarchate and working towards the establishment of an independent Bulgarian church. The author of a note dated June 10, 1887, called for full support of the Greek clergy in order to ensure its assistance “in the moment of our inevitable collision with pan-Hellenism on the ruins of the Turkish domination.” A number of articles criti-

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260 AVPRI, f. 340, op. 801, d. 25, ll. 3-10vs.
261 AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 2921, ll. 1-2vs., 14-15vs.
262 Ibid., d. 1193vs., ll. 335-335vs.
263 On this period see: V. Kosik, Vremya razryva: politika Rossii v bolgarskom voprose, 1886-1894 gg. (Moscow, 1993).
264 AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 2923, ll. 12-14.
cizing the policy of Ignatiev were published in the newspaper *Grazhdanin* in 1888. Replying to these accusations, Ignatiev explained that it was the Congress of Berlin in 1878 and the policy of Austro-Hungary that led to the failure of Russian policy. After political boundaries are determined, the ecclesiastical problems will immediately be solved, he wrote. The further actions of the Russian embassy in 1889-1890 can be explained by current events. The official note of the prime minister of the Bulgarian government, S. Stambolov, to the Ottoman porte demanding that the rights of the Bulgarians in Macedonia (June 4, 1890) be maintained did not receive the support of Russia. As a result of Stambolov’s note, two berats for the Bulgarian metropolitans of Skopje and Ochrid were issued the same year. The Russian embassy decided to demonstrate its disapproval to the Bulgarians by supporting the patriarchate in its struggle against the Ottoman government to preserve the rights of the church and by supporting the appointment of Serbs to bishoprics in Macedonia. In this critical moment Russia demonstrated its support of the patriarchate. Russia maintained the same course of diplomacy during the next two years, 1891-1892.

The restoration of relations between Russia and Bulgaria in 1895 and the coming to power of K. Stoilov began a new period in Bulgaria’s policy regarding Macedonia. Stoilov devised a plan in which the exarchate would obtain less territory than that provided for in the San Stefano Treaty of 1877, but the patriarchate had to recognize that the exarchate must be contained within the borders of the Bulgarian Principality. However, Stoilov’s efforts failed because they did not receive the approval of Prince Ferdinand. Hoping to gain popularity among his people, he proposed that all of Macedonia be Bulgarian. But both Greek and Bulgarian extremists wanted to possess all of Macedonia and so it was evident that the problem could not be solved peacefully.

In the 1890s the tension in Macedonia reached new heights as Bulgarian (*chetnici*) and Greek (*andartes*) guerilla groups began armed opposition. Both sides continued to struggle for the ecclesiastical self-determination of the population. Such a struggle created additional problems for Russia which had just signed a treaty with Austro-Hungary to preserve the status quo in Macedonia (1897); it was not prepared to enter into another war in the Balkans. The Bulgarian exarch, Iosif, was also very anxious about the armed movement because it seriously hindered his plan of a step-by-step peaceful resolution. Moreover, afraid to lose Russian support in this matter, he was obliged to take seriously the repeated concerns of the Russian embassy.

The approval of this election by the sublime porte took place because of the vigorous support of the Russian embassy. The Russian embassy maintained close relations with Joachim III during the years after his resignation in 1884 and hoped that he would


266 Chr. Temelski, ed., *Bylgarski Exarch Iosif I. Dnevnik*, 316.
continue his supranational policy in ecclesiastical affairs. Nevertheless, in the new political environment of the early 20th century, Joachim could not and did not want to protect the Bulgarians. Russia’s response to Joachim’s stance is well documented in the official replies of the Russian Holy Synod to the two messages that Joachim sent to autocephalous churches in 1902 and 1904. In answer to the second letter the Russian Synod expressed its displeasure with and even irritation at the growth of nationalism and its negative consequences for ecclesiastical affairs. During the deliberations on how to respond, the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Moscow, Archimandrite Iacobos, sent a note to Metropolitan Antonius of St. Petersburg detailing the suffering of the Greek population of Macedonia and Thrace at the hands of the tyrannical Bulgarian chetniks. In the message, Archimandrite Iacobos quoted a Greek bishop of these dioceses who described the violence and robbery of the chetniks and how they forced the peasants to convert to the exarchate. He also devoted a special section to describing the activities of the Russian gendarmerie who kept track of the developments of the Mürzsteg program. In a letter, Metropolitan Stefan wrote that the Russian officers, on coming to Voden, did not visit the Greek prelate but went directly to the Ottoman administrator of the region accompanied by a Bulgarian in order to avoid being accused of supporting either the Greeks or the Bulgarians. In the villages of Mesimerion and Vladovon, Russian officers also encouraged the exarchists and supported the activities of the Bulgarian guerillas. The patriarch, using Stefan’s account of the Russian officers, appealed to the Russian Synod which greatly irritated the Russian ministry of foreign affairs and did nothing to contribute to the rapprochement of the Russian and Ecumenical churches. The correspondent of Moskovskiye vedomosti commented in this way:

The Russian Orthodox officers are educated and well informed enough to know that the Greek patriarchal and exarchate churches are two churches equally Orthodox in the canonical and theological senses. That is why a Russian Orthodox officer would never take the side of either hierarchy; even less would Russian officers consider it decent to support openly the intrigues of the Bulgarian revolutionary organization.

Another concelebration of Russian and Bulgarian clergy took place in 1902 at the consecration of the Russian Memorial Church in Shipka. The rite was celebrated by the

267 See the diplomatic correspondence of I. A. Zinoviev in the period of the elections: RGIA, f. 797, op. 71, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 133.
268 Archimandrite Iacob to Metropolitan Antonii, July 1, 1904. RGIA, f. 797, op. 84, 2 otd., 3 st., d. 365, ll. 5-8. Similar complaints were directed against the Russian officers by the Serbs. They wrote that while visiting the village Doriane the officers settled in a Bulgarian house (Moskovskiye vedomosti, no. 251 (September 11, 1904)).
269 Petrus, “A new phase of the Macedonian question”, Moskovskiye vedomosti, December 5 (18), 1904, No. 336; December 7 (20), No. 338; December 8 (21), No. 339. This commentary is an interesting example of neglecting the Bulgarian schism by an official pan-Slavic newspaper.
Metropolitan of Stara Zagora Methodii, and the Russian prior of the military clergy, Zhelobkovsky. Both Russian and Bulgarian clergy were present as was Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich and the Bulgarian Prince. The concelebration was important for the Bulgarian exarch as a demonstration of the Orthodoxy of the Bulgarian church. In his conversation with the Russian ambassador, Iosif stressed that the church should be consecrated by representatives of both parties. Zinoviev replied that Russia had never regarded the Bulgarian church as schismatic and that the concelebration had his blessing. However, he insisted that it be kept from the Greeks up to the last moment. Metropolitan Symeon of Varna, and members of the Bulgarian Synod and the Bulgarian minister of finance, Sarafov also discussed the concelebration. Symeon was unwilling to accept the invitation to be present at the ceremony without also concelebrating. As the Patriarchal Synod was unaware of the preparations for the ceremony, the matter was discussed there only after the event. In its session on October 1, 1902 a telegram from the Metropolitan of Philippopolis was read which described the Russian-Bulgarian concelebration. The Metropolitan of Xanthi demanded immediate action against the Russian clerics according the decision of the Synod of 1872, but Joachim III, afraid of open conflict with Russia proposed that the decision be postponed. The decision was again postponed at the next session of the Synod on October 24, 1902. The Metropolitan of Efessos thought that a note should be sent to the Russian Holy Synod protesting the concelebration, but also added “of course we cannot undertake vigorous measures against the Russian church”, by which he meant breaking off canonical relations between the Russian and the Constantinople churches. He also argued that this measure was unsuitable due to the “difficult circumstances in which the church finds itself at the present moment”. The efforts of the patriarch to discuss the matter with the ambassador also failed as Zinoviev stated that Prior Zhelobkovskii was a military priest and hence not under the jurisdiction of the Russian Synod. Though the question was not brought up in any future sessions of the Synod, the patriarch’s hesitation to deal with the concelebration of the Russian and Bulgarian clerics was a major issue during the patriarchal crisis of 1904.

One of the main ways in which Russia refused to acknowledge the Schism was its support for Bulgarian churches and monasteries. For example, in 1903 the nuns of the Batoshevsky Monastery near Sevlievo requested assistance from the Russian Holy Synod for the building of a church. The Russian ambassador in Sofia supported this application and stressed that it would be advantageous as it would strengthen the Orthodox presence in the district of Sevlievo, especially in light of the active mis-

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270 Chr. Temelski, ed., Bylgarski Exarch Iosif I. Dnevnik, 506.
271 M. K. Sarafov-to metropolitan Symeon, August 29, 1902. Archive of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, f. 144k, op. 1, d. 677, ll. 1-1v.
272 Report of the Patriarch to the Synod on November 19.
sionary work of Protestants and Catholics in the region. The Russian Synod decided to send a thousand rubles to the monastery from the reserves of the Bessarabian capital in acknowledgement of the presence of Bulgarian monasteries in Bessarabia affiliated with the Mt. Athos real estates.

The Greek-Bulgarian conflict became extremely tense in 1906 after a series of Greek massacres in Bulgaria.274 The conflict began when the inhabitants of Varna refused to recognize the new Greek metropolitan. Soon the disorder spread to other cities and towns. After the second unsuccessful attempt of the prelate to land in Varna, the patriarch sent a series of notes to the sublime porte in which he called the actions of the Bulgarians “incompatible with the principles of religion, morality and civilization”. The Bulgarians, he wrote, tried to take possession of the Greek church and Greek hospital in Varna.275 In his subsequent reports to the porte, the patriarch presented information about the statistics of the Greek population in Bulgaria276 and demanded the removal of the “schismatic” exarchate from Constantinople and the Bulgarian bishops from the Macedonian and Thracian eparchies, and the closing of the Bulgarian Church of St. Stephan in Constantinople and the Bulgarian seminary in Pera.277 Shortly thereafter Joachim addressed a memorandum to the ambassadors of all the Great Powers in Constantinople in which he reported on the occupation and plunder of the Greek churches in Varna, Kavarna, Philippopolis, Stenimachos, Tatarpazardzik, Peristera, Rushtuk and Pyrgos and about the fire and massacre in Anchialo on July 30.278 On August 14 the patriarch sent a communiqué to the Russian embassy informing the Russian government about these events.279 However, Russia


275 Protests of Joachim III to the Minister of Justice sent on July 3/15, 8/21, 12/25, 1906)

276 In the takrir of July 13/26, 1906 one can find the following information. In the territory of Bulgaria about 100,000 people belong to the Patriarchate in five districts (Varna, Mecembria, Anchialo, Sozogathoupolis, Philippopolis). There are 159 priests, 125 churches and monasteries, 66 schools (7,744 pupils) and 125 teachers. According to Bulgarian statistics in 1905 from 64,000 to 70,000 Greeks lived in Bulgaria. See: H. Silianov, Osoboditelnite borbi na Macedonija, 2. Sled ilindenskoto vyzstanie (Sofia, 1943), 254.

277 Takris of July 13/26 and July 28/August 10, 1906

278 The texts of these protests were collected and edited in Constantinople the same year: Mémo- randums addresses aux représentants des grandes puissances à Constantinople et autres documents relatifs aux récents évènements de Bulgarie et de Roumelie Orientale. (Constantinople, 1906), 5-6, 7-8, 9, 10-12, 13, 14-15—the takris to the Ottoman government; 25-34—the text of the memorandum to the Great Powers. See also: AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 2940.

279 Ibid., ll. 9-10.
remained neutral and did not respond to the protests of the patriarch. The Russian press also remained silent on the events in Bulgaria. The church-political magazine, *Kolokol*, found the patriarch’s memorandum to the Great Powers sharp in tone and damaging to the Bulgarians and the Bulgarian government.\(^{280}\) *Moskovskije vedomosti* quoted a passage from the inquiry made by the minister of internal affairs, Petkov, saying that the catastrophe in Anchialo was provoked by the Greeks who opened fire on a Bulgarian anti-Greek meeting. According the report of the minister, the number of Greek victims had been fantastically exaggerated by the Greeks.\(^{281}\)

The only Russian official who expressed sympathy to the Greeks was Professor I. I. Sokolov of St. Petersburg Theological Academy. He published a number of articles in support of the Greeks and the patriarchate on the pages of *Tserkovnye vedomosti*. Sokolov was a true advocate of the idea of an Ecumenical pan-Orthodox union in the spirit of Byzantinism. According to him, the main instigators of the present events were the Ottoman government and the European concert. The Russian embassy was also responsible for the conflict as it had approved the reforms of the patriarchate and had initiated the establishment of the Bulgarian exarchate.\(^{282}\) From 1900 to the 1910s Sokolov was one of the few representatives of philhellenism in Russian public life and ecclesiastical circles. The governmental circles preferred to remain uninvolved in the events in the Near East and the Balkans. The official church press reflected the nationalist pan-Orthodox position. Thus, in his article in the journal of the Holy Synod *Tserkovnye vedomosti*, the canonist, S. V. Troitskii wrote, “the last collision between the patriarchate and the exarchate makes us wish for a more vigorous interference on the part of the Russian church in the affairs of the Eastern Orthodox churches”.\(^{283}\)

The Bulgarian Schism changed the direction of Russian policy in the East and turned it from a policy of political romanticism into a policy of Russian national exclusiveness. Before the Schism, the Eastern Question was regarded as an obviously Russian one; the Schism estranged both the Greeks and the Bulgarians from the Russians. One author wrote:

> The passion for nationalism in Russia increased this estrangement. The Eastern churches due to their constant discord were seen to be in continual tension with each other while the Russian church which has no internal tensions, was seen to be quite stable with no need to step out of its isolation. Now the epoch of narrow nationalism is coming to an end and Russia needs direct and close contacts with the Eastern churches.\(^{284}\)

\(^{280}\) *Kolokol*, October 17, 1906, no. 223.
\(^{281}\) *Moskovskije vedomosti*, August 8, 1906, no. 195.
\(^{283}\) S. Troitskii, “Meropriiatija Vselenskoj patriarchii protiv bolgarskogo ekzarcha,” *Tserkovnije vedomosti*, (1908), Pribavlenija, no. 5: 236-238.
\(^{284}\) Ibid.
By 1910 the negotiations to mend the Bulgarian Schism were deadlocked and as one could see, the relations between the two sides worsened. A new stage began with the negotiations to establish the Balkan League. In mid-1910 Austria sought to bring about a rapprochement between Romania and Turkey in order to counter Greece and Bulgaria. Patriarch Joachim requested the Russian embassy to identify all the documents concerning the proclamation of the Schism and the attempts to mend it undertaken in the 1870s. As a starting point for the reconciliation, Joachim put forward a plan developed by Onou in 1873 and 1874. The Bulgarians put forward the only condition preserving the firman of 1870: now that they have officially appointed bishops to seven sees in Macedonia, it might be possible, in their opinion, for the negotiations to move forward.285 The position of the embassy, however, remained the same. Ambassador Charykov stressed that at least officially the Russian embassy had to remain uninvolved in these negotiations. Nevertheless, Russia could not help but support this movement which should strengthen the alliance of the Balkan states against the expansion of Austro-German ambitions and the Turkish attempts of pan-Ottoman denationalization.

The next step in ecclesiastical reconciliation was made in Sofia by the Greek ambassador, Panas. The Bulgarian prime minister, Malinov invited the exarch to begin negotiations with the patriarchate, but Iosif was not inclined to hurry. In November 1910 the Bulgarian deputy from Bitola openly expressed his approval of reconciliation in the Ottoman parliament.286 But further action was blocked by members of the Patriarchal Synod. Because the involvement of the Greek government was essential to move the agenda forward, the Russian ambassador in Athens, A. Sverbeev, was instructed to continue negotiations regarding the mending of the Schism. But Greek political leaders did not comply. Minister of Foreign Affairs Griparis persuaded Sverbeev that the Greek government had no influence on the Synod of Constantinople. The truth of the matter was that the Greek government was not interested in reconciliation because the continuation of the Schism suited the Greek national struggle in Macedonia.287 The mood in Sofia was the same. The secretary of the Synod of the Bulgarian Church, Kostov, told the Russian ambassador in Sofia, Urusov, that we don’t see any benefits for the exarchate: our strength was born in struggle and we need further struggle for its final establishment … The history of the last ten centuries proves that the Bulgarians and Greeks have never understood each other and of course will never in the future.288

285 Dispatches of the Russian ambassador N. V. Charykov, August 1/14, 1910 no. 114 and October 27/November 9, 1910, no. 140. AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 3471, ll. 76-78’.
286 Tserkovnyj vestnik, no. 48 (1910): 1513-1516.
287 Dispatch of N. V. Charykov, November 10/23, 1910, no. 157. AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 3471, ll. 63-65; Telegram of A. Sverbeev, November 13/26, 1910. Ibid., I. 60; Dispatch of N. V. Charykov, November 17/30, 1910. Ibid., II. 56-58’.
288 L. V. Urusov to S. D. Sazonov, December 2, 1910, Ibid. II. 48-50’.
The Bulgarians are self-confident and aggressive, accused Urusov. Being low church believers, they use the Schism and the situation of the moment to their own political end. The Bulgarian ambassador in Athens, Hadji Mishev, also acknowledged that Bulgaria was not interested in mending the Schism:

From an ecclesiastical point of view, the mending of the Schism, which is not recognized by any of the Balkan states and especially by Russia, is not of great importance for Bulgaria. From a political point of view, of course, it would contribute to the peaceful coexistence of the Bulgarian and Greek elements in Macedonia. Nevertheless, Greece is against the reconciliation because it would lead to rapprochement of the Bulgarians-Exarchists and the Slavophones-Patriarchists.

The idea of a reconciliation also met with resistance, albeit not openly expressed, in Serbia, which had always supported the Greeks in Macedonia and now was afraid it would find itself isolated.

The ongoing negotiations demonstrated once more that ecclesiastical reconciliation required not only a political alliance but also a division of power between the competing states in Macedonia, Greece, Bulgaria and to a lesser extent, Serbia. Exarch Iosif was ready to abandon the idea of a Greater Bulgaria but he could not accept the Greek Great idea of a revived Byzantium with a continuous coastline from Greece to Constantinople.

After arriving in Constantinople, the new Russian ambassador, Giers, continued the negotiations. He visited both the patriarch and the Bulgarian exarch. Joachim III told him that the patriarchate did not object to mending the Schism but insisted on observing the church canons and some other conditions. The meeting with the exarch was much more cordial and mutually beneficial. As Iosif noted in his diary, the Russian ambassador had initiated a visit with him (a sign of respect in the eyes of the exarch), while the previous ambassadors only returned his visits. Iosif complained about the decreasing Bulgarian population in Macedonia—about 200,000 of them had left the province during the previous few decades. Working to mend the Schism was rather difficult for him as he was obliged to assist those communities that wanted to join the exarchate. In every case the patriarchate would insist on the removal of the exarchate from Constantinople to Sofia. Iosif could not accept this because in Constantinople he could advocate for Bulgarians and support the Bulgarian cause.

In contrast to the prevailing skepticism among Bulgarian politicians, the Metropolitan of Varna, Symeon, regarded the mending of the Schism as a necessary step for

289 A. Sverbeev to S. D. Sazonov, January 2, 1911, no. 1. Ibid., ll. 40-41.
290 Dispatch of Gartwig from Belgrade, November 21, 1910. AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 3471, ll. 53-54.
291 P. K. Mishev to I. St. Geshov, November 26, 1911. CDA, f. 322k, op. 1, d. 269, ll. 80-81.
292 Alexandropoulos to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. April 28, 1912. AYE, f. 21, 1, 1.
the Bulgarian church. According to his proposal, reconciliation should be followed by a proclamation that the Bulgarian church would be autocephalous. This act would enhance relations with Russia and its church and would return the Bulgarian people to the Orthodox fold. Only with the restoration of normal relations with the Russian church would the Bulgarian clergy be able to resist Catholic and Protestant propaganda in the country, he told Nekliudov, the Russian ambassador in Sofia.\textsuperscript{294} In his commentary on this conversation, Nekliudov noted that in his opinion Russia had to be more accepting of the declarations and applications of the Bulgarian clergy.

The successful actions of the Bulgarian army in October 1912 and the real possibility that it would soon enter Constantinople again raised the question of mending the Schism. Who would celebrate the first liturgy in St. Sofia? This question worried both the Greeks and the Bulgarians. At this critical time several sessions of the Patriarchal Synod were held. As a compromise, the Greek metropolitans agreed to ignore the Schism, but only temporarily and only in Constantinople in order for a concel- ebration to take place, presided over by the patriarch with the exarch.\textsuperscript{295} The exarch, for his part, demonstrated his readiness to formally ask for pardon from the patriarch. Nevertheless, the plans of the Bulgarian government were not realized due to Russia’s opposition as it was unwilling to allow any country to enter Constantinople and to control the Straits. If Ferdinand decided to enter Constantinople, he would see all of Europe turn against himself demanding him to change course, the Russian ambas- sador told the exarch.\textsuperscript{296} The preservation of the sovereignty of Turkey in Constanti- nople, the Straits and the adjoining territory was one of Russia’s demands. Immediate action in the region became a matter of discussion at several sessions of the Russian Council of Ministers near the end of November 1912. Advocates of the war such as the minister of war, V. A. Suhomlinov, and the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich among others accused the minister of foreign affairs, Sazonov, of unnecessary hesitations. However the voices in favour of caution were vindicated.\textsuperscript{297} After the retreat of the Bulgarian army from Chataldji the question of the Schism was no more a matter of serious discussion.

The new political situation after the Balkan Wars created significant problems for the patriarchate because it lost most of its prosperous eparchies in Macedonia. At a session of the Patriarchal Synod, the metropolitans said that though perpetuating the Bulgarian Schism suited Greek interests, after the resolution of the Eastern Question and the division of Macedonia, the autocephaly of the Bulgarian church would be proclaimed. Then the exarch would leave Constantinople and the patriarchate would be

\textsuperscript{294} Dispatch of Nekliudov, 10 August, 1912. RGIA, f. 797, op. 82, 2 otd. 3 st., d. 441, ll. 2-3.
\textsuperscript{295} Kanellopoulos to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. September 9, 1912. AYE, f. 83, 3.
\textsuperscript{296} AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 3464, ll. 50.
obliged to end the Schism. The defeat of Bulgaria in the Second Balkan War really changed the situation. After the Treaty of Bucharest (August 30, 1913) and the establishment of new borders in the Balkans, ecclesiastical divisions were to be in accord with political borders. The exarch's cause in Macedonia was lost and in November 1913 he was forced to leave Constantinople. The problem of the Schism continued to worry Russia. After the departure of Iosif it seemed that the obstacles to reconciliation were removed. But diplomats failed to take into account the extreme national tension following the defeat of Bulgaria. The Russian embassy tried to exert pressure on the patriarch regarding the critical financial and political position of the Orthodox church in Turkey in the first half of 1914. Talking with Patriarch Germanos V, Giers offered him help on the condition that the Schism be mended. Fonvisin, a staff of the Russian embassy carried out the preliminary negotiations in Sofia. The final attempt on the part of Russia before it entered the First World War was to discuss the terms of reconciliation with Exarch Iosif during his visit to the Russian ambassador to Sofia, Savinskii. It was supposed that Professor I. S. Palmov of St. Petersburg Theological Academy would draft the official letter to the Ecumenical Patriarchate outlining the terms of a settlement. The war interrupted the negotiations and the letter was never sent. In 1915 the exarch made a final attempt: he asked the Russian priest in Athens to start negotiations with E. Venizelos, the Greek prime minister to mend the Schism. Although official negotiations ended when Turkey entered the First World War, in 1917 the Metropolitan of Cyprus, Meletios Metaksakis, still wanted to raise the matter of the Bulgarian Schism at the Synod in Moscow.

The Greek-Bulgarian ecclesiastical question vividly demonstrates the character of the Russian policy in the Balkan region at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Delaying action and maintaining the status quo together with other political difficulties led to the temporary cessation of Russian diplomatic efforts in the Near East. Constantly maneuvering between the Greeks and the Bulgarians did not enhance Russia's authority in the region; neither could it temper nationalistic opposition in the Balkans. The Bulgarian Schism was resolved only in 1945 when the political borders were finally determined, and population exchange took place. As a result there were no more regions with mixed populations and no reasons for further conflict.

298 Kannelopoulos-to L. Koromilas, Reports of February 7 and 9, 1913. AYE, f. 53, 5.
299 AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 3464: 52-55.
300 Chr Temelski, ed., Bylgarski Exarch Iosif I. Dnevnik, 811.
301 Ibid., 819.
5 Russia and Mt. Athos (1878-1914)

Russia, through its ecclesiastical efforts in the Ottoman Empire, sought to establish closer ties with the Orthodox population while strengthening Russian influence in the eastern Mediterranean as a whole. Mt. Athos, a collection of monasteries situated on a small peninsula in the northern Aegean, was paramount in this process. Unlike the Russian foundations in Palestine, the Russian monastic community on the Holy Mountain had a long history apart from government initiatives. The spiritual aspirations of the common people (narod) supported by the tsars and governing elite provided the material foundation for Russia’s presence on Mt. Athos. The case of Mt. Athos, on one hand, further demonstrates the continuing relevance of religion in the Russian-Ottoman-Balkan relationship. On the other hand, the case of Mt. Athos suggests ways in which popular spirituality could influence diplomacy in relation to the Eastern Question. Mt. Athos, due to its important geographical location on the southern coast of Macedonia, and due to its spiritual significance for the Eastern Orthodox world, was the centre of attention for all the states interested in the future division of the Ottoman Empire.

Mt. Athos, the eastern part of the Chalkidiki Peninsula, was one of the most important spiritual centers of the Eastern Christian world beginning in the 10th century. It was a unique monastic republic. Under Byzantine rule, the ecumenical patriarchs had usually been Greek. Because the highest spiritual authority on Mt. Athos was the Patriarch of Constantinople, it is not surprising that most of the monasteries on Mt. Athos belonged to the Greeks. Although the Greeks dominated, many Orthodox peoples (Georgians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Rus/Russians, and later Romanians) had their own monasteries on Mt. Athos. Up until the 15th century when the Ottomans conquered the Balkans, the monasteries were under the protection of either the Byzantine emperor or the monarchs of the respective Orthodox states to which the monasteries belonged. Mt. Athos thus presented a spiritual model of the Eastern Christian world, reflecting the political and cultural processes within it. The privileged and isolated position of Mt. Athos was due to the so-called abaton (the prohibition of women and alien persons—lay, military) and the large donations from Eastern rulers. Mt. Athos enjoyed an autonomous government and the monasteries became influential spiritual and cultural centers. The sultans preserved the privilege of self-government after the Ottomans conquered Mt. Athos in 1423-24.

Though the position of the church changed fundamentally under Ottoman rule, Mt. Athos continued to be a focus of religious aspiration for many Orthodox Christians. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the monasteries of the Holy Mount received large donations from the hospodars (rulers) of the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia and from the Russian tsars. However, they also became victims of robbery and the despotic actions of Ottoman authorities. Little by little, the non-Greek monaster-
ies fell into the hands of Greek monks, a process that reflected the situation in the Orthodox church in the whole of the Ottoman Empire.\(^{303}\)

In the 18\(^{th}\) century, according to the account of the traveler, Vasilii Barskii, only a few Russian monks could be found on the Holy Mount.\(^{304}\) However, in the mid-19\(^{th}\) century, the Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon and the two sketes—the Holy Prophet Elias and the Holy Apostle Andrew—grew. The prosperity of Russian monasticism on Mt. Athos in the late 19\(^{th}\) and early 20\(^{th}\) centuries is usually connected with two major persons, the confessor of the Russian monastery, Hieronym, and its abbot, Makarii Sushkin.\(^{305}\) Following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, Russian monastic communities grew rapidly due to the protection of high diplomatic and governmental officials and the raising interest among the Russian people. In fact, they soon became the richest and most populated on the rocky peninsula.

Despite the disappointment of the Congress of Berlin, Russia insisted on including article No. 62, which provided important diplomatic patronage for the non-Greek monks on Mt. Athos. This crucial point guaranteed the autonomous existence of a Russian community in Ottoman territory under Russian state protection.

The spiritual flourishing of Russian communities on Mt. Athos inspired admiration among Russian pilgrims and travelers, who began to flock to the region in large numbers. The former patriarch, Joachim III, who lived on Mt. Athos in the years 1886-1901, stressed the difference between the Russian institutions and the Greek ones. “The spiritual power on Mt. Athos doesn’t matter at all,” he wrote to the Russian consul to Thessaloniki, Ivan S. Iastrebov. “Disobedience is rampant. The Greek monasteries are at odds with each other and are trying to surpass each other in willfulness. In contrast, order prevails in the Russian communities; everybody obeys the abbot, they work with humility and deny the self, and they don’t interfere in lay affairs.”\(^{306}\)

The prosperity of the Russian monasteries and sketes provoked discontent and envy among the Greeks, whose monasteries suffered from lack of financial support.

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\(^{304}\) V. Grigorovich-Barskii, *Pervoe poseschenie svaitoi Afonskoi gory Vasiliiia Grigorovicha-Barskogo, Im samim opisannoe* (St. Petersburg: Pravoslavoe Palestinskoe Obshchestvo, 1885).


\(^{306}\) I. S. Iastrebov to A. I. Nelidov, January 24, 1891, RGIA, f. 797, op. 61.2 otd. 3 st., d. 146, ll. 8-12.
The general adverse conditions in the Balkans, and the intensity of nationalist passions and anti-Slav prejudices, promoted further hostility on the Holy Mount. The government of Athens repeatedly undertook measures against the Russian monastics. In 1883, a delegation of a theologian and historian, professors N. Damalas and P. Pavlidis, arrived from Athens. They proposed several ways to strengthen the Greek position on Mt. Athos. Firstly, they proposed that the patriarch be convinced to resist the pressure of Russian diplomacy and to act independently. They also proposed strengthening Greek education on the Holy Mountain in order to encourage the monks to protect the rights of the Greeks, and sending a Greek consul from Macedonia to Mt. Athos at least once a year to support the nationalistic sentiments of the monks. The Greek delegation further suggested that Greek pilgrimages to Mt. Athos be organized, to counterbalance the Russian ones which totaled as many as 4,000 pilgrims a year. Finally, the project proposed a scheme to grant Athonite monks British citizenship in order to benefit from British protection. If this latter point should prove difficult, continued Damalas and Pavlidis, “we should encourage the arrival of more monks who are English citizens, for example from Cyprus.”

Though this plan was never realized, it testifies to Greek concern about Russian influence on Mt. Athos as well as the British influence on Greek policy at that time.

The Greek consul to Thessaloniki, G. Dokos, who visited Mt. Athos in 1887, wrote a lengthy report to the Greek minister of foreign affairs, Stephanos Dragoumis, analyzing the situation on the Holy Mount from the point of view of Greek national interests. In his report, Dokos paid special attention to the Russian threat, and suggested that the leasing of buildings in Mt. Athos’s capital, Karea, should be prohibited. He also believed that the stationing of diplomatic representatives there would be expedient. “We must have able people in every monastery,” stressed Dokos. “By systematic work from one center we can neutralize the activities of the Russian monasteries, which are well protected. The Russian monks have one purpose in mind: they are organized with military discipline and serve [Russian] political centers abroad.”

It is interesting to note that among the measures that could be used against the Russians, Dokos did not exclude help from Roman Catholic states. In fact, he observed that the Austrian consul to Thessaloniki showed interest in the former Italian monastery of the Amalfitani, known as Morfanou. The consul was curious to find some documents concerning this monastic settlement, which had ceased to exist centuries earlier. Dokos believed that establishing a Catholic monastery on Mt. Athos was unlikely, but the support from a great power like Austro-Hungary could be useful against the Russians.

309 Report from August 5, 1889, _ibid._
As the reports indicate, Greek diplomats feared that the Russian government was interested in Mt. Athos as a political and even military base. Indeed, St. Petersburg spared no expense in strengthening the Russian element there.

It appears that the general aim of Russian church policy in the Near East at this time was to pacify and reconcile the Orthodox peoples under the power of a supranational Ecumenical Patriarch. The Greek monks on Mt. Athos are here categorized as part of the general grouping ‘Greeks’ in Ottoman lands, and according to the report they should not serve as a pawn of the Athens government in its political ambitions. In fact, the Russian diplomats distinguished well enough the Greek monks of Ottoman origin, who usually were more open to supranational ecumenical views, and those who had come from the Greek kingdom and were typically influenced by nationalism.

The increasing number of Russian monks and pilgrims on Mt. Athos prompted the Russian government to appoint a representative to control the situation. Up to 1889, Abbot Makarii fulfilled this role, but after his death, the question about appointing a leader to supervise the flood of pilgrims arose again. Government officials in St. Petersburg, who were afraid of creating on Mt. Athos the same conflict and complicated situation that they had at the Russian spiritual mission in Jerusalem, did not support opening a Russian consulate on Mt. Athos or sending an ecclesiastic representative there.310

Based on the inconsistent instructions of the Russian Foreign Ministry, one can see that the Russian government had no clear policy when it came to Mt. Athos; it exhibited no definite position regarding the usefulness of the Russian presence there at all. The Russian embassy in Constantinople as well as the consulate in Thessaloniki sent numerous inquiries to the Russian Foreign Ministry concerning Mt. Athos, but never received concrete answers. Many of the diplomats strongly opposed investing further in Russian Mt. Athos (an idea posed earlier by the Metropolitan of Moscow, Filaret Drozdov) because they saw little benefit returning to Russia, both materially and spiritually. They argued that such resources would be better used to strengthen Russia’s hold on the peripheries of the Russian Empire itself by supporting such institutions as the recently established Monastery of New Mt. Athos in the Caucasus. Realizing the need for a concrete decision, the Russian ambassador to the sublime porte, Nelidov, could not suggest a solution because nobody would donate such sums of money for this new venture.311 “We have only evidence of the deep reverence of the Russian people for the Holy Mount and cannot weigh the moral advantages of this

veneration or to what degree Mt. Athos is useful for us from a political point of view …

We must deal with an unknown, the independent and mighty national force [that is, the reverence of Russia’s peasants],” wrote Nelidov.312 Nelidov believed that the Russian government should step back from influencing the affairs of Mt. Athos and should cease coordinating the flood of Russian pilgrims to Mt. Athos. Nevertheless, St. Petersburg consistently tried to limit the flow of money to Mt. Athos that Russian monks, especially kelliotes (inhabitants of the small cells that belonged to the big monasteries and that could therefore, never be regarded as Russian property) collected throughout Russia.

The legal status of the Russian monks on Mt. Athos remained uncertain as the surge in pilgrims coincided with major political and legal changes taking place in the Ottoman Empire at this time. According to the Mt. Athos Regulations (Kanonismos) of 1876 (included in the Turkish Law Code), all Mt. Athos monks, irrespective of their nationality, were regarded as Ottoman citizens. They were given a sort of residency permit (nufus in Turkish) but in fact, their Turkish citizenship remained nominal. The Russian monks, however, also maintained their Russian passports and enjoyed diplomatic protection according to Article 62 of the Berlin Treaty of 1878. Russian law stipulated that a person could lose his or her nationality by serving a foreign state without the permission of his government, or by refusing to return to Russia when summoned by the government. However, according to the edict of the Russian Holy Synod of July 13, 1816, Russian subjects who became monks abroad were not recognized as monks inside Russia. Furthermore, Tsar Alexander I issued another law which allowed Russian citizens to become monks abroad on the condition that they would never return to their motherland.313 Later persons who had become monks abroad could join Russian monasteries after spending three years as novices; in every case, permission from the Holy Synod was necessary. The dual status of the Russian monks—having both Russian and Ottoman citizenship—on Mt. Athos was both advantageous and disadvantageous for them. On the one hand, it allowed them to conduct monastic business in Russia; on the other hand, governmental officials could choose to protect them only when they found it advantageous; if a certain monk was regarded as “unreliable,” the formula “such person calls himself a hieromonk,” was employed to discredit him. In some cases, Russian diplomats did not hesitate to dismiss the most importunate applicants because they were “Turkish citizens.”314

The Turkish authorities made several efforts to strip Russian monks of their Russian status, but these efforts were always foiled by Russian diplomacy. While

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312 A. I. Nelidov to N. P. Shishkin, April 10, 1890, AVPRI, f. 180, op. 517/2, d. 1193a, ll. 292-95.
314 For example, in 1879 Ambassador A. B. Lobanov-Rostovskii rejected to help the Georgian monks on the reason that they, having become monks abroad, had lost their Russian citizenship. See, AVPRI, f. 180, op. 517/2, d. 3672, ll. 11-12.
conducting the census of the Mt. Athos population in 1905, for example, the Turkish authorities tried to confiscate the passports of Russian monks. The demand of the officials, however, met with resolute refusal from all Russian monasteries except the Georgian cell of St. John the Theologian. These monks surrendered their passports. But upon the protest of the Russian representative in Thessaloniki, Nikolai V. Kokhmanskii, the vali (governor) of the city promised to return the passports. In the face of the resistance of the monasteries, the Turkish authorities backed down rather than create an international scandal. After a new wave of confiscations of Russian monks’ passports by the Young Turk government in 1909, Kokhmanskii again stressed to the government that the Russians on Mt. Athos were regarded as only temporarily outside Russia and had never lost their citizenship. The Russian consulate in Thessaloniki issued new passports to replace the confiscated ones, treating the passports as lost rather than confiscated in order to placate the Turkish authorities.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the issues occupying Russia in regard to its presence on Mt. Athos had not changed. The fears concerning Russian expansion on the Holy Mountain and its final transition into Russian hands are reflected in the report of the Bulgarian agent in Thessaloniki, Atanas Shopov:

I travelled from monastery to monastery around the whole Mt. Athos peninsula and it seemed to me that I’m travelling around Russia. Continually on the quays, in the monasteries, in the cells, in the centre of the kaza [the administrative district of Mt. Athos], in forests and on roads you meet Russians and more Russians, both monks and laity. Their number is increasing from day to day ... in five or six years the number of Russians will have doubled or tripled. Nobody doubts that in a few years only Russians will inhabit the whole of the Holy Mountain. The Russians, but also the Greeks and Bulgarians suppose that soon the Mt. Athos peninsula will politically be governed by Russia as well. Economically it has been in Russian hands for a long time. All the rich Greek monasteries receive their incomes from Russia which controls the receiving and distribution of these revenues.

In 1898, the Russian consul to Thessaloniki, N. A. Ilarionov, visited the Serbian Hilandar Monastery. Hilandar, one of the oldest monasteries on the Holy Mountain, had large debts and a very small monastic population. Only a few of the monks were Serbian; most were Bulgarians from Macedonia. The Russians had had their eye on this monastery for a while and offered to pay its debts in exchange for allowing one or more Russian monks into the brotherhood; in this way, it was hoped, the monas-
tery would gradually pass into Russian hands. The Serbian government, however, took measures to counter Russian influence and strengthen the Serbian presence at Hilandar. In 1900, Belgrade paid the debts of the monastery and offered to grant it an annual sum of 1000 Ottoman liras. In the end, the Russian consul decided to support the Serbs in Hilandar rather than increase Russian presence, which was in keeping with the general policy of the Russian government in Macedonia during these years, i.e. to support the Serbs against the Bulgarians, although Russia did not abandon its goal of acquiring the monastery.

The Russians occupied several cells belonging to Hilandar, the largest one being the cell of St. John Chrysostom. In 1902, an agreement was signed between the abbot of the cell and the Serbian metropolitan of Rashka and Prizren. According to this agreement, the metropolitan passed authority over the Lavra of Dechani in Kosovo, which had historically been Serbian, to the Russians for several years. In exchange, the Russians agreed to organize a strict monastic order, to restore the buildings and to protect the monastery from attacks by Albanian brigands. While for the Serbian ecclesiastical authorities this measure was the only way to save the monastery, for the Russian monks it was an opportunity to found a new Russian monastery in the Balkans. The Russian abbot intended to organize the Dechani monastery as an extension of the cell of St. John Chrysostom, which would not be limited in the number of the monks nor in the scope of building initiatives. In the following years, about twenty Russian monks were installed in Dechani.

Simultaneously, Russian monks from Mt. Athos explored other options for their creative activities, namely in Palestine and Syria. Many small, neglected monasteries existed in this region which could be easily bought by rich Russian kelliots. In 1903, the abbot of the Russian cell of the Holy Cross on Mt. Athos, Panteleimon, purchased the ancient Lavra of St. Chariton, eight kilometers from Jerusalem, and settled seven monks there. The Patriarch of Jerusalem, Damianos, protested that this was uncanonical interference into the affairs of another church, but the Russians ignored the patriarch’s letter. On July 12, 1912 in Damascus, the Patriarch of Antioch, Gregorios, and a representative of the cell of the Holy Cross on Mt. Athos, Gennadii, signed an agreement that enabled Russians to lease the patriarchal monastery of St. Ilias Shuaya in Syria. The Russian abbot of the Mt. Athos cell was appointed as abbot of the monastery. According to the agreement, the Russian brotherhood became owners in perpetuity of all the movable and immovable property of the monastery and had to make graduated payments to the patriarch, which increased from 200 to 400 French

318 Ibid., ll. 66-71.
319 A. Shopov to T. Ivanov, April 19, 26, and 27, 1900, ibid., ll. 4-5, 20-21, 26.
320 See more about this in Chapter 6.
napoleons a year. The Russian consul to Damascus considered this a favourable arrangement both for the strengthening of Orthodoxy in Syria and for the Russian convent.322

Irrespective of the political significance of such initiatives, the main reasons for the Russian monks’ interest in Palestine were the lack of space and opportunity for development on Mt. Athos. The richest Russian cells would have been able to take in a large number of monks and to build large monasteries, but Athonite regulations strictly forbade such expansion. However, the Russians did not always adhere to the restrictions and such actions led to constant conflicts between Russians and Greek ecclesiastical authorities. The kelliots posed one of the main problems on Mt. Athos in the beginning of the 20th century, both for the Greeks and Russians. Officially, no more than three monks could live in each cell, one senior and two younger. But in fact, within a few years the senior monk often gathered money to take on more novices and rebuild the cell into a more substantial and prosperous settlement. The population of such cells sometimes grew to more than one hundred persons; some were able to build magnificent churches and monastic houses. This development made the dependent cells, the inhabitants of which were only tenants, de facto monasteries sometimes richer than their parent monastery.

In 1896, the Mt. Athos kelliots united and founded an organization, “The Brotherhood of Russian Kelliots”.323 The organization aimed to protect the rights of the kelliots in their struggle with the major Greek monasteries. Soon the Brotherhood managed to attract the favorable attention of the Russian royal family and support from the ambassador in Constantinople, Zinoviev, as well as the influential director of the Russian Archaeological institute in Constantinople, T. I. Uspenskii. The Brotherhood kept a hospital in Thessaloniki and a monastic school in the Ottoman capital.

While the kelliots enjoyed support from some diplomats and high officials, the Russian Holy Synod did not look on them with favour. It was easier for church authorities to deal with the big monasteries than with independent settlements. The Synod feared that the legal disputes between smaller Russian settlements and large Greek monasteries would continue for decades and cause serious difficulties. The Russian Holy Synod therefore issued decrees against the kelliots’ and monks’ letters request-

322 Shahovskoi to the Russian Holy Synod, 1912, RGIA, f. 796, op. 195, VI otd. 1 st., d. 1116, l. 4.
323 Kelliots were the inhabitants of the small monastic huts called “kellion” (cell, the third and smaller form of settlement behind the monasteries and the sketes). These foundations belonged to some of the large independent monasteries and monks could only lease them. The Athos Regulations provided a limitation of six inhabitants for the kellia, who were regarded as hermits. Nevertheless, the Russian monks established a much larger number of monks there and built large churches and edifices. The organization of the brotherhood made the kelliots a power comparable to St. Panteleimon Monastery. Their activities were a matter of constant controversies with the Greek owners of the kellia. See, P. Troitskii, Istoriia russkikh obitelei Afona v XIX-XX vekakh (Moscow: Indrik, 2009), 111-88.
ing economic support, which had been sent throughout Russia.\(^\text{324}\) The large Russian monasteries and some public authorities supported the position of the Russian Synod. For example the famous liturgist at the Theological Academy in Kiev, Alexei Dmitrievskii, wrote a passionate article against the kelliots’ activities.\(^\text{325}\) Obviously, such criticism directed towards a significant portion of the Russian monks would not contribute to the stability of the Russians on the Holy Mountain as a whole. Dmitrievskii’s article also caused a sensation in Greece after being translated by the secretary to Meletios Metaksakis, the Archbishop of Cyprus and later Patriarch of Alexandria and of Constantinople, who used it in his extremely Russophobic book.\(^\text{326}\) Encouraged by the position of the Russian Synod, the Patriarch of Constantinople issued a decree limiting the size of the kelliots and their number on Mt. Athos.\(^\text{327}\) Despite these measures, the kelliots continued their activities.

In the dangerous and stormy situation in the Balkans in the first decades of the 20th century, the rich Russian monks who lived without protection increasingly became victims of thefts and robbery. The Russian diplomats during their frequent visits to the Holy Mountain tried to protect the kelliots. From the reports of the employees of the embassy and the consulate in Thessaloniki we can find that they usually sympathized with the kelliots and stressed that with some rare exceptions they were pious people who cared only about saving their souls.\(^\text{328}\) This provides an example of the contrast between the actions of the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Holy Synod; here, the Russian government proved more supportive of monks on Mt. Athos than did the Russian Orthodox Church.

A new era in the life on Mt. Athos began with the Balkan Wars. In November 1912, the Greeks annexed the Holy Mountain. A Greek army detachment of 800 soldiers formed a garrison; the Bulgarians also sent 70 soldiers to protect their monastery. While the Greek inhabitants of Mt. Athos regarded this as a liberation making possible a resurgence of their influence, the Slavs were rather anxious about their future. The status of Mt. Athos was a matter of international discussion at the London Conference of 1912-13. Russia categorically insisted on the internationalization of Mt. Athos under the protectorate of the six Orthodox states (Russia, Greece, Serbia, Romania,

\(^{324}\) "O merakh dlia bor'by s zloupotrebleniami afonskich kelliotov po sboru pozhertvovanij v Rossii," Tserkovnye vedomosti, April 30, 1911, no. 18, pribal’eniia, razdel “Khronika”.
\(^{325}\) A. A. Dmitrievskii, Russkie afonskie monakh-kellioti i ikh prositelnye o milostyni pis’ma, rassylae-
\(^{328}\) N. Kokhmanskii to I. A. Zinoviev, April 30, 1906, AVPRI, f. 180, op. 517/2, d. 3680, ll. 1-6; 7, 8-9; May 8, 1907, RGIA, f. 797, op. 73, II otd. 3 st., d. 293, ll. 18-19; May 21, 1912, AVPRI, f. 180, op. 517/2, d. 3682, ll. 7-9.
Montenegro and Bulgaria). The first goal was to neutralize Greek supremacy, and the second, to protect the rights of the monks native from each Orthodox state. Had the Greeks succeeded in dominating Mt. Athos, all the contentious issues would have been resolved in favour of the Greeks, and not the Russians. In the Russian plan of a protectorate, not surprisingly, international control of the Orthodox states over the Holy Mountain would ensure Russia’s dominance.

Russian diplomats developed several options for dealing with the matter of jurisdiction. The consul to Thessaloniki, Alexei K. Beliaev, proposed that each of the six Orthodox states appoint one representative, who would have a seat in Karea, the administrative center of Mt. Athos. The delegates would comprise an official council with the Russian representative as chairman. This council would be the only representative of Mt. Athos in its international contacts. The delegates would function in the same capacity as the consuls of the Great Powers did in the Ottoman Empire. According to Beliaev’s plan, the Mt. Athos monastic population would be dependent politically on the Russian Foreign Ministry. The spiritual authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople and the self-government of Mt. Athos in its internal affairs would remain as before. Another proposal, developed by the Russian consul to Monastir, A. M. Petriaev, repeated, in general, the main points articulated by Beliaev.

The proposal of B. S. Serafimov, the adviser on ecclesiastical affairs in the Russian embassy in Constantinople, further enhanced the degree of tsarist protection. Serafimov stressed that since the non-Russian monasteries existed due to incomes from their estates in Russia or the collection of money there, he concluded that without Russian aid they would soon be in dire straits. Serafimov emphasized that there were 4,250 Russian monks on Mt. Athos in 1909-11, without taking into consideration the metochs (farmsteads), and he advocated expanding Russian influence on Mt. Athos. “One can hope that with the change of political circumstances the present situation will change as well. In due course many of the 17 Greek monasteries will become Russian, as had happened with the Monastery of St. Panteleimon, and then our monks will consider themselves to be in better conditions,” he wrote. Russia itself would deal with all Mt. Athos affairs giving the monks the opportunity for internal self-government according to the ancient rules. The representatives of the other five Orthodox states would also send their representatives to serve as consuls. One can notice that this proposal was hurriedly written and was not free from political romanticism.

The legal adviser of the Russian embassy in Constantinople, A. N. Mandelstam, discussed the juridical side of the issue in detail. He advocated either designat-

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329 AVPRI, f. 180, op. 517/2, d. 3686, ll. 1-4.
330 Ibid., ll. 5-9.
331 Ibid., ll. 20-27.
332 Ibid., l. 25.
ing Mt. Athos as a neutral territory under the protectorate of the six Orthodox states or making it a neutral territory governed by representatives of the six states. In his opinion, the creation of a neutral territory was preferable for Russia because this would allow Russian laws to be implemented. Mandelshtam maintained that in either case a strong governmental power was obligatory in order to stop the international disagreements on the Holy Mountain. The nationalistic tensions between Russians and Greeks, Greeks and Bulgarians, Greeks and Georgians were a reflection of the general Greek-Slav (and Greek-Georgian) tension in the Balkans in those years. The Second Balkan War and the defeat of Bulgaria made the situation on Mt. Athos more acute.

When the monks on Mt. Athos learned of the Russian plans to internationalize and establish a condominium, the seventeen Greek monasteries sent their delegates to the Athens government and to the London Conference with a petition to unite Mt. Athos with the Greek kingdom. At the same time, the Russian monks addressed another petition to the London Conference demanding the neutralization of Mt. Athos under the protectorate of Russia and the Balkan states. in their petition, they asked that one representative for every 250-300 monks be sent to the central council; that civil and criminal matters be separated from spiritual ones; that the present rules on possession of landed estates be abolished and that these estates remain in Russian hands after the leases expired rather than being returned to their Greek owners.

The question of the international status of Mt. Athos was not solved during the deliberations at the London Conference. The London Treaty of May 17, 1913 only postponed the decision regarding the Holy Mountain. The Austro-Hungarian representative strongly opposed the Russian proposal to make Mt. Athos neutral because at that time, the Hapsburg Empire, more than any other power, had a vested interest in southern Macedonia. Because of Austro-Hungary’s opposition, only the first part of the proposal concerning the preservation of the spiritual subordination of Mt. Athos to the patriarch was adopted. As for the proposal to form a common protectorate, it was postponed due to irreconcilable disagreements among the parties. The Treaty of Bucharest signed on August 26, 1913, also did not resolve the problem.

The Second Balkan War and the defeat of Bulgaria buried all hopes for a union of Orthodox states or of Slavic states under a Russian protectorate. The Bulgarian ecclesiastical schism could not be mended and a common protectorate on Mt. Athos seemed unlikely. The resistance of the western powers was not the only obstacle. In June and July of 1913, another internal problem arose on Mt. Athos, namely the matter of the Name Worshipers (Imiaslavtsy or Imiabozhniki). The followers of the movement

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333 AVPRI, f. 180, op. 517/2, d. 3689, ll. 1-21.
334 Ibid., d. 3686, ll. 29-36.
accepted the idea that “the Name of God is God Himself”. The roots of this heresy lay in the Byzantine mysticism of Symeon the New Theologian and Hesychasm, a 14th century renewal movement led by St. Gregory Palamas. The continual repeating of the Jesus Prayer (“My Lord Jesus, have mercy on me”) was an age old tradition on Mt. Athos so Name Worshippers were not so much inventing a modern heresy as reinterpreting an old tradition. This movement, being purely spiritual, split the Russian monastic community in half. The Russian government, weary of further complications in the Balkans, mistook the disturbances for political action and regarded the movement as a rebellion. The Greek monasteries and the patriarch wanted to deport a part of the Russian monastic community, and supported the Russian ecclesiastical and civil authorities. In July 1913 more than 800 Russian monks were forcibly relocated to Russia. This action marked the beginning of the weakening of the Russian element on Mt. Athos.

In September 1913, as the international status of Mt. Athos remained uncertain, a representative of the Russian embassy in Constantinople, Serafimov, arrived on Mt. Athos on a special mission. The aim of his visit was to brief the embassy on the situation, protect Russian monks from violations, and work to restore peace on the Holy Mountain. In the same month, the Metropolitan of Cyprus, Meletios Metaksakis arrived on Mt. Athos to spread agitation among the Greek monks and support their nationalistic aspirations. The presence of Serafimov (who despite his being incognito was regarded as a Russian consul), irritated the Greek monks to a considerable degree. At the end of September, the Kinot (the Mt. Athos administration body) decided to move him from the Skete of St. Andrew. This decision, however, was not implemented because of the uncertain position of the Vatopedi Monastery, which housed the Skete, and which was afraid that it would lose income from its estates in Bessarabia if Serafimov would complain about his removal to the Russian Ministry. Meanwhile, the Greek press printed angry articles against Serafimov.

In October 1913, the Kinot of Mt. Athos together with Metropolitan Meletios wrote a petition to the Greek king Constantine expressing its desire that the Holy Mountain be included as part of the Greek kingdom to ensure that no civil authority could inter-

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335 The stimulus for its spreading was the book Na gorakh Kavkaza by Hieromonk Ilarion. The leader of the movement became monk Antonii Bulatovich, a former officer. The Name Worshipers followed the Byzantine practice of the hesychast and in fact had no political inspirations. On this topic, see the excellent work by Ep. Ilarion Alfeev, Sviashchennaia taina Tserkvi. Vvedeniie v istoriiu i problematiku imiaslavskikh sporov (St. Petersburg: izdatel'stvo Olega Abyshko, 2007); see also, K. K. Papoulidis, Oi Rossoi Onomatolatrai tou Agiou Orous (Thessaloniki: IMXA, 1977); L. Graham, J. M. Kantor, Naming infinity: A True Story of Religious Mysticism and Mathematical Creativity (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 7-18.

336 Reports of B. S. Serafimov to M. N. Giers, September 24, 1913; October 1, 1913; October 7, 1913, AVPRI, f. 180, op. 517/2, d. 3697.
fere in its affairs. The representatives of the Bulgarian and Serbian monasteries, intimidated by the Greeks, also subscribed to the petition. Only the representative of the Russian St. Panteleimon Monastery refused to subscribe. The petition was publicly read in the presence of many monks on October 3, a national holiday for the Greeks, was accompanied by a ceremony and prostration before the icon Axion Estin, with claims of ‘Long live Greece!’ Metropolitan Meletios also gave a passionate patriotic speech. A delegation of five representatives visited King Constantine and Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos with the petition. The latter assured the monks that “as the Holy Mount has kept and keeps all the Byzantine rites, and has kept for us our language during the long ages of slavery, it is of great importance for Hellenism. Be sure, fathers, that the government will do its best to preserve the structure of Mt. Athos, both ecclesiastical and political.” Both the king and the prime minister were ready to support the Greek monks on Mt. Athos.

During his stay on Mt. Athos, Serafimov continued to concentrate on the future international status of Mt. Athos. Metropolitan Meletios proposed that Russia should abstain from its program of internationalization, while Greece should guarantee that the Russian monks would have the rights and privileges that they had had before the Balkan Wars. In the present situation, Serafimov was inclined to adopt this proposal, because the establishment of an association of Orthodox states would be impossible to implement without undertaking violent measures and Greek counter-petitions to the Powers. Meanwhile, the Bulgarian Schism remained unresolved, and Serbia united with Greece to oppose Russian interests. Romania had only two sketes and several cells on Mt. Athos (which were hostile to the patriarchate), and Montenegro had no interests on the Holy Mountain. According to Serafimov, the protests of the Mt. Athos Greek Kinot would result in limiting Russian advancement towards the Archipelago and the Mediterranean which would stall Russia’s efforts. This would be catastrophic for the Russian monasteries, while the adoption of the proposal of Meletios could “give us the opportunity to reach our intended results”.

Serafimov also presented the conditions on which, in his opinion, the Russian-Greek agreement could be signed. Serafimov proposed that the Mt. Athos religious community would remain under the spiritual power of the Ecumenical Patriarch, and that all actions on Mt. Athos would be undertaken only after their approval by both Russian and Greek authorities. According to his proposal, a guard formed both by Greeks and Russians would replace the Greek military detachment, and the Greek

337 See the Russian translation of this text in addition to the report of Serafimov, October 21, 1913, ibid., ll. 46-47.
338 Reports of Serafimov, October 7, 1913, ibid., ll. 23-24, 34-35
339 An extract from the protocol of the session of the Kinot on October 28, 1913. Quoted from the report of B. Serafimov, November 2, 1913, ibid., ll. 57-60.
340 Ibid., ll. 30-31.
government should not confiscate monastic properties outside the peninsula (mainly in Macedonia and Thrace). The latter point, stressed Serafimov, had especial significance for Russia regarding the estate, Nuzla, in the Gulf of Kavala, which belonged to the Russian skete of St. Andrew, and which could be used as a strategic naval base.\textsuperscript{341} The proposal of Serafimov, though favourable to Russia, was not adopted by the Russian Foreign Ministry. Meanwhile, the position of Serafimov on Mt. Athos became more and more difficult and even dangerous. In December 1913 he left the Holy Mountain.

The question of the status of Mt. Athos continued to be discussed in 1914. Ever the artful and flexible diplomat, Greek prime minister Venizelos, who desired Russian support, was ready to make some concessions. In May 1914, the Russian ambassador to Constantinople, Giers, handed the Greek representative a proposal concerning the international status of Mt. Athos and expressed his willingness to begin negotiations. The agreement, based on Serafimov’s plan, contained two main points: the spiritual subordination of Mt. Athos to the Ecumenical Patriarch and Russian control over the political administration of the monastic foundations.\textsuperscript{342} The Greek government put forward a counter-proposal about a Greek-Russian \textit{condominium} on Mt. Athos. It proposed dual citizenship for Athonite Russian monks and restricted all other Orthodox states from taking part in decisions regarding the governance of Mt. Athos.\textsuperscript{343} This proposal might have been the better way out for Russia as a patron of Slav interests in the Balkans even though Greece would in all likelihood, renege on its promises once it had a firm hold on Mt. Athos. Its implementation, however, was thwarted due to the resistance of Serbia and Bulgaria.

With the onset of the First World War, the matter of the status of Mt. Athos did not come up again at a diplomatic level. Up until the Revolution of 1917, the Russian government did not recognize Mt. Athos as part of the territory belong to the Greek kingdom. We may definitely speak about the final union of Mt. Athos with Greece only in 1926, when the Greek government issued a law that all monks of the Holy Mount should be Greek citizens. Thus, the long discussions on the international status of Mt. Athos ceased immediately when Russia ceased its diplomatic pressure.

After the defeat of the Name Worshipers in 1913 and the beginning of the First World War the following year, when many of the novices were called up to military service, a rapid decrease in Russians on Mt. Athos began. From 1913 to 1917, the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{341} Ibid., ll. 31-32.
\item \textsuperscript{342} H. K. Papastathis, “To kathestos tou Agiou Orous kai tis Ekklesias stin Makedonia meta tin synthiki tou Boukourestiou,” \textit{Nomokanonikes meletes} (Athens: Protypes Thessalikes Ekdoseis, 2009), 61-63.
\end{enumerate}
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Russian population on Mt. Athos halved from 4100 to 2460. After 1917, when Russians lacked the opportunity to visit Mt. Athos and the government no longer supported the monasteries, Russian monasticism on the Holy Mountain ceased until the end of the 20th century.

The period between the end of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 and the beginning of the First World War was the “golden age” of Russian Mt. Athos. Despite the opposition from the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greek monasteries (as well as of the Russian government), the aspirations of the Russian people for a presence on Mt. Athos were so strong that the Russian monastic population grew annually. In the difficult political situation at the turn of the century, the Russian government did not take active steps in the Balkans; it maintained the status quo. The fear of breaking the balance of power and provoking a military conflict led to an extremely passive position on the part of the Russian Foreign Ministry, which preferred non-involvement on every occasion on this issue. Sometimes even the rational proposals of the diplomats met with no sympathy from the Holy Synod; many matters that had to be solved immediately were caught up in red tape.

The inconsistency of the policy towards the Russian monks on Mt. Athos meant that the political potential of Mt. Athos was not used to the full and did not bring the benefit it could. One could say that Russian Mt. Athos acted not in coordination with the governmental policy, but to some degree in spite of it. The enterprising, business-savvy Russian peasants, inspired by liberty which they could not receive in their motherland, created a unique phenomenon in southeastern Europe: a large Russian community with strong economic and moral potential. One cannot doubt that this original “Russian island” in the eastern Mediterranean served as a real support to the Russian authority in the region. It is difficult to say what the fate of the Russians on Mt. Athos would have been if the Revolution of 1917 had not happened. Yet, one thing is certain: Russian monasticism greatly influenced the political and spiritual life of the Balkans and of Eastern Christianity in general. Later, during the 20th century, Russian learned monks from Mount Athos spread the knowledge about Orthodoxy in Western Europe.

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At the turn of the 19th century, Old Serbia (Kosovo and Metochia), a territory with a mixed Serbian and Albanian population, was one of the most unstable regions in the Balkans. The Serbian Orthodox population had been weakened by the closure of the Pech Patriarchate in 1766. Later, the growth of anti-Christian tendencies in Turkey and rising Albanian nationalism resulted in drastic situations for many Serbian families from Metochia. After the defeat of the Prizren League in 1878, the sultan’s policy was aimed at supporting the Albanians against the Serbians, who were regarded as potentially revolutionary.345 The 1890s were a period of anarchy, which increased after the Greek-Turkish War of 1897. In 1898-1899 the Pech League was formed which continued the fight for Albanian autonomy. Austro-Hungary supported Albanian independence, seeing it as a bulwark against the Russian-protected Serbia.

As in other regions of the Ottoman Empire, there were two legal ways to support the nationalistic spirit of the population: by opening schools and strengthening ecclesiastical organization. After signing the consular convention between Serbia and Turkey in 1886 a series of Serbian consulates were opened in Skopje, Thessaloniki, Bitola and Prishtina. Russia also continued its traditional financial and diplomatic support of the Serbians in the ecclesiastical and school realms. With the help of the Russian vice-consul to Prizren, I. S. Iastrebov, the first Serbian theological school in Kosovo was founded in 1871. In the Serbian-Bulgarian conflicts in Macedonia he sided with Serbia.346

The only possible way in which Serbia could hope to influence the affairs of the Ottoman Empire was through ecclesiastical avenues. The first step was the election of the Serbian Dionisii Petrovich to the Rashka and Prizren See in 1896; the next was the election of Metropolitan Firmilian in Skopje (1903). Both appointments took place with the active support of the Russian embassy in Constantinople. In 1910 the Metropoly of Veles and Dibra was headed by Varnava Rosich, a former student at St. Petersburg Theological Academy who later became the Serbian patriarch.347

347 P. Orlovich, Skopal’sko vladichansko pitanje 1897-1902 (Belgrade, 1902); N. Razhnatovich, “Rad vlasti Crne Gore i Srbije na postavljanju Srpskih mitropolita u Prizrenu i Skopliu 1890-1902 godine”, Istorinski zapisi 22 (Titograd, 1965) 2: 217-275; M. Vojvodic, Petrogradske godine Stojana Novakovicha (1900-1905) (Belgrade, 2009), 44-49.
Between 1878 and 1903 Russian influence in Old Serbia waned and Austro-Hungary’s influence grew; it occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina. The diplomatic defeat of Russia in Bulgaria resulted in its isolation in the Balkans. Despite the unfavourable political situation, beginning in 1900 Russia again became active in the region. The Russian consuls, A. Mashkov, G. Shcherbina and A. Rostkovskii actively supported the Serbians and defended them from the violation of the Turks.

The Lavra of Dechani, founded in the 14th century, traditionally was one of the national symbols of the Serbian people. By the beginning of the 20th century the monastery suffered from Albanian raids, Turkish military aggression, and poor administration. The abbots expended money for their own needs, and thus, the monastery was on the brink of collapse. The situation became especially difficult after the killing of one of the Albanian leaders, Tsol Sokol, in August 1900. At that time the monastery was occupied by Turkish soldiers and the Albanians repeatedly attacked it. In this critical situation, Metropolitan Nikephor decided to request help from the Russians and to invite Russian monks to live in the monastery for a period of time.348

In June 1902 Nikephor, Metropolitan of Rashka and Prizren, sent a letter to the Russian consul to Skadr, G. Shcherbina, stating that he would like to begin negotiations regarding the monastery with the Russian embassy in Constantinople and the patriarchate. At the same time, Nikephor asked the prior of the kellion of St. John Chrysostom on Mt. Athos, Cyril, to find a monk who could serve as abbot in Dechani. The metropolitan hoped to reorganize the monastic life with the help of the Russians, who were known for their discipline, and who also had enough money to pay the debts of the monastery; an important reason for Cyril’s effort was the support he hoped to receive from the Russian embassy for the monastery. As for the Russian kelliots from Mt. Athos, they saw such a daughter monastery in the Balkans as an opportunity to relocate from Mt. Athos where their efforts were suppressed by the Greeks.

As the Russian vice-consul to Prizren, A. Petriaev reported:

Upon receiving the letter from the metropolitan, Cyril immediately wrote to Arsenii [his representative in Constantinople] to leave without delay for Prizren. He instructed him to arrange with the metropolitan to appoint monks from Mt. Athos to form the brotherhood of Dechani. The metropolitan had to allow them to organize their community according to the rules of Mt. Athos and with the right to elect the abbot from within the brotherhood.349

348 The history of the so called “Dechani affair” is well documented by papers both from Russian and Serbian archives. In 1910 an article on it was published by the Serbian consul to Skopje J. Jovanovich: Inostrani [J. M. Jovanovich], Dechansko pitanje (Beograd, 1910). The detailed study of D. Batakovich is based on the materials of Serbian archives (D. T. Batakovich, Dechansko pitanje (Belgrade, 1988)). In this chapter, for the first time the documents from Russian archives are used.

349 A copy of the report of A. M. Petriaev. Prizren, July 28, 1902, № 100, RGIA, f. 797, op. 72, 2otd. 3 st., d. 26, l. 61.
We cannot point out the exact date when negotiations commenced between Nikephor and the Russian monks. However, by May 1902 they were known to the Russian consul to Prizren, A. Beliaev, who described the history of Tsol Sokol, the dire situation of the monastery and spoke about the need to protect it.\footnote{Dispatch from May 26, 1902, AVPRI, f. Slavianskij stol (Slavic Department), op. 495, d. 4993, ll.4-6.} On July 27, 1902 Arsenii arrived in Prizren and asked the Russian vice-consul, A. Petriaev for support; the latter advised him not to reveal the reason for his visit to the Serbian community, and to be very cautious in his discussions with the metropolitan; Dechani was in his diocese and he would be the one to permit Russian monks to settle there. Petriaev was convinced that an energetic brotherhood would not only help Orthodoxy in Old Serbia, but it would also help return to Christianity the Serbians who had been islamized in the early 19th century. But he opposed the introduction of the monastic rules of Mt. Athos in Dechani, because they would be met with resistance by the Orthodox population who was used to neither the strictness of Athonite rules nor Russian Orthodoxy.\footnote{RGIA. F. 797, op. 72, 2 otd., 3 st., d. 26, 62. A copy of the report of Petriaev. 28 July 1902: RGIA, f. 796, op. 183, 6 otd. 1 st., ll. 2-3.}

Arsenii arrived in Pech on September 20. The successor of Petriaev, S. V. Tukholka, reported that the installation of monks from Mt. Athos in Dechani took place without undue difficulties due to the good will of the Serbians and the good relations between Metropolitan Nikephor and Cyril. “It is a very advantageous moment for us, which might not come our way again”, wrote the consul. As on Mt. Athos, the Russian monks would remain Russian citizens in Serbia, which gave the Russian diplomatic representatives the obligation to defend them.\footnote{Dispatch of November 28, 1902. AVPRI. F. Slavianskij stol, op. 495, d. 4993, ll.20-22.} Tukholka also stressed the political benefits for Russia in installing the monks in Dechani. First, it would strengthen the position of Orthodoxy vis-à-vis Catholicism, especially that of Austria. Second, it would help established closer relations between Russia and Old Serbia, and raise the profile of Russia. Third, the consulate could enlist Russian monks to gather political information, and thus follow the example of the Austrian consulate which paid Catholic priests for information gathered. The monks were to arrive in small groups of two or three. It seemed important to initially appoint Russian abbots in other Serbian monasteries as well as the brotherhood was becoming Russian due to the lack of Serbian monks.\footnote{Ibid., ll. 21-22.} So here we see a plan of gradual appropriation by the Russians not only of Dechani, but of other monasteries in Kosovo.

By the beginning of December 1902, after a series of meetings between the metropolitan and the Ottoman authorities, order in the monastery was restored. Meanwhile the Russian monk Arsenii arrived in Dechani to take over the administration of the monastery.\footnote{Secret telegram of S. Tuholk to A. Zinoviev. No. 186, ibid., 23. D T. Batakovich, Dechansko pitanje, 72-74.} In autumn 1902 negotiations between the metropolitan and Russian
diplomats to determine how Dechani would be handed over to the Russians took place. Neither the metropolitan nor the Serbian consul reported to the Serbian government about it. On December 14, Tukholka sent the text of the agreement (nine items) according to which the monastery was to be transferred to the Russians to the Russian ambassador to Constantinople, Zinoviev. Tukholka found the terms “suitable in general”, and reported on the ongoing negotiations concerning the transferring to the Russians of the monasteries Grachanica and Devich and the patriarchal monastery in Pech, i.e. the most important Serbian monasteries in Kosovo and Metochia. The official act concerning Dechani was signed on January 14, 1903 and by the end of January the transfer had taken place.

As the stabilization of the finances of the monastery and the regulation of relations with Albanians and Turkish soldiers would be costly, Cyril requested permission from the Russian ambassador to Constantinople to collect money in Russia during a period of three years. Because Ambassador Zinoviev actively supported the Russian monks, he asked the Russian ministry of foreign affairs for financial support for the monasteries in Serbia from the funds of the Bessarabian estates. He stressed the importance of this for Russian policy as it would convince the Serbs that Russia was actively supporting Serbian interests. The proposal of Zinoviev was supported by the Synod: on September 24, 1904 Cyril was granted permission to have a permanent representative in Odessa to carry out the affairs of the cell of St. John Chrysostom and the Dechani Monastery. According to the proposal of the Holy Synod on February 4, 1905, the Foreign Ministry decided to grant Cyril an annual sum of 10,000 rubles from the extra capital of the Bessarabian estates. In exchange the Russian Foreign Ministry demanded that the Serbian government recognize the kellion as a Skete of the Hilandar monastery, on whose lands it was situated. At the same time the Russian government sent to Metropolitan Nikephor 3,580 golden dinars in gratitude for accepting the Russian monks.

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355 S. V. Tuholka to I. A. Zinoviev. 14 December 1902, no. 213, AVPRI, f. Slavianskij stol, op. 495, d. 4993, ll. 26-27. The full text has been published several times. See D. T. Batakovich, Dechansko pitanje, 83.
356 AVPRI. f. Slavianskij stol, op. 495, d. 4993, l. 25.
358 AVPRI. f. Slavianskij stol, op. 495, d. 4993, ll. 49-52.
359 Ibid., ll. 35-42. See also the copy of the proposal of the over- procurator of the Holy Synod of the Russian church S. Lukianov to the Holy Synod, 3 April, 1910, no. 3216, RGIA, f. 797, op. 80, 2otd. 3 st., d. 164, ll. 1-4.
360 K. P. Pobedonoscev to V. N. Lamzdorf. AVPRI. f. Slavianskij stol, op. 495, d. 4993, l. 170.
361 RGIA. F. 797, op. 80. 2otd. 3 st., d. 164, ll. 1-2.
362 D. T. Batakovich, Dechansko pitanje, 89.
Despite this auspicious start, the situation in Kosovo in the first months of 1903 was precarious. In March 1903 the Albanians killed the Russian consul to Mitrovitsa; massacres of the Serbian population continued. In the first half of 1903, due to the political crisis in Serbia, the government did not actively oppose the Russian initiative but this changed. The six Russian monks who had come to Prizren from Mt. Athos were not sent to Dechani because the metropolitan, pressed by the Serbian government, opposed their placement. The Russian consulate would not impose itself in the support of Orthodoxy, reported Tukholka. The new Serbian government, instated following a military coup in May, 1903, demanded that additional conditions be met, including that the Russians should leave Dechani as soon as the danger had passed. The Serbian government also offered financial compensation to the monks. P. B. Mansurov, an expert in ecclesiastical affairs in the Russian embassy in Constantinople, proposed that Metropolitan Nikephor, in a new agreement with the Serbian government, should give the Russians another monastery in Old Serbia as compensation for the loss of Dechani. Ambassador Zinoviev added that two or three Russians should be left in Dechani. At first Cyril refused to change the conditions, but later seemed to agree with the proposal of Mansurov. More intrusive was Varsonofii, the representative of the St. John Chrysostom cell in Constantinople: he insisted on retaining ten to fifteen Russian monks in Dechani for five to six years. As the tension surrounding the Russians continued, Cyril decided to leave for Mt. Athos, but was stopped by the metropolitan and the Serbian representative, Hristich. In August the Russian consul Tukholka came to Dechani to investigate the case. Tukholka hoped to remove the main opponent of the Russians, Gavrilo Dozhich, a resident monk and Bojko and Tsvetko Stamatovich, Serbian teachers in the monastery.

At the beginning of September 1903, Zinoviev and Gruich, the Russian and Serbian ambassadors respectively, signed an agreement in which Cyril remained abbot, but a Serbian monk was appointed as his assistant; the number of the Russian monks was to be reduced to ten; a school would be opened; both the Russian and the Serbian governments would support the monastery. A commission was formed to implement this agreement by the Foreign Ministry in Belgrade with Metropolitan Dimitry of Shabac as its head. Its members came to a conclusion that the agreement between the Russians and Nikephor was uncanonical and the Russian monks had to

364 AVPRI. f. Slavianskij stol, op. 495, d. 4993, ll. 32-33.
365 Report of S. V. Tukholka, July 12, 1903, ibid., l. 64.
367 S. V. Tukholka to the First Department of the Foreign Ministry, December 22, 1903, no. 653, ibid., ll. 93-94.
leave Dechani immediately. Tukholka insisted on a more active rebuttal on the part of the Russian diplomatic mission in Belgrade, but Ambassador Muraviev preferred caution. He argued that the Russians had legal rights based on the agreement, and Dechani was on Turkish territory not Serbian. However, the Serbians, defending their national holy place, had a moral claim to it as well.

There were several reasons for the tension in Dechani. First, the Mt. Athos monks viewed Dechani as a Russian monastery and demanded full obedience from the Serbs. Nor did they accept the Serbian ecclesiastical traditions. Furthermore, the strict Mt. Athos rules were rather arduous for the Serbs and Cyril preferred to have Russian rather than Serbian monks to instruct Serbian novitiates.

The Russian Foreign Ministry supposed that it would be possible to fulfill the Serbian requirements (a limited term for the Russian presence in the monastery; the old buildings would be preserved; Serbian customs would be observed) and the Russian mission in Belgrade addressed the Serbian government with the following proposal (April 27, 1904). An appointment of a Serbian abbot could also be accepted if he had only a title, while in fact the monastery was ruled by a Russian abbot. The main goal remained the same—recognizing the St. John Chrysostom cell as a skete. In his answer Prime Minister N. Pashich stressed that the agreement was uncanonical and illegal because it had been implemented without the approval of the Serbian government and the Hilandar monastery to which the cell belonged. This answer provoked discontent in the Russian embassy in Constantinople. Zinoviev wrote:

The terms expressed in the Serbian note evince the overmastering prejudice which guides the present Serbian government in its attitude to the participation of the Russian elements in the revival of monastic life in Old Serbia. This prejudice seems to me not completely based in reality. Russia will never be able to replace Serbia as the primary influence in an area so distance from Russia. The monastery will always depend on Serbia; here the Russians can only be allies of the Serbs.

In view of the impossibility of a resolution, S. Tukholka proposed that the Dechani case be considered as a separate one from the Mt. Athos one. In the second half

371 Dispatch of A. Muraviev-Apostol-Korobin. February 11, 1904, no. 16, AVPRI, f. Slavianski stol, op. 495, d. 4993, II. 103-104.
of 1905 the situation around Dechani seemed to stabilize because the attacks from the Serbian press subsided as did the pressure from the Serbian government. Cyril built good relations with his assistant, the Serbian abbot Theophil. Serbian chanting was introduced in monastic worship which contributed to better relations with the population. Though in Pech there were still two parties, Russophiles and Serbophiles, Tuholka was confident that at least the first round of conflict surrounding Dechani was resolved and the Russians had come out on top.  

Meanwhile the financial situation in the monastery worsened. The huge expenses motivated Cyril to ask the Russian Holy Synod about the possibility of acquiring a house in Odessa. The Archbishop of Cherson vehemently opposed this and pointed out that such a metochion could create difficulties with the local ecclesiastical authorities nor would it be advantageous due to the distance between Odessa and Old Serbia. As a result the Synod rejected Cyril’s request. The position of the monastery remained precarious; on the one hand, Cyril had to resist Albanian demands and on the other, he had to build good relations with the Serbs of the nearest village. At the same time he requested that the metropolitan grant official permission for the 18 Russians who had arrived in Dechani by June 1906 to be resident. At the beginning of 1908, Cyril requested the Russian consulate in Prizren to allow him to build a daughter monastery in the Orenburg province in Russia on estate land donated to the St. John Chrysostom kellion by E. V. Slepyh; Cyril planned to initiate monks for Dechani there. The attempt to organize a Mt. Athos metochion in Russia failed: the Holy Synod refused to allow it.  

The diplomatic reports of 1906 reveal Cyril’s mismanagement of the affairs of Dechani. In December 1906, the commission, headed by the metropolitan, uncovered a large deficit in the budget of the monastery. He insisted on replacing Cyril. On October 16, 1908 Nikephor sent a letter to S. Igumanov, director of the foundation in Belgrade, outlining his opposition to Cyril. On October 17 a commission headed by the rector of Prizren Theological School, D. Kovachevich, was appointed and started its work in Dechani on November 2. As Cyril refused to show them the accounts, the members of the commission wrote to the metropolitan that it was not possible to

376 S. V. Tukholka to The First Department of the Foreign Ministry, January 28, 1906, AVPRI, f. Slavianskij stol, op. 495, d. 4995, ll. 22-24.  
377 The Office of the head of the Holy Synod to the Archbishop of Cherson. June 13, 1906, RGIA, f. 797, op. 76. 2 otd. 3 st., d. 39, l. 1.  
378 Extract from the Resolution of the Holy Synod, February 22/March 14, 1907, no. 1192, ibid., l. 5.  
379 Report of S. V. Tukholka, June 18, 1906, ibid., ll. 36-37.  
380 S. Razumovskii to I. A. Zinoviev, January 15, 1908, no. 9, ibid., l. 106.  
381 Holy Synod to Foreign Ministry, June 28, 1908, no. 5385.  
382 Metropolitan Nikephor to the Foreign Ministry of Serbia, August 22/September 4, 1904, AS, f. MID (Foreign Ministry) PPO, 1907, red. 404; D. T. Batakovich, Dechansko pitanje, 145.
investigate the situation and asked him to initiate a petition among the people to have the Russians removed peacefully.\textsuperscript{383}

By the end of 1909 it was apparent that the financial situation of the monastery was threatened. The huge expenses, the reduced financing from the Serbian government and the deduction of the incomes from the metochions resulted in large debts. Answering to the numerous complaints of the Serbian government and after an official note from the Serbian ambassador, the Russian ambassador to Constantinople, Charykov, decided to resolve this long drawn out matter. A special commission headed by N. V. Kokhmaskii started its work in the Russian embassy in Constantinople. Its members were Cyril, S. P. Razumovskii the consul to Prizren, and Kutepov, the third secretary of the embassy. Serbia put forward several proposals for the new agreement: the monks in Dechani would be replaced by other Russian monks according to the recommendations of the Russian diplomacy; their stay in the monastery would be limited; the metropolitan and the Serbian and Russian consuls should administer the monastery; a school for the monks and Serbian children should be opened; the Russian monks should assist in repossessing territory captured by the Albanians.\textsuperscript{384}

Ambassador Charykov reported:

\begin{quote}
From the minutes of the meetings of the commission from November 27 to December 10 last year and from its private report of December 19, without the participation of Cyril ... I have concluded that the difficult situation of the Dechani Monastery can be explained by the financial mismanagement and incapacity of Cyril to deal with such a difficult financial affair.\textsuperscript{385}
\end{quote}

It was decided that Cyril would not return to Dechani and that Charykov would apply for permission for Cyril to collect money in Russia for one year. Also, the monastery would be loaned a sum from the incomes of the Bessarabian monasteries without interest for 12 years. Charykov wrote, “I completely share the view that the monastery should be returned to the Serbian people, but there is no doubt that the immediate removal of the Russians from the monastery would only result in the final destruction of this historical Serbian holy place.” The commission decided that the money received from Russia would be paid to the monastery in monthly installments by the Prizren consulate upon the receipt of a monthly financial report. The financial assistant of the monastery was to be appointed by the Prizren consulate. The Russian consulate promised to ask the Turkish government for military protection of the monastery.\textsuperscript{386}

\textsuperscript{384} \textit{Ibid.}, 165-166.
\textsuperscript{385} N. V. Charykov to A. P. Izvolskii (the Russian Minister of Foreign affairs), January 20, 1910, no. 14, AVPRI, f. Slavianskij stol, op. 495, d. 4998, ll. 9-13.
\textsuperscript{386} \textit{Ibid.}, ll. 11, 14-23.
Though the decisions of the commission were agreed to by Cyril, his assistant Varsonofii at first refused to agree to the interference of lay authorities in the monastic affairs. He was supported by the metropolitan.\(^{387}\) However, their efforts brought no results. As one can notice, Charykov, as well as his predecessor Zinoviev, supposed that the situation would improve with better management. His point of view was not shared by the Russian Foreign Ministry both from a political and an economic point of view. Appointing an employee of the consulate to manage the financial matters would mean that the official administrator of the monastery would be the Russian government, which of course would provoke the Serbs. That is why the Council of Ministers decided that the Russians should leave Dechani immediately, and on March 10, 1910 Charykov received a telegram to that effect.\(^{388}\) The telegram also made clear that the debts of the monastery (85,000 rubles) had to be paid. On July 25, 1910 the Russian Holy Synod came to the same conclusion.\(^{389}\)

Though sending the Russian monks to Dechani was recognized as having been a mistake, an immediate removal of the Russians was considered untimely by both Charykov and the Russian ambassador in Belgrade, Gartwig.\(^{390}\) Meanwhile the metropolitan continued to undermine the monks. After an exchange of letters a personal meeting between the consul, Razumovskii, and Nikephor about the metropolitan's actions, prevented an open scandal. As Nikephor had planned the canonical prohibition of the Russians in Dechani and their forced removal by the Turkish soldiers, Razumovskii proposed to the Ministry that Nikephor be recalled to Constantinople by the patriarch and replaced.\(^{391}\) Nikephor’s opinion that Cyril had to be replaced by another more suitable missionary from Russia was shared by Charykov, but because the Russians were in Dechani for only a limited period of time it seemed senseless to appoint a replacement.\(^{392}\) The following year the Russian government paid the debts of the monastery and extended the annual subsidy.\(^{393}\) The next Russian consul, S. Zuev, thought there was little purpose to the Russian presence in Dechani and opened negotiations on this subject with Dimitrievich, the rector of the Prizren Theological School.\(^{394}\)


\(^{388}\) AVPRI. f. Slavianskij stol, op. 495, d. 4998, ll. 66-67.

\(^{389}\) RGIA. F. 797, op. 80. 2 otd. 3 st., d. 164, 11. The Serbian ambassador to St. Petersburg, D. Popovich reported about the decision of the Council of Ministers about the abandoning of the Dechani Monastery by the Russians: Reports from May 6, 27, 1910. AS. F. MID PPO. II. Red. 512.


\(^{392}\) Report of N. V. Charykov. March 22/April 4, 1910, no. 46, ibid., l. 76.

\(^{393}\) N. V. Charukov to S. D. Sazonov, November 3, 1910, no. 247, ibid., ll. 170-171.

As a result of the first Balkan War, Metochia became part of Montenegro. Neither its government, nor Gavriil Dozhich, who became Metropolitan of Pech with Russian support, insisted on the removal of the Russians from Dechani. During the First World War in one of the monastery buildings a hospital for wounded soldiers was organized. In 1915 the monastery was in the Bulgarian occupation zone and in 1916 the Russian monks were interned in a camp for prisoners of war in Hungary.
7 An Unrealized Project: The Myra Lycia Affair

No other saint was more highly esteemed in Russia than St. Nicholas of Myra. The Christianization of Myra in Lycia was completed by 325; St. Nicolas was its bishop. He died in 330 and was buried in the church of Lower Myra.\(^{395}\) The Byzantine period saw mass pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Nicolas. Later, in 1087, after its conquest by the Seljuks, Italian merchants stole the relics and transferred them to Bari in eastern Italy, where they can still be seen.

After the Ottoman conquest, the Myra church went to rack and ruin. In 1850 it was visited by the famous Russian traveler and writer Andrei Nikolaevich Muraviev. He was moved by the poor state of the church and asked Metropolitan Filaret Drozdov for permission to restore it.\(^{396}\) With Filaret’s help Muraviev collected 25,000 rubles and through the Russian vice-consul to Rhodes, H. Ducci, bought what was left of the church and the surrounding 42 hectares. The deal was concluded on behalf of Dimitri Antonas, an inhabitant of nearby Castelorizo. The purchase was effected with the help of the Metropolitan of Pisidia, Meletios; the sultan’s firman allowing the restoration was issued in 1852.\(^{397}\) (During recent excavation of the territory of the church, Professor S. Otuken found a stone with a troparion to St. Nicolas in Slavonic and an inscription “Constructed by pious Russians 1853”.)\(^{398}\)

The restoration work continued in 1858, first by the local inhabitants and later by the architect Salzmann, who was in charge of the excavations and restoration from October 1858 to May 1860. He removed the soil from the church and uncovered the mosaic floors in the altar area. Due to lack of time and money only the main area of the church was restored. The work, costing about 40,000 rubles, was finished by 1863.

Though initial permission from the Pisidian metropolitan had been given, a patriarchal act of August 1858 ordered the Metropolitan of Pisidia to immediately stop all construction work, as the Greeks feared that they would lose control of the church

\(^{395}\) The first basilica in this place was built in the 5th or 6th century. The present day church with a crypt is dated to 8th century. The church was rebuilt many times, but the altar area has been preserved while the walls are covered with frescoes from different periods. The exact burial place of St. Nicolas is unknown; the legendary sarcophagus, which is thought to be his, is dated 160-170 c.e. and is one of the many sarcophagi that survive in the church from a late Roman cemetery. See: R. M. Harrison, “Churches and Chapels of Central Lycia”, Anatolian Studies, 13 (1963); J. Borchhardt, ed., Myra: eine Lykische Metropole in antiker und byzantinischer Zeit (Berlin, 1975); S. Yildiz-Otuken, “Die Nikolaoskirche in Myra in Licht der neuester Forschungen”, Fremde Zeiten: Festschrift für Jurgen Borhardt, II (Vien, 1996): 227-238; Eadem, “Demre-Myra”, American Journal of Archaeology 1 (Boston, 1997).

\(^{396}\) Pribavlenija k izdaniju tvorenij Sv. Otcov v russkom perevode, IX (=Mirlikijskaja tserkov’ i grobnica Sviatitelia Nikolaja Chudotvorca) (Moscow, 1850).

\(^{397}\) E. Sokolovskii, Otkrytie i vozobnovlenie drevnej basiliki Sv. Nicolaja v Mirach Likijskich (St. Peters- burg, 1861).

\(^{398}\) Chr. Kalaitzis, Metropolitan of Myra, Ta Myrovola Myra. I istoria ton Myron apo ton 19o aiona os to 1922 (Athens, 2002), 196.
and its surrounding lands.\textsuperscript{399} Subsequent patriarchal acts were, however, positive. For example, on September 16, 1859 Patriarch Cyril VII praised the zeal of Metropolitan Meletios and the diligence of Dimitris Antonas.\textsuperscript{400} However, fears about Russian activities were not entirely quelled. In 1865 Patriarch Sophrony III sent a letter to the Pisidian metropolitan, Cesarios, asking for information concerning the church in Myra, whether the priest there had been commemorating the name of the Patriarch, and by whom he had been appointed.\textsuperscript{401} Clearly, the patriarch had received information about Russian activities which raised his suspicions.

In 1864 A. N. Muraviev handed over the rights for the Myra land and the church to Ignatiev, who had just been appointed Russian ambassador to the sublime porte. According to Ottoman law, foreign subjects could not acquire land on Turkish soil, and that is why the land had been registered initially in the name of Antonas. The latter died in a shipwreck and his property was left to his sons. Ignatiev first entrusted the church in Myra to the Metropolitan of Rhodes, Dorotheos, and then made over the rights of the property to his mother-in-law, Duchess Anna Golitsyna. Antonas’s sons received a compensation of 7,000 Turkish liras.\textsuperscript{402}

In 1870 H. Ducci was replaced by another Russian vice-consul to Rhodes, V. O. Jugovich. He received the title of ownership of the plot in Myra on behalf of A. Golitsyna; the land was described as \textit{erazi-i-emirije}, i.e., it was to be cultivated for three years, otherwise it would revert to the government.\textsuperscript{403} In 1868 Ignatiev asked Makarii Sushkin, the abbot of the Russian monastery, St. Panteleimon on Mt. Athos to take care of the church and to send some monks to it. In this way a Russian monastery in Myra would be founded. St. Panteleimon Monastery agreed but without enthusiasm; it could see no benefit in acquiring the place and was afraid of a confrontation with the patriarchate. Nevertheless, Makarii sent two monks who settled near the church. They asked the ambassador for permission to collect aid in Russia. Permission was given by the Russian Synod when it met December, 1874 to January 1875. The two monks, Afanasii and Varsanofii, started collecting donations in 1877, just before the beginning of the Russo-Turkish War. In April 1878 they requested a renewal of permission, because they had been unsuccessful in their first attempt; but it appears they did not receive it.\textsuperscript{404}

\textsuperscript{399} AKP KPA, cod. 32, No. 1858: 256-257 (See the edition of the text: Chr. Kalaitzis, \textit{Ta Myrovola Myra}, 89-90).
\textsuperscript{400} AKP KPA, cod. 32, No. 1859: 472.
\textsuperscript{401} Chr. Kalaitzis, \textit{Ta Myrovola Myra}, 66-67.
\textsuperscript{402} G. P. Begleri to V. N. Chitrovo, November 6, 1893, \textit{Rossija i Prvoslavnyj Vostok}, 271.
\textsuperscript{404} See a copy of this document in the archive of N. P. Ignatiev, GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1150, l. 11'.
Before the beginning of the war, in 1876, Mt. Athos monks started collecting funds through St. Alexander Chapel in St. Petersburg. It was founded in memory of the attempt on Alexander II’s life on May 25, 1867, but had remained unfinished. The donors had no difficulty in transferring their gifts to the Mt. Athos monks, so the chapel was dedicated to the church in Myra and sanctified in 1879. Money started coming in, and by January 1, 1896 the capital of the chapel for building a Russian monastery in Myra totaled 118,000 rubles.

At the beginning of 1876 the inhabitants of Myra sent the patriarchate a complaint about George Antonas (son of Dimitris) who did not allow them to pray in the church. The patriarch asked the Metropolitan of Rhodes to investigate the case. In a letter of the patriarch to Ignatiev (June 5, 1877) we read that vice-consul Jugovich bought the land around the church and tried to force the inhabitants to leave their houses and rebuild elsewhere. When they refused, he did not allow them to attend church services.

This letter was in fact the first official protest from the patriarchate. Why was it filed so late? One reason is that the Greeks had previously intended to restore the church with Russian help knowing that later it would inevitably pass into the hands of the patriarchate but that they had no definite plans of how this would happen. The presence of Mt. Athos monks and the attempts of Jugovich to legalize it as a Russian possession of course provoked anxiety. But the real struggle took place after 1878 when Ignatiev had already left Constantinople. In May 1878 the Greek vice-consul to Antalya addressed a letter to the great protosyggel of the patriarchate, stressing that if Russian activities were not immediately stopped, the Russians would establish a powerful monastery in the place and use it “as a stronghold of pan-Slavic aims”. The same year, Joachim III again protested, this time to Ambassador Lobanov-Rostovskii. In the protest, the patriarch repeated the complaint he had made to Ignatiev. In 1879 Joachim reported to the Synod that the patriarchate demanded a takrīr to halt the sale of the land. On August 4, 1879 a sultan’s teskere was issued, stating that the restoration of the church by Muraviev had been an act of piety and the church should be made subordinate to the patriarchate. The sultan’s government was to ensure that the land would not be passed out of the hands of the patriarchate and in the future no threats would be made towards the local inhabitants. After the publication of the governmental document a monk from the patriarchate was sent to Myra to work in

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405 See the documentation of the chapel: AVPRI, f. 337/2 (Russian Imperial Palestine Society), op. 873/13, d. 13 (1877-1918).
406 Chr. Kalaitzis, Ta Myrovola Myra, 197.
408 Ibid., 69, 197-198.
409 See the full text in Russian translation in: L. A. Gerd, ed., Rossia i Pravoslavnyj Vostok: 309; extracts are edited in: Chr. Kalaitzis, Ta Myrovola Myra, 70.
the church and organize a school. His activities were, however, misunderstood by the sons of Antonas, who refused to give him the holy vessels and other church property. Nothing could be done by the next abbot, Eugenios, appointed in 1881. In 1884 the Metropolitan of Rhodes Germanos (future Patriarch, 1912-1918) sent by the patriarch, tried to resolve the conflict. He reported that the Russians were planning to open a consulate in Myra—though not with the intent to protect their acquired properties. In 1885 Germanos was appointed patriarchal exarch to Myra and made efforts to establish the rights of the patriarchate to the church.410

However, a Russian consul to Myra was not appointed, and in November 1886 Ignatiev passed the title of the properties in Myra to Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, head of the imperial Orthodox Palestine Society. Mundane matters were entrusted to Jugovich, then vice-consul to the Dardanelles. Meanwhile on June 25, 1886 a new abbot was sent to Myra, a local person, Paisios from Kastelorizo. By this appointment Metropolitan Germanos hoped to establish closer contact with the inhabitants of the village.

Further events can be reconstructed from the correspondence of Abbot Paisios with Metropolitan Venediktos and the reports of Jugovich. Following the instructions received from the Palestine Society, Jugovich had to receive permission from the patriarch for construction of a Russian church in Myra in compliance with the Salzmann plan, and for settling Russian monks there. He entrusted the matter in Constantinople to the advocate, G. Apostolidis. Apostolidis’s job was to acquire a patriarchal sigillion (act), which would allow Russia to gain possession of the monastery for a limited period. The church would be given to the Russians for 50-60 years but with conditions. They had to pay the patriarchate a rent of 500 francs for the first three years; 1,000 francs the next ten years; 5,000 francs for the remaining years. The contract had to be bought for a sum of 160,000 francs (30,000 of them allotted to the schools of the patriarchate). In addition to the contractual costs, the advocate would cost 4,500 francs regardless of the outcome.411 The conditions were considered too demanding given the probable outcome and the Society decided to reject them and only give Jugovich the task of legalizing the estate as the Russian purchase of the church had never been officially recognized by either the Greeks or the Ottomans. It was thought that if the Ottomans officially confirmed the purchase, the patriarchate would concede the church on more suitable terms. If the Ottomans refused, the patriarchal act would be of no use any way.

In June 1887 Jugovich went to Myra to assure himself that the land was still regarded by the Ottoman authorities as a Russian possession. He registered the prop-

410 G. Papadopoulou, sygyronos ierarchia tis Orthodoxou Anatolikis Ekklisias I (Athens, 1895), 454-455; Chr. Kalaitzis, Ta Myrovola Myra, 198, 200.
411 N. N. Lisovoi, Russkoe duchovnoe i politicheskoe prisutstvie v Sviatoj Zemle i na Blizhnem Vostoke, 277-278.
An Unrealized Project: The Myra Lycia Affair

The property on behalf of M. P. Stepanov and received 25,000 francs from the capital of Myra for his expenses. The local Ottoman authorities reaffirmed the rights of Duchess Golitsyna and the Russians to the land. The Greek abbot Paisios reported on the visit of Jugovich to the patriarchate in a very critical manner. The Russian and French consuls to Rhodes who accompanied Jugovich clearly intended to deprive the Greeks of the Church of St. Nicolas, he wrote. In all of this the Russian embassy in Constantinople remained silent. The lack of interest on the part of the embassy was the result of the personal negative attitude of Ambassador Nelidov towards the Palestine Society, and by his belief that a successful outcome was not possible.

After the departure of Jugovich, the Greek clergy did its best to persuade the Ottoman authorities to take decisions that were unfavourable to Russia, which it did, for example, the governor of Antalya stated that the Myra estates were of strategic importance for Turkey. That is why the documents presented by Jugovich for approval to the department and the erazi-i-emirije were put aside pending further investigation by the War Ministry. Thus the affair changed from being purely an ecclesiastical one to being a political one.

The Ottoman government sent two commissions to Myra. The first was headed by topography engineer, Lieutenant Colonel Abdulla-Bey; it went to Myra in November 1889 and returned to Constantinople in March 1890. The commission first made a survey of all monastic and non-monastic lands in the region and, second, interrogated the locals in order to know how Jugovich had acquired the land and what his legal status was regarding this land. The Ottoman commission was followed by a patriarchal one, consisting of three metropolitans and several laics. The abbot of Myra was also summoned to Constantinople to report. The entire affair of the acquisition of the land by Anna Golitsyna and the mission of Jugovich were again repeated. The final conclusion of the commission was reflected in the Synod Act of March 22, 1890. The patriarchate sent a decisive protest to the porte countering the demands of Jugovich. He asked that the Ottoman government issue an official act, confirming the inviolability of the church property in Myra. However, owing to the measures undertaken by Jugovich in Constantinople, the Ottoman general headquarters denied that the Myra estate was of any strategic importance. Nevertheless, no final decision on the affair was taken.

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413 N. N. Lisovoi, Russkoe duchovnoe i politicheskoe prisutstvie v Sviatoj Zemle i na Blizhnem Vostoke, 278-279; L. A. Gerd, Constantinopol’ i Peterburg, 379-380.
Jugovich then insisted on sending a new Ottoman commission to Myra. His request was granted, and in 1891 a new commission of three officers was sent, along with Jugovich. At the same time the Metropolitan of Pisidia was told to prevent any interference of the Turkish officials in church affairs and to report any steps of the governmental commission to the patriarchate. The correspondence of the Metropolitan of Pisidia, the Abbot of Myra and the patriarchate in the years 1891-1893 reflects the struggle between the church and the Russian representatives, both parties trying to convince the Ottoman government of the rightness of their cause.

Jugovich died in 1893. The Palestine Society appointed Begleri, the agent of the Russian Shipping and Trade Company in Constantinople, in his place (in May or June 1893). Some of the hopes pinned on him no doubt arose because of his close relations with Patriarch Neophytos VIII (1891-1894). V. N. Khitrovo, secretary of the Palestine Society, expected Begleri to accomplish two tasks: 1) gather information on the case from the patriarchal archive; 2) negotiate with the patriarch on the case and convince him to come up with a good solution in exchange for a certain sum of money.

Begleri’s plan of actions was to convince Patriarch Neophytos VIII to help the Russians. If the Ottomans got involved in the affair, a rumor would be spread that the monastery would be turned into a nunnery, and any suspicions that the monastery would be used for political or military purposes would thus be neutralized. Begleri first met with the patriarch to deal with assistance to Russia at the beginning of October 1893. He hoped to reach a positive resolution, based, firstly, on the Russophile disposition of Neophytos VIII, and secondly, on the fact that the monastery in Myra brought in no income to the patriarchate, but, on the contrary, created many difficulties.

The next meeting of Begleri with the patriarch took place at the end of October 1893. The patriarch informed Begleri that the first secretary of the Synod had already gathered the documentation on the case, and that the members of the Synod were very hostile towards the Russians and their activities in Myra, because Jugovich’s actions had resulted in the involvement of the Ottoman government. Nevertheless, Neophytos promised to do his best and to call the Metropolitan of Pisidia, Benedictos, to Constantinople and discuss the matter with him. However, Begleri found it very difficult to resolve the matter as it stood because it had been complicated by becoming political.

In February 1894 Begleri informed Professor Troitskii that the former Metropolitan of Pisidia, Benedictos, had written an explanation of the issue of Myra. The patri-
arch, in his opinion, wanted to receive a guarantee of support from the Russian government in the event that he hand over the monastery to the Russians. In April 1894 Begleri visited St. Petersburg and met the secretary of the Palestine Society, V. N. Khitrovo. One cannot doubt that their topic of conversation was the Myra affair. The leaders of the Palestine Society, however, were pessimistic about the matter. Begleri proposed another solution: that the church would be restored with Russian money, and the keys would be handed over to the patriarch on the condition that there would be patriarchal permission for a church service in Slavonic for the Russian pilgrims. Begleri’s proposal was as a whole adopted by Khitrovo, however, it was rejected in Moscow. Ambassador Nelidov in Constantinople also thought it a good solution and the only possible way out at that moment.

Further events in Constantinople (the earthquake in summer 1894, the struggle of the patriarch against the porte and the members of the synod, and the abdication of Neophytos VIII) hindered a resolution of the Myra affair. During the reign of Patriarch Anthimos VII, Begleri proposed further action to Troitskii. We don’t know whether he received permission or not, but a year later he reported the existence of a letter from the Metropolitan of Pisidia to the patriarchate (May 4, 1896) on the same subject. According to the letter, the kaimakam of Antalya, on arriving in Myra, had called together all the inhabitants and told them that they had no right to sell their estates. The land, he said, had never belonged to the church, but to Duchess Golitsyna and was now up for public sale. In Begleri’s opinion, the Ottoman government wanted in this way to reaffirm its possession of the land. He devised another plan, namely to send the porte a note about the Russian tsar’s patronage of this place. One has to suppose that this note was never sent, and no trace of it is found among Begleri’s letters to Troitskii. Patriarch Constantinos V, when asked about the affair, paraphrased Virgil’s famous words “I am afraid of the Russians even when they are bringing gifts”.

After the removal of the Russians from Myra, the situation did not improve for the Greeks. The correspondence between the abbot of Myra and the patriarch in 1897 and 1898 reveals tense relations with the locals and the presence of large debts of the church.

Ignatiev remained interested in Myra till the end of his life. On July 9, 1908 he asked M. P. Stepanov about the situation. Not seeing a favourable outcome, the Palestine Society decided to hand over the Myra-Lycian capital to the Bargrad commit-

419 Ibid., 298.
423 A paraphrase of “Timeo Danaos et dora ferentes” from The Eneid by Virgil.
424 AKP KPA, cod. 69 (17 April 1897), prot. 947, 84; ibid., cod. 70 (November 7, 1898), prot. 5857, 395.
tee, who was erecting a Russian church in Bari. The Russian ambassador to Constantinople, Charykov, supported this move and stressed that the military and political considerations which had previously guided the thinking of the Russian government, were no longer relevant, and the construction of a magnificent church in Myra would no longer give Russia its accustomed moral status. On December 7, 1910 the capital was finally handed over to the Bargrad committee.425

So, despite the enormous sums wasted on resolving the affair and all the efforts of the diplomats and agents, the plan to create another Russian monastic center in the diocese of the Patriarchate of Constantinople failed. Mt. Athos remained the only stronghold of Russian monasticism in the east Mediterranean up to 1917.

425 M. P. Stepanov to N. F. Geiden, AVPRI, f. Embassy in Constantinople, op. 517/2, d. 7683, l. 27-32; N. V. Charykov to A. A. Shirinskiy-Shichmatov, November 10, 1910, ibid.
8 Conclusion

The main focus of Russia’s Near East policy at end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries was a resolution of the Eastern Question—the domination of the Straits, Bosporus and Dardanelles. This traditional direction of Russia’s southern policy became much more complicated after its defeat in the Crimean War. The efforts of diplomacy after 1856 were aimed at restoring the previous influence in the east Mediterranean. The goal was reached to some degree due to successful activities of the Russian Foreign Office and especially due to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. But the main problem was not yet resolved. In the 1880s and 90s new obstacles arose for Russia. The South Slav states and Romania were orientated towards the Western Great Powers, and they and Greece continued to oppose Russian policy. By the middle of the 1880s Russia found itself in complete diplomatic isolation in the Balkans. Basically, after the Bulgarian Crisis and the Austro-German humiliation of Russia in 1885-87, Russian policy in the Balkans was reactive and comparatively quiescent until 1908. The motto of the Russo-Austrian agreements of the end of the 1890s and beginning of the 1900s was “to put the Balkans on ice” and freeze any activities there. At the beginning of the 20th century Russian directed its attention mostly to the Far East and then to internal problems (the Revolution of 1905-07). But the Bosnian crisis of 1908-09 was the catalyst for activating its policy in the Near East. The formation of the Balkan League in 1911-1912 was significant and may be the only substantial success of Russian diplomacy of that time. The Balkan Wars, though, did not give the Great Powers what they wanted, and it was only the First World War that brought a final resolution of the Eastern Question: the Ottoman territories were divided between the European powers.

The political isolation of Russia in the Balkans and its withdrawal from active participation in the events set the stage for a greater role of ideology. The main basis and ideological weapon traditionally was the shared Orthodox faith with the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire. The ability to support Orthodoxy was an advantage for Russia compared with its Western rivals and helped create the conditions that could draw Orthodox Christian peoples into the sphere of Russian political interests and provide a basis for devotion after their political liberation. This imperial doctrine was rooted in the old concept of Russian domination among the family of Orthodox states. The neo-Byzantine and neo-Slavist ideology served as a theoretical basis for Russian Balkan and Near East policy up to 1917.

This well-balanced concept was seriously tested at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. However, beginning in the 1880s it was no longer effective. First, Russia’s aspirations for the Straits and Constantinople met the strong counteraction of Britain, France, Austro-Hungary and Germany, each of which had its own interests in the Near East. Despite all their rivalry, the Western Powers shared a common goal—to neutralize Russia’s ambitions. Second, the 19th century saw the rise of Balkan nationalism and the liberation struggle of the peoples of European Turkey. The European Powers tried to draw the young Balkan states into their own spheres of policy. Here
their interests also came into confrontation with Russia which wanted to create a large Southern Slavic state as its base in the Balkans. The rivalry of the Balkan peoples led to ecclesiastical/nationalistic conflicts which could not be resolved in a peaceful manner. Being unable to overcome these challenges, for several decades Russian diplomacy was on a course of tacking between them in order to maintain a tentative balance.

Russia’s ecclesiastical policy, aimed at uniting the Christian peoples, was, after 1872, to a great degree paralyzed by the Bulgarian Schism. All the attempts of diplomats to mend the Schism failed, because without first a political resolution, ecclesiastical affairs could not be settled. At the beginning of the 20th century Balkan nationalism came to a head. The old Ottoman supra-national millet system was replaced by nationalistic antagonism. Because the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s policy was pro-hellenistic, its relations with Russia became more and more tense. The Bulgarian church was outside of the sphere of Russian policy for many decades due to the Schism. The Serbian Church was closer to Russia and this resulted in Russian support of Serbian ecclesiastical and national interests in, mostly, Macedonia. However, here Russia had also to act very cautiously in order not to provoke the jealousy of rival nations. Achieving church reconciliation in 1911-1912 was much more difficult than reaching a political union; the Bulgarian Schism was not mended.

The ecumenical facet in Russian foreign policy at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries became less and less effective. Nevertheless it was in these last decades before the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 that Russian monasticism on Mt. Athos flourished. The number of Russians on Mt. Athos by 1913 was more than 4,500. Without an interest in policy, Russian monasteries provided strong moral support for Russia’s policy in the East. Their influence spread far beyond the borders of the Mt. Athos peninsula. The rich Russian monks acquired properties in Macedonia, Lebanon and Palestine. While the close contacts of the Russian government with the Eastern clergy ceased, Russian monasticism became more and more influential.

The beginning of the 20th century was a period in which the political ambitions of Russia were not in step with reality. The old concept based on the support of Orthodoxy did not work. The attempts to restore the Byzantine church governmental model in the first decade of the 20th century proved untenable; church relations were replaced by national and political ones. In its rivalry with the Western Powers, Russia could only restrain and neutralize their most threatening efforts. The Russo-Japanese War, the Bosnian crisis, the failure of the demarche of Charykov—all these events reveal the weakness of Russia in this period. Nevertheless, the Byzantine ideal of domination over the Orthodox world still prevailed in the consciousness of the church politicians, diplomats and statesmen. In the 1880s and 90s these ideas were only elaborated on a theoretical level, but in the 1910s they influenced practical policy. The mythologisation of the consciousness not only of ivory tower scientists and journalists, but of trained leaders of the state prevented them from accurately assessing the international and internal situation and contributed to the tragic fate of Russia during the years of the First World War.
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AΠΚ Archeio Patriarcheiou Konstantinoupoleos (Archive of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Istanbul) (F. Correspondence of the Patriarchate).
AVPRI Archiv Vneshney Politiki Rossijskoj Imperii (Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, Moscow) (F. Embassy in Constantinople, Reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slavic Department, Greek Department, Central archive, Political archive, General Consulate in Saloniki, Russian Orthodox Palestine Society).
AYE Archeio Ypouergeiou Exoterikon (Archive of the Foreign Ministry of Greece, Athens).
CDA Centralen Dyrzhaven Archiv (Central State Archive, Sofia).
CGIA SPb Central’nyj Gosudarstvennyj Istoricheskij Archiv Santk-Peterburga (Central State Historical Archive of St. Petersburg), St. Petersburg (F. 2182 I. E. Troitskii).
RGIA Rossiijskij Gosudarstvennyj Istoricheskij Archiv (Russian State Historical Archive), St. Petersburg (F. 797 Office of the over-procurator of the Synod, 796 Office of the Synod).
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