

BILATERAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE 200th ANNIVERSARY OF
JOHN CAPODISTRIAS' BIRTH
(Moscow, 27 - 28 May 1976)

On May 27th-28th 1976, the Institute for Slavonic and Balkan Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union sponsored a conference dedicated to the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of John Capodistrias, Tsar Alexander I's Foreign Minister, and later first President of the newly-constituted Greek state. The gathering was attended exclusively by Greek and Russian scholars. Those invited from Greece were Zacharias Tsirpanlis, professor of the University of Jannina, Léandros Vranousis, Director of the Research Centre on Medieval and Modern Hellenism of the Academy of Athens, and Dr. Domna Dontas, Director of the Foreign Ministry Archives, but only Professor Tsirpanlis and Mrs. Dontas attended.

The inspiration for the conference came from the well-known Russian historian, Grigori Arš, whose work on Righas Veletinlis, the Filiki Eteria, the history of Epirus, the Greek communities of Russia, and most of all, on John Capodistrias, indicates his deep knowledge and understanding of the problems of modern Greek history¹. Thanks to the Institute's willing assistance the two Greek scholars who took part in the meeting were informed in advance on relevant organizational matters.

The meeting's proceedings were carried in the Institute's Hall. It was opened by the Institute's President, Mr. Markov, a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences. In all, five reports were presented, three by Russians and two by Greeks.

The first report (in Russian) was by Prof. Arš, under the title (in the French summary), «Capo d'Istria et le mouvement pour la libération nationale en Grèce en 1809-1822». It was an examination of the pre-revolutionary patriotic activity of Capodistrias while he was in service at the Tsar's court. Prof. Arš expanded our previous knowledge with new evidence drawn from unpublished documents from Russian archives (especially the archives relating to Russia's foreign policy). He was thus able to correct certain erroneous views of previous historians.

The second report, under the title, «Mémoires et rapports de Jean Capodistrias (1809-1822). Problèmes et recherche», was by Prof. Tsirpanlis. For the first time thanks to this report, there was undertaken the listing, chronological arrangement and evaluation of the memoranda, reports, drafts of speeches, and diplomatic instructions that Capodistrias himself drew up in the years during which he represented the greatest land power in Europe. In this way the breadth of Capodistrias's diplomatic work was emphasized not only in the Balkans and Europe, but also in the New World. Mention was made of published works, of those to be found in various archives around the world but as yet unpublished, and of works that first-hand evidence assures us were written by Capodistrias but have not yet been found anywhere. In this last case research in the Russian archives (of both Moscow and Leningrad) should prove most rewarding. A typical example of this is provided by the noteworthy series of volumes published, since 1960, by the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs, under the title *Vnešnjaja Politika Rossii. XIX i načala XX veka* (The Foreign

1. See his recent book: *I. Kapodistrija i grečeskoe nacional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie. 1809-1822 gg.* (J. Capodistrias and the Greek National Movement for Liberation, 1809-1822). Moskva 1976, pp. 328.

Policy of Russia. 19th and Early 20th Centuries). In particular, volume 7 (Moscow 1970), volume 8 (1972), volume 9 and 10 (or volume 1 and 2 of the second series, Moscow, 1974, 1976) contain very interesting memoranda of Capodistrias. Volume 11, in preparation, will also contain notable writings of Capodistrias.

The third report (in Russian) was by the staff scholar of the Balkan Institute of Moscow, A.M. Stanislavskaja, under the title (in the French summary) "Ioanne Capo d'Istria - L'homme d'État de la République Ionienne". With a sound understanding of the social and political situation of the Septinsular Republic, the author presented Capodistrias during the first eight years of the 19th century when he was rising to high political office in his homeland, collaborating with the Russian representative, George Motsenigo. It is worth stressing that this report drew on unpublished archival material from the Russian archives which is of considerable use in throwing light on Capodistrias's activities as an official of the Septinsular Republic. Mrs. Stanislavskaja is a specialist on these subjects if we consider her recent and most interesting book, entitled, *Rossija i Grečija v konce XVIII-načale XIX veka. Politika Rossii v Ioničeskoj Respublike, 1798-1807 gg.* (Russia and Greece at the End of the 18th and the Beginning of the 19th centuries. Russian policy in the Ionian Republic, 1798-1807), Moscow 1976, pp. 376.

The fourth report, under the title «Le président Jean Capodistrias et les frontières de la Grèce, 1828-1831», was by Dr. D. Dontas. She sketched, on the basis of both published and unpublished sources, Capodistrias's continual diplomatic attempts to get the Great Powers to redefine, in better fashion, the boundaries of the small, independent Greek state.

The fifth report (in Russian), was by the staff scholar of the Balkan Institute of Moscow I.S. Dostjan. Its title (in the French summary) was «Les relations de Capo d'Istria avec la Russie en 1826-1831», and in it she examined, on unimpeachable evidence, the close relations of Capodistrias with St. Petersburg while he was President of Greece. It concerns a delicate question and a very interesting side of Capodistrias' political and diplomatic career at the end of his life when the other Great Powers and several of his enemies accused him of being an agent of Russia. It must be noted that Mrs. Dostjan has made a special study of Russo-Balkan relations on the first third of the 19th century, and has written an important book: *Rossija i Balkanskii Vopros. Iz istorii russko-balkanskih političeskikh svjazei v pervoi treti XIX v.* (Russia and the Balkan Question. From the history of Russo-Balkan Relations in the First Third of the 19th century), Moscow 1972, pp. 368.

The discussion that followed was realised in a cordial, helpful atmosphere. Apart from those who read reports, the opportunity was given to several staff scholars of the Balkan Institute of Moscow to take part and to elaborate upon their views and also to other scholars concerned with Capodistrias's period (e.g. Professor V.G. Sirotkin; see his work "Bor'ba v lagere konservativnogo Russkogo dvorjanstva po voprosam vnešnei politiki posle voiny 1812 goda i ostavka I. Kapodistrii v 1822 g. [The Struggle in the Camp of the Conservative Russian Gentry Over Questions of Foreign Policy after the War of 1812, and the Resignation of J. Capodistrias in 1822] in the volume *Problemy Meždunarodnyh Otnošenii i Osvoboditel'nyh Doiženii. Sbornik Trudov*, Moscow 1975, pp. 3-47).

This meeting of Russian and Greek scholars honored the first great Greek diplomat and politician who served both Russia and Greece with dedication and, judged by the spirit of the age, liberal orientation. Today his memory allows us the op-

portunity for yet another step towards a more sincere and closer collaboration between Greece and Russia in the area of cultural and intellectual relations.

Capodistrias's memory remains very strong in academic circles in Russia. The archives of Moscow and Leningrand, through which the organizers of the meeting were kind enough to direct their Greek colleagues, have a vast amount of material to offer in the form of autograph letters, memoranda and notes by Capodistrias. Let us hope that the descendants of the great Corfiote diplomat will be given the opportunity of studying these documents, for the sake of historical truth.

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THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS (Athens, 19 - 29 August 1976)

The first congress of Orthodox theological schools took place at Athens in 1936. At the end of the first congress the wish was expressed for the convening of the second congress in the shortest possible time but forty turbulent years were to pass before that wish was fulfilled.

Meanwhile, concrete theological and other attempts, both preliminary and contributory to the convening of the second congress of Orthodox theological schools were made. In this context, mention must be made here of the Theological Symposium, on a pan-orthodox basis, organized in 1973 at Thessaloniki by the theological school of the University of Thessaloniki. The papers from this conference have already been published under the title «Inter-Orthodox Theological Symposium, 12-16 September, 1973»¹.

In addition to the Symposium we should also mention the series of lectures undertaken a few years earlier, in 1965, by the Institute for Balkan Studies again at Thessaloniki, concerning the Orthodox Churches and the theological developments within them. These lectures were also published in a special—and imposing—volume entitled *The World of Orthodoxy*².

Thus, we arrive at the second congress of Orthodox Theological Schools which again convened at Athens, from the nineteenth to the twenty-ninth of August, 1976, at the Inter-Orthodox Center of the Church of Greece, at Pentélis monastery—now a familiar site for such conferences.

The two Greek theological schools of the Universities of Athens and Thessaloniki shared the initiative for the organization of this conference which was placed under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture and Sciences and the Ministry of National Education and Religion. From its own end, the Church of Greece warmly embraced this historical conference also. The reason for this was undoubtedly the special in-

1. For relevant material cf. 'Επετηρίς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς Πανεπιστημίων Θεσσαλονίκης 19(1974), 1-425.

2. Cf. 'Ο Κόσμος τῆς 'Ορθοδοξίας, Thessaloniki 1968. [Institute for Balkan Studies, no. 99].