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Integration of Refugees in a Religious Context

This paper investigates the role of Orthodox Church and religion in the integration of refugees, exchanged solely on the basis of their religion in 1923. The paper is divided into the following parts: the role of religious identification in the life and the integration of refugees; the contribution of the Church to the establishment and the relief of these impoverished people in spiritual as well as in material terms.

One is legitimate to argue that religion was not a problem for the integration of refugees in the Greek state. In actual fact, the expulsion of all the Greek Orthodox Ottoman refugees resulted in the homogeneity of Greece, as is demonstrated by the statistics respecting religion after 1922¹. The statistics and the census illustrate that almost 94% of the Greek population were Orthodox after the arrival of the Asia Minor refugees. In this context, scholars have justifiably noted that after the refugees' establishment, "Greece comes remarkably near to the ideal homogeneous state"². For instance, in 1912 the population of Greek Macedonia consisted of 42,6% Greek Christians and 39,4% Muslims. By 1926 "the percentage of Muslims had been reduced to 0,1% and the Greeks numbered 88,8%"³.

However, one may question the actual degree of religious dedication that these statistics represent for the refugee population. Their flee to a secular state could have resulted in a secularization of this population in terms of church attendance and compliance with religious values. Considering also that the refugees were expelled or exchanged from their Anatolian homeland on the basis of their Christian identity, the question raised at this point is how great was the contribution of the Orthodox faith to the survival and the integration of these impoverished people.

1. *Στατιστική Επετηρίς της Ελλάδος* [Statistical Annual of Greece], Athens 1931.

2. B. A. C. Sweet-Escott, *Greece. A Political and Economic Survey, 1939-1953*, London & New York 1954, p. 3.

3. W. B. King and F. O'Brien, *The Balkans*, New York 1947, p. 199.

1. Greek Orthodox belief as a component of refugee integration

The question, which was the role of religion in the integration of refugees, will be discussed in this section. As was said, the fact that the refugees fled to a secular state where Greek Orthodoxy was a state religion and not a way of living or discrimination could have resulted in the secularization of the religious aspect of their life. Scholars define secularization as a decline in church attendance and a diminishing of the Church's importance in the daily life of the people.

As refugees, on arrival in Greece they immediately created a church, whether in a tent or whatever temporary shelter was available. All the refugees' recollections outlined the importance of a church as the centre of their new settlement. Once housing settlements were established, the first priority always was the collection of funds for the construction of a church. Greek and foreign refugee organizations were met with the earnest requests of refugees to erect first of all in their settlements churches. According to the refugee newspaper *Προσφυγική Φωνή* (Refugee Voice) the will of refugees to be established in a specific place was dependent on the existence of church and school. It was argued, "the refugees did not want to settle in places where there was no teacher or priest"⁴.

Sometimes, the lack of church buildings created an open conflict between refugees and the high ecclesiastical hierarchy of Greece. Within this context, the Metropolitan Sofronios of Naousa and Verroia (in Macedonia) wrote to the Holy Synod about the problematic relations with the refugees in his diocese, who were from Argyroupoli. He claimed that they had the pretension to lay claim to building that was erected after the liberation of the area, which was used by his Metropolis (of St. Demetrios) as a chapel, in order to transform it into their own parish church. The Metropolitan argued that he provoked the rage of the refugee by rejecting their request. He also said that his denial was on the grounds that the number of churches was enough to satisfy the needs of all Christians, as well as that a continuous separation of natives and refugees was harmful⁵. Furthermore, the Church provided a concrete reference

4. *Ibid.*

5. ΙΑΥΕ (Ιστορικό Αρχείο Υπουργείου Εξωτερικών) [Historical Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs], File 54.3, B/35, Γενικά Εκκλησιαστικά θέματα [General Ecclesiastical Issues], Letter from the Metropolitan of Naousa and Verroia addressed

point, where specific links with their past life could be expressed and experienced. For instance, in Macedonia the refugees tried to retain “to a great extent their former village organizations which they have brought from Anatolia, and they have their local governments, their churches, and their schools⁶.

As Renée Hirschon notes in her anthropological study of the contemporary refugee establishments in Attica, the religious dimension of life was manifested in a striking way even in their life in Greece. It was rooted in a particular philosophy of life, which is identifiably part of the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition. The researcher admits that, after the conclusion of her survey, she was compelled to reassess her initial expectations. She points out that, influenced by the urban ecology of the Chicago School, she started her survey with the unexamined assumptions that “religion would probably have little importance, since this was a fully urban locality, inhabited by people whose origins were primarily urban”. She concluded that her error lay in accepting uncritically the diminished importance of religious institutions and the disintegration of family structure, among other things. She discovered that “these preconceptions were soon shaken by first-hand experience of an inescapably ‘religious’ and ‘traditional’ orientation in Kokinia. There was no demise of religious commitment after the establishment of refugees in Greece”⁷. A very important conclusion was that “the lack of separation between ‘religious’ or ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’ was marked feature of life in this locality”⁸. She also provides some clues to explain the particularly marked character of religion in the life of Kokinia and similar urban quarters. In the event, she attributes this religious self-identification to the period of their expulsion and preceding it, when this awareness had probably been heightened because religious factors had been used politically to provide the ostensible reason for their removal.

Within this context we shall trace the role of religious identification during the exodus and hardships the refugees experienced during their

to the Holy Synod in Athens (Naousa, 11 August 1927), p. 2.

6. N. Bentwich, “The New ‘Magna Grecia’ ”, *The Contemporary Review*, December 1924, p. 1746.

7. R. Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus*, Oxford 1989, p. 194.

8. *Ibid.*

flight to Greece until their first settlement. In actual fact, the spirituality and power that the refugees derived from their Christian belief in the experience of their hardships reflected in many descriptions of their flight to Greece. In this respect, Ioannis Loukakis remembered his last trip from his homeland in Pontos (Propontis) to Greece and described some moments which in essence can be characterized as religious, for they are based on the notion of continuous interaction between the human and divine realms. He writes:

The ship sails on the Aegean Sea; we got a glimpse of the island of Limnos and we left it behind. We came into view of Mount Athos, and from miles away adults and children made the sign of the cross in order to get the help of the Saints for the unknown trip⁹.

During the refugees' Odyssey, the vitality of the religious dimension of life in Anatolia was manifested in attitudes rooted in a particular philosophy of life which is identifiably part of the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition. In this sense, religion appeared in the context of events, which would be described by an empirical scientist as transcending the normal order and were therefore attributed to a supernatural agency more than meets the eye. It was what the refugees called in one word a miracle.

Within this context, religion was a reference point for the refugees even at the most difficult moments of their expulsion from Asia Minor. At that time, the so-called miraculous happenings, the veneration of icons, which are believed to have a mediatory role, which is central in Orthodox worship, was said to play a significant role in the survival of refugees. Many refugees attributed to them a metaphysical power, which helped them to get away from their persecutors. From this perspective, Evangelos Galas describes the panic in the port of Smyrna, when everybody tried to embark on the ships and save his own life. According to his description, "armed Turks were searching even the clothes of the refugees for money. Somebody ordered the women and the children to sit down, in order to gather the men who were to be sent to Ankara.

9. ΑΚΜΣ (Αρχείο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών) [Archive of the Centre of Asia Minor Studies], 169, Vythinia (Proussa), Memoirs of Loukakis Ioannis, p. 6.

God had his hand and we managed to sit down without being noticed”¹⁰.

In the event, although the refugees interviewed differed in their pattern of flight and had different origins, they all claimed that the icons saved them from death. For instance, Zoi Tikmoglou from Magnesia told how her

... brothers were imprisoned by Turks when they went to the railway station of Cordellio to hear from Smyrna, which was cut off. They felt washed-out and they decided to escape from their prison. A woman holding an icon of St. Eleftherios was with them. They passed the guard and God blinded him. He did not see them and they returned to Cordellio, where her parents were mourning for their lost children¹¹.

However, icons were not only the object on which they set all their hopes of salvation and a successful flight to Greece, but also became the centre of identification in the community under construction. Many of the refugees carried their icons all the way from Anatolia, and these were the first, if not the only, objects that were reestablished in their new life. Moreover, many refugee churches, established in Greece following the population exchange, contain especially venerated icons from Asia Minor that had been preserved during the hostilities or brought across after the influx of refugees in Greece. Other refugees boasted the existence of icons (of St. John¹² and of St. Georgios¹³) brought all the way from Asia Minor to their icon stands at their new homes.

Moreover, many of the Greeks who were exchanged under the provisions of the Lausanne Settlement attempted to collect their *iconostasis* and the icons from the churches. In some cases, they used to

10. Evidence of Evangelos Galas, from the District of Koldere (Kol-dere in Turkish) with a population of 2,000 Greeks, in Apostolopoulos, F. D. (ed.), *Η Έξοδος: Μαρτυρίες από τις Επαρχίες των Δυτικών Παραλίων της Μικρασίας* [Exodus: Evidences from the Provinces of the West Coast of Asia Minor], Athens 1980, Vol. A', p. 111.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

12. Evidence of Antonia Chadjistefanou, from the District of Mougla (Menteche in Turkish) with a population of 2,000 Greeks out of 10,000, in Apostolopoulos, F. D. (ed.), *Η Έξοδος: Μαρτυρίες από τις Επαρχίες των Δυτικών Παραλίων της Μικρασίας* [Exodus: Evidences from the Provinces of the West Coast of Asia Minor], Athens 1980, Vol. A', p. 213.

13. Evidence of Eftychia Rousou, from the District of Mylasa (Miles) with a population of 3,500 Greeks out of 7,000; *Ibid.*, p. 205.

carry even stones from their houses or churches with them. In fact, in Kokinia (a refugee neighbourhood) one church was built which even incorporated stones brought from its namesake in the town of Nicaea (now Iznik, Turkey)¹⁴.

From this perspective, the church embodied community life in social as well as in spiritual terms for the refugees. The first President (Ch. Howland) of the Refugee Settlement Commission in Greece illustrates how these churches housed icons, reliquaries of saints and memories emotionally charged and carried on their exodus to Greece¹⁵. In this respect, the local religious festivals were the real entertainment in the refugee villages; they were usually preceded by an all-night vigil in and around the church and were associated with the local patron saint, whose relics or icon are often believed to have worked miracles. Therefore, many families did not take any serious decisions —regarding journeys, marriage or crops, for example— before consulting the saint, in the form of a litany or doxology. There were some cases where the housing of the saints' relics provoked disputes among different refugee factions of the same origins. In Euboea, in the refugee establishments from Procopiens, the young people guarded the relics to prevent them from being stolen by other refugees. Moreover, 500 families originating from Karvali in Asia Minor were established in a malaria-infested area close to Cavala in northern Greece. The unsanitary conditions and the swamps made the place unhealthy and the climate unwholesome. Despite official encouragement, the refugees would not move to another site. Nothing would move them to leave the place, since they were more afraid of being split up. Thus, all the community had been gathered around the body of its Saint (Gregorios Nazianze)¹⁶, which was brought from Asia Minor and was "legated" from generation to generation for 12 centuries.

The case of these refugees, settled in Nea (New) Nazianzeno Charvatis, was also singled out in the course of a parliamentary discussion. In 1925, the MP Constantinos Filandros addressed the Minister of Welfare (Anastasios Misirloglou) on their request to erect a church in

14. R. Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe*, p. 196.

15. Société des Nations, *L'Etablissement des Réfugiés en Grèce*, Geneva 1926, pp. 26-27.

16. He is considered to be the Father of the Eastern Orthodox Church. In fact, he was Patriarch of Constantinople in the fourth century.

this settlement. It was stressed that 500 refugee families fled almost naked to Greece from their Asia Minor community, which had a lot of gold and wealth (which Venizelos had asked unsuccessfully to be returned), carrying with them only two icons and the relics of their Saint which they hid in their clothes and placed in a hut when they arrived in Greece, where they worshipped them from morning till night. It was argued that they did not complain about their misfortune or the lost gold and wealth, but for the lack of a church to house the relics of their Saint¹⁷.

It could be suggested that the hardships the refugees experienced during the flight and afterwards could have provoked an awareness of human frailty, with consequences for their religious belief. Considering also that “in the great majority of cases, a prophetically announced religion of redemption has had its permanent locus among the less-favoured social strata”¹⁸, one may gather that the refugees provided the ideal congregation after their exodus. Christianity as a religion of salvation helped them to survive and to settle in a safe, though unfamiliar, environment. The rational supplements or the symbolic representations in the collective rites of the churches in Asia Minor were materialized throughout their adventure. The metaphysically conceived passions of their religion of redemption and salvation were experienced in their own reality and made their sufferings more bearable. From this perspective, religious belief not only guided their thoughts but also directed their actions and led to a complete identification with religion among its followers after 1923. The adventures of the refugees fulfilled the definition of the first Christians as “people of the Way” in elementary religious studies. Ever since, Christians have thought of themselves as pilgrims on a journey.

One may argue that during their flight to Greece, the Greek Orthodox Christians of Asia Minor undertook a pilgrimage, which differed from the non-compulsory character of worship of the religious Christians. From this perspective, religious belief contributed powerfully to the integration of refugees and to the construction of a newly imagined

17. *Εφημερίς των Συζητήσεων* [Gazette of the Debates], Vol. IV, Session 175th, 8 April 1925, p. 947.

18. H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, London 1995², p. 274.

community by appealing to the irrational —either through miracles or the provision of emotional stability in the first settlement— as much as other loyalties to national anthems, flags and history. Religious consciousness was fuelled by the obligatory pilgrimage to the Greek mainland and was intensified through its hardships.

Furthermore, the post-1923 social and religious context in the Greek state could be interpreted as adopting the immigration-crisis theory of Rushton Coulborn, which maintains that the fear of social breakdown and anarchy posed in a society by the economic difficulties faced by the new-coming immigrants during their adaptation to an unfamiliar environment, leads her to react with new beliefs and practices on a far more ritualized basis. From this perspective, the settlements of refugees as well as Greek society reacted with a more organized religion in terms of rituals and symbolic representations¹⁹. In Coulborn's perspective, this new set of stronger religious beliefs and ritual identifications aimed at strengthening the links of the community under construction to overcome the threat of social disintegration faced by the influx of refugees, who faced many hardships during their exodus as well as in their economic and social adaptation to new and unfamiliar conditions²⁰.

Life in the congregation appeared to be an important form of legitimacy, which rests upon Christian tradition and the incorporation of the worshippers. The refugees demanded and worked passionately for the construction of churches, in order to have a consecrated building where they could focus attention on the purpose of worship, and where they could house the relics and memories carried from Asia Minor. Within this context, the Church remained a powerful agent of incorporation and a dynamic institution in the remaking of the refugees' life in Greece.

However, there was a place where the Church unavoidably lost its influence on the refugees' life.

The Greek Orthodox Church was the main cultural agent in Asia Minor until the mid-19th century and one of the main national ones until 1923. In the framework of the Ottoman Empire, the institutions of civil and religious authority were not distinct. The *millet* institution functioned as the main administrative and religious unit and was re-

19. R. Coulborn, *The Origin of Civilised Societies*, Princeton 1959, chapter 5.

20. *Ibid.*

cognized as a corporate personality, where the subject communities (*rayas*) enjoyed a degree of autonomy, forming “states within states”²¹. At the head of the Greek *millet* was the Patriarch of Constantinople (*millet bashi* or *ethnarchos*) and two bodies of bishops: the Holy Synod and the Permanent Mixed (clergy-laity) National (ethnic) Council. Their spiritual leaders of the *millet* held “both ecclesiastical and civil judicial authority” over most of the social affairs of the community²². In this context, the authority of the ecclesiastical institutions extended beyond strictly religious affairs to the regulation of various aspects of the everyday social life of the Orthodox faithful. The Church made a large contribution to the running of all municipal, financial and educational affairs of the community in general.

However, this was not the case in the Greek State, where the Greek Orthodox Church was basically tied with an Erastian subordination to the state and incapable of articulating an independent voice. Joseph R. Llobera argues that England offers a classical example of the Erastian principle of subordination of ecclesiastical to secular power when Henry VIII, “whether stirred up by conscience, worried about succession or moved by lust, sought a divorce that had led him into a collision course with Rome”²³. This momentous decision was presented as a defence of Parliament’s sovereign and was to enhance, in the centuries to come, the rule of law and Parliament in England²⁴.

On the same lines, there was a close interconnection between Church and State in Greece. After the establishment of the modern Greek State, there was a clear differentiation between religious and political functions on every level (village, community, region, nation)²⁵. Almost all of the political functions that had previously been exercised by the Church organization were shifted to the newly established State. The charter of 1852 entrusted the administration of the Church to a Holy Synod with the Archbishop of Athens as president. It also made the

21. F. Hertz, *Nationality in History and Politics*, London 1945, p. 142.

22. G. S. M. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Chicago 1974, vol. 3, p. 125.

23. J. R. Llobera, *The God of Modernity*, Oxford 1994, p. 135.

24. *Ibid.*

25. N. P. Mouzelis, *Modern Greece, Facets of Underdevelopment*, London 1979, p. 189.

Orthodox religion the official religion of the new Greek state, and provided for the appointment of bishops and priests and the administration of Church properties²⁶. The Church itself could take no direct action against heresy or proselytism but had to rely upon the State and had to honour official State requests for services and participation in state functions²⁷.

As a result of the above-mentioned legislation, the religious authorities were under the direct control of the political. In other words, the Church was subordinated to the State, which was responsible for the designation and payment of priests, the approval of the enthronement of the new bishops as well as the Establishment and development of programmes linked to the settlement and incorporation of the Asia Minor refugees. Through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Church was more or less run as an administrative branch of the State, and in the State budget shared the same Ministry with the Ministry of Education. Since ecclesiastical structures were subjugated to the Greek state, many of the social responsibilities of the Church (such as caring for the poor, the construction of church buildings, the employment of clergy and the creation of parishes) were expected to be undertaken by secular political administrative mechanisms. This was the new environment in which the deeply religious refugee flock was socialized and the one in Greece where they were to be integrated.

The question to be discussed is how the Church came up to the expectations of its new refugee congregations that were in real need of philanthropic work along the lines of Christian philosophy, and accordingly challenged the clergy to put into practice the values of Christian faith.

2. The role of the Greek Orthodox Church as an integrating agent

In this section of the paper, attention will be given to the contribution of the Greek Orthodox Church to the integration and relief of refugees.

In the event, the appalling situation of the refugees was the first

26. E. D. Theodorou, *The Church of Greece*, Athens 1959, p. 16.

27. J. E. Rexine, "The Church in Contemporary Greek Society", *Diakonia* 7 (1972) Number 3, p. 206.

major difficulty encountered in their settlement. These people either left their houses with such precipitation that they did not carry anything with them. Dr. F. J. Nansen, who was entrusted by the League of Nations with the task of supervising the first settlement of refugees in 1922, in his report submitted for consideration by the Lausanne Conference, accentuated the fact that

The vast majority of these refugees, especially those from Asia Minor, came without clothing or blankets of any kind, except for what they stood up in, which was often of a very light character. The clothing question is most acute and, unfortunately, demands considerable sums of money²⁸.

While winter was imminent and hung over the lives of the refugees like the sword of Damocles, Nansen was particularly anxious about the future of those refugees who came from areas of Asia Minor and Eastern Thrace. Those people “had to be fed”²⁹, as he mentioned before the Council of the League of Nations. Nonetheless, this task could prove very difficult, particularly for a state like Greece, which had limited welfare sources. It was a country devastated by war (throughout the period 1912-1923) and was thus “suffering from financial anaemia”³⁰. The international press presented with gloomy colours the future of those destitute people and made an appeal to the philanthropy of its readers. The British newspaper *The Yorkshire Observer* drew the attention of its readers to the fact that

Most of the refugees from Asia Minor, and in particular those from the Pontus, arrived in Greece with no other clothes than those in which they stood up, and since there has been no money to purchase such things as clothes, the only garments these unfortunate people possessed have, after two, and in many cases three years’ wear, been reduced literally to rags³¹.

28. LNA, R 1761, 48/24722/24337, Report of Dr. Nansen on the refugee situation in Greece, Part II, 28 November 1922, p. 1.

29. League of Nations, Official Journal. Verbatim Record of the Fourth Assembly. Sixteenth Plenary Meeting, Tuesday 27 September 1923, pp. 14-16.

30. League of Nations, Official Journal 4th Year (No. 8, August 1923) Eighth Meeting, Geneva, Thursday 5 July 1923, p. 903.

31. IAYE, File A/4/4, 1925 (Πρόσφυγες και Έγαντοι) [Refugees and Collection of

The author also launched an appeal to the philanthropy of the British reading public. In the event, the Greek government and the international relief organizations were alarmed at the emergency of the refugees' situation. Within this context, Dr. F. J. Nansen invoked Christian philanthropy to explain the acceptance of all Greek- and non-Greek-speaking refugees by the Greek state, and described the whole situation as follows:

They were not Greek subjects, many of them could not speak Greek —they spoke Turkish. They were of the Greek race to a great extent, that is true, but many of them were not even of Greek race— they were Armenians, but they were all of them Christians, and when you ask the Greek Government why, in their great difficulties —why they received these refugees, they said: "If we did not open the doors they would have perished, and we haven't the heart to say no"³².

In actual fact, their impoverished situation motivated philanthropic emotions and generated support from many native lay and clerical members of the receiving society.

The Greek Orthodox Church was one of the first agents to whom political and international bodies were addressed for humanitarian help. For instance, at the difficult time of the refugees' massive flight to Greece, the Epidemic Commission of the League of Nations reported the urgent need for clothing and linen. It was suggested that a number of copies of its appeal must be sent for circulation "to the Union branches and the Churches, who we understand are taking up the matter actively and with good results"³³.

At that time, the Greek Minister of Relief addressed a telegram to the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, asking it to come to the aid of the refugees who were without shelter and food. In particular, he asked for information about the number and the capacity of the monasteries

Money), Article of W. H. H. Sams (the Save the Children Fund Administrator in Salonica), "The Refugees in Macedonia: Urgent Need for Help, Aged People Turned Away Unfed", in the newspaper: *The Yorkshire Observer*, 5 October 1925.

32. Extracts from address of Dr. Fridjof Nansen at Philadelphia on 15 November 1923, p. 1.

33. LNA, R 1762, 48/2554/24954, Appeal of the Epidemic Commission addressed to P. J. Baker (League of Nations' branch in London, 15, Grosvenor Crescent), p. 1.

within the boundaries of Greek territory, which could accommodate a large number of refugees³⁴. Subsequently, a telegram of the Holy Synod urged the Metropolitans of Greece to provide information respecting “the monasteries which were available for housing and feeding a large number of refugees, under the condition of their accessibility in order to carry provisions”³⁵.

Various responses were addressed immediately to the Metropolitan of Athens, Theoklitos, from different monasteries. Each of the four monasteries of Paramythia outlined the possibility of housing 20 refugees. Arta and Akarnania replied that their Prefects had already pressed all their monasteries into service³⁶. The Archbishop of Patras, Antonios, pointed out that only one monastery (the Home for the Aged) out of four was accessible to the centre of the town³⁷. On the same grounds, the Metropolitans of Larissa (Arsenios)³⁸, Gythio (Dionysios)³⁹ and Calamon⁴⁰ gave a negative response to the request of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece. The Metropolitans of Tripoleos⁴¹ and Naupaktias⁴² argued that their establishments were not suitable for accommodating refugees, since they “were too remote”. In the island of Cephalonia it was noted that there were cells without beds or bedclothes only for five refugee families⁴³. The monasteries of Corinth replied that there was a possibility of housing 15 families, whereas the Metropolitan of Dimitriados (Germanos) said that 50 rooms were available⁴⁴. Additionally, the Metropolitan of Fdiotida responded that each of the holy

34. ΑΙΣ (Αρχείο Ιεράς Συνόδου), [Archive of the Holy Synod], File: Encyclicals of the Holy Synod, Protocol No. 70480, Number of processing: 665, Letter of the Minister of Relief to the Holy Synod, Athens, 27 September 1922.

35. ΑΙΣ, File: Encyclicals of the Holy Synod, Protocol No. 678-665, Number of processing: 1074, Signed by the Metropolitans of Athens (Theoklitos), Hydras and Spetson (Prokopios), Kalavryton and Aegialias (Timotheos) and Artas (Spyridon), 30 September 1922.

36. *Ibid.*, Number of processing: 736, 5/10/1922.

37. *Ibid.*, Number of processing: 3766, Protocol No. 742, 7/10/1922.

38. *Ibid.*, Number of processing: 28016, 14/10/1922.

39. *Ibid.*, Number of processing: 28858, 15/10/1922.

40. *Ibid.*, Number of processing: 3460, 18/10/1922.

41. *Ibid.*, Number of processing: 33791, 17/10/1922.

42. *Ibid.*, Number of processing: 30761, 16/10/1922.

43. *Ibid.*, Number of processing: 3393, 17/10/1922.

44. *Ibid.*, Number of processing: 30082, 16/10/1922.

monasteries of Omvriani and St. Constantine could be used for the housing of 100 refugees respectively⁴⁵. The Metropolitan of Thebai and Levadia (Synesios) offered to accommodate 50 refugee families in the monastery of Osios Lukas, 30 at Osios Seraphim, and 30 families one at each of the other six monasteries in his territory, although there might be problems of communication with some of them⁴⁶. The Archimandrite of the monastery of Penteli in Attica replied to the Archbishop of Athens that since there was a shortage of buildings in Athens it would be possible to appropriate ecclesiastical properties for the housing of refugees⁴⁷. It was suggested that they should be housed in the following eight monastery dependencies: Vrava (Marathonas), Geraka, Gargitou, Cherotsakouli, Bourba, Braona and Zoodochos Pigi⁴⁸. Within the same context, the Archbishop of the Cyclades replied that

Thousands of refugees had already been settled in all of these islands. For instance, 1,000 refugees were placed in Mykonos and about 7,000 or more in Syros; we raised money for their provisioning and housing. We also established mess allowances and lodged almost all of them in public, municipal or private buildings. Concerning the refugee priests we appointed eight of them in various parishes (in the islands), which had no vicars (...). Respecting our Holy Monasteries, they are in decay. Besides they are inappropriate for housing refugees, because of their long distance from the sea and the towns and the consequent difficulty in communication and the transportation of goods⁴⁹.

Taking into consideration the number of monasteries, which existed in the respective areas of the above-mentioned sample, one may con-

45. *Ibid.*, Protocol Number: 809, Number of processing: 728, 2/9/1922.

46. ΑΙΣ, File: Encyclicals of the Holy Synod, Protocol Number: 1233, Number of processing: 1269, 1/9/1922.

47. ΑΙΣ, File: Encyclicals of the Holy Synod, Protocol No. 2878, Number of processing: 150, 4/10/1922.

48. *Ibid.*, Number of Processing: 2978, 6/10/1922.

49. ΑΙΣ, File: Encyclicals of the Holy Synod, Protocol No. 5821-5822, Number of processing: 4056, Letter of the Bishop (Athanasios) of Syros, Tinos, Andros, Kea, Mylos, Ermoupolis, 18 November 1922.

clude, that only 9% (four out of 35⁵⁰) replied positively to the Greek government's appeal to provide shelter to refugees. The rest refused, either on the grounds that they did not comply with the terms of accessibility or because they had already hospitalized refugees on their premises.

It has to be said that the Church proved helpful to refugees in many other respects. In the event, it was the only official administrative agent that saved records through its parish lists from the communities in Asia Minor. From this perspective, it was to be very helpful to refugees in order to reunite their families. Sometimes bishops (such as those of Crete, Chios, Mytelini and Syros)⁵¹ provided valuable information respecting missing relatives of refugees.

The Patriarchate of Constantinople also offered its help in spiritual terms. Priests of the Patriarchate's dioceses risked their lives to offer consolation and mental strength to the victims of the war. In actual fact,

The reverend Metropolitan Metron was sent to Asia Minor in order to accompany the sorrowful descent of the refugees from Prussa to the sea. The Metropolitans of Kyzikos and Nicaea were also sent as Patriarchal delegates to Marmora and Thrace to contribute to the moral comfort of Christian populations.(...) In particular, the Metropolitan of Vryoulon was sent to help 200,000 who still remained in danger in the town of Smyrna⁵².

Luckily, the Church did not confine herself to her duty of preaching and spiritual help to the refugees. In many cases, the Ecumenical Patriarchate was considered to be the only responsible body for the allocation of money collected among the various benevolent foundations and societies⁵³. Priority was given to orphanage asylums, which protected "orphans of the nation, children of Greater Greece, of the com-

50. *Στατιστική Επετηρίς της Ελλάδος* [Statistical Annual of Greece], Athens 1930, p. 375.

51. ΑΙΣ, File: Ecumenical Patriarchate, Letter from the Young men's Christian Association of Athens in Greece to Metropolitan of Athens (Theoklitos), Protocol No. 2754, Number of processing: 1851, Athens, 13 September 1922.

52. *Ibid.*

53. ΑΙΣ, File: Ecumenical Patriarchate, Protocol No. 726, Number of Processing: 482, Constantinople, 14 April 1921. Decision 6742 for the allocation of 50,000 dr. to the orphanages protected by the Central Relief Foundations.

mon mother and country”⁵⁴.

In the same context, numerous appeals were made to different agents and these managed to get some aid for the refugees’ relief from different sources. In 1922, “after the appeal of the Ecumenical Patriarch the first contribution of 50,000 francs arrived from the Zarifis’ House in Marseilles”⁵⁵. Furthermore, the Patriarch of Constantinople made a proposal without precedent: In 1922, the Assembly of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,

caring for the relief of the Asia Minor refugees, who have left their homeland in hundreds of thousands and stream into the islands and Thrace, while many other thousands are waiting the means of rescue from the shores of Asia Minor, decided — in view of the dimensions of such a catastrophe and in order to save the people from starvation— to dispose all the golden and silver objects of the Holy Churches of the Archdiocese of Constantinople and the regions of Chalcedon, Derkon and Metron, making a start from the Sacristy of our Patriarchate. Only the vessels which are absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of Holy Worship and particularly the Holy Sacraments will be exempt⁵⁶.

Moreover, the Patriarch made an appeal to the philanthropy of all Greeks —poor and rich— wherever they were, to help and “save more than 1.5 million brothers —mostly composed of women and children— from cold and disease”⁵⁷. Thanks also to the pleas of the Patriarchate, much money was collected from the Greek Orthodox diaspora of other foreign philanthropic organizations. In this context two American relief organizations (the American Friends of Greece and the Fatherless Children) were sending about \$100,000 yearly to Greece. They also offered to build a model workshop and training school for refugee women in

54. ΑΙΣ, Files: Ecumenical Patriarchate, Protocol No. 327, Constantinople, 3 September 1920.

55. *Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια* [Ecclesiastical Truth] (Magazine of the Ecumenical Patriarchate), Vol. 46, Year MB’, Number of issue: 35, Constantinople, 3 September 1922, p. 363.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 364.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 362.

Athens⁵⁸.

Apart from the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Church of Greece developed a philanthropic work after the settlement of refugees. Within this framework, the Metropolitan of Chalcida in his letter to the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece deals with the problem of relief of more than 20,000 refugees who had been established in his district. The Metropolitan noted that he “personally visited their settlements and tried to console and comfort these people with his mystagogic rituals and preaching”⁵⁹. He also tried to co-operate with those in office so as to help these refugees in all respects. After his precepts the people of Chalcida willingly relieved these poor brothers. Having raised money “they succeeded in providing refugee girls with a dowry and refugee boys with relief”⁶⁰. Within the same framework, the ecclesiastical magazine *Εκκλησία* (Church) noted that the Metropolitan bishop of Demetrida managed to collect one million drachmas, and the Metropolitan of Syros organized the distribution of clothes and food to the young and ill refugees who were settled on his island. However, it was stressed that the greatest weight fell upon the shoulders of the Archdiocese of Athens⁶¹. To deal with the emergency, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece decided to pass a special plate in the services of the Sunday liturgy for the relief of the Asia Minor refugees⁶². During the services, the congregations in Greece were called upon to deprive themselves to help the poor Asia Minor refugees.

Most of the time the provision of housing or education was seen in relation to a generally “humanitarian” attitude towards the increasing stream of refugee children. It is worthwhile quoting from a letter addressed from the Secretary of the “Holy Synod”, to the Church of Greece. It was noted that:

58. ΙΑΥΕ, File Α/4/4, 1925 (Πρόσφυγες και Έθελαι) [Refugees and Collection of Money], Letter addressed from the American Friends of Greece to Mr. Simopoulos, (Greek delegate in Washington, D.C.), 17 August 1925, pp. 2-3.

59. ΑΙΣ, File: Episcopate issues, Metropolitan of Chalcida, Letter addressed to the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, Protocol No. 1053, Number of processing: 796, 2 October 1925.

60. *Ibid.*

61. *Εκκλησία* [Church], Year 3, No. 18, 2 May 1925, pp. 142-143.

62. ΑΙΣ, Files: Encyclicals of the Holy Synod, Protocol No. 724, Number of processing: 1087, Athens, 7 October 1922.

The 'Holy Union' in Athens founded and maintained the 'Church Orphanage' in Vouliagmeni, operating in accordance with articles approved by the State. About 100 orphans have found shelter and the warm protection of the Church in this orphan's asylum, where these poor and unhappy children are fed and educated according to the Christian principle⁶³.

The Greek Archdiocese in St. Andreas, in Attica, ran another asylum. "It comprises a number of various small industries in which needy refugee women find a profitable job and free board. Moreover, special lessons in the form of educational and social lectures are given to the workers every day while the factory-girls are taught the school subjects of the Primary and Hellenic Schools"⁶⁴.

From this perspective, the Greek Orthodox Church came up to the expectations of a philanthropic treatment of refugees. However, the Church of Greece did not follow the same pattern of behaviour when the government decided to confiscate church land and allocate it to landless natives and refugees.

After 1923 and the necessity for the liquidation of large land properties for the establishment of refugees, a long-drawn-out conflict arose between Church and State. In the dispute that followed, some bishops sided with the Church, which refused to authorize the granting of church lands to landless peasants and refugees. The issues raised involved dramatically the conflict of Church and State over legal and specifically constitutional procedures, but also raised moral issues. In 1923, in the ecclesiastical magazine *Εκκλησία* (*Church*), an article drew the attention of its readers to the fact that the policy of the government led the public opinion to believe that these plots of land were *res nullius* that belonged to the monks, rather than sacred and inalienable estate of the church. It was also argued that this property could help the church to satisfy her numerous wants⁶⁵.

63. ΑΙΣ, File: Various issues of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Protocol No. 315, Number of processing: 980, Athens, 18 July 1922. About raising money for the benefit of orphans of the war victims.

64. Αρχείο Κτιστόπουλου (Ktistopoulos' Archive), File 2, Correspondence of Kountouriotis: Letter from the Archbishop of Greece to Kountouriotis (No. 126376/13-5-1924).

65. "Η Εκκλησιαστική Περιουσία" [The ecclesiastical property], *Εκκλησία* [Church], Year Α', Athens, 18 August 1923, No. 12, pp. 93-94.

The British ambassador in Athens, Mr Ramsay, reported that a Government Bill providing for the liquidation of some church property and the suppression of a number of the smaller monasteries was passed through Parliament in the spring of 1930. Within this framework, the properties liquidated were to be allocated partly to refugees to continue the policy of settlement and the remainder to be administered by the State. It was commented that the passing of this Act gave rise to what looked very like a conflict between Church and State. At the Council of Orthodox Churches held at Mount Athos, the Holy Synod laid down that the liquidation of these conventual properties was both contrary to the ideas and opinions of the Church and anticanonical, and would bring about the ruin of the remaining conventual properties⁶⁶.

The difference between Church and State was also commented on in the Press, and the newspaper *Εστία* [Fireplace] condemned the Minister of Cults, Georgios Papandreou, who threatened to resign, for pushing matters so far. *Πατρίς* [Homeland] also regretted the action of the Episcopate and their violence in opposition to the law, and expressed the hope that the quarrel would not lead to a conflict or even a war, as had happened in the Churches of the West⁶⁷. After the resignation of some Metropolitans, the Church sought for some reconciliation. The Archbishop of Athens called on the Minister of Cults and expressed his recognition of the good intentions of the Government in promulgating the law⁶⁸. Subsequently, an agreement was signed on 31st July between the Central Council of Liquidation and the National Bank, by which the latter was empowered to undertake the liquidation of the conventual properties for a period of four years, free of charge⁶⁹. Moreover, the law N.4684/1930, voted by the Greek Parliament, divided monastic real estate into liquidated and preservable. The latter was defined as that property which was necessary for the maintenance of the monastery, and all the property that was to be come into the Monastery after the

66. FO 371/14391, C 5649/5649/19, From Mr Ramsay (Athens), to Arthur Henderson MP, No. 368, (2/10/30), Dated: 1 July 1930. Received: 14 July 1930, pp. 1-4.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

68. FO 371/14391, C 6602/5649/19, Report on the conflict between Church and State in Greece. Addressed by Mr Harvey (Athens) to Arthur Henderson (MP), No. 440, (2/14/30) Dated: 7 August 1930, Received: 28 August 1930.

69. *Ibid.*

passing of the above-mentioned Bill⁷⁰.

One may conclude that the Church developed a philanthropic work to help the refugees from Asia Minor. They collected money from the Christian congregations, they ran messes and the distribution of clothes, and tried to provide spiritual help for the new flock. We must single out the decision of the Patriarch to provide all the golden and silver objects of his Archdiocese along the lines of Christianity, which preached the need to reduce extremes by curbing the rich and raising the living standards of the very poor. It was on these lines that the Patriarch tried to help the ex-flock at the expense of church wealth.

However, the government's decision to confiscate monastic lands created much tension in the relations of the Greek state with its Greek Orthodox church and led the Church to articulate a voice which was not always in accordance with Christian and philanthropic values. Although the total number of liquidated properties does not appear in data or sources as separate from the total expropriated land, one may suggest that the quarrel and the crisis escalated had a real effect on the transformation of the relations between the Greek state and the Greek Orthodox church. Although the impoverished situation of the refugees required drastic measure to be taken in order to help them acquire property, the Church strongly resisted the liquidation of its own land. From this perspective, not only was there a differentiation between the official policy of the State and that of the League of Nations that gave priority to the rural settlement, but it also produced a world along the lines of a belief, which supported the idea that the world is not perfect and that anyway it is God who makes people rich and poor. The only difference is that the poverty of the refugees was not the result of God's decision or their own laziness, and it was very difficult for these people to believe that it was much more important to be saved only in the religious sense than having land to cultivate and something to eat after the end of their compulsory pilgrimage to the Christian state of Greece searching for salvation, piety, healing and help.

However, it has to be recalled that at the time of the refugees' influx, Christianity was more often employed in the argumentation of policy-

70. Sp. Troyianos, *Παραδόσεις Εκκλησιαστικού Δικαίου* [Lectures of Canon Law], Athens 1984, p. 379.

makers at a domestic as well as an international level. The Christian belief implied a clear demarcation of identity as well as a repository of values and ideas that could facilitate the settlement and integration of those people.

Conclusion

Within the above-described framework of the refugees' settlement, one is justified in concluding that the religious aspect of their settlement did not follow the expected pattern of secularization in a modern civic society. Their religious belief, along with the Church as a central institution in their social life, remained powerful agents for the consolidation of their new communities, though not anymore for an ethnic identification of the Christian populations. Their religious behaviour did not have any of the elements of secularization in terms of a declining importance in church attendance, or the diminishing of religion's influence in their daily life, or even the necessity of turning to private forms of worship.

The obligatory pilgrimage to the Greek state and the hardships experienced by the refugees who survived gave a new dimension to their religious belief. As a result, there was no decline in church-attendance after their settlement in Greece. On the contrary, the irrational element of their belief in a supra-natural power, which influenced or controlled their lives and the world of nature, was strengthened. In their settlements, priority was given to the construction of churches, which housed the relics and icons brought from their homeland, became the centre of their reconstructed community and enhanced social integration and solidarity within them.

Concerning also the external forms of ecclesiastical life —such as the rituals and liturgies of the Church— one may conclude that they performed an important social function. After 1923, participation in and attendance of rites were a synonym of socialization and veneration in the local community. From this perspective religious belief is seen as a means of strengthening and reinforcing social norms and values. In doing so it contributed to order and integration in society, and the set of beliefs and practices (rituals and religious ceremonies) were the means of uniting the refugee group.

On the other hand, though the refugee congregation experienced no secularization whatsoever, the struggle about a radical social or financial reform at the expense of the monastic rural wealth implied a sort of secularization for the Church of Greece. The Church, motivated by her interest in the land, attempted to articulate an independent and secular voice, albeit not along the lines of Christian philosophy.

Thus, for the refugees who fled to Greece the Church could no longer accommodate their problems or represent them at a political or financial level. They had to adjust themselves to the mechanisms of a secular and political system. In their eyes, the Church was no longer responsible for their education, the preservation of language or the undertaking of national hegemonic roles as it used to be in the *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire. The Church of Greece was limited to its spiritual tasks, and its sole aim was the preservation of the faith, and salvation through vigils, prayers and almsgiving.

Moreover, the only secular attitude of this Church was not in accordance with the Christian ethical code. They recognized it when the Church started to fight against the Greek state in order to protect its monastic and estate property. Apart from provisions in spiritual or philanthropic terms, which were mainly based on collecting money from church congregations, only the Patriarchate proposed any form of material help from the ecclesiastical treasures of the parishes.

Though not following a Christian and philanthropic spirit, the quarrel with the state showed that stability and the preservation of its financial situation was a choice that would be defended by the Church with a Protestant ethic in Weber's terms, and signified its emancipation from Erastian subjugation.