



Εργαστήριο Ιστορίας, Πολιτικής, Διπλωματίας και Γεωγραφίας της Εκκλησίας
Laboratory of History, Policy, Diplomacy and Geography of the Church

The Eusebius Lab International Working Papers Series

Eusebius Lab International Working Paper 2020/07

*The Greek Orthodox Church during the
Dictatorship of the Colonels
Relations of Church and State in Greece at the seven -
year period of military Junta (1967-1974)*

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ISSN:2585-366X

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Περίληψη

Τό ἐκκλησιαστικό ἦταν τό μοναδικό ἀπό τά θέματα τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ τόπου ὅπου ἡ δικτατορία τῶν Συνταγματαρχῶν εἰς ἀμφότερες τίς φάσεις αὐτῆς (ἐπί Γ. Παπαδοπούλου, 1967-1973 καί ἐπί Δημ. Ἰωαννίδη, 1973-1974) ἐφήρμοσε διαφοροποιημένη πολιτική. Καί στίς δυό περιπτώσεις ὑπῆρχε ἴδια τακτική: Παρέμβαση στά ἐσωτερικά τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, παραβίαση τῆς κανονικῆς τάξεως (= τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν κανόνων), ἐπιβολή Ἀρχιεπισκόπου τῆς ἐμπιστοσύνης τοῦ κατὰ περίπτωση πραξικοπηματία (Γ. Παπαδοπούλου-Δ. Ἰωαννίδη), πλαισιωμένου ἀπό διαφορετική καί παντοδύναμη κάθε φορά ὁμάδα ἀρχιερέων. Κατά τήν πρώτη φάση τῆς δικτατορίας ὁ κανονικός καί νόμιμος Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Χρυσόστομος Β΄ (Χατζησταύρου) ἀρνούμενος νά ὑποκύψει στίς πιέσεις γιά παραίτηση προκειμένου νά προωθηθεῖ διάδοχος ἀρεστός καί συνεργάσιμος στό καθεστῶς, θά εἶναι τό πρώτο θύμα τῆς δικτατορίας. Ὁ (ἐξ ἀρχιμανδριτῶν προερχόμενος) διάδοχός του Ἰερώνυμος Α΄ (Κοτσώνης) ἀφοῦ κατέλαβε «νόμιμα» μέν ἀλλά ἀντικανονικά τόν ἀρχιεπισκοπικό θρόνο καί ἡ διορισθεῖσα 8μελής «Ἀριστίνδην» Ἱερά Σύνοδος πού ἀντικατέστησε –καί ὑποκατέστησε– τήν κανονική «μικρά» (Δ.Ι.Σ.) καί «μεγάλη» Ἱερά Σύνοδο (Ἱεραρχία), θά συμπορευθοῦν μέ τήν «ἐθνοσωτήριο» στρατιωτική Κυβέρνηση ἀναλαμβάνοντας τό «ἐκκλησιοσωτήριο» ἔργο πού ἐπαγγέλθηκε ἡ 21η Ἀπριλίου. Μέ ἀντικανονικές διαδικασίες καί μεθοδεύσεις τόν δρόμο πρός τήν ἐξοδο θά δοῦν ἄλλοι 15 κανονικοί καί νόμιμοι Μητροπολίτες τῆς «παλαιᾶς» Ἱεραρχίας, στό πλαίσιο ἑνός συντονισμένου σχεδίου ἀλλοιώσεως τῆς συνθέσεως τῆς Ἱεραρχίας, τό ὅποιο γιά νά ὀλοκληρωθεῖ περιέλαβε καί τήν ἐκλογή 29 νέων Μητροπολιτῶν προσκειμένων ὡς ἐπί τό πλεῖστον στίς χριστιανικές ὀργανώσεις οἱ ὁποῖες ἐξαρχῆς συντάχθηκαν μέ τό ὄραμα πού ἐκπροσωποῦσε ὁ Ἰερώνυμος γιά τήν «κάθαρση» στήν Ἐκκλησία καί γιά μία «Καινούργια Ἑλλάδα». Ὁ στόχος, ὅμως, παρά τή συντελεσθεῖσα ἀλλοίωση τῆς Ἱεραρχίας δέν θά ἐπιτευχθεῖ. Τό οἰκοδόμημα τοῦ Ἰερωνύμου θά καταρρευθεῖ ὅταν ὁ τότε Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος ἐπιχειρῶντας –συνεργούσης καί τῆς δικτατορίας– νά καταστρατηγήσει τίς πατριαρχικές διατάξεις πού ὀρίζουν τόσο τή σχέση τῆς κανονικῆς ἐνότητας (ΠΣΤ 1850) μέ τό Πατριαρχεῖο, ὅσο καί τά κανονικά δικαιώματα αὐτοῦ στίς Νέες Χῶρες (ΠΣΠ 1928), θά βρεῖ ἀπέναντί του τήν πλειοψηφία τῆς Ἱεραρχίας, ἡ ὁποία μέ τήν ἀντίθεσή της στίς ἐπιλογές του θά δρομολογήσει τή δική του ἐξοδο. Ὁ νέος Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος, ὁ ἀπό Ἰωαννίνων Σεραφεῖμ, ἄν καί ἀνῆλθε στό ὑπατο ἐκκλησιαστικό ἀξίωμα στή διάρκεια τῆς δευτέρας φάσεως τοῦ δικτατορικοῦ καθεστώτος (στίς 12.01.1974, ἐπί Δημ. Ἰωαννίδη) δέν ταυτίσθηκε μέ τή δικτατορία, ὅπως ὁ προκάτοχός του Ἰερώνυμος. Τοῦτο ἐξηγεῖται λόγῳ τόσο τοῦ μικροῦ χρονικοῦ διαστήματος πού εἶχε μέχρι τότε (12.01.1974-23.07.1974) διανύσει ὁ Σεραφεῖμ, ὅσο καί –κυρίως– ἐπειδή συμβόλιζε τήν ἐκκλησιαστική παράταξη πού ἀνέλαβε τά ἡνία τῆς Ἱεραρχίας ἔχοντας ἔλθει σέ «μετωπική» ρήξη μέ τόν Ἰερώνυμο καί εὐρύτερά τη μερίδα ἐκείνη τῆς Ἱεραρχίας πού ἀντιπροσώπευε τό σύστημα πού εἶχε ἐπιβάλει ἀπό τίς πρώτες ἡμέρες τῆς ἐγκαθιδρύσεώς του καί γιά μία ὀλόκληρη ἐξαετία (1967-1973) τό καθεστῶς τῆς 21ης Ἀπριλίου. Ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Σεραφεῖμ τήν κρίσιμη περίοδο 1974-1975 διεσφάλιζε στόν Πρωθυπουργό Κων. Καραμανλή ἡσυχία καί τάξη στό ἐσωτερικό τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, γεγονός πού ἐπηρέασε θετικά καί ἔδρασε ἀποτελεσματικά στήν ἀνάπτυξη μίας ἀγαστῆς συνεργασίας στίς σχέσεις μεταξύ τῶν δύο ἀνδρῶν καί κατὰ συνέπεια στίς σχέσεις Πολιτείας-Ἐκκλησίας.

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The Greek Orthodox Church during the Dictatorship of Colonels
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I. The Colonels' coup

April 21, 1967 was the dawn of a very difficult day in Greece not just for Democracy, but also for the Orthodox Church of Greece. On that day, with the imposition of the military Junta by the Colonels¹, the terrible experience of the seven years' dictatorship² began, during which, on the one hand, the democratic system of government in the Greek State was abolished, on the other hand the democracy of the Synod, a system of administration of the Church³ from the time of the Apostles was also suppressed. During the twentieth century, the Greek Church, in its relationship with the State, experienced a lot of state intervention, mainly from dictatorial regimes such as those of General Theodoros Pangalos (1925-1926) and Ioannis Metaxas (1936-1941) who wanted to subdue the Church to their political ends. The violence however, and the extent of the interventions that the Church suffered from the seven year dictatorship which was set up by the regime on the 21st of April, led to this historically long-suffering relationship at levels that exceeded submission and reached even to the domination of the Church by the State. The dictatorial regime of 21st April 1967 seeking to place the Church under its direct control would not hesitate to invade into the affairs of the Church, as a first step, by enforcing of a new ecclesiastical leadership which was ideologically and politically friendly towards the regime. The "Revolution of 21st April 1967" (which was in fact a coup against the legit-

¹ The regime of 21 April was judged as dictatorial by the unanimous resolution of the Revisionary House of the Greek's Parliament, on January 14, 1975. The House with its Resolution (Government Gazette, issue number 6, Vol. A' / 18.01.1975) proclaimed that "the Republic was never abolished legally" and described the abolition of the Republic on April 21, 1967 as a coup - and not as a Revolution that created fairness - thus paving the way for the prosecution of the ringleaders and the cadres of the seven-year dictatorship. In August of the same year, the regime of 21 April was unanimously declared as dictatorial by the decision No. 477/1975 of the Athens Five-member Court of Appeal. See, Hatzivasiliou, Evanthis (Χατζηβασιλείου, Εύάνθης). 1997. "Restoration of Democracy. The restoration of democratic governance. 14 January 1975", *Konstantinos Karamanlis: Archive, Facts and Texts*, Volume 8. Athens: Edition: Konstantinos Karamanlis Foundation and "Ekdotiki of Athens", pp. 292-293.

² The "Seven Year Period" the period referred from 1967 to 1974, is the period in which the Greece was governed by the dictatorship of the "Revolutionary Government of 21 April", led by a group of military officers headed in the first phase (1967-1973) by Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos and the second phase (1973-1974), the Brigadier General Dimitrios Ioannidis.

³ Determined here by the Church in its institutional form, that is, in the sense of the administrative institution constituted in the form of the collective organ of administration, namely the Holy Synod (council) of the Hierarchy («great» Holy Synod consisting of 80 members – Metropolitans [bishops] or the Permanent Holy Synod («small» Holy Synod consisting of 12 members – Metropolitans [bishops]) and not the Church as the foundation of God, and in this theological sense as "the body of Christ", which was proclaimed by the Apostle Paul (A' Corinthians, 12, 27, Ephesians 1, 22-23). In the present study we refer to as "institutional" or otherwise called "governing" Church, an institution that functions as a legal entity of public law within the existing system of the " State legislature".

imate government) apart from assuming a "Salus populi" / "Save the Nation" character, will seek to become "a Savior of the Church". The interventions of this dictatorship - the longest in the 20th century - in most cases were in blatant disregard to the Canon Law and the canonical order of the Church⁴. But that was not to be taken as strange. The really strange thing was that these unlawful interventions were accepted or caused by the Church's administration itself, as it emerged after the planned legislative interventions of the dictatorship from the earliest days of its imposition in order to serve the ideological expediency of the dictatorial regime on the one hand, and on the other the self-serving interests of the power of various ecclesiastical parties.

The dictatorship, knowing the importance of the Church as an institution first hand, after putting it under its full control, it further wanted to exploit its strong foundations in society. It attempted, with the help of the religious / christian organizations⁵, to appropriate and promote the values of the "Greek-Christian Civilization"⁶, which for the christian organizations constituted their ideological pedestal. These values, the dictatorship, with the assistance of religious organizations of clergy and laymen, referred to as an ideological "emblem" of the regime, not because of its concern towards Hellenism and Christianity, but to achieve its social intervention and acceptance. Thus, beyond the given anti-communist argumentation, the "Greek-Christian civilization" through its ideological-political use will become the basic ideology of the dictatorship, aiming to be the positive opposite of communism. On the

⁴ Konidaris, Joannis (Κονιδάρης, Ίωάννης). 2016. "The Church in the dictatorship" in *The dictatorship of the colonels and the restoration of democracy*. Athens: Publisher: Institution of the Hellenic Parliament, pp. 170-174, and of the same writer (2019). "The repercussions of dictatorship interferences on the Church" in *The dictatorship of Colonels. Seven-year's anatomy*. Athens: Patakis Editions, pp. 68-81. See, also, the interesting article of Nanakis, Andreas (Νανάκης, Ανδρέας), Metropolitan of Arkaloxorion (Church of Crete) and professor of Ecclesiastical History of of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, «The Church of Greece and the Junta», in newspaper "Kathimerini", 11.06.2017, p. 29.

⁵ These are private Christian Brotherhoods of clergymen and laymen that operated autonomously and independently of the official Church of Greece, often criticizing Church leadership, pursuing - as is supposed - the progress and upgrading of the ecclesiastical organization. The most important of these organizations were "Zoë" ("Life") and the "Sotir" ("Savior").

⁶ The "Greek-Christian Civilization," an ideology dating back to the second half of the 19th century, during the seven years of the dictatorship, was the main axis on which the regime's propagand was built. As the basic ideological tool - manifesto was used the work of the leader of the Brotherhood of the theologians "Zoë" Alexandros Tsirindanis (Αλέξανδρος Τσιριντάνης). 1950. *Towards a Christian Civilization*. Athens: Damascus Publications. The term "Greek-Christian" as a determinant of civilization was first used in 1852 by Spyridon Zambelios (Σπυρίδων, Ζαμπέλιος), [1813-1838]. In fact, the term "Greek-Christian" is not used precisely in the work of Lefkadian historian and scholar, but the terms "Christian Hellenism" and "Greek-Christian idea", through which the relationship of religion is emphatically underlined and a national identity, so that the term "Greek-Christian civilization" which was established, is justified. More historical elements about the "Zoë" movement in the study of the elder (presbyter) and professor of Richard Stockton State College of New Jersey (U.S.A.) Demetrios Constantelos (π. Δημήτριος Κωνσταντέλος). 1959. *The "Zoë" Movement in Greece*. New York. (<http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/arhu/content/docs/djc%20archive/The%20Zoe%20Movement%20in%20Greece.pdf>). See also, Maczewski, Christoph. 2002. *The movement of "Zoë" in Greece* (translation by G. Metallinos). Athens: Armos Publications, pp. 97-100, Gazis, Efi. 2004. *The Second Life of the Three Hierarchs. A Genealogy of "Greek-Christian Civilization"*. Athens: Pub. Nefeli, p. 63 and Makirdes, Vasileios. 2004. *Orthodoxy in the Service of Anticommunism. The Religious Organization "Zoë" during the Greek Civil War*, in «The Greek Civil War». London: Pub. Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College of London – Philip Caraboot and Thanasis Sfikas (ed.), p. 160-171.

other hand, the newly-imposed regime of the Church, not only did not oppose to the calling of the dictatorship, but believing that by following in the dictatorship's steps it would be able to "rehabilitate" the ecclesiastical organization from the sins it charged its ecclesiastical leaders of the past, from the very first moment agreed and fell in with the "beliefs" of 21st April on "cleansing," a notion which believed that the new, under Archbishop Ieronymos (Kotsonis), synodal authority regarded the Church, not so much as eucharistic authority, but as society of some sort, an administrative mechanism, an instrument for serving the Junta's political ends. The dictatorship found support in the ideology of "Greek-Christianity" and was also supported both by the Church and by the christian organizations, which had become its guardians and useful collaborators.

The intervention of the dictatorship in the administration of the Church had been criticized by Constantine Karamanlis as leader of the conservative-democratic party who, after the fall of the dictatorship, became the first Prime Minister of the Transition, as head of the "Government of the National Unity" formed by synergy and participation of all believers in the democratic political system of all the other political parties in July 1974⁷. Karamanlis, in 1967, being self-exiled in Paris, denounces the constitutional deviation from the first days (April 23rd) of the coup⁸ and in 1969 blames the "military government of Athens" that "with its contradictory and incoherent policy it created a tyrannical and illegal regime in which this country is deteriorating"⁹.

It is clear that Karamanlis attempts to cut off the umbilical cord of the dictatorship with the area of the conservative faction that could theoretically give the military regime a primitive acceptance¹⁰. In Karamanlis' statements, there seems to be no lack of caustic irony for the political exploitation of religion and, as he notes, an exploitation "of the minimal christian methods"¹¹. This is a critical reference, which has clearly been received not only by the leadership of the dictatorship but also by the leadership of the Church (in which Ieronymos was a part), which collaborated in these practices, which Karamanlis is ridiculing by treating them as a parody of religiosity with which the authentic religious conservative political party could not be related. In the spring of 1973, Karamanlis, with his influential statements (23.04.1973) in the "Vradyni" and "Thessaloniki" newspapers, will make a harsh criticism by accus-

⁷ Ktistakis, Giannis (Κτιστάκις, Γιάννης). 2008. "Konstantinos Karamanlis and the Church of Greece". *Constantinos Karamanlis in the twentieth century*. International Conference. Athens: Edition by Konstantinos Karamanlis Foundation, pp. 365-372.

⁸ Karagiannis, Evangelos (Καραγιάννης Εύαγγελος). 2008. "Public interventions by K. Karamanlis during the period of the dictatorship", *Konstantinos Karamanlis in the twentieth century*. International scientific conference. Athens: Edition: Konstantinos Karamanlis Foundation, pp. 252, 256.

⁹ Interview at the Swiss newspaper "Journal de Geneve" (1 October 1969).

¹⁰ Tzermias, Paul (Τζερμιάς, Παύλος). 1990. *Political Thought of Constantine Karamanlis: A Detection*. Athens: Greek "Euroekdotiki" Publications, p. 185.

¹¹ In the late '69s, a time when the propaganda of the regime was taking place, the self-exonerated in Paris Con. Karamanlis, in an interview at the Swiss newspaper "Journal de Geneve" (October 1, 1969), commemorating the "Greek-Christian" version of the policy of the dictatorship, states: "the status of Athens lacking any particular ideological orientation in any form of government - responds. And this vacuum can not be filled either in medieval theocratic terms or by slogans (motto) like "Greece of Greek Christians", while the methods of the regime are not at all Christian ... " See, also, Grigoriadis, Solon (Γρηγοριάδης, Σόλων). 1975. "History of Contemporary Greece 1941-1974". *The dictatorship*, vol. 6. Athens: Publications K. Kapopoulos, pp. 57-58.

ing the military government that with its volatile policy is destroying critical institutions of state and society, these "tribulations" destroy state institutions and the Church as well¹². "The Government Experimentations have constantly disorganized the Administration, the Church and the Education, so as to present the image of a dangerous disintegration"¹³ stressed the self-exiled Greek politician, who seems to be interested and closely watches over the value judgment, the "martyrdom" the Church is experiencing at that time.

In July 1974, after the fall of the dictatorship, Con. Karamanlis arrived in Athens to take over the fortunes of the country and was accepted as a "Messiah"¹⁴. In the administration of the Church there was a new Archbishop, who a few hours after the arrival of Karamanlis, at the dawn of July 24, 1974 by whom he was sworn as the Prime Minister. The new Archbishop, the former Metropolitan of Ioannina Seraphim (Tikas), although he had ascended to the supreme ecclesiastical principle during the second phase of the dictatorial regime (dated 12.01.1974, during the period of the second dictator brigadier Dimitrios Ioannidis), had not been identified with the dictatorship as much as his predecessor Ieronymos. This can be explained because of the short period of time that Seraphim had so far (12.01.1974-23.07.1974), and – even more - because he symbolized the ecclesiastical wing of bishops that at January of 1974 took over the normal (canonical) Hierarchy, having come into "direct" conflict with abnormal Hierarchy of period 1967-1973 and more widely that party of the Hierarchy that represented the (completely controlled by the regime) administration system of Church that had enforced since the early days of his establishment and for a six-year period (1967-1973) the dictatorship of 21st April. Seraphim reassured Karamanlis that there would be no conflicts during the critical period 1974-1975 bringing peace and order within the Church, which influenced positively and acted effectively in the development of a good co-operation in the relationship between the two men and consequently in the relations between Church and State - which instead of being of institutional - mutual respect had been transformed during the period of the dictatorship into relations of self-interest - political and religious - interests between the military government of 21st April and its appointed ecclesiastical leadership.

II. "The Belief" of the 21st of April.

¹² On the same day (April 23, 1973), in which Karamanlis observed the "dangerous disintegration," of the Greek Church the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios (Papadopoulos) with his Letter of 366 / 23.04.1973 to the Archbishop Ieronymos remarks about the violation of the terms of the Patriarchal Acts (1850/1928) regarding the (non) observance of the of the order of seniority at the rank of bishop for the establishment of the Permanent ("small") Holy Synod and calls on him to take action to "return to normality". See, also, in Kommatas, Demitrios (Κομματᾶς, Δημήτριος), Metropolitan of Sebasteia (of Patriarchate in Turkey). 2006. *The Patriarchal and Synodical Act of 1928*. Thessaloniki: "Photomethexis" Publishing, pp. 462-463. A decade ago (13.04.1973) was published the decision No. 1175/1973 of the Supreme Court of the State with which the composition of the appointed members of the Standing Holy Synod had been canceled. of the 117th period (1972-1974). The "Ieronymus system" had begun to collapse. See, Andreopoulos, Charalampos (Haris) (Ἀνδρέοπουλος, Χαράλαμπος [Χάρης]). 2017. *The Church of Greece during the 1967-1974 dictatorship. A historical and law- canonic approach*. Thessaloniki: "Epikentro" Publications, pp. 238-241.

¹³ Svolopoulos, Konstantinos (Σβολόπουλος, Κωνσταντῖνος). 1997. "Ordeal period, 1963-1974". *Constantinos Karamanlis: Archive, Facts and Texts*, opere citato, Vol. 7, pp. 170-171.

¹⁴ Rizas, Sotirios (Ριζᾶς, Σωτήριος). 2014. "In the beginning of political changeover". *The time of transition to Democracy.*, Athens: Magazine "New Estia", issue number 1862 (June), pp. 398-424.

The very ideology of 21st April was expressed by the dictator George Papadopoulos himself through his public speech, which has been recorded in the multifaceted project "Our Belief" released by the regime. Our "Belief" was aimed at - at least that was the intention of its author - to become the "gospel" of the regime¹⁵. Within the dictator's speeches, the ideological concept of the regime is concentrated, as Georgios Papadopoulos expressed it himself¹⁶. Obviously, it aspired to become one of the main propaganda tools of the dictatorial government. The reasons for his edification are made clear in the preface of the first volume, since, through his reasons and interviews, Georgios Papadopoulos "leaves a clear view of the aims and the positions of the Revolution of 21 April and clearly delineates the prospects of their development through the good of our Fatherland and of all the people, "it is doubtful whether the regime managed to establish a clear ideological outline in the sense of a coherent system of beliefs and theories for the understanding and interpretation of reality"¹⁷. Thus, any reference to the ideology of the dictatorship relies, in essence, on the isolation and critical analysis of repeated issues of regime propaganda and on the evidence of the period, such as enlightening handbooks, speeches, interviews with governmental and ecclesiastical officials, and publications of the proscriptive press.

In its endeavor to form a complete dominant political ideology that would make it possible to legitimize the status of the regime, the seven year regime relied on two main axes: anti-communism and "Greek-Christian civilization"¹⁸ which is a version of national ideology articulated in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the co-operation of the Church¹⁹ in the ideological-political aspirations of the time²⁰, as

¹⁵ In most of his reports Georgios Papadopoulos refers to faith, which refers to religion, and thus the title of the work "Our Belief" could be seen as a communicative effort by the regime to link it to the consciousness of the people with the (the same title) christian "Symbol of Faith".

¹⁶ Richard Clogg talks about "pseudo-ideology" (false ideology) or "pseudo-ideologies" (false ideologies) hurriedly being assembled by the ideological representatives of the colonels in attempting to legalize and rationalize their coup and practices. See, Clogg, Richard. 1976. *The Ideology of the "Revolution of 21 April 1967"* in *Greece under the military yoke*. (edited by G. Giannopoulos and R. Clogg). Athens: Papazisis Publications, pp. 81-112, and Diamantopoulos, Athanasios (Διαμαντόπουλος, Ἀθανάσιος). 1977. *The Greek political life. Twentieth century*. Athens: Papazisis Publications, pp. 231-257 and himself, (2000). "The dictatorship of Colonels. The Aprilian regime". *History of the Greek Nation*. Athens: "Ekdotiki of Athens" Publications, p. 266. See, also, Papadimitriou, Despina (Παπαδημητρίου, Δέσποινα). 2010. "The ideology of the regime". *The military dictatorship of 1967-1974*. Athens: Special edition for the newspaper "The NEW" ("TA NEA"), pp. 105-114.

¹⁷ According to historical, sociological and political analyzes, we cannot speak of a structured ideology of the dictatorial regime, but rather of a coincidence, a hotch-spotch of extremist views, without internal logic and coherence. See, Close, David. 2007. *Greece, 1945-2000. Politics - Society - Economy* (translation by G. Merikas). Thessaloniki: Thyrathen Publications, pp. 186-187.

¹⁸ The ideology of the "Greek-Christian civilization" as expressed in the period of the seven year dictatorship, was exactly the same in its essence and in the political and social purposes it served, with the ideology of "Third Greek Civilization" by Joannis Metaxas, despite any minor variations. See, relevant to the following footnote 23.

¹⁹ This is the time during which the Church is identified as modern Greek, the official state ideology of "Greek-Christianity", which has, as a primary thesis, the implementation of the doctrine of the Great Idea. This dependence of the Church on the State degrades it from an "ideological body" to a "constituent of ideology", an instrument and agency of the political power in question. See, a relative analysis of the Greek model by Skopetea, Elli (Σκοπετέα, Ἐλλη). 1988. *The "Model Kingdom" and the Great Idea. Aspects of the national problem in Greece (1830-1880)*. Athens: Polytypus Publications, p. 133.

expressed in the Great Idea²¹, and was found to be at the peak of its scope for the first quarter of 20th century, acquiring - and especially in the case of the seven year dictatorship - the character of a regime ideology. In the case of the Junta, however, the use of "Greek Christianity", as a term and in many manifestations, would be dictated not by a clear political pursuit of the regime but for propagandistic purposes, since as the term "Greek-Christianity" appealed to the emotions of great parts of society and – more importantly – homogeneous ideological-political groups of cadres and members of Christian organizations. What is indisputable, however, is that the leaders of the coup themselves had begun their military career in the period of Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas and had shaped their main ideological positions during the Second World War and the Civil War through their participation in the paramilitary organization called «I.D.E.A.» («Sacred Bond of Greek Officers») and the religious organization "Hellenic Light"²², attempted to form a new ideology that would include elements of the 4 August speech²³ and anti-communism.

Based on this general guideline in the ideological arsenal of the dictatorship, the "Greek-Christian civilization" had a prevalent position, in a phantom, propaganda-

²⁰ As noted by the professor of Sociology, Joannis Petrou [Ἰωάννης Πέτρου] (1992. *Church and Politics in Greece (1750-1909)*. Thessaloniki: Kyriakidis Publications, pp. 180-182), at the time, during the "*the ideological function of the Church cultivates ethno-scholasticism and Greek-centrism in the ecclesiastical space*", while observing that "*the fermentation of the ecclesiastical mindset with the national idea linked the second so closely with it that it is considered a duty of ecclesiastical Hierarchy to support anything covered behind it*". The negative effects of this event were, of course, more than obvious in the case of the seven year dictatorship.

²¹ The term was first used by I. Kolettis in the Constituent National Assembly on January 14, 1884, in order to justify the pursuit of the extension of the borders of the Greek state to the point of the Ottoman Empire, where the Greek element living in the region prevailed in numbers and in cultural supremacy; Especially in the Constantinople area. The ideology of the Great Idea was officially terminated by the Asia Minor Catastrophe, the Treaty of Lausanne and the exchange of populations in 1923, and henceforth transformed into the ideology of "Greek-Christianity".

²² It was the organization which, according to professor of Philosophy at "Panteion" University Christos Giannaras [Χρήστος Γιανναράς], (1987. *Refuge of Ideas. A testimony*. Athens: Domos Publishers, p. 86), took over the "*spiritual part of the anti-communist struggle*" under the presidency of King Paul and his active participation in this whole activity with the archimandrite Ieronymos Kotsonis, the forerunner (head priest) of the Palace and later Archbishop of Athens and all Greece during the period of the seven year dictatorship, "*fanatic anticommunist*," according to David Close (op. cit.), pp. 184. In the same organization ("Hellenic Light"), speeches, lectures, etc, were attended by middle and senior army officers who participated in "I.D.E.A."’s paramilitary conspiracy organization, including the subsequent dictator (1967-1973) Georgios Papadopoulos, who in this organization meets the archimandrite, head priest of the Palace and later – during the dictatorship - Archbishop (1967-1973) Ieronymos Kotsonis, whose nationalist and anti-communist views were well known.

²³ In the ideology of August 4 (1936), the trident "Homeland - Religion - Family" dominated the attempt to cultivate the vision of "Third Hellenic Civilization" through the coupling of the first Greek civilization that was the ancient Greek and the second that was the Byzantine. Metaxas, limiting the importance of classical humanism and the Athenian Democracy, will want to highlight the Byzantium, exaggerating the role of religion. The stimulation of religious sentiment was enough to create the "Third Greek Civilization," as an ideological vehicle, to which many of the Church's agents joined together. In the speech of 21st April (1967), the ideology of Metaxas will find its continuation through the triptych about "Greece of the Greek Christians" and the vision of "Greek-Christian Civilization". See, Gazis, Efi. 2011. "*Homeland, Religion, Family*". *History of a slogan (1880-1930)*. Athens: Publications "Polis".

like version²⁴, which was the capital and dominant position, and its two slogans: "Greece of the Greek Christians", through which the dictator presented the "ideal of the Greek", but using it, in essence, more as an ideological overture of the regime than as an expression of genuine feelings towards the homeland (Hellas - Greeks) and the religion (Christians). It is a motto that directly refers to the ideology of Metaxas as the second basic three-fold slogan of the "Homeland - Religion - Family" dictatorship. With these "Greek-Christian" inspirational slogans - irrespective of the self-consciousness of the Orthodox Church - the Military Government of the seven year dictatorship interpreted its official speech, which is considered to be "authentically" expressed by the leader of the regime, Georgios Papadopoulos²⁵. This was the rea-

²⁴ In a scientifically documented, ideologically politically balanced and politically careful approach to the notion of "Greek-Christian Civilization" - as regards the relation of "Greek" civilization to the "Christian" - Professor of Linguistics of the University of Athens, Georgios Babiniotis, speaks about the components of "Greekness" and "Christian faith", defining as their constituent the "Greek-Christian Ideal". Expanding the historical concept - and its varied manifestations - of the "Greek-Christian Civilization" from the falsification suffered during the dictatorship (1967-1974), Babiniotis referring to the "Greek-Christian ideal" notes that "this is an ideal that was not disputed, of course, when the Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment led by Korais and the Masters of the Nation supported it, most priests did so too (Eugenios Voulgaris, Neophytos Doukas, Anthimos Gazis, Konstantinos Oikonomos, Neophytos Vamvas and others), also supported by the freedom fighters Makrygiannis and Kolokotronis and other as well. However, it was questioned later, when it was associated with a strong conservatism in the educational act, and as a term was short-circuited when used propagandistically in the dictatorship of Papadopoulos as a nationalist slogan. It is well-known that anything can be distorted and devalued if it is the object of purpose and the cover of different intentions [...]. Today is the time," said G. Babiniotis, "the word "Greek-Christian" to be "declassified" politically and ideologically, with the exception of historical references in the period of the seven year dictatorship, and to regain its primary and substantive conceptual and semantic content which is the bipolar reference to the Greekness and Christianity of the classical Greek rationality and Christian Orthodoxy." See, Babiniotis, Georgios (Μπαμπινιώτης, Γεώργιος). 2002. *The Three Hierarchs Founders of Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy and Rationalism*, (Speech in honor of the Three Hierarchs), Athens: Bimonthly newsletter of University of Athens, vol. 28, pp. 4-5. Also republished on the University of Patras website, http://www.upatras.gr/inaos/treis_ierarxes_themelio_mpampiniotis.html. On the basis of the same approach, professor of the Theological Department of University of Athens Georgios Patronos will point out that "unfortunately, the" Greek-Christian Civilization "that sprang through the spiritual processes of the Greek and Christian ideals, was miserably abused by all of us, either by political men or by the religious leaders, and that is due to the fact that it was proposed in our times by some reckless people as a nationalist ideology and was cut off from the natural roots of Patristic Orthodoxy." See, Patronos, Georgios (Πατρώνος, Γεώργιος). 2011. *The concept of the composition of Hellenism and Christianity in the Three Hierarchs*, Chania of Crete: Christ and the Cosmos, 31, monthly publication of the Holy Bishopric (Metropolis) of Kissamos and Selinas, Kissamos of Chania, p. 12. The "Greek-Christian civilization" is characterized as a "Fabrication" by the professor of dogmatics at the Department of Theology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), Chrysostomos Stamoulis, considering the "creation of the meeting of the ideological-enthusiastic framework and the neo-Hellenic nationalism of the state entity" during the post-war period, See, Stamoulis, Chrysostomos (Σταμούλης, Χρυσόστομος). 2012. *The demand and the desire for a better tomorrow. Introduction to the Christian Civilization of Alexander Tsiridanis*. Heraklion of Crete: Scientific Yearbook of the Churches of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Academy of Crete, pp. 361-368.

²⁵ One of the first completed researches ever written about the official speech of the dictatorship through "Our Belief" is that of Emmanuela Mikedakis whose aim is to identify what words-concepts dominate the speech of G. Papadopoulos according to the composition of his audience and political conjuncture. See, Mikedakis, Emmanouela (Μικεδάκη, Εμμανουέλα). 2007. "Renouncing the Recent Past, Revolutionizing the Present and Resurrecting the Distant Past: Lexical and figurative representation in the political speeches of Georgios Papadopoulos (1967-1973)". PhD diss, University of the New South Wales. Concerning "Greek-Christianity belief" itself, despite its constant invocation, it is doubt-

son why the Church endorsed and always corroborated the regime's propaganda, disregarding its spiritual role and the principles of the democratic constitution it naturally advocates, and which compels it to challenge every ideological-political attempt of any dictatorial regime – of any kind- as happened with the seven year dictatorship, as the granted by God human right of freedom on which the democratic principles of the social organization of the State are based.

The "Greek-Christian civilization" was undoubtedly the basic ideology of the dictatorship, aiming to constitute the positive opposite of Communism²⁶, in accordance with the "ethno-religious" principles in which the leaders of 21 April were nourished, as it was pointed out, rather calmly, in the first Report of the Greek Annex of the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A of U.S.A.) which was sent to Washington to describe what took place in Greece a few hours after the dictatorship of the 21st of April. In the C.I.A. report, which was handed over by the US Embassy, concerning the profile of the leader of the coup it was stated that "according to reports we have Papadopoulos was a member of a religious organization that archimandrite Ieronymos had created in the army ...", meaning the organization "The Greek Light," founded by King Paul and led by Professor Alex. Tsirintanis, while the leader of the organization was the head priest of the Palace and later Archbishop Ieronymos who played the leading role in the organization and operation. According to the American Report, "this organization is considered as a part of the religious movement "Zoë" ("Life") which permeates all levels of Greek society. Papadopoulos often speaks of the "Greek-Christian civilization ..."²⁷, which is recorded in a positive spirit as it intimates towards a dictatorial regime on the one hand, but ideologically related to the Civil War and Post Civil War governments, a clearly anti-communist regime, which would later be the legitimized by the US Government.

The main task of the 21st April regime was to halt the "communist risk" and thus coincided and went along with the top ideology of the post-war state – the symbol of the struggle against the Left, ie "Greek-Christianity", making it "the crown of its world-based foundation the Greek-Christian ideal: *Faith, Homeland!*"²⁸ The intense re-promotion of the "Greek-Christian culture" as an official national religious ideology and the resulting shift towards "Greek ancient history" will create an anti-ideology, controversial to some extent, with the idea of modernization-Europeanisation which the governments of the Parliamentary period had followed: «The ideological and overwhelming aims of "Europeanisation" and "prosperity" which had been proclaimed in the past had not inspired and stimulated the regime,

ful whether the dictators had the spiritual background to understand its original conceptual and semantic content, so in the end what they probably did was to make people despise it in the conscience of a large part of public opinion.

²⁶ Boglis, Ioanna (Βόγλη, Ίωάννα). 2007. "The official speech of the regime of 21 April. "Our belief" the book of Giorgios Papadopoulos", M.Sc. diss, "Panteion" University of Athens, Department of Political Sciences and History, p.72. "Greek-Christianity" was a basic ideology of the dictatorship, without being its own invention. Its gradual emergence, as an ideology, from the interwar period, especially after the end of the civil war, was accomplished with the help of the Church and the Christian organizations as well as the dominant social groups and classes.

²⁷ Papaxelas, Alexis (Παπαχελάς, Άλέξης). 1997. *The rape of the Hellenic Republic. The American Factor, 1947-1967*. Athens: Edision Bookshop of "Estia", pp. 322-323.

²⁸ Vryonis, Constandinos (Βρυώνης, Κωνσταντῖνος). 1969. *The Greek-Christian Ideal of the Struggle of Independence, a world-stage foundation of the Revolution of 21 April 1967*. Athens: p. 7.

but they proved to be divisive slogans. But this should have been expected as obvious. An ideological re-loading was sought, from where Greece itself had contributed. Its leadership had despised its own source, ancient, but always life-giving, and it drew from other sources, which were of no value to Greece. The Army had to come to the forefront of politics, so as to be driven to the source that would lead to the streams of wisdom [...]. The spirit of the worldview of the Greek-Christian civilization also determines the spirit of our Revolution»²⁹, stressed the member of the "Revolutionary Committee" of the "April 21st" Stylianos Pattakos, expressing the ideological manifesto of the "National Government" of which he was Vice-President.

III. The interventions within the Church

Less than one month after the tanks had taken to the streets³⁰, the control of the Church from the dictatorship regime was completed and an "emergency Church" was created in order to (co-) serve the ideological-political aims of the "Revolution". The interventions of the dictatorship were immediate and successfully all objectives were centered towards it. They were manifested by a number of non canonical regulations - such as the planned removal of the legal and regular Archbishop Chrysostomos II (Hatzistavrou) and the constitution of the (eight - appointed - members / bishops) "Aristindin" / "Ex merito" (Irregular) Synod³¹ for the election of a new, well-liked archbishop. And that was not all. After the ascension to the archiepiscopal throne of archimandrite Ieronymos and through the close and without serious interference cooperation that then developed between him and the dictatorial regime, one can also distinguish the effort made by the Church to appropriate the State toward achieving its own objectives. With goals of ideological-political priorities in the context of the "Greek-Christian" precepts and beliefs, as well as aiming its own internal –supposedly reformative- organization. The latter, which was set in the context of a professional "cleansing" that would have the assistance of the State, was associated not only with the curtailment of any moral behavior of its clergymen, but also with a "Sorting out of Affairs" among opposing ecclesiastical groups of archbishops who had the origin of their ideological-political conflicts (Royalists vs

²⁹ Pattakos Stylianos (Παττακός, Στυλιανός). 1968. *Towards the New Greek Dawn "Greece of Greek Christians"*. Athens: Magazine "Positions and Ideas", vol. A', issue number 5, p. 436.

³⁰ At this point it should be clarified and highlighted, as a continuation of what has been aforementioned and in footnote. 1, that what happened in April 1967 was not the seizure of power by the "Armed Forces" as it was, in a way, mentioned complacently and in an official way by the regime of April 21, according to which "the Armed Forces took over the country's rule "But the seizure of power was" made by a clique of officers who took advantage of the circumstances ". According to the historical analysis by professor of the University of Athens Evanthis, Hantzivasiliou (Εύάνθης, Χατζηβασιλείου). 2009. *Deceptions, dilemmas and the failure of politics: the Army on the path to the dictatorship*", in *Unyielding in Dictatorship* (edited by Manolis Vassilakis, Papazisis Publishing Athens, pp. 440-442), "the dictatorship was the result of successive and on many levels failures and mistakes of the central political scene, its political forces and its protagonists".

³¹ About «Aristindin» (Synod): The greek word «Ἀριστίνδην» («Aristindin») cannot be translated in english. It means that you pick, not elect, the best among a group of people (here bishops), the "elite". In this case "Aristindin" is said to be the Synod, which is made up of some of the most excellent – as supposed - members of the Hierarchy, which are generally chosen by the State for the election (as a rule, of "the most favorable") of Archbishops and Metropolitans or for (supposedly for reasons of political expediency and in most of the cases practiced) "cleansing" of the Church. Its composition, is regarded as a form of intervention by the State in the internal affairs of the Church ("sacra interna corporis") and is considered to be an abnormal act.

Venizelists [liberals], organizational vs anti-organizational, more or less attached to the Patriarchate, etc.) from the so called interwar era.

The period of the seven-year institutional anomaly and the overthrow of the Holy Canons (= ecclesiastical rules) begins in the first phase of the dictatorship (1967 - 1973) and is manifested by successive, manifestly abnormal and violent interventions, such as the removal of the Orthodox Archbishop Chrystomos II (Hatzistavrou) and the establishment of the appointed - and abnormal - "Aristidin" Synod through which it was neutralized - essentially "silenced" - the function of the Holy Synod of the lawful Hierarchy (the "great" Holy Synod of sixty-five metropolitans / bishops members), the synodic system was repressed and neutralized³² as was the democratic government of the state by suspending the function of the elected Greek Parliament. The irregularities of this period include the election of a new, archbishop and a plethora of other bishops (twenty-nine in number) by the "Aristidin" Synod, the deposition (dethronement) of unwelcomed bishops of the old canonical hierarchy by means of laws in which the normal and ecclesiastical order was abolished³³. As was the case, for example, with the Compulsory Law 214/1967, according to which extraordinary court martial-like Ecclesiastical Courts were founded, the so-called "holy Courts of Law", non-existent and unknown in the Holy Rule and ecclesiastical tradition, which referred to a special law offense concerning "the loss of a person's well behaved manners according to the testimony of a witness and the loss of one's prestige"³⁴ many chief priests were condemned by this special law and were relieved of their duties by summary procedures not having any right of appeal, thus abolishing unprecedentedly any judicial means of appeal.

In this first phase of the dictatorship (1967-1973) an attempt to circumvent the Patriarchal Tome/ Volume (1850) and the Patriarchal and Synodical Act (1928) will be attempted and eventually initiated by Archbishop Ieronymos. It is a matter of wonder that a President of the Synod who is also a professor of Canon Law violates Holy Rule regulations concerning Holy Rule Law of relations between the Greek Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. He does this by invoking his personal view

³² In an anniversary text of the Permanent Holy Synod for the completion of the 40th anniversary of the Charter of the Church of Greece (Law 570/1977) published in January 2018 in the official magazine of the Church of Greece "Theology" - which is signed by Metropolitan of Syros Dorotheos (Polykandriotis), in his capacity of Vice-President of the Permanent ("small") Holy Synod - in reference to the events of the period 1967-1974, it criticized "the revolutionary - coupled change of leadership of the Church of Greece at a synodical and metropolitan level of administration, through the laws and administrative acts of the dictatorial regime of April 1967" and pointed out that the purpose of these interventions was "to overthrow the normal administration of the Church by appointing a new Sustainable ("small") Holy Synod, the removal of powers from the Hierarchy (the "great" Holy Synod), the election of a new Archbishop, the removal of sixteen non-friendly bishops and the election of twenty-nine new bishops", See, Polykandriotis, Dorotheos (Πολυκανδριώτης, Δωρόθεος), Metropolitan of Syros (of Aegean) *Anniversary of the 40th anniversary of the Charter of the Church of Greece (Law 570/1977)*, "Theology", Publication of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, vol. 89, issue number 1, 2018, pp. 93-97.

³³ "It is surprising that a distinguished Canonologist like him (Ieronymos) had come to favor a number of apparently abnormal Holy Rule acts ...", states the leading historian of the 20th century Ranciman, Steven. 1972. *The Orthodox Churches and the secular state*, Oxford: Auckland University Press - Oxford University Press, pp. 70-71. Publishing in "The Step" newspaperer ("Το Βήμα»). Athens, 14.09.1972.

³⁴ The Apostle Paul's "outstanding good testimony" (A' Timothy, 3,7) refers not to the bishops but the lay people who wish to enter the clergy.

that they are not "essential types" for the constitution of the Permanent ("small") Holy Synod in concern with essentials for the participation of the hierarchs of those who are under the spiritual supervision of the Ecumenical Patriarchate - Metropolises (dioceses) of the "Nees Hores" ("New Lands")³⁵. This was an effort which clearly had the intention of reducing the Holy Rule rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the Greek territory, and in particular the Metropolises of the "New Lands"³⁶ belonging to the Patriarchate, which however ended in a deadlock for Ieronymos. When later, this improper endeavor on his part will assume- by a court decision - a dimension of illegality, then, the entire structure will collapse thunderously, leading him to his resignation (1973).

IV. The "fatal" mistake of Ieronymos

Using the "freedom" granted to him by the dictatorship, Ieronymos will endeavor, as an expressionist of the idea of a "National Church", to transform the autocracy of the Greek Church towards the Ecumenical Patriarchate into "self-centered Church". In this direction, he will attempt to fully release the Patriarchal and Synodical Tome (Volume) of 1850 (through which the Patriarchate was given the autocephaly [autonomy] in the Church of Greece) and the Patriarchal and Synodical Act of 1928, wishing to make the Greek Church "independent" (an autonomously function, like a self-government). Thus, in the new Charter, which will be voted in 1969, these two patriarchal texts, through which the normative framework of the relations between the Church of Greece and the Patriarchate were regulated, will be absent. And all this occurred in order for the Church of Greece to acquire, according to the aims of Ieronymos, which the dictatorship also fully covered, its "full autonomy" and its "self-regulating" function, in which no other regulatory regulations would have any coming from a "foreign" or "other Church," as Ieronymos considered the Patriarchate.

³⁵ According to the Patriarchal and Synodical Act of 1928 the Ecumenical Patriarchate retained its supreme canonical authority and rights over the dioceses of the "Nees Hores" ("New Lands"), even though they were now to be administered in practice by the Holy Synod of the autocephalous Church of Greece. The term "Nees Hores" ("New Lands") is of political and not ecclesiastical origin. The issue arose with the liberation of these parts of the Greek State (Macedonia, Thrace, Aegean islands, a section of Epirus and a small part of Thessaly corresponding to the diocese of Ellassona) from Ottoman Empire, during the Balkan Wars (1912/1913), and had political, legal, ecclesiastical and canon law implications.

³⁶ These are the Metropolises (dioceses) of the regions of Northern Greece (Macedonia), Epirus, Thrace, the Aegean islands and an area of Thessaly (Ellassona), which are governed (administered) by the autocephalous Church of Greece, but continue to be subject to the spiritual jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. See, Vlachos, Ierotheos (Βλάχος Ιερόθεος). 2002. Metropolitan of Nafpaktos (of Peloponnese), *Ecumenical Patriarchate and Church of Greece*. Libadeia (of Boeotia / Sterea Ellada / Central Greece): Edition: Holy Monastery of the Birth of the Theotokos (Virgin Mary) of Pelagia, Valakos – Theodoroudis, Malamati, (Βαλάκου – Θεοδωρούδη, Μαλαματή), 2003, *Political and constitutional aspects of the status of the New Lands ("Nees Hores")*. Katerini (of Macedonia): Edition "Epektasis", Demetrios, Kommatas, Demetrios (Κομματᾶς, Δημήτριος). 2006. Metropolitan of Sebasteia (of Patriarchate in Turkey), *The Patriarchal and Synodical Act of 1928*. Thessaloniki: "Photomethesis" Publishing, Iatrou, George (Ιατρού Γεώργιος). 2010. *The position of the ecumenical patriarchate in the ecclesiastical, Greek and international legal order* (Library of Ecclesiastical Law). Athens – Komotini: Publications Antonis Sakkoulas, pp. 251-300 and Nanakis, Andreas (Νανάκης Ανδρέας), Metropolitan of Arkalochori (of Crete). 2017. *Aspects of relations between Church and Greek State in the 20th century*. Thessaloniki: Barbounakis Publications, pp. 193-219.

Instead of setting up the "small" Synod (Permanent Holy Synod) with the objective specifications of the order of seniority at the rank of bishop, as provided by the patriarchal texts (Patriarchal Tomos of 1850 and Patriarchal Act of 1928), Ieronymos will promote, with the provision of the new Statute Charter (1969), a system of constitution of the Permanent ("small") Holy Synod through the election and appointment of its members by the Hierarchy³⁷. It was, for example, a system of constitution through a clearly controlled process, of which the composition of the Permanent Holy Synod would arise on the basis of the will of the existing Archbishop and would have clearly features of the Order, which was a direct circumvention of the episcopate-policy, and therefore of the canonical order of the Church. This choice proved to be fatal for Ieronymos. The voices of protest within the Hierarchy of November 1972 will soon evolve into a storm that will sweep its foundation. The composition of the appointed "small" Synod of the Permanent Holy Synod, following the appeal of the Metropolitans of Eleftheroupolis and Florina, will be annulled by the Supreme Court of the State (Council of State) not as non canonical as the plaintiffs sought, but as illegal, from errors and omissions that were attributed to the legally –held system implemented by Ieronymos himself, whose control was lost. Beyond that, the countdown begins. In the period of May 1973, when the Hierarchy necessarily takes place in order to establish a new and legitimate Permanent Holy Synod, the dispute within the Church between the "ieronymic" on the one hand and the "pro-patriarchal" on the other, takes explosive dimensions.

On May 10, 1973, at the crucial session on the controversial issue of how the establishment of the Permanent («small») Holy Synod (appointed, as Ieronymos wanted it, or in the order of seniority at the rank of bishop, as the "patriarchs" wanted, in accordance with articles of the patriarchal texts), the battle to be given would have the character of survival for the Archbishop, but Ieronymos will not be able to control his own bishops, the friendly and ideologically dedicated bishops to him. A sufficient number of "adherent bishops" at that crucial meeting of the Hierarchy of May 10, 1973, on the controversial issue of the establishment of the Permanent («small») Holy Synod will distance themselves from his ecclesiastical politics and cause an internal "schism" to vote against his system by voting for the proposal of the "pro-patriarchal" party for the formation of the Permanent Holy Synod by the order of seniority of bishops. This catalyzing conversion of some bishops of the "ieronymical" party will make the "patriarchal" party a majority. The "Ieronymos' system" finds itself in a precarious situation. The signs of its collapse are now visible.

Ieronymos, instead of admitting that his defeat - on May 10, 1973 - was due both to his personal mistakes to the conduct of his ecclesiastical policy and to his own mistakes in manipulations that caused the "apostasy" from the group of Bishops of his own the choice, will consider the Permanent Holy Synod as responsible for the loss of power, the (vague and abstract) "ecclesiastical establishment", implying as such the Metropolitan's group of the old Hierarchy. It was not, however, as widely believed, Seraphim and other bishops who were of the same opinion of the anti-organizational wing of the Hierarchy, who threw him out. They, indeed, sought it, but in reality Ieronymos was threatened - literally – and dethroned by his own bishops - their electoral rows, in a two-phase overthrow . In the first, Metropolitan of

³⁷ See, Andreopoulos, op. cit., pp. 199-206 and 211-223

Frourina (of Macedonia) Augustinos Kantiotis with the appeal he filed (along with the bishop of old Hierarchy Metropolitan of Eleftheroupolis [of Macedonia] Amvrosios Nikolaou) before the Supreme Court, will succeed in the cancellation of the Permanent Synod established by the Ieronymos system (by election - appointment of its members) in April 1973, whereas in the second and most crucial phase the eight "hieronymical" bishops will dissociate themselves from the Archbishop, who had elected them in office. They will decisively contribute to his defeat within the Hierarchy by the "pro patriarchate" faction at the crucial meeting on 10 May 1973 on the issue of the composition of the Permanent Holy Synod. This development will be the main cause of the subsequent gradual - and therefore particularly injurious to the Church's prestige and painful to him personally - collapse of the Ieronymos from the Archdiocese throne. Having lost control of the Hierarchy, he will resign in December 1973.

V. Archbishop Ieronymos Kotsonis. An evaluation of his route

1. His rise, his incumbency and his fall (1967-1973)

He was undoubtedly a clergyman with extraordinary qualities recognized by the first hierarchs who belonged ideologically to the opposing party to which he belonged (that of the "royalist" priests, affiliates to Archbishop Chrysanthos [1938-1940]). For example, the (affiliate to Archbishop Damaskinos [1941-1949] and of the "Venizelian Persuasion") Metropolitan of Ellassona Iakovos (Makrygiannis) in 1958 will praise Ieronymos archimandrite at that time, describing him as a "clergyman of exceptional scientific prestige (...) good and humble (.....) and proposing him as "worthy of enlistment in the list of the elect to the primacy of Archbishop"³⁸. The attempts to re-elect him through a regular Synod will evolve in the early years of the 1960s. At the beginning of the 60s an attempt was made by the Patriarchate - when Athinagoras (Spyrou) was in office - and he will be elected as the titular Metropolitan (bishop) of the Ecumenical Throne³⁹. Three more attempts will be made: the two of these elections to the Archdiocese (January 1962 and February 1962, when the seat was vacated due to the resignation of only a month before elected Archbishop Jacobos [Vavanatsos]) and the third for the Metropolis of his homeland (Syros, in 1965), but all of them failed. His candidacy will be disapproved by the majority of the hierarchs as a reaction, not because of his "shining" priestly and academic figure, but due to his, on the one hand, constitutional - "organizational" origin, and on the other hand to the pressures which the Palace held him liable to, and in which the majority of the Hierarchy did not seem willing to succumb⁴⁰. His fourth attempt of election was successful, but the fact that he was associated with the dictatorship casted shadows on him. Regarding the aspect of normality, his election had the enormous disadvantage that it was carried out not by the normal Hierarchy, or even by a normally constituted "small" ("Permanent") Holy Synod, but by a manifestly irregular 8-member "Aristindin" Holy Synod which - Hierarchy absent - had been set up by the dictatorship in order to manipulate the Church as an institution.

³⁸This wrote in 1958 in his Report to the Holy Synod the Metropolitan of Ellassona (Thessaly) Iakovos (Makrygiannis), who nine years later, in 1967, just two months after the establishment of the dictatorship and the rising of Ieronymos to the archiepiscopal throne forced when he will be forced to resign (July 1967). See, Andreopoulos, op.cit., p. 271, footnote 688.

³⁹ See, Andreopoulos, op. cit., p. 105, footnote 126.

⁴⁰ See, Andreopoulos, op. cit., p. 271.

Strangely, Ieronymos, a prominent university professor of Canon Law, agreed to cooperate in the abolition of the Church's congregational system attempted and accomplished by the Junta ictatorial regime of 21st April 1967 abolition of the church's congregational system. To provide political support to the dictatorship Archbishop Ieronymos did not hesitate to clash with international ecclesiastical organizations he had excellent cooperation with, such as the World Council of Churches (WCC), which he was even a member of the Central Committee. Thus, Ieronymos, while in August 1967 welcomed at Crete with praise and honor the representatives of the WCC in Heraklion, for the meeting of the Central Committee of the Council, about a year later, in July 1968, he refused to participate in a WCC conference Uppsala Sweden protesting against about the criticism of the WCC blaming the the government of the Colonels for violating the human rights of Greek citizens. Ieronymos considered this critique as exceeding the role of the ecclesiastical organization and unjustifiably interfering with the internal affairs of the (Greek) State⁴¹. Opposed to this by the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America Iakovos (Koukouzis), who a few days after of the WCC conference in Uppsala, where he participated, went to Athens for the Clergy - Laity Congress of the Archdiocese of America, leaving Archbishop Ieronymos exposed. Archbishop Iakovos stated that the «*only thing that the World Council of Churches was interested in was the presence of the Church of Greece, as a member of the WCC*» and that "*during the 16 days that he remained in Sweden no media articles were written against the Church of Greece*"⁴².

The way in which Ieronymos became Archbishop and the procedures that followed were arbitrary, without any moral or ecclesiastical basis. However impressive his academic qualifications, brilliant work and ethos may be, one could not justify any arbitrariness relating to Canon law⁴³. Instead, they should protect the Church

⁴¹ About it, see Zacharopoulos, Nikolaos (Ζαχαρόπουλος Νικόλαος). 1994. *Aspects of relations between Church of Greece and World Council of Churches during the dictatorship of Colonels 1967-1974*. Athens: "Panteion" University, pp. 177-178 and Tsompanidis, Stylianos (Τσομπανίδης Στυλιανός). 2008. *The Contribution of the Orthodox Church and Theology to the World Council of Churches*. Thessaloniki: Pournaras Editions, pp. 150.

⁴² See, newspaper "Macedonia", in the article titled "The Archbishop of America Iakovos in Athens", 17.07.1968, p. 5. This is a statement of outstanding importance as it was expressed by a highly prestigious man, the Archbishop of America Iakovos (Koukouzis), who, after the return of the democratic regime (July 1974), was wrongly accused of supporting the dictatorship as in July 1968 he organized the Clergy - Laity Congress of the Archdiocese of North and South America in Athens, aiming to lift the isolation of Greece due to the the dictatorship. Throughout the dictatorship, Iakovos was in contact with the former Prime Minister of Greece, exiled in France, Konstantinos Karamanlis exerting severe criticism on the military government. In one of his letters – revealed by the Konstantinos Karamanlis Foundation - in the 1992-1997 edition of the 12-volume historical work "Konstantinos Karamanlis: Archives, Facts and Texts" (Athens, 1992-1997), Iakovos, in July 1973, characterizes the military government as a "*hard dictatorship*" talking about "*a state of deceit and fraud incarnated by Papadopoulos*", "*state of Nazi or Leninist or Stalinist investigative method or brainwashing practiced by Ioannidis*". More on the issue of the relations between Archbishop Iakovos and the junta of Athens, see in Athanasios, Grammenos (Αθανάσιος Γραμμένος). 2015. «The Archbishop of North and South America Iakovos at Greek – Turkish relations, 1981-1989», *Balkan Studies* (Valkanika Symmeikta [Βαλκανικά Σύμμεικτα] 17 (2015). Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies and of the same writer, (2018) «Orthodox American. The Archbishop of North and South America Iakovos at Greek – American relations, 1959-1996. Thessaloniki: Epikentro Publications.

⁴³ The theologian professor, Athanasios Kottadakis, of the oldest members of the Theologian Brotherhood "Zoë" still having the impressions of the events of the period of the seven year dictatorship, after having criticized the Church for the status of April 21 - describing it as a "negative environment"

from outside interventions. That is why, later than the regular Hierarchy of '74, the 8-member "Aristindin" Session of his election would be considered abnormal. It was a crisis - that the election of Ieronymos was abnormal - with which all the professors of Canon law (besides himself⁴⁴) and Ecclesiastical Law and scholars of legal and historical scholars identified at an academic level⁴⁵. The consequences of this irregularity in the election of Ieronymos were followed also the procedures of his elected 29 metropolitans, the period 1967-1973, amongst whom (12) bishops who were declared to have been forfeited. The issue of "12" was then - from 1974 onwards - the focus of the problem that has been tempting the Church for a whole 20-year period, although the "roots" of the problem lie in May and June 1967, when the irregular 8-member "Aristindin" session, initially elected Ieronymos and then under the presidency of the other the 29 new hierarchs. The latter, in turn, "inherited" the irregularity from which the session which elected them suffered, as the session of the "Presbytera" (old) Hierarchy" (constituted by the hierarchs which had been elected before 21 April) in January 1974 in that respect⁴⁶.

2. Ieronymos as President of the Hierarchy. His successes and his failures in the way of exercising power.

The good relations that Ieronymos developed with the regime had positive results in the economic field, especially in the early years of Junta. His main - and commonly accepted - success was the integration of the clergy into the public payroll. The decision was announced by Georgios Papadopoulos, on May 2, 1968, at a "festive" session of the "Aristindin" Synod⁴⁷. The "Aristindin" Synod considered the

- will write in September 1975: "... one wonders why people with a diamond moral stature are under the suspicion that they can play and bet on the" cards "of one ruler of this world ...", expressing by his opinion the negative relations developed with the dictatorial regime by Ieronymos, and the Metropolitans who were elected when he was in office. See, Kottadakis, Athanasios (Κοτταδάκης, Ἀθανάσιος). 1975. *Sections in the Ecclesiastical Question*, Magazine "The Shepherd" ("Poimin"), issue number 9-10 (September-October), Mytilene: Edition of Holy Metropolis of Mytilene (Northern Aegean), p. 192.

⁴⁴ Considering his election as normal in May, 1967, after his resignation, Ieronymos will refuse to accept it in January 1974 as a "divine dispensation" decision by the Hierarchy's to award him the title of "former Archbishop Athens". He felt that his title was rightly owed to him, See, at Andreopoulos, op. cit., p. 305, footnote 58.

⁴⁵ Indicatively, see, Konidaris, Gerasimos (Κονιδάρης, Γεράσιμος). 1974. *There is a regular Hierarchy. It is possible to resolve the Greek ecclesiastical problem properly*, Athens: Publication "Ionia", Mouratidis, Konstantinos (Μουρατίδης, Κωνσταντῖνος). 1975. *The schizophrenic ecclesiastical policy of the dictatorship*. Athens: Newspaper "Orthodox Press" (No 226/17.01.1975), Marinou, Anastasios (Μαρίνου, Ἀναστάσιος). 1844. *Church and State Relations*. Athens: Edition of Educational institution of Ioannis and Errieti Grigoriadis, Fidas, Vlasios (Φειδᾶς, Βλάσιος). 1991. *A Note on the Ecclesiastical Issue (1967-1974)*. Athens: Review of Ecclesiastical and Canon Law "Christianos", issue number 297, p. 16, Boumis, Panayiotis (Μπούμης, Παναγιώτης). 1995. "Unreasonable and unconstitutional interventions of the State to the Church of Greece". *State power and Orthodox Church* (collective work). Athens: "Minima" Publishing, Konidaris, Ioannis (Κονιδάρης, Ἰωάννης). 2016. *Vade mecum (Handbook) of Ecclesiastical Law*. Athens - Thessaloniki: Edisions' Sakkoulas, Papastathis, Charalambos (Παπαστάθης, Χαράλαμπος). 2012. "The Canonic issue of his pre-eminence from Edessa Metropolitan of Thessaloniki Panteleimon Papageorgiou", *Memory of the Metropolitan of Thessaloniki Panteleimon Papageorgiou. Memories from his life, work and testimony*. Proceedings of a scientific conference, edited by Prof. Petros Vassiliadis and the Holy Metropolis of Edessa. Everyone considers the election of Ieronymos (Kotsonis) to be abnormal.

⁴⁶ Andreopoulos, op. cit., p. 273.

⁴⁷ The announcement will become a front page headline in the newspapers. See. "Macedonia" newspaper, "The clergymen are paid following the scale of civil servants", 03.05.1968, pp. 1 and 7.

signing and publication of the relevant law. 469/1968⁴⁸ as a great success thanking Papadopoulos for having solved a long-standing issue for the Church in the best way⁴⁹. In a "gesture of gratitude", Ieronymos, attempt to "capitalize" his accomplishments for the body of clerical success, so he awarded Papadopoulos the "Golden Cross of the Founder of Church of Greece Apostle Paul"⁵⁰, a prize which no other Prime Minister had received before. After his own interventions, the previous year, the dictatorship supported his provisions regarding the economic upgrading of the clergy and even decided to raise the pensions and personal benefits of the Clergymen⁵¹. In addition, his contribution to Christian solidarity with the establishment of a homonymous public / ecclesiastical organization which was responsible for the special care of elders, the upgrading of ecclesiastical education through the establishment of a high school of Orthodox studies, called "Ecclesiastical Academy" which would function to produce a high spiritual and Christian education⁵², the establishment and construction of the Attica Diocese in Penteli (a mountain outskirts of Athens area) constituted a positive account of his work. On the other side some negative views existed because of his clerical duties as Head of the Church, and especially for the event that during his tenure the Church was derailed from regularity. With his synergy in the abolition of the synodic system, Ieronymos actually undermined his own personal grandiose, "regenerative" ecclesiastical body's aims, as he had promised them in his enthronement, and the reactions that his policy provoked within of the Hierarchy, because of its marginalization, weakened any attempts to substantiate "modernization" and actual "renewal" of the ecclesiastical organization. Consequently, this long-standing crisis of the ecclesiastical organization weakened its relationship with the members of the Church and the surrounding society. With his policy, Ieronymos instead of making allies in the Hierarchy's body, he provoked crises, created rivalries and brought divisions. Finally, his "system" collapsed inward, when, in the event of loss of coherence in the "hieronymic" line, the Metropolitans who had been elected in his term abandoned him. His academic qualifications, as an academic, and his wisdom, were not able to bring together the Hierarchy and the ecclesiastical body more broadly. On the contrary, it could be said that, as shown by the developments, they had a negative effect.

The academic style of Ieronymos made him inflexible for the office he was running. It is evident in the policy of Ieronymos the elements of an academic "ankylosis" that confronted him with the holy canons, under the spiritual terms, the Church tradition, and on the other hand, of an ideological-political "rigidity", the divisive spirit of which prevented any attempts to achieve unity within the Hierarchy. The refusal of Ieronymos to overcome the differences that separated him on the academic-

⁴⁸ "On the salary scale of the clergy of the Church of Greece" (Government Gazette, issue number 162, Vol. A / 24.07.1968).

⁴⁹ As this is pointed out in the encyclical No. 1543/4831/25.07.1968 of the "Aristindin" Synod. See, "The Synodic Encyclicals", Vol. D' (1968-1971). 2000. Athens: Edition of Apostoliki Diakonia of the Church of Greece, pp. 80-87.

⁵⁰ The "medal" of the "Great Cross" of the "Order of the Apostle Paul" (given by the "Aristindin" Synod in May [02.05] of 1968) will be given to Papadopoulos in a second "festive" meeting, this time from the Hierarchy in November (16.11) of 1972.

⁵¹ See, also, magazine *Church*, issue number 21, 01.11.1967, p. 641.

⁵² Law 192/1967 "On the establishment and operation of the High School of Orthodox Studies under the name" Ecclesiastical Academy "" (Government Gazette, issue number 202, Vol. A' / 18.11.1967).

ecclesiological and ideological-political level with the Metropolitans of the "old" hierarchy and to balance them synthetically, divided the hierarchal body into "ours" and "others" leading the two parts / wings to antagonism and polarization which in turn - and to speak in theological terms - represented the absence of divine grace, the absence of the Holy Spirit, as much as each side claimed it for itself.

It is reported by important ecclesiastical personalities that Ieronymos actually wanted to renew the Greek ecclesiastical reality⁵³. However, his choice to attempt his renewal work based on dictatorship and religious organizations, and his tactics to rely on his eminent archbishops, by removing - albeit displacing - the different ideological and ecclesiological perceptions of hierarchs, have also demonstrated the limits of this effort.

VI. The election of Seraphim

The election of Metropolitan of Ioannina Seraphim to the office of Archbishop in January 1974 was similar to Ieronymos. It was a result of a conjuncture which in this second phase of the dictatorship was controlled by the Brigadier Dimitrios Ioannidis, who had overthrown Papadopoulos early that year. He was the one who abolished Ieronymos from his duties because he ignored him during the swearing-in ceremony the oath of Adamandios Androutopoulos Government, which emerged after the November counter-strike regime (25.11.1973) and which government he inconspicuously directed, hence the nickname "invisible dictator" which was given to him. He was the one who paved the way for bishop Seraphim of Ioannina to become a new Archbishop. However, his election it was not merely a change of persons, but a change in policy of the Junta in order to control the Church.

The Holy Synod (the "small" and "the great" one) had already passed into the hands of the "old guard", "anti-organizational", "pro-patriarchal". The party of the Hierarchy supported by Ieronymos, with intense cohesion problems within it, after

⁵³ See, also, Agouridis, Savvas (Άγουρίδης, Σάββας). 2000. "As if ...". *Questions about Church and State Relations*. Athens: Magazine "Synaxis", pp. 69-70, Protopapas, Nikolaos (Πρωτοπαπάς, Νικόλαος), 2010. Metropolitan of Fthiotida (of Sterea Ellada / Central Greece), "The after-years of his resignation Archbishop of Athens Ieronymos Kotsonis (1973-1988)", *Christodoulos. Dedicated Tome (Volume)*. Athens: Edition of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, pp. 195, 224, and Giannoulatos Anastasios, Archbishop of Tirana and all Albania. 2013, "The Forgotten Command: *Go, therefore...*" (...and make disciples of all nations, Matthew 28,19). *From the lethargy to the awakening*". Athens: Apostoliki Diakonia of the Church of Greece, pp. 361-371, where Archbishop Anastasios honors the offer of Ieronymos to the Missionary Movement and more specifically to the external missionary. Anastasios (who as clergyman, from his early years at the priesthood, belonged to the Brotherhood of Theologian "Zoë" ["Life"], with whom Ieronymos had a good relationship) considers Ieronymos as "a man who had a vision for the opening of the Church of Greece in the modern world, a man with wide visions, but", as he says "was prevented by the Education Minister of the second phase of the dictatorship, a professor of the same (Aristotle of Thessaloniki) University (faculty of Theology) Panayiotis Christou, whom Anastasios describes as "a fanatical enemy of the Ieronymos". Archimandrite Nikodimos Giannakopoulos, a respected clergyman who serves in the Holy Metropolis of Karystos and Kymi (prefecture of Euboea in the region of Sterea Ellada / Central Greece) and is today a confessor at the Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Savior in Kymi, who from the early years of his priesthood had met Ieronymos, in a discussion we had with him regarding the subject of the Church during the dictatorship (1967-1974) and the case of the Archbishop of Ieronymos, told us that "Ieronymos was a Archbishop who had sincere mood and vision to modernize and renew urged the Church, aiming at the economic independence of the Church from the State, but that was one of the main reasons that fought him and was essentially forced to resign».

its defeat at the Hierarchy in May 1973, was already in the opposition faced with an additional problem of "leadership" of the party, as with the resignation of Ieronymos in mid-December '73, it is "orphaned" and enters a defensive phase of retrenchment.

The choice, therefore, of the new "Ioannidian" leadership of the dictatorship. Essentially, Ioannidis wanted to associate with the powerful pole represented by the "seraphimic" party, for reasons of power. It was a "one way" decision dictated by the political expediency of the time. Seraphim who was affiliated with Ioannidis since WWII and the resistance were comrades fighting against the Germans at the time of the German occupation in "«National Democratic Hellenic League" ("E.D.E.S.") of General Napoleon Zervas. This fact of acquaintance between of the two men (Ioannidis and Seraphim) was not what started, launched the ecclesiastical developments, but, of course, it accelerated them. Ioannidis gave Seraphim unlimited freedom, but excessive use of power under the new ecclesiastical leadership evolved into a kind of "revanche" (revenge) towards the previous one. If for Ieronymos the most "black page" of his office in the Archdiocese was his flagrantly irregular election, for Seraphim, a "black page" in his own office in the archdiocese was the removal without a trial and apology - or even a hearing - of the twelve "Ieronymical" bishops, which created an unprecedented anomaly in the later life of the Church of Greece.

We also encounter violations of the Holy Canons in the second phase of the dictatorship (1973-1974) during the days of the so-called "Presbytera" (old) Hierarchy⁵⁴ with Seraphim. Although the latter has been recognized as a significant contributor during the post-invasion of the restoration of regularity in the Church and the balancing of its relations with the State on the basis of fellowship as well as the normalization and full restoration of the relations of the Church of Greece with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, however, it should not be overlooked that during the critical period (1973-1974) of the transition of ecclesiastical power from Ieronymos to Seraphim, the arrangements in the Church were decided by an equally oppressive regime (of brigadier Dimitrios Ioannidis) as a continuation of the previous (of colonel Georgios Papadopoulos). A regime that had also crushed the Constitution and had stifled democratic freedoms and individual rights. Consequently, whatever the arrangements made with the assumption of the new ecclesiastical leadership, the attempted approach to the problem, in the context of regularity, presupposes that two events are combined and taken into account: first, that these arrangements (as in the previous 1967-1973 period) constituted a brutal interference in the Church's domain of a dictatorial regime, perhaps more impressive than that of the preceding, and second, that the new Seraphim leadership of the Church with its own provocative stance against these problematic regulations of law collaborated as to disrupt their implementation. In the case of the handling of the of the twelve "Bishops of Ieronymos"⁵⁵ who, through "Constitutional Acts" 3 and 7/1974 of Dictatorship were

⁵⁴ This is the Hierarchy established in January 1974 with the participation of the old Hierarchs, those who were elected before the dictatorship of 21st April 1967.

⁵⁵ These were Bishops who had been elected on the Ieronymous period in Archdiocese (1967-1973) or came from previous canonicals Holy Synods (Hierarchies) but were identified with Ieronymos, collaborating in irregularities that had been attributed to the ecclesiastical leadership over the seven year dictatorship. The expression is used as a "terminus technicus", as is the reference for the rival - of the "Ieronymic" - the "seraphimic" one.

regarded as abusive, were disposed of their thrones without giving them the right to apology, is characteristic not as a given example of ecclesiastical treatment in an irregularity, but as an example to avoid. This is because, as has been shown by the evolution of the events, the provisions of "Constitutional Acts" No 3 and, in particular, 7/1974, as perceived by the law, undermined the essential aim of returning to the ecclesiastical order on the basis of the Sacred and only Rules and created an unprecedented anomaly in the later life of the Church of Greece⁵⁶.

As a result and side-effect of all the legal problems which congested the Church in both phases of the dictatorship, was the ecclesiastical problem of the entire of seven year period of dictatorship which came back dramatically and in a more acute form sixteen years later and in particular the year 1990, after the legal justification from the Supreme Court of the 12 "hieronymic" metropolitans who had been overthrown by their thrones in 1974, the result was during the democratic period to agitate the relationship between the Church and the State for a six year period (1990-1996).

The actions of both Ieronymos (Kotsonis, 1967-1973) and his successor Seraphim (Tikas, 1974), which were covered by Obligatory Laws, Legislative Decrees and Constitutional Acts, were "legal", but not according to the Canons of the Church, lead to the derailment of the Church from regularity, and gradually the challenge and development of an internal dispute that divided the Hierarchy into factions: "ours" and "yours".

A polarization that represented the dimension, which in turn represented - to pose it theologically - the absence of Divine Grace, the absence of the Holy Spirit as if each side claimed it for itself. The restoration of ecclesiastical regularity will play a catalytic role in the restoration of state democratic normality, covering internal injuries and wounds left behind by the seven-year dictatorship.

During the early years of his government, the prudent ecclesiastical politics of the then Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis not only brought the desired tranquility and peace to the Church, which had seriously been disrupted in the past seven year dictatorship, but founded its democratization in a series of constitutional regulations (the fortification of the Patriarchal Volume of 1850 and the Synod Act of 1928 in the Constitution of 1975), and the legislation of (Statute Chart, Law 590/1977) which positively regulated both its internal function and its relations towards the State.

VII. Conclusions

The "Ecclesiastical problem" was the only one of the issues of life in Greece in which the dictatorship in its both phases (G. Papadopoulos, 1967-1973, D. Ioannidis, 1973-1974) applied a differentiated policy. Thus, in both cases there was the same tactic: interference in the internal affairs of the Church, a violation of the normal range - canons (= the ecclesiastical rules), imposing an Archbishop they trusted, in each case, surrounded by a different and powerful, each time, group of prelates. During the first phase of the dictatorship, the legitimate Archbishop Chrysostomos II (Chatzistavrou) refused to succumb to the pressure to resign in order to be succeeded by another who would be likeable and cooperative towards the dictators. That's why he will be the first victim of the dictatorship.

⁵⁶ Konidaris, Joannis (Κονιδάρης, Ἰωάννης). 2016. *Vade mecum (Handbook) of Ecclesiastical Law*, op. cit., pp. 81-86

His successor Ieronymos, since he occupied «legally» but irregularly the throne of Archbishop, and the designated –consisting of 8 members– “Aristindin”, the Holy Synod which replaced the normal «small» and «great» Holy Synod (Hierarchy), will come along with the “nation-defensive” military government assuming the “church defensive” work, which was a part of the plan of the April 21st government, with its irregular procedures and approaches and show the way to the exit to sixteen (16) canonical and legitimate bishops of the «old» (before dictatorship) Hierarchy, under a coordinated plan, altering the whole composition of the Hierarchy, which in order to be completed, included the election of twenty-nine (29) new Metropolitans, who had strong ties with “christian organizations” who originally approved Hieronymus’ vision to “cleanse” the Church and work for a “New Greece”.

The objective, however, despite the progressive alteration of the Hierarchy, would not be achieved. Ieronymos’ “building” would collapse when attempting – with the help of the dictatorship– to circumvent the patriarchal provisions that define both the relationship of the canonical relationship (according to the Patriarchal and Synodic Tome [Volume] of 1850) with the Patriarchate, and the canonical rights at the “New Lands” (according to the Patriarchal and Synodic Act of 1928), as the majority of the Hierarchy would express its opposition to him and his plans and give rise to his resignation. It will be succeeded by Metropolitan of Ioannina Seraphim who was elected normally –to an empty throne– who, in his attempt, however, to bring the Church back to its regular orbit, because of unfortunate manoeuvres, despite healing old wounds, he would not avoid opening new ones –like the dismissal of “the 12” without a trial and the right to apology – that plagued the life of the Church of Greece for many years.