



Istanbul's Greek Community Wishes to Remove Patriarchs' Graves from Orthodox Cemetery

The graves belong to Efthim and his successors Turgut Erenerol and Selçuk Erenerol. Efthim declared himself pope of a new Turkish Orthodox church he founded himself in 1921. On October 2, 1923, Papa Eftim besieged the Holy Synod and appointed his own Synod. Later, he invaded the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and proclaimed himself "the general representative of all Orthodox communities."

Mihail Vasiliadis, owner of the Turkey-based Greek newspaper "Apoyevmatini," spoke to Turkish newspaper Cumhuriyet noting that: "This is the Greek Orthodox cemetery. These men were not even Orthodox, let alone Greek. They were excommunicated."

Papa Efthim I and his two successors were excommunicated by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul, after the first founded the Turkish Orthodox church. However, when they passed away, the Turkish government decided they should be buried in Istanbul's Greek Orthodox cemetery, despite the fact that the Greek community opposed the decision.

"They had found a fake church. In order to be a church, one must be recognized by the Ecumenic church and the other 17 churches," noted Vasiliadis. "Do I have to see the graves of these nationalists who did harm to Greeks each time I visit my parents' graves? As Greeks, we want their graves out of here," he told Cumhuriyet.