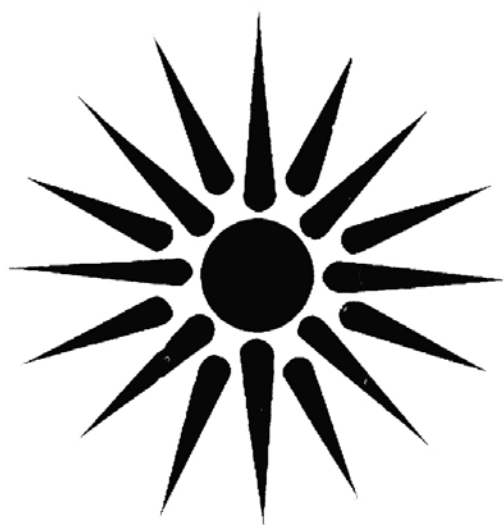


Recovering Macedonia

Expiration of the Bucharest Treaty of 1913



By

Risto Stefov

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Expiration of the Bucharest Treaty of 1913

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PREFACE

[Macedonia will remain occupied as long as the Macedonian people are unrecognized, abused and made to feel like strangers on their own native lands. It is a well know fact that Macedonia was invaded, occupied and illegally partitioned by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria in 1912-1913 against the wishes of the Macedonian people. The Serbian occupied part, now known as the Republic of Macedonia gained its independence in 1991 and is today a sovereign state while the parts annexed by Greece and Bulgaria remain occupied.]

Even though the title of this book makes reference to the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest expiring, in reality this Treaty has no expiration date.

The Treaty of Bucharest is one of the most tragic and significant event in the twenty-eight centuries of Macedonian history. It is the conclusion to a number of preceding bilateral agreements between the Balkan States and an end not only to the Balkan Wars, but also to the many and continuous armed conflicts that took place in Macedonia such as the 1902 Gornodjumajsko uprising, the 1903 Ilinden uprising, the 1908 Young Turk uprising, the so called 1910 and 1911Magareshki assassinations.

At the end of all these conflicts the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest was drafted as a means of partitioning the Macedonian territory with intent to eradicate the name “Macedonia” and permanently divide the Macedonian national unity.

The desire to see this treaty expire is symbolic and will be used as a means to bring attention to the plight of the Macedonian people and their condition after being divided for almost a century.

Inspired by Josef S. G. Gandeto, author of the book “Ancient Macedonians, Differences Between The Ancient Macedonians and The Ancient Greeks”, “Recovering Macedonia” is a comparative historic analysis of the Macedonian people in relation to their neighbours. This book, like Josef Gandeto’s book, is about bringing awareness that Macedonians, contrary to Greek and Bulgarian allegations are not Greeks or Bulgarians but Macedonians and not only exist but thrive and have thrived in Macedonia and the world over for many centuries. This book brings into light the differences and similarities between the Macedonians and their neighbours and their historical progression through the ages to this day. It also asks the question “Why Macedonian’s neighbours are deserving of their own states and self rule and not the Macedonians?”

My hopes in writing this book is to bring awareness and inform the Macedonian people that they are just as deserving to have, not only their own state the Republic of Macedonia, but to be recognized and honored as Macedonians in their traditional homeland in Greece and Bulgaria and the world over.

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Introduction

It has been almost a century since Macedonia was invaded, occupied and partitioned by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria and to this day Greece and Bulgaria have done nothing to address the needs and rights of the Macedonian people. In fact Greece and Bulgaria have not only ignored the Macedonian people living in their States, but they have done everything they can to denationalize and extinguish them and all that is Macedonian.

Ever since the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, Macedonians have been struggling to assert their identity and to this day Greece and Bulgaria are doing everything they can to stop them. Why?

Why haven't Macedonians succeeded in gaining recognition and taking their rightful place in this world? Why do Greece, Bulgaria and to some extent Albania and Serbia oppose Macedonia's recognition?

The Macedonians only want back what is already theirs. Macedonians have never made unreasonable or outrageous demands yet they still have not succeeded in making any gains. Why not?

Why haven't Greece and Bulgaria addressed the Macedonian question? Why haven't outside criticisms prompted Greece and Bulgaria to recognize the Macedonian minorities?

To adequately tackle these issues we need to go as far back as the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and explore the political climate and circumstances under which the successor States, specifically Greece and Bulgaria were created. Who were the architects of these States and what purpose did they have in mind for them when they were created? Why were Macedonians denied the right to exist in spite of their long history, heroic struggles and desire to create a Macedonian State?

Greece was a multicultural, multiethnic state at its inception in 1829 but instead of embracing its true and rich heritage, it opted for something unreal, mythical and bizarre. Why did modern Greece, a multiethnic Christian State abandon its true roots and instead opt to adopt a 2,500 year old dead culture?

If Macedonia simultaneously belonged to Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, as each claimed, why did they then agree to partition it? Why did they sign the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest agreeing to Macedonia's partition without any signs of protest?

To this day Greece and Bulgaria have done nothing to inform their citizens of the truth about Macedonia. Instead they continue to lie and deceive them maintaining that Macedonians don't exist. Worse, they label Macedonians as criminals and call them thieves for wanting back what is theirs.

The term "Macedonia" when used in this series will mean "Ethno-Graphic" or "Geographic" Macedonia. The part of Macedonia occupied by Greece in 1913 will be referred to as "Greek Occupied Macedonia". The

part of Macedonia occupied in 1913 by Bulgaria will be referred to as “Bulgarian Occupied Macedonia”. The part of Macedonia occupied in 1913 by Serbia and declared its independence in 1991, will be referred to as “Republic of Macedonia”. The part of Macedonia given to Albania in 1919 will be referred to as “Albanian Occupied Macedonia”.

The Macedonian (Macedonian peoples’) position regarding the Macedonian question

There is no Macedonian in this world today who does not want to see Macedonia reunited. Most Macedonians however are realists and are willing to accept less if given a chance. For starters they would like to see the Macedonian minorities in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania gain recognition with full rights and privileges. Macedonians want the Macedonian minorities in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania to enjoy the same rights and privileges that the Albanian and other minorities enjoys in the Republic of Macedonia.

The majority of Macedonians want the Republic of Macedonia to join NATO for security purposes to protect its integrity in order to create political stability and attract investment and economic growth.

All Macedonians, including those in the Diaspora, want the Republic of Macedonia to join the EU under its constitutional name. Most Macedonians living in the Republic of Macedonia want to join the EU for economic opportunities.

Macedonians originally from Greek and Bulgarian occupied Macedonia, who now live in the Diaspora, want Greece to recognize all Macedonians as Macedonian. Those Macedonians who were stripped of their Greek citizenship because they declared themselves Macedonian want to have their citizenship reinstated.

Macedonians exiled from Greece would like to be recognized as Macedonians and their Greek citizenship along with their homes and properties returned.

Macedonians living inside Greece and Bulgaria want to be recognized as Macedonians with full rights and privileges.

Macedonians expect Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia to admit to and take responsibility for atrocities their Governments committed against civilians in Macedonia during the two Balkan wars.

Macedonians expect Greece to admit to and take responsibility for evicting large numbers of civilians, including the refugee children, from Greek Occupied Macedonia during the Greek Civil War.

The Macedonian position is very clear and very simple;

We simply want to be acknowledged for who we are, Macedonians.

We want to be given back what was taken from us; our homes, lands, citizenship and our dignity.

We want those who did harm to us in the past to acknowledge their wrongdoing and take responsibility for it.

The Greek (Greek State) position regarding the Macedonian question

Even since 1878 when it became evident that the Great Powers would not allow Macedonia to gain its independence from the Ottoman Empire, plans were made to partition Macedonia. Since then Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia refused to recognize the Macedonian identity.

Since then the Greek position has been that Macedonians do not exist. Census statistics produced in the past have never shown Macedonians to have ever lived in Greek occupied Macedonia.

Ever since Macedonia's invasion, occupation and partition, Greece, without acknowledging the Macedonian identity, has persecuted Macedonians. Those that Greece could not Hellenize, it forcibly evicted or outright murdered under the guise that they were Bulgars or Slavs not worthy of living on Greek soil.

With regards to history, the Greek position is that the ancient Macedonians were Greek and the modern Macedonians are not really Macedonians but Slavs.

Greece, in spite of being a signatory to the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, does not acknowledge the invasion, occupation and partition of Macedonia. The violent and forcible acquisition of Macedonian territory is justified on the basis that the ancient Macedonians 2,300 years ago were Greek and therefore Macedonian lands belong to Greece.

The Greek position is very clear and simple;

Macedonians do not exist.

Greece is a racially homogenous State and has no minorities.

The name Macedonia is Greek and the Slavs can't have it.

The Bulgarian (Bulgarian State) position regarding the Macedonian question

The Bulgarian position is also very clear and simple;

Macedonians do not exist.

Macedonia is a province of Greater Bulgaria.

The people living in Macedonia (the Macedonians) are Bulgarians.

Neither the Greek nor the Bulgarian State has changed its position since these positions were established in the last quarter of the 19th century. (Bulgaria changed its position and did recognize the Macedonian nation for a brief period after World War II, but quickly reverted back to its old position).

So why are Greece and Bulgaria refusing to budge on their positions?

So far Macedonians have pleaded their case, mainly through criticisms, to successive Greek and Bulgarian Governments and most recently to European and World institutions. This unfortunately has not worked for various reasons.

Neither Greece nor Bulgaria would admit to having minorities living in their respective states so world institutions, in the way international laws have been established, have no case against them. Corrective change must come from within.

Macedonian communities, particularly those living inside Greece and Bulgaria, because of repressive measures imposed on them by their governments have not yet mustered the necessary will to force change from within.

Greek and Bulgarian Governments do not have the will on their own to affect change. Governments are elected on the basis of status quo and are not known for implementing revolutionary changes. Besides, these same Governments are responsible for creating the mess to begin with. To change would mean to admit to having made errors. How are the Greek and Bulgarian Governments going to fare if they, after lying to their voters for years, now admit that Macedonians do exist?

What can be done to break the impasse?

Obviously what has been done to date has not worked. Therefore a new approach is needed.

I don't have all the answers and I do welcome your ideas. I want to hear from the Greek and Bulgarian communities who believe Macedonians have a future in the Balkans. I know you exist and I know you have been silent on the issue. It is now time to start building bridges. Your comments and questions are welcome.

I believe there is a future for Macedonians in Greece and Bulgaria. I also believe Macedonia will be re-united. Macedonian people have proven themselves to be tolerant and able to peacefully co-exist with other people. Greece and Bulgaria on the other hand have chosen intolerance, oppression and violence as a way of life.

If Macedonians have shown anything is how to live in harmony with other people. Even at the worst of times, Macedonians never gave up believing that all people can live as equals. Was it not Gotse Delchev, a Macedonian revolutionary hero from the 1903 Macedonian Ilinden uprising against the Turks, who said, “I conceive the world only as a field of cultural competition among nations?” And what about the Republic of Macedonia, is there another country in the Balkans where minorities enjoy such rights?

Greek and Bulgarian denial of the existence of Macedonians, in view of the existence of a Macedonian State and a large and active Macedonian Diaspora, not only defies logic but goes against the European grain. Is it not Europe who wants to give minorities their rights?

Do Greece and Bulgaria, in view of the European agenda, really believe they will have lasting peace by oppressing and denying Macedonians and other minorities their rights?

Greeks and Bulgarians must understand that their survival does not depend on oppressing minorities and using violence to keep the peace. They must also understand that it is this inequality and oppression of minorities that causes tension, hatred and conflict. We don't all have to be Greeks or Bulgarians to live peacefully together. We can just as easily live together in harmony as Macedonians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians, etc. if we so chose.

European businessmen want to do business in Europe without problems. They have recognized the value of “free societies” and that is precisely why they want minorities to be given their rights. By denying their minorities their rights Greek and Bulgarian Governments are in fact working against the European agenda which in the long term will harm their states and their people.

It is well documented that Greece and Bulgaria have committed atrocities in Macedonia and those states sooner or later will face the consequences and will pay for their crimes. Denying the existence of Macedonians does not excuse them for what they did. As far as I can tell, committing atrocities against people is still a punishable crime under international law. Isn't that what the Haig is all about?

No one has the right to decide the Macedonian peoples' destiny but the Macedonians themselves. Granted nothing can be done these days without Great Power intervention, but if the Great Powers are serious and support the laws they have enacted, especially those that govern human rights, then Macedonians should have no problem shaping their own destiny, writing their own history and calling themselves what they truly are, Macedonians.

Macedonians have a big job ahead of them. In addition to learning about themselves, their history, their heritage and their right to exist in this world, they must also learn to tell every Greek, every Bulgarian and every

other person in this world the truth about themselves and about Macedonia.

There is a treaty out there, the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest which Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia signed to divide and occupy Macedonia without our consent. Macedonia is our country and we want it back.

Many Macedonians believe the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest will expire in 2012 at which time it will reopen. This time the Macedonians will be there to make sure it is done right.

The job of getting things to move forward largely rests with the Macedonian Diaspora. The vast majority of Macedonian people in the Diaspora are descendants of those Macedonians who were forcibly evicted from Greece. They have cause and legitimacy to challenge the Greek State not only to recover their own properties, culture and identity, but also to help those who are still oppressed and are unable to help themselves. Macedonians in the Diaspora have the freedom and the resources necessary to do the job which their compatriots in Greece and Bulgaria can't.

Besides interpreting the details of the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, this series of articles will be dedicated to finding a solution to the Macedonian question. In doing so it will use historical evidence to expose the lies, deception and myths perpetrated by the Great Powers, Greece and Bulgaria to keep the Macedonian people down and rob them of their heritage and their future.

Who were the Ancient People?

It is difficult for people to accept the idea that history, the way we know it today, is biased to serve the interests of those who are in control. It is also difficult for people to believe that what they have been taught in school may not be the truth.

Do you not agree that there are Macedonians living throughout this world today and do you not agree that people are still taught in school that Macedonians do not exist?

If you are a Macedonian why should you believe a history that denies your existence? If you are a Greek or Bulgarian why do you believe your State sponsored education that is teaching you to hate your neighbours and deny their existence?

You can believe what you like but if you truly seek the truth then you must make every effort to find it for yourself.

In this and the next chapter I will attempt to objectively analyze the makeup of the people who lived in the southern Balkans from prehistory to today. It is my intention to provide you with a general overview and give you an alternative look at the age old problem of who these people were. In my analysis, I will provide you with summaries only, obtained from the most current sources and from old models that no longer fit the modern political agenda. For details, you are encouraged to read the original material (most of which is available on the internet) for yourselves.

If you consult any standard history schoolbook on the southern Balkans it will tell you first that there were Greeks then Romans and then the Ottomans. Later came the modern Greeks, Bulgarians, Yugoslavians and Albanians, but no Modern Macedonians. There will be a bit of information about the Ancient Macedonians, mainly about Philip and Alexander, but only secondary to the Ancient Greeks. There will be a bit of information on the Byzantines but mainly on how Roman and Greek they were. There will be plenty of information on the Greeks, their god-like activities, their brilliance and the various inventions they discovered, and how they are a real gift to our modern world.

After reading your standard history schoolbook you get the impression that no one outside of the Greeks and Romans ever existed in ancient times. You get the impression that no activities ever took place outside of Greece: not to the north, not across the Aegean, or south of the Mediterranean. It is as if an ice sheet and thick fog covered those lands inhabited only by Barbarians, a kind of people who could neither think nor speak but barked words of unknown tongues.

Why did these authors come to this conclusion? Why are the Greeks and Romans so important to history and the Barbarians so unimportant? Were the Barbarians truly that uncivilized and contributed nothing worth mentioning?

How did the Greeks become so civilized and the Barbarians, living so close or even among them, so uncivilized? How can people living so close together be so far apart culturally?

Thanks to unbiased scientists and scholars and people with no political agendas, questions such as these are now being slowly answered and the answers might surprise you.

One such scientist and scholar is Professor Mario Alinei who has put forward a new theory called the “The Paleolithic Continuity Theory on Indo-European Origins”.

Basically what Professor Alinei says, and backs with archaeological, linguistic and genetic evidence, is that people have always been where they are today. In other words, the indigenous people of any given region in eastern Europe and the Balkans have always been where they are today. By always he means they have been there for more than ten thousand years and as long as thirty-thousand years, as far back at the great ice age.

If we accept Professor Alinei’s assertions then we must also accept the idea that Macedonians, Serbians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians, etc have always been where they are today. Naturally some things may have changed over time due to evolution and external influences, but the basic make-up or the under layer of people has remained the same.

Among other great scholars who have contributed immensely to the identification of the various ancient people living in the Balkans are Jozko Savli, Matej Bor, Ivan Tomazic, Florin Curta and Anthony Ambrozic.

Jozko Savli, Matej Bor and Ivan Tomazic, independent of Professor Alinei’s model, have discovered that most of the ancient toponyms in and around the Balkans bear the original names given to them by the Barbarian tribes which lived there many millennia ago. The real surprise about these discoveries is that the toponyms have Slavic names.

Also independent of Professor Alinei’s model, Anthony Ambrozic has discovered that a vast part of Europe, particularly the Balkans and eastern Europe is covered with Barbarian artifacts that also bear inscriptions of Slavic origins. Ancient inscriptions found in south-eastern Europe, which scientists for years have been unable to translate, are in fact of Slavic origin. Ambozic has translated thousands of them including those found at Dura-Europos, which could only have been of ancient Macedonian origin. Dura-Europos was a frontier Macedonian city in Syria founded by one of Alexander the Greats’ successors.

Attempts were made by French paleo-linguists, who even went to Asia and Africa looking for ancient languages, to translate the Dura-Europos inscriptions but without success. Too bad they didn’t go to Macedonia or any part of the Balkans and consult with local Slav speakers. According to Ambrozic, “Anyone in Slovenia, even people on the streets could have translated the Dura-Europos inscriptions.”

Looking at the ancient puzzle from a different perspective, Odisej Belchevski, a student of Homer and of the Heroic Age, has also independently discovered words of Slavic origin in Homers poems and other works.

Before I continue allow me to clarify what I mean by Slavic origin. The inscriptions, Homeric words, toponyms, names, etc., of which I mentioned above, are classified to be of Slavic origin because they are familiar only to Slav speakers. Modern Slav speakers by using the Slav language are able to read and decipher their meaning.

Naturally the question here is “How can that be?” Aren’t we taught in school that the Slavs are newcomers to the Balkans? Aren’t we taught that they started arriving in the Balkans around 600 AD? What were Slavs doing in the Balkans long, long before that?

Judging from the large numbers of Slav speakers in Europe today and the vast regions they occupy, it only makes perfect sense that they have been there for a long time. Conversely, it makes very little sense to think that a group of people so backwards, so disorganized and so late coming to the Balkans could be so successful and gain so much in such a short time.

It is no surprise that when we put Savli, Bor, Tomazic, Curta, Ambrozic and Belchevski’s assertions together with Alinei’s model that it makes perfect sense.

The Slavs have always been where they are today! By Slavs I mean the Slav speakers.

The many nationalities and ethnicities whom we today erroneously call “Slavs” are in fact “Slav speakers”. And today we can say with some certainty that they were the first Europeans.

As far as history can tell us the word “Slav” became widely known for the first time during Emperor Justinian’s reign around 500 AD. I believe Justinian was the first Emperor to try and classify the various tribes inside and outside of his empire. He called them Slavs because they shared a similar/common language. In other words, they were called Slavs because they spoke a similar language not because they were ethnically related as mainstream historians would have us believe.

There are some today who believe that the Slavic language was an international language, just as English is today. The fact that various nationalities and ethnicities spoke the Slav language in such a vast region definitely qualifies it to be called international. Additionally, the Slavic language, because it was spoken by everyone, is truly a language of the people. That is precisely why it has survived for so many millennia and has maintained its integrity with little change over the ages.

It is not my intention here to debate the origin of all the Slav speakers but to give you a general overview only of those who lived in and around the southern Balkans.

Who were these ancient Slav speakers who qualify to be called the first Europeans?

If we carefully examine our history books we will find, as mentioned earlier, “Barbarians” occupying the vast plains of the Balkans before there were any “Greeks” or Romans. These Barbarians lived tribal lives not worthy of any mention by our modern historians. If, however, we do some more research we find that these Barbarians were separate and distinct people who lived in and occupied their own territories and, most importantly, had names.

The least known of these ancient peoples were the Lyncestian and Paeonian tribes who, relative to geographical Macedonia, lived in the northern part of central Macedonia in the region where the Republic of Macedonia is today. South of the Lyncestians and Paeonians and along the entire central Greek Peninsula lived the Aegean Pelasgian tribes. West of the Pelasgians, Lyncestians and Paeonians lived the massive Illyrian tribes. East of the Lyncestian, Paeonians and Pelasgians lived the massive Thracian tribes.

Phrygians once also lived in Macedonia in the lush Vardar Valley but most of them left Macedonia long ago for their ancestral homeland in Asia Minor.

What is interesting about these groups of people is that they shared a common language. According to Anthony Ambrozic, who translated inscriptions from artefacts from all of these groups, their language was Slavic. By Slavic I mean it could be understood by modern Slav speakers.

Who were the “ancient Greeks”?

Mainstream history tells us that the Pelasgians lived among the ancient Greeks and as I mentioned earlier, were indigenous to the region.

According to Bernal, the ancient Greek culture, as we know it today, did not develop on its own but rather was influenced from the outside.

Bernal also claims, with overwhelming evidence, that the indigenous people living in present day Peloponnesus were culturally and linguistically influenced, mostly by the more civilized Egyptians and Phoenicians. It was this cultural influence that transformed the indigenous people into what we today call the “ancient Greeks”. In other words the so-called ancient Greeks have culturally evolved, among others, from the Pelasgians.

About three and a half millennia or so ago during and perhaps after the Mycenaean civilization collapsed, Egyptians and Phoenicians crossed over the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas and colonized parts of the Peloponnesus. The more civilized Egyptians overwhelmed the indigenous population so dramatically that it was completely transformed. As the Egyptian civilization in Egypt declined and the Egyptian colonists became assimilated into the new cultural melting pot, the region took on an entirely new character

The Phoenicians, who were also assumed to have colonies in the Peloponnesus, gave Ancient Greeks the gift of writing. It is unclear whether the Phoenicians were colonists in the Peloponnesus or not but it is clear that the ancient Peloponnesians received their alphabet from the Phoenicians.

I want to mention at this point that it is not my intention to debate the origins, ethnicities and nationalities of the so-called “ancient Greeks” but to point out that the under layer of ancient Greek society was Pelasgian.

The effects of this cultural transformation were so profound that only in a few centuries the Peloponnesians became an entirely new and unique society with a unique language and alphabet and a new way of life. Its citizens mastered the arts and sciences, navigation and began to traverse the vast waterways and built self-governing cities.

Who were the ancient Macedonians?

Geographical Macedonia as we know it today was the center or the hub, where the great tribes came together. Macedonia was where the lines between Illyrian, Lyncestian, Paeonian, Thracian, Pelasgian, Phrygian and other tribes overlapped.

The ancient Macedonians were a mix of all the people who lived in geographical Macedonia as we know it today.

It is unclear exactly to which tribe the first Macedonians belonged but history tells us they originated in the Kostur region and by Herodotus’s time (450 BC) they expanded eastward and occupied the lush western Vardar Valley. Macedonians were a mixture of all the nations and tribes that lived in Macedonia. By Philip II’s time, when geographical Macedonia was consolidated under one king and under Macedonian control, all these people came to be known as Macedonians.

Was there any relationship between the ancient Greeks and the ancient Macedonians?

As mentioned earlier, the indigenous people of the Peloponnesus became Greeks under the cultural influence of the Egyptians and Phoenicians. The people of Macedonia became Macedonians under the influence of various Macedonian Royal dynasties.

As most of the Phrygians left Macedonia, the Macedonians continued their easterly expansion taking over Phrygian lands and filling the power vacuum the Phrygians left behind. By Philip II’s time all tribes within Macedonia were conquered and came under Macedonian control.

Before Philip II conquered the ancient Peloponnesians (ancient Greeks) they were very protective of their culture. They treated outsiders with suspicion and disgust and those who did not share their values were labeled Barbarian and kept out of their affairs (Olympic games etc).

As the two communities grew and expanded they started to come in contact and began to trade. Being economically and militarily weaker the

Macedonians for many years had to bend to the will of the more powerful Peloponnesians, but that eventually changed.

The only relationship Macedonians had with the Peloponnesians, at the time, was trade.

Culturally the two communities were worlds apart and to suggest that they were similar would be irrational.

Problems between the two communities began to develop when the Athenians started colonizing Macedonian lands at Chalcidice. Macedonians being militarily weaker used diplomacy to defend themselves. As foreign intrusions continued, however, the Macedonians had no choice but to build up their military strength and fight back, eventually defeating the Peloponnesians (except for Sparta) and placing them under Macedonian political and military control.

For those who believe the Macedonians were Greek, here are some facts to remember;

The so-called “ancient Greeks” or Peloponnesians as I referred to them above, outside of their colonies at Chalcidice and a few other places at the tip of southern Macedonia, had never set foot on Macedonian soil.

The Peloponnesians (ancient Greeks) were never united as a single state with a single government as the Macedonians were. Each of their cities operated as a stand alone state with its own independent government.

The allied Peloponnesian forces were defeated in battle at Chaeronea in 338 BC and subjugated by the Macedonians from which they never recovered. Their largest City States, including Athens, were occupied by Macedonian garrisons until 197 BC when they were freed and re-occupied by the Romans.

Since their defeat in 338 BC the ancient Peloponnesians, including Sparta, were politically subordinate to the Macedonians and for over 140 years were under Macedonian control.

Why did the ancient Macedonians speak “Greek” and not their Slavic language?

It is interesting to note that the so-called “Greek language” spoken in Macedonia before Philip II’s time was not indigenous to Macedonia and, according to inscriptions found, was identical to the Attic language spoken in Athens. So whatever Greek the Macedonians spoke was acquired from education in schools, not from their mothers.

For the Greek language spoken in Macedonia to have been a “Greek dialect” as modern Greeks would have us believe, it would have had to have some divergence from the original Attic just like other dialects found in the Peloponnesus. The fact that the Greek language spoken in Macedonia was exactly the same as the Attic, evidenced by the inscriptions found, can only mean that Macedonians acquired it through education in Athens or Athenian teachers taught it to Macedonians in Macedonia.

Another fact to remember, again as evidenced by inscriptions found, the Macedonians did not speak “Greek” until a later period. In other words the Greek language came to Macedonia from Athens, a fair distance outside of Macedonia, long after it was spoken for centuries in the Peloponnesus.

The common Macedonians, which included the lower ranks of the Macedonian military, did not speak “Greek” because they were not educated in “Greek”. The common Macedonians spoke another language, a language indigenous to the region. We can now say with some certainty that that language was Macedonian, a Slavic dialect that belonged to one or more of the indigenous groups living in ancient Macedonia. We can also say with some certainty that the Slav language spoken by the ancient Macedonians is the root language of modern Macedonian spoken by the Macedonians today.

Closer to Philip II’s time when Macedonia became involved in trade and commerce with its neighbours, it began to more frequently use the Attic language, commonly known as the Koine or common language. By the time Koine began to make its way into Macedonia it was already in use throughout the eastern Mediterranean.

Koine was made famous by Alexander the Great after taking it around the world and making it his international language. Koine unfortunately did not take root with the people and as such always remained a language of trade and commerce.

Before disappearing altogether the Koine language resurfaced again the late 19th century when it was adopted by the modern Greek State as the language of its people.

By then Koine had evolved so much and had acquired so many foreign elements that it had completely drifted apart from its Attic roots.

If the ancient Macedonians spoke a Slavic language then why did they not leave any evidence of it?

This is a question frequently asked by modern Greeks who refuse to accept the idea that Alexander the Great spoke anything but Greek.

This is a valid question, however I believe it should be reworded as follows;

We know from history that the ancient Macedonians spoke another language besides Koine. What we don’t know is what that language was. So the question should be;

Why haven’t the Greeks made any effort to identify this other language Macedonians spoke?

Contrary to popular belief there is overwhelming evidence left behind by the ancients. The problem is finding accredited scholars to verify it and admit to its existence. Most historians, paleo-linguists, philologists and archaeologists prescribe to the “Slav Migration Theory” and believe the Slavs arrived in the Balkans no earlier than the 6th century AD. They

refuse to recognize a Slav existence in the Balkans before that. To them, these writings are of unknown origin.

Some of these inscriptions were found centuries ago and were believed (labeled) to be of unknown origin.

Many of these inscriptions are now being slowly translated by a new group of scholars who are dedicated to pursuing the truth, not just accepting the status quo. Among these dedicated individuals is our own Macedonian paleo-linguist and pioneer Vasil Ilyov (also spelled Iliov).

Ilyov has translated a number of these inscriptions (some are displayed on his website) and has independently concluded that they are indeed of Slavic origin.

The myth that no Slavs existed in the Balkans prior to the 6th century AD was invented by the 19th century Great Powers and propagated by the modern Greeks. More on this in future articles.

Modern Greeks maintain that “if such inscriptions existed” Greek archaeologists would have found some by now.

At the risk of being ridiculed, I can say that I am certain Greek archaeologists have found such artifacts and have translated them. The problem of making such evidence known would have contradicted their political agenda so it was hidden from public view.

It is well known that Macedonia was the cradle of Slavonic Civilization yet the Greeks have not disclosed a single artifact that bears Macedonian Cyrillic writing?

It is also well known that every Church in Greek occupied Macedonia had at least one Slavonic Bible and dozens of icons with Slavonic writing. Every cemetery had headstones with Macedonian Cyrillic inscriptions. Where are they now? Why is there not a single shred of evidence, not even in a museum, that proves Slav speaking Macedonians ever existed in Greek occupied Macedonia? Is it because these artifacts don't exist or is it because Greek authorities have systematically removed them and hidden them from public view?

If Greek authorities have lied to us about the existence of Slavonic (modern Macedonian) artifacts that we know existed, what makes you think they will admit to the existence of even more damaging evidence like very ancient Slav artifacts?

How can these artifacts (with very ancient Slav inscriptions) exist in abundance in the Republic of Macedonia just north of the Macedonian-Greek border and as far north as the Danube River and not exist in Greece?

But then again, since when is the Greek State known for telling the truth about Macedonia's past anyway?

Who are the Modern People?

In the previous chapter we established that the ancient indigenous people living in the lower Balkans were Paeonians, Lyncestians, Pelasgians, Phrygians, Illyrians, Thracians and others. From these tribes, over time and through external cultural influence and through mutual contact, two distinct independent and powerful communities emerged. The Macedonians, who were a monarchical society, organized as a single large state and were ruled politically by a royal dynasty and a single king. The Peloponnesians or “Ancient Greeks”, who were a mixed democratic-monarchical society, organized in many (dozens) City States. Some were democratic and some were ruled by dynastic monarchies, which were very protective of their culture, xenophobic and closed to outsiders. The City States were never united and were never organized under a single political system or under a single universal leader.

Even though the two communities emerged and developed independently, they eventually came into contact and, to some extent, influenced each other politically, economically and culturally. For the most part, however, the two communities remained aloof until Macedonia conquered the Greek City States in 338 BC. After that the City States lost their political independence and began to decline under Macedonian domination. Then in 197BC they were briefly liberated and re-conquered by Rome, from which they never recovered.

There is no question that Macedonia was culturally influenced by the more advanced City States but no one can say with any certainty how deep this influence penetrated Macedonian society. If language can be a factor of “cultural influence”, then we know that some Macedonians were bilingual and only a small segment, mainly the educated elite, spoke Attic, later Koine. The vast majority, or common Macedonians, neither had the inclination nor the need to learn foreign languages. It is doubtful that the farmers and soldiers who came from rural Macedonia had any desire or need to learn more than their own indigenous mother tongue.

With regards to ethnic mixing, there is no historical evidence of any extraordinary ethnic mixing between Ancient Macedonians and Ancient Greeks. There is, however, historical evidence that during classical times the number of slaves living in Attica roughly equaled the number of free inhabitants. What this means is that even at the outset, the ancient Greeks were multi-ethnic. There were no slaves in Macedonia.

I just want to mention here that many ethnicities, including blacks from Africa were among the Attic slaves who during the Roman occupation were freed and became Greek citizens and assimilated into ancient Greek society.

To learn more about the differences between the Ancient Macedonians and the Ancient Greeks, I would recommend reading J.S.G Gandeto’s

book “Ancient Macedonians: Differences Between The Ancient Macedonians and the Ancient Greeks”. Gandeto has dedicated his entire book, using mostly ancient sources, to prove without any doubt that the Ancient Macedonians were not Greeks. Neither of the ancient people believed they were related to the other.

For the 140 years or so between the time Macedonia conquered the Greek City States and Rome annexed Macedonia, there were open borders and people could have moved back and forth but no one knows to what extent and how many, if any, moved.

What we do know is that a number of cities (18) were founded by Alexander III during his Eastern campaigns which in part were populated with Macedonian settlers. These cities continued to exist for centuries after the Macedonian dynasties collapsed. We also know that sick and wounded Macedonian soldiers were left behind by Alexander as far back as Pakistan and never returned. You can draw your own conclusions from this.

Rome was a City State and did not have a large population to run its vast empire, so it tended to hire from the outside. Given that Rome just conquered the Macedonian kingdoms (three of them) with well established administrations and trained armies then it must have been natural for Romans to hire Macedonians.

Much of Rome’s army, administration and leadership, including its Emperors, especially towards the end, came from the non Roman but Romanized populations outside of Rome. Even the Romans themselves admitted that the Emperors from Macedonia were the most capable and progressive of all leaders. The Empire always expanded, prospered and gained magnificence under the leadership of Macedonian Emperors such as Justinian I and Basil II.

There is historic evidence of Roman colonization in Macedonia but to what extent and what ethnicities, is unknown. The only visible evidence of Roman presence in Macedonia today are Roman ruins and Latin speaking Vlachs, who I will address in the next chapter.

After the Roman Empire split into West and East, the Western part disintegrated while the Eastern part continued to exist for another millennium or so. During this vast time span, much happened in the Balkans and the region experienced population shuffles and foreign invasions which greatly influenced its demographics.

The Eastern Romans or Byzantines (better known as the Pravoslavs to the Macedonians) were notorious for population shuffles. It is well known that invaders such as the Slav speakers, who entered Byzantine territories from north of the Danube River, were moved to Morea (modern day Peloponnesus) and to Asia Minor. These invading Slav speakers, I believe, were refugees fleeing from other invading tribes who came to the Balkans from beyond the Danube River.

When Bulgars from the north started crossing the Danube River, the Pravoslavs moved populations from Syria and Armenia to fill sparsely populated areas in Northern Macedonia so that they would act as barriers against the invasion.

The Pravoslavs were also notorious for displacing people from trouble spots. History has recorded a number of such displacements including the one of Tsar Samoil's ancestors who were moved from Armenia to Macedonia.

Besides internal population displacements, outsiders also invaded the lower Balkans over the years.

According to H. G. Wells who studied world history, it was the Wall of China that propagated displacements and caused demographic changes in Western Asia and Europe. The Wall of China, which was meant to end Mongolian invasions into Eastern China, was in fact the cause for the westward migrations.

The wall forced Mongolian migrants, who spent their summers in Mongolia and winters in China, to abandon their traditional annual migrating patterns and turn westward. Pressure from the westward Mongol invasions pushed some of the indigenous tribes further to the south thus causing a cascading effect, which was eventually felt in the Balkans.

Some of the tribes that invaded the south Balkans included the Visigoths who crossed the Danube around 376 AD, the Huns around 447 AD, the Avars around 560 AD, the Bulgars around 680 AD and so on. Slav speakers or Slav movements have also been recorded by history but they were simply refugees fleeing from the invaders. Many Slav families, due to economic hardships brought on by the invaders, left their ancestral homes and traveled south into Byzantine territories.

As mentioned in chapter two of this series, the Slav speakers were indigenous to the region. The Slav speakers are the original Europeans, the first people to settle the Balkans.

After the Bulgars, next to invade the Balkans were the Vikings. The Vikings made their trek from the north by water but were repelled by the Byzantines. At the turn of the first millennium following the Vikings came the Muslims. The Muslim invaders were successfully repelled and held at bay for at least another two centuries before they made their presence felt in the Balkans. By the 12th century AD the Muslims had mustered enough strength to cross over from Asia Minor, invade the Eastern part of Europe and keep parts of it occupied until the 20th century.

The Muslim invaders, better known as the Ottoman Empire, were numerically far inferior to the vast populations they invaded. To overcome their population shortages, they tended to assimilate people from the occupied lands by converting them to Islam. Some converted voluntarily and yet others were forcibly converted regardless of their ethnicity. The only distinction that mattered to the Ottomans was whether their citizens

were Muslim or not, everything else was unimportant. By the 16th century, before nationalism had reached the Balkans, people could only be distinguished by their religion. There were Muslims, the dominant class, and others, the administrative and working classes. The reason I emphasize that there was a non-Muslim administrative class is because it played an important role in the emergence of the modern Balkan States, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

By the 19th century, outside of religion and language (and to a small extent, traditions), it was impossible to distinguish between the various ethnicities living in the lower Balkans. People simply identified with their religion and to some extent with their language. There were Muslim Turks who spoke Turkish, Slavic, Albanian, Roma, etc. and then there were Christians who spoke Turkish, Slavic, Koine, Vlach, Albanian, etc. So it was impossible to determine ethnicities.

In the categories of “people classification” religion was number one, followed by social class, language and then by tradition. Nationality was not even a criterion until nationalism was introduced in the Balkans in the 19th century.

Nationalism in the Balkans

As mentioned earlier, before the introduction of nationalism in the Ottoman Balkans, the Ottoman State classified its citizens by religion, Muslims and “others”. The “others” belonged to the Christian and Jewish faiths. Official Islam prohibited any other classification of its citizens outside of religion.

Within the Christian classification, unofficially there were two classes of people, the administrative or middle class and the working class.

In terms of language most of the working class was uneducated and spoke one or more of the indigenous languages of the region, which were orally passed on from generation to generation. The vast majority of the administrative class was educated and spoke two or three languages. They spoke their mother tongue, Turkish and Koine. The Ottoman administrative class was multicultural and multiethnic, similar to modern middle classes in multi-ethnic states.

The administrative class had to be educated in order to serve the Ottoman Empire in various capacities, from running the Empire’s banks to running Ottoman business outside of the Empire to performing domestic duties like purchasing goods, administering the Christian Churches and performing translating services for the Ottoman Empire. Muslims by law were not allowed to handle money, speak foreign languages, or venture outside Islamic borders.

The administrative class was educated in the ancient traditional language of administration and commerce, the Koine language. Koine was

spoken in Tsari Grad (Constantinople or Istanbul) by the middle class since the city was created. Tsari Grad served as the capital of both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires.

When nationalism was introduced on masse for the first time in the Balkans, the very concept was foreign and difficult for people to comprehend. People clearly understood religious affiliations, languages spoken and social class structures but they could not tell one nationality from another because the concept was foreign to them.

The Nationalities of the Lower Balkans

Up to this point we have given you a general overview of historical events that affected the demographics of the lower Balkans from the dawn of the Roman Empire up to the early 19th century. I also want to mention that, from the 4th century AD up to the 19th century AD the lower Balkans have been without borders and internal travel and population movements have been without restrictions.

So at the dawn of the 19th century we have two major religions dominating the lower Balkans, Islam and Orthodox Christianity. Among the two religions we have a very large population of Slav speakers and smaller populations of Turkish, Albanian and Vlach speakers. Among the Orthodox Christians we also have the middle class of Koine speakers.

It is very important to understand that before the introduction of nationalism in the lower Balkans, the Koine speakers, also known as the Phanariots, had no allegiance to any nation nor clung to any ideals of nationalism or nation building. They were simply the servants of the Ottoman Empire. However as the Ottoman Empire began to crumble, the Phanariots, being educated and thus more enlightened on world affairs, were the first to “consciously awaken”. Their first thoughts were to replace the ruling Turkish class with themselves. They wanted to replace the Muslim Ottoman Empire with a Christian one and restore the Byzantine Empire to its former glory. The idea of another “Large State” in Europe, especially in the Balkans, unfortunately created fear in the leadership of the Great Powers whose only comfort was to see the Ottoman Empire dismantled and replaced with small, manageable “western style” States.

After failing to create “one Balkan State” out of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, the Phanariots refocused their efforts in creating several new states, the kind that fit in the agenda of the Great Powers: the kind that could be manipulated by Western leaders and served their interests. Following the Western example, the Phanariots began to employ nationalism as the line of division for making these new States. Nationalism unfortunately was a new concept for the Balkan people and the proposed dividing lines were but a blur at best.

The Political Agenda

In the previous chapter we established that just before the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, the southern Balkans were politically dominated by two religions, Islam and Orthodox Christianity. Even though Islam was the dominant religion, the majority of people belonged to the Christian religion which had the support and backing of the Great Powers. Within the two religions we established a linguistic division consisting of a majority of Slav speakers and minority Vlach, Albanian and Turkish speakers. Within the Christian religion we also established the existence of two classes of people, the middle educated class which in addition to its multi-lingual mother tongue spoke Koine and Turkish and the multi-lingual working class which spoke Slavic, Vlach, Albanian and Turkish.

In the previous chapter we also established that the Great Powers had no desire to see a large Christian State succeed the Ottoman Empire. They preferred to see several smaller, equal sized, ethnically divided, Western style states emerge in its place.

The formation of the new Balkan States therefore was not a natural process but rather a politically motivated one designed to serve the interests of the Great Powers, mainly Britain, France and Russia.

I just want to mention here that the Christians belonging to the Ottoman middle class (also known as the Phanariots) were, in a modern sense, a multi-ethnic group of people. The fact that they spoke the Koine language and were associated with the formation of the Greek State does not make them ethnically Greek. In fact the word “Greek” at the time was a reference to a “class” of people and not to an ethnicity. Nationalism and ethnic affiliations are post 19th century concepts which were later introduced to the Balkans by the Great Powers and were absent in the religiously oriented Ottoman society.

The middle or Greek class, before the Greek State’s formation, was prevalent not only in Greece but throughout the entire Ottoman Empire. Some families also existed outside of the Ottoman domain and operated businesses through southern coastal Europe and the coastal Black Sea.

As a side note I also want to mention here that the word “Bulgar”, a derivation from the word “Vulgar”, also defined a class of people and not an ethnicity. In pre-19th century Ottoman society a Christian working class existed which was referred to as the “Vulgar” class by the Latin and Koine speakers. The Vulgars or Bulgars were the uneducated commoners, people employed in agriculture and in menial jobs. They also belonged to a multi-ethnic community, in the modern sense of the word, and were prevalent not just in Bulgaria but throughout the entire southern Balkans.

The breakup of the Ottoman State into smaller and diverse States initially had its problems. Many of the leading revolutionaries opposed the idea and for that they were labeled traitors and sent to prison. Most

revolutionaries fought to liberate their lands and free themselves from Turkish oppression. They did not sacrifice themselves to serve the Great Power in their bid to breakup their lands. Unfortunately, in the end the strong got their way. The Great Powers were determined to break up the Ottoman State by any means possible. But by successfully creating “ethnic diversities” from the same stock of people and poisoning them with their nationalistic propoganda, they not only shattered the Ottoman State but they made sure these people would never again reunite.

Since there were no clear national or ethnic distinctions between the various people at the time, the Great Powers simply used whatever was convenient. Since there was already a clear class distinction between the Christians, they took advantage of it. The Christian middle class was defined as being “ethnically Greek” and later the Christian working class became the “ethnic Bulgarians”.

The Great Powers sought their opportunity and when it presented itself they took it without giving much consideration to problems it might create for the new States. In other words no consideration was given to the fact that this might divide people who were otherwise genetically and linguistically related.

The problems created were unfortunately solved by even more drastic measures. In Greece’s case, the entire population had to be assimilated to fit this new, artificially created “ethnic profile”.

Once the Great Powers forged the new Balkan States and defined the desired identities they then unleashed their plans on the entire Balkan population. It was only a matter of time before each new State assimilated everyone within its control.

When they were done with their own territories, the new Balkan States turned their efforts on Macedonia

By then almost all Great Powers were stakeholders in the European remnant part of the Ottoman Empire. While France saw the Balkans as an opportunity to invest and expand its failing political influence (since the Napoleonic wars), Russia saw the Balkans as a way to extend its shipping and naval might beyond the Black Sea and into the Mediterranean. Britain, the major power of the time, felt threatened by Russian westward encroachment and did everything it could to stop Russia from “contaminating its back yard”; the Mediterranean Sea.

Serbia was first to emerge as an autonomous state as a result of a number of political power plays between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Next to emerge was Greece. Greece emerged as a result of a failed rebellion prompted by the Phanariots in an attempt to take political control away from the Ottoman authorities.

Even though Greece was simultaneously wooed by Britain, France and Russia, Germany had the pleasure of administering it first. Britain, France and Russia mistrusted each other and opted for Germany to take control of

Greece because Germany at the time was most neutral with least personal vested interests in Greece.

While Germany strived to establish Otto, the young Bavarian prince, as King of Greece, the French and especially the British were hard at work creating a history for this new “Greek identity”. It was to be modeled after the so-called “Ancient Greeks” about whom the West had learned centuries ago from the Muslim Arabs in Spain.

The Modern Greek State was created by the Great Powers and exploited by Britain for the sole purpose of protecting its interests in the region. Since then and to this day Greece has been a British and Great Power protectorate and pawn. Evidence of this can be found in contemporary British Parliamentary debates.

When Greece was created for the first time in 1829 it encompassed a small region known as the Morea (modern day Peloponnesus). The tiny fledgling State was located on the lands where the “Ancient Greeks” once lived more than two thousand years ago.

The neo-Greek leaders, just molded from the upper stratum of a very diverse society, unfortunately had no notion of ethnicity let alone of belonging to an extinct race that had once lived and vanished two millennia ago.

The cultures, traditions and languages of the Moreans were so diverse that the newly formed Greek State had great difficulty not only containing itself as a nation but also choosing a course for its future. But after some years of struggle and a civil war, the tiny State finally overcame its problems. Unfortunately what emerged was neither real nor a reflection of its original self. Everything real was forsaken in favour of a fabricated mythical culture and an ancient dead language. The Greek State adopted a long gone dead language to falsely connect itself to a past it never had. Today, Greece marvels at ancient artifacts as if they belong to it, ignoring that it usurped that language and culture and falsely made it its own.

It is important at this point to understand that the South Balkan demography at the turn of the 19th century was composed of pockets of Vlachs, Albanians and Turks among a sea of Slavs.

It is also important to understand that south of Mount Olympus, between Macedonia and the Peloponnesus in the western region known as Epirus, lived a large population of Albanians. The region east of Epirus known as Thessaly was populated mostly by Vlachs.

It was very rare at the time that any single identity occupied an area or a region larger than a village. Similarly there was no consistency of overlap but definite overlaps of various identities throughout the entire region. In other words there was no place larger than a village that was pure, diverse identities occupied all regions with varying densities. The Albanians, for example, were a majority at the very western fringe of the Balkan Peninsula near the Adriatic Sea and their numbers tended to fall

exponentially towards the east. The Vlachs on the other hand were a majority in Thessaly but their numbers diminished into small pockets in the easterly and northerly directions. The Slav speakers, modern day Macedonians, Serbians and Bulgarians, were about the only identities that were consistently dense throughout the southern Balkans north of Mount Olympus.

Little is known of the methods Greece used to assimilate Albanians, Slavs, Vlachs and Turks in the Morea, Epirus and Thessaly but their methods became well known in Macedonia.

By the turn of the 20th century the Great Powers were so successful in breaking up the Ottoman State, through the creation of politically and diametrically opposed States that they decided to allow the process to extend into Macedonia. The Macedonian national consciousness and Macedonian desires for independence was completely ignored in favour of partitioning Macedonia between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria and respectively assimilating the Macedonian identity to fit the new profiles of those states.

Origins of the modern people in the southern Balkans

The Macedonians

According to the old model, ethnically and linguistically speaking the modern Macedonians can trace their roots as far back as 1500 years before the time of Kiril and Metodi and the Slavonic renaissance.

According to new evidence, as described in the last three chapters of this series, Modern Macedonian roots extend as far back as 3000 years.

The Greeks

As previously mentioned, ethnically and linguistically speaking, the modern Greek nation is a 19th century artificial creation. The modern Greek ethnicity was created by the assimilation of Albanians, Slavs, Vlachs and Turks. Ethnically and linguistically speaking, there were no Greeks before the 19th century. The people referred to as Greeks by the outside world, by the West in particular, were the multi-ethnic Ottoman Christian merchant class and the Church Clergy who spoke the Koine language.

The Vlachs

There are three probable scenarios for the existence of the Vlach identity in the southern Balkans;

They were an indigenous Balkan people recruited and educated in the Latin language by the Romans to serve in their administration, and/or They are remnants of the many garrisons Rome employed to maintain a hold on the region, and/or Remnants of Roman and other Latin speaking settlers.

There are also some who believe the Vlachs in the lower Balkans are Romanian migrants and settlers who over the years ventured south in search of pastures for their herds of livestock. Some abandoned their traditional lifestyles and became the town and village merchants yet many still roam the mountainous countryside raising sheep and goats.

The Albanians

As for the Albanian presence in the Balkans, there are also three probable scenarios;

They are a Byzantine transplant from Ancient Albania (modern day Azerbaijan) to the Adriatic coast of modern Albania.

They came with the Ottoman Empire as elite fighters and guards and were settled on the western part of modern day Albania. Being influenced by Italy they are a combination of Latinized Slavs and western migrants.

Or, all of the above.

It is unlikely however that modern Albanians are related to the ancient Illyrians.

On the question of the Albanian Tosk identity, there are some who believe that the Tosks may have come from Tuscany, Italy.

I want to mention at this point that Albanians are not indigenous to Macedonia. The Albanians living in Macedonia today are recent settlers and newcomers to the region. Some made their entry into Macedonia from Albania during the Ottoman era and others came from Kosovo during the open border Yugoslav era.

The Turks

Ethnically, it is unknown who the Turks of the 19th century were. They were identified as Turks because they were Muslim. The Ottoman Empire was multi-ethnic and Turk was synonymous with Muslim. It is also well known that the Ottoman Empire assimilated many different peoples from many different places, including Macedonia.

The Modern Dilemma

It seems that the world has changed in the last century or so and old values are being replaced with new ones. When the religiously oriented

Ottoman Empire was crumbling and nationalism was fashionable, it was fashionable to create monotone and homogeneous nations. Today nationalism is no longer fashionable and the world is busy creating new colourful fashions that are more politically correct and a better fit in today's reality.

While the world is trying to right the wrongs of the 19th century, Greece it seems is stuck in a time loop experiencing over and over the myths of its own creation. No one would have noticed or cared if it weren't for the fact that, while living its fantasy, Greece has created a living nightmare for the Macedonian people.

No self respecting, rational Macedonian would have ever wanted to tangle with Greece on such intangible and outlandish matters as ancient history, ancient flags and ownerships of names, but when Greece made these a life and death situation for the Macedonians, what choice did they have?

This bizarre Greek behaviour and distaste for Macedonians I will leave to the experts to analyze. But if I may be allowed to state my opinion, I would speculate that Greece fears the Macedonians not for historical reasons but for what it has done to them in the last two hundred years. Macedonians who see themselves as a real nation and the rightful inheritors of the Macedonian lands and heritage, Greece feels, are not only a threat to its integrity as a country but are also a threat to its artificial identity.

Greece as a State must realize that its actions have consequences and it can no longer hold on to a value system that's not only unfashionable but undesirable. Modern Greece must accept the reality that it is not "Ancient Greece" and its people are not "direct descendents of the Ancient Greeks". It must also allow its citizens to choose for themselves who they are and what they want. Maintaining a 19th century status quo is not only anti-progressive; it is downright dangerous.

It is a fact that the Macedonian identity has survived in spite of all Greek efforts to extinguish it.

Macedonia was not invaded, occupied and partitioned by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria in 1912, 1913 because of legitimate claims, it was invaded, occupied and partitioned illegally and brutally because of imperial ambitions and land grabs.

The Macedonian people lost their opportunity to create a Macedonian State in the 19th century not because they did not have the will, or a legal and moral right to do so, they lost their opportunity because the Great Powers desired it. .

It has almost been one hundred years since Macedonia was snatched from the Macedonian people but the Macedonian desire to have its own state has not ceased. One hundred years later a strong Macedonian identity is emerging with a message to the world; "we want to live free and in

peace with our neighbours". It is our wish as Macedonians to invite the Great Powers to re-consider their past actions and decisions and to help the Macedonian people re-integrate in the society of nations and take their rightful place in this world. We are here to stay.

Macedonians want nothing from Greece except what is already theirs. We are not your enemies. We simply want to co-exist peacefully with you as Macedonians with rights and privileges. We simply want back what is ours; our name, our lands, our heritage, our history and our dignity.

Great Power Influence in the Balkans

The Balkans seemed like an unimportant place to the Western Powers until the Russian-Turkish war of 1769 to 1774 took place and Russian forces badly defeated the Ottomans. Russia's victory and the signing of 1774 Kuchuk Kainarji Treaty gave Russian ships access to the Black Sea, the Bosphorus and Endrene (the Dardanelles). Russia became the "protector of Orthodox Christians" inside the Ottoman domain and for the first time, the Ottomans allowed Russian (non-Muslim) consular agents inside their empire.

The Kuchuk Kainarji Treaty bolstered Russian expansionism in the Balkans, which alarmed the Western Powers and initiated the "Eastern Question" of "what will happen to the Balkans when the Ottoman Empire disappears"?

The Eastern Question of the 1800's later became the Macedonian Question of the 1900's.

Two overwhelming "forces" came into being in the 19th century, which transformed the Balkans. The first was the 1848 "western economic revolution" which thrust the Balkans into social and economic upheaval. The second was "increased intervention" from non-Balkan political forces. As the century advanced these developments merged, working not for the interests of the Balkan people but for the benefit of Europe's Great Powers.

At about the same time Russia was making its way into the Balkans, the West was experiencing changes of its own. The industrial revolution was in full swing coming out of England and progressing towards the rest of the world. France was the economic super power but was quickly losing ground to England. The French Revolution (1789) gave birth not only to new ideas and nationalism but also to Napoleon Bonaparte. As Napoleon waged war in Europe and the Middle East, French shipping in the Mediterranean subsided only to be replaced by the Phanariot and British traders. French trade inside the Ottoman territory also declined and never fully recovered. By land, due to the long border, Austria dominated trade with the Ottoman Empire exercising its own brand of influence on the Balkans especially on the Serbian people.

As the turn of the 19th century brought economic change to Europe, the Balkans became the last frontier for capitalist expansion. By the 1800's Europe's political, economic and military institutions were rapidly changing. Western governments and Western exporters were aggressively pursuing Balkan markets on behalf of their Western manufacturers. This aggressive pursuit smothered Balkan industries before they had a chance to develop and compete. As a result, Balkan economies began to decline causing civil unrest and nationalist uprisings. While Western countries were left undisturbed to develop economically and socially, external forces prevented Balkan societies from achieving the same. Mostly regulated by

guilds, Balkan trades could not compete with Western mechanization and went out of business. Without jobs, most city folk became an economic burden on the already strained rural peasant population. The economic situation in the Balkans deteriorated to a point where people could no longer tolerate it and they started to rebel.

Besides the strife it brought to the Balkan people, this Great power Balkan invasion also created competition between the Great Powers. Imperial expansion was running rampant and it was heading for a collision course.

Of all the Great Powers, Russia tended to be the most aggressive and was usually the cause of each new Turkish defeat. Russia's goals in the Balkans were (1) to gain exclusive navigation rights from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea for both merchant and military ships and (2) to annex Tsari Grad (Constantinople) and Endrene (the Dardanelles) for itself, both of which were unacceptable to the Western Powers.

Great Power aggression and posturing finally peaked when Russia came face to face with Turkey, England and France in the outbreak of the Crimean War (1853 to 1856).

After the end of the Crimean war in 1856, by the Treaty of Paris, the Western Powers made sure Russia's desires for expansion were curbed. First, all Russian warships were barred from the Black Sea and second, the Black Sea was opened to merchant ships from all the states. After that, all the Great Powers, not just Russia, became the guarantors of the Balkan states.

From 1815 to 1878 Great Britain was Russia's strongest rival for Balkan influence. British interests led Britain to intervene against the Turks in the Morean revolution of the 1820s but went to war against Russia in 1853 (Crimean war) on Turkey's behalf.

Obviously, Russia was not happy about the situation it found itself after the Crimean War which set the stage for the next conflict.

In 1875 the Ottomans entered a crisis situation owing 200 million pounds sterling to foreign investors with an annual interest payment of 12 million pounds a year. The interest payments alone amounted to approximately half the state's annual revenues. On the brink of bankruptcy, to preserve Ottoman stability and to make sure Turkey paid up western European debts, the Great Powers in 1875 took over the management of Turkish revenues. This was done through an international agency, called the Ottoman Public Debt Administration (OPDA). To continue to receive credit, the Sultan had to grant the OPDA control over state income. Therefore, control of the state budget and internal policies fell into foreign hands. The burden was too great for the local peasants and it manifested itself in a number of independent uprisings. Discontentment with Turkish rule, economic plight and pure neglect of human life precipitated the "Eastern Crisis".

The growing discontentment of the peasantry in the Balkans disturbed the Great Powers who now had a vested interest in protecting the Ottoman Empire from falling apart. A conference was convened in Tsari Grad in 1876 to discuss strategies on how to deal with the insurrections and the “Eastern Question” in general. Representatives of Russia, Austria-Hungary, Britain, Germany, France and Italy attended and decided to place Macedonia and Bulgaria under the control of the Great Powers. Turkey rejected their demands and soon found herself at odds with Russia. By early 1877, war broke out in Serbia and Montenegro followed by a massive Russian invasion of Bulgaria. The Turkish armies were decimated and Turkey was forced to talk peace. Peace was negotiated between Russia and Turkey on March 3rd, 1878 and the San Stefano Treaty was signed without Western Power consent. Russia, as usual, was concerned more with self interests and less with the interest of the people it was trying to protect, so it sought the opportunity to realize a long held ambition in the Balkans, access to the Mediterranean Sea.

The conclusion of the San Stefano Treaty sent shock waves not only through the Western Powers, who had a lot to lose (financial investments in the Ottoman Empire), but also to states like Greece and Serbia who had territorial ambitions towards Ottoman territories.

Disturbed by the Russian tactics, the Western Powers re-convened the Eastern Question at Berlin in July 1878. At this point the San Stefano agreement was revised and Macedonia was given back to the Ottomans. On the verge of bankruptcy, Russia could not resist the Western Powers and gave in to their demands.

In the spring of 1878 Macedonia reached the crossroads of its destiny. Macedonia was one step away from overthrowing six hundred years of Ottoman tyranny when Western Powers stepped in and prevented it. Why? Was Macedonia less deserving than Greece, Serbia, or Bulgaria? Were the Macedonians less Christian than the Greeks, Serbians, or Bulgarians? Was the Macedonian struggle to free itself from Turkish tyranny not convincing enough?

The real reason for giving Macedonia back to Turkey had little to do with religion, nationalism, or human rights and a lot to do with greed, profit and imperial expansion.

Russia desperately wanted to access the Mediterranean Sea but the Western Powers desperately wanted to prevent it.

“Canning (a British politician, 1812-1862) had planned to head off Russia’s advance, not by direct opposition, but by associating her with England and France in a policy of emancipation, aimed at erecting national States out of the component parts of the Turkish Empire. Such States could be relied upon to withstand Russian encroachment on their independence, if once they were set free from the Turk. The creation of the Kingdom of

Greece was the immediate outcome of Canning's policy" (Page 372, Trevelyan, British History in the 19th Century)

The success of the Crimean war (Turkey's victory), convinced the British to slow down their policy of creating new Balkan States and exploiting the lucrative Ottoman markets and collecting returns on their loans made to Turkey.

At the stroke of a pen Bulgaria was freed (autonomous) while Macedonia was sentenced to suffer further indignity and humiliation. Back in the hands of the Ottomans and the Greek clergy, Macedonia entered a new era of suffering and cruelty, destined to pay for the sins of all the other nations that rose up against the Ottomans.

Between the spring and summer of 1878, Macedonia's fate was decided not by Russia or the Western Powers, but by Britain alone. Britain who created Greece and introduced the curse of Hellenism, was now prepared to fight Russia, by military means if necessary, to keep her out of the Mediterranean Sea.

To avoid war a compromise was reached. "The essentials of this compromise were agreed upon between England and Russia before the meeting of the European Congress, which took place at Berlin under the chairmanship of Bismarck, and formally substituted the Treaty of Berlin for the terms of San Stefano" (Page 377, Trevelyan, British History in the 19th Century)

"To our (British) eyes the real objection to the San Stefano lies not in its alleged increase in Russian power, but in the sacrifice of the fair claims of Greeks and Serbians, who would not have remained long quiet under the arrangements which ignored their racial rights and gave all the points to Bulgaria. Lord Salisbury felt this strongly, especially on behalf of Greece."

"Beaconsfield's success, as he himself saw it, consisted in restoring the European power of Turkey. It was done by handing back Macedonia to the Port (Turks), without guarantees for better government. This was the essence of the Treaty of Berlin as distinct from the Treaty of San Stefano. 'There is again a Turkey in Europe' Bismarck said. He congratulated the British Prime Minister – 'You have made a present to the Sultan of the richest province in the world; 4,000 square miles of the richest soil.' Unfortunately for themselves, the inhabitants went with the soil. Since Beaconsfield decided, perhaps rightly, that Macedonia should not be Bulgarian, some arrangements ought to have been made for its proper administration under a Christian governor. Apart of all questions of massacres, the deadening character of the Turkish rule is well known. Lord Salisbury seems to have wished for a Christian governor, but nothing was done in that direction. A golden opportunity was thus let slip." (Page 378, Trevelyan, British History in the 19th Century)

The Macedonian people were not at all happy about what went on in the Berlin Congress and showed their discontentment by demonstrating first in Kresna then in Razlog, but as usual their pleas were ignored. The Turkish army was dispatched and the demonstrations were violently put down.

Facing the possibility of becoming extinct in Europe, the Ottoman Empire began to re-organize and take demonstrations and rebellions seriously. After the Greek uprising the Sultan became distrustful of the Phanariots and expelled most of them from his services. He came close to ousting the Patriarch and his tyrannical Bishops but Russia stepped in and prevented it. Many of the Slav people were not happy with being ruled by a Greek Patriarch and after Russia's show of solidarity to the Greeks and the Patriarch, they threatened to convert to Catholicism. This created a real concern for Russia. "In the days when Panslavism was a force in Russia and General Ignatieff ruled Constantinople. Russia naturally feared that if the Southern Slavs became Catholics she would lose her ascendancy over them." (Page 73, Brailsford, Macedonia)

In 1870 Russia convinced the Sultan to allow a new millet to be formed, thus creating the Exarchate Church which was immediately excommunicated by the Patriarch. Fracturing the Rum (Romeos) Millet into two opposing factions suited the Ottoman authorities perfectly because now Christians, instead of rebelling against the Turks, would fight one another. Now, in addition to the Ottoman and Greek, a third government was created that would rule the same people in three conflicting ways.

From the day they were liberated, both Serbia and Greece began strengthening their economies and poisoning their people with nationalist propaganda. Serbia introduced education for the masses and was teaching her youth about her ancient exploits and past empires that ruled Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia. Children were taught that all Slavs (except for the Bulgarians who were Serbia's enemies) were truly Serbs.

Modern Greeks on the other hand, infatuated with the discovery of the Ancient City States, were going overboard promoting "Hellenism" and making territorial claims on Macedonia based on ancient rites. At the same time, the Greeks were making wild claims, claiming that all Orthodox Christians were Greeks. Here is what Brailsford has to say about that. "Hellenism claims these peoples because they were civilized by the Greek Orthodox Church. That is a conception which the Western mind grasps with difficulty. It is much as though the Roman Catholic Church should claim the greater part of Europe as the inheritance of Italy. To make the parallel complete we should have to imagine not only an Italian Pope and a College of Cardinals which Italians predominate, but a complete Italian hierarchy. If every Bishop in France and Germany were an Italian, if the official language of the church were not Latin but Italian and if every

priest were a political agent working for the annexation of France and Germany to Italy, we should have some analogy to the state of things which actually exist in Turkey.” (Page 195, Brailsford, Macedonia)

Here is what Brailsford has to say about how the Greeks received title to the Orthodox Church. “The Slavonic (Macedonian) Churches had disappeared from Macedonia, and everywhere the Greek Bishops, as intolerant as they were corrupt-‘Blind mouths that scarce themselves know how to hold a shephook’-crushed out the national consciousness, the language, and the intellectual life of their Slav (Macedonian) flocks. It is as a result of this process that the Eastern Church is a Greek Church. The sanctions of ‘Hellenism’ so far as they rest on the Church, are the wealth of the Phanariots and the venality of the Turks....the Slav libraries in the old monasteries were burned by the Greek Bishops.” (Page 196, Brailsford, Macedonia)

After 1878, for a Macedonian to be Hellenized meant that he or she had to give up his or her own name, language, culture, history, folklore and heritage for something issued by the Greek State.

Here is what Karakasidou has to say. “...The ideological content of notions of the Hellenic nation, which far from being ecumenical has shown itself to be intolerant of cultural or ethnic pluralism, has lead many inhabitants of Greek Macedonia to deny or hide those aspects of their own personal or family pasts...” (Page 125, Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood)

Hellenization was never made by choice, only by brute force. One was made to “feel Greek” when it suited the Greek State. The moment one wanted something from the Greek State or one strayed from Greek policy, they were quickly reminded of their “true identity” in a derogatory fashion and quickly “put in their place”. To be Hellenized meant to lose dignity and to suffer constant and unwarranted humiliation because no matter how hard one tried to be a Hellene, one could never measure up. A Hellenized person was/is neither Greek nor Macedonian but a soul in limbo.

To quote David Holden “To me, philhellenism is a love affair with a dream which envisions ‘Greece’ and the ‘Greeks’ not as an actual place or as real people but as symbols of some imagined perfection.” (Page 12, Greece without Columns)

“Further back still beyond the War of Independence, when the modern nation-state of Greece came into being for the first time, the whole concept of Greece as a geographical entity that begins to blur before our eyes, so many and various were its shapes and meanings. But if geography can offer us no stable idea of Greece, what can? Not race, certainly; for whatever the Greeks may once have been,..., they can hardly have had much blood-relationship with the Greeks of the peninsula of today, Serbs and Bulgars, Romans, Franks and Venetians, Turks, Albanians,...,in one invasion after another have made the modern Greeks a decidedly mongrel race. Not politics either; for in spite of that tenacious western legend about

Greece as the birthplace and natural home of democracy, the political record of the Greeks is one of a singular instability and confusion in which, throughout history, the poles of anarchy modulated freedom has very rarely appeared. Not religion; for while Byzantium was Christian, ancient Hellas was pagan.” (Page 23, Greece without Columns)

Unlike Macedonia and other Balkan nations who have natural and vibrant languages, Greece artificially created and used (up until the 1970’s) an imposed adaptation of the classical language called the Katharevousa. “Hellenizing” under these conditions not only rendered the Hellenized races mute but also imposed a meaningless and emotionless language on those doing the Hellenization. (If you want to learn more about the Greek language controversy read Peter Mackridge’s book “The Modern Greek Language”.)

When Greece was born for the first time in 1832 it was unclear what her national character was. To quote David Holden, “the Greek nation-state was a product of western political intervention-‘the fatal idea’ as Arnold Toynbee once called it, of exclusive western nationalism impinging upon the multi-national traditions of the eastern world. By extension, therefore, at any rate in theory, it was a child of the Renaissance and of western rationalism. (Page 28, Greece without Columns)

Officially, Greeks call their modern state Hellas, and are officially known as Hellenes, but at the same time they call themselves Romios (from the Turkish Rum millet) implying that they are descendents of the Romans. Greece, however, is a derivation of the Latin “Graecia” (Page 29, Holden, Greece without Columns) the province of the Western Roman Empire which extended from Mount Olympus to the Peloponnesus. Again, to quote David Holden, “its international use to describe the sovereign state that currently occupies that territory is merely a reflection of the fact that ‘Greece’ in this modern sense is literally a western invention. (Page 29, Greece without Columns)

If philhellenism is a love affair with a dream, then Hellenism is a dream of a few “evil geniuses” who sought to destroy what was real in favour of creating something artificial, like a Frankenstein’s Monster. Hellenism may be a dream for a few (mad men) but it has been a nightmare for the Macedonian people. Here is what Karakasidou has to say. “Greek natural identity was not a ‘natural development’ or the extension of a ‘high culture’ over the region of Macedonia, although now it is frequently portrayed as so. The ideology of Hellenism imposed a homogeneity on the Macedonian region and its inhabitants.” (Page 94, Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood)

The Macedonian Agenda

The year 1878 was a pivotal point in history for most of the Balkan people. A number of important historical events took place that would have lasting significance. This was the year when powerful decisions were made, some to liberate people yet others to subjugate them, decisions that would have lasting effects and grave consequences.

Before 1878 there was great hope in Macedonia that the Christian Powers in Europe would soon rise up and drive the Muslim Turk out of Europe. Most educated and enlightened Macedonians were well aware of the situation in the Balkans especially of the Ottoman State's slow but steady decline. They were witnessing the long held and powerful Empire crumble at its fringes and new Christian States forming from its debris. Macedonians knew it was a matter of time before they too would be liberated and for good.

Before 1878 Macedonians rose and fought against the Turks not only to liberate themselves but also to liberate their Christian Brothers in Greece, Serbia and other places. By doing this they knew that when their turn came they could count on their friends, with whom they fought side by side, to come and give them aid.

1878 was the year the maps of the Balkans were re-drawn. It was the year grand plans for solving the Eastern Question were put in action. It was the year Macedonia's fate was sealed.

1878 was also the year the enlightened Macedonians came to the realization that they could no longer hope or depend on the outside world to come to rescue them or liberate their Macedonia.

Unbeknownst to the ordinary Macedonians, who suffered endlessly under the Ottoman yoke, was that their calls would not be answered, their kind favours would never be returned, the freedom they so longed for would never materialize and their suffering would never cease.

Macedonians made their bid for liberation once in 1689 (the Karposh uprising) when Austria invaded Macedonia, once in 1876 at Razlog and twice in 1878. The Macedonian people rose and fought against the Turks side by side with the Russian army in early 1878. They again rose and fought the Turks in the Kreshna uprising in late 1878.

After the Russian army overran and liberated most of the Balkans in March 1878, the Macedonian people experienced a brief spell of freedom. Unfortunately their freedom was cut short in July 1878 by order of the Western Powers.

Russia's impudence for self importance and its impatience with the Western Powers, in a bid to gain access to Mediterranean waters, attacked Turkey in early 1878 delivering a devastating blow and liberating most of the Balkans including all of Macedonia.

Shocked by this unexpected act, Russia's opponents, the Western Powers, intervened by convening a conference in Berlin and decided, among other things, to return Macedonia to the Ottomans.

In the brief period from March 3rd to July 13th, 1878 Macedonians experienced a taste of freedom for the first time in centuries and also a taste of betrayal the kind they would never forget.

This betrayal was a clear signal for the Macedonian people of what the Christian Powers had in mind. Worse than being handed back to their tormentors was the inaction of the Western Powers who made absolutely no effort or demands to safeguard the rights or safety of those Macedonians whom they handed back to the Turks as a gift.

Macedonia, being the center of the Ottoman domain in Europe, had very little contact with the outside world and new ideas, especially nationalism, were slow to penetrate. Unlike the Serbians who bordered the Austro-Hungarian Empire and were continuously bombarded with outside propaganda and the Greeks who were merchants and sailors and had opportunities to interact with the outside world, Macedonians were mostly peasants and farmers tied to the land with virtually no outside contact. Macedonians however were well aware of who they were ethnically speaking, but little emphasis was placed on their ethnic identity mainly because they saw themselves as Christians first and Macedonians second. Their fight at the time was with the Muslim authorities and not with the individual ethnicities in the Balkans.

As Slav speaking Orthodox (not Catholic) Christians the Western Powers saw the Macedonians as natural Russian allies and enemies of the West. As a result of this Macedonians were disadvantaged and received little or no attention from the West. In fact Britain and Germany, ignoring evidence to the contrary like Macedonian folklore and traditions, did their best to rob the Macedonian people of their ancient heritage by declaring that they were "Slav" and had no connection to the ancient Macedonians who, in their opinion, were "Greek".

Knowing all this, the Macedonian intelligentsia still bore no ill will towards their Christian brothers and was confident that the world would see the truth one day once it became known. In fact, the 19th century Macedonian intellectuals were so preoccupied with the plight of their people that all priority was given to survival; everything else was of secondary importance.

The 1878 wake up call for the Macedonian intelligentsia brought home the idea that Macedonia must liberate itself and for that to happen the Macedonian people must be informed, organized, armed and trained for a massive rebellion. Unfortunately by the time the Macedonian people were ready to do this, the Ottoman authorities were well aware of what was happening and rebellions were made very difficult to come by. After the

Ottomans lost lands to Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria they were determined not to lose any more and became vigilant regarding such matters.

For some, especially for Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, 1878 was the year of realization that if Macedonia was not going to be liberated as a free nation-state then perhaps maybe it could be annexed by outside forces. So while the Macedonian people were organizing for a massive rebellion, new and more sinister forces were making plans for their future.

Unbeknownst to the Macedonian people, high level discussions and negotiations were taking place between the Great Powers and the new Balkan States on how to solve the Macedonian question.

Two important decisions were reached as a result of these negotiations; Macedonia would be partitioned and annexed by Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, and

Macedonia would be divided along national lines.

Both of these decisions were made without the knowledge, consultation or approval of the Macedonian people.

After gaining approval from the Great Powers, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria began to infiltrate Macedonia by way of the churches, the only legal authorities recognized by the Ottoman powers. In the legal absence of a Macedonian Church, foreign churches were allowed to be established inside Macedonia.

Unfortunately, even though Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia through their churches busied themselves making Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbians out of the Macedonian population in Macedonia, the Macedonian leadership did not perceive this as a threat to the Macedonian national consciousness and continued to organize the struggle against its main foe, the Ottoman authorities.

With the formation of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization in Solun in 1893, the movement was nationally consolidated and the armed struggle began to take shape.

At the turn of the 20th century the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement began to feel the effects of the foreign churches on Macedonian soil. First it was the virulent foreign propaganda. When that alone did not produce desired result, the foreign churches began to illegally employ bands of armed brigands to terrorize the population and accelerate the process of making Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians out of the Macedonian population.

Unfortunately, most of the Macedonian leadership still could not see this as a serious threat. "One can change a Macedonian into a Greek as much as one can change a sheep into a goat." was not an unusual response one would get when posing the question.

With the exception of some intellectuals, like Krste Misirkov, the top leadership could not rationalize the "real reasons" why Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria would want to make Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians out of

Macedonians. For the moment the leadership had a more pressing job which was to liberate Macedonia from the Turks.

In retrospect, the Macedonian leadership was correct in its assessment of the effects of foreign propaganda before the Ilinden 1903 rebellion. Direct threats from Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian involvement, be it propaganda or armed incursion, were minor in comparison to having to deal with the massive Turkish army. Indirectly however, especially during and after the 1903 attempt, foreign involvement proved to be lethal. The Churches and armed bands cooperated with Turkish authorities, which in the long term brought greater harm to the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement than its leadership could have estimated. Turkish authorities and the Turkish military needed assistance with its intelligence and had the eyes and ears of the Churches. History has recorded many instances where the Greek Church and its clergy and even the Greek sponsored brigands cooperated with the Turkish army to monitor Macedonian activities and to capture and assassinate Macedonian Revolutionary leaders.

The Macedonian Revolutionary Movement itself was well organized. It was a grass roots movement organized by the people for the people and it was not affiliated with any foreign powers or foreign states. It was a true peoples' movement dedicated to liberating all the people in Macedonia and creating a Macedonian nation-state. This was an accomplishment that all Macedonians can take pride in.

According to peace keepers who served in Macedonia and witnessed this, they declared it was one of the most organized but unfortunately most poorly executed revolutions that Europe had ever witnessed.

It was well organized mainly due to the efforts of the national and regional leadership and poorly executed mainly due to foreign, mostly Bulgarian, intervention.

Unlike the Greeks who had almost no local support and little hold on Macedonia before the Ilinden rebellion, the Bulgarians were in the thick of things. The Bulgarians were so certain that they would annex Macedonia they made every effort to stifle the rebellion and turn the tide to their advantage. They did this through sabotage and outright assassinations. In fact every time the Revolutionary Movement made some real progress, its leadership paid for it with lives. Bulgarian agents, spies and assassins were responsible for more Macedonian leaders being killed than the entire Turkish army. Even the 1903 Ilinden rebellion itself was instigated by Bulgarian agents to start early so that it would fail. Gotse Delchev, the supreme commander of the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement, was against an early rebellion because he believed his fighters were not properly armed and trained for the massive task at hand.

As for the Bulgarian involvement, based on historical accounts, Bulgarians have done more harm to the liberation movement and its pursuit for an independent Macedonia than all other forces combined. The

Bulgarians were responsible for most of the revolutionary leadership's apprehensions and killings. It was by no accident that the Ottoman authorities declared the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization illegal on January 31st, 1903 and had all its leaders arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment in the harshest prisons in Asia Minor. A list with the names of all revolutionary leaders was compiled high up in the Bulgarian State leadership, if not by Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand himself, and handed to the Turkish authorities.

The annexation of Macedonia with all its glory and making it a part of Bulgaria was Prince Ferdinand's personal project.

The failed 1903 Ilinden Macedonian rebellion was a signal not only for Turkey but also for Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria to escalate their intervention. To make sure no future rebellions would occur, agents from all three states were dispatched to hunt down and eliminate all revolutionary leaders that survived the rebellion.

In the hunt for rebels and in the pursuit to quell the rebellion many fighters and civilians were killed and villages burned. These were acts of terror which not only instilled great fear in the hearts of the Macedonian population but also crushed their will as Macedonians. This was a great opportunity for the foreign propaganda machine to turn the situation around.

Leaderless and morally crushed, Macedonians began to doubt themselves and their abilities to liberate themselves by themselves. Those who could see no end to their misery found solace in the propaganda.

It was during this time and under these conditions that Greece exploited the situation and by wielding the might of the Turkish army turned Macedonians into Greeks. Yes, it was Greeks closely cooperating with Turks that turned the tide in Greece's favour. It is hard to believe Greece has forgotten all that! Yes, this is an historical fact that today's modern Greeks refuse to acknowledge. Without the help of the Turkish army very few Macedonians would have surrendered to the Greek will.

The failed rebellion and loss of leadership literally opened Macedonia's doors to foreign intervention. Left unprotected, the Macedonian people turned to the Greek Patriarchate and Bulgarian Exarchate Churches for solace only to be filled with false hope and to again be betrayed.

With the Macedonian revolution out of the way and having the Macedonian people fooled into believing that they would soon be liberated, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria anxiously made plans to invade Macedonia. Unfortunately, in their haste their plans were stifled because the three could not agree on how to divide Macedonia. Having no previous borders to agree on or the right kind of populations to liberate, they consulted the Russian King who also had no answers. He did, however,

advise them that whatever territory their armies liberated, it would be theirs to keep.

I want to clarify at this point what I meant by my comment “the right kind of population to liberate”.

Earlier I mentioned that one of the conditions imposed by the Great Powers in sanctioning the division of Macedonia was that Macedonia had to be divided “along national lines”. This meant that Greece could only annex the territory where the majority of the population was ethnically Greek. Bulgaria could only annex the territory where the majority of the population was ethnically Bulgarian and so on. Since none of the population in Macedonia was ethnically Greek, Bulgarian or Serbian, the three states took measures to make it so. Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian ethnicities had to be literally manufactured.

After some trials, the final solution came down to church affiliation. By this I mean those Macedonians who were affiliated with the Greek Patriarchic Church were declared to be ethnic Greeks. Those affiliated with the Bulgarian Exarchate Church were declared to be ethnic Bulgarians and those affiliated with the Serbian Church were declared to be ethnic Serbians.

What is totally bizarre about this solution is that it assumed that since there was no Macedonian Church in Macedonia, there were no ethnic Macedonians in Macedonia.

Unfortunately since all three State Churches were allowed to operate in overlapping territories, all three Churches made claims to the same people. There were many instances where one village had a majority of Macedonians affiliated with the Greek Church, while another village in close proximity, just a few kilometers away, had a majority of Macedonians affiliated with the Bulgarian church and so on. In other words right from the onset it was not clear where the dividing lines should be placed. If I may add, all of this was done without the knowledge or consent of the Macedonian people.

Welcomed as their liberators the Macedonian people allowed the foreign armies to march into Macedonia unabated only to be betrayed again.

After the Turks were driven off, with Macedonian help I might add, the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian armies not only captured and jailed much of the Macedonian leadership but they also turned on the Macedonian civilian populations. The Greek army burned down villages where the majority of the population was affiliated with the Bulgarian Church. The Bulgarian army in retaliation burned down villages where the majority of the population was affiliated with the Greek Church and so on. There were so many atrocities committed and so much carnage left that the situation prompted an investigation from the Carnegie International Commission.

The Commission arrived in Macedonia just before the second Balkan War ended and even though it didn't witness all the atrocities first hand, it did interview many eye witnesses and a year later filed a report with its findings. Unfortunately the report was filed just before the eruption of World War I and was shelved before anything could be investigated. As a result no war crimes were investigated and no charges were laid. And so another saga ended un-investigated and the perpetrators literally got away with murder.

After Macedonia's partition in 1913 each State again took measures against the Macedonian people, some in retribution for assisting the enemy and others just simply to "ethnically" cleanse the population.

With all that had happened, the Macedonian leadership was very much weakened but not completely destroyed and continued to function, mostly externally. The new borders imposed on the Macedonian people, as a result of Macedonia's partition, proved to be more impenetrable than expected so interaction between the leadership and the people ground to a standstill.

Over the years after the occupation, the Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia and the Macedonians in Bulgarian occupied Macedonia fared the worst of all Macedonians and by the Second World War suffered expulsions, denationalization, jail sentences and disappearances. Many were murdered. The Macedonian language was outlawed and the Macedonian identity was completely erased. Macedonians were forced to pledge loyalty to their new states and as a result were assimilated into their respective societies.

After the Second World War the Serbian occupied part of Macedonia was granted Republic Status within the Yugoslav Federation. The Macedonian people earned this right with the spilling of their own blood during the liberation of Yugoslavia from the Fascist forces. The Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia also spilled blood to free Greece but the Greek authorities refused to acknowledge it. The Macedonians in Bulgarian occupied Macedonia were briefly recognized as Macedonians but unfortunately the Bulgarian authorities had a change of heart and soon revoked the recognition.

Regarding the Greek Civil War, I would like to state my own opinion at this point because I believe there are things that need to be said. In retrospect, based on what we learned after the archives of World War II were opened, there are indications that the Greek Civil War was not just a simple and straight forward war. I believe it had more sinister motives.

Knowing that the Great Powers had already agreed that Greece would remain under the British sphere of influence, why was the Civil War allowed to start in the first place? Surely both sides of the Greek leadership must have known about this agreement?

It was made certain that Britain would not allow a Communist regime to govern Greece even if the Communist forces won by combat or by free election.

So the real crux of the problem is what do you do with a Communist majority in Greece?

How would Britain have handled a Democratically elected Communist Government in Greece?

Would a Communist regime cooperate with Britain and remain loyal and honour its policies? I don't think so!

I believe the Greek Civil War was started in order to crush the Communists in Greece, nip them in the bud before they had a chance to become a serious problem for Britain. After all Greece was the gateway to the Mediterranean waters. Am I the only one that sees the historic pattern here? If Greece became Communist, it would have aligned itself with Russia thus giving the Russians access to the Mediterranean Sea.

But why involve the Macedonian people? That's simple. During the German occupation, free from Greek oppression, the Macedonian people in Greece not only experienced a mini renaissance but also showed the will to organize and fight for their freedom. This was well demonstrated by the formation and actions of the Aegean Brigade which not only proved to be formidable but also put fear in the hearts of the Greeks.

The Macedonian people were involved in the Greek Civil War so that once again their spirits would be broken.

The Macedonians have always been a thorn in the side of Greece, so why not break their will while beating up on the communists. By its own admission after the fact, the Greek Communist leadership would have never given autonomy to the Macedonian people had it won. So why did it lie to them? Macedonians were promised autonomy, even outright independence, just to get them involved and in doing so destroyed them. One only has to look at the results to be convinced of the validity of this argument.

The expulsions and murders committed between 1912, when Macedonia was partitioned, and 1949 when the Greek Civil War ended reduced the Macedonian population from a great Majority to a minority on its native soil.

The above mentioned issues are well known to the Macedonians. It is high time now that they are made known to the international community so the world will stop treating Macedonians as some kind of Communist creation or as terrorists scheming and plotting to usurp Greek lands and Greek history.

Treaties and Agreements

As mentioned in an earlier chapter (part 6) the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 succeeded in undermining Ottoman control and encouraging attempts at self-determination. Yet, even though the Macedonian people had irrefutably demonstrated their own national consciousness and desire for autonomy, the Great Powers twice refused their pleas and eventually restored the Ottoman Turk to power, thus guaranteeing their own economic interests.

During the 1878-79 war, the Russian army penetrated deeply into the European part of the Ottoman Empire and succeeded in seizing Anriano (Endrene) resulting in an armistice on January 31st, 1878. After the armistice, Russia dictated a peace treaty, termed the San Stefano Peace Treaty, signed on March 3rd, 1878 which freed Bulgaria, most of Macedonia and Thrace and created a "Greater Bulgaria".

Not satisfied with the results of this Russo-Turkish agreement the Western Powers re-convened the Eastern Question at a Berlin congress and a month later on July 13, 1878 the San Stefano agreement was revised as follows:

Independence was granted to Serbia and Montenegro as well as Romania. Bosnia was given to Austria-Hungary and the territory of present day Bulgaria was divided into two administrative districts Bulgaria proper and eastern Rumelia. Eastern Rumelia was given back to the Ottomans. Macedonia, Thrace, Kosovo and Albania were also given back to the Ottomans.

With the exception of clause 23 which required the Turks to provide a small degree of economic autonomy to Macedonia, Macedonians were again committed to Ottoman oppression without guarantees of safety. The conditions of clause 23, unfortunately, were never enforced by the Great Powers or complied with by Turkey.

Even though on the surface it appeared that the Berlin Congress had solved the Balkan problem, underneath it continued to fester and grow.

On January 19th, 1897 William Gladstone, a British Statesman sent a letter addressed to the President of the Byron Society Hawarden Castle, Chester;

Dear Sir,

The hopelessness of the Turkish Government would make me witness with delight its being swept out the countries which it tortures: but without knowledge of resources available to support the revolt. I dare not take the responsibility of encouraging it in any fort or degree.

Next to the Ottoman Government nothing can be more deplorable and blameworthy than jealousies between Greek and Slav, and plans by the States already existing for appropriating other territory.

Why not Macedonia for Macedonians, as well as Bulgaria for Bulgarians and Servia for Servians? And if they are small and weak, let them bind themselves together for defense, so that they may not be devoured by others, either great or small, which would probably be the effect of their quarrelling among themselves.

Your very faithful

W. E. Gladstone

The Times (London), 6th January 1897, p. 12.

Why not a Macedonia for the Macedonians indeed? The Macedonian problem would have been solved and the Balkan Wars and all the suffering and misery would not have taken place had the Great Powers allowed and assisted in the formation of a Macedonian State. Unfortunately that did not happen and the 1903 Macedonian Ilinden uprising was allowed to fail which was a disappointment to the Macedonian people and created new problems that have yet to be solved.

Decisions made during the Berlin Congress encouraged Balkan expansionism and signaled for a more aggressive policy towards Macedonia.

As early as 1867, by their agreement to ally themselves in partitioning Macedonian territories, Greece and Serbia had demonstrated designs upon Macedonia. But Greece and Serbia were not alone. A declaration of Bulgarian policy in 1885 stated: "Our whole future depends on Macedonia; without her the Bulgarian State in the Balkans will be without importance of authority: Salonika must be the main port of this State, the grand window to illuminate the entire building. If Macedonia does not belong to Bulgaria, Bulgaria will never be firmly based."

Greece too had its own designs made evident by the comments of a Greek aristocrat: "Macedonia is the lung of Greece: without it the rest of Greece will be condemned to death. For Greece to become a great power she must expand into Macedonia."

The Serbians too had their ideas about Macedonia which were expressed by this directive: "We Serbia, are ready to enter into any combination if necessary in order to prevent the Macedonian Question being settled in any way that harms our vital interests, without which Serbia cannot survive."

One hundred or so years later, we are still discussing the Macedonian question which should be obvious by now that it cannot be solved without the participation of the Macedonian people.

The legacy of Berlin subjected Macedonia to three new tyrants who began a violent assimilation program and a long period of brutal oppression to a point of genocide, which has lasted to this day.

The period immediately following the Berlin Congress demonstrated that Balkan chauvinist intent was not merely to occupy and exploit Macedonia as the Ottomans had, but to eradicate the Macedonian culture and replace it with an alien one. By any means possible; be it by the gun, religion or semi-legal means, the Balkan States attempted to strip the native Macedonians of their language, religion, folklore, literature, traditions and consciousness. In other words, rob the Macedonian people of their spirit and then turn them into Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians.

Feeding their own impatience and greed and fearing backlash from the others, the Balkan States began to develop long and elaborate plans on how to gain as much Macedonian territory as possible without getting embroiled in a conflict. If I may add, none of these States, including Greece, had any historical claims on Macedonian territory at the time. Their aims were purely colonial and imperialistic.

To avoid conflict with each other Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria began to negotiate (with each other) the division of Macedonia by means of non-aggression agreements.

A secret five year treaty was signed between Serbia and Bulgaria on March 30th, 1904 which basically defined each State's spheres of influence in Macedonia with regards to the implementation of the Murzsteg reforms. Then on September 19th, 1911, Serbia and Bulgaria began negotiations on a common attack against the Ottomans with the purpose of partitioning Macedonia. On February 29th, 1912, in their preparation for war to evict the Ottomans out of Macedonia they concluded several agreements including a treaty of friendship and alliance.

A Greek-Bulgarian treaty was signed on May 30th, 1912. Both parties promised not to attack one another and to come to each other's defense should Turkey attack them.

In June 1912 the "Balkan League of Nations" consisting of Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria was formed and shortly afterwards delivered an ultimatum to the Ottoman to "deliver the promised reforms in Macedonia or prepare to be invaded".

There was much intrigue, agreements, counter-agreements and secret deals between the League of Nations but from the outset each was determined to exploit any situation that developed, purely for its own gain. The League of Nations was simply a device for synchronizing a military effort and the simplest way to settle the Turkish question. Attack the Ottomans simultaneously and on multiple fronts while circumstances were favourable and present the European powers with a *fait accompli*.

On October 18th, 1912 Montenegro declared war on Turkey with the League following suit.

Russia, the architect of the Balkan League, was against a war in 1912 and so were France and Britain. A war at this point might throw off the delicate diplomatic balance and escalate into a “world war”. Russia feared that the half-millennium old Ottoman Empire might not be as easy a target as the League had estimated. Britain and France feared a backlash from Germany and Austria now that Turkey was warming up to them as a prospective ally. To stop the League’s aggressive actions, both Britain and France threatened them with economic sanctions but that was not enough to stop them from continuing with their mission.

By November it was becoming apparent that Turkey was running out of options and on November 12th, 1912 called on the Great Powers to bring about an armistice. To deal with the situation a peace conference was scheduled for December 16th, 1912, to take place in London.

Having some time to adjust to the new situation, the Great Powers for the first time opted from the usual “status quo” recommendations and considered making concessions to the victors.

Austria was not happy with the prospect of a “large Serbia” and Serbian access to the Adriatic Sea so eyeing the Adriatic region as a prospective sphere of influence for itself, Austria recommended and Britain agreed to “creating” Albania, a new State. Another reason why Austria did not want Serbia to have access to the Adriatic Sea was because a Serbian port might become a Russian port.

I just want to mention here that Macedonians were not allowed to attend the London Peace Conference

The London Conference adjourned by officially declaring an end to the First Balkan War. Unfortunately its resolutions left all parties dissatisfied. Serbia was dissatisfied with losing the Albanian territory and appealed to Bulgaria to grant her access to the Aegean Sea via Solun and the Vardar valley, but her appeals fell on deaf ears. Greece also was not happy with Bulgaria’s invasion and annexation of Endrene and to balance its share, Greece wanted Serres, Drama and Kavala as compensation. That too fell on deaf ears. Bulgaria, frustrated became bitter with Russia for deserting it during the London Conference negotiations.

Seeing that Bulgaria was not going to budge and the fact that neither Greece nor Serbia on their own could take on Bulgaria, should a conflict arise, Greece and Serbia on April 22nd, 1913 began negotiating an alliance and on May 19th, 1913 concluded a secret pact to attack Bulgaria. In other words the Greek-Serbian objective was to take territory from Bulgaria west of the Vardar River, divide it and have a common frontier.

After stumbling onto this Greek-Serbian pact, despite Russian attempts to appease it by offering it Solun, Bulgaria remained bitter and in a moment of weakness was lured away by Austria. By going over to Austria, Bulgaria in effect broke off all relations with the Balkan League. Russia,

disappointed with the Bulgarian shift in loyalty, made it clear that Bulgaria could no longer expect any help from Russia.

In what was later termed the “Second Balkan War”, the Bulgarian army, unprovoked, preferring the element of surprise, attacked its former allies on June 30th, 1913. The bloody fight was short lived as Romania, Montenegro and Turkey joined Greece and Serbia in dealing Bulgaria a catastrophic blow. The promised Austrian support didn’t materialize as the risks for Austrian involvement outweighed any benefits. Turkey was able to re-gain some of what was lost to Bulgaria but the greatest beneficiary of all was Greece which received the biggest piece of the Macedonian pie.

The Second Balkan War ended on August 10th, 1913, the darkest day in the history of the Macedonian people, with the conclusion of the Peace Treaty of Bucharest.

With Macedonia dismantled Serbia gained territories from the summit of Patarika, on the old frontier, and followed the watershed between the Vardar and the Struma Rivers to the Greek-Bulgarian boundary, except that the upper valley of the Strumnitza remained in the possession of Bulgaria. The territory thus obtained embraced central Macedonia, including Ohrid, Bitola, Kossovo, Istib, and Kotchana, and the eastern half of the sanjak of Novi-Bazar. By this arrangement Serbia increased its territory from 18,650 to 33,891 square miles and its population by more than 1,500,000.

Greece’s gains started from the boundary line separating Greece from Bulgaria from the crest of Mount Belashitcha to the mouth of the Mesta River, on the Aegean Sea. This important territorial concession, which Bulgaria resolutely contested, in compliance with the instructions embraced in the notes which Russia and Austria-Hungary presented to the conference, increased the area of Greece from 25,014 to 41,933 square miles and her population from 2,660,000 to 4,363,000. The territory thus annexed included Epirus, southern Macedonia, Solun, Kavala, and the Aegean littoral as far east as the Mesta River, and restricted the Aegean seaboard of Bulgaria to an inconsiderable extent of 70 miles, extending from the Mesta to the Maritza, and giving access to the Aegean at the inferior port of Dedeagatch. Greece also extended its northwestern frontier to include the great fortress of Janina. In addition, Crete was definitely assigned to Greece and was formally taken over on December 14, 1913.

Bulgaria’s share of the spoils, although greatly reduced, was not entirely negligible. Bulgaria’s net gains in territory, which embraced a portion of Macedonia, including the town of Strumnitza, western Thrace, and 70 miles of the Aegean littoral, were about 9,663 square miles and her population was increased by 129,490.

Minority Agreements

Under the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria not only partitioned Macedonian territories but they also divided the Macedonian people. Never since Roman times have Macedonians been divided by artificially imposed borders and never in the history of Macedonia has the Macedonian identity been so forcefully and brutally attacked.

At the turn of the 20th century Macedonia was still under Ottoman control and the Macedonian people had little to no contact with the outside world. At the time there were no NGO's or governing bodies that represented the Macedonian voice. Outside contact with the Macedonian people was thus relegated to outside agencies like the foreign Embassies and the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian Churches. Anyone wanting to visit Macedonia, be it a journalist or diplomat, first had to obtain permission from the Ottoman authorities. Then government or Church appointed guides, who only supported Ottoman, Greek, Bulgarian, or Serbian interests, would guide them. The only legitimate Macedonian authority, which represented the interests of the Macedonian people, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), was viewed as illegitimate, radical and in some cases as a terrorist organization.

When the outside world looked for demographical statistics to find out what ethnicities lived in Macedonia they went to the Greek, Serbian, or Bulgarian Churches. The Ottoman authorities kept statistics by religion "Muslim" and "Others". The foreign Churches on the other hand, who refused to acknowledge the Macedonian identity on account that there was no Macedonian Church to legitimize and represent it, took their own statistics based on their own criteria. Anyone who attended or was affiliated with the Greek Church was thus counted as being Greek. Similarly, anyone attending or being affiliated with the Bulgarian Church was counted as Bulgarian and so on. By the turn of the 20th century foreigners, including the foreign media, came to depend on the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian agencies for information on Macedonia. Thus the ethnic Macedonians having no representation of their own were now represented by Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbians, the very same people who had designs on annexing their Macedonia.

Worse, which would become a problem for Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia later, was that the various Macedonian people identified as Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbians by these foreign agencies were prevalent and overlapping throughout the whole of Macedonia. In other words there was no region in Macedonia that was exclusively affiliated with one Church or another. Even most of the small villages were of mixed affiliations so there were no clear cut dividing lines to distinguish one identity from the others.

It is also well known that when Macedonia was invaded by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria in 1912, there were no plans on how it was going to be divided. In fact this indecision was the cause that sparked the second Balkan War in 1913 which again ended without a mutually accepted plan on the division of Macedonia. Thus Macedonia's division and annexation by Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia was arbitrary and without design and was going to be settled by military means, in other words by war. So when the dust settled there were winners and losers and none of the contestants were satisfied with what they received. Worst off were the Macedonian people whose home was now not only occupied by foreigners but also partitioned by three different, warring states which were determined to turn the Macedonian people into Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbians by any means possible even by extreme violence if necessary.

The bitterness of the Second Balkan War and the dissatisfaction of not meeting expectations with regards to Macedonian territories turned Bulgaria against Greece and Serbia making the Macedonian population its political pawns. Hoping to gain more territory from Greece and Serbia and in retribution for Greece's and Serbia's part in the Second Balkan War, Bulgaria joined the Central Powers during World War I and fought against the Allies ending in its defeat with the signing of the Neully Treaty on November 27, 1919. It was again a bitter defeat for Bulgaria with more suffering in Macedonia.

After the Treaty of Neully, some 46,000 Macedonians were kicked out of Bulgarian occupied Macedonia for their past affiliations with the Greek Church and 92,000 Macedonians were deported from Greek occupied Macedonia for their past affiliation with the Bulgarian Church.

The deportations continued through the early 1920s until the spring of 1924 when Greece and Bulgaria signed the Politis-Kalfov Protocol on March 24, 1924 which was to provide minority rights for the so called "Greek minority" in Bulgaria and the so called "Bulgarian minority" in Greece.

The protocol obliged Greece to secure fair treatment for all members of this minority according to the terms of the August 10th 1920 Treaty of Sèvres between Greece and its major allies in World War one. Unfortunately Greece never implemented the Protocol.

Here are some details from a Greek source that somewhat explains what transpired:

Colonel A. C. Corfe and Major Marcel de Roover, members of the Mixed Commission for Greek-Bulgarian Emigration established in 1919, were assigned to observe the protocol's implementation paying particular attention to minority's specific needs especially in matters of education and religion. Subsequently they would submit reports to the Greek government making their recommendations.

After the protocol was signed, Greece and the League of Nations engaged in negotiations regarding the details of its implementation. The Greeks offered a proposal which focused on three points:

(1) Bulgarian minority schools with more than forty students would be sponsored by the Greek state. If there were fewer than forty students, then it would be the community's task to support its school financially. It would be compulsory for teaching personnel to obtain Greek citizenship.

(2) Exarchate priests would be obliged to obtain Greek citizenship and no bishops would be appointed to the Bulgarian minority, because, according to the rules of the Orthodox Church, the coexistence of two religious authorities of the same dogma within the same bishopric is forbidden.

(3) A Minority Bureau reporting to the Greek Foreign Ministry would be established in Solun which would collect and evaluate all petitions concerning minority rights. It would also investigate cases and submit its report to the minister in charge, who was expected to settle each issue.

In the Greek government's view the establishment of such a service was the best way not only to handle all minority matters but also to assist the League of Nations, which at that time was overwhelmed by numerous petitions and letters of grievance concerning the so called "Bulgarian minority of Greece". According to the Greek Government the so called "Slavophones" of Greek Macedonia lacked a sound national orientation and there were several with pro-Bulgarian leanings, but the presence of the Commission members and the collection of petitions might encourage the so called "non-Bulgarian Slavophones" to join the minority group owing to its apparently preferential treatment. Such a development would then accelerate the flow of Bulgarian money into Macedonia for the establishment of additional Bulgarian schools. In any case, Greece was not prepared to give the impression that the so called "Greek Slavophones" were neglected by the state while the so called "Bulgarian minority" enjoyed favorable treatment. Greece obviously expected that these measures, especially the establishment of the Minority Bureau, would suffice to treat the minority question in the best possible way and in conformity with the minority treaties. On the other hand, it is clear that Greek officials were confused about the national preferences of Greece's Slavic-speaking inhabitants. Politis, for example, considered all Slavophones to be Bulgarians while his superior, the foreign minister, stated that only a few Slavophones aligned themselves with Bulgaria.

On November 28, 1924, the secretary general of the League of Nations sent a letter to the minority section director, to inform him of this and rejecting the Greek proposal to channel all minority complaints to the League of Nations exclusively through the Solun Minority Bureau, arguing that this was against Article 2 and Article 3 of the protocol, signed only two months earlier, which in fact had provided for a League of Nations'

service and not for a service by a branch office of the Greek Foreign Ministry. The secretary general closed his letter with a number of his own suggestions:

(1) The Greek government would have to establish a Minority Bureau in Solun.

(2) Attached to this office would be a separate service which would have to be provided for Corfe and de Roover, to which all minority petitions, complaints, etc. would be addressed.

(3) All these documents would then be forwarded, together with Greek remarks, to the Mixed Commission.

(4) After that Greek officials could send these documents to the Minority Section of the League of Nations, which was expected to investigate the cases and take appropriate measures.

(5) The Minority Section would have to report to Corfe and de Roover who, in turn, were expected to inform the League of Nations.

On December 4 Marcel de Roover dispatched a confidential report to Eric Colban to inform him of a conversation he had had with the Greek foreign minister with whom, among other things, he discussed the language to be used in the minority schools. He maintained that the medium of instruction should be neither literary Bulgarian nor Serbian but a Macedonian dialect.

A few days later, during the meeting of the Council of the League of Nations in Rome, negotiations took place between Greece and the League on the implementation of articles in the Politis-Kalfov Protocol concerning the so called "Bulgarian minority". Eric Colban recorded the negotiation procedure in detail in his lengthy, confidential report under the title "Record of Various Conversations in Rome concerning the Execution of the Minorities Protocol of September 29, 1924 between the Greek Government and the League of Nations."

On December 14, Corfe and de Roover started talks with Colban concerning the problems the Greek government was experiencing with the Geneva protocol. It was already clear that the Greek parliament was not going to ratify the protocol.

On the question of the minority schools Colban noted that, according to the Minority Treaty of Sèvres, the language of the minority was meant to be its mother tongue which the so called "Bulgarians of Greece" spoke being slightly different from all the other Slavic languages. Since no newspaper or book had ever been written in these dialects therefore, a new literary language had to be standardized, based on these local dialects. Colban observed, however, that since such linguistic construction was against the terms of the minority treaty, Bulgaria would protest and would press for the use of literary Bulgarian instead. Although Bulgaria was not directly involved in the minority treaties that Greece had signed, Colban felt that its views should not be neglected even though its claims were not

legitimate. De Roover also supported the view that the local dialect should be used since this option was expected to help the Greek government deal with any counterarguments during the forthcoming parliamentary debates. But Corfe reacted, feeling that such an option was too risky because “the creation of a Macedonian language might encourage the Macedonian movement not only in Greece but also in Bulgaria and Serbia.” Nevertheless, he concluded that strict implementation of the minority treaties was absolutely necessary, which meant that use of the local dialects was inevitable.

On December 15, 1924, Greek representatives informed the League of Nations representatives that the Greek government would be glad to sanction local dialects as the minority school language. However, since those dialects lacked literary form, Greece would prepare a primer and other textbooks. With regards to risks associated with:

(1) The provocation of a Macedonian movement following the creation of a distinct Macedonian language and

(2) Bulgaria's consequent reaction; the Greek representative replied that Greece fully appreciated those risks.

On February 2, 1925 the Greek parliament voted against the protocol which prompted the Council of the League of Nations to insist that Greece was not going to ignore its obligations toward the minorities as defined by the Treaty of Sèvres and submitted three questions to the Greek government regarding the Slavic speakers in Greece:

(1) What measures had Greece taken since September 29, 1924 to implement the minority treaty it had signed on that day?

(2) What measures would Greece be taking if it could not comply with the terms of the treaty?

(3) What were the Greek views regarding the educational and religious needs of the Slavophones and what measures did the Greek government intend to take to meet those needs?

On May 29, 1925 Greek representatives informed the League of Nations secretary general that no measures could be taken before the completion of the Greek-Bulgarian voluntary emigration that had been decided in Neuilly in 1919, which was still in progress. They also affirmed that Greece intended to respect the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres.

Regarding the third question, they stressed that Greece was open to any suggestions concerning the education of the “Slavic-speaking” linguistic minority.

In late 1925, following a legislative decree, a department was established in Greek occupied Macedonia for the administration and supervision of elementary non-Greek education. The new department was manned by three members of the educational council appointed by the minister of education, in addition to the director of the Second Political Department of the Foreign Ministry and three unpaid citizens, all living in

Macedonia, suggested by the foreign minister and appointed by the minister of education. A counselor of education proficient in one of the local dialects was appointed head of the new department for a three-year period. It was also decided that only teachers who knew the local dialects would be appointed to teach the non-Greek classes.

The establishment of the Department of Non-Greek Education was just a beginning. Following the decision to employ the local Slavic dialect in the minority schools, the Greek government entrusted to a three-member committee of specialists the preparation of a primer that became known as the “Abecedar.” The three members were Georgios Sagiaxis—who had been involved since the early years of the century in folklore and linguistic studies concerning Vlach-speakers and Slavic-speakers and had studied ethnography and linguistics abroad on a Foreign Ministry scholarship—and two philologists, Iosif Lazarou and a certain Papazachariou, both native Vlach-speakers who also knew the local Slavic dialect.

The product of their combined efforts was a primer in the local Slavic dialect but written in Latin characters. This choice caused an immediate, furious reaction by Bulgaria, since the use of the dialect instead of standard Bulgarian undermined Sofia's traditional argument that Slavic speaking clearly indicated Bulgarian ethnicity. Mikov, the Bulgarian representative in the League of Nations, expressed his government's discontent regarding the Greek initiative. At the same time, Ivan Sismanov, a university professor in Sofia, published an article in a local newspaper stressing that these measures would reduce the population of Macedonia to a “semibarbarous” Moreover, the use of the Latin alphabet was condemned as constituting a “rude insult” for Macedonia's “suffering Bulgarian population” Macedonian pro-Bulgarian refugee organizations also protested, demanding the immediate introduction of the Cyrillic alphabet.

At this point a reassessment of the Greek views was necessary. The League of Nations had made it clear that complying with the treaties was not optional.

Both Serbians and Bulgarians vehemently protest to the League of Nations, claiming the primer in its current form undermined their claim that Macedonians are Serbs and Bulgarians respectively to which Greece countered with a last minute cable to the League stating that “the population...knows neither the Serbian nor the Bulgarian language and speaks nothing but a Slav-Macedonian idiom.” This was indeed a rare Greek admission to the existence of Macedonians not only on Greek soil but also on Bulgarian and Serbian soil, encompassing the entire geographical Macedonia.

Soon afterwards Greece "retreated" the Abecedar so as to preserve its Balkan alliances and the Primer was destroyed soon after the League of Nations delegates left Solun.

Since then Greece has denied the existence of Macedonians and refers to Macedonians as "Slavophone Greeks", "Old Bulgarians" and many other appellations but not as Macedonians. The very fact that official Greece did not, either de jure or do facto, see the Macedonians as a Bulgarian minority, but rather as a separate Slav group ('Slav speaking minority'), is of particular significance. The primer, published in the Latin alphabet, was based on the Lerin - Bilola dialect.

After Gianelli's Dictionary, dating from the 16th Century, and the Daniloviot Cetirjazicnik written in the 19th century, yet another book was written in the Macedonian vernacular.

The primer with instructions in the Macedonian mother tongue, was mailed to some regions in Western Greek occupied Macedonia (Kostur, Lerin and Voden) and the school authorities were prepared to give it to Macedonian children from the first to the fourth grades in elementary school. Unfortunately this did not materialize.

Subsequent Greek governments, even though their state was a signatory to the Minority Treaty of Sèvres, have never made a sincere attempt to solve the question of the Macedonians and their ethnic rights in Greece. Thus while measures were being undertaken for the opening of Macedonian schools, a clash between the Greek and Bulgarian armies at Petrich was concocted, which was then followed by a massacre of the innocent Macedonian population in the village of Trlis near Serres. All this was aimed at creating an attitude of insecurity within the Macedonians so that they themselves would give up the recognition of their minority rights and eventually seek safety by moving to Bulgaria. The Greek governments also skillfully used the Yugoslav-Bulgarian disagreements with organized pressure on the Macedonian population, as was the case in the village of Trlis, tried to dismiss the Macedonian ethnic question from the agenda through forced resettlement of the Macedonian population outside of Greece.

The ABECEDAR, which actually never reached the Macedonian children, is in itself a powerful testimony not only of the existence of the large Macedonian ethnic minority in Greece, but also of the fact that Greece was under an obligation before the League of Nations to undertake certain measures in order to grant the Macedonian minority their rights

Even though much time has elapsed since then, Greece still owes the Macedonian people living on Macedonian soil the rights it promised then in 1920.

I believe that time has come for Greece to recognize the Macedonian minority and fulfill its obligation to the Macedonian people as promised by the various Treaties and Conventions it has signed.

From a Majority to a Minority

Despite all the minority agreements and promises of fair treatment for their newly subjugated Macedonian people, the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian Governments not only maintained the status quo but began to accelerate the process of expulsion, denationalization and forced assimilation in Macedonia.

Following World War I, Greece and Bulgaria, according to the November 27, 1919 Minority Treaty convention, exchanged populations. Greece expelled some 53,000 (Wilkinson, 1951:262) "Slav speakers" to Bulgaria in exchange of 30,000 so called "Greeks" from Bulgaria. Then with the breakout of the Turkish-Greek war in 1921 as a result of Venizelo's "Megali Idea" a policy to create a "Greater Greece" and bring together all "Greek peoples" under a single Greater Greek State, the Macedonians in Greece again became victims of yet another war. First it was Macedonian men sent to fight and die in Turkey for the glory of "Greater Greece" and later Macedonian lands were given away as Macedonia became a dumping ground for the Turkish refugees.

Greece launched a major offensive against Turkey in March 1921 and by the end of the summer the Greek armies reached the Sakarya River, about forty miles west of Ankara.

The assault on Asia Minor was an "exclusively Greek initiative" without the blessing of the Entente Powers and as a result the Greeks found themselves alone and running out of ammunition. They knew they couldn't count on Italy or France for help but the realization of their predicament sunk in when Britain also refused to help them. By early autumn the Greeks were pushed back beyond the halfway point between Smyrna and Ankara, reaching an uneasy military stalemate. Realizing that they couldn't possibly win militarily or politically, the Greeks turned to the Paris Conference of March 1922 looking for a compromise. The compromise called for the withdrawal of the Greek armies and placing the Christian population under the protection of the League of Nations. Sensing a victory, Mustafa Kemal of Turkey insisted on an unconditional evacuation of the Greek forces, a demand unacceptable to the Greeks. Still counting on British help, in July 1922 the Greeks unsuccessfully attempted to get permission from their allies to enter Tsari Grad (Istanbul).

Turkey launched a full-scale offensive on August 26, 1922 (a dark day for Greece and its Megali Idea) near Afyonkarahisar and forced the Greeks into a hasty retreat back to Smyrna.

On September 8th the Greek army was evacuated and the next day the Turkish army invaded Smyrna. The worst came on the evening of the 9th when outbreaks of killing and looting began, followed by a massacre of the Christian population in which 30,000 Christians, perished. As a result

of the violence 250,000 people fled to the waterfront to escape the catastrophic disaster.

The Asia Minor campaign was over along with the "Megali Idea" of a Greater Greece. Worse yet, as a result of this catastrophic Greek fiasco, over one million Turkish Christians were displaced; most of them were moved to Macedonia. Their settlement affected the demography of the Macedonian landscape as well as the morale of the Macedonian population. An entire generation of young Macedonian men, who were drafted into the Greek military, were sent to the Asia Minor campaigns and many lost their lives. The Greek authorities never acknowledged their service and no compensations were ever paid to the families of those "breadwinners" who lost their lives. The reason for the omission, according to Greek authorities, those who fought for Greece from Macedonia "were not Greeks but Bulgarians". How convenient! This is how Greece treated and is still treating its noble citizens of Macedonian descent!

I just want to mention here that many Greeks blame this catastrophe on the Turks and believe the Turks were at fault. How can Turks be at fault when it was Greece that unlawfully and without provocation attacked and invaded Turkey?

By the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923, the Greco-Turkish war came to an end and Greece and Turkey signed a population exchange agreement.

It is important to understand that the selection criteria for the population exchanges were based strictly on religion. In other words, Greece agreed to accept a Christian population regardless of ethnicity or language. Similarly Greece agreed to expel a Muslim population regardless of what ethnicity it belonged to and what language it spoke. As a result, Greece exiled many Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia simply because they were of the Muslim faith.

The November 1925 issue of National Geographic Magazine best illustrates the magnitude of the human wave, the audacity of the Greek and Turkish authorities and the total disregard for human life. "History's Greatest Trek, Tragedy Stalks the Near East as Greece and Turkey Exchange Two Million of their People. ...1922 began what may fairly be called history's greatest, most spectacular trek-the compulsory intermigration of two million Christians and Muslims across the Aegean Sea." "...the initial episodes of the exchange drama were enacted to the accompaniment of the boom of cannon and the rattle of machine gun and with the settings pointed by the flames of the Smyrna holocaust." (Page 533, Melville Chater, National Geographic, November 1925)

"Stroke of the Pen Exiles 3,000,000 People. It is safe to say that history does not contain a more extraordinary document. Never before in the world's long pageant of folk-wanderings have 2,000,000 people-and certainly no less than 3,000,000 if the retroactive clause is possible of

complete application-been exiled and re-adopted by the stroke of the pen" (Page 569, National Geographic, November 1925). "Even if regarded as a voluntary trek instead of a compulsory exchange, the movement would be without parallel in the history of emigration." "One might just add that history has never produced a document more difficult of execution. It was to lessen these difficulties that exchangeability was based in religion and not race. Due to five centuries of Turkish domination in Greece, the complexities in determining an individual's racial status are often such as would make a census taker weep." (Page 570, National Geographic, November 1925)

"Greece with one-fifth Turkey's area has 1,500,000 more people. Turkey with a population of 5,000,000 and naturally rich territory contains only 15 people to the square mile...Greece, with less than one fifth of Turkey's area, emerges with a population exceeding the latter's for the first time by 1,500,000 people averaging 123 to the square mile." (Page 584, National Geographic, November 1925)

"History's Greatest Trek has cost 300,000 lives. Conservative estimates place it at 300,000 lives lost by disease and exposure." (Page 584, National Geographic, November 1925)

"The actual exchange was weighted very heavily in Turkey's favour, for some 380,000 Muslims were exchanged for something like 1,100,000 Christians." "The total population in Greece rose between 1907 and 1928 from 2,600,000 to 6,200,000." "After the Greek advances of 1912, for instance, the Greek elements in Greek Macedonia had constituted 43 percent of the population. By 1926, with the resettlement of the refugees, the Greek element has risen to 89 percent." (Page 121, Richard Clogg, A Short History of Modern Greece).

Please note that Clogg uses the words "Greek element" and not "ethnic Greeks" (if there is such a thing?) when referring to the population in Greek occupied Macedonia. What exactly did he mean by "Greek element"?

The "Greek element", as he calls it is not Greek at all. It consists of Vlachs, Albanians and some Macedonians mainly those affiliated with the Greek Church. There were no "ethnic Greeks" living in Macedonia prior to its colonization by the Turkish refugees.

Many people of Turkish speaking Eastern Orthodox stock were exchanged with Sunnite Muslims of Greece. The Turkish speaking Karamanlides were sent to Greece, while Greek speaking Cretan Muslims were deported to Turkey. The Karamanlides lived in Karaman or Cappadocia and may have been Orthodox Christian by religion but they spoke and wrote Turkish and considered themselves to be Turks. When the time came for them to leave for Greece, they were reluctant and while living in Greece were regarded as "foreigners".

In 1924, 31 of the 81 orthodox cities and villages in Cappadocia spoke so called “broken Greek” which Greeks from Greece proper could not understand and the other 50 spoke Turkish only. Also, Christians living in the larger cities like Caesaria, Nigdi, Neapolis, Prokopi, etc spoke Turkish only. Christians living in the eastern provinces of Asia Minor like Pamphylia, Isavria, Cappadocia, Kilikea and Lycaonia from whom the Karamanlides originated and were not Islamized, also spoke Turkish only.

In my estimation it is doubtful that the actual population of “Greeks” present in Greek occupied Macedonia prior to the arrival of the Turkish settlers was 43% as Clogg and others claim. A more accurate estimate would be 3%, representing the new Greek settlers mainly business opportunists already there, the Greek administration, police and military types that arrived and settled in Macedonia between 1912 and 1922. Further proof of the low existence of so called “Greeks” in Macedonia can be found in the 1911 edition of Encyclopedia Britannica under the heading “The Outline of the Macedonian Problem”. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, the total population living in Macedonia was 2.2 million consisting of 1.3 million Christians, 800 thousand Mohammedans and 75 thousand Jews. Among the races [ethnicities probably determined by language] living in Macedonia included are 1.15 million Slavs, 500 thousand Turks, 120 thousand Albanians, 90 thousand Vlachs, 75 thousand Jews, 35 thousand Gypsies and 25 thousand Greeks. If we go by these stats, the so called “Greek speaking” population living in Macedonia in 1911 amounted to no more than 1.1% of the total population. Hardly the 43% presented by Clogg. What Clogg is referring to by this 43% is most probably the Macedonian Christian population affiliated with the Greek Church which by no means was “ethnic Greek” or Greek speaking.

I also do not agree with the idea that the entire refugee population that was settled in Macedonia from Turkey was “ethnic Greek” or “Greek speaking” as Greek authorities would like to portray it. In any case, assuming that the total population of settlers from Turkey (89%-43%) was 46% and that from Greece was 3% then by 1932 there were 49% newcomers and 51% indigenous people living in Greek occupied Macedonia.

I call the settlers “newcomers” because there is no proof that they were in any way “Greek”. Yes, the Turkish refugees were Christians but that does not mean that they were actually “ethnic Greeks”.

"If Greece exists today as a homogeneous ethnos, she owes this to [the Asia Minor Catastrophe]. If the hundreds of thousands of refugees had not come to Greece, Greek Macedonia would not exist today. The refugees created the national homogeneity of our country. (Antonios Kandiotis, Metropolit of Florina, Page 141, Anastasia Karakasidou, Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood)

Surprisingly (and shamefully) after knowing all this, Greece still claims its population to be homogeneous and directly descendent from the ancient peoples of the ancient City States and of the ancient Macedonians.

According to Karakasidou, almost half of the refugees from Turkey were settled in urban centers and rural areas in Macedonia. "Searching for locations in which to settle this mass of humanity, the Greek government looked north to the newly incorporated land in Macedonia..." "...by 1930, 90 percent of the 578,844 refugees settled in rural Greece were concentrated in the regions of Macedonia and western Thrace. Thus Macedonia, Greece's newly acquired second 'breadbasket' (after Thessaly), became the depository for East Thracian, Pontic, and Asia Minor refugees." (Page 145, Anastasia Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*)

If we take into consideration that most of the population imported from Turkey into Macedonia was ethnically "unknown" or non-Greek and the fact that very few so called "Greeks" from Greece proper settled in Macedonia we can conclude that Greek occupied Macedonia was settled by a number of non-Greek ethnicities.

It is not ridiculous to assume that Greek occupied Macedonia after the settlements consisted of 51% indigenous people, predominantly Macedonians and 49% of newcomer settlers mostly of non-Greek (Turkish, Armenian, Albanian, Vlach, Patriarchic Macedonian, etc) origins.

In other words the demographic composition of Greek occupied Macedonia after the arrival of the Asia Minor refugees still consisted of a Macedonian majority and a slew of unidentified other minorities.

A census done by the Greek government in 1928 reported that there were 81,984 "Slavophones" in Greece. Interestingly, the number of Macedonians drastically fell between 1903 and 1928, supporting the idea that Macedonia was being Hellenized.

Bearing in mind the stats presented in the 1911 edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1.15 million Slav speakers lived in Macedonia. Since Greece occupied 51% of Macedonia in 1912, 1913 we can safely assume that 51% or more of the total Slav speaking population which lived in Macedonia ended up under Greek control. 51% amounts to approximately 600,000 people. Thus, according to 1928 Greek stats, in less than 30 years approximately half a million Macedonians became Hellenized and made into "pure Greeks".

I am using the term "Macedonians" instead of "Slavophones", even though Greece did not recognize them as such and considered them to be Bulgarian speakers, which explains why Professor R. A. Reis, who was commissioned by the Greek government to ethnologically study the new territories, felt compelled to insist that "those you call Bulgarophones, I will simply call them Macedonians" (Reiss, 1915:3).

The numbers really get confusing when we add the Bulgarian and Serbian views. According to the Bulgarian Rumenov, in 1928 there were a total of 206,435 "Bulgarians" living in Greek occupied Macedonia. The Serb Bora Milojevich pegs the numbers at 250,000 "Slavs". Belgrade's "Politika" in its 6164 issue published June 24, 1925 gave three times greater numbers for the Macedonians in Greece than official Athens: "The Greek government must not complain that we are pointing to the fact that the Macedonian population of West Macedonia - 250,000 - 300,000 - is the most unfortunate national and linguistic minority in the world, not only because their personal safety is endangered, but also because they have no church or school in their own language, which they had during Turkish rule."

So the "real" number of Macedonians living in Greek occupied Macedonia in the late 1920's is unknown and to this day remains disputed in Balkan documents. Unfortunately, Greek governments will not allow anyone, including neutral observers to conduct statistical studies.

If we follow the "Greek example" we will note that according to Greek Stats, Greece is populated by 98% "pure Greeks" and 2% "Muslim Greeks". In other words Greece, to this day, has no creditable population statistics that are based on ethnic composition.

Without a clear definition of what a "pure Greek" is one cannot accurately interpret what that means. However, looking at the numbers one can speculate that Greece may still be using religious affiliation to define its demographics. The numbers 98% Orthodox Christians and 2% Muslims most accurately represent Greece's demographics. Unfortunately, religious affiliation hardly speaks of the various ethnicities that make up that population. So, what exactly is the Modern Greek nation made up of outside of Orthodox Christians and Muslims? Who are the "ethnic groups" living in Greece today?

To answer this question we need to go back to the time before Greece became a State and examine the ethnic composition of the populations living on those lands that now make up Greece.

Before Greece became a State for the first time in 1829, its ethnic composition consisted of a Majority of Albanians, Turks, Vlachs and Slav speakers. If there were any so called "Greeks" they were a small minority. As Greece acquired Epirus and Thessaly, more Albanians, Vlachs, Slav speakers and Turks were added to its Population. In 1912, 1913 as Greece acquired 51% of Macedonian territories, it added a large portion of Macedonians (or Slav Speakers as Greece like to call them), Vlachs, Albanians, Turks, Roma and Jews to its total population. Since then Greece expelled a number of Macedonians to Bulgaria because they were affiliated with the Exarchate Church, and imported some so called "Greeks" from Bulgaria. Through the 1920's Greece expelled a sizable Muslim population and added a large number of Christian Turks

from Asia Minor and other regions of Turkey as indicated earlier. Thus, ethnically speaking at the end of the 1920's even after all the population exchanges, Greece remained predominantly the same; made up of Slav Speakers, Turks, Albanians, Vlachs, Roma and Jews.

There is no doubt that the Slav speakers in Greece are Macedonian and will declare themselves as Macedonians should Greece allow them to do so under the right conditions. If we examine the situation in the Republic of Macedonia in the 1920's and today we will see that in the 1920's there were no Macedonians registered to live in that territory. There was a large Majority of "Slav Speakers" referred to as "Serbians" by the Serbian Sate and smaller minorities of Albanians, Vlachs, Roma, Jews, etc. The situation however in the 1990's became different. The so called Serbians were not Serbians at all but Macedonians. The only Serbians registered as Serbians in the Republic of Macedonia in 1990 were the Serbian settlers who came with the army and administration in 1912, 1913 when Macedonia was invaded, occupied and partitioned by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria. All the so called "Slav speakers" of the late 1920's declared themselves as Macedonians in the 1990's. So, if we examine today's demographic statistics of the Republic of Macedonia we will find a large Majority of Macedonians living there with well represented minorities of Albanians, Vlachs, Roma, Serbians, etc., or minorities of the same ethnicities and somewhat same proportions that lived on the same soil in the late 1920's.

Now if we apply the same conditions to the Greek occupied territories and adjust for the population exchanges of the 1920's we can deduce that the population living in Greek occupied Macedonia is predominantly ethnic Macedonians, Turks, Vlachs, Albanians, Roma, etc. Proportionally, when stacked against the entire population living in Greek occupied Macedonia the Macedonian population may be a minority (30% to 49%) but given the number of other ethnic minorities such as the Asia Minor Turks, Albanians, Vlachs and Roma and their numbers, the Macedonian population may be close to being the majority. In other words, the Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia may outnumber all of the other individual ethnic groups.

As I said, the only way to prove or disprove this is by Greece recognizing the various ethnicities living on its soil and by creating the right climate for them to self-declare.

Denationalizing the Macedonians in Greece

Even before Greece invaded, occupied and annexed 51% of Macedonian territories, it had begun its denationalization process converting Macedonians into Greeks. By denationalization I mean, indoctrinating people into believing that they were Greeks related to the so called “Ancient Greeks” the people that live south of Mount Olympus two and a half millenniums ago. Greece was determined to gain Macedonian territories by proving to the world that “Greeks” lived in Macedonia and by rights Macedonian territories belonged to Greece. Unlike today where Greece is indoctrinating people into believing that Greek-Macedonians are related to the Ancient Macedonians. In those days the Greek State was making claims that Macedonians did not exist and only “Greeks”, “Slavs” (Serbians and Bulgarians), Turks, Albanians, Vlachs, Roma and Jews lived in Macedonia.

Before the formation of the Bulgarian state, Greece took it upon itself to view all Orthodox Christians as “Greeks” on account that they all were affiliated with the Patriarch Church. But after Bulgaria became a country in 1878 and established the Exarchate Church it challenged the Greek views and Greece backed off.

After the establishment of the foreign Churches (Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian) inside Macedonia and in the absence of a Macedonian Church, the three competing states began to divide the Macedonian people by affiliation to their Church. In other words, according to Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, ethnic Macedonians affiliated with the Greek Patriarchate Church would be counted as Greeks, ethnic Macedonians affiliated with the Bulgarian Exarchate Church would be counted as Bulgarians and ethnic Macedonians affiliated with the Serbian Patriarchate Church would be counted as Serbians. Since there was no official or legal Macedonian Church in Macedonia (the Ottoman authorities on the advice of the other Orthodox Churches inside Macedonia would not approve of one) there were no Macedonians to be counted as Macedonians inside Macedonia.

It was by this method that the demographic in Macedonia was established and published into various statistics in the late 19th and early 20th century.

I believe Greece is still using this method to this day to count people in its state. How else does one explain the Greek demographic of 98% “Pure Greek” and 2% “Muslim Greeks”?

Demographic statistics released by Greek authorities before the invasion, occupation and partition of Macedonia in 1912, 1913, were based exclusively on Church affiliations. All Macedonians affiliated with the Greek Patriarchate Church were counted as “Greeks” even though they were not “ethnic Greeks”. The fact that there were virtually no “ethnic Greeks” living in Macedonia before 1912 did not stop Greece from

showing numbers as high as 40% to 50%. Even the massive expulsions carried out between 1912 and 1928 were based strictly on religion and “Church affiliation” and NOT on ethnicities.

During the second Balkan War Greece initiated a massive denationalization program to eradicate everything Macedonian which began with the ethnic cleansing of entire towns and villages in South Central Macedonia (Kukush, Doiran, Demir-Hisar and Serres). The criminal activities perpetrated by the invading Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian armies were brought to world attention which prompted the Carnegie Endowment Commission to investigate. Even though all three States, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia committed atrocities against the Macedonian people during the 1912 and 1913 Balkan Wars, for our purpose here we will only focus on the Greeks.

The Carnegie Endowment Commission was dispatched from Paris on August 2nd, 1913, shortly before the end of the second Balkan War and returned to Paris nearly eight weeks later, on September 28th. In spite of opposition from the Greek government, the commission arrived in time to witness much of the war’s aftermath and record most accounts while they were still fresh in people’s minds. The commission’s findings were compiled and released in 1914.

In a statement dated February 22, 1914, Carnegie Endowment Acting Director Nicholas Murray Butler said:

“The circumstances which attended the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 were of such character as to fix upon them the attention of the civilized world. The conflicting reports as to what actually occurred before and during these wars, together with the persistent rumors often supported by specific and detailed statements as to violations of the laws of war by the several combatants, made it important that an impartial and exhaustive examination should be made of this entire episode in contemporary history. The purpose of such an impartial examination by an independent authority was to inform public opinion and to make plain just what is or may be involved in an international war carried on under modern conditions. If the minds of men can be turned even for a short time away from passion, from race antagonism and from national aggrandizement to a contemplation of the individual and national losses due to war and to the shocking horrors which modern warfare entails, a step and by no means a short one, will have been taken toward the substitution of justice for force in the settlement of international differences.

It was with this motive and for this purpose that the Division of Intercourse and Education of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Constituted in July, 1913, an International Commission of Inquiry to study the recent Balkan wars and to visit the actual scenes where fighting had taken place and the territory which had been devastated. The presidency of this International Commission of Inquiry was entrusted to

Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, Senator of France, who had represented his country at the First and Second Hague Conferences of 1899 and of 1907, and who as President Fondateur of the Conciliation Internationale, has labored so long and so effectively to bring the various nations of the world into closer and more sympathetic relations. With Baron d'Estournelles de Constant there were associated men of the highest standing, representing different nationalities, who were able to bring to this important task large experience and broad sympathy.

The result of the work of the International Commission of Inquiry is contained in the following report. This report, which has been written without prejudice and without partisanship, is respectfully commended to the attention of the governments, the people and the press of the civilized world. To those who so generously participated in its preparation as members of the International Commission of Inquiry, the Trustees of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace offer an expression of grateful thanks.” (Preface) George F. Kennan. “The Other Balkan Wars”

The commission reported that the atrocities committed by the Greek army at Kukush took place on July 4, 1913. The town was a flourishing community of 13,000 people, the centre of an exclusively Slavonic-speaking area which the Greek army occupied and burned to the ground. European observers confirmed that Greek soldiers evicted occupants from their homes which they then looted and burned down. It was estimated that in Kukush alone the Greek army burnt down forty villages and 4,725 houses. The commission’s report provides the names of the burned down villages and respective numbers of houses in each that were destroyed. The commission was also informed and given the names of seventy-four people, mostly women and eleven children, who were murdered by the Greek soldiers. It was estimated that more than 100,000 Macedonians became refugees and fled the town. No accounts were given regarding their losses of life and property.

On July 6, 1913 approximately four thousand refugees attempting to flee, accidentally ran into three hundred Greek cavalrymen. Unfortunately, following their surrender, the Greeks picked out sixty men and took them off to a nearby forest and had them murdered. Eye witnesses reported that Greek soldiers were seen the next day running rampant killing, raping and robbing people. The commission was unable to establish the exact number of refugees slain by the Greek army on site but according to witnesses the number was no less than 365 people. One European eye witness informed the commission that after the Greek army entered Gevgelija it executed two hundred civilians.

Most atrocities committed by the Greek army were corroborated by the soldiers themselves in letters they sent home to their relatives. A captured mailbag revealed the reality of horrors perpetrated against the Macedonian civilian population. According to one soldier’s account “This war has been

very painful. We have burnt all the villages abandoned by the Bulgarians [Macedonians affiliated with the Exarchate Church]. They burn the Greek villages [Macedonian villages affiliated with the Patriarchate Church] and we the Bulgarian [Macedonian villages affiliated with the Exarchate Church]. They massacred, we massacred and against all those of that dishonest nation, who fell into our hands, the Mannlicher rifle has done its work. Of the 1,200 prisoners we took at Nigrita, only forty-one remain in the prisons, and everywhere we have been, we have not left a single root of this race.”

One hundred and sixty villages and no less than sixteen thousand houses were burned by the Greeks in the Second Balkan War. No attempt was ever made to find out how many civilians were tortured, raped and murdered and how many thousands were left homeless.

It is important to note at this point that the Macedonian people did not raise arms against the invading allied armies (Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian). Instead of opposing them, the Macedonians welcomed the allied armies and in fact helped them evict the Turkish forces from Macedonia.

The atrocities committed against the civilian population in Macedonia including the burning of villages was simply a cold act of genocide perpetrated to eradicate the Macedonian civilian population in order to make room for Greek colonization.

Unfortunately for the Macedonian people, this was only the beginning. No sooner than the invading armies established their spheres of influence and partitioned Macedonia with their imposed artificial and illegal borders, the process of denationalization was accelerated. First came the demands for loyalty to the new occupiers. Macedonians affiliated with the Exarchate Church were given twenty-four hours to “take what they can carry” and leave their lands. "This is Greece now and there is no place for Bulgarians here." Those who remained were forced to swear loyalty to the Greek State. Anyone refusing to take the loyalty oath was either executed, as an example of what would happen to those disloyal, or evicted from the country. To explain the mass evacuations, Greek officials claimed that the inhabitants of Macedonia left by choice or became Greek by choice. The truth is no one was given any choice at all.

Thousands of Greek publicists began to fill the world with their shouting about the essentially Greek character of the populations of their newly occupied territory. The Greek newspapers began to write about a Macedonia entirely populated by Greeks and the fact that no-one spoke Greek was explained by calling the people 'Bulgaro-phone Greeks'. The Greek army when entering villages and encountering Macedonians speaking Macedonian, discouraged them from doing so by crying out. “Why are you talking Bulgarian, this is Greece and you must speak Greek now." All “Slavic” language schools and churches were closed and

teachers and priests were expelled. Use of the Macedonian language and Macedonian names were forbidden and Macedonians were referred to as Bulgarians, Serbians or natives.

After the Treaty of Bucharest was signed on August 10, 1913 Macedonia's partition was formalized and the Greek Government set up a "Military Administration" to govern its new acquisition which Greece named "New Territories". Then an influx of administrators, educators, police, etc. were sent from Greece to administer it. Among other things, the first order of business was to "Hellenize the New Lands".

In 1917 Greece passed LAW 1051 inaugurating new administrative jurisdictions for governing its newly acquired Macedonian lands.

In 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles, Britain and France ratified the principles of the Bucharest Treaty thus endorsing Macedonia's partition. This gave Greece the signal it needed to pursue forced expulsion, continue its policy of denationalizing the Macedonians and begin a mass colonization of the Macedonian territories by transplanting "potential Greeks".

What was surprising, especially to the Balkan delegation, was the raising of the Macedonian question by Italy. On July 10, 1919, Italy along with the USA made a proposal to the "Committee for the Formation of New States" for Macedonian autonomy. France flatly opposed the motion while Britain proposed establishing a five-year Macedonian Commissary under the auspices of the League of Nations. Greece and Serbia, by refusing to acknowledge the existence of a Macedonian question, literally killed the motion.

Another item that came out of Versailles was Article 51, the League of Nations' code to "protect national minorities". Article 51 of the Treaty of Versailles espouses equality of civil rights, education, language and religion for all national minorities. Unfortunately, article 51 was never implemented by the Balkan States or enforced by the League of Nations which Greece and Bulgaria, to this day, violate and ignore.

It is interesting to note that on September 29, 1924 Greece signed an agreement with Bulgaria declaring that the Macedonians in Greece were Bulgarians. Not to disappoint the Serbians, when they found out about this, the Greeks changed their mind and on August 17, 1926 declared that the Macedonians in Greece were in reality, Serbs.

In 1920 the Greek Ministry Of Internal Affairs publishes a booklet "Advice On The Change Of The Names Of Municipalities And Villages" in Greek occupied Macedonia.

From 1918 to 1925, Greek authorities changed 76 Macedonian names of villages and towns to Greek ones.

"By law promulgated on November 21, 1926, all place names (toponymia) were Hellenized; that is the names of cities, villages, rivers and mountains were discarded and Greek names put in their place. At the

same time the Macedonians were forced to change their first and surnames; every Macedonian surname had to end in 'os', 'es', or 'poulos'. The news of these acts and the new, official Greek names were published in the Greek government daily 'Efimeris tis Kiverniseos no. 322 and 324 of November 21 and 23, 1926. The requirements to use these Greek names is officially binding to this day. All evidence of the Macedonian language was compulsorily removed from churches, monuments, archeological finds and cemeteries. Slavonic church or secular literature was seized and burned. The use of the Macedonian language was strictly forbidden also in personal communication between parents and children, among villagers, at weddings and work parties, and in burial rituals." (Page 109, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece, The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation)

The act of forbidding the use of the Macedonian language in Greece is best illustrated by an example of how it was implemented in the Township of Assirios (Giuvezna). Here is a quote from Karakasidou's book Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood.

"[We] listened to the president articulate to the council that in accordance with the decision [#122770] of Mr. Minister, General Governor of Macedonia, all municipal and township councils would forbid, through [administrative] decisions, the speaking of other idioms of obsolete languages within the area of their jurisdiction for the reconstitution of a universal language and our national glory. [The president] suggested that [the] speaking of different idioms, foreign [languages] and our language in an impure or obsolete manner in the area of the township of Assirios would be forbidden. Assirios Township Decision No. 134, 13 December 1936." (Page 162, Anastasia Karakasidou, Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood)

By 1928, 1,497 Macedonian place-names in Greek occupied Macedonia were Hellenized (LAW 4096) and all Cyrillic inscriptions found in churches, on tombstones and icons were destroyed (or overwritten) prompting English Journalist V. Hild to say, "The Greeks do not only persecute living Slavs (Macedonians)..., but they even persecute dead ones. They do not leave them in peace even in the graves. They erase the Slavonic inscriptions on the headstones, remove the bones and burn them."

In the years following World War I, the Macedonian people underwent extensive measures of systematic denationalization. The applications of these "denationalization schemes" were so extensive and aggressively pursued that in the long term they eroded the will of the Macedonian people to resist.

In Greece, in 1929 during the rule of Eleftherios Venizelos, a legal act was issued 'On the protection of public order'. In line with this Act each demand for nationality rights is regarded as high treason. This law is still in force.

On December 18, 1936, Metaxas' dictatorial government issued a legal Act 'On the activity against state security' on the strength of which thousands of Macedonians were arrested, imprisoned, expelled or exiled (EXORIA) on arid, inhospitable Greek islands, where many perished. Their crime? Being ethnic Macedonian by birth.

LAW 6429 was passed to reinforce Law 4096 on the Hellenization of toponyms and DECREE 87 was enacted to accelerate the denationalization of Macedonians. The Greek ministry of Education sent "Specially trained" instructors to accelerate the "conversion to Greek" language.

On September 7, 1938 legal Act No. 2366 was issued banning the use of the Macedonian language. All Macedonian localities were flooded with posters: 'Speak Greek'. Evening schools were opened in which adult Macedonians were taught Greek. Not a single Macedonian school functioned at the time or ever since.

Many Macedonians were fined, beaten and jailed for speaking Macedonian. Adults and school children alike were further humiliated by being forced to drink castor oil when caught speaking Macedonian. LAW 1418 was enacted to reinforce previous laws on renaming peoples' names and toponyms.

While there were some prospects for basic human rights for the Macedonian people in the Greek State in the early 1920's, those prospects died as Greece tightened its grip on Macedonia by implementing more racist assimilation policies. If that was not enough, on December 18, 1936 the Greek Government issued a legal act concerning, "Activities Against State Security". By this act thousands of Macedonians were arrested, imprisoned and expelled from their homeland.

In 1938 Australian author Bert Birtles in his book "Exiles in the Aegean" wrote, "In the name of 'Hellenization' these people (Macedonians) are being persecuted continually and arrested for the most fantastic reasons. Metaxa's way of inculcating the proper nationalist spirit among them has been to change all the native place-names into Greek and to forbid use of the native language. For displaying the slightest resistance to the edict-for this too is a danger to the security of the State-peasants and villagers have been exiled without trial." (Page 112, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation)

In 1940 39 more place-names were Hellenized since 1929. In 1945 LAW 697 was enacted introducing more regulations on renaming toponyms.

The Greek Government in Greek occupied Macedonia worked closely with local collaborators and enlisted, from the Macedonian population, only those who could be proven trustworthy. The collaborators worked hard to identify all those who were sympathetic to the Partisans and reported on their activities on a regular basis. Anyone reported aiding the Partisans was severely punished and sometimes executed. In the spring of

1947 all those who were blacklisted were rounded up, arrested and locked up in the Lerin jails. Those accused of aiding the Partisans were taken out and executed. The rest, after spending one hundred days in jail without trial, were sent to various concentration camps in the most desolate Greek Islands where they were kept anywhere from 2 to 5 year.

I want to mention something very important here because I believe the Greek Government, even before the commencement of the Greek civil war, had plans "to deal with the Macedonians in Greece". In 1947, during the Greek civil war, the legal act L-2 was issued. This meant that all those who left Greece without the consent of the Greek government were stripped of their Greek citizenship and banned from returning to that country. The law applied to Greeks and Macedonians, but in its modernized version the act is binding only on Macedonians. It prevents Macedonians, but not former Communist Greeks who fought against the winning side from returning to Greece and reclaiming property. On January 20, 1948, the legal act M was issued. This allowed the Greek government to confiscate the property of those who were stripped of their citizenship. The law was updated in 1985 to exclude Greeks, but still binding on Macedonians

Clearly acts L-2 and M were designed to work against the interest of the Macedonian people. Even innocent Macedonians who left before the Civil War were not allowed to return. The question now is "What was Greece planning to do with the Macedonians?" The way acts L-2 and M were enforced over the years brings another question to mind. If there were no Macedonians living in Greece, as the Greek state claims, then what ethnicity were these people the Greek Government was refusing to allow back? Why is it that Greek law makes the distinction between Macedonians and Greeks when it suits Greece but not when it benefits the Macedonians?

By the end of 1947 battles were raging everywhere in Greece and the war was slowly moving north into Macedonia. Clearly this was a "Greek War", yet again the Macedonian population was being sucked into it. The heavily armed Greek air force and mechanized artillery gained control of most cities and main roads. The Partisans were literally trapped and continued their strictly defensive campaigns mainly from the mountains Vicho and Gramos.

As the situation became critical, both sides stepped up their recruitment campaigns and again were drawing from the same population. The Partisans could no longer count on volunteers alone and began to enlist fighters by force and drafted anyone they could get their hands on, male or female. In addition to support roles, women were now armed and given combat duties. They fought alongside the men against the well-trained, well-disciplined and heavily armed Greek Army. Such was the

fate of the Macedonian women, most of who were taken by force to fight someone else's war.

As the war intensified the Greek air force regularly bombed Macedonian villages putting the civilian population, including children, in danger. In the spring of 1948, to save the children, a temporary evacuation program was introduced and implemented on a voluntary basis. It is estimated that about 28,000 children from the ages of 2 to 14 were rounded up and taken across the border into Yugoslavia. From there they were sent to various Eastern Block countries.

Again, I want to point out that the evacuation program was sponsored and organized by the Greek Partisan Leadership which was fully versed in "Greek Law" (act L-2). Yet they carried out the children's evacuation program and lied to the trusting mothers that the evacuation was only a temporary measure. Almost all the Macedonian children who were evacuated in 1948 are still not allowed entry into Greece.

Fearing reprisal from the advancing Greek army, in August 1949 waves of refugees left their homes and went to Albania to save themselves. When the war was over Greece did not want them back. As a result they were sent to Eastern Block countries that were willing to take them. Years later some tried to return but Greece (act L-2) would not allow it. Even innocent Macedonians, who did not participate in the conflict, including the evacuated refugee children, were refused entry (again act L-2). Years passed and still they were refused entry again and again. They were not even allowed to visit ailing relatives. Finally in 1985 a repatriation policy was introduced and amnesty was given but only to those of "Greek origin". This again excluded the Macedonians.

After the Greek Civil War ended LAW 3958 was enacted to allow the confiscation of property of those who left Greece and did not return within five years. Villages in Greek occupied Macedonia were forced to swear "LANGUAGE OATHS" to speak only Greek and renounce their mother tongue (MACEDONIAN).

In 1962 DECREE 4234 was enacted to reinforce past laws regarding confiscated properties of political exiles and deny them rights to return.

In 1968 The EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS accused Greece of human rights abuses and in 1969 the COUNCIL OF EUROPE declared Greece "undemocratic, illiberal, authoritarian, and oppressive". Greece was forced to resign from the Council of Europe under threats of expulsion. The Military Junta in Greece continued its policy of colonizing the confiscated Macedonian lands and continued to donate Macedonian lands to persons with "proven patriotism" for Greece.

The Macedonian Revival

In spite of all that has been done to the Macedonian people to break their spirit, particularly by Greece in the last century or so, they still possess the desire to be Macedonian. Hidden like a spark in the ashes of an old fire the Macedonian spirit lives on looking for the next opportunity to ignite and shine again.

It is believed that Macedonia existed as a state from approximately 800 BC to 168 BC when the Macedonian king Perseus (Philip V's son) was defeated in battle by the Romans and Macedonia was annexed by Rome. Ever since that day (June 22nd, 168 BC) the Macedonian people have made numerous bids to recover their Macedonia, some with partial and some with no success at all. Macedonians however are patient people determined to wait it out believing that the time will come when Macedonia will again belong to the Macedonians.

The first bid to free Macedonia took place in 153 BC when the pretender Andriscus claiming to be Philip VI, son of Perseus by Laodice, Seleucus IV's daughter who was also Demetrius I's sister, took the Macedonian throne.

Andriscus went to Rome to plead his case for the Macedonian people but the Senate was not interested in a hearing. Frustrated, Andriscus returned home and sought help from the Macedonian people who gave him what he needed including royal robes, a diadem, recognition and troops. He received recognition from Byzantium and troops from various Thracian chieftains.

Given the circumstances in Macedonia, rule by a pretender was preferable to being divided and ruled by Romans. When he was ready Andriscus advanced on Macedonia from Thrace and, after two battles in 149 BC, took control of Macedonia. Unfortunately Macedonia's freedom was short lived. Two Roman legions, under the leadership of Quintus Macedonicus, were dispatched and ironically ended Andriscus's career at Pydna in 148 BC.

After this unsuccessful revolt, the Macedonian people lost their independence entirely and Macedonia became a Roman province. To avoid this from happening again, the Romans partitioned Macedonia into four regions; Macedonia Terita, Macedonia Secunda, Macedonia Prima and Macedonia Quatra and the Macedonian people were forbidden from freely crossing region boundaries or leaving Macedonia. The Macedonian people of the 2nd century BC were literally divided just like the Macedonian people of the 20th and 21st century AD.

After that, even though Macedonians took part in ruling and administering the Roman Empire and later the Eastern Roman Empire, Macedonia remained under foreign control.

Macedonians suffered immensely under Roman rule especially during the first few centuries of the first millennium. To ease their pain, many turned to Christianity which recognized their suffering and offered them comfort with rewards in the afterlife.

The Macedonians were the first people in Europe to embrace Christianity and make it part of their daily lives. The Bible mentions Macedonia and the Macedonians numerous times including Apostle Paul's visit. Paul became an important factor in the spread of Christianity to Macedonia when he had a vision of a man, a Macedonian, urging him to "come to Macedonia and help us". Paul interpreted this vision as God's will to take the "Good News" of Jesus into Macedonia. "And when they had come opposite My'sia, they attempted to go into Bithyn'ia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; so, passing by My'sia, they went down to Tro'as. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedo'nia was standing beseeching him and saying, 'Come over to Macedo'nia and help us.' And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedo'nia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them." (Page 1044, The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, Holman, Philadelphia, 1952)

There are some who believe that the man in Paul's vision was the Apostle Luke. Luke was a Macedonian, a physician by trade, who Paul met for the first time in Troas. Luke may have had some connection to Philippi to have Paul sent there. It is unknown whether Luke was a Christian before he met Paul but he was certainly one afterwards. Luke was a great writer and composer of one of the gospels.

It was around 50 AD when Paul set foot on European soil for the first time. That was in the Macedonian towns of Philippi, Solun and Berroea where he preached the word of Jesus (Acta apos., XVI, id. XVII). Around 52 and 53 AD he sent epistles to the people of Solun (Epist. Thess); then in 57 AD he came back to Macedonia to follow up on his progress. In 63 AD he again sent epistles to Macedonia but this time to the people of Philippi (Epist. Philipp).

Even before Paul went to Macedonia legend has it that Macedonia was visited by Jesus' mother Mary. "The Blessed Virgin excluded all other women from Holy Mountain, when she claimed it as 'Her Garden' after she was driven ashore by storms near the site of the present monastery of 'Iviron' USPENIE." (Page 41, Vasil Bogov, Macedonian Revelation, Historical Documents Rock and Shatter Modern Political Ideology, Western Australia, 1998) Holy Mountain, or Sveta Gora as it is known in Macedonia, is the holiest place in Europe and one of the greatest monastic centers of Christendom.

Paul's first mission to Macedonia took him to Philippi where he met a woman named Lydia, a fabric dealer. Lydia was a widow who sold cloth and textiles and was a rare example of a free woman who lived and

worked in Macedonia. For some time, Lydia was exposed to Jewish religious practices which she had observed at a colony of Jews who had settled near her home in Thyatira. Lydia, along with her household, is believed to be the first Christian in Macedonia to be baptized by Paul. After Philippi, Paul's missionary journey took him to the beautiful Macedonian city of Solun where, in 50 BC, he established what later came to be known as the "Golden Gate" church, the first Christian church in Europe.

Besides bringing faith to the people, Christianity also inadvertently introduced another factor into ordinary people's lives, "the written word" a factor rarely mentioned by historians. If the word of Jesus was to be taught directly to the ordinary people it had to be taught in the language the ordinary people understood. So to teach the multitudes, who spoke various languages, Christianity was compelled to create written languages and teach priests to read who in turn would spread the word of God by reading it from a holy book written in the language people understood. By creating a written language or an alphabet as we call it today, Christianity laid the foundation for written knowledge and modern education. In Macedonia's case it commissioned the resurrection and modernization of the written "Slav language" today known as the Cyrillic Alphabet, spoken by many millions throughout Eastern and Central Europe. I say resurrection and modernization instead of "creation" because there are indications that a written form of the Macedonian ("Slav") language did exist in prehistoric Macedonia before the written form of Koine was adopted by the ancient Macedonians. (Ilyov, Vasil. Macedonian Artifacts, Ancient Inscriptions and their Translations. <http://www.unet.com.mk/ancient-macedonians-part2/index.html>)

The Cyrillic Alphabet which by right should be called the "Macedonian Alphabet" was organized, promoted and presented to the world by Kiril and Metodi, two Macedonian brothers from Solun, Macedonia. Half the continent of Europe then looked to Macedonia for enlightenment and the spread of spiritual knowledge. For many centuries the need to educate the Slav Speakers compelled Macedonians to build educational institutions and the first university in Ohrid. Yes, the first university in Europe was built in Ohrid, present day Republic of Macedonia. This university was responsible for educating thousands of young priests who were willing to serve God and who were commissioned to bring the word of Jesus to the multitudes of Slav speakers.

By the turn of the first millennium Macedonia was the cultural and religious center of the entire Eastern European world, spreading not only Christianity but also Macedonian culture and the Macedonian Language, a Solun dialect, which later became known as Church Slavonic.

In spite of Macedonia being politically controlled by the Pravoslavs (Byzantines) and by the Bulgars, linguistically and culturally Macedonia remained Macedonian.

The next bid the Macedonian people made to free themselves militarily was during the 10th century AD after the collapse of the Bulgar empire in 969 AD due to a war they lost against Russia and while the Pravoslavs were fighting a war in Asia.

In the absence of Bulgar control, the Comitopoloι brothers, David, Moses, Aaron and Samoil sons of Duke-Comes Nikola, organized a successful uprising and freed parts of Macedonia.

The uprising was a result of excessive exploitation of the Macedonian people who at the same time were heavily taxed by both the Bulgars and the Pravoslavs. As the need for more resources increased in order to support both empires, which at the time were at war, so did Pravoslav and Bulgar control over Macedonian principalities. With the strengthening of Pravoslav and Bulgar control over Macedonia came decline of Macedonian tribal self-government. Foreigners from other parts of the empires were granted Macedonian lands and privileges to use the Macedonian population to do their work. Church and monastery land holdings were formed and in time increased through gifts and by means of confiscations. Many Macedonian peasants lost their lands to the church due to defaulting on loans or by being accused of religious crimes. After everyone took their cut, the Macedonian peasant was left with nothing. Pushed beyond the brink of starvation, the Macedonian peasants revolted in what later became known as the Bogomil movement. Even though it was religious in nature, the Bogomil movement was predominantly a class struggle between the poor Macedonian peasants and their rich foreign rulers. The Bogomil movement was initiated in Macedonia by a Macedonian priest named Bogomil.

It is said that at the dawn of medieval Macedonia two great Macedonian men arose, Kliment of Ohrid and a priest named Bogomil. The first was an educator and writer whose distinguished work is the pride of Macedonia. The second was an idealist whose heretical theory became a rallying cry for the oppressed in Macedonia and later throughout Europe.

Bogomil was the first to teach religious elements adopted from the Paulician and Marsalian teachings. These beliefs, which forbade taking sacraments, worshipping images, including the cross, and refuted much of the Bible, were probably introduced to Macedonia by the Armenian colonists deposited in Thrace by past Pravoslav emperors. Many of the dualistic, anti-ecclesiastical and anti-feudal characteristics of these movements found their expression in the Bogomil ideology. The Bogomils believed in the existence of a struggle between good and evil and that good would conquer in the end. They maintained that the rich were the servants of the devil and anyone who submitted to them was going against God.

According to them, the entire visible world with all its laws and systems had been created not by God but by the devil. They opposed the existence of churches and monasteries, were against the use of crosses, icons and feasts and propagated the belief that man could pray to God without the aid of a priest. Much of the energy attributed to the rise of the Bogomil movement came from the unbearable exploitation from foreign rulers and the Church. Bogomilism was strongest in the territory defined by the triangle of the Vardar River, Ohrid and Mt. Shar.

In 976 AD, the four brothers, David, Moses, Aaron and Samoil were successful in establishing joint rule which unfortunately did not last. After the three brothers were killed, Samoil took the throne for himself and began a westerly campaign penetrating Thrace, Macedonia and Thessaly right down to the Peloponnesus. Just recovering from its last sacking, Solun was about to be sacked again but Samoil decided to continue south and in so doing he took a large number of towns, including Larissa. Samoil resettled the inhabitants of Larissa in the interior of his state and incorporated the Larissan soldiers into his own army.

From Larissa he removed the remains of St. Achilles and brought them to Prespa, to the island of Ail. Protected by the waters of Lake Mala Prespa, Samoil made Ail his capital and built a magnificent palace on it.

It was no accident that Samoil received his strongest support from the territory defined by the triangle of the Vardar River, Ohrid and Mt. Shar. Samoil's success was fueled by the Bogomil movement and its distaste for foreign rule. In Macedonia the Bogomil movement was particularly influential in the creation of favourable conditions for a liberation uprising and the formation of an independent state. Samoil took full advantage of the situation and established a Macedonian state.

In 989 AD Samoil invaded Dalmatia, captured young king Vladimir and made him a prisoner of war in his own castle in Prespa. While Samoil was plundering Dalmatia, his daughter Kossara fell in love with the young captive king Vladimir and wanted to marry him. Not to disappoint her, Samoil gave in and gave her his blessings thus introducing Macedonian blood into the royal European lines that live on to this day. Now that he was his son-in-law he gave Vladimir his former kingdom back. As a wedding gift he also gave the newlyweds Dyrrachium and all its territories. He even returned Trebinye to Vladimir's uncle, Dragomir. Samoil's good deeds not only earned him the respect of his son-in-law but Vladimir also became his ally and loyal vassal.

When Samoil died in 1014, his kingdom was vast and included the whole of Macedonia (except for Solun), Thessaly, Epirus, the coastal sclavenes of Oiocleia, Travunya and Zachlunia, the Neretva region (excluding the islands) as far as Cetina, Serbia, Bosnia and a considerable part of Bulgaria. For the most part, the majority of the population living in Samoil's empire was Macedonian, with large Slav pockets south of

Olympus down to the Peloponnesus. To a lesser extent there lived Bulgars, Serbs, Croats, Romani, Albanians and Vlachs. Additionally there lived migrants such as Vardariot Turks and Armenians who were recently settled there by former Pravoslav emperors and some by Samoil. While many Armenians existed in Thrace, Samoil had also settled some in Pelagonia, Prespa and Ohrid. The Romani were known to exist mostly in coastal regions.

Samoil's kingdom was a newly created state with a completely different nucleus of people and with completely different domestic and foreign policies than any of his neighbours. The center of Samoil's state was in the far south of the Balkans, inside today's Republic of Macedonia. Samoil had a number of capitals, which he used from time to time. During his reign Samoil moved his capital to several places including Prespa, Ohrid, Prilep, Bitola, Pronishte and Setin, all of which were inside Macedonia.

According to ancient sources, very little is known about the socio-economic conditions and the organization of Samoil's state. It is likely that the majority of people in Samoil's kingdom were peasants, most of whom were freemen, but those working on the feudal estates were either serfs or churchmen. The serfs worked on both secular and church lands while churchmen worked exclusively on church lands. Being of a slightly better social class, the churchmen were exempt from heavy taxes. However, the churchmen were obliged to donate extra labour, probably in community service, in lieu of taxes.

The noble class in Samoil's state was made up mostly of feudal lords and aristocrats who were allied behind Samoil and supported his policies. After his death the alliances began to erode and the nobles went their separate ways in pursuit of their own interests which led them closer and closer towards the Pravoslavs.

Slavery was rarely practiced but on occasion slaves were captured and sold, usually outside the kingdom. The main source of slaves was prisoners of war. It is well known, for example, that Samoil enslaved the population of Larissa after their city fell.

Most of Samoil's income came from imperial land-holdings, sale of livestock, judicial fines and military plunder. Samoil's treasury contained many valuables including gold and money. Having no coins of his own minted, the currency circulated in Samoil's kingdom was Pravoslav.

As for his military makeup, Samoil was supreme commander and enlisted his forces almost exclusively from his own kingdom. He had an enormous army consisting of both infantry and cavalry. Samoil was an able strategist who personally took part not only in planning but also in executing battles. For the most part, Samoil's weaponry and military dress was similar to the Pravoslav. His soldiers wore a short outer tunic, trousers and a shirt of steel. They also wore a helmet with a pivoting extension

which could be lowered down to the chin to protect the warrior's face. Each soldier was armed with a defensive shield, long spear and sword. Other accessories included bugles and standards. Besides his regular army, Samoil also employed his own bodyguards. Samoil had no navy or any type of war vessel.

The official language of Samoil's kingdom was Macedonian although Koine was also used occasionally as the language of diplomacy at the imperial palace.

Samoil built some of the most significant buildings in his kingdom including the Basilica of St. Achilles, his various palaces and a number of churches situated in the southern parts of his kingdom.

The famous and historic Archbishopric of Ohrid was created during Samoil's reign. Initially the Archbishopric was seated in Prespa but when Samoil moved to Ohrid, he brought it with him. Ohrid became his capital as well as his religious center. After its consolidation, the new archbishop was given authority over all bishops who fell under Samoil's jurisdiction. Unfortunately the Pravoslavs refused to recognize the Archbishop of Ohrid, probably because the Roman church which crowned Samoil had consecrated it. During Samoil's rule the Macedonian church was quite popular and the clergy, especially the bishops, enjoyed their privileged positions.

When Basil II, another Macedonian serving as Emperor of the Pravoslavs, found out that Samoil had died, he marched his army to Polog via Solun and razed Samoil's imperial palace in Bitola. His troops stormed Prilep and Shtip bringing devastation to everything that stood in their path.

In the spring of 1015 Basil set out for Voden and subdued an uprising and by 1018 he succeeded in destroying the last remnants of Samoil's forty-two year reign (976-1018) of his Macedonian kingdom.

After conquering Macedonia, Basil II made it a Pravoslav province and sub-divided it into themes installing a large army to keep the peace.

The Archbishopric of Ohrid was subordinated to Pravoslav authority and incorporated into the Patriarchate of Tsari Grad (Constantinople). Macedonia was reorganized into thirty-two eparchies. The Bulgarian, Serbian and Albanian eparchies were also incorporated into the Ohrid Archbishopric. An Archbishop and the Church Synod were given supreme authority over the Ohrid Archbishopric. The Synod met in Ohrid once a year to elect new bishops and discipline clergy accused of various breaches and misconduct.

The Archbishop of Ohrid was no longer elected by the Synod, as it had been under Samoil's rule, but was appointed by Tsari Grad and confirmed by the Pravoslav Emperor. The Archbishop remained autocephalous but was subject to the Pravoslav state and church authorities. He was a member of the principal administration of the Patriarchate of Tsari Grad,

attended its sittings, defended the interests and prestige of the Pravoslav Church and participated in the resolution of disagreements with the western Church.

Basil II allowed the higher clergy of the Archbishopric to retain some privileges. By doing so he gained their support in strengthening Pravoslav rule over Macedonia. To appear sympathetic he also appointed John of Debar, a Macedonian, head of the Archbishopric.

After Basil II's death in 1025 his successor Leo attempted to tighten control over the Macedonian church by replacing the Slavonic language with Koine. Having encountered opposition, in 1037 he removed John of Debar, one of the strongest supporters of the Macedonian language. Henceforth the Archbishops of Ohrid and the bishops of the churches in the Ohrid Archbishopric were regularly elected from the ranks of the Koine speaking clergy. The lower clergy remained Slavonic speakers because they were closer to the people.

When Ohrid came under Pravoslav control the Koine speaking hierarchs began to eradicate all documents written in Slavonic. Many manuscripts which had been preserved in Ohrid were destroyed. In the churches Slavonic liturgy began to be preached in adaptations translated from Koine. The Slavonic names of rivers, towns, etc. were also replaced by either classical Koine or Latin names. The Archbishopric of Ohrid was slowly becoming a Koine speaking institution designed to destroy the Macedonian traditions, which had been nurtured over the years. Slavonic literacy could not, however, be totally destroyed. The adaptation of Koine did not succeed in taking any deep roots among the people who continued to communicate in their native Slavonic language.

Hard hit by this latest clampdown, the Macedonian people once again began to lose control of their Macedonia. After reaching a renaissance under Samoil, Macedonia, after its capitulation to the Pravoslavs again fell to foreign rule and began to decline. Even though Basil II was a Macedonian himself, his loyalties lay with the Pravoslavs. His obligation was to serve his own empire above the interests of the Macedonian people.

The roaring fires which King Samoil of Macedonia ignited in the Macedonian people began to slowly extinguish as Pravoslav control tightened over Macedonia. Economically divided into themes and controlled by foreign hands, Macedonia's capacity to free itself began to slowly diminish.

Tax reforms introduced in 1040 requiring peasants to pay taxes with money were good for the economy and for the tax collectors but bad for the peasants. Feudal lords awarded rights to collect state taxes meant that foreigners in addition to owning the lands were now also in authority to extract not only taxes for the state but whatever else they could for themselves above and beyond what the law prescribed. Besides regular taxes, Macedonians were also obliged to pay various supplementary taxes,

like judicial fines, toll tax for crossing rivers, fishing tax, water-mill tax and marriage tax. As a marriage tax the groom was obliged to pay his bishop a gold piece and the bride twelve ells (15 meters) of linen.

This was too much for the Macedonian people to bear and in their frustration they began to rebel. Leading the rebellion was Peter Delyan, Gabriel Radomir's son by his first wife, the daughter of the Hungarian king. The rebellion, supported by the Hungarian king, began in the regions of Belgrade and Morava near the Hungarian border and soon spread south to Skopje. With popular support and assistance from the local Macedonian population, the rebel army invaded and took Skopje. Tsari Grad quickly reacted by dispatching an army in pursuit. But instead of attacking, the Pravoslav soldiers defected and proclaimed Tihomir, one of their own soldiers, as their emperor. Tihomir unfortunately died in battle leaving his army under Delyan's command.

Delyan immediately began a military campaign to recover his grandfather's (Samoil's) kingdom by sending troops to Dyrrachium and, with the support of the local people, took that theme. He then sent a large army to besiege Solun. At the sight of Delyan's immense army, Pravoslav Emperor Michael IV, who at the time was waiting for him, fled in terror to Tsari Grad leaving Manuel Ivets in command of the Pravoslav army. Instead of fighting Ivets defected to Delyan's side, joining forces with the rebels.

Exploiting the panic which had risen in the ranks of the Pravoslav army, Delyan dispatched his armies in several directions. One, led by Anthimus, made its way south reaching as deep as the town Tiva and spreading the revolt into Epirus and conquering the theme of Naupactos. Another army took Demetrias (Volos in Thessaly) and so on. Soon Delyan was in possession of a large territory encompassing the greater part of Samoil's kingdom.

Unfortunately the rebellion proved futile as the numerically superior Pravoslav army in 1041 engaged and defeated the rebels.

Instead of bringing change for the better, the rebellion brought disaster to the Macedonian people. The Pravoslav army, which consisted mainly of Norwegian mercenaries under the command of Harold Hardrada, devastated Macedonia. They enslaved most of the population and brought new state officials and feudal lords who, together with the army, introduced even more oppressive measures.

Frustration continued to boil in Macedonia and in 1072 the Macedonian people again took to the streets and began another rebellion. Led by George Voyteh a revolt broke out in Skopje and was immediately assisted by Michael, the ruler of Zeta, who was related to Samoil. Michael sent his son Constantine Bodin along with three hundred of his elite troops to join Voyteh and his rebels at Prizren and immediately proclaimed him emperor under the name Peter, in honour of the fallen Peter Delyan.

The rebels descended on Macedonia with two columns of armies and managed to liberate Skopje and Ohrid but received a severe blow while attempting to liberate Kostur. Outnumbered and outgunned, Voyteh agreed to surrender thus ending the rebellion.

In 1073 the Pravoslavs stepped up their campaign in Macedonia and brought additional forces in to rout out the remaining pockets of rebel resistance. Unfortunately that was not all that they did. In pursuit of the rebels, the Pravoslav army destroyed Samoil's imperial palace in Prespa and looted the churches in the vicinity. These acts further inflamed the situation and the rebels continued to resist, forcing the Pravoslavs to bring even more troops and take more drastic measures. Only by burning and razing everything, wherever opposition was offered, did the Pravoslavs succeed in putting down the rebellion. By the end of 1073 it was all over.

When all else failed the oppressed masses began to express their frustration by joining the Bogomil movement. They became particularly powerful at the end of the eleventh century and even more so during the course of the twelfth century. The struggle of the Bogomils was directed as equally against the feudal lords as it was against the Pravoslav Emperor and his spiritual and ecclesiastical officials.

The next conquerors to influence the Macedonian people in a negative way were the Seljuq Turks, whose conquests would change the shape of both the Muslim and Pravoslav worlds. In 1055, having conquered Persia, they entered Baghdad and their prince assumed the title of sultan and protector of the Abbasid caliphate. Before long they asserted their authority up to the borders of Fatimid Egypt and throughout Pravoslav Anatolia. They made their first appearance across the Pravoslav frontier in Armenia in the mid-1060's and went as far west as Caesarea in central Anatolia.

By the middle of the fourteenth century, the Ottoman Turks had consolidated their power in Asia Minor and were becoming a threat to the Balkan states. Their first serious campaign for the conquest of Europe began in 1352 when they took the fortress of Tzympe, on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Two years later, taking advantage of a devastating earthquake, they took the fortress of Gallipoli, thus creating a convenient bridgehead for their forthcoming penetration of the Balkans.

Among the first to be threatened by the Turkish forces was Uglesha's rule, a feudal lord in Macedonia. Confronted with danger he persuaded his brother Volkashin to take joint actions. Hostilities broke out in September 1371 near Chernomen followed by a fierce battle on the River Maritsa. The river turned red as casualties mounted, among them the brothers Volkashin and Uglesha. Volkashin's son Marko retained the title of King but had to recognize Turkish authority and pay tribute and rendering military aid to the Turks. The Dragash brothers who ruled Eastern

Macedonia with their seat at Velbuzhd also became Turkish vassals. It was a major victory for the Turks and a catastrophe for the Macedonians, not only for the loss of life but for the terrible change of fate.

King Marko, known to Macedonians as Marko Krале, became a legendary folk hero in western Macedonia surrounded by tales and hero stories. In 1365 Volkashin proclaimed himself king (tsar) and became co-ruler with king Urosh. His brother, the despot Uglesha, ruled over the Struma region. Marko inherited Volkashin's throne and title but as part of the treaty with the Turks, whose authority he had to recognize, he had to pay tribute to the Turkish Sultan. It is believed that Marko was born in 1335. His name was discovered in a document establishing him as one of Volkashin's delegates to Dubrovnik. His name was also discovered in some chronicles of his time establishing him as the son of Volkashin and later as Marko the king. In another document dated 1370 Volkashin makes mention of his sons Marko and Andrew and of his wife Elena.

With its capital in Prilep, Marko inherited a state that lay between the Vardar River and Albania stretching from the Shar Mountain range down to Kostur, excluding the cities of Skopje and Ohrid. After becoming king, Marko minted his own coins and placed on them the inscription: "King Marko faithful to Lord Jesus Christ".

Marko Krале was killed on May 17, 1395 in Craiova Romania, during a battle against the Vlach military leader Mircho. Marko was obliged to fight for the Turks as part of his treaty agreement with Sultan Bayazit. Marko Krале, it appears, left no heir. After his death his state reverted to the Turks.

Even though Marko Krале had been a Turkish vassal and fought on the side of Bayazit's army he was a devout Christian and just before he died on his deathbed he begged God for forgiveness and prayed out loud, asking God to help the Christians. And thus a legend was born. Marko Krале, the fearless legend, has been enshrined in the Towers of Prilep where he was born and by his frescoes and paintings in various churches and monasteries.

Life under Turkish rule in Macedonia was harsh. The Ottoman overlords overthrew the Pravoslav administration at the top and continued business as usual economically exploiting the people. Macedonian lands continued to be in foreign hands and the peasants continued to be exploited as before. The new conquerors were only interested in making profit for themselves and to feed their imperial ambitions.

When the Ottomans crossed over to the Balkans and conquered Macedonia the basic state institutions and military organization of the empire were still in a state of development. Built on a basis of feudal social relations the empire was despotic with many elements of theocratic rule.

After sacking Tsari Grad the Ottomans adapted much of the Pravoslav administration and feudal practices and began to settle the Balkans. The conquered people of the new Ottoman territories became subjects of the empire, to be ruled according to Muslim law. At the head of the Ottoman Empire sat the Sultan who was God's representative on earth. The Sultan owned everything and everyone in the empire. Below the Sultan sat the ruling class and below them sat the Rajak (protected flock). Everyone worked for the Sultan and he in turn provided his subjects with all of life's necessities. The Sultan was the supreme head of the empire and his power was unrestricted.

The Ottoman legal system was created around the Seriat which had its basis in Islam. The Koran and Hadith were the books from which the ideals and fundamental principles for the construction of the legal system were drawn. No law could be passed which in principle contradicted the Seriat. Only the supreme religious leader, the Sejh-ul-Islam, had the right to interpret and assess the legal norms and only from the point of view of Islamic law.

The Koran dictated Muslim conduct and behaviour, including punishment for crimes. In the Ottoman mind only religion and the word of God had sole authority over peoples' lives. Religion was the official government of the Ottoman State. Islam was the only recognized form of rule that suited Muslims but could not be directly applied to non-Muslims. So the next best thing was to allow another religion to rule the non-Muslims. The obvious choice of course was the Pravoslav Christian Orthodox religion, which was the foundation of the Pravoslav Empire. There was a catch however. The official Muslim documents that would allow the "transfer of rule" were based on an ancient Islamic model, which denounced all Christianity as a corrupt invention of the "Evil one". The conservative Turks regarded the Christians as no more than unclean and perverted animals. Also, the ancient documents called for sacrifices to be made. A Christian religious leader, for being granted leadership by the Muslims, was expected to sacrifice his own flock on demand to prove his loyalty to the Sultan. It was under these conditions that the Patriarch accepted his installment as sole ruler of the Christian Orthodox faith and of the non-Muslim Millet.

The Sultans tolerated Christianity as the government of the non-Muslim Millet and sold the Patriarchate to an adventurer who could buy (bribe) his nomination. Once nominated, the Patriarch in turn sold consecration rights to Bishops, who in turn regarded their gain as a "legitimate investment" of capital and proceeded to "farm their diocese". Under Ottoman rule the Patriarchate in Tsari Grad became a corrupt business, having little to do with faith and more to do with making money. As more and more bishoprics fell into the hands of the new Patriarch, faith

at the top began to fade away. This was also the beginning of the end for the Slavonic (Macedonian) Churches in the Ottoman Empire.

In addition to being a religious ruler, the Patriarch and his appointed Bishops became civil administrators of the Christian and non-Muslim people. Their authority included mediating with the Turks, administering Christian law (marriages, inheritance, divorce, etc.), running schools and hospitals and dealing with the large and small issues of life. There were no prescribed provisions on how to deal with criminal matters or the limit of authority on the part of the Bishops. In other words, there was no uniform manner by which Christian criminals could be punished or limits to how far a Bishop could exercise his authority. This opened the way for interpretation, neglect, abuse and activities of corruption such as nepotism, favouritism and bribery.

In an attempt to create a stable political and social support system in conquered Macedonia, the Ottoman authorities introduced voluntary migration for Turks from Asia Minor. As a result, many Turkish settlements sprang up all over Macedonia and occupied strategic positions like valleys of navigable rivers and coastal plains. This increase in Muslim numbers, particularly in the larger towns, was at the expense of the Macedonian Christian population. The nomads of Anatolia were best suited for such migration because of their nomadic way of life.

Migration into Macedonia was not restricted to Turks. Late in the 15th century Jews fleeing the western European Inquisitions in Spain and Portugal also settled in Macedonia. These migrations were of particular significance to Macedonia's economic development. Jewish colonies sprang up and flourished in important urban centers like Solun, Bitola, Skopje, Berroea, Kostur, Serres, Shtip, Kratovo and Strumitsa. The Jewish colony in Solun was one of the largest and most significant of all colonies in the entire Ottoman Empire. By the middle of the 16th century Solun was home to more than three thousand Jewish families.

Besides the colonization of Macedonia by foreign elements, there was also the assimilation of Macedonians in the Islamic fold. The process of converting Christians to Muslims began as soon as Macedonia was conquered. At the outset, a fair number of the old nobility converted to Islam in the hope of protecting and even increasing their landholdings. Gradually greater proportions of the population were converted, sometimes whole villages and districts at once. Macedonians living among the Turks, especially in the larger towns, gradually began to assimilate into the Turkish fold. Even though they became Turks, a great majority of the Macedonians retained their mother tongue and continued to speak Macedonian, practicing their traditions and even their religious customs.

Ever since its inception, the Ohrid Archbishopric extended its sphere of influence and dominated the neighbouring churches. In spite of Pravoslav attempts to curb its power, the Ohrid Archbishopric survived

and began its revitalization. By the start of the 15th century it subordinated the Sofia and Vidin eparchies and by the middle of the same century it was in control of the Vlach and Moldavian eparchies. Shortly afterwards it took control of parts of the Pech Patriarchate including Pech itself. Even the Orthodox districts of Italy (Apulia, Calabria and Sicily), Venice and Dalmatia were subordinated to the Ohrid Archbishopric for a while.

Unfortunately the more powerful the Macedonian Church became the more it attracted attention prompting the Sultan to break it up by establishing separate eparchies. In 1557 the Pech Patriarchate was reinstated and took Tetovo, Skopje, Shtip and Upper Ozumaya from the Ohrid Archbishopric. In 1575 the Orthodox Christians of Dalmatia and Venice were taken away from the Ohrid Church and moved under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate in Tsari Grad. At the start of the 17th century Ohrid lost all the eparchies from southern Italy. After that Ohrid's boundaries remained unaltered until the dissolution of the Macedonian Church in 1767.

As mentioned earlier, the Archbishopric of Ohrid, since its inception, has been an autonomous church headed by an Archbishop who was elected by a Synod. The Synod consisted of archpriests from various eparchies and was summoned on various occasions to deal with the more important matters while the Church Convocation dealt with general matters. The majority of Archbishops who served the Ohrid Church were foreigners and most of them were greedy for money, succumbing to bribery. Some, however, worked hard to raise the standards of the Archbishopric and others including Prohor, Athanasius and Barlaam even worked secretly against the Ottoman yoke.

Even though the Ohrid Church had lost a great number of its possessions to the Ottomans it still remained a feudal institution and, apart from the returns it received from its church lands, it also received considerable income from various taxes, from performing services and settling disputes. The Ohrid lower clergy were all Macedonian and were scarcely distinguishable economically from the general population. Even though foreigners occupied the leading positions in the church, the church itself supported a unique Macedonian culture and an independent Macedonia.

During the second half of the 16th century there were obvious signs of a weakening Ottoman Empire. The successful campaigns that were waged earlier were coming to an end only to be replaced by a series of military defeats and territorial losses. Unable to expand or even hold onto existing territories, the Ottoman central government began to lose prestige and slowly fell into an economic crisis. The situation worsened when feudal lords decided to replace the Rajak's tax contributions in kind (finished products) with money, most of which they kept for themselves. In time, the feudal lords became less interested in taking part in unsuccessful

campaigns and defied the weakening central government by refusing to supply the war effort with men or materials. The central government's inability to exercise authority over the feudal lords created a suitable environment for anarchy. More and more of the more powerful feudal lords began to take advantage of the situation and formed their own small military fiefs.

By the middle of the 17th century life in the chifliks became so harsh that peasants left their villages for larger towns, adding to the influx of Muslims and Jews. Many, who could no longer bear the burden and had nowhere to go, turned to marauding and robbing. Bands of peasants left their hearths and fled to either join outlaw organizations (ajdutska druzhina) or live in larger towns where some of them succeeded in becoming factors of significance in the urban economy.

During the 17th century western Europeans came to Macedonia and procured certain privileges from the Ottomans that allowed them to open consular agencies. In 1685 French merchants from Marseilles opened an agency in Solun and in 1700 they opened another one in Kavalla, through which they purchased cotton and wheat. Later Britain, Venice and the Netherlands also established consular agencies in Macedonia. At that time Solun was the gateway to the Ottoman Empire and the largest port for European goods destined for the Balkans.

With the ascendancy of the Atlantic trade routes, Dubrovnik (Ragusa) and the Italian towns began to decline, particularly during the 17th century when western traders were being replaced by local ones, especially in central Europe.

Catholic influence and propaganda, although somewhat disorganized, was present in Macedonia as early as the 16th century. In 1622 when the Papal Throne came under Jesuit control, a new organization called the Congregation for the Spreading of the Faith was established with aims at controlling all Catholic missionary activities throughout the world. It was not too long afterwards that the Catholic missions infiltrated Macedonia, including the Archbishopric of Ohrid. By the first half of the 17th century four of the Archbishops of Ohrid (Porphyry, Athanasius, Abraham and Meletius) were secretly working for the Catholics. Links were established by eparchies where Church Congregations were discretely approached to switch to Catholicism. The missionaries from Rome were cautious, tactful and did not impose the Latin language upon the population. By doing so and by showing respect for the dogma of the Eastern Church, Catholic propaganda in Ohrid became very effective in gaining ground. In fact it became so effective that in 1630 the Unites attempted to take over the archiepiscopal church of the Assumption of the Virgin but the Archbishop, by handsomely bribing the Ottoman authorities, was able to halt the takeover. That unfortunately did not stop the Catholics from trying and by the middle of the 17th century they created a Catholic Archbishopric

inside Ohrid. But as soon as it was created, conditions turned unfavourable for them and it had to be dissolved and subordinated to the Diocese of Skopje.

In 1661 Archbishop Athanasius took a trip to Rome with a proposal to unify Rome and the Archbishopric of Ohrid. An agreement was reached and a missionary by the name of Onuphrius Constantine was elected as Bishop to serve at the Koine speaking College in Rome. The union, however, did not work out and Catholic propaganda in Macedonia began to lose its effect. A new hope was growing among the Balkan people that Russia, a Christian Orthodox country, would some day liberate them from their bondage.

The Macedonian people were never content with being occupied and showed their displeasure at every opportunity. The first major uprising after the fall of Samoil's empire occurred in the middle of the 15th century in the Debar region, where Macedonians, Albanians and Vlachs lived together. Led by George Castriot, the people rose up against the tyranny of the Turks.

George Castriot, who took the name Scanderbeg after Iskander, more commonly known as Alexander the Great, came from an illustrious feudal family which at the time ruled part of present day central Albania and the greater Debar region in the present day Republic of Macedonia. During the Ottoman conquests in the region, John Castriot, George's father, managed to retain his title and holdings by acknowledging the supreme authority of the Sultan and fulfilling certain obligations as his vassal. As proof of his loyalty, John Castriot surrendered his sons to the Sultan to be held as hostages. One of those sons was George who quickly became fascinated by the energy and vigour of the Ottoman military and could not wait to join them.

Having accepted Islam, George's first act was to change his name to Scanderbeg. Scanderbeg quickly built a reputation as an able commander and gained the confidence of the Ottoman supreme authorities. When his father died in 1437, Scanderbeg took his father's place as governor of the same district. Even though Scanderbeg was an ally of the Sultan, his real loyalties lay with his people.

When war broke out in the region in 1442 and Janos Hunjadi's armies penetrated the interior of the Ottoman Empire, Scanderbeg decided the time was right to renounce his allegiance to the Sultan and raise a rebellion.

Scanderbeg was becoming a legend and a serious threat to Ottoman stability so it did not take long for the Ottoman military to amass a large force and after a long struggle, push Scanderbeg into Albania.

Scanderbeg died of illness on January 17, 1468. Ten years later after the fall of Croia, the last bastion of rebel strength, on January 16, 1478 the rebellion was over. This however was not the first or last rebellion. In

time, and with the breakdown of Ottoman rule, more and more revolts would take place in the future.

The next local uprising took place in 1564/65, in the Moriovo region and spread to the Prilep plains and from there to the town of Prilep. Dubbed as the Moriovo and Prilep revolt, it is unknown why this revolt began but it is clear that three peasants and two priests from the Moriovo district started it. No sooner had the trouble started than the Sultan, through a decree dated October 3, 1564, ordered that the leaders of the revolt be put to death while the followers were to be sent to serve as oarsmen on Turkish galleys. Before the decree could be enforced however, the perpetrators fled causing the Sultan to order another decree for their capture.

Prilep soon became a hotbed of demonstrations when the Ottoman court ruled in favour of a Pasha in a dispute with the peasants. According to a document dated December 1565 a revolt broke out inside the town of Prilep when the Prilep Court, in settling a dispute between the peasants and Mustapha Pasha, ruled in favour of the Pasha. When the news hit the streets more than a thousand rebels from the surrounding villages, armed with sticks and stones, assembled and stormed the court. It is unknown how this revolt ended.

Since Christians by law were not allowed to carry arms, they had no effective defense against maltreatment, especially from the corrupt legal system. The only recourse available to them was to become outlaws. Although unpopular, outlawry was one of the oldest forms of armed struggle expressed by the Macedonian people, which reached epidemic proportions over the course of the 17th century. The outlaws, or haiduks, lived secret lives known only to other outlaws or trusted friends. When it came to defending their homes and properties, they came together in bands or druzhini of twenty to thirty people. Occasionally, for defensive purposes a number of smaller bands combined together to form a large band usually numbering no more than three hundred people. The band leaders or vojvodi were elected members of their bands and were usually chosen for their military skills and leadership abilities. The ranks of the outlaws came mostly from the feudally tied peasants but it was not uncommon to find priests and monks among them. Women too were known to have joined outlaw bands. The oldest record of a woman outlaw dates back to 1636. Her name was Kira and she was from the village Chapari. Kira was a member of Petar Dundar's band from the village Berantsi, near Bitola. There were also recorded cases of women who led outlaw bands.

The main preoccupation of the outlaws was to defend the oppressed and in times of trouble come to their aid. In retaliation the outlaws were known to attack feudal estates and even burn down Spahi (tax collector) harvests. They also ambushed and robbed merchant caravans and tax collectors. Bands were known to have attacked some of the larger towns.

On several occasions outlaws banded together and overran Bitola, Lerin, Ohrid and Resen. Twice they looted the bezesteen in Bitola, once in 1646 and again in 1661.

To curb outlaw activities, the Ottoman authorities frequently undertook extreme measures by organizing posses to hunt them down, burning down villages that were known to be sympathetic to outlaws and imprisoning and sometimes executing relatives of outlaws. When all these measures failed to stop them, the Ottomans introduced the services of the *derbendkis*, to provide safe passage through the countryside to important functionaries such as merchants, tax collectors and travelers.

Outlaws who were captured were tortured, sent to prison for life, or executed. The lucky ones were executed outright. Their dead bodies were then impaled on stakes or on iron hooks for everyone to see. Those less fortunate were skinned alive, had their heads split open and were left to die a slow and painful death. Those sent to prison were usually chained to galleys and spent the rest of their lives as oarsmen.

Despite the extreme measures exercised against them, the outlaws were never stamped out and were always a part of every conflict. The outlaws were the nucleus of the armed forces and the experienced leaders and commanders of the revolts and uprisings. They were the first to raise the spirit of resistance and the first to stand up for the people. That is why the outlaws are so widely revered in Macedonian folklore.

Unwilling to yield, the Ottoman noose continued to tighten on the Macedonian peasants, Christian and Muslim alike. Their moment to strike back, however, came when the Ottomans became entangled with the Austrians in a war during the Austrian invasion of Macedonia. What came to be known as the Karposh Uprising, dubbed after its leader Karposh, was a Macedonian people's revolt against the economic, social and political injustices perpetrated by the Ottoman overlords.

In 1683 the Ottomans, for the second time, tried to take Vienna but failed after a two-month siege. The city was saved with the assistance of the Polish army led by King John Sobiesky. The Ottoman army suffered a catastrophic defeat resulting in enormous losses of territory, material and manpower. To prevent further expansion and keep the Ottomans in check, the Holy League of Austria, Poland, Venice and later Russia was created.

Once they gained momentum the Austrians continued to drive the Ottomans southward reaching the northern boundaries of Macedonia. Led by General Piccolomini, the Austrians entered the Plain of Skopje on October 25, 1689 and were met by a jubilant crowd celebrating their triumphant arrival.

The Austrians continued to march southward and came upon the town of Skopje only to find it empty. Skopje had been evacuated and left with plenty of food and all kinds of merchandise. Feeling that it may have been a trap, Piccolomini withdrew his forces at once and set the town on fire.

The fires raged for two whole days and consumed the greater part of Skopje.

The Austrians continued to move through the Macedonian interior and set camp in the village of Orizari, near Kumanovo. A detachment was sent to Shtip, which arrived there at dawn on November 10, 1689 only to be met with Ottoman resistance. A fierce battle broke out but the Austrians managed to force the Ottomans out, leaving about two thousand of their dead behind. After setting the town on fire, the Austrians left for camp but on their way ran into an Ottoman detachment of three hundred soldiers. Another battle ensued and the Ottomans disbursed.

The destruction and mayhem caused by the Austro-Turkish War brought a sudden deterioration in the economic and political situation in the region. The need for further military operations forced the Ottoman state to increase its purchases of grain, fodder, livestock, timber and other agricultural products, far below normal prices. Also, to pay for the military campaigns, a host of new taxes were introduced. During this difficult period the Rajak also suffered violence at the hands of deserters from the Ottoman army and from the defectors of the central government.

The military catastrophe and the chaotic situation inside the Ottoman Empire again created suitable conditions for widespread outlawry in all parts of Macedonia, especially in the Moriovo, Bitola, Tikvesh, Veles, Shtip and Mt. Dospat regions which led up to the famous Karposh Uprising.

Sometime in the middle of October 1689 the famous outlaw Arambasha Karposh led an uprising which broke out in the region between Kustendil and Skopje. Immediately after declaring a revolt, Karposh attacked and captured Kriva Palanka. Kriva Palanka was an Ottoman stronghold built in 1636 to house Ottoman soldiers. After capturing the stronghold, Karposh declared it liberated rebel territory and made it his center of resistance. Among the items captured at the stronghold were six cannons, a real prize for the rebels. After securing Kriva Palanka the rebels built and secured a new stronghold near Kumanovo.

It is not known whether or not the rebels were assisted by the Austrians but it is possible. According to contemporary Ottoman chronicles and local legends, Karposh was known as the "King of Kumanovo". This could have been a title conferred upon him by the Austrian emperor Leopold I who sent him a Busby (a tall fur hat worn by hussars and guardsmen) as a gift and a sign of recognition.

Unfortunately for the rebels, the current situation did not last long and a reversal in military and political events played a decisive role in the fate of the uprising. The Ottomans had by now had enough time to take countermeasures to stop the economic and military decline of their state. The first step taken in Macedonia was to put down the rebellion and drive the Austrian army out of Macedonian territory. To do that the Ottomans

employed the services of the Crimean Khan, Selim Giray, along with his fierce detachment of Tartar warriors.

The Turkish council of war met in Sofia on November 14, 1689 and decided to attack the Karposh uprising through Kustendil. But before they could do that they had to secure Kriva Palanka. Upon finding that they were about to be attacked, the rebels set fire to Kriva Palanka and concentrated their forces in the new fortress in Kumanovo. No sooner had they prepared their defenses than the Ottoman and Tartar detachments arrived. The rebels stood their ground and fought gallantly but were quickly overwhelmed by the numerically superior Ottoman force. A large number of rebels, including Karposh, were captured at the outset. When the battle was over, all rebels who resisted to the end were slaughtered. Karposh and the others were taken prisoner. After subduing Kumanovo, the Ottomans left for Skopje where they executed Karposh and the others.

Karposh was brought before Selim Giray who at the time was standing on the Stone Bridge over the River Vardar. Selim used him for target practice and impaled him with his Tartar lances. He then had his body hurled into the Vardar River. Karposh died in early December 1689 and with him died the Karposh uprising.

For the rebels who survived the battles there was no salvation from the Ottoman backlash except to leave Macedonia. Many fled north beyond the Sava and Danube Rivers. Some even went as far north as the Ukraine and Russia and joined the Russian military. There they formed the "Macedonian regiment" which became part of the regular Russian army. The failed Karposh uprising depleted the local population of northwestern Macedonia of people opening the way for large scale Albanian immigration.

Just as the Karposh revolt was winding down in Macedonia, on April 6, 1690, Leopold I issued a manifesto inviting "all peoples of Albania, Serbia, Mysia, Bulgaria, Silistria, Illyria, Macedonia and Rashka to join the Austrians in taking up arms against the Turks." Then on April 26, 1690 he issued a letter making Macedonia and her people his protectorate. It has been said that Leopold acted on the advice of Macedonians Marko Krajda of Kozhani and Dimitri Georgija Popovich of Solun. Among other things the letter stated that "we graciously accept the Macedonian people, in its entirety in every respect, under our imperial and regal protection." Another letter was issued on May 31, 1690 extending Austria's protection to Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania. Unfortunately, all these good gestures were too little too late for Macedonia which by 1690 was back under tight Ottoman control.

The 18th century witnessed renewed conflicts with several new wars breaking out, resulting in more negative consequences for the Macedonian people.

Internally, the Ottoman Empire was plagued with feudal anarchy, perpetrated by the powerful feudal lords. Some were so powerful that they openly defied the central government by not submitting taxes and by using state money to bolster their own private armies and maintain their own independence.

Besides the renegade begs, the 18th century also gave rise to a new breed of bandits who found it easier to rob innocent people than to work. At times these groups numbered as high as five hundred roaming the Macedonian countryside, robbing and looting entire villages at a time. Most of these marauding bandits were of Turkish and Albanian extraction. They often collaborated with the defiant feudal lords and corrupt state officials, doing their dirty work.

By 1715 banditry had become a reputable profession and, for some, robbing and looting became a way of life. When complaints from Turkish merchants and businessmen began to arrive the Ottoman State had no choice but to intervene.

At times even the *martolozes*, men hired to protect the population, also contributed to the anarchy. Instead of upholding the law, they held up villages, taking food and materials without paying. Some even committed atrocities under the pretext of pursuing outlaws.

During the Ottoman war with Austria and Russia, which lasted from 1787 to 1792, a new group of bandits, known as the *krcali*, appeared in Macedonia. The *krcali* were a large group who used various mountains throughout Macedonia for cover. The *krcali* were organized in bands of about two thousand. Their ranks consisted of peasants, army deserters and women, people of all faiths and nationalities. They rode on horseback and were extremely mobile. They were known for their surprise attacks and lightning fast ability to loot whole villages and towns. Many districts were devastated by the *krcali* who were hunted down by the Sultan's army for a decade before they were eradicated.

The greatest victims of this anarchy were the defenseless Christians whose only way of getting justice was for themselves to become outlaws. As in the 17th century, outlawry exploded again in the 18th century forcing the Ottoman State into a crisis. Unable to deal with outlawry on its own, the central government made it the responsibility of the general population by imposing additional taxes on them.

Unable to stop the outlaws by conventional methods, the Ottoman authorities proposed various different schemes including employing them as *martolozes* (protectors) with a regular monthly income. The bands that agreed to the terms were pardoned for their past crimes. Unable to deal with the outlaws on its own was a clear signal that the Ottoman central government was weakening which prompted a further escalation in anarchic activities.

Attacks on the Macedonian peasant population in both villages and towns were carried out on a regular basis. The pressure of violence caused people to leave the dangerous countryside for the safety of larger towns. Macedonians left their rural homes for the urban setting thus opening up opportunities for foreign influx, mostly Albanians, to fill the void. With more Macedonians flooding the towns the economy began to shift from agriculture to craftsmanship and commerce. Also, coincidental with the movement of people, craftsman trades were gradually set free from small individual commissions for local consumption to the large production of goods for export.

With the majority of the trades operated by Macedonians, leadership in the guilds began to slowly change hands. Macedonian merchants began to venture further out to strengthen their links with the outside world. Ohrid merchants began to trade with those of Port Durazzo thus gaining access to cities in Italy. Also merchants from Kostur opened trade with Venice and Austria. Macedonian trading houses were opened in Solun, Kostur, Bansko, Serres, Voden and Ohrid with bureaus in Bucharest, Timisoara, Budapest, Vienna, Livorno, Venice, Odessa and Moscow.

Christians were allowed to trade with the usual restriction both inside and outside of the Ottoman world but Muslims were prohibited to do so by law. According to Muslim law, ordinary Muslims were not allowed to handle money, speak foreign languages, or venture beyond Islamic held lands. Therefore, a select class of Christians known as the Phanariots was appointed by the Sultan to handle official trade, communication and contact with the outside world.

The Phanariots were a group of wealthy Christians who got their name from the “Phanar” or lighthouse district of Tsari Grad where they lived. After the Sultan installed the Patriarch (highest religious leader of the Eastern Orthodox Church) in Tsari Grad (Constantinople), the Phanar became a thriving community of wealthy and educated Christians. The Sultan placed the Phanariot Patriarch in charge of the Christian Millet because he found him more agreeable than his other (poor) Christian counterparts. The Patriarchy functioned like a state within a state with its own administration and services. Having the Sultan’s favour, the Patriarch took the opportunity to expand his dominion over the entire Eastern Christian Church by replacing whatever legitimate bishoprics he could with his own corrupt people. For example, the Old Serbian bishoprics were abolished as punishment for helping the Habsburgs (Ausro-Hungarian Empire). At about the same time the Macedonian bishopric, including the powerful Ohrid bishopric, was also abolished. After becoming *gospodars* (lords), the Phanariots replaced all the Romanian bishoprics. As *gospodars* in Romania, the Phanariots abolished Church Slavonic (Macedonian) liturgy and replaced Macedonian speaking clergy with Romanians. The Romanians however, didn’t care much for the Phanariots and pursued

Romanian ways. Eventually as more and more bishoprics were shut down the Phanariots redefined the old culture, Christian faith and Christian education to suit themselves and their corrupt ways.

The Ottomans trusted the Phanariots well enough to give them a role in the central Ottoman administration. This included the office of the “Dragoman”, the head of the Sultan's interpreters’ service. Phanariots participated in diplomatic negotiations with outsiders and some even became ambassadors for the Ottoman Empire. Phanariots were put in charge of collecting taxes from the Christian Millet for the Ottomans and whatever they could pilfer from the peasants they kept for themselves. Many scholars believe that Romania’s peasants have never suffered more than they did during the Phanariot period. Phanariots also secured food and other services for the Ottoman court.

The Phanariots, through the Dragoman, were largely responsible for providing “all kinds” of information to the outside world about the Ottoman Empire, including their own desires to rule it some day. Some Phanariots were educated abroad in London and Paris and were responsible for bringing information into the Ottoman Empire. Towards the middle of the 18th century, the Phanariot dream was to replace the Ottoman Empire with a Christian Empire like the Russian model. In theory, they wanted to re-create a multi-cultural Pravoslav Empire (Byzantine) but with a Patriarch in charge. The Phanariots believed that with Russian or German help it was possible to achieve their goals.

The power and money hungry Phanariots were not content with only running the Ottoman administration but sought to possess all the eparchies of the Pravoslav Churches. Pressured by the Phanariots, the Patriarchate of Tsari Grad increasingly began to interfere in the affairs of the various Archbishoprics including the Church of Ohrid. Using his influence with the Sultan, in May 1763, the Patriarch attempted to appoint a man of his choice, the monk Ananias, as head of Ohrid. Ananias, however, was rejected and the Archbishopric elected Arsenius, the Macedonian Metropolitan from Pelagonia. This unfortunately proved disastrous for the Archbishopric. The Patriarch retaliated and by means of bribery and intrigue, with the aid of the Ottoman authorities and his allies among the higher clergy in the Ohrid Church, he gradually did away with the Archbishopric. On January 16, 1767 Arsenius was forced to resign his office voluntarily, recognize the Patriarchate of Tsari Grad and personally request the abolition of the Ohrid Archbishopric. The Sultan issued a decree making the abolition legal and annexing its eparchies to the Patriarchate of Tsari Grad. The Ohrid Eparchy itself was abolished and the town came under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Durazzo. Aiming to eradicate every single trace of the once autocephalous Ohrid church, the Patriarchate even changed Ohrid’s name to Lychnidos. The local bishops

were replaced with Koine speakers throughout Macedonia and new ecclesiastical taxes were introduced.

After the unfortunate loss of the Ohrid Church to the Patriarchate, monasteries were virtually the only cultural centers left in Macedonia. Having a large number of Slavonic (Macedonian) manuscripts in their possession, the monasteries took over the tradition of copying and reproducing liturgical, philosophical, educational and other ecclesiastical documents. Included among the most important of these monasteries were the Lesnovo Monastery near Kratovo, Matejche and St. Prohor Pchinski near Kumanovo, Slepche near Demir Hisar, Treskavets near Prilep, Prechista near Kichevo, John Bigorski near Debar and Polog in the Tikvesh district. The desire to continue in the Macedonian tradition was provided by Sveta Gora (Holy mountain or Mt. Athos) where the Macedonian culture and Slavonic language continued to be cherished and heard in the monasteries of Chilandar, Zograph and Panteleimon.

Among the various documents kept by the clergy in Sveta Gora were monastic records of the names and donations of all visitors to the monasteries. Important documents of Slavonic literacy such as Clement's Charter, the Slepche Letters, the Macedonian Damascene of the 16th century, the Tikvesh Collection of the 16th and 17th centuries and the Treskavets Codicil of the 17th and 18th centuries were also preserved in Sveta Gora.

Monasteries provided shelter for teaching cleric students to read and write in the Macedonian language. During the 17th and more so during the 18th century, Macedonian monks began to open schools in the towns near their churches where they taught basic literacy to willing students. Such schools were also operated in Veles, Skopje and Prilep.

New churches, built mostly by villages in Macedonia during Ottoman rule, were far smaller and more modest than those built in the pre-Ottoman period. Architecturally their form was simple, to make them indistinguishable from the houses in the village. A fresco painting hanging on the interior wall and several icons mounted on wooden iconostases were the only things that distinguished churches from houses.

Icon paintings were still painted in the old style but the quality of the work gradually declined. Original works became a rarity and artistic creativity boiled down to nothing more than imitations and copying the great works from previous epochs. The number of painters, journeymen and apprentices also declined and so did their field work.

During the 18th century several painting studios existed, the most significant being located in the Ohrid and Prespa district, the Treskavets and Zrze monasteries in the Prilep district, Slepche, Lesnovo and the Skopje Tsrna Gora.

Some of the works produced during this and earlier periods were of considerable artistic value and of importance to the churches. Examples of

these include the paintings in the Church of the Holy Virgin located in a cave at Peshtani. The snake cross in the Church of St. Demetrius in Ohrid was painted at the end of the 15th century. The monk Makarios, from the village of Zrze, painted the icon of the Virgin of Pelagonia in 1422, and the portrait of Kuppen, painted in 1607, was in the Church of the Holy Virgin at Slivnitsa Monastery in the village of Slivnitsa in the Prespa district.

The influence of oriental elements in Macedonian woodcarving also increased during the same period. The double braid, carved in shallow and flat carvings, was a pure and exclusive motif right up until the 17th and early 18th centuries when more intricate carvings began to appear. Good examples of shallow carving are the doors of the old monastery, Church of St. John the Baptist at Slepche. Other exceptionally good pieces of woodcarving are the doors of the Treskavets Monastery, probably carved at the end of the 15th century.

Shallow woodcarvings can also be found on icon frames from the same period. The most interesting is that of the baptism of Christ found in the Church of the Holy Virgin at the Slivnitsa Monastery.

Deep incisions began to appear at the close of the 17th century, showing superior beauty in contrast to the shallow carvings. Good examples of deep carvings are the iconostases of St. Naum Church near Lake Ohrid (1711) and St. Demetrius Church in Bitola (1775).

On the subject of music, the necessary conditions for the development of professional music in Macedonia were not quite there during the Ottoman era. Folk music, however, flourished and was very popular with the Macedonian people, not only for its entertaining qualities but also for its manifestations of soul, spirit, joy, suffering and pain. Most composers, unfortunately, chose to remain anonymous and cannot be credited for their work. Apart from church music, which continued to be sung in the Pravoslav chant style, folk music dominated Macedonian melodies virtually up until the end of the 19th century.

Apart from being conquerors and tyrants the Ottomans also had positive qualities. Turkish literature in Macedonia started as far back as the second half of the 15th century. Skopje, Enidzhe Vardar, and Endrene (Adrianople) were the largest Turkish cultural centers in the European part of the Ottoman State. Literature and poetry were the most valued and cherished aspects of Turkish culture which flourished during the 15th and 16th centuries but began to decline in the second half of the 17th century.

Wherever a sizable Muslim population lived in Macedonia, it left its mark in the form of Islamic temples, either as mosques or as mescids (smaller mosques).

Another form of Ottoman artistic expression was mausoleums, which also left their mark in Macedonia. Distinguished Ottomans were buried in

mausoleums. One of the oldest that has been preserved is the mausoleum at Isaac Beg's mosque in Skopje.

Another group of Muslims who left their mark on Macedonian soil were the Dervishes. Wherever dervishes were found, so were their convents and hermitages.

More forms of Ottoman architectural expressions in Macedonia were the medresas, or religious schools which occupied a place of distinction among Macedonia's urban panorama. Isaac Beg built one of the first significant medresas in Skopje in 1445. Other prominent Ottoman buildings included large numbers of imarets, or free kitchens for the poor and travelers. Medresas and imarets usually existed as ancillary buildings in complexes among the larger mosques.

The Ottomans also owned numerous inns and caravanserais, which were built in the more important urban and commercial centers at various intervals along the main traffic routes in Macedonia. One of the finest was the Kurshumli Caravanserai in Skopje.

Covered markets or bezsnes were also popular in Macedonia, built to meet the needs of growing commerce in the various towns. One such place was the Mustapha Pasha covered marketplace in Skopje.

We must not forget the famous hamams or Turkish public baths, which were offered to the public both in towns and villages. Some, like the Daut Pasha Baths and the Cift Baths in Skopje, were immensely large and beautiful structures. Also of importance were the public systems of piped water, drinking fountains and wells.

Turkish educational institutions, which were emphatically religious in nature, in addition to teaching religion, offered students the opportunity to study Oriental languages, Islamic law, philosophy and mathematics. Education was conducted in the medresas (religious high schools) and the mektebs (religious elementary schools). By the 15th century two medresas were operating in Skopje. The Isaac Beg Medresa, was one of the oldest and most famous in the entire Balkans

Books were also important in the cultural life of the Islamic world. Oriental libraries, consisting mostly of religious books, were set up throughout the mosques, medresas and convents all over Macedonia. The oldest, richest and most important of these libraries was the library in Isaac Beg's mosque in Skopje.

Besides the Turks, the Albanians in Macedonia also possessed a rich culture. Life experiences were preserved in calendar songs, cradle songs, wedding and love songs. Some of the oldest and richest epics still exist in the Debar and Kichevo regions and are part of the Albanian mythological heritage. Albanian literature was also rich in folk tales.

With regard to dress, Albanian women wore clothes exceptionally rich in colour with a unique dress design. One could tell to which village a

woman belonged by the colours and patterns on her dress. Men's clothing was fairly standard throughout Macedonia.

Unlike Muslim Turks and Albanians, who were free to enjoy their cultures, Christian Macedonians found the Turkish yoke increasingly unbearable, particularly from the Turkish troops who enjoyed abusing, humiliating and harassing them. With bases in Tsari Grad and Solun, troops constantly passed through Macedonia on their way to and from wars. Dissatisfied with their own condition, the soldiers often took their frustration out on the Macedonian population.

There were always Turkish soldiers in Solun so in spite of harsh living conditions no Solunian dared cause trouble unless living conditions became unbearable. In 1712 a plague broke out as a result of poor living conditions and by 1713 over 8,000 people had lost their lives. In 1720 the people of Solun had had just about enough of Turkish rule and took up arms when their wheat supplies were cut and there was no bread to eat. The same happened in 1753, 1758 and again in 1789. According to descriptions of 18th century Solun, the city had not grown beyond the confines of the Pravoslav walls, parts of which still remained in good condition. Solun had four big towers, three of which were rectangular and one circular, (the White Tower still exists to this day) located at the southern part of the fortified walls.

The population of 18th century Solun numbered approximately 40,000 people, most of whom were Turks and Jews. The streets in the commercial district were covered over with boards forming a continuous roof, providing shade for the shoppers on the hot summer days.

On the international stage, the military balance continued to shift away from the Ottomans as they continued to lose their edge in technology and modern weaponry. While western economies continued to improve, Ottoman economic development remained stagnant. A century of military defeats suffered at the hands of the western Europeans devastated the Ottoman Empire. More recently, the emergence of Russia as another powerful Ottoman foe also added to the Ottoman misery.

Ottoman-Russian wars began as early as 1677. Russia attacked the Crimea in 1689 and in 1695 captured the crucial port of Azov. Russia, up to this point, had been completely cut off from the Black Sea and had suffered immensely both economically and politically at the hands of the Ottomans.

Faced with multiple fronts, the Ottoman Empire began to shrink and for the first time since its invasions of Europe it began to permanently lose conquered lands. By the year 1700 the Sultan had surrendered almost all of Hungary, as well as Transylvania, Croatia and Slovenia to the Habsburgs while yielding Dalmatia, the Morea and some Aegean islands to Venice and Padolia and the South Ukraine to Poland. Russia had gained some

territories north of the Dniester River, lost them for a while and regained them again later.

Another minor but crucial event for the south Balkans took place in 1711 when one of the Moldavian *gospodars* (lords) was accused of collaborating with the Russian army and was held responsible for the Russian invasion of Romania. As punishment the Ottomans replaced all Romanian and Moldavian *gospodars* with Phanariots from Tsari Grad.

Ottoman losses were not limited to Europe alone. On the eastern front, in a series of unsuccessful wars between 1723 and 1736, the Turks lost Azerbaijan and other lands to the Persians. A decade later in 1746, after two centuries of war, the Ottomans abandoned the conflict with Iran leaving their Iranian rivals to face political anarchy.

The agreement signed at Kuchuk Kainarji in 1774 with the Russian Romanovs, similar to the 1699 Karlowitz treaty with Austria, highlights the extent of the losses suffered by the Ottomans during the 18th century. The 1768 to 1774 war, the first with Tsaritsa Catherine the Great, included the annihilation of the Ottoman fleet in the Aegean near Chezme. Russian ships sailed from the Baltic Sea through Gibraltar, across the Mediterranean Sea and sank the Ottoman fleet at its home base. By this victorious engagement Russia forced the Sultan to break ties with the Crimean Khan. Without the Sultan's protection, the Khans were left at Russia's mercy. In a sense, the Sultan too lost out because he could no longer count on the Khans for help.

The 1774 Kuchuk Kainarji Treaty gave Russian ships access to the Black Sea, the Bosphorus and Endrene (the Dardanelles). By this treaty Russia built an Orthodox church in Tsari Grad and became the self appointed "protector of Orthodox Christians" inside the Ottoman domain including Wallachia (Romania) and Moldavia. Also, for the first time, the Ottomans allowed Russian (outside) consular agents inside their empire. Russia at the time did not have enough ships to fill the shipping demands so many of the shipping contracts went to Phanariot captains who were on friendly terms with both the Russians and Ottomans.

Russian gains at the expense of the Ottoman's began to raise suspicions with western States, particularly since Russia appointed herself protector of all Pravoslav Christians.

The next event to shake the world was the French revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte's rise to power. Bonaparte invaded Egypt in 1798 which marked the end of Ottoman dominion in this vital and rich province along the Nile. The Ottoman central government never regained Egypt, which later emerged as a separate state under Muhammad Ali Pasha and his descendants. After Ali's death his successors kept close ties with the Ottomans in Tsari Grad but remained independent.

Among the many losses the Ottomans experienced also came some gains. In the 1714 to 1718 war with Venice the Turks took back the Morea.

Towards the end of the 18th century and in the early part of the 19th century, Macedonia, like other parts of European Turkey, was a hotbed of unrest. Trouble was stirred up by the military deserters and by local feudal lords who, in the absence of the Ottoman military, had declared themselves independent and were fighting with one another for greater dominion.

The political and economic insecurity created by this anarchy and by the central government's inability to cope, forced another large migration of Macedonians from the villages into the towns. The sudden growth in the urban population caused an increase in the production of crafts and agricultural products, which became trading commodities for the central European and Russian markets. The fairs in Serres, Prilep, Doyran, Struga, Enidzhe Vardar, Petrich and Nevrokop became commercial trading posts for both domestic and foreign trade. The newly created market network enabled Macedonian businessmen to develop trading ties with the outside world. Businessmen from Veles, Bitola, Serres, Bansko and Ohrid set up their own agencies in Vienna, Leipzig, Trieste and Belgrade. Along with trade also came prosperity and exposure to the outside world. Macedonian merchants became the bearers of progressive ideas, education, culture and Macedonian national sentiment.

The Kuchuk Kainarji Treaty bolstered Russian expansionism in the Balkans, which alarmed the western Powers and initiated the "Eastern Question"; "What will happen to the Balkans when the Ottoman Empire disappears?" The Eastern Question of the 1800's later became the Macedonian Question of the 1900's.

At about the same time as Russia was making her way into the Balkans, the west was also experiencing changes. The industrial revolution was in full swing, coming out of England and progressing towards the rest of the world. France was the economic superpower but was quickly losing ground to England. The French Revolution (1789) gave birth not only to new ideas and nationalism, but also to Napoleon Bonaparte. As Napoleon waged war in Europe and the Middle East, French shipping in the Mediterranean subsided only to be replaced by the Phanariot and British traders. French trade inside Ottoman territory also declined and never fully recovered. By land, due to the long border, Austria dominated trade with the Ottoman Empire exercising its own brand of influence on the Balkans.

As the turn of the 19th century brought economic change to Europe, the Balkans became the last frontier for capitalist expansion. By the 1800's Europe's political, economic and military institutions were rapidly changing. Western governments and exporters were aggressively pursuing Balkan markets on behalf of their western manufacturers. This aggressive pursuit smothered Balkan industries before they had a chance to develop and compete. As a result, Balkan economies began to decline causing civil unrest and nationalist uprisings. While western countries were left

undisturbed to develop economically and socially, external forces prevented Balkan societies from achieving similar progress. Mostly regulated by guilds, Balkan trades could not compete with western mechanization and went out of business. Without jobs, most city folk became a burden on the already economically strained rural peasants. The economic situation in the Balkans deteriorated to intolerable levels and like in the previous two centuries, people began to rebel.

Two overwhelming “forces” came into being in the 19th century, which transformed the Balkans. The first was the 1848 “western economic revolution” which thrust the Balkans into social and economic upheaval. The second was “increased intervention” from non-Balkan political forces. As the century advanced these developments merged, working not for the interests of the Balkan people but for the benefit of Europe's Great Powers.

Turkey's financial collapse opened the door for western governments to manipulate internal Ottoman policies as well as divert needed revenues to pay foreign debts. On top of that the Ottoman Empire was forced into becoming a consumer of western European commodities. While western Europe prospered from these ventures, Ottoman trades and guilds paid the ultimate price of bankruptcy. Lack of work in the cities bore more pressure on the village peasants, who were now being taxed to starvation to feed unemployed city dwellers, as well as maintaining the status quo for the rich. The Ottoman Empire became totally dependent on European capital for survival, which put the state past the financial halfway point of no return and marked the beginning of the end of Ottoman rule in Europe.

For the oppressed peoples of the Balkans, the dawn of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of national struggles for liberation from the centuries-long domination of the Ottoman Empire. The first was the Serbian uprising of 1804 followed by the Phanariot uprising of 1821. Macedonians, in an effort to liberate their Christian brothers from the oppressive Muslim Turk, took part in both uprisings. In the first Serbian uprising a Macedonian named Volche was instrumental in building the Deligrad fortifications and distinguished himself as a great fighter in battle. Petar Chardaklija was another Macedonian who also distinguished himself as a great fighter in the Serbian resistance. Petar Ichko, another Macedonian, led a delegation that concluded the well-known Ichko Peace Treaty of 1806 with the Ottoman government. When news of the Serbian uprising reached Macedonia the Macedonian people were stirred to action. Unfortunately the Ottoman authorities were ready and concentrated large numbers of troops in Macedonia, quelling the rebellion even before it had a chance to start.

Macedonians also participated in the Phanariot uprising of 1821. Immediately after the outbreak of the Morea revolt Macedonians formed their own bands, particularly in the Voden district and joined up with the Morean rebels. Among the band leaders who fought side by side with the

Moreans were the brothers Ramadanovi, Dimche Minov, Dincho Drzhilovich and Demir Trajko.

Strongly influenced by the ideals of the Phanariot freedom fighters who were calling on the entire Balkan population to take up arms against the Ottoman yoke, many Macedonians, particularly those in the Voden and Negush districts, did take up arms. In early March 1822, under the leadership of Atanas Karatase and Angel Gacho, a revolt broke out in the town of Negush. In no time the rebels put down the Turks and declared Negush liberated. The revolt quickly spread towards Voden engulfing a large number of villages. Unfortunately, effort and determination alone were not enough to stop the numerically superior Ottoman army. Isolated and besieged from all sides the rebels were suppressed and dispersed. After a fierce battle the Turks recaptured the town of Negush and persecutions and pillaging followed. To avoid further problems, the population of Negush was either enslaved or resettled in other parts of Macedonia.

The following is part of a letter written by Gacho that reveals the existence of the Negush uprising.

“No sooner had I heard the sound of Ares's bugle and the weeping call of my beloved fatherland for the protection of its rights than I scorned my tranquility, wealth and glory, took arms against the tyrants and managed to stay near Negush during the whole war. There I fought long and blood-shedding battles until the destruction of Negush, where my beloved children and my wife were taken, prisoner, but, thank God, they are now alive, although in a hostile country (exposed) to the will of the barbarians. Patriot, Angel Gacho, 16th September 1824”

(Page 183, The University of “Cyril and Methodius”, Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State, Volume One, Skopje, 1985)

This next letter is from the Sultan to the Kapticibasi, the Solun Mutesellim Jusuff Beg, concerning the uprising in Negush

“...We have heard that the disloyal villains from Negush and the surrounding villages, who rose to arms and for whose destruction we undertook a campaign with a great number of soldiers starting from Solun, built up at the end of the town real and strong redoubts defending the town under the leadership of the repulsive and false captains Zafiraki, Iliamandi, Karatase and others. Although there were a few traveling representatives sent to them from our side who advised them to hand over their arms, promising that they would be pardoned, and that in case they did not do it, they should expect an inglorious end, thus showing them the way to their salvation, they unrepentantly replied with the following curses: ‘We do not believe the words of Moslems and shall continue our disobedience and uprising.’ Therefore, putting into effect the orders of the declared fetva against them, it was decided that in future their greasy bodies should be

erased from the face of the earth. But as for the success of the aforementioned full pressure and complete surrounding of the neighbouring mountains is necessary, you are being ordered to mobilize from among the Moslems in the town (of Ber) 200 young men and distinguished fighters as soldiers, who, having been put under the command of the carrier of his order, our lord privy seal, Abdul Baki-Aga, should form a detachment which should leave for the Negush camp at once. That is why this order is being issued by the Solun divan and the Nengus camp. See that this order will be carried out as soon as possible and avoid any action contrary to it.

Tsari Grad, 3rd recep 1217

(26th March 1822)”

(Page 185, The University of “Cyril and Methodius”, Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State, Volume One, Skopje, 1985)

This next letter is from Naum Ichko to prince Milos Obrenovic.

“To the noble Master Milos Obrenovic, greeting him most kindly, I have received your noble letter of the 17th instant and understood what you are writing to me concerning the horse I bought from your servant and which was put up for sale. The Turks wanted to buy it, and it was good I bought it so that it did not come into their hands. I am most yours and the horse is yours too. I am driving it to pasture in Savamala, in a field; in three days the pasture will be finished. I shall be sending it saddled with the first boy who leaves for your palace. Since you already know about the sufferings in Negush, now I am informing you about my misfortune. A cousin of mine with his whole family happened to be there, fleeing from Katranica to Negush for safety; almost at the time Negush was taken they were taken as slaves: his wife, four girls and three sons. Nobody knows if my cousin is alive or dead. The family was imprisoned there by a bolukbasi from Debar and driven to Bitola in order to sell them to the Christians, because the merchants and craftsmen there bought out many slaves; the bishop only bought 30 slaves. When nobody could buy any slaves any more, the woman said to the merchants that she had a relative in Belgrade; the merchants said this to the bolukbasi asking him not to take them to the Arnautluk, but to wait 25 days until they informed me. The bolukbasi consented but said that he will not sell them for less than 4,000 coins. Then the merchants wrote me to send the money as ransom for those 8 souls. We must, my dear Master, not only redeem our relatives but also every Christian soul should be saved from Turkish hands. But it is difficult for me to find 4,000 coins, since the eparchy is weak; therefore I could only spare 1,500 coins and for the rest 4,000 I beseech you, kneeling before you, kissing your hands and feet, to help me to save those 8 souls for the souls of your parents and the health of noble Milan. It would be good, my dear Master, if you could intercede in favour and ask some of the

voivodes or pig merchants whom God has given wealth to help with 100 or 200 coins, to raise small funds, so that the Christians here can also redeem a few Christian souls from Turkish hands. Do you remember how many Serbian slaves were redeemed from Turkish hands by the Christians down there during the first years? The time has now come for us to pay the debt back. Two or three years ago you made it possible for various people to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy City of Jerusalem; now the time has come for your face to see that holy place. It is Jerusalem to save the slaves; this letter almost comes to you through commissioner Magus.

Please answer me so that Isaija can bring the answer to me by Friday evening, since the commissioner from Bitola is leaving on Saturday, and I may know what to write to the merchants in Bitola concerning those 8 souls.

I remain your obedient servant.

Naum Ichko

Belgrade, 23rd May 1822”

(Pages 185, 186 and 187, The University of “Cyril and Methodius”, Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State, Volume One, Skopje, 1985.)

The above letters are proof of the Negush (Nausa) uprising which took place in early March 1822. This is another Macedonian historical event that can no longer be hidden to protect the interests of Macedonia’s southern neighbour.

In addition to paying heavy taxes to the Ottomans, the village peasants of the Balkans were burdened with paying off western European loans. For some the burden was so great that it manifested itself in a number of independent uprisings. Discontentment with Turkish rule, economic plight and pure neglect of human life precipitated the “Eastern Crisis”.

The first of these uprisings began in 1875 in Bosnia but soon spread to Montenegro and Serbia. About a year later the village peasants in Bulgaria showed their discontentment and staged a massive liberation struggle. To a lesser extent, the liberation struggle extended to Macedonia where an armed insurrection took place in Razlog in 1876.

The growing discontentment of the peasantry in the Balkans disturbed the Great Powers which now had a vested interest in protecting the Ottoman Empire from falling apart. A conference was convened in Tsari Grad in 1876 to discuss strategies on how to deal with the insurrections and the “Eastern Question” in general. Representatives of Russia, Austria-Hungary, Britain, Germany, France and Italy attended the conference and decided to place Macedonia and Bulgaria under the control of the Great Powers. Turkey rejected their demands and soon found herself at odds with Russia. By early 1877, war broke out in Serbia and Montenegro followed by a massive Russian invasion of Bulgaria. The Turkish armies

were decimated and Turkey was forced to negotiate the March 3rd, 1878 San Stefano Treaty without Western Power consent.

Between the spring and summer of 1878, Macedonia's fate was decided not by Russia or the Western Powers, but by Britain alone. Britain who created Greece and introduced the curse of Hellenism into the Balkans, was now prepared to fight Russia, by military means if necessary, to keep her out of the Mediterranean Sea. To avoid war a compromise was reached. "The essentials of this compromise were agreed upon between England and Russia before the meeting of the European Congress, which took place at Berlin under the chairmanship of Bismarck, and formally substituted the Treaty of Berlin for the terms of San Stefano." (Page 377, Trevelyan, British History in the 19th Century)

"To our (British) eyes the real objection to the San Stefano lies not in its alleged increase in Russian power, but in the sacrifice of the fair claims of Greeks and Serbians, who would not have remained long quiet under the arrangements which ignored their racial rights and gave all the points to Bulgaria. Lord Salisbury felt this strongly, especially on behalf of Greece."

"Beaconsfield's success, as he himself saw it, consisted in restoring the European power of Turkey. It was done by handing back Macedonia to the Port (Turks), without guarantees for better government. This was the essence of the Treaty of Berlin as distinct from the Treaty of San Stefano. 'There is again a Turkey in Europe' Bismarck said. He congratulated the British Prime Minister – 'You have made a present to the Sultan of the richest province in the world; 4,000 square miles of the richest soil.' Unfortunately for themselves, the inhabitants went with the soil. Since Beaconsfield decided, perhaps rightly, that Macedonia should not be Bulgarian, some arrangements ought to have been made for its proper administration under a Christian governor. Apart of all questions of massacres, the deadening character of the Turkish rule is well known. Lord Salisbury seems to have wished for a Christian governor, but nothing was done in that direction. A golden opportunity was thus let slip." (Page 378, Trevelyan, British History in the 19th Century)

After gaining status as protector of the Suez Canal and the waterways to India, Britain was awarded Cyprus. Content with her gains, Britain became lax and agreed that Russia and Austria-Hungary should oversee Ottoman affairs in Macedonia. "The British people, when left to themselves, neither knew or cared who massacred whom between the Danube and the Aegean. Byron's Greece had appealed to their imagination and historical sense, but the Balkans were a battlefield of kites and crows." (Page 373, Trevelyan, British History in the 19th Century)

The Macedonian people were not at all happy about what went on in the Berlin Congress and showed their discontentment by demonstrating first in Kresna then in Razlog, but as usual their pleas were ignored. The

Turkish army was dispatched and the demonstrations were violently put down.

Facing the possibility of becoming extinct in Europe, the Ottoman Empire began to re-organize and take demonstrations and rebellions seriously. After the Greek uprising the Sultan became distrustful of the Phanariots and expelled most of them from his services. He came close to ousting the Patriarch and his tyrannical Bishops but Russia stepped in and prevented it. Many of the Slav people were not happy with being ruled by a Greek Patriarch and after Russia's show of solidarity to the Greeks and the Patriarch, they threatened to convert to Catholicism. This created a real concern for Russia. "In the days when Panslavism was a force in Russia and General Ignatieff ruled Constantinople. Russia naturally feared that if the Southern Slavs became Catholics she would lose her ascendancy over them." (Page 73, Brailsford, Macedonia)

In 1870 Russia convinced the Sultan to allow a new millet to be formed, thus creating the schismatic Bulgarian Exarchate Church which was immediately excommunicated by the Patriarch. Fracturing the Rum (Romeos) Millet into two opposing factions suited the Turks perfectly because now Christians, instead of rebelling against the Turks, would fight one another. Now, in addition to the Ottoman and Greek, a third government was created that would rule the same people in three conflicting ways. From a religious standpoint, minor differences distinguished the Greek from the Bulgarian Church. Both were Pravoslav (Christian Orthodox), except that the Greeks acknowledged the authority of the Greek Patriarch while the Bulgarians obeyed the Bulgarian Exarch. The language of liturgy was about the only distinct difference between the churches. The Bulgarians used the Old Church Slavonic (Macedonian), familiar to Macedonians, while the Greeks used an ancient language no Macedonian could understand. The creation of the Exarch Church stepped up nationalistic activities inside Macedonia and increased the stakes for territorial claims.

From the day they were liberated, both Serbia and Greece were strengthening their economies and poisoning their people with nationalistic propaganda. Serbia introduced education for the masses and was teaching her youth about her ancient exploits and past empires that ruled Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia and that the Slavs (except for the Bulgarians who were Serbia's enemies) were truly Serbs.

The modern Greeks on the other hand, infatuated with the discovery of the Ancient City States, were going overboard promoting "Hellenism" and making territorial claims on Macedonia based on ancient rites. At the same time, the Greeks were making wild claims that all Orthodox Christians were Greeks. Their argument was that if a person belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church they were Greek. Here is what Brailsford has to say about that. "Hellenism claims these peoples because they were civilized by

the Greek Orthodox Church. That is a conception which the Western mind grasps with difficulty. It is much as though the Roman Catholic Church should claim the greater part of Europe as the inheritance of Italy. To make the parallel complete we should have to imagine not only an Italian Pope and a College of Cardinals which Italians predominate, but a complete Italian hierarchy. If every Bishop in France and Germany were an Italian, if the official language of the church were not Latin but Italian and if every priest were a political agent working for the annexation of France and Germany to Italy, we should have some analogy to the state of things which actually exist in Turkey.” (Page 195, Brailsford, Macedonia) Here is what Brailsford has to say about how the Greeks received title to the Orthodox Church. “The Slavonic (Macedonian) Churches had disappeared from Macedonia, and everywhere the Greek Bishops, as intolerant as they were corrupt-‘Blind mouths that scarce themselves know how to hold a sheephook’-crushed out the national consciousness, the language, and the intellectual life of their Slav (Macedonian) flocks. It is as a result of this process that the Eastern Church is a Greek Church. The sanctions of ‘Hellenism’ so far as they rest on the Church, are the wealth of the Phanariots and the venality of the Turks...the Slav libraries in the old monasteries were burned by the Greek Bishops.” (Page 196, Brailsford, Macedonia)

After 1878, for a Macedonian to be Hellenized meant that he or she had to give up his or her name, his or her own language, his or her own culture, his or her history, his or her folklore and his or her heritage. Here is what Karakasidou has to say. “...The ideological content of notions of the Hellenic nation, which far from being ecumenical has shown itself to be intolerant of cultural or ethnic pluralism, has lead many inhabitants of Greek Macedonia to deny or hide those aspects of their own personal or family pasts...” (Page 125, Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood)

Hellenization was never made by choice, only by brute force. One was made to “feel Greek” when it suited the Greeks. The moment one wanted something from the Greeks or one crossed one of the Greeks, they were reminded of their “true identity” and quickly “put in their place”. To be Hellenized meant to lose dignity and to suffer constant and unwarranted humiliation because no matter how hard one tried to be a Hellene, one could never measure up. A Hellenized person was neither Greek nor Macedonian but a soul in limbo.

To quote David Holden “To me, philhellenism is a love affair with a dream which envisions ‘Greece’ and the ‘Greeks’ not as an actual place or as real people but as symbols of some imagined perfection.” (Page 12, Greece without Columns)

Officially, Greeks call their modern state Hellas, and are officially known as Hellenes, but at the same time they call themselves Romios (from the Turkish Rum millet) implying that they are descendents of the

Romans. Greece, however, is a derivation of the Latin “Graecia” (Page 29, Holden, Greece without Columns) the province of the Western Roman Empire which extended from Mount Olympus to the Peloponnesus. Again, to quote David Holden, “its international use to describe the sovereign state that currently occupies that territory is merely a reflection of the fact that ‘Greece’ in this modern sense is literally a western invention.” (Page 29, Greece without Columns)

Did it not once occur to westerners that in the heart of Macedonia, perhaps there was a unique Macedonian culture living there? Did it not once occur to them that perhaps the Macedonians with their multicultural and multiethnic character did not want to be molded to fit the western profile of what a nation should be? Only those who participated in the 1878 Berlin Congress and who forever committed Macedonia to suffer more cruelty and injustice can truly answer these questions. By throwing Macedonia back to the Greeks and the Turks it was punished for its stubborn ways. Macedonia refused to be molded into a monolithic unicultural, pseudo-homogeneous nation. One thing is for certain, as the West is now growing old and gaining wisdom and experience it is realizing that the way to peace and prosperity on a small planet is tolerance of minorities and democratic freedom and cultural and national pluralism. Macedonia, as it turns out, always had those qualities. As for the rest of the new Balkan States, one day they will realize the error of their ways and forever bear the shame of what they did to the Macedonian people.

I know that words can do no justice to the suffering the Macedonian people endured since 1878. I will do my best to describe what life was like to be ruled by the Turks, governed by the Greeks, pillaged by the Albanians and robbed and beaten by the villains of society. It has been said that education was a curse in Macedonia. No educated Macedonian who called himself or herself Macedonian lived to a ripe old age. If a person was educated, they died at the hands of his or her enemies, not because they were educated but because they were feared. The Turks feared them because they might rise up against them. The Greeks feared them because they might oppose them. The Bulgarians feared them because they might expose them.

By the time taxes and bribes were paid to the authorities, warlords and town hoods, a Macedonian family was left with 25 to 40 percent of their meager annual earnings to live on. To make ends meet Macedonian men were accustomed to taking on additional jobs within the Ottoman Empire or abroad to make enough to survive the winter. It has been said that after twenty-five years of achieving autonomy, Bulgaria was thriving economically thanks to the cheap labour provided by the Macedonian migrant workers.

Macedonians have always earned their living by sweat and blood and deserve more than they have been dealt in the past.

The West, including the USA and Canada were to some extent, also beneficiaries of cheap Macedonian labour. Western traders flooded Macedonia with cheaply manufactured goods and bankrupted the local (antiquated) industry (run by the guilds). Raw materials purchased from Macedonia were manufactured using cheap Macedonian labour and the finished products were sold back to the Macedonians at a profit.

A Macedonian could not rise above his tyrannical existence on his own because every time he did he was either killed for his education, robbed of his wealth, kicked out of his home for his lands, murdered for defending his family, or humiliated for his existence. This is not what Macedonians wanted for themselves, but those powerful enough refused to help them. The Greek clergy who were responsible for the well being of the Macedonian people were the first to condemn the Macedonians. Their first priorities were to Hellenize them so that they could steal their lands. The Greeks, with their “superior attitude”, despised the Macedonians because of their ethnicity and because of their agrarian abilities (which the Greeks loathed).

The Great Powers, in their zeal to dominate the Balkans, found themselves at odds with each other and by 1878 were either content with “doing nothing” or stifled by frustration and “turned their backs” on the mess they created. Turkey, for the West was the goose that kept on laying golden eggs.

No excuses or apologies from the English and the French can make up for unleashing Turkey and Hellenism on Macedonia after 1878. No Macedonian, or any human being for that matter, should ever forgive the Western Powers for putting profit ahead of human life and intentionally turning their backs on the Macedonian people.

Labeling people “Slav” and “Barbarian” because they were not educated does not make them inhuman and certainly does not excuse the so called “civilized” western societies for tormenting them. Here is what Petrovska has to say. “It is erroneous to dismiss peasant culture as backwards, simply because they are not literate cultures. Indeed the opposite is the case. Children were educated by way of story telling and folklore, which contained morals and lessons about life, relationships and their places in the world.” (Page 167, *Children of the Bird Goddess*)

One has only to examine Macedonian traditions, customs, dress, folklore and attitude towards life to find an “old race” full of vigour, enduring hardships, living as it always lived close to nature, always craving everlasting peace. Macedonian songs are timeless records of sorrow and of hope that “someday this too will pass”. Macedonians have survived to this day because they have a caring quality and a capacity to give and forgive, never wanting anything in return. Anyone who has visited a Macedonian home or has lived among Macedonians can attest to that.

Macedonia had done no ill against any nation to deserve her punishment from the Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians. Macedonians did not desire to be labeled “barbarian Slavs” or choose to be illiterate. It was “pure prejudice” on the part of Western Societies that degraded the Macedonian people to barbarian status and created the conditions for their neighbours to abuse them. The West’s artificial creation of Greece and Hellenism and the Greek quest for purity and national homogeneity is what upset the “natural balance” in the Balkans. Macedonia, since Alexander’s time, has been a “worldly” nation and has maintained her multi-ethnic, multi-cultural pluralistic character. If you take the Turks out of Macedonia in the 19th century you will find a society of many nations working and living together in peace, each doing what comes naturally. Anyone who has lived in Macedonia can attest to that. It has always been “outsiders” who upset the balance and disturbed the peace in the Balkans. While Western Europe slept through her “dark ages”, the people of the Balkans lived in relative harmony for over 1,100 years. Each ethnicity played an important role in maintaining the social and political balance and the economic self-sufficiency of the region.

During the 19th century almost all Macedonians lived in village communities. There were no Greeks living in the Macedonian mainland and only a small minority lived in the coastal towns, islands and larger cities. The majority of the villages were Macedonian with the odd Vlach village nestled here and there in the mountains. Macedonians spoke the Macedonian language and lived an agrarian life working the lands. Among the Macedonians lived some Vlachs who spoke both Vlach and Macedonian. Their main occupation was retail trade, running the local grocery stores and retail businesses. In addition to the Vlachs, there were roving Romas (Gypsies) who traveled from village to village trading their wares. They traded pack animals like horses, mules and donkeys, repaired old and sold new flour sifters, loom reeds and other fine crafts. They bartered with the village women and traded beads, string and sewing needles for beans and walnuts. To those who could afford it, they sold silk kerchiefs, handmade baskets and purses. With those who couldn’t afford them, they traded their wares for vegetables, eggs and a few bales of hay. Among themselves the Gypsies spoke their Gypsy dialect but with their customers they spoke Macedonian.

Another ethnicity that frequented the Macedonian landscape were the panhandlers from Epirus and Thessaly who performed magic on old copper pots and pans and made spoons and forks shine like mirrors. In addition to their own language, they too spoke Macedonian and were open to bartering for their wares and services.

Carpenters, stone masons, barrel makers and woodcutters came from far and wide. They came from as far as Albania or as close as the poorest Macedonian village. For a fair wage, some rakija (alcohol spiced with

anise during distillation) and three meals a day, they built fences, porches, staircases and entire houses. For the Macedonians the soil provided most of life's necessities. For the rest they bought, traded, or bartered.

The only desire Macedonians had in the 19th century was to rid themselves of the tyranny of the oppressive Turks. This was most evident in the communiqué's, appeals and manifestoes of the legendary Macedonia Revolutionary Committee.

While Macedonia was being choked by the Turkish noose of oppression, tormented by Hellenism and frustrated by Bulgarian deception, the Greek army, in 1881, annexed Thessaly and in 1885 the Bulgarian army (with Russia's support) annexed eastern Rumelia. While the Ottoman Empire was crumbling at the edges, it was tightening its grip ever harder on Macedonia. Looting, burning homes and murders were on the rise. More and more Macedonians were made homeless and forced to become outlaws. The brave ones took up arms and fought back only to see that their actions caused more deaths and misery. The Turks and their Albanian allies didn't care who they killed. If one Turk or Albanian died in battle, the army took revenge on the next village they encountered. Thousands of innocent women and children were murdered in revenge killings, not to mention the assaults on countless young girls. Homes were burned down and the inhabitants were shot as target practice as they ran out to save themselves from the fire. Those too old or sick to move died a horrible, fiery death. Many of the survivors from the burned out villages joined the outlaws in the mountains and as their ranks swelled they began to organize and fight back.

Western Europeans and Russians, on the other hand, were flooding the Ottoman Balkans on vacation, to do business or lend a helping hand as missionaries or relief workers. They enjoyed all the freedoms and privileges as honorary citizens of the Ottoman Empire, under the protection of their country's flag and paid nothing for the honour bestowed upon them, not even taxes.

It has been said that soon after the Turks conquered Albania, Albanians began to convert to Islam. As Muslims, the Albanians to a large extent enjoyed the same privileges and advantages as their conquerors. The advantages of becoming a Muslim as opposed to staying Christian were obvious. Those who wanted to retain title to their lands did not hesitate to convert. In fact many realized that by converting they could amass wealth and increase their own importance at the expense of their Christian neighbours.

By the 19th century about two-thirds of the Albanians embraced Islam and served in almost every capacity in the Ottoman administration including the Sultan's palace guard. Also by the 19th century a great deal of the Ottoman services became corrupt and self-serving. Being Muslims, the Albanians were protected from prosecution of crimes committed

against the Christians. This encouraged them to perform predatory acts like kidnappings for ransom, illegal taxation, extortion and forceful possession of property.

There are two documented methods, that I have come across, which describe how Albanians of the 19th century came to live in Macedonia, among the Macedonians.

1. To keep the Macedonians in check, the Turks created and strategically positioned Albanian villages inside Macedonia among the Macedonian villages.

2. By expelling or killing a few families in a Macedonian village, Albanian bandits could claim squatter's rights and move in. By the next generation, the children of the squatters would become the "begs" (lords) of the village which made them legitimate landowners. Being in charge of the village, they appointed their own family members and trusted friends into positions of authority like tax farmers and policemen. In this manner they could rule unchallenged.

Forceful occupation of villages was most prevalent during campaigns in the absence of the Turkish army. When the Turks were sent to fight against Russia in the east or against Napoleon in Egypt, the Albanians sought their chance and moved in unabated. Here is an excerpt from Brailsford's book about the habits of some Albanians. "He will rob openly and with violence but he will not steal...He will murder you without remorse if he conceives that you have insulted him..." (Page 224, Macedonia, Its Races and their future)

To be fair, I want to mention that Albanians have their good qualities as well. Brailsford speaks very highly of them when it comes to loyalty and honesty. As mentioned earlier, under the right conditions Albanians can peacefully co-exist with other ethnicities and be a contributing factor to the wealth of a nation. The Macedonians have for a long time co-existed side by side with Albanians. Also, the Albanians who fought to liberate Greece in Morea did not fight for Hellenism, they fought for the good of all the people of the Balkans, including the Macedonians. There was also that one-third of the Albanian population which remained faithful to Christianity that equally suffered the injustices of the Greek clergy and the Ottoman authorities that deserve mention.

The 1878 Treaty of Berlin set events in motion in the Balkans for the next forty years. The re-appearance of Ottoman soldiers, the worsening economy and the reign of terror imposed by the Greek clergy was crushing the spirits of the Macedonian people. In the meantime, the economic situation of the Great Powers and the new Balkan States was improving daily. In 1881 the Muhareem Decree gave Europeans complete control of Ottoman finances and trade markets. During the same year the Tsari Grad Conference of Great Powers agreed to the Greek annexation of Thessaly and Epirus. Later that same year Austria-Hungary agreed to allow Serbia

to annex parts of Macedonia in some future time. Four years later Bulgaria, with some Russian help, annexed eastern Rumelia. While the Western Powers were contemplating the "Eastern Question" and collecting returns from Turkish loans, the new Balkan States were plotting Macedonia's demise. Here is what each of them had to say:

Bulgaria: "Bulgaria's whole future depends on Macedonia, without her our State will be without importance or authority. Solun must be the main port of this State, the grand window to illuminate the entire building. If Macedonia does not belong to us, Bulgaria will never be firmly based".

Greece: "Macedonia is the lung of Greece, without it the rest of Greece would be condemned to death. For Greece to become a greater power she must expand into Macedonia."

Serbia: "We are ready to enter into any combination if necessary in order to prevent the Macedonian Question being settled in any way that harms our vital interests, without which Serbia cannot survive".

In addition to being handed back to the Turks, the 1878 Treaty of Berlin now subjected Macedonia to three new tyrants. In time, Macedonia would be subjected to all kinds of evil but the most cunning would turn out to be Bulgarian chauvinism. The Macedonian people knew very well where they stood with the Greeks. Greek policies were straightforward, Hellenize everyone by any means possible, force and brutality included. The Bulgarian approach was very different. The Bulgarians were interested in educating the Macedonian masses into believing that they were Bulgarians. Anyone who showed any opposition didn't live to tell about it. And so became the legacy of so many educated Macedonian young men and women.

It was the charismatic humanitarian William Gladstone, a three time British Prime Minister, who uttered the words "Macedonia for the Macedonians" which rang out like loud church bells throughout Macedonia. "Macedonia for the Macedonians" was the signal that rallied the Macedonians into action and gave them hope that finally the West would support their cause. In spite of his great sympathy for the Macedonian people, unfortunately, Gladstone was not in a position to help. The best the Great Powers could offer were "reforms". A great number of reforms were drafted and agreed upon but never implemented. The Turkish Pashas continued to humour the westerners with reams of fictional statistics and accomplishments, while the Begs (feudal lords) continued to dominate the "Chiflik" (estates) and squeeze the village peasants out of their existence. The only visible reforms were rail and road improvements sponsored by western companies who were able to divert Ottoman finances from the state budgets. Peasants who owned land were taxed so excessively that they had to work on Sunday at road and bridge building to catch up on back taxes. To get such a job they had to resort to bribery. As if that was not enough, in 1889, re-imposing a personal tax of seven

shillings per year for each newborn son further increased the tax burden. This was only reduced when the boy was able to work, at age fifteen. Some of these taxes were raised to assist small-scale manufacturing, which was largely owned by foreign investors. Village peasants were forced to sell their most valued possessions, hand-made crafts, old coins and heirlooms, for next to nothing, to pay these taxes.

By late 1890, those Macedonians who had land couldn't afford to work it because of high taxes and frequent raids. Those who worked for the Bega were at the mercy of their landlord without rights or legal recourse. The courts were clearly working against the Macedonians and beyond "external intervention" there was no way to challenge their tyrannical authority. Though the land was fertile there was no incentive to work. Agrarian life became a burden, filling village life with hopelessness and crushing the spirit of the Macedonian peasant. Many Macedonian men left their families and turned to pechalbarstvo (migrant work), traveling to various foreign countries in search of work but often returning home poorer due to high travel and lodging expenses. It was during these times that large emigrant Macedonian communities began to form in cities like Sofia, Paris, London, etc. Besides migrant workers, young Macedonian men also traveled abroad to pursue a higher education. They too became involved in the growing Macedonian worker communities. By the late 1890's over 100,000 Macedonian men were working or studying outside of Macedonia. Cafe conversations dominated by discussions of "what to do to improve the situation at home" became commonplace. It was clear to many that the discontentment they were experiencing was not a local or village issue, but a matter that enveloped all of Macedonia. It was also clear that Turkey would not allow Macedonia to protect herself or Turkish courts to rule in Macedonia's favour. It became clear to all that the only option open to a Macedonian was outright rebellion, a rebellion that would have common purpose, tactical mobilization and central direction. There were many lessons to be learned from the great deeds and disasters of the American war of Independence, the French Revolution and others. By the late 1890's Turkish tyranny was not the only ill in Macedonia. There was also the process of Hellenization, Greek propaganda and the Greek clergy to contend with. Beyond that there was Bulgarian propaganda that was becoming more venomous by the day.

On another front, escalated Bulgarian activities in Macedonia prompted Greece and Serbia to reconsider an old alliance (1866-67) of restoring ecclesiastical unity under the Patriarch in order to take away from the Exarchate. This alliance, due to Greek greed, for the time did not work out. This, however, would be a prelude to a future and deadlier alliance that would last to this day.

By 1890 the rebellion started to organize and gain momentum. The students were the first to take action. Student revolutionary organizations

were formed in Switzerland and Bulgaria. Both used various tactics to combat anti-Macedonian chauvinist Balkan propaganda. Organized in 1891, the group in Bulgaria allied itself with the organization of Macedonian emigrant workers (Pechalbari) in Sofia and had much success. In time more organizations sprang up in Russia, Britain and Greece but none could match the achievements of the Sofia based "Young Macedonian Literary Society" under the tutelage of Petar Pop Arsov. This Society of young Macedonians formulated its own constitution and managed the revolutionary publication "Loza" (Vine). The first issue of Loza came out in January 1892 followed by six more publications before the Society was denounced by the Greek and Serbian press, and claimed as "its own" by the Bulgarian press. According to official Bulgarian State policy, "Macedonians were Bulgarians" and any worthwhile Macedonian creation belonged to Bulgaria.

While émigré Macedonian students were fighting Greek and Bulgarian propaganda and shoring up western support, an historic moment inside Macedonia was about to unfold. It was October 23rd, 1893 in Solun when two high school teachers, Damjan Gruev and Anton Dimitrov, together with Petar Pop Arsov, a former editor of Loza and Hristo Tatarchev, a doctor, got together in bookshop owner Ivan Nikolov's house for an informal meeting. The main point of discussion was the plight of the Macedonian people and what to do about it. As word got around a committee was formed, more Macedonians got involved and a second (formal) meeting was held on February 9th, 1894. The topic of discussion included forming an organization and drafting of a constitution to guide the committee.

The organization became known as Vnatrezhna (Internal) Makedonska (Macedonian) Revolutsionerna (Revolutionary) Organizatsia (Organization), VMRO (IMRO).

Being clandestine in nature, IMRO had some difficulty recruiting new members, but within a year or so its influence extended beyond Solun and into the rest of Macedonia. Initially the organization was more ideological and less practical, with the majority of its recruits being teachers, most of whom taught at the Exarchate schools inside Macedonia. To rally the masses the organization needed to educate them and bring them in line with IMRO's objectives. For that it needed a charismatic leader who was able to talk to people at their own level and who was free to travel without too much interference from the authorities. The man who answered that call was Gotse Delchev, a man of vision matched by only a few, the father of the Macedonian Revolution and the soul of the movement

By 1896 VMRO was able to exert influence to a point where it acted like a state within a state, taking over administrative positions from the Ottomans, leading boycotts against Ottoman institutions and offering isolated villages protection from Greek and Bulgarian sponsored brigands.

In time IMRO operatives were able to penetrate Ottoman economic, educational and even judicial functions. The downside of "giving the people what they want" was that it opened the doors for Bulgarian infiltration. By "attitude" and use of the Greek language it was easy to recognize Greek influence. However, Bulgarian influence was not as easily recognized. While the Greeks cared nothing about Macedonian affairs and loathed the Macedonian language, the Bulgarians were part of Macedonian affairs and spoke the Macedonian language eloquently.

IMRO demonstrated great leadership by its ability to organize Macedonia into seven revolutionary districts (Solun, Serres, Strumitsa, Shtip, Skopje, Bitola and Endrene {Dardanelles}). It also demonstrated its weaknesses. Having allied itself with the poor village peasants and striving to refrain from obligations and debts, IMRO found itself strapped for finances.

The lack of sufficient arms brought home the realization that this "uprising" was going to be a long one. Here again, Gotse and the IMRO leadership proved their worth by adopting a policy of self-arming. With a little bit of skill on weapons manufacture, learned from the Armenian Revolutionaries, IMRO set up a number of munitions factories in remote and secluded areas, capable of producing homemade bombs and other explosives. Unfortunately, in 1900 during a raid at one of these factories, Dame Gruev was arrested by the Turkish authorities and imprisoned in Bitola. He came back to active duty in April 1903.

In spite of all efforts made to obtain them, the Macedonian "Cheti" lacked arms but had plenty of courage to make up for it, which in time put fear in the Turkish hearts. As IMRO grew beyond its ideological stage, it began to recruit, equip and train fighters. Volunteers were recruited mainly from the villages, young men who were willing to fight for their freedom. Those who were in trouble with the law (brigands) were armed and recruited into active duty. The outlaws were men who flourished by attacking Turks and stealing from them. They were admired for their courage and ability to live free. They were men who practiced the art of war, knew how to live in the open, how to ambush and how to hide. They were the men who taught the young Macedonian recruits to fight and win. The rest were reservists and lived at home, only called to duty as required. Each reservist was expected to purchase and secure his own rifle and ammunition. Recruitment was carried out in utmost secrecy. Even women were enlisted in the Macedonian revolution, but their role was limited to cooking, washing, mending and nursing the wounded.

The primary role of a fighter was to defend the people from Turkish and brigand attacks. The Cheti consisted of about five to ten men, organized for rapid mobilization and quick response. The goal was to have one Cheta responsible for one village (preferably their own) in all of Macedonia. The leader of each Cheta was chosen for his abilities to lead

his men, and more so, for the peoples' confidence in him to protect their village. To respond quickly, the Cheta had to be familiar with the village's terrain and escape routes. To maintain secrecy, all orders were given by word of mouth.

A turn for the worse for the Macedonian people came in April 1897 with the Goluchowski-Muraviev Agreement drawn up by Tsar Nikolas II of Russia and Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria. In part, the agreement called for Macedonian territory to be divided equally between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria at some future time.

To take advantage of this, a year later the Bulgarian Exarchate, instructed by the Bulgarian Prime Minister, created a Vrhovist (supremacist) organization and based it in Solun. Known as the "Revolutionary Brotherhood", it in turn began to form its own insurgent groups while all along pretending to be part of IMRO. Its purpose was to carry out terrorist activities and blame them on the real IMRO. The Bulgarian intention was to provoke a fight between IMRO and the Turkish militia with hopes that IMRO would be destroyed and the Turks would be weakened enough for Bulgaria to invade and permanently occupy Macedonia.

Brigand activities were not exclusive to the Bulgarians, the Greeks too through the Patriarchate Church employed brigands to harass and exact terror on villagers. Their aim was to forcefully Hellenize as many Macedonians as possible to show the world that "Greeks" indeed lived in Macedonia.

The Macedonian freedom fighters or Cheti were undermanned and poorly armed. They were fierce fighters and fought gallantly when it came to protecting their villages but were not prepared for an all out full scale war with the Turks.

The Turkish militia at the time had orders to conduct searches to collect weapons but it did not always operate under the best of ethics. Turkish soldiers discovered that they could make a lot more money by being paid not to punish the individual owning the weapon than to actually punish them. It became common practice to accept bribes. People who could afford to pay bribes were excluded from severe punishments. It was less of a punishment to produce a rifle than it was not to have one at all.

On January 31st, 1903 the Turks declared IMRO illegal and sought ways to destroy it. This created a controversy among the IMRO leadership where one group wanted to take immediate action and another felt they were not ready. The controversy gave the Vrhovists a chance to become a wedge between those in IMRO who wanted an immediate uprising and those who believed that an uprising at this point was suicidal. Gotse Delchev did not want an immediate uprising and was hoping to find a better solution. Unfortunately during a second Congress, mostly dominated by Vrhovists, held in Solun in February 1903 a decision was made to start

the uprising early. August 2nd, 1903 was picked as the date to commence the rebellion. Delchev and most of IMRO's loyal supporters feeling it was going to be a disaster boycotted the congress.

To weaken the Turks, the Vrhovists staged a number of bombings and terrorist acts. The Solun to Tsari Grad railway was bombed on March 18th, as was the Solun Ottoman bank a month later. This however, did not weaken the Turks as expected but instead brought more Turkish troops into Macedonia and further escalated the violence against innocent civilians.

The sudden rise in violence against Ottoman institutions was not well received by European investors and businessmen, who saw Ottoman Macedonia as a safe place to invest. The few lonely voices in London, who were supporting the Macedonian cause, were quickly drowned out by the many voices of discontent calling for the demise of the Macedonian freedom fighters now labeled terrorists.

A general staff was elected with Damjan Gruev as the head and preparations for the uprising began. In due time plans were made to begin organizing the uprising. The Cheti were armed with the few weapons available and began their training. On July 26th, 1903, by a dispatch to the Great Powers via the British vice-consul in Bitola, the General Staff formally announced the uprising. Then on July 28th, 1903 IMRO dispatched mounted couriers to all the sub-districts with the message "let the uprising begin". On the same day the General Staff also informed the Ottoman Director of Railways to warn travelers to choose a safer mode of transportation in order to avoid being hurt.

Despite the odds, the brave people of Macedonia heroically rose to the task with valour. They knew well enough that the fight they were about to undertake might not bring them what they desired yet they chose to fight anyway because it was a fight for freedom and freedom after centuries of slavery was valued above life itself. Unfortunately, that did not convince the Great Powers to lend a helping hand.

When the rebellion began, as a precaution, most villages were evacuated. People who left the villages took up residence in secluded places in the mountains. They took whatever they could carry and set up camp in temporary shelters constructed from tree branches and covered with vegetation. Livestock was fenced out of sight in wooded areas and ovens to cook food and bread were constructed underground.

Turkish soldiers had orders to burn down all empty villages, believing them to belong to families of insurgents, and spare the rest. In practice however, that's not how it turned out.

Villagers that didn't join the rebellion felt it was unnecessary to evacuate because they posed no threat to the Turks. Unfortunately the Turkish militia did not see it that way. Feeling the rebel sting, angry militiamen turned against all civilians and when they were done with them,

they burned their homes down. Neokazi near Lerin was one such village where 60 Macedonian men were captured and placed under arrest. On their way to Lerin the Turks tortured and massacred the men in cold blood. Eyewitnesses reported seeing the Turks lining up the men in rows and firing their newly acquired rifles at them to see how many one bullet could kill.

Three days later it was Armensko's turn. After losing a skirmish to Chakalarov, Haireddin Bimbishi's (the butcher of Smrdesht) troops, defeated, angry and embittered were heading for Lerin when they came across a welcoming committee at Armensko. The priest and villagers went out to greet and welcome the Turks in a peaceful manner but instead became their victims. Bimbishi's men turned on the defenseless village; pillaging, burning and satisfying their brutal lust.

As battles raged on throughout western Macedonia, the Cheti put down most of the local Turkish garrisons. They destroyed bridges, railway lines and communications centers, captured most chifliks and briefly liberated regions such as Kichevo, Demir-Hisar, Kostur, Lerin, Klisoura and Neveska. The cities of Kostur and Lerin themselves were not liberated. The most successful and highly celebrated of all battles was the storming of the town of Krushevo. Nikola Karev led the Cheti in the attack and defeated the local Turkish garrison with ease. The Macedonians quickly took over strategic points like the Post Office, Town Hall and local Police Station and declared Krushevo liberated. True to their democratic commitments, the leaders of the liberating force constituted the Krushevo assembly which appointed a committee of sixty members, twenty from each of the community's Macedonian, Vlach and Albanian populations. The committee in turn elected an executive body of six delegates, two from each community, which operated as a provisional government. The government in turn established a financial, judiciary and police force. "At Krushevo, under the rays of temporary liberty, fraternity and equality, national hatreds were dispelled and peace and concord reigned. For eleven whole days Krushevo lived as a little independent state, and although in miniature, clothed with flesh and blood that idea which spurred Macedonians to fight, against tyranny up to the Ilinden rising." (Page 193, Vasil Bogov, *Macedonian Revelation, Historical Documents Rock and Shatter Modern Political Ideology*)

The "Krushevo Republic", unfortunately, only lasted two weeks but it was a glorious Republic that will forever remind the Macedonian people of their eternal struggle for independence and thirst for freedom. The liberation of Krushevo imprinted on the new Macedonian generations the legacy of a timeless and irreversible march towards self-determination. Here again we see the Macedonian desire for multiculturalism and for a new multiethnic society waiting to resurface. The Republic was constituted

on a multiracial basis in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the Macedonian people.

Next to Krushevo, Kostur faired second best in the tactical mobilization of the Cheti, under the command of Lazar Pop Trajkov and Vasil Chakalarov. These brigades staged successful raids, liberating Klisura and Neveska, then returned southward and, with the support of over three thousand villagers, attacked Kostur but without success. In the meantime other Cheti attacked and liberated Ohrid, which remained free for almost three months. The Ohrid attack was the most successful in terms of advance planning and administering the establishment of medical aid, underground workshops, secret bakeries and securing foodstuffs. Ohrid later became the center for establishing refugee camps for many displaced persons.

Uprisings outside of western Macedonia were limited to swift guerilla actions consisting mostly of attacks against Ottoman institutions, bombings of railway lines and the occasional skirmish with the Turkish militia. Many Cheti were successful in capturing important Turkish officials. They hoped to construct dialogue for prospective negotiations but, in actuality, met with little success.

Vrhovist involvement, as expected, was minimal during the uprising and brought to light, once again, the true nature of Vrhovism (Macedonia for the Bulgarians).

As the Cheti fought gallantly putting down garrison after garrison in the larger towns, many of the smaller villages were left unprotected and open to Bashi-bazouk (armed Muslim civilians) and Turkish militia attacks. Keeping in mind the Neokrazi and Armensko incidents, many of the Cheta chiefs felt compelled to return home to repel such attacks. Due to this and the fact that the numerically superior Turkish militia overpowered the Cheti, in the short term, a large-scale operation against the Turks never materialized. Unfortunately, as time passed so did the opportunity for a decisive strike, as an even larger Turkish force was amassing.

The initial success of the rebellion was a surprise to the Turks especially since Turkish forces were numerically superior. The Cheti demonstrated their abilities in battle and more than matched the numbers with will. Turkey, unfortunately, was determined to put down the rebellion and amassed additional forces, deploying a total of 167,000 infantry, 3,700 cavalry and 440 pieces of artillery (all cannons). Krushevo alone was surrounded by 20,000 Turkish troops with 18 cannons against an encircled force of no more than 1,200 rebels. The battle to retake Krushevo began on August 12th with the Macedonians crying out "Sloboda ili Smirt" (liberty or death) against the onslaught of Turkish cannon fire. Pitu Guli and his men fought gallantly by providing stiff opposition to the Turkish advance but were no match for General Baktiar Pasha's forces. Baktiar was a

skilled war veteran who overwhelmed the Cheti by attacking the entire region simultaneously. The region was surrounded by soldiers, encircled by cannon fire and every Macedonian stronghold within was simultaneously attacked, cutting off all reinforcements.

After the mountains lit up with gunfire and smoke filled the skies, no Great Powers came to the rescue. Macedonians were left alone to feel the full brunt of the Ottoman Empire's army and to pay for all of Europe's sins committed against the Turks.

Once Krushevo fell, one by one other IMRO strongholds began to yield, winding down the ten-week-old rebellion. In Krushevo, Baktiar Pasha allowed his troops to kill, pillage and rape for three days. The town was permanently devastated with 117 civilians murdered, 150 women raped and 159 houses burned.

In the Ilinden aftermath, according to Michael Radin, in total 4,694 civilians were murdered, 3,122 women raped, 12,440 houses burned, 201 villages razed, 75,835 people left homeless and about 30,000 people left the country for good, becoming permanent refugees. (Page 105, IMRO and the Macedonian Question) Besides the atrocities committed against the civilian population in Macedonia, the most significant impact of the uprising was the loss of so many great IMRO leaders.

Despite the negative attitudes of the European Governments, there was much press about the Ilinden rebellion. World opinion was generally sympathetic to the Macedonian cause and highly critical of the Ottoman atrocities. Emigrant Macedonians the world over bombarded the Western Press with scathing attacks on the British, French and Austrian governments for supporting Turkey, militarily and financially. Even emigrants as far as the United States staged large rallies in support of the rebellion. In New York alone more than 100,000 gathered to show support. A Chicago newspaper reported that a Macedonian regiment had formed in that city and was preparing to take part in the rebellion.

Closer to home, south Slav Nations such as Slovenia and Vojvodina held public meetings in support of the Macedonian Revolution. Even the European press featured sympathetic headlines when covering the rebellion. "It was a bitter struggle between the tortured slaves fighting en masse, often without weapons, but on spirit alone, for life and liberty; and the sadistic Pasha and his cohorts, murdering and plundering with rabidity." (Giorgio Nurigiani) British official policy, however, was less than sympathetic. According to the Daily News September 14, 1903, Prime Minister Balfour told the House of Commons, "...the balance of criminality lies not with the Turks, but with the rebels." The paper was critical of this attitude and recorded the following editorial: "The balance of criminality is surely here in our own land. Britain had denied Macedonia freedom at Berlin, knowing that (continued) Ottoman rule was synonymous with cruelty and tyranny, and by adopting a laissez-faire

attitude at the juncture, Britain is a consenting party to all the ghastly murders and massacres in Macedonia..." (Page 107, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

While there was public outcry in the streets regarding the treatment of Macedonians, the British Government cared less about Macedonia's suffering than about Bulgarian threats to their precious Ottoman Empire. Being weakened by the Macedonian rebellion, the thinking in London was that Turkey was now ripe for a Bulgarian invasion. Balfour used the Macedonian rebellion as a pretext to move Britain's Mediterranean Fleet into the Aegean Sea fearing that war between Bulgaria and Turkey was now inevitable.

At about the same time Greek-Turkish relations began to warm up. The souring relationship between Turkey and Bulgaria was seen as a new opportunity by Greece to accelerate her Hellenization activities inside Macedonia. Making her way to Turkey, Greece had to first prop up her cool relationship with Germany. Her first attempt was initiated by inviting German help to re-organize the Greek military. After that Greece began to grant industrial and commercial favours to German businessmen, including the re-organization of the Greek telegraph.

The Turks, on the other hand, were looking for allies. The loss of Ottoman Crete to the Greeks was only a bruise to the Turkish ego, so the Turks were willing to forgive and forget. Losing Macedonia, however, was serious and bolstering its friendship with Greece was one way of staving off Bulgarian advances.

To preserve whatever they could from a failing rebellion, IMRO turned its attention to diplomacy. In September 1903 Pere Toshev, of IMRO, took a trip to Tsari Grad to elicit some guarantees from official representatives of the Great Powers. Toshev's only request was that Macedonia be given a Christian governor. Unfortunately, his request was rejected in favour of the status quo. Later, however, when statistics of Turkish atrocities started pouring in, the Great Power attitude softened a little. In October the Great Powers reconsidered Toshev's request, but instead of appointing a Christian governor each nation agreed to send a small "peace-keeping" force. This did not help the Macedonian position at all. In fact it hindered IMRO from self-defense initiatives even against bandit attacks.

Turkish atrocities committed against the Macedonian villages, in the eyes of the world, created bad publicity for Turkey and for its allies, the Western Powers. As a result, Turkish popularity started to decline and so did Turkey's favour with the Great Powers. Being financially strapped and having her hands tied, Turkey turned to her neighbours for assistance. By declaring Macedonia a "multi-interest zone" and inviting armed propaganda from Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, to counter IMRO insurgence, Turkey was hoping to turn the tide of the rebellion in her

favour. Again Great Power inaction put Macedonia and the Macedonian people in peril.

According to Brailsford, the Cheti fought about 150 battles in total with 746 casualties, which amounted to about 15 % of the total fighting force. In most of these encounters the Cheti were outnumbered by at least 10 Turks to 1 Macedonian. (Page 155, Macedonia its Races and their Future) Before it was all over, the Turks were attacking everywhere, even in secluded areas that once were beyond militia reach. To save themselves, many civilians resorted to camping among the fighters and even following them in wild battles. Their only safety was to be with the Cheti.

"... Sometimes the battle raged about the lair where the women and children lay, the men fighting with all their manhood to defend some shallow trench, knowing that behind them cowered wife and child expecting massacre if their courage failed or their bullets missed the mark." (Page 162, Brailsford, Macedonia its Races and their Future)

IMRO leaders, who survived the rebellion, responded decisively to the new crisis by establishing temporary centers where urgently needed food and medical supplies were distributed to the displaced population. While doing that they were also fighting a political battle with the Vrhovists for control of IMRO itself. The Bulgarians had dispatched Komitadjis (assassins) to eliminate the "old guard" but the legendary Yane Sandanski and his Cheta remained active and fought back fearlessly. When word got out that Sandanski was still alive and active, he gained a large following and was able to successfully repel all assassination attempts.

The Ilinden rebellion had no happy ending for Macedonia. The Macedonian people lost their bid for freedom and paid the ultimate price of being again enslaved, in spite of their efforts. The Macedonian rebellion did not succeed because there were too many factors working against it. The Macedonian people showed will and determination and rose to the task in spite of all odds. Compared to the Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian rebellions, the Macedonians were the most determined, well organized and most desperate, but they were not ready. The Serbians, Greeks and Bulgarians had only one enemy, the Turks, but received a lot of help from friends in high places (the Great Powers). In contrast, no one beyond the Macedonians themselves wanted the Macedonians to succeed. The Greeks and especially the Bulgarians went out of their way to create obstacles. The Great Powers, believing that they had nothing to gain, also abstained from helping Macedonia. The Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian struggles for independence prepared the Turks and made them more determined to deal with the Macedonians.

When the conflict was over, the people who returned to their villages were devastated to find their homes destroyed. Added to all their ills, winter was fast approaching and no food or shelter was to be found. To make matters worse, a curfew was placed on travel and those away from

home found themselves stranded. Those in need of work were no longer allowed to leave their vilayets. This was the first time in Macedonian history that Macedonians ever considered permanent emigration. Many early Macedonian emigrants to Canada, the USA and Australia were refugees from the Ilinden aftermath.

When reports of the uprising could no longer be contained and filtered out to the foreign media, it became clear that the Turks were not as successful as they had claimed, in keeping peace and maintaining the status quo in Macedonia. The Great Powers, Britain in particular, were disturbed by the atrocities committed by Turkish soldiers. On Britain's insistence the Great Powers recommended European officers take over command of the Turkish gendarmerie. Unfortunately, the European officers were Christians and the Turks refused to take orders from them. The German officers had some success because they had trained the Turks but not enough to make a difference. To prevent the situation from deteriorating further, Britain pushed for high-level reforms which resulted in the appointment of two Turkish inspectors but in the end they did nothing to ease the problems.

As mentioned earlier, determined to eradicate IMRO influence, Turkey turned to her neighbours for help. By declaring Macedonia a "multi-interest-zone" Turkey invited armed propaganda from Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia to counter the insurgents.

The failed uprising, loss of so many great IMRO leaders, the Turkish backlash and now the foreign influence was too much for IMRO. The close links with the villages and the ideological differences between isolated IMRO branches widened. Although IMRO continued to live, it lacked direction and was on the verge of an ideological collapse. In time, however, it managed to muster two more congresses. With the advent of Krste Misirkov's book, a new tide of opinion was spreading throughout Macedonia. Misirkov warned against falling under the influence of the chauvinistic elements and recommended taking a more nationalistic approach in order to weed out Vrhovist and conservative elements. At the Prilep Congress held in May 1904, IMRO was re-vitalized and its independence reasserted. The most significant developments to emerge from this Congress were IMRO's ability to shed itself of its conservative elements and to adopt a resolution to decentralize the organization and give more power to the sub-districts. This Congress literally split IMRO into two ideologically polarized halves. While leftist IMRO adopted a defensive strategy, the right wing conservative Vrhovists pursued a policy of renewed confrontation. The two factions continued to masquerade under the same banner and were headed for a showdown. The showdown materialized in November of 1905, at the Rila Monastery near the Macedonian-Bulgarian border and took the form of a General Congress.

There was a single item of paramount importance on the agenda, to determine the direction of the Organization.

Defeated at the Rila Congress, the Right wing Vrhovists took up permanent residence in Sofia and continued to wage a terrorist war on the IMRO leadership. Both Nikola Karev, in 1905, and Dame Gruev, in 1906, were indirectly eliminated by terrorist acts of the Vrhovists.

Bulgarian interference in Macedonia not only damaged the revolutionary movement but also put fear in the civilian population, ripening conditions for Balkan intervention. Greece and later Serbia were quick to take advantage of a weak IMRO and a frightened population. With the assistance of the Turkish military they were able to step up armed propaganda campaigns inside Macedonia. The aim was to kill two birds with one stone. By being the eyes and ears of the Turks, the Greek clergy spied on the Macedonians and disclosed information to Turkish authorities. The Turkish military in turn, stepped up activities to eradicate the remnants of the Cheti and their leaders. At the same time, in the midst of terror, the same Greek spies who were spying on them were also offering Macedonians Hellenism as a way to salvation. "No one can deny that the Greeks owed much to the Turks. Indeed the victory of the Turks in 1903 was the salvation of Hellenism in Macedonia. From the outset the Greek clergy and notables devised means of passing information to the Turks. The Turkish authorities on their side welcomed this support." (Pages 118-119, Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897-1913*)

The most notorious of the Greek clergy was the Metropolitan of Kostur, Archbishop Germanos Karavangelis. Karavangelis was sent to Macedonia by the Patriarch Constantine V who favoured the Athenian (the most nationalist) style of Hellenism and selected Karavangelis as the right man to do the job. Dakin portrays Karavangelis as a charismatic and capable figure of a man that is a credit to the human race. (Pages 119-127, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897-1913*) That, however, is far from the truth. Karavangelis was a ruthless killer and a disgrace to the Christian religion. Karavangelis was personally responsible for the assassination of hundreds of Macedonian patriots including priests, notables, teachers and IMRO leaders. He was also personally responsible for Hellenizing hundreds of Macedonian villages, by force and by sheer terror. If you wish to know more about Karavangelis' terrorist actions in Macedonia read his biography (the original version) "Arheio Makedonikou Agona, Pinelopis Delta, Apomnimoneymata, Germanou Karavaggeli, Georgiou Dikonymou Makri, Panagioti Papatzanetia".

Karavangelis' first priority after accepting the post as Metropolitan of Kostur was to raise an army. He couldn't import one, the Great Powers were watching, so he resorted to purchasing one. The most pliable and feeble-minded man who would sell his soul for gold was the self styled brigand Kote of Rula ("the darling of Athens"). Kote sold out his own

people for Greek gold. From being the most revered Cheta leader, Kote became the most hated man in Macedonia. When Karavangelis decided who was to die, Kote became the executioner. In addition to regular pay for murder, Kote and his band of no-goods received additional rewards of gold coins for turning in desired body parts from their victims. While Kote was doing the murdering in the Macedonian villages, Karavangelis, in person with Turkish escorts, was Hellenizing. Nothing and no one could stand in his way. Those who Karavangelis couldn't buy or bribe he had killed. "By containing and fragmenting the Internal Organization in Western Macedonia, Kota (Kote) and Karavangelis not only caused the projected rising to be continually postponed but they also caused it to be undertaken prematurely; and eventually they both contributed towards its defeat and failure. True, most of the recorded action (the arrests, searches and attacks on villages and bands) were carried out by the Turks, but the Turks nearly always acted on information supplied by Karavangelis or his agents. It was Karavangelis again who prevailed upon the Turks to attack Smardeshi (Smurdersh) on 9/22 May 1903." (Page 132, Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897-1913*)

"After the Ilinden rising of August 1903, it was Karavangelis who, escorted by 600 Turkish soldiers, visited the villages, celebrating mass, speaking to the villagers and calling upon them to surrender arms. The result was that even such strongholds as Aposkepos (Aposkep), Zagoritsani (Zagoricheni) and Gabresi (Gabresh), which only a few months before had declared themselves Exarchist, now returned to the Patriarchist fold. Without the support of the Turks, it is doubtful whether Karavangelis's work would have been successful. It is equally doubtful, however, whether but for the activities of the Patriarchist counter-movement, the Turkish authorities could have dealt such a decisive blow to the Internal Organization (IMRO)." (Page 135, Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897-1913*)

The ultimate disgrace for Karavangelis came after the massacre of the village Zagoricheni. Refusing to bend to Hellenism, Zagoricheni, on direct orders from Karavangelis, was massacred to the last person the Greeks could lay their hands on, including the unborn children inside the wombs of pregnant women. Witnesses reported finding bodies of pregnant women with their abdomens cut open. The survivors who escaped the atrocity refused to bury the dead bodies of their neighbours. For days the dead were guarded until the European consuls in Bitola came to witness the atrocities for themselves. Here is what Brailsford had to say. "The chef d'oeuvre of this Hellenic campaign was achieved at Zagoricheni, a large Bulgarian village (author's note: Macedonian village, there were no Bulgarian villages inside Macedonia) near Klissoura, which, like Mokreni, took a leading part in the uprising of 1903, and like Mokreni was burned by the Turks. A Greek band, which is said to have numbered over two

hundred men under three Greek officers in uniform, surprised it by night (April 6-7, 1905) by using bugle calls which led the villagers to suppose that Turkish regulars were manoeuvring in the neighbourhood. They burned ten houses, and twenty-eight of the temporary homes erected amid the ruins of the last conflagration. They wounded seven persons and killed no less than sixty, among them seven women, twenty-two persons over sixty years of age, and five children under fifteen. There was a good deal of evidence to show that the local Turkish authorities were privy to this massacre, and some circumstances seemed to include the Archbishop of Castoria (Kostur). It is quite clear that no conflict or provocation preceded what was simply a deliberate massacre, and the only reason for choosing Zagoricheni was that it was an eager and patriotic Bulgarian center, and that it disobeyed the summons of the Greek Archbishop to return to the Patriarch fold." (Pages 216-217, Macedonia its Races and their Future) After the massacre when it was discovered that Karavangelis was implicated, to escape punishment, the cowardly Archbishop of Kostur fled to Sveta Gora (Holy Mountain) where he spent two years in hiding before fleeing to Austria. Today, there is a statue of Karavangelis in Kostur to commemorate his great contributions to Hellenism.

Macedonians were well acquainted with the murderous activities of the Bulgarian Vrhovists whose new waves of terrorist bands began to penetrate the eastern borders of Macedonia in March of 1904. Fortunately, Yane Sandanski's forces were still in control of the Pirin district and more often than not, successfully repealed Bulgarian advances. In the west bands of young Turks, who deserted the army during the Ilinden rebellion, joined Albanian gangs, looting and killing indiscriminately. From the north Serbian bands began to penetrate Macedonian territory. By mid 1905, there were eleven bands numbering almost 100 men pillaging, murdering, razing entire villages and wreaking their own special brand of terror. The most violent campaign was waged by the Greek terrorists who penetrated the south-central regions of Macedonia. By 1905 the Greeks imported a contingent of Cretans, a thousand-strong, and reinforced it with Turkish deserters who roamed unhindered razing and slaughtering entire villages. By 1906 eight bands numbering over 400 men were operating in the Solun district alone and another twelve bands of 600 men around Bitola.

Along with the intrusions of armed bands in Macedonia there reappeared the foreign schools and propaganda institutions directed by the Greek and Bulgarian churches. The terrorist bands instilled fear in the Macedonian population and the churches were quick to take on the role of protector, setting the stage for the partitioning of Macedonia.

It was well known that there were no Greek, Bulgarian, or Serbian ethnicities living in Macedonia but that didn't stop the new Balkan States from inventing them. The wheels of the protagonists were turning when

they attempted to kill two birds with one stone by cleverly substituting “ethnicity” for “church affiliation”. By the end of the 19th century the Christian Millet of Ottoman Macedonia was already divided into two millets (the Greek Patriarchist Millet and the Bulgarian Exarchist Millet). First, since there was no Macedonian Millet there was no “governing body” to represent a Macedonian religious denomination. Second, since all Christians in Macedonia already belonged to one millet or another, it was easy to make “ethnic” claims on behalf of “church affiliation”. In modern terms, all Macedonians belonging to the Patriarchist fold were considered to be ethnic Greek. Similarly, all those Macedonians belonging to the Exarchist fold were considered to be ethnic Bulgarians. By introducing Serbian churches and schools, Serbia later used similar tactics to claim the existence of a Serbian ethnicity inside Macedonia.

All Macedonians belonging to the Patriarchist church were given Greek or “Hellenized” names. Similarly, all Macedonians belonging to the Exarchist church were given Bulgarian names. In many instances brothers, born of the same parents, were given different last names because they happened to go to different churches. Their choice of church had nothing to do with loyalty to one faction or the other, but rather with the church’s location relative to their homes. Each brother attended the church nearest to his house as he had always done. The sad part was that now with every spoonful of religion came a dose of venomous propaganda. Brother was pitted against brother, one fighting for “Hellenism” and the other for “Bulgarism”. At the beginning of the Ilinden rebellion most Macedonian villages belonged to the Exarchate Church. With increased Greek activities through Karavangelis and others like him, the tide was turning. The Greek success was mainly due to the Turkish-Greek alliance and the Turkish militia’s assistance. The Macedonian people were frightened to a point of agreeing to anything to escape further punishment.

The alliance, which gave the Greeks the upper hand, did not go unnoticed by the Bulgarians. British fears of a Turkish-Bulgarian war were alleviated when Bulgaria on April 8th, 1904 signed a peace agreement with Turkey. Bulgaria promised to reduce subversive actions in Macedonia in exchange for Turkish promises to implement the Murzsteg Reform Program and to extend it to the Endrene (Dardanelles) region. Russia was not too happy about the agreement, especially since Bulgaria herself was beginning to make moves towards Endrene. Being of strategic importance, Russia was hoping to eventually annex Endrene for itself.

The prospect of declining Bulgarian intrusions inside Macedonia was welcome news for Karavangelis. The Greeks could now import fighters from Crete, to fight the Macedonian Cheti, side by side with their Turkish allies without Bulgarian interference. Unfortunately, while the Bulgarians reduced their military intrusions, they stepped up Exarchist activities creating stiff competition for the Greeks. The clergy on both sides were

going after the same flock as both sides appointed themselves protectors and guardians of the people. In the eyes of the world they became ambassadors of the Christian flock in Macedonia. This competition to attract parishioners created friction between the opposing factions. Friction turned to violence in villages where both groups existed and fought for control over the village church. The Turks were indifferent to the squabbling due to its religious nature and remained neutral in church disputes. When fights erupted, the Turks padlocked the church so neither group could use it. As competition for control of the village churches intensified so did brigand warfare. Local squabbling never went unnoticed and both Patriarchists and Exarchists sent their hatchet men to eliminate the so-called “troublemakers”. Many priests, teachers, notables and community leaders lost their lives in this way.

Britain, at one point, contemplated creating an autonomous Macedonia but knew that Russia and Austria would be against it. “It was fortunate for Greece at this juncture that Lansdowne’s plans foundered in a sea of European politics and that both Russia and Austria opposed Macedonian autonomy.” (Page 152, Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897-1913*) This is an important fact for ALL to know, which is contrary to “Greek propaganda” that no Macedonians existed before 1945. Here is documented proof that a Macedonian nation did exist prior to the 19th century and came very close to achieving independence. The Ilinden rebellion was ALL about Macedonia and about Macedonians asserting their desire to live as equals in the world. The Great Powers, especially Britain and Russia, owe it to the Macedonian people to come clean and put an end to the incessant “Greek propaganda”. It no longer makes any sense to keep the Macedonian people from taking their rightful place in the world. They are certainly not a threat to anyone. Those who committed crimes against the Macedonian people and continue to deny their existence obviously have a problem. But why punish the victims, for being victims?

The Young Turk movement had been active for at least thirty years, ever since Turkish students were allowed to attend European schools en masse. Among other things, the Young Turks were in favour of granting self-government to Macedonia, Thrace and Albania and believed that the Ottoman Empire could be salvaged via reforms. When the 1903 Ilinden rebellion started, many of these European educated students had already joined the ranks of the Turkish military as junior officers. The atrocities committed and the methods used in dealing with the rebels during the Ilinden aftermath went against the principles of these young men and many deserted the Turkish army. Some joined roving Albanian bands in hopes of eliciting their assistance to form an opposition to the Sultan. Some attempted to establish contacts with IMRO, hoping that IMRO would join them to rise against the Sultan.

By 1905 the Young Turks organized under the banner of “Union and Progress” and established themselves in Solun, away from the grasp of the Sultan in Tsari Grad. It was not too long before they gained some measure of control over the local Turkish army, especially in Macedonia. It was not difficult to convince soldiers serving in Macedonia that anything was better than killing and murdering women and children.

After observing the actions of the Young Turks, the IMRO leadership was convinced that it was better to work with them than against them. The Young Turks also offered self-government and significant agrarian reforms if they gained power, which was attractive to most IMRO leaders. Dame Gruev and Nikola Karev were already dead, which left IMRO in the hands of Gjorce Petrov, who favoured a policy of urban-led insurrection. Popularity and the strength of the rebellion, however, lay in the hands of the legendary Yane Sandanski. He was in favour of supporting the Young Turk regime, especially their prospective agrarian reform programs.

While Russia was having mixed feelings about the Young Turk regime, the European powers, especially Britain who through intrigue created the regime, were relieved to be rid of the old reform programs. Britain approved of the cooperation between NFP and the Young Turks, which caused further fracturing between the NFP (who wanted to create an autonomous Macedonia inside an Ottoman Federation) and “grass roots” IMRO (who wanted independence by armed rebellion). Unfortunately the Young Turk regime, with all its promises, did not meet expectations and reverted to the old Turkish way of rule. To stave off attempted coups by extremist factions, the Young Turk regime resorted to dictatorial rule in place of fostering liberal programs. This clampdown manifested itself in a number of repressive laws in Macedonia including the laws on strikes, political associations and armed bands. This policy reversal again destabilized Macedonian society by bringing back the old oppressive political climate. The NFP and all other political, cultural and professional organizations were effectively banned, forcing IMRO to go underground. The Macedonian people, in the meantime, were thrown back into anarchy and things went downhill from there.

The Young Turk regime predicted its own demise. To save itself, between 1910 and 1911, it re-settled almost a quarter of a million Turks in Macedonia, hoping to maintain control of Macedonia if it was ejected from Tsari Grad. They faced several fronts, including the Albanian revolution in 1909-1912, the Italian-Turkish war in Libya in 1911, domestic opposition, the resurgence of armed bands and finally the Sultan’s new loyal army. The Young Turk regime could no longer maintain a hold on power and on July 13, 1912 capitulated to the Sultan.

In the meantime, the Great Powers were locked in a struggle of their own where none could maneuver without upsetting the delicate balance of the status quo. While the Great Powers were held in balance by their own

political vices, the new Balkan nations were flexing their economic and military muscles. Alliances like the Serbian-Bulgarian league against Greek-Turkish collusion or the Greek-Romanian league against Bulgarian aims at Macedonia came and went. On the surface it seemed that everything was normal but deep inside a rift was developing.

The rift became apparent when Russian-Austrian relations began to seriously cool. Dividing lines were drawn as Russia began to warm up to Britain and France while Austria began to warm up to Germany. Italy remained neutral for a while and took a few shots at Turkey but was prohibited (by the other powers) from attacking the centers of Turkish power. (It was through these campaigns that Italy occupied the Dodecanese). Even though Italy was restrained from further campaigns, it weakened Turkey enough for the three new Balkan States to consider campaigns of their own. Italy's actions were also a sign of things to come and created an atmosphere of urgency for the new states to expedite their own plans for territorial annexation.

Everyone wanted a piece of Macedonia but no one dared stick out its neck to get it. The three wolves of the Balkans (Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria), with Russian help, realized that each alone could not accomplish what the three could do together. They swallowed their pride put their differences aside for now and by the end of 1911 started negotiations for an alliance.

As a way of preventing Austrian aspirations in the Balkans, Russia invited the idea of a Serbian-Bulgarian league. Russia hoped that, jointly, Serbia and Bulgaria would be able to withstand Austrian advances in Macedonia without its involvement. After getting them to agree to talk, Serbia and Bulgaria listed their terms but could not reach an agreement. Autonomy for Macedonia was one major issue of contention upon which they could not agree. While Sofia supported the idea of autonomy Belgrade opposed it. Finally, for the sake of expediting the negotiations, all parties agreed that the "autonomy question" would be left separate and dealt with after the annexation of Macedonia.

Russia made it clear to both parties that they couldn't invade Macedonia without its permission and only if Turkey became a threat to the Christian population. In the meantime, Serbia was encouraged to take steps to annex Albania and Kosovo. A draft Serbian-Bulgarian agreement was reached and signed on March 13th, 1912. Included in the agreement was a crude delineation of prospective boundaries and suggestions that the final boundaries might be settled by force of arms. The Russians also insisted that Tsar Nikolas II would arbitrate any disputes regarding the exact territorial limits.

Even before the Serbian-Bulgarian agreement was finalized, Greece was already having discussions with Bulgaria about negotiating a Greek-Bulgarian agreement. The Greek-Bulgarian negotiations, like the Serbian-

Bulgarian negotiations, were conducted in secret known only to the Greek King, Prime Minister Venizelos and their negotiator “The Times” correspondent J. D. Bouchier, an old friend of Venizelos. Like the Serbs, the Greeks had always opposed the idea of Macedonian autonomy but the Bulgarians were unwilling to proceed until Greece agreed to the autonomy. The Greek-Bulgarian treaty was signed on May 30th, 1912. Both parties promised not to attack one another and to come to each other’s defense should Turkey attack them.

The “Balkan League of Nations” was spawned in June 1912 and shortly after Turkey was given a signed ultimatum bearing the League’s signature, which in short read, “deliver the promised reforms in Macedonia or prepare to be invaded.”

There was much intrigue, agreements, counter-agreements and secret deals between the League of Nations (Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia) but from the outset each was determined to exploit any situation that developed, purely for its own gain. “The League of Nations in fact was simply a device for synchronizing a military effort upon the part of the four powers (Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro) who had come to realize that the simplest way to settle the Turkish question, before it was too late and while circumstances were favourable, was to attack Turkey simultaneously and present the European powers with a *fait accompli*.” (Page 440, Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897-1913*) All that remained now was to provoke Turkey into committing an offence against the Christian population and the invasion would become a reality.

Using proven techniques of terrorism to prepare the battleground, Vrhovists, masquerading as IMRO agents, conducted many raids inside Macedonia murdering, raping and plundering villages in hopes that the Macedonian bands would be blamed. When the Turks investigated the disturbances, both Patriarchist (Greek Church) and Exarchist (Bulgarian Church) authorities corroborated their stories and pinned these acts on the Macedonians. As expected the Turks responded swiftly and dealt with the situation in the usual manner. Unfortunately for the Turks their actions were welcome news to the League’s spies who dispatched their stories to the European press. The Turks, in the eyes of the world, committed atrocities against the Christians in Macedonia and something had to be done. It was now up to the Great Powers to decide the course of action.

Along with documents of Turkish atrocities, the foreign press also received well-camouflaged League propaganda. The League had commenced extensive propaganda campaigns against the Turks, detailing every Turkish act for European consumption. A war was imminent but, according to the League’s propaganda, it was a necessary war to “liberate” the enslaved Christians from Turkish oppression. The League, through extensive media campaigns, called on all Christians in Macedonia to join the League and oust the oppressive Turk. Here is what Yane Sandanski

had to say; “We ought to work on the awakening of the consciousness of the Macedonian masses that they are an independent nation...because those who seek to ‘liberate them’... will actually be coming to enslave them...” (Page 134, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question). In other words, Sandanski suspected that Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria were up to something.

As mentioned earlier, the Western Powers had not exhausted the full potential of the Ottoman markets and were unwilling to let the Ottoman regime in Macedonia collapse. At the same time Britain, France, Italy and Russia were greatly concerned about the aggressive attitudes of Germany outside of the Balkans. More importantly, they were concerned that the Turkish regime was leaning towards a Turkish-German alliance.

When Russia proposed the idea of a “Balkan League of Nations” it was welcome news for Britain, France and Italy. The League was viewed as an anti-German front, a way of ejecting the Ottoman regime from Europe and at the same time, safeguarding (British, French and Italian) interests and expansionary ambitions. The not so obvious Russian motive for sponsoring the League was to guarantee its own influence in the Balkans perhaps through Serbia or Bulgaria or both.

On October 18th, 1912 Montenegro declared war on Turkey with the League following suit. The battles that ensued were fought almost entirely on Macedonian soil, once again causing the Macedonians to suffer from someone else’s war.

Russia, the architect of the Balkan League, was against a war in 1912 and so were France and Britain. A war at this point might throw off the delicate diplomatic balance and escalate into a “world war”. Russia feared that the half-millennium old Ottoman Empire might not be as easy a target as the League had estimated. Britain and France feared a backlash from Germany and Austria now that Turkey was warming up to them as a prospective ally. To stop the League’s aggressive actions, both Britain and France threatened Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria with economic sanctions but that was not enough to suppress the appetites of the three hungry Balkan wolves.

The League’s plan was to surround the Turkish army in Macedonia and force it out to Tsari Grad. To everyone’s surprise, however, the League won a crushing and unexpected victory in just six weeks. Five Ottoman divisions were surrounded and defeated in two battles, in Bitola and Kumanovo. With the exception of Sandanski and a force of 400 Macedonians who fought back and liberated Melnik and Nevrokop, the League received no opposition from the Macedonians. In fact, the enthusiasm created by the “liberators” not only helped the League fight harder but also encouraged thousands of Macedonians to enlist in the League’s armies. “A Macedonian Militia force of 14,000 fought under the Bulgarian command in the East. The ‘Volunteer regiment’, directed by

IMRO veterans, consisted of a thousand Macedonians, Turks and Albanians. In the Serbian and Greek armies, Macedonian detachments such as the 'National Guard' and the 'Holy Band', were given the task of encircling the Turks to fight their retreat." (Page 143, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question) Even Chakalarov, the protector of the Lerin and Kostur regions, joined the fight to help the League get rid of the Turks. The League's victories and intense propaganda were so convincing that the entire Macedonian nation welcomed the "liberators" with open arms.

The moment the three wolves evicted the Turkish army from Macedonia, they quickly worked out a partitioning strategy along the following lines:

Serbia was to receive the northwestern portion of Macedonia, which included Skopje, Bitola, south to west of Lerin, east to Gevgelija and west to the Albanian Mountains.

Bulgaria was to receive all of Thrace, west to Gevgelija, south to the Aegean Sea and east from Solun.

Greece was to receive north to Lerin, west to the Albanian Mountains, all of Epirus and east to Solun. "To ensure their hegemony and quell any dissent, the occupying forces set up the apparatus of government and, by legislative decrees, extended their own constitutions to these new bodies, from which Macedonians were absent. Indeed, in many provincial centres, such as Gevgelija, a double or triple condominium was established, much to the detriment of the Macedonian citizens." (Page 143, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

In view of the Macedonian contribution to the League's success in evicting the Turks, on December 12th, 1912 Sandanski called for Macedonian autonomy. The League's occupying armies, however, refused to budge and initiated a violent assimilation program. The Macedonian fighters, who fought side by side with the League's armies, found themselves policed by a joint League command ensuring that no resistance or independent action would arise. The League also pursued Sandanski and his men. Sandanski resisted and stayed active in the Pirin Region until his assassination in 1915 by Bulgarian agents.

The changing conditions inside Macedonia forced the IMRO leadership to seek refuge in foreign cities away from home. Some of the more prominent leaders moved to St. Petersburg and joined the Macedonian community living there. This small group of Macedonians consistently lobbied for Macedonian Statehood and, in the war's aftermath, acted as a government in exile. The most outspoken advocate of the Macedonian leaders was Dimitar Chupovski who published the "Macedonian Voice" and continuously protested to the Great Powers against Macedonia's partition. In June 1913 he wrote; "The division of Macedonia among the brother nations is the most unjust act in the history of these nations – it is trampling on the rights of man, and a disgrace for

the entire Slav race.” (Page 145, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question) In total eleven issues of “Macedonian Voice” were published and distributed all over Europe.

“A great terror reigns in Macedonia now. The ‘freedom’ of the allies has no frontiers, no-one from Macedonia has the right to travel outside, to protest or complain before the European states. Whoever disturbs this order is either killed or imprisoned. The allies surround Macedonia with a Chinese Wall...” (Page 145, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

The Macedonian people must not stand idly by and accept the unworthy fate of being divided so that others may profit from it. “In the name of the Macedonian people, we demand that Macedonia remain a single, indivisible, independent Balkan state within its geographical, ethnographic, historical, economic and cultural frontiers...Macedonia represents a unified body both from the historical and natural viewpoints, and cannot voluntarily end its many centuries of existence by agreeing to be broken up...Can we allow a people to be, at one and the same time, Bulgarian, Serb and Greek? Is it not simpler to assume that the nationality attributed to us is dictated by the big power politics of the interested parties who wish to take over Macedonia?” (Page 145, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

By November it was becoming apparent that Turkey was running out of options. On November 12th, 1912 it called on the Great Powers to bring about an armistice. To deal with the situation a peace conference was scheduled for December 16th, 1912, to take place in London. Having some time to adjust to the new situation, the Great Powers, for the first time, opted from the usual “status quo” recommendations and considered making concessions to the victors. Austria, however, was not too happy at the prospect of a “large Serbia” let alone allowing Serbia access to the Adriatic Sea. Austria was eyeing the Adriatic region as a prospective sphere of influence for itself. Being unable to make concessions by itself, however, Austria did the next best thing and agreed with Britain to the idea of “creating” a new State, Albania. Another reason why Austria did not want Serbia to have access to the Adriatic Sea was because a Serbian port might become a Russian port.

This attempt to deny Serbia access to the Adriatic Sea not only left Serbia landlocked but also upset Russia, causing it to break relations with Austria. Italy too was affected by this diplomatic power play, pushing it to improve its relations with Austria. This, as it turned out, was the crucial historic moment which gave birth to the “Triple Alliance” (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy) and the “Triple Entente” (Britain, France and Russia), a division that would have future consequences.

As a result of this sudden change of events, Austria began to amass troops along the Serbian border. At the same time, fearing German intervention, Russia ordered a halt to Bulgarian and Serbian advances

towards Tsari Grad. To fully curb Serbian and Russian expansionism: France, Britain and Italy voted to grant the newly created Albanian State full independence. This saved Albania from being partitioned by the Greeks and Serbians and made it a Great Power protectorate, which Albanians enjoy to this day.

I want to emphasize that by 1912 it was well known that a Macedonian Nation with a Macedonian consciousness existed and demonstrated its desire for independence. These actions were well documented and familiar to the Great Powers, yet even after pleading their case, the Macedonians were NOT ALLOWED to attend the London Peace Conference of December 16th, 1912. Numerous petitions were made by IMRO affiliates from St. Petersburg, all ignored. Also, Chupovski's memo to the British delegation was not tabled. Here is what Chupovski (in part) had to say; "In the name of natural law, of history, of practical expediency, for the Macedonian people, we ask that Macedonia's right to self-determination be admitted, and that Macedonia be constituted within its ethnic, geographical and cultural borders as a self-governing state with a government responsible to a national assembly." (Page 147, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

The London Conference adjourned on August 11, 1913, officially declaring an end to the First Balkan War. In spite of all the wheeling and dealing that went on during the conference, the resolutions left all parties dissatisfied. Serbia was dissatisfied with losing the Albanian territory. Serbia appealed to Bulgaria to grant it access to the Aegean Sea via Solun and the Vardar valley, but its appeals fell on deaf ears. Greece also was not happy with Bulgaria's invasion and annexation of Endrene (the Dardanelles). To balance its share, Greece wanted Serres, Drama and Kavala as compensation. That too fell on deaf ears. Bulgaria, frustrated with not achieving its "San Stefano fictional dream" was bitter about Russia deserting it during the London Conference negotiations.

Seeing that Bulgaria was not going to budge and the fact that neither Greece nor Serbia alone could take on Bulgaria, should a conflict arise, Greece and Serbia concluded a secret pact of their own to jointly act against Bulgaria. In short, the objective was to take territory from Bulgaria west of the Vardar River, divide it and have a common frontier.

After stumbling upon this Greek-Serbian pact, despite Russian attempts to appease it by offering it Solun, Bulgaria remained bitter and in a moment of weakness was lured away by Austria. By going over to Austria, Bulgaria in effect broke off all relations with the Balkan League. Russia, disappointed with the Bulgarian shift in loyalty, made it clear that Bulgaria could no longer expect any help from Russia.

In what was to be termed the "Second Balkan War", the Bulgarian army, unprovoked, attacked its former allies on June 30th, 1913, again on Macedonian soil. Preferring the element of surprise, Bulgaria turned on its

former allies and renewed the conflict, officially turning the Macedonian mission from “liberation” to “occupation”. There were two things that Bulgaria didn’t count on, Romanian involvement and Austrian treachery. The bloody fight was short lived as Romania, Montenegro and Turkey joined Greece and Serbia in dealing Bulgaria a catastrophic blow. The promised Austrian support didn’t materialize as the risks for Austrian involvement outweighed any benefits. The real surprise, however, was Romania’s break with neutrality. Up to now Romania had remained neutral and refused to get involved. No one, not even Bulgaria, anticipated this attack from the north. However this was a once in a lifetime opportunity for Romania to regain lost territory. Even Turkey was able to re-gain some of what it had recently lost to Bulgaria. Being involved in too many fronts at the same time, Bulgaria was unable to repel Turkey and prevent it from taking back the Endrene region. The biggest winners to come out of this conflict were Greece and Serbia, both of whom got exactly what they wanted and virtually unabated.

The Macedonians fared worst in the conflict mainly due to their own enthusiasm. As frontlines shifted positions, Macedonian citizens who were enthusiastic about supporting one faction now became traitors for doing that and butchered by the other faction for showing sympathy to their enemy. “The Carnegie Relief Commission, dispatched to the Balkans in late 1913, reported the incredible story of human suffering. In Macedonia alone, 160 villages were razed leaving 16,000 homeless, several thousand civilians murdered, and over 100,000 forced to emigrate as refugees.” (Page 149, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question) This genocidal tragedy was committed in a relatively short time, by those who marched in and were welcomed as “liberators”. Worst and most unexpected was that “Christians” committed this genocide against “Christians”, reminiscent of the 1204 tragedy committed by the Western Crusaders in Tsari Grad.

After a great deal of jockeying for position, deliberating and negotiating, the warring factions agreed to an armistice, and peace between Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia was negotiated in August, 1913 in Bucharest. The map of Macedonia was again redrafted without Macedonian participation. The new boundaries ignored previously agreed upon considerations such as lines of “nationalities” (not that any existed), the Macedonian people’s democratic desires, etc., as the Bucharest delegates imposed their artificial sovereignty upon the Macedonian people. With the exception of one minor change in 1920 in Albania’s favour, these dividing lines have remained in place to this day. Of the total Macedonian territory 51% went to Greece, 39% to Serbia, and 10% to Bulgaria. August 10th, 1913 became the darkest day in Macedonian history.

Not since Roman times has Macedonia been partitioned in a way where three brothers were forced to assume three different (imposed) identities, speak three different foreign languages in their own homes and

be treated as strangers in their own lands. The future will show that where half a millennium of Turkish suppression and a century of forced Hellenization/ Bulgarization couldn't erode Macedonian consciousness, Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian aggression, in less than a decade, would. The once proud Macedonian nation, that long ago conquered the world, bridged east and west, introduced Christianity to Europe, safeguarded all ancient knowledge and protected the west from eastern invaders, had now been beaten and reduced to a shadow of its former self. The force of this latest intrusion transformed the Macedonian nation into a shy creature, seeking homes in foreign lands and hiding in the twilight while its enemies danced on the heads of its dead and, to the world, proclaimed them as their own. It was not enough that they consumed the Macedonian lands. These new depraved creatures, spawned by western greed, consumed all Macedonian treasures such as history, culture, religion, literature, folklore, ancient knowledge stolen from Holy Mountain (Athos), etc. and regurgitated them as their own. Without hesitation they will lie to the world, even to their own people, about "their true identities" and blame their ills on the innocent. Their propaganda will turn "lies to truths" and "truths to lies" until all people are poisoned with hatred, an artificially created hatred, which will haunt Macedonians for all time and render them mute. Silence will fill the air and children will not dare cry, for if they utter anything Macedonian a terrible curse will befall them which can only be partially lifted if they leave their lands or submit to the will of their new masters. The proud name "Macedonia" which echoed through the centuries and outlasted time itself will become a "dirty word" never to be spoken. The Macedonian language, the mother tongue of all Slav languages, the "Voice of Eastern Christianity" will be "muted", to be spoken only in the shadows and dark corners, in fear that "enemy ears" may be lurking. In time it will become known as "our language", spoken by "our people", a mute language spoken by a nameless nation. In time, the Macedonian nation, the Macedonian people and the Macedonian language will become "an anomaly", "an idiom" in its ancestral land.

This is the fate that awaits the Macedonian people in the 20th century, all with the blessings of the Great Powers.

The Macedonian Decline

Macedonia's division between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria by the Treaty of Bucharest 1913, was devastating for the Macedonian people but surprisingly, there was still hope left in them that this was only a nightmare and one day soon they would awaken and find themselves liberated. Unfortunately with the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and the Great Powers sanctioning the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, the nightmare became permanent.

The jubilation of liberation died down quickly as the fires of burning villages lit the night skies. Macedonia was in flames again. Liberators turned to occupiers and rained havoc on the Macedonian population. The political, economic and ethnic unity of Macedonia was no more. Greek soldiers who came to liberate their Christian brothers from the oppressive Turks and terrible Bulgarians were now burning, torturing and murdering people. In the words of Sir Edmond Grey, "The Balkan war began as a war of liberation, became rapidly a war of annexation, and has ended as a war of extermination." (Page 294, Vasil Bogov, Macedonian Revelation, Historical Documents Rock and Shatter Modern Political Ideology)

The Greek atrocities were revealed to the world when a lost mailbag was discovered containing letters from Greek soldiers in Macedonia to their families in Greece. The mailbag was turned in to the Carnegie Relief Commission and the contents of the letters were made public. Expecting to fight for the glory of the fatherland, the soldiers instead found themselves torturing, murdering, burning houses and evicting women and children from their homes in a most vile way. The letters revealed that the soldiers were acting on direct orders from the Greek authorities and the Greek king himself. Macedonian families of known Exarchists (Macedonians belonging to the Bulgarian Church) were ordered by force to "take with them what they could carry and get out". "This is Greece now and there is no place for Bulgarians here." Those who remained were forced to swear loyalty to the Greek State. Anyone refusing to take the loyalty oath was either executed, as an example of what would happen to those disloyal, or evicted from the country. To explain the mass evacuations, Greek officials claimed that the inhabitants of Macedonia left by choice or became Greek by choice. The truth is no one was given any choice at all.

"A thousand Greek and Serbian publicists began to fill the world with their shouting about the essentially Greek or Serbian character of the populations of their different spheres. The Serbs gave the unhappy Macedonians twenty four hours to renounce their nationality and proclaim themselves Serbs, and the Greeks did the same. Refusal meant murder or expulsion. Greek and Serbian colonists were poured into the occupied country... The Greek newspapers began to talk about a Macedonia peopled entirely with Greeks and they explained the fact that no one spoke Greek

by calling the people 'Bulgaro-phone Greeks' ... the Greek army entered villages where no one spoke their language. 'What do you mean by speaking Bulgarian?' cried the officers. 'This is Greece and you must speak Greek.'" (Page 104, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece, The Struggle to define a new Balkan Nation)

In 1913 Professor R.A. Reiss reported to the Greek government: "Those whom you would call Bulgarian speakers I would simply call Macedonians...Macedonian is not the language they speak in Sofia...I repeat the mass of inhabitants there (Macedonia) remain simply Macedonians."

History again turned its eyes away from the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian atrocities in Macedonia to focus on new events that were about to unfold and engulf the entire world.

After losing Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria in 1908 and the Albanian territories in 1912 (again because of Austria) Serbia became bitter and resentful. "To the nationalist Serbs the Habsburg monarchy (Austria-Hungary) was an old evil monster which prevented their nation from becoming a great and powerful state. On June 28, 1914, a young Serbian nationalist, Gavrilo Princip, assassinated the heir of the Habsburg monarchy, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and his wife at Sarjevo." (Page 104, Felix Gilbert, The End of the European Era, 1890 to the Present)

Within two weeks of the assassination the First World War broke out, engulfing all of Europe. It was inevitable and a matter of time before a "world war" would break out in the Balkans. The Great Powers were incapable of exercising diplomacy either between themselves or with the new Balkan States they helped create. Macedonia was sacrificed in order to appease the new Balkan States but that did little to satisfy their ferocious appetites for lands and loot.

While World War I raged on consuming the lives of millions of young men and women, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia were serving their own brand of chauvinism in Macedonia. For the next five years, with the world busy with its own problems, there was no one to hear the cries of the Macedonian people at the hands of the new tyrants. If the gravestones of the dead Macedonians could speak they would tell tales of torture and executions, deception and lies. They would say, "Our Christian brothers came to liberate us but instead they killed us because we were in their way of achieving greatness. We were labeled 'criminals' because we would not yield to their demands. I ask you is it a crime to want to live as free men? Is it a crime to want to be Macedonian? Is it a crime to want to exercise free will? It is they who are the criminals for befouling everything that is Christian, for their lies and deception, and for murdering us to possess our lands. History will record August 10th, 1913 as the darkest day in Macedonia, the day our future died."

The triple occupation worsened living conditions in Macedonia but the fighting spirit of the Macedonian people continued to live underground and abroad. Three generations of fighting for liberty, freedom and an independent Macedonia came to a close. The Ilinden generation and IMRO were defeated, not by the Turks or Muslim oppression but by Christian cruelty and deception.

Soon after the occupation, underground societies sprang up everywhere urging the Macedonian people to refuse their new fate and oppose the partition. Accordingly, many Macedonians did so by refusing to obey the new officialdom and by not participating in the new institutions. This however did not stop the military regimes occupying Macedonia from systematic denationalization and violent assimilation.

The battle for "dominion of the world", which started over Balkan affairs, soon took a sinister turn to again involve Macedonia. As the Entente Powers (Britain, France, Russia and Italy) were fighting with the Central Powers (Germany and Austro-Hungary), Bulgaria, smarting from her losses at Bucharest, remained neutral. In a turn of events, to the amazement of the Greeks, the Entente Powers approached Bulgaria with an offer of a substantial portion of Macedonian territory in exchange for her alliance. Bulgaria, however, seemed to prefer the company of the Central Powers, perhaps they offered her a bigger portion, because by late 1915 her armies marched in and invaded Macedonia. To quote the Bulgarian War Minister General Nikolaev, "We care little about the British, Germans, French, Russians, Italians, Austrians or Hungarians; our only thought is Macedonia. Whichever of the two groups of Powers will enable us to conquer it will have our alliance!" (Page 154, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

While the Serbs were being engaged on their northern border, the Greeks were debating which side to take. Their hesitation or "National Schism", as it was later called, lay in the differences that emerged between the Greek Prime Minister Venizelos and the Greek King Constantine I, over which side to join. Venizelos was a strong supporter of the Entente and within days of the outbreak of hostilities was ready to offer Greek troops to fight alongside the Entente. King Constantine, on the other hand, did not share Venizelo's zeal and believed that Greek policies would be best served by staying neutral. Being married to Sofia, the sister of Kaiser Wilhelm II, however, predisposed Constantine towards the Central Powers. The tug of war between Prime Minister and King divided the people of Greece into two camps and the country slid towards a state of virtual civil war. Having the authority to do so, Constantine replaced Venizelos with a pro-German Prime Minister and called for an election to end the impasse. Unfortunately for the King, Venizelos once again came out victorious with a clear majority. Bulgaria's attack on Serbia, due to a Greek-Serbian treaty, predisposed Greece to offer Serbia assistance. The

king's camp refused to comply on the grounds that it was not Bulgaria alone who was committing the aggression and insisted on remaining neutral. Venizelos called on Parliament and won support to send Greek troops to fight alongside the Serbs and to allow Entente troops to land in the Solun region. Venizelos was again forced to resign. "But whatever the constitutional rights and wrongs of the situation Venizelo's second resignation on 5 October 1915 signified a total breakdown in relations between the king and his elected prime minister. Britain and France, however, had not yet given up Greece for lost and held out to Venizelo's successor, Alexander Zaimis, the prospect of the cession of Cyprus to Greece in return for aid to Serbia, whose forces were now under severe pressure." (Page 109, Richard Clogg, A Short History of Modern Greece)

Soon afterwards, Zaimis too was forced to resign. New elections were held in December but were boycotted by the Venizelos camp. Events came to a head when the Royalists refused to allow evacuated Serbian troops to cross over from Corfu and join the Entente forces on the Solun front. Backed by the Entente, a group of pro-Venizelos officers launched a coup in Solun against the official government and created a provisional pro-Entente government with its own army. Once again many Macedonians, deceived by Balkan propaganda, joined the war with hopes of being liberated only to end up as "cannon fodder" used by both sides at the front. Macedonian casualties mounted and towns and villages only recently reconstructed were again bombarded to dust.

Soon after establishing the Solun front, the occupation of Greece was complete. France had dispatched 60,000 troops to the Balkans with hopes of safeguarding the Skopje to Solun rail links. By late 1917, Entente troops were emerging victorious over the Bulgarians and Germans in Macedonia. No sooner was the battle over than a problem developed between British and French commands in Macedonia. While the British General, Milne, supported Venizelos and his attempts to constitute a pro-British provisional government in Greece, the pro-Macedonian French General, Sarrail, opposed Venizelos and sought to drive the Greek army out of Macedonia. "The ambitious plan for Macedonian autonomy drafted by the French command in 1915 and 1916 were but mere progressive steps to ensure France a strategic outpost for capital expansion." (Page 155, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

Once again Macedonians were caught in the middle of someone else's war. To save face France recalled Sarrail and replaced him with a pro-Greek commander, thus avoiding a diplomatic disaster.

After establishing a government in Athens and consolidating his power in Greece, Venizelos committed nine divisions to the Macedonian front to assist Entente forces on the Solun front. To further prove his devotion to the Entente, Venizelos committed two more divisions to fight the Bolsheviks in Russia.

When the war was over, on November 11, 1918, a general armistice was signed and a Peace Conference was convened in Versailles, France. Venizelos arrived in Paris as the principle negotiator for Greece, determined to reap his reward for his solid support to his victorious allies. One of Venizelos's objectives was to resurrect the "Megaly Idea" by annexing parts of Asia Minor, Smyrna (Ismir) in particular. He convinced the world that the Christians living in Asia Minor were Greek and should be part of Greece. Unfortunately for Venizelos, Italy had prior claims in Asia Minor (Anatolia) which created a problem for the peacemakers. Greek ambition was viewed with suspicion by Italy so to strengthen her claims, in March 1919, Italy began to build up troops in the region. The Greeks viewed this as a threat to their own claim and before a final territorial solution was reached they demanded concessions. The reasons given were that the Greek people in Asia Minor were endangered by Turkish aggression and needed protection. After much protest on the Greek side, Britain, France and the Americans finally gave them permission to send a small defense force. Under the protection of allied warships, on May 15, 1919, Greek troops began their landing in Smyrna. Instead of staying put however, as per prior agreements, they began to occupy western Asia Minor.

No sooner were the Central Powers driven out of Greek territories than the Greek Government, by passing LAW 1051, inaugurated a new administrative jurisdiction for governing the newly acquired lands in Macedonia.

When it started to become clear that the Entente Powers were winning the war, encouraged by Woodrow Wilson's principles of nationality, many Macedonian lobby groups placed their faith in the Peace Conference in Versailles. Wilson's fourteen principles of nationality implicitly asserted the right of all nations to self-determination.

In his address to the Pan Slavic Assembly in Odessa in August 1914, Krste Misirkov called for achieving autonomy by diplomatic means. An article was written and extensively circulated in May 1915, which specifically dealt with the autonomy call.

The student organization "Independent Society", in Geneva Switzerland under the slogan of "Macedonia for the Macedonians", demanded the application of Wilson's principles to create an autonomous Macedonia based on the principles of the Swiss Federative model.

Remnants of IMRO also took action in the rally for an Autonomous Macedonia. After the Bulgarians murdered Yane Sandanski in 1915, his supporters fled the Pirin region to save their own lives and later regrouped in Serres to form the "Serres Revolutionary Council". "Having noted the impetus for unification of the Southern Slavs against the Central Powers, the Council issued a 'Declaration of Autonomy' in October 1918, in which it appealed for membership of a Balkan Federation on the basis of

Macedonian territorial integrity. This plea was ultimately rejected by the ruling cliques of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which later became known as Yugoslavia". "By striving for political and economic hegemony over the Balkans, Balkan nationalism has thrown the Balkan peoples and states into deep contradictions and conflicts which must be begun by war, and finished by war and always war." (Pages 158-159, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

Once again the Macedonian people came to the forefront to plead their case and once again they were shut out. How many more wars must be fought and how much more blood must be spilled for the world to realize that there is no end to Balkan conflicts without involving the Macedonian people in resolving the Macedonian question?

The Peace Conference, which was supposedly "the tribunal of international conscience", had no place for "Wilsonian Justice" or the opportunity for self-determination. Instead of practicing what they preached, the so called "peace makers of Versailles" rewarded aggression in exchange for self-interest.

With the stroke of a pen, in 1919 at the Treaty of Versailles (Paris), England and France sealed Macedonia's fate by ratifying the principles of the Bucharest Treaty and officially endorsing the partitioning of Macedonia. This gave Greece the license she needed to pursue forced expulsion and denationalization of Macedonians and to begin a mass colonization by transplanting "potential Greeks" into the annexed territories of Macedonia. The Neuilly Convention allowed for forced exchanges of populations. About 70,000 Macedonians were expelled from the Greek occupied part of Macedonia to Bulgaria and 25,000 "so called Greeks" were transplanted from Bulgaria to Greek occupied Macedonia.

"Macedonia's fate has been the subject of every kind of political combination, negotiation and treaty since 1912, each more immoral than the last, each ignoring completely the local interests and desires of a population which, with the stroke of the statesman's pen, can be condemned to national dissolution, and denied the right to a free national life while Armenians, Albanians and Jews receive political freedom." (Page 160, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

The Great Powers did not dare lose the strategic importance and untapped wealth in Macedonia or dare disappoint their trusted allies in the Balkans. Think of the endless bickering and complaining!

What was surprising, especially to the Balkan delegation, was the raising of the Macedonian question by Italy. On July 10, 1919, Italy along with the USA made a proposal to the "Committee for the Formation of New States" for Macedonian autonomy. France flatly opposed the motion while Britain proposed establishing a five-year Macedonian Commissary under the auspices of the League of Nations. Greece and Serbia, by

refusing to acknowledge the existence of a Macedonian question, literally killed the motion.

Another item that came out of Versailles was Article 51, the League of Nations' code to "protect national minorities". Article 51 of the Treaty of Versailles espouses equality of civil rights, education, language and religion for all national minorities. Unfortunately, article 51 was never implemented by the Balkan States or enforced by the League of Nations which Greece and Bulgaria, to this day, violate and ignore. Why is this? Because to this day Greece and Bulgaria claim that "the Macedonian ethnicity" does not exist and has never existed. So what minorities should they be protecting? In response to the Greek claim I would like to ask the Greeks the following questions:

1. To what minorities were you referring, when on September 29, 1924 your Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikolaos Mihalakopoulou signed an agreement with the Bulgarian Foreign Minister Kalkoff?
2. To what minorities were you referring, when on August 17, 1926 you made an agreement with Yugoslavia regarding the nationality of the "Slavophones" in Greece?

(Pages 159-161, G.A.L. I Kata Tis Makedonias Epivouli, (Ekdosis Deftera Sympepliromeni), Athinai 1966)

On September 29, 1924 Greece signed an agreement with Bulgaria declaring that the Macedonians in Greece were Bulgarians. Not to disappoint the Serbians, when they found out about the Greek-Bulgarian agreement, the Greeks changed their mind and on August 17, 1926 declared that the Macedonians in Greece were in reality, Serbs.

As it turned out the loudly proclaimed "Wilson principles" at the Paris Conference were only for show. The real winners at the end of the conference were the "players", the biggest one of all being Venizelos of Greece. "The entire forum was a farce, and its offspring the Versailles Treaty, the ultimate insult to the dignity and self-esteem (what remained of it after continuous war and bloodshed) of the long-tormented Macedonian people. Those Macedonians prodded by conscience, by the mistrust gained after generations of suffering, and by the desire for freedom, thereafter treated the Versailles Treaty, and all political treaties, with the contempt they deserve." (Page 166, Radin, IMRO and the Macedonian Question)

At the conclusion of the Treaty, Greece got back what she had previously annexed and, additionally, received a large portion of Epirus, western Thrace, Crete and the Aegean Islands. It is important to mention here that when Albania's affirmation for independence was signed, at the London Conference in February 1920, more of Macedonia's territory was partitioned. A narrow strip of land running through Lake Ohrid and southward along Macedonia's western boundary was awarded to Albania.

Soon after arriving victorious in Greece, Venizelos, in a speech in Solun, announced his plans for a "Greater Greece" (Megali Idea) and to bring together all "Greek peoples" under a single Greater Greek State.

I remember, as a child, listening to old men in my village, sitting on the porch telling tales of bygone wars when, as young soldiers, they chased the Turks to Ankara yelling "two Turks to a bayonet". They also told stories of how it took them sixty days to gain sixty miles and how they lost them in one day of retreat. I didn't understand what they were talking about then but it was about the Greek exploits in Asia Minor. As mentioned earlier, after building up a large military presence in Asia Minor, a major offensive was launched in March 1921 and by the end of the summer the Greek armies reached the Sakarya River about forty miles from Ankara.

The assault on Asia Minor was an "exclusively Greek initiative" without the blessing of the Entente Powers and as a result they found themselves alone and running out of ammunition. They knew they couldn't count on Italy or France for help but the realization of their predicament sunk in when Britain also refused to help them. By early autumn the Greeks were pushed back beyond the halfway point between Smyrna and Ankara, reaching an uneasy military stalemate. Realizing that they couldn't possibly win militarily or politically, the Greeks turned to the Paris Conference of March 1922 looking for a compromise. The compromise called for the withdrawal of the Greek armies and placing the Christian population under the protection of the League of Nations. Sensing a victory, Mustafa Kemal of Turkey insisted on an unconditional evacuation of the Greek forces, a demand unacceptable to the Greeks. Still counting on British kindness, in July 1922 the Greeks unsuccessfully attempted to get permission from their allies to enter Tsari Grad.

Turkey launched a full-scale offensive on August 26, 1922 (a dark day for Greece and her Megali Idea) near Afyonkarahisar and forced the Greeks into a hasty retreat back to Smyrna. On September 8 the Greek army was evacuated and the next day the Turkish army invaded Smyrna. The worst came on the evening of the 9th when outbreaks of killing and looting began, followed by a massacre of the Christian population in which 30,000 Christians perished. As a result of the violence 250,000 people fled to the waterfront to escape the catastrophic disaster.

The Asia Minor campaign was over along with the "Megali Idea" of a Greater Greece. Worse yet, as a result of this catastrophic Greek fiasco, over one million Turkish Christians were displaced, most of them into Macedonia. Their settlement affected the demography of the Macedonian landscape as well as the morale of the Macedonian population.

An entire generation of young Macedonian men, who were drafted into the Greek military, were sent to the Asia Minor campaigns and many lost their lives. The Greek authorities never acknowledged their service and no

compensation was ever paid to the families of those "breadwinners" who lost their lives. The reason for the omission, according to the Greek authorities, "they were Bulgarian."

It is, I am told, noble to die for your country. Would it not be "nobler" to die for someone else's country? How did the Greeks repay those, noble enough to die for Greece? They let their widows and children live in poverty. This is how Greece treated its noblest citizens!

By the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923, the Greco-Turkish war came to an end. Greece and Turkey signed a population exchange agreement using "religion as the basic criterion for nationality." (Page 120, Richard Clogg, *A Short History of Modern Greece*)

The November 1925 issue of *National Geographic Magazine* best illustrates the magnitude of the human wave, the audacity of the Greek and Turkish authorities and the total disregard for human life. "History's Greatest Trek, Tragedy Stalks the Near East as Greece and Turkey Exchange Two Million of their People. ...1922 began what may fairly be called history's greatest, most spectacular trek-the compulsory intermigration of two million Christians and Muslims across the Aegean Sea." "...the initial episodes of the exchange drama were enacted to the accompaniment of the boom of cannon and the rattle of machine gun and with the settings pointed by the flames of the Smyrna holocaust." (Page 533, Melville Chater, *National Geographic*, November 1925)

"Stroke of the Pen Exiles 3,000,000 People. It is safe to say that history does not contain a more extraordinary document. Never before in the world's long pageant of folk-wanderings have 2,000,000 people-and certainly no less than 3,000,000 if the retroactive clause is possible of complete application-been exiled and re-adopted by the stroke of the pen" (Page 569, *National Geographic*, November 1925). "Even if regarded as a voluntary trek instead of a compulsory exchange, the movement would be without parallel in the history of emigration." "One might just add that history has never produced a document more difficult of execution. It was to lessen these difficulties that exchangeability was based in religion and not race. Due to five centuries of Turkish domination in Greece, the complexities in determining an individual's racial status are often such as would make a census taker weep." (Page 570, *National Geographic*, November 1925)

"Greece with one-fifth Turkey's area has 1,500,000 more people. Turkey with a population of 5,000,000 and naturally rich territory contains only 15 people to the square mile...Greece, with less than one fifth of Turkey's area, emerges with a population exceeding the latter's for the first time by 1,500,000 people averaging 123 to the square mile." (Page 584, *National Geographic*, November 1925)

"History's Greatest Trek has cost 300,000 lives. Conservative estimates place it at 300,000 lives lost by disease and exposure." (Page 584, National Geographic, November 1925)

"The actual exchange was weighted very heavily in Turkey's favour, for some 380,000 Muslims were exchanged for something like 1,100,000 Christians." "The total population in Greece rose between 1907 and 1928 from 2,600,000 to 6,200,000." "After the Greek advances of 1912, for instance, the Greek elements in Greek Macedonia had constituted 43 percent of the population. By 1926, with the resettlement of the refugees, the Greek element has risen to 89 percent." (Page 121, Richard Clogg, A Short History of Modern Greece)

After all this, surprisingly (and shamefully) Greece still claims her population to be homogeneous; direct descendents of the peoples of the ancient City States.

"If Greece exists today as a homogeneous ethnos, she owes this to [the Asia Minor Catastrophe]. If the hundreds of thousands of refugees had not come to Greece, Greek Macedonia would not exist today. The refugees created the national homogeneity of our country. (Antonios Kandiotis, Metrpolite of Florina, Page 141 in Anastasia Karakasidou, Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood)

According to Karakasidou, almost half of the refugees were settled in urban centers and rural areas in Macedonia. "Searching for locations in which to settle this mass of humanity, the Greek government looked north to the newly incorporated land in Macedonia..." "...by 1930, 90 percent of the 578,844 refugees settled in rural Greece were concentrated in the regions of Macedonia and western Thrace. Thus Macedonia, Greece's newly acquired second 'breadbasket' (after Thessaly), became the depository for East Thracian, Pontic, and Asia Minor refugees." (Page 145, Anastasia Karakasidou, Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood)

Even before Greece had secured her grip on Macedonia, officials were sent to administer "the new lands". The first official Greek administrator arrived in Solun near the end of October 1912, accompanied by two judges, five customs officials, ten consulate clerks, a contingent of reporters and journalists and 168 Cretan soldiers. Among other things, the first order of business was to "Hellenize the New Lands". "After the Greeks occupied Aegean Macedonia, they closed the Slavic language schools and churches and expelled the priests. The Macedonian language and names were forbidden, and the Macedonians were referred to as Bulgarians, Serbians or natives. By law promulgated on November 21, 1926, all place names (toponymia) were Hellenized; that is the names of cities, villages, rivers and mountains were discarded and Greek names put in their place. At the same time the Macedonians were forced to change their first and surnames; every Macedonian surname had to end in 'os', 'es', or 'poulos'. The news of these acts and the new, official Greek names were

published in the Greek government daily 'Efimeris tis Kiverniseos no. 322 and 324 of November 21 and 23, 1926. The requirements to use these Greek names is officially binding to this day. All evidence of the Macedonian language was compulsorily removed from churches, monuments, archeological finds and cemeteries. Slavonic church or secular literature was seized and burned. The use of the Macedonian language was strictly forbidden also in personal communication between parents and children, among villagers, at weddings and work parties, and in burial rituals." (Page 109, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece, The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation)

The act of forbidding the use of the Macedonian language in Greece is best illustrated by an example of how it was implemented in the Township of Assirios (Giuvezna). Here is a quote from Karakasidou's book *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*.

"[We] listened to the president articulate to the council that in accordance with the decision [#122770] of Mr. Minister, General Governor of Macedonia, all municipal and township councils would forbid, through [administrative] decisions, the speaking of other idioms of obsolete languages within the area of their jurisdiction for the reconstitution of a universal language and our national glory. [The president] suggested that [the] speaking of different idioms, foreign [languages] and our language in an impure or obsolete manner in the area of the township of Assirios would be forbidden. Assirios Township Decision No. 134, 13 December 1936." (Page 162, Anastasia Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*)

By 1928 1,497 Macedonian place-names in the Greek occupied Macedonia were Hellenized (LAW 4096) and all Cyrillic inscriptions found in churches, on tombstones and icons were destroyed (or overwritten) prompting English Journalist V. Hild to say, "The Greeks do not only persecute living Slavs (Macedonians)..., but they even persecute dead ones. They do not leave them in peace even in the graves. They erase the Slavonic inscriptions on the headstones, remove the bones and burn them."

In the years following World War I, the Macedonian people underwent extensive measures of systematic denationalization. The applications of these "denationalization schemes" were so extensive and aggressively pursued that in the long term they eroded the will of the Macedonian people to resist.

"In Greece, in 1929 during the rule of Elepeterios Venizelos, a legal act was issued 'On the protection of public order'. In line with this Act each demand for nationality rights is regarded as high treason. This law is still in force.

On December 18, 1936, Metaksas' dictatorial government issued a legal Act 'On the activity against state security' on the strength of which

thousands of Macedonians were arrested, imprisoned, expelled or exiled (EXORIA) on arid, inhospitable Greek islands, where many perished. Their crime? Being ethnic Macedonian by birth.

On September 7, 1938 legal Act No. 2366 was issued banning the use of the Macedonian language. All Macedonian localities were flooded with posters: 'Speak Greek'. Evening schools were opened in which adult Macedonians were taught Greek. Not a single Macedonian school functioned at the time." (Page 8, What Europe has Forgotten: The Struggle of the Aegean Macedonians, A Report by the Association of the Macedonians in Poland)

Many Macedonians were fined, beaten and jailed for speaking Macedonian. Adults and school children alike were further humiliated by being forced to drink castor oil when caught speaking Macedonian.

In Vardar Macedonia, the Yugoslav government attacked the problem of denationalization and assimilation by enacting laws, such as the September 24, 1920 "Resolution for the Settlement of the New Southern Regions", designed to effectively exclude Macedonians from owning any property. The Macedonian language was banned along with cultural institutions through a uniform code known as the December 30th, 1920 EDICT, which was aimed at persecuting all political and trade union associations.

The bulk and most arable of Macedonian lands were awarded to Serbian army officers who survived the World War I Solun front. Land was also awarded to the Serbian administrators of Macedonia including government bureaucrats, judges and the police. The denationalization measures were complemented with aggressive re-education programs producing "little Serbs" out of the Macedonian children. As for the unwilling adults, they were given two options - "live as a Serb" or "die as a Macedonian"!

In Pirin Macedonia, the Bulgarian government enforced compulsory name changes and, through repressive political and economic means, stepped up the assimilation process. Initially land reforms favoured the poor, including the Macedonian peasants. Later, however, that too changed and Macedonians here were exposed to a similar fate as the Macedonians in Greek and Serbian occupied Macedonia.

The Macedonians in Albania posed little threat to Albania's authority and fared relatively better than their kin in Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. The village inhabitants were not persecuted or subjected to any comprehensive denationalization programs. As a result the Macedonian culture flourished, original names remained and the people spoke Macedonian uninhibited.

After the Great War there was peace in Europe. Unfortunately Macedonians continued to endure denationalization, forced assimilation, forced emigration and economic neglect at the hands of the new masters.

As time will tell Europe will not have a lasting peace, a new menace with greater ferocity is emerging and will engulf the entire world. Once again someone else's war will be fought on Macedonian soil and once again it will prove even more devastating than any previous war, almost fatal to the Macedonian nation.

After the conclusion of the Great War and the Soviet Bolshevik revolution, the Great Powers were in ruins and began their lengthy process of rebuilding. Russia's desires for imperialist ventures and its obsession with destroying the Ottoman Empire brought immense economic suffering to its people. While the Macedonians in the Balkans were suffering from denationalization and oppression, the world around them was changing.

Lenin's rise to power put an end to Russian imperialist ambitions in the Balkans, especially the Tsarist desires for annexing Tsari Grad and Endrene. Germany, on the other hand, bitter about its latest defeat, began to rebuild its economy. Smarting from their latest bouts with Germany, France and Britain too began to rebuild their economies and military strengths. Germany, as the vanquished party and instigator of the Great War, was forced to pay restitution for damages to the victorious nations.

In spite of all efforts made to recover from the Great War, the economic situation in Europe was worsening and came to a climax in October 1929 when the stock market crashed in the United States. The economic collapse of the 1930's and the "Great Depression" polarized the world into "left and right" economic camps. On the left were the supporters of the working class and Communism, while on the right were the supporters of industry and capitalism. The tug of war between left and right came to a climax when civil war broke out in Spain in July 1936. Germany was in support of the right and sent troops to fight on the side of the Spanish Government. Germany, at the time, was only allowed to have a small army, so to compensate for its limited numerical capability it focused its efforts on producing a superior force. Germany's small but capable army was field-tested and battle hardened in the Spanish conflict. This explains its numerous victories during the course of World War II. Russian and German influences did not escape the Balkan States and they too felt the pull from the two camps.

To maintain control of his kingdom, King George II of Greece made his state a dictatorship. In 1936, after the Greek premier's death, he appointed General Metaxas the minister of war to take charge of Greek affairs.

While there were some prospects for basic human rights for the Macedonian people in the Greek State in the early 1920's, those prospects died as Greece tightened its grip on Macedonia by implementing more racist assimilation policies. If that was not enough, on December 18, 1936 the Greek Government issued a legal act concerning, "Activities Against State Security". By this act thousands of Macedonians were arrested,

imprisoned and expelled from their homeland. Among other things, Metaxas on September 7, 1938, by legal act 2366, outlawed the Macedonian language and prohibited people from speaking it by imposing heavy fines and imprisonment.

In 1938 Australian author Bert Birtles in his book "Exiles in the Aegean" wrote, "In the name of 'Hellenization' these people (Macedonians) are being persecuted continually and arrested for the most fantastic reasons. Metaxa's way of inculcating the proper nationalist spirit among them has been to change all the native place-names into Greek and to forbid use of the native language. For displaying the slightest resistance to the edict-for this too is a danger to the security of the State-peasants and villagers have been exiled without trial." (Page 112, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation)

Once in control of the Greek State, Metaxas acted against the labour unions and their leaders and declared strikes illegal. He then turned to suppressing all political opposition, outlawed all political parties and imprisoned leaders who would not pledge their loyalty to him. The communist party too was outlawed and driven underground. The press was also heavily censored.

Being a military man, Metaxas dedicated much of the State's finances to modernizing the Greek army in both manpower and military hardware. In the sphere of education, he re-wrote Greek history to support his own ideologies declaring that there were three great periods in history: classical, Byzantine and his own regime, which was then known as the "Regime of the Fourth of August". He created a National Youth Organization to bring children together from various social classes and provided military training for boys and domestic skills for girls. Even though the Metaxa regime was ideologically similar to that of Spain and Italy, the Greeks were always loyal to Britain.

In Yugoslavia events were progressing in a similar manner to those in Greece. After King Alexander declared himself dictator of Yugoslavia in 1929, he suspended the constitution and subdivided his kingdom in such a way that the Serbs would be a majority in all districts. He also abolished trade unions and removed personal liberties. The Serbian occupied territory of Macedonia was referred to as "South Serbia" and the Macedonian language was forbidden from being spoken in public. The history of the Macedonian people and their surnames were changed as well, to give Serbian emphasis. Place names too were changed and replaced with historically Serbian names. Unlike the Metaxa regime, after the 1930's, the Yugoslav regimes began to relax their tight grip and allowed unofficial and limited use of the Macedonian dialects to be spoken in the streets of Macedonia and in plays and drama clubs.

In Bulgaria events followed a similar course as in Yugoslavia and Greece. A military coup was imposed in May 1934, the 1879 constitution

was abolished and political organizations and trade unions were suppressed. In 1935 King Boris III, in a bloodless coup, overthrew the old dictatorship and replaced it with his own Royal one. Bulgarian governments since Bulgaria's inception in 1878 have officially and adamantly denied the existence of the Macedonian ethnicity arguing that Macedonians are Bulgarians. Thousands of Macedonians, who over the years tried to express different views, were jailed or exiled. The attitude that Macedonians are Bulgarians was used to justify violent assimilation acts and to deny Macedonians their basic human rights. Ever since its inception in 1878, Bulgaria has been obsessed with possessing Macedonia and has caused immense suffering for the Macedonian people.

The downfall of the Tsarist Russian Imperial Empire, the break-up of the Habsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire and the demise of the Ottoman Empire removed three of the Great Powers from internal Balkan influence. While Britain played a less active role, France and Italy attempted to form competing alliances in the Balkans but did not have the military might to enforce them. The Balkan governments, on the other hand, for the first time had an opportunity to adjust their relations with each other and form alliances to protect their mutual interests. Unfortunately their hatred for each other and fear of losing Macedonia always prevented such alliances and again allowed outsiders to play a role in their internal affairs.

Germany's humiliating defeat in the Great War, coupled with its economic plight in the 1930's, gave rise to a new kind of German radicalism. Hitler exploited that and turned it to his own advantage. Hitler, in the short term, also gave the German people what they desired most, work and hope for a better future. Unfortunately, in the long term, he delivered disaster not only to the German people but also to many other nations, including the Macedonians.

As a new-world order emerged from the Great War, new alliances began to form. On one side stood the Axis partners, initially consisting of Germany, Italy and Japan. As war broke out, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Finland and Thailand joined in. On the other side the Allied partners consisted of Britain, the Soviet Union, the USA and China. As the war progressed more and more nations joined the allies, totaling about fifty before the war was over.

In September 1940 Germany, Italy and Japan signed a cooperation agreement. This basically identified their intentions with respect to each others' spheres of influence, defining their political, economic and defense strategies as well as their obligations to each other. The agreement came to be known as the "tripartite pact".

After war broke out in the Balkans, the first to fall to fascist aggression was Albania. By an ultimatum delivered to Albanian King Zog, on March 23, 1939, Italian troops landed in Albania and occupied its territory on April 7, encountering little resistance. Soon after consolidating control in

Albania, on October 28th, 1940, Italy declared war on Greece. Greece, however, turned out to be tough to defeat and Metaxa's foresight in arming his state paid off.

Official history praises Greece and Greek soldiers for their bravery and fighting spirit but neglects to mention the contributions and sacrifices Macedonians made to keep Greece safe. Macedonians were the first to be dispatched to the front lines in Albania, taking the full brunt of the offensive as well as the winter cold. More Macedonian men suffered from gangrene than from Italian bullets and bombs. Unprepared for the frigid temperatures, many men lost their fingers, toes, limbs and even their lives to frostbite. Food too was in short supply. The brave Macedonian soldiers had to fight off starvation as well as the Italians. They did this to protect a country that refused and still refuses to recognize them.

All their sacrifices were in vain because six months later, on April 6th, 1941, the German army marched into Greece. Again the Macedonians fought bravely but they were no match for the well-trained, well-disciplined German army.

There is a story, I am told, of a Macedonian soldier, a real old coot, who refused to surrender to the invading Germans and continued to fire at them in spite of orders to cease. He held his position until he ran out of ammunition and the Germans practically grabbed him by the neck. Expecting to meet his maker, he stood up and bravely faced his enemy. Instead of killing him, the German soldiers, one by one, shook his hand and praised him for his bravery, then let him go. (I don't want to give you the wrong impression about the Germans. This is how they behaved in the beginning during the Partisan days, later however their policy was to "kill ten innocent civilians for each German soldier killed".)

When the Germans reached Athens, the Greek government capitulated and the soldiers on the Albanian front were left on their own. Some were told to go to Epirus and regroup, expected to make the long trek on foot. Others were told nothing and were left to roam the countryside. Eventually they were all picked up by German patrols, disarmed and sent home. The returning soldiers were given a hero's welcome. Unfortunately for those who were wounded, losing fingers, toes and limbs to frostbite, there was no compensation or solace for their pain.

The German invasion was a welcome relief for the soldiers from the Italian front, but at the same time it posed an uneasy uncertainty as to what was going to happen next. No one was certain how the new invaders were going to react. The Macedonian people, having ample prior experience with being occupied, were expecting the worst. As time would show the new invaders were a mixed blessing for the Macedonian people.

After war broke out in Europe, Bulgaria allied itself with the axis powers and on March 1, 1941 joined the German led pact. The entry of German troops into Bulgaria put Yugoslavia in a difficult position. To

avoid German wrath, on March 25, 1941, the Yugoslav Regent, Prince Paul, also joined the German led pact. This did not sit well with young King Peter who, with the help of the Yugoslav military, staged a coup and deposed the Regent. This meant that Hitler had to negotiate with Yugoslavia again. Hitler was counting on Yugoslavia to allow him passage to attack Greece. The new situation angered Hitler and instead of negotiating he signed directive number 25 declaring Yugoslavia an enemy of Germany and ordered its destruction. Hitler wanted a swift strike so he withdrew troops from the Russian campaign.

It took Hitler's army 12 days to demolish Yugoslavia, a small diversion in his destructive career, but there are those who believe that this little diversion changed the course of history. To begin with it gave the Soviet Union just enough time to adequately prepare for an offensive, which ultimately led to Germany's defeat. Secondly, the violent nature of the attack created the right conditions for a Partisan uprising, which ultimately helped to establish the Republic of Macedonia. The battle for Yugoslavia and Greece was swift and effective. When it was over the Germans, as an ally to the axis powers, allowed Bulgaria to occupy Vardar (Yugoslav occupied) Macedonia and the eastern region of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. Later, after the Italians left, Germany allowed Bulgaria to occupy western Macedonia as well.

Many Macedonians from the Vardar region who had suffered under the Yugoslav regime welcomed the Bulgarian invaders as saviors and liberators. Their euphoria was short-lived as the Bulgarians quickly began to oppress and forcibly Bulgarize the Macedonian population. If there had been any pro-Bulgarian sentiment before, it quickly disappeared after the occupation. Germany's violent entry into Yugoslavia, coupled with Bulgarian oppressive attitudes towards the Macedonian people, gave birth to an underground Macedonian resistance movement.

In Aegean Macedonia, after the Germans settled in, life for the Macedonian people took on an uneasy normalcy. The Greek police, who had supported the Metaxa regime before the occupation, now cooperated with the German military and again became active in Macedonia. To counter its oppressive tactics the old Komiti (Ilinden revolutionary guard) rearmed and went back to active duty. The "old timers" were angered by Greece's oppressive laws and were spurred back into action by Bulgarian propaganda condemning the oppressive Greek tactics. The Bulgarians were well aware of the unfavourable conditions the Greek Government had created in Macedonia and used the opportunity to agitate the Greeks. Komiti actions were limited at best and were restricted to the Italian zones, as the Germans would not tolerate armed actions in their zones.

The Partisan movement in Yugoslavia was more organized and progressive than in Greece. Led by Tito, the Communist partisans in Yugoslavia organized a war of national liberation in which the

Macedonians, led by General Tempo, fought on an equal footing. Macedonians formed their own section of resistance even before they were recognized and accepted by Tito. The first anti-fascist war of national liberation began in the Republic of Macedonia on October 11, 1941. October 11th is the "Second Ilinden" for the Macedonian people. Since 1941 they have celebrated it as "Macedonian Revolution Day". The Macedonian people by their actions, loyalty and patriotism earned their place in the world. By hardship, determination and the spilling of blood the Macedonian people demonstrated their desire for freedom and the willingness to rule themselves. The Great Powers in 1829 (by the London Protocol) satisfied the Greeks by making Greece a country. Similarly in 1878 (by the congress of Berlin) Russia liberated the Bulgarians making Bulgaria a country. Unlike the Greeks and Bulgarians, however, the brave people of Vardar Macedonia had to fight by themselves, for themselves, to earn their place in the world among the free nations.

For just over a year the Macedonians of Vardar endured enough Bulgarian treachery to last them a lifetime. Then in April 1942 they rose up and demonstrated their displeasure. Macedonian Partisans took up arms against the Bulgarian army but were massacred in a bloody battle. Unarmed Macedonians then took to the streets to protest the massacre and they too were cut to pieces.

To escape persecution, sections of the Macedonian Partisan force in Yugoslavia fled into Aegean Macedonia. Some entered the Italian zones near the village Besfina and the rest penetrated the German zones in the region around the village Sveta Petka and quickly went underground. The Besfina force, before it had a chance to make contact with the local population, was spotted by the Komiti who quickly sprang into action. Seeing uniformed men on the Besfina hillside startled the old Komiti. Thinking that it was a Greek police (Andari) invasion force, the Komiti appealed to the local Italian garrison and were given arms and permission to attack. When the Komiti started the offensive the Partisans backed off and sent representatives to negotiate. They went from village to village and spoke with the local chiefs. The strangers wore handsome uniforms and conducted themselves seriously, with charm and charisma. They spoke long and well about freedom, liberty and the treachery of the Bulgarian Fascists.

When the Komiti found out that the uniformed men were Macedonians they accepted them with open arms, gave them (surrendered) their weapons and many voluntarily joined their cause. The Partisans of Sveta Petka, because of a German presence, had to work under cover but they too succeeded in recruiting volunteers from the local population. After the Partisan penetration, the Macedonian people of Aegean Macedonia learned about Bulgarian atrocities and ceased to believe the Bulgarian propaganda.

The old Ilinden guard was demobilized and replaced by a Partisan movement.

Partisan organizers took extraordinary measures to explain to the Macedonian people that they were fighting for the freedom and liberation of the Macedonian people from the tyranny of the oppressive states. The Macedonian involvement in this war, and later in the Greek civil war, was not about "Communist ideologies" or about alliances or obligations to the Great Powers. It was simply the next stage in the long struggle for "liberation from oppression" and to fulfill a longing for freedom, re-unification and self-rule. The Macedonian contribution in fighting against Fascism is not only under emphasized but also misinterpreted by historians. I will once again say that the Macedonian people, during the Second Great War (WWII), rose on the democratic side and fought against fascism for the liberation of the states in which they lived. The Macedonian people, like other people in the Balkans, fought to liberate their homeland and thus earn their place in the world. This cannot be ignored and must be recognized and recorded in the annals of history.

After all the German and Bulgarian occupying forces withdrew from Yugoslavia, the Partisans, numbering about 800,000, were in full control. There were no outside invasion forces (Allied or Russian) inside Yugoslavia, so foreign interference was not a problem. At that time the Macedonian Partisans possessed a sizeable force and wielded considerable influence in the ranks of the Tito regime. The Macedonian people did their share of fighting for the liberation of Yugoslavia from the Fascists and earned their place as equals among the Yugoslav people.

On August 2nd, 1944 Macedonia was officially proclaimed a Republic within the Yugoslav Federation. A Bitola-Lerin dialect was chosen and adopted as the official language of the Republic and the city of Skopje was chosen as the new Republic's capital.

No sooner had the Germans withdrawn from Greece than the British military arrived in Athens. Athens was evacuated on October 12, 1944 and a British occupation force entered the city a few days later. While Britain entered Greece with only four thousand troops, most unfit for combat, ELAS (Greek Partisans) in contrast had seventy thousand men armed and ready for combat. Even the British admit that if the Greek Partisans wanted to, they could have seized power. The conditions were certainly right. The question is why didn't they and what was the Greek Civil War all about? Official history provides no answers, only more questions.

It took the British a couple of months to organize and by mid December 1944 they had fifty thousand soldiers of their own and some loyal Greek troops to back them. The local Greek troops came from the ranks of the Andari (National Republican Greek League), the same men who fought alongside the Germans against they own people. They

switched their German gear for British uniforms and were back on the streets again attacking the Partisans.

As Greece started to collapse, before Germany invaded in 1941, King George II fled and formed a government in exile in London, which was recognized by the Allies as the official Government of Greece. Also the British, in advance of the German departure, established a center of Greek activity in Cairo where a Greek army, navy and air force operated under British command.

After the British consolidated power in Greece they were able to support the British appointed Greek Government and ordered the Partisans to demobilize. What is interesting here is that before the British were able to militarily enforce a disarmament they ordered the Partisan forces to disband. What is more interesting and noteworthy is that EAM agreed to demobilize its own forces with hardly any conditions. The only condition worthy of mention is the request for Britain to disarm the "Government support units"; EAM's main opposition. Knowing full well that Britain would never allow communist rule in Greece and also knowing that the Soviet Union signed an agreement with Britain not to interfere in Greece, EAM still believed it could come to power with no outside help.

When the British went ahead with the original plan, ignoring EAM's request to disarm the Government Support Units, EAM withdrew from the government. EAM then protested against British actions by organizing demonstrations and general strikes. When the Athens Square began to flood with thousands of demonstrators the police were ordered to fire on the crowds, killing fifteen people. To make matters worse, Churchill approved a plan for Britain to occupy Athens by any means necessary if required. ELAS still held more than three-quarters of Greece but because it could no longer count on outside (Soviet) support, it had to re-evaluate its own position.

Under these conditions EAM, in January 1945, accepted an armistice trading guns for votes. The Varkita agreement was signed on February 12, 1945 requiring all bands to demobilize and surrender their weapons. The British, once again, confirmed their allegiance to the Greek Government by giving Athens full political and military support, committing their willingness to fight to prevent a Partisan victory. The biggest losers of the Varkita agreement were the Macedonians. As soon as EAM signed the agreement, all anti-Macedonian laws were back in force and the Macedonian people lost all that they had gained during the German occupation. EAM/KKE (Greek Communist Party) made absolutely no effort to safeguard Macedonian rights in the agreements with Britain and as a result began to lose favour with the Macedonian leadership. When the Macedonian Partisan forces were ordered to demobilize, as part of the Varkita agreement, the Macedonian leadership refused. Goche and Titan

refused to disarm and disband without guarantees that no harm would come to their men or to the Macedonian people.

The question of "what will happen to Aegean Macedonia under Greek communist rule" was still unclear. Greece was determined to rid itself of the Macedonians one way or another and outlawed the Macedonian forces. A strike force was assembled by ELAS (the Greek Partisans) and sent north to intervene and arrest the Macedonian brigade now considered illegal. But instead of putting up a fight the Macedonian brigades crossed over the Yugoslav border and entered Vardar Macedonia. In Vardar Macedonia they were a welcome addition to existing Macedonian forces fighting the Albanian Balisti (German allies) in Tetovo and Gostivar. The Macedonian leadership could have decided to stay and fight ELAS but it would have made no sense to bring the war home to Macedonia. They knew very well that British troops would soon follow and they would be fighting a senseless, bloody war in their own backyard.

With the Macedonian force out of the way, the Greek police were back and up to their old tricks. This time it wasn't only the Macedonians who were their victims. They hated the Greek Partisans just as much. With practically no one to stop them, the Greek police escalated their terror activities arresting, torturing, and murdering people indiscriminately, including the EAM, ELAS and KE (Communist Party of Greece) leadership. By the time elections were convened most of the Partisan leadership had disappeared. They were either in jail serving hard time on fabricated and trumped up charges or they were dead.

Elections were scheduled for March 31st, 1946. Instead of voting, the Greek Partisans re-armed themselves and rebelled against the Greek Government. The rebellion manifested itself as an attack on Greece in the village of "Lithohorion", situated east of Mount Olympus directly south of Katerini in Thessaly. Other attacks soon followed and in no time the conflict escalated into a full scale Civil War, engulfing not only Greece but Greek occupied Macedonia as well.

In a bizarre turn of events, ELAS, who less than a year ago turned their guns on Macedonian fighters, now extended their hands in friendship. All was forgiven and forgotten when the ELAS leadership asked the Macedonians for their help. This time they came with offers of "equal rights", "recognition" and even possibilities of "re-unification with Vardar". Now tell me what Macedonian could resist that?

Many Aegean Partisan fighters who had crossed over to Vardar Macedonia only the year before came back. On their return they organized themselves under NOF, the Macedonian National Liberation Front, and fought side by side with ELAS. Many were well aware of the saying "beware of Greeks bearing gifts" and knew that the Greek offer was too good to be true. But there was always that small ray of hope that perhaps this time the outcome for Macedonia might be different. Besides, their

families, homes and lives were in Aegean Macedonia. What other choice did they really have? They returned because they were lonely, loved their families and because they had to live with the guilt of leaving their loved ones in dire straits. Every Macedonian born in Macedonia, even in the most desolate places, knows the feeling of homesickness and yearns to return.

By early 1947 the Partisan force was showing real strength in military capability and promise for delivering on its commitments to the Macedonian people. About 87 Macedonian schools were opened in the Lerin and Kostur regions. A record number of students (10,000) were reported attending school. Macedonian literature and culture seemed to flourish. The Greeks, unfortunately, were never at ease with the Macedonian gains and there was visible resentment and mistrust between the two peoples. Greek chauvinism seemed to flourish even at the best of times. Macedonians, on the other hand, were never at ease about revealing their real names or identities, especially to the Greek Partisans. One Macedonian explained it to me this way, "If they knew that you were Macedonian then you had to watch both your front and back, because you never knew where the next bullet was going to come from."

In Macedonia the ranks of the Partisans were swelling mostly with volunteers from the patriotic Macedonian villages. Some who had combat experience were promoted to the rank of officer. The Greeks were hesitant and careful not to promote Macedonians to high ranks. Those they reserved for Greeks only. In addition to enlisting men, the Partisans also drafted women as nurses, field medics, tailors, menders, launderers, cooks, supply organizers and even armed combatants. For a while the Partisans grew their own food in donated and abandoned fields. The workforce, managing the harvests and delivering food to the Partisan camps, was made up mostly of women volunteers.

Both the Greek Government and the Partisans were recruiting fighters from the same population. While young men were drafted to fight for the Greek Government, their wives, sisters, brothers, mothers and fathers were drafted to fight for the Partisans. There were heavy propaganda campaigns conducted on both sides poisoning the minds of the young and impressionable, dividing and tearing the community apart and pitting brother against brother.

This was the Greek legacy passed on to the Macedonian people for offering their help. This was the "Greek curse" that many Macedonians must bear for partnering with the Greeks. To this day many Macedonians harbour hard feelings and struggle to make amends. To this day the Macedonian community remains divided on this issue.

From the day the British set foot in Greece they were adamant about ridding themselves of the Partisans by any means possible, even condoning acts of violence and terror. From mid-1945 to May 20th, 1947

the Partisans reported that "in Western Macedonia alone, 13,529 Macedonians were tortured, 3,215 were imprisoned, and 268 were executed without trial. In addition, 1,891 houses were burnt down and 1,553 were looted, and 13,808 Macedonians were resettled by force. During the war, Greek-run prison camps where Macedonians were imprisoned, tortured, and killed included the island of Ikaria near Turkey, the Island of Makronisos near Athens, the jail Averov near Athens, the jail at Larisa near the Volos Peninsula, and the jail in Thessaloniki. Aegean Macedonian expatriates claim that there were mass killings on Vicho, Gramos, Kaymakchalan, and at Mala Prespa in Albania." (Page 116, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece, The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation)

The Greek Government in Macedonia worked closely with local collaborators and enlisted, from the Macedonian population, only those who could be proven trustworthy. The collaborators worked hard to identify all those who were sympathetic to the Partisans and reported on their activities on a regular basis. Anyone reported aiding the Partisans was severely punished and sometimes executed. In the spring of 1947 all those who were blacklisted were rounded up, arrested and locked up in Lerin jails. Those accused of aiding the Partisans were taken out and executed. The rest, after spending one hundred days in jail without trial, were sent to various concentration camps in the most desolate Greek Islands.

I want to mention something very important here because I believe the Greek Government, even before the Greek civil war, had plans "to deal with the Macedonians in Greece". "In 1947, during the Greek civil war, the legal act L-2 was issued. This meant that all those who left Greece without the consent of the Greek government were stripped of Greek citizenship and banned from returning to the country. The law applied to Greeks and Macedonians, but in its modernized version the act is binding only on Macedonians. It prevents Macedonians, but not former Communist Greeks who fought against the winning side from returning to Greece and reclaiming property. On January 20, 1948, the legal act M was issued. This allowed the Greek government to confiscate the property of those who were stripped of their citizenship. The law was updated in 1985 to exclude Greeks, but still binding on Macedonians." (Pages 116-117, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece, The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation)

Clearly acts L-2 and M were designed to work against the interest of the Macedonian people. Even innocent Macedonians who left before the Civil War were not allowed to return. The question now is "What was Greece planning to do with the Macedonians?" The way acts L-2 and M were enforced over the years brings another question to mind. If there were no Macedonians living in Greece, as the Greeks claim, then what ethnicity were these people the Greek Government refused to allow back?

Why is it that Greek law makes the distinction between Macedonians and Greeks when it suits Greece but not when it benefits the Macedonians?

By the end of 1947 battles were raging everywhere and the war was slowly moving north into Macedonia. Clearly this was a "Greek War", yet again the Macedonian population was being sucked into it. The heavily armed Greek air force and mechanized artillery gained control of most cities and main roads. The Partisans were literally trapped and continued their strictly defensive campaigns mainly from the mountains of Vicho and Gramos.

As the war intensified the Greek air force regularly bombed Macedonian villages putting the civilian population, including children, in danger. In the spring of 1948, to save the children, a temporary evacuation program was introduced and implemented on a voluntary basis. It is estimated that about 28,000 children from the ages of 2 to 14 were rounded up and taken across the border into Yugoslavia. From there they were sent to various Eastern Block countries.

Again I want to point out that the evacuation program was sponsored and organized by the Greek Partisan Leadership which was fully versed in "Greek Law"(act L-2). Yet they carried out the children's evacuation program and lied to the trusting mothers that the evacuation was only a temporary measure. Almost all the Macedonian children who were evacuated in 1948 are still not allowed entry into Greece.

By the spring of 1949 the Greek Civil War became a "killing field" consuming the Macedonian population. Some of the children who were previously evacuated were brought back to fight against the battle hardened Greek army. Children who were strong enough to carry a rifle, regardless of age, were snatched from the child refugee camps in Romania and brought back to Greece. Two of the three groups that were brought back were instantly massacred upon engaging the Greek Army. They were all under the age of fifteen, had no combat training and no idea of what to expect. The third group was spared only because mothers protested against such barbaric acts. The Partisans demobilized the third group before it reached the battlefields and sent the children home.

By the twisted hand of fate, Zachariadis, the supreme commander of the Partisan forces and his cronies, in their wisdom, decided to make a final stand against Greece that would make or break the Partisan movement. Their rationale was that the Partisans needed to occupy a large town or city to serve as their base. This would make them worthy of consideration and perhaps gain the attention of the Great Powers, especially the Soviet Union. There are many who share my belief that the Partisan attack on Lerin on February 12, 1949 was nothing more than an attempt to exterminate the Macedonian fighting force and terrorize the rest of the Macedonian population into leaving Greece. I can say that with certainty now because that is exactly what happened.

In one last-ditch attempt to gain composure and legitimacy, the Partisans attacked the city of Lerin, attempting to create a base of operation and show the world that they were a force worthy of recognition. Their effort however was not rewarded. They didn't capture Lerin and lost most of the force in the attempt. Seven hundred young Macedonian men and women died on that fateful day, their bodies buried in a mass grave. The Partisan leadership waited until dawn before ordering the attack. Wave after wave of innocent young men and women were slaughtered, cut down in their prime by Greek machine-gun fire. The horror of the slaughter became visible at dawn when the first light revealed the red stained terrain. The fresh white snow was red with the blood and bodies of the fallen.

To this day opinions are divided on the rationale for attacking Lerin so late in the war. The war was almost over and the Greek Army, supported by Britain, was unstoppable. In retrospect, some believe that gaining control of Lerin would have given the Partisan leadership a bargaining chip for surrender. Looking at the facts, however, reveals a more sinister plan. By now it was well known throughout the world that Britain would not allow a communist influence in Greece. Britain's decision was supported by the Soviet Union and by Stalin himself. The Partisan leadership was well informed that it could no longer depend on support from the Communist Block countries, under Soviet influence. Relations with Yugoslavia had broken off and the Greek-Yugoslav border was closed. The Communist Party, which promised Macedonians human rights and freedoms, slowly began to distance itself from its commitments. Most of the Partisans who fought in the battle for Lerin were new recruits and inexperienced fighters. Most of the force was made up of Macedonian men and women under Greek leadership. The Partisan command hesitated when it was time to launch the offensive, thus giving the enemy extra time to prepare its defenses. The hesitation demoralized the Partisan combatants who were not prepared for the prolonged outdoor winter cold.

A cursory analysis of developments prior to the Lerin assault and a post-mortem of the aftermath led to one inescapable conclusion. The assault on Lerin was designed to destroy the Macedonian Partisan force. By offering the Lerin offensive instead of surrendering, the Partisan leadership "sacrificed its own force". By accident or by design the assault on Lerin contributed to the demise of many Macedonian fighters and to the mass exodus of the Macedonian population. Many believe that the Greek civil war succeeded in "ethnically cleansing" the Macedonian people, where many years of assimilation had failed.

Fearing reprisal from the advancing Greek army, in August 1949 waves of refugees left their homes and went to Albania to save themselves. When the war was over Greece did not want them back. As a result they were sent to Eastern Block countries that were willing to take them.

Years later some tried to return but Greece (act L-2) would not allow it. Even innocent Macedonians who did not participate in the conflict, including the evacuated refugee children, were refused entry (again act L-2). Years passed and still they were refused entry again and again. They were not even allowed to visit ailing relatives. Finally in 1985 a repatriation policy was introduced and amnesty was given but only to those of "Greek origin". This again excluded the Macedonians.

As the Macedonian terrain was rained upon by bombs from the air and from cannon fire, the frightened Macedonian people, mostly old men and women and mothers with young children, took with them whatever they could carry and left their homes for the safety of the mountains. From there they were told to go to Albania and meet up with their relatives.

"One such group left the village of Kolomnati and was headed down the mountain towards Rula when it was spotted by a young Greek officer. The young man immediately telephoned his general and informed him of the situation. 'Should we intercept?' inquired the young officer. 'No, let the troublemakers go, we don't want them here,' replied the old general." (Story told by the general's assistant who asked to remain anonymous)

When the Greek Army broke the Lerin Front, the Partisan force that survived the onslaught fled for Albania. The fighters closest to the city were captured and imprisoned. Those who confessed to having voluntarily joined the Partisans were all executed. The others were either exiled in the Greek Islands or released after serving their sentences in local jails.

In its pursuit of the fleeing Partisans, the Greek Army managed to cut off the escape route of a group of Partisans who were manning the cannons and artillery fire at Bigla (the cannons after the war were put on display in the city of Lerin). Being unable to flee to Albania, the Bigla group attempted to cross into Yugoslavia near Prespa Lake. At the Yugoslav border they were stopped by the Yugoslav army, which agreed to allow them passage only if they voluntarily disarmed. Expecting to continue the war from Albania, the Partisans were reluctant to disarm and chose a different escape route. Unfortunately, they attempted their escape during the daytime and were spotted by the Greek Air Force. Many were killed by machinegun fire from above and some drowned attempting to swim across Lake Prespa. Only a small group made it to Albania.

When they arrived, to cover for their own blunders, the leaders of the Bigla group concocted stories claiming that Tito's forces attacked them and would not allow them entry into Yugoslavia. Later the same men changed their stories and told the truth about what happened. Unfortunately by then Greek Partisan and Yugoslav relations had deteriorated. Even though Yugoslavia was one of EAM's strongest supporters, the Greek Partisans used this story in their propaganda campaigns to discredit Tito in the eyes of the Soviet Union.

When the Greek Civil War was over the Partisan leadership assembled in the abandoned Italian camp of Bureli, Albania, to assess what went wrong and why they lost the war. After some deliberation they came to the conclusion that it was Tito and Macedonian collaboration that sabotaged the war effort. The failure was blamed on the Macedonian Partisan leadership for co-operating with Tito's Partisans. Seven of the most loyal Macedonian leaders were accused of sabotage and sentenced to death. Fortunately Enver Hodzha (Albania's highest State Leader) did not want atrocities committed in his country and would not allow the executions to take place. The men were taken to the Soviet Union, tried for treason and sentenced to life imprisonment, to be served in the prison camps of Siberia. After Stalin's death Krushchev re-opened their cases and found the men innocent of all charges and released them.

After the Greek Civil War was over life in Aegean Macedonia was no longer the same. The smaller villages were evacuated (some permanently) and the people were relocated to the larger towns under the watchful eye of the Greek police. The familiar joy and laughter that once filled the streets was gone and the streets were barren of children. The proud Macedonian people, who only a few years before had reveled in life, were once again joyless.

As the Greek Civil War was coming to a close western Aegean Macedonia was bombed to dust. Partisans and civilians alike fled to Albania to save themselves. When the war was over many wanted to return but Greece did not want them back. Anyone who voluntarily fled was not allowed to return, regardless of whether they were guilty of any crimes or not. After spending some time in the camps in Albania the people of Macedonia, again victims of someone else's war, became permanent war refugees and were sent to various Eastern Block countries. Before departure the refugees were separated into two groups. One, made up mostly of Partisan fighters, was sent to the USSR. The other, consisting mostly of civilians and Partisan support staff, was sent to Poland. After the groups were separated they were transported to the port of Durasi, loaded onto cargo ships and sent westward through Gibraltar to Poland and eastward via the Black Sea to the Soviet Union. The voyages were long and unpleasant. To avoid detection the refugees were literally hidden inside the cargo and at critical times ordered to remain immobile and quiet for long periods of time. When they landed at their destinations the refugees were stripped and their flea-infested clothes were burned. After being powdered with pesticide and bathed in hot baths they were placed in quarantine where they spent about a month and a half resting idly before being relocated to permanent quarters.

After settling down and securing employment in their new countries, many parents began to look for their refugee children and with the help of the authorities were able to bring them home. As a result many children

left their host countries to join their parents in Poland, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, etc.

Refugees with relatives in Canada, the USA and Australia through sponsorship made attempts to immigrate themselves and look for their children or have their relatives look for their children if immigration was not possible. Initially "the iron curtain" was shut tight and made it difficult to make inquiries but as the Red Cross became involved it became easier. In 1953, during a Red Cross convention in Switzerland, the question of the Refugee Children from the Greek Civil War came up and the various Red Cross agencies agreed to cooperate and exchange information with each other. After that anyone requesting help to locate missing persons in Eastern Block Countries was not refused.

By 1950 Greece was taking extreme measures to close her borders with Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Trusted Albanians from Epirus were brought into Macedonia and seeded throughout the border villages to act as eyes and ears for the Greeks. Greek authorities clamped down on the remaining population and no one was allowed to travel without permission. There were strict rules of conduct put into effect, including curfews. Anyone caught wandering outdoors past dusk was shot on sight. Many shepherds quit their jobs for fear of being killed and left their sheep wandering aimlessly. One little boy had an argument with his stepfather and ran away. The authorities were not at all sympathetic and wouldn't allow the family to go looking for him. The boy's mother and sister went looking for him anyway and brought him home safely at great risk to their own safety.

When the violence in Greece subsided, parents and relatives began to inquire about repatriating their children. Those who displayed some loyalty to the Greek cause were told that their children would be allowed to return if decreed by the Greek Queen Fredericka. Unfortunately this process required connections with the local Greek authorities and a lot of money, money that most Macedonians did not have. Those considered for repatriation had to meet a number of conditions including the willingness to accept permanent Hellenization. Children from Partisan families were automatically disqualified. Those who weren't willing to change their names or weren't liked for some reason were also disqualified. As the years passed fewer children were allowed to return and requests for repatriation continued to be ignored. Parents and relatives died and still their children were not allowed to return, not even for a visit.

After travel restrictions to countries behind the iron curtain were lifted, parents, in spite of the expense, old age and ill health, made their way to visit their children.

Many of the people I interviewed don't know why the Greek authorities wouldn't allow the children to return. In spite of pleas, even on humanitarian grounds, the Greek authorities, decade after decade,

government after government, maintain the same policy and will not allow the Macedonian refugee children to return home.

After the war was over and all the remaining Partisans were captured or killed, people who were evacuated by the Greek authorities were slowly allowed to go home to their own villages. While many returned to their old homes a few families decided to make the new village their home. Some lost their farm equipment, tools, livestock and personal belongings to looters. For most life had to start all over again. As tensions began to ease, those held in concentration camps were released and began to arrive home only to find their property gone. The Greek authorities, in addition to confiscating the properties of many of those who fled as refugees during the mass exodus of 1949, also confiscated the properties of those held in concentration camps.

In time people became demoralized and lived in constant fear of the authorities and retribution from their collaborators. There was a certain stigma attached to the relatives of Partisans or their supporters that caused them to withdraw from society and keep to themselves. Those who served in the Greek concentration camps were constantly harassed with curfews, restricted mobility and suspicion of espionage. Many were followed by plainclothes policemen and pressured to become informants and spy on their neighbours. Strangers were viewed with suspicion and automatically assumed to be foreign spies.

As radios became affordable people began to purchase them and listen to various programs, including broadcasts from Eastern Europe and the Federal Republic of Macedonia. The Greek police became vigilant and on many occasions were observed outside people's yards listening to hear what programs were playing. Those caught listening to foreign programs were accused of espionage. The Macedonian language was once again banned from use and the "M" word became a dirty word even if it was spoken on the radio. Ever since Greece invaded the Macedonian territory, successive Greek Governments refused to acknowledge the existence of the Macedonian language.

One by one, all those who came back from the Eastern European countries left for Canada, the USA and Australia because they could no longer stand the Greek oppression. They had tasted freedom and wanted more even if it meant abandoning their beloved ancestral homes. They remembered how life was before the latest Greek clampdown and now it was not the same. The people had changed also, they were still courteous and kind but their spirits were broken. Everyone was afraid, careful not to say anything incriminating as if every word was going to be judged and the person punished. Children born during this time were brought up believing that this was how life was and it was supposedly the best life one could have. They were taught to understand that Greece was the cradle of democracy and no one in the world was freer than the Greeks. Those who

knew better did not dare speak. There were certain things that could not be done or discussed, especially the Greek Civil War. Children were taught Greek chauvinist songs in school and sang them at home in front of their parents who didn't dare say anything. Even their children could unwittingly betray them. The Macedonian language became "our" language and could only be spoken in secrecy with relatives and trusted friends. The word "Macedonia" or "Macedonian" was banned from the peoples' vocabulary and could not be spoken, especially in public. Pre-school children who learned "our" language at home from their grandmothers spoke Greek with a heavy accent and were constantly teased and scolded for not knowing how to speak properly. If a child was caught speaking "our" language in class or in the yard, punishment ensued which varied from being publicly humiliated and told not to speak "those filthy words" to being given a good dose of castor oil. Sometimes children sang Greek songs about the deeds of the Greek heroes and broke their parents' hearts. Their precious children were unknowingly idolizing the true criminals and murderers; Macedonia's worst enemies. Some parents, when their children were old enough to keep a secret, taught them that they were a different people, that they were Macedonian, not Greek. Other parents, thinking that it was in the best interest of the children not to know their true identity, allowed them to believe that they were Greek. Their loyalties however were never rewarded since it was very rare for a Macedonian child to be accepted in Greek society. It was not because Macedonian children were incapable of being intellectual, as the Greeks would have us believe, but because the Greek Government systemically discriminated against Macedonians. Discrimination was common practice especially at the individual level. Macedonians were constantly put down and as a result kept to themselves. Sometimes, however, during heated discussions or unavoidable arguments Macedonians did show discontentment but the arguments always ended with the lethal insult of being called a "Bulgar", the lowest form of life known to Greeks. The highest level of education a Macedonian child was permitted to achieve was grade six. Junior high was possible only for the children of those who had shown and continued to show loyalty to the Greek cause.

After the fall of the dictatorship in Greece, in the mid-sixties, many Macedonians were publicly encouraged by the Greek politicians to leave Greece because "there was no future for them there". Many of the empty villages in western Macedonia were filled with Albanians from west central Greece. Vlachs who originally lived in the highlands of Thessaly and spent summers in the Macedonian mountains took up permanent residence there. Many applied for and were granted the properties of post-Greek Civil War migrant families.

Macedonians who immigrated to Canada, the USA and Australia at the start of the 20th century organized village associations to assist fellow

immigrants in adjusting to their new countries. As post-Greek Civil War immigration accelerated, these village associations became a haven for new immigrants and their membership grew. Encouraged by their newfound freedoms, many of the new émigrés enjoyed their Macedonian culture and language in the Diaspora. This was perceived as a threat to Greek influence both at home and abroad. As the associations grew in strength so did their threat to the Greek chokehold. To counter this, with help from the Greek Embassies and Consulates, pro-Greek factions began to infiltrate the Macedonian associations. The weaker associations were overpowered and rendered ineffective. Those that resisted managed to survive and preserve their unique Macedonian identity. For the ones that the Greeks could not subdue, parallel and competing pro-Greek associations were formed. The day a Macedonian association held an event the pro-Greek association held a similar event, to divide the people. Macedonians wishing to participate in events and prone to blackmail were discouraged from joining the Macedonian organizations and encouraged to join the pro-Greek ones. This is precisely why the Macedonian community in the Diaspora has become a silent community. This suits the Greeks perfectly and leaves the Macedonians frustrated and disappointed.

The most anti-Macedonian organization to surface from all the Greek associations is the Pan Macedonian Association, which aims to not only divide the Macedonian Nation but also destroy everything that is Macedonian. To this day this organization preys on the weak, innocent, naïve and those who can be bought and continues to spread hatred and lies at every opportunity. The Pan Macedonian Association is a "false organization" fully financed by extreme Greek nationalists and by the Greek taxpayers most of whom are unaware of its discriminatory practices and the friction it creates between fellow Greek citizens.

In addition to disseminating anti-Macedonian propaganda and lobbying for "the Greek cause", many of these so-called "Greek-Macedonian" organizations spy on Macedonian organizations and individuals, reporting their activities to the Greek authorities. Many activists and supporters of the Macedonian cause, even though they are Greek citizens, are barred from returning to Greece. Their cause is noble if they serve the Greeks at their own expense but as soon as they attempt to serve their own interests they suddenly become traitors.

Macedonians are refused entry into Greece at the border points without any explanation. Without consent their passport is stamped "void" and thrown back at them. They do the same to individuals with foreign passports without respect for the foreign State's property.

The Rebirth

While the Greek Civil War and the Greek State took a toll on the Macedonian people in Greece, the Macedonians in the Peoples' Republic of Macedonia achieved recognition as ethnic Macedonians and as speakers of the Macedonian language.

On August 2, 1944, in the monastery Prohor Pchinski, the Macedonians in the Serbian annexed part of Macedonia made a decision to set up a Macedonian republic within a planned Peoples' Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As the official language for their State the people of Macedonia chose a new standard language based on the Macedonian vernacular speech which in fact belonged to the language of the central Macedonian dialects. The language recommendations were finalized on May 3, 1945 and proclaimed on June 7. The Macedonian official language quickly became the Macedonian literary language as it gained wide acceptance not only in the Republic of Macedonia but also in Greek occupied Macedonia, Bulgarian occupied Macedonia and in North America and Australia. Linguists argue that language standardization succeeds only if there is widespread acceptance of the language.

With the standardization of the language also came Macedonian radio, television and publications such as newspapers, magazines, journals etc. To cater to Macedonians outside of the Republic of Macedonia, a publishing house "Matitsa na Iselenitsite od Makedonija" was set up which published monthly magazines and yearly calendars. These publications became the cultural lifeline between home and abroad not only for the Macedonians from the Republic of Macedonia but also for all Macedonians from the entire region of geographical Macedonia. Macedonians began to learn about themselves and their past and began to fight back against the Greek and Bulgarian propaganda.

Although the iron curtain was shut tight for most East European countries, for Yugoslavia, at least by Canada and Australia, it was open a crack allowing goods to flow in and out. Macedonians living abroad were able to subscribe to and receive their magazines from Macedonia directly by mail. Being free to broadcast on radio and television in the Macedonian language, the Macedonian music industry began to flourish producing records and later cassettes on masse. Folk songs, patriotic songs, songs sung by the Partisans, etc, were suddenly available to western markets and were flooding Canada, the United States and Australia.

Some TV and radio broadcasts, to the chagrin of Greece and Bulgaria, were aimed at the Macedonians living in the neighbouring countries. Greece did not want its citizens to listen to foreign broadcasts which in the fifties were considered illegal and those caught listening were punished. This also applied to Turkish, Romanian, Bulgarian and Macedonian broadcasts even if they were broadcast in the Greek language.

Macedonian generations born in Greek occupied Macedonia after the early 1950's were brought up under an atmosphere of fear, suspicion and mistrust and began to lose contact with other Macedonians even in their own neighbourhoods. Many of these Macedonians visited Canada, Australia and the USA where they found culturally thriving Macedonian Communities. The freedom of belonging to a nation without punishment allowed the Macedonians in the Diaspora to form village community organizations, regional and even national organizations like the United Macedonians who not only aspired to have a mother country like the Republic of Macedonia but wished to see a united geographical Macedonia encompassing every ethnic Macedonian from everywhere.

Macedonians, especially from Greece, visiting relatives in the Diaspora found themselves overwhelmed with feelings of what it was to be Macedonian. More recently regional organizations like "The Lerin Region Macedonian Cultural Association of Ontario" were formed to culturally bridge Macedonians living in Ontario with their compatriots living in the Lerin Region. Visitors to Canada returning to Greece brought news with them that Macedonians were alive and well in the Diaspora. Macedonians not only exist but thrive as Macedonians with their own culture, language, traditions and Church and most importantly, they are free to do so with no state obstacles.

Macedonian churches in the Diaspora were first built in the early 1960's and since then have served as bastions of Macedonian unity and culture.

Although still restricted from speaking their language and practicing their culture, ethnic Macedonians in Greece and Bulgaria began to assert their rights as people first by speaking Macedonian in public and then by singing Macedonian songs at weddings and festivals. At first they could only sing and play melodies without lyrics but in time and as the numbers grew they began to add lyrics and even record songs in Macedonian.

With the eminent breakup of Yugoslavia looming over the horizon, Macedonians worldwide began to see the possibility of at last having their own State. Even the oppressed Macedonians in Greece began to feel the fervor and started to form their own movements. According to Pavle Voskopoulos, a Macedonian activist in Greece, "Vinozhito and the Macedonian activists in Greece have come a long way in the last twenty years or so since their first appearance in 1982. It was in 1982 that, for the first time since the 1940s, Macedonian songs and dances began to be openly and publicly expressed. No one would have believed that ten years later the Macedonians would have been able to organize Vinozhito. Even after Vinozhito became a political party in Greece, no one would have believed that in the next ten years it would hold its first successful congress in Solun, the heartland of Greek chauvinism. This was only

possible through the hard work and perseverance of Vinozhito's membership and with the assistance of Vinozhito's European partners."

In their fight for human rights as national minorities in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania organizations such as Vinozhito, OMO Ilinden, OMO Ilinden-Pirin, Bratstvo, MIR, Prespa, MED and others began to form. To help their compatriots in the occupied Macedonian territories, human rights and other organizations began to form in the Diaspora. These organizations became the voice of the Macedonian people in the occupied territories. Initially the most active were the Detsa Begaltsi (Refugee children from the Greek Civil War) who organized worldwide and brought world attention to their plight, unfortunately without much success. Greece refused to hear their pleas and would not budge on their issues.

On September 8, 1991 over 95.5% of the citizens living in the Peoples' Republic of Macedonia voted for an independent Republic of Macedonia. The will of the people was confirmed on September 18, 1991 at the Macedonian Parliament with the declaration for acceptance of the results from the referendum.

The next important step in strengthening the state was the adoption of the Constitution on November 17, 1991, which was supplemented after the 2001 conflict and signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement.

The internationally legal subjectivity of the state was recognized on April 8, 1993 with an acclamation of the UN General Assembly. Macedonia was admitted as the 181st full-fledged member.

Fearing that it might lose its illegally occupied Macedonian territories, Greece was first to object to the Republic of Macedonia's independence. Its rational and arguments can best be described by the advertisement in the New York Times on April 26 and May 10, 1992 by an organization called "Americans for the Just Resolution of the Macedonian Issue". The first issue was headlined "Macedonia, what's in a name" and the second "The name 'Macedonia' is a time bomb! Mr. President, you can defuse it". Both articles were directed at the then President George Bush Sr.

Statements by the Greek government have not deviated from these sources, so they remain a fair means of discovering what the Greeks appear to be concerned about. Here is what John Shea has to say;

[The first of these advertisements focuses on the idea of a threat to Greece from a state called Macedonia. While the text says, "Recognize the Republic of Skopje, yes!" it adds, "With the name 'Republic of Macedonia,' why?" Thus, on the face of it the problem is not so much about the existence of the new state, but the possible consequences of it bearing the name Macedonia. The implication is that this name will somehow rekindle past territorial ambitions that would not be so easily stirred with a different name.

The advertisement gives a lot of attention to the involvement of Tito and Yugoslavia in the Greek civil war, referring for instance to "former communist designs on sovereign Greece." It informs the reader that

"In 1946, Tito and Stalin armed insurgents to trigger a bloody Civil war and unimaginable years of suffering for the Greek nation Today, Skopje's government aims to perpetuate the nightmare."

The advertisement goes on to say that the "Skopje government":

- claims that Macedonians exist "under occupation" in Greece;
- calls for the "liberation" of all Macedonians, even those who regard themselves as free Greeks;
- issues currency depicting landmarks of sovereign Greek territory;
- publishes maps incorporating fully one-third of mainland Greece;
- has a constitution proclaiming Tito's expansionist goals, calling for the "unification of Greek provinces under a fabricated 'Macedonian' nation." According to this ad, recognition of an independent republic called Macedonia would encourage aggression, increase tensions, destabilize the Balkans, and validate a "shameless fraud."

In this last statement we have a reference to the wider issue concerning the name

Macedonia. The Greeks say that they have the sole right to use the name, for various historical reasons. The rest of the advertisement contains statements from American and world leaders (including American senators, the president of the European Parliament, the prime minister of Australia and the Greek prime minister) , opposing recognition of the state of Macedonia up to the time the ad was placed, and an open letter to President Bush appealing in particular to historic concerns about "communist expansionism" in the area, the bitter experience of the Greek civil war, and previous American support of anti-communist forces in Greece. In this latter connection it is worth considering the quoted statement by a former United States Secretary of State on December 26, 1944: "This government considers any talk of a Macedonian 'nation,' Macedonian 'Fatherland' or Macedonian 'national consciousness' to be unjustified demagoguery representing no ethnic or political reality. ...a possible cloak for aggressive intentions against Greece."

The May 10 ad is much less detailed. It quotes a New York Times story (datelined May 2, 1992) on the European community's willingness to recognize the "breakaway republic of Macedonia" only if it changed its name, and once again appeals to past American concern about instability in the Balkans in general and about Macedonia in particular. "Since the break-up of Yugoslavia," reads the ad, "its people have suffered the relentless gunfire of hostilities: one tragedy after another -all stemming from ethnic violence and border disputes. The single stable border in the Balkans is provided by Greece. Now the breakaway southernmost

Yugoslavian republic of Skopje insists on being recognized as 'Macedonia.'" The advertisement goes on to say that in 1944, the Roosevelt administration recognized Greek ethnic, cultural and historical rights to the name and condemned any reference to a so-called Macedonian "nation." Describing the same issue today as a "dangerous ticking time bomb," the ad says that recognition of what it calls "Skopje" as the "Republic of Macedonia" would legitimize and encourage extremist and false claims upon sovereign Greek territory. Furthermore, the advertisement suggests a threat of war in the Balkans in which the United States could become involved.

Here is the rest of the Greek position, expanding on the question of the "Greek ethnic, cultural and historical rights to the name." Here Shea uses quotations from pamphlets distributed from Greek orthodox churches, apparently deriving from Greek government publications available in the Greek embassy during 1992. He does this so that the Greek position is accurately presented. Here are some of the important claims that are made.

1. The New York Times advertisement of 4/26/92 says, "4000 years of Greek History, 4000 years of Greek Culture, 4000 years of Greek Heritage. ...Skopje's government seeking recognition as the 'Republic of Macedonia' perpetuates a fraud." Pamphlets distributed in churches stated, "Macedonia has been Greek for 3,000 years. In ancient times Macedonians spoke Greek, worshipped Greek gods, expressed their creativity through Greek art and maintained a refined Greek culture. ...all archaeological discoveries continue to unearth more information attesting to the indisputable Greekness of Macedonia."

2. "Out of the blue, in 1944, the Yugoslav communist leader, Tito, wishing to weaken Serbia on the one hand, and set the footing for future territorial claims against Greece on the other, schemingly gave South Serbia the Greek name 'Macedonia' and re-wrote the 'history' books to declare that ancient Macedonia was Slavic and that these people were descendants of Alexander the Great."

3. "The existence of a 'Slav' Macedonia could never be, and indeed, has never been supported either by historical data, or by ethnographic maps, or by statistics, or by some census, or by archaeological finds, or by even an obscure mention of such a nation from antiquity till today."

4. "Macedonia has been the name of Northern Greece for more than 3000 years. The Greek region...has one of the most homogeneous populations in the world (98.5% Greek). Its population speaks Greek, feels Greek, is Greek."

5. "An independent 'Macedonia' would monopolize the name at the expense of the real Macedonians who are twice the number of the Slavs. The use and abuse of the name would cause widespread confusion as is already apparent."

6. "Macedonia is an indispensable part of Greece's historical heritage - it cannot identify, in an ethnic sense another nation."

7. "The Skopje 'language' is undeniably Slavic."

8. "The Slavs did not set foot in the Balkans until 1000 years after Alexander the Great."

9. "The name 'Macedonia' (which is etymologically Greek) was in use at least 1,500 years before the arrival of the first Slavs."

10. "Every known Macedonian town, river, and person had a Greek name -Philip (lover of horse), Alexander (protector of men), Archelaus (leader of people), Amyntas (defender), Ptolemy (warlike), Bucephalus (ox-head)."

11. "The Old Testament (Daniel Ch. 8) and the New Testament (Acts Ch. 17) confirm the Greekness of Alexander and the Macedonians."

12. "It was the Greek language that was taken to Asia (Bible written in Greek) and cities with Greek names and institutions that were founded."

13. "There are 60,000 archaeological finds that confirm that the Macedonians were Greek in language, culture and religion."

14. "The home of the Greek gods was in Macedonia. Is it feasible that a people would worship its national gods in a foreign country?"

15. "Yugoslav Macedonia is not even geographically in the territory occupied by ancient Macedonia."

16. "Independent sources in this century (Turkish Census of 1904 when the region was part of the Ottoman Empire, League of Nations Census of 1926 and declassified British Archives 1934) make no mention of any ethnic Macedonians whatsoever until the Communists came along with their preposterous concoction to dominate the Balkans."

17. "By appropriating and maintaining the name 'Macedonia' the Slavs are laying the foundations for future territorial claims against the region of the same name in Greece. They have clearly expressed this intention by:- (a) plagiarizing and blatantly falsifying history (b)... continuously using maps and emblems that include northern Greece as part of 'Macedonia' and (c) refusing to comply with the directive of the European Community in its declaration of 16th December 1991 to (i) cease hostile propaganda; (ii) commit itself to guarantees that it has no territorial claims and (iii) not use a denomination (Macedonia) which implies expansionist intentions."

This set of statements was widely circulated, with minor changes made for particular locations, in different parts of the English-speaking world. Copies of the main points were distributed through Greek churches, and were frequently published in the "letters to the editor" sections of local newspapers. Clearly the Greek communities were very keen to see the message spread and went to great organizational effort and expense to see that this happened.] Pages 4 to 7, John Shea, "Macedonia and Greece, The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation".

I just want to mention here that John Shea dedicated his entire book in response to these Greek claims rendering them all to be false.

The reader must keep in mind that like Macedonia, Greece is a product of its past. Macedonia and Greece share a common past and history from the Ancient Macedonian period in BC up to 1912 when the artificial border was imposed. Prior to 1912, Macedonia and Greece had no border. There was no border during the Roman period, the Byzantine period or the Ottoman period so whatever took place in Macedonia also took place in Greece, that is, above and beyond the common interaction between the two people. Like Macedonia, Greece also felt the full brunt of every invasion, occupation and assimilation of people who have ventured and traversed that region. So, to claim that Greece is pure with 4,000 year old roots and at the same time to claim that Macedonia isn't is utterly irrational and blatantly ignorant.

Being unable to force Macedonia to back down on the name issue, on February 16, 1994 the then Greek Prime Minister Andrea Papandreu announced that Greece was canceling all trade links with Macedonia and was closing the consulate in Skopje. This was in response to the American offer of diplomatic recognition of Macedonia. One week after the US recognized Macedonia as "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and one day before the announcement of the embargo, tens of thousands of protesters filled the streets of Solun, waving banners, Greek flags and stars of Vergina: proclaiming "Macedonia is Greek". The crippling embargo no doubt designed to extinguish the new state, was imposed by Greece in the cold of winter. All fuel supplies were cut off including energy supplies for home heating, transportation and industrial use. The embargo was lifted with the signing of the Interim Accord on September 13, 1995.

The young Macedonian state survived, in spite of Greek attempts to extinguish it.

The Future

There is no Macedonian who at one point or another did not think or ask the questions; “Will Macedonia be reunited again?” “When will Macedonia be reunited?” “How will Macedonia be reunited?” Before answering these questions every Macedonian and non Macedonian must consider “Why Macedonia must be reunited.”

The 1913 Treaty of Bucharest and all previously associated agreements and treaties were based on the premise that “Macedonians do not exist” and thus the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest was written and signed under the assumption that only Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians live in Macedonia. Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria after annexing parts of Macedonia supposedly exchanged populations and cleansed their parts of Macedonia. After the exchanges each State declared that its population was pure. In other words only Greeks live in Greece, only Bulgarians live in Bulgaria and only Serbians live in Serbia. A decade or so after Macedonia’s partition and annexation, each state in turn produced and published statistics confirming its population purity. After that, each state maintained that they had no minorities living in their respective states.

Today, almost a century later, we know that this is not true. Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria knew very well when they annexed Macedonian territories that the majority of the people living on Macedonian soil were not Greeks, Serbians, or Bulgarians. They used religious affiliation in place of ethnicity to convince the Powers to allow them to freely annex Macedonian territories without obligation to the ethnic Macedonian people.

Even though the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian people had no national awareness prior to the 19th century and before their liberation, they were recognized and allowed to form their own states. Yet the Macedonians who gained their national sentiments a little later and who fought for the creation of a Macedonian state were neither recognized nor allowed to form a state.

If Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria were correct in their claims and indeed cleansed their respective Macedonian territories, today there would be only Greeks living in the Greek part of Macedonia, Serbians living in the Serbian part and Bulgarians living in the Bulgarian part. If Macedonians indeed did not exist, as Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria claimed almost a century ago, then today there would be absolutely no Macedonians in existence at all. Yet a census taken after the Republic of Macedonia declared its independence from Yugoslavia (Serbia’s successor), showed a hefty majority of ethnic Macedonians living where Macedonians supposedly did not exist.

So if Serbia was correct in its assumption that only Serbians lived in Serbian annexed Macedonia one hundred years ago, then where did these ethnic Macedonians come from?

There is only one correct answer to this question. Ethnic Macedonians have always existed; Serbia falsified its statistics to hide that fact!

One only needs to apply the same principle to Greece and Bulgaria to see the real picture.

So, “Why should Macedonia be reunited?”

For starters Macedonia belongs to the Macedonian people and the Macedonian people want to live together. Macedonia was illegally occupied and partitioned between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria under false pretenses and without the Macedonian peoples’ consent. If this was done by mistake, then that mistake must be rectified. If it was done intentionally then Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria will have to answer to it. They are responsible for creating the problem and they should be responsible for correcting it.

“How will Macedonia be reunited?”

Macedonia cannot be reunited without the willingness of Greece and Bulgaria. Unfortunately this willingness cannot develop as long as Greece and Bulgaria deny the existence of Macedonians and refuse to accept the fact that they illegally occupied and annexed Macedonian territories. The first step in gaining this willingness is to have Greece and Bulgaria recognize the existence of ethnic Macedonians not only in the Republic of Macedonia but also in their respective territories. In other words, Greece and Bulgaria must allow its citizens to self declare their ethnic identities with their support and protection. The next step is to accept the fact that Macedonia was partitioned without the Macedonian peoples’ consent and then by referendum allow Macedonians to make the choice of separating and reuniting with other Macedonians or remaining within their respective states. Macedonians may chose to reunite Macedonia culturally and still remain administratively tied to the existing states. But until the Macedonian people are given that choice, we will not know.

“When will Macedonia reunite?”

Macedonia has a better chance of reuniting in some form or another after the Republic of Macedonia joins the European Union when the current borders inside geographic Macedonia are dissolved.

Macedonians should strive to achieve their rights in Greece and Bulgaria first before looking for some sort of cultural independence for all of Macedonia. Greece and Bulgaria must be willing partners before any re-unification can occur. This is a long term process and must be achieved by peaceful means.

Macedonia may have been powerful at one time but that is no longer the case and Macedonians must now heed the lessons of history. Since Philip V’s time Macedonians have experienced disaster after disaster.

Their situation worsened with every conflict, insurrection and revolution. Macedonians have many historical examples to draw from and understand that conflicts have brought nothing but misery and suffering to the Macedonian people.

Macedonians first and foremost need to learn about themselves: who they are and accept the rich culture and heritage with very deep roots to which they belong. They must also learn to rely only on themselves and to exploit the current benefits offered by international institutions.

Greece and Bulgaria now belong to the European Union and as such are obligated to abide by European Union rules. They can no longer treat people with disregard especially their minorities.

Following are some excerpts from the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the

Protection of National Minorities (Strasbourg, 1.II.1995);

“A pluralist and genuinely democratic society should not only respect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each person belonging to a national minority, but also create appropriate conditions enabling them to express, preserve and develop this identity.

Considering that the creation of a climate of tolerance and dialogue is necessary to enable cultural diversity to be a source and a factor, not of division, but of enrichment for each society.

Section I, Article 1

The protection of national minorities and of the rights and freedoms of persons belonging to those minorities forms an integral part of the international protection of human rights, and as such falls within the scope of international co-operation.

Section I, Article 3

Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice. Persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention individually as well as in community with others.

Section II, Article 4

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] undertake to guarantee to persons belonging to national minorities the right of equality before the law and of

equal protection of the law. In this respect, any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority shall be prohibited.

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.

Section II, Article 5

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage. Without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy, the Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation.

Section II, Article 6

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] undertake to take appropriate measures to protect persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity.

Section II, Article 7

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] shall ensure respect for the right of every person belonging to a national minority to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Section II, Article 8

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to manifest his or her religion or belief and to establish religious institutions, organizations and associations.

Section II, Article 9

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] undertake to recognize that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.

Section II, Article 10

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private and in public, orally and in writing.

In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those persons so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need, the Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible, the conditions which would make it possible to use the minority language in relations between those persons and the administrative authorities.

Section II, Article 11

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the minority language and the right to official recognition of them, according to modalities provided for in their legal system.

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to display in his or her minority language signs, inscriptions and other information of a private nature visible to the public.

Section II, Article 12

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority.

In this context the Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] shall inter alia provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks, and facilitate contacts among students and teachers of different communities. The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] undertake to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities.

Section II, Article 14

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.

In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.

Section II, Article 15

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] shall create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them.

Section II, Article 17

The Parties [Greece and Bulgaria] undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with persons lawfully staying in other States, in particular those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage.”

Macedonians must accept and understand that these rights apply to them as well. They must learn to be confident and start demanding their rights as people, as citizens and as Macedonians in both Greece and Bulgaria. Greece and Bulgaria will fulfill their obligations in accordance with the Framework Convention cited above if and only if Macedonians (a) understand their rights as people and as citizens of Europe, (b) unite

and speak with a single voice, and (c) demonstrate their wishes in massive numbers. This is an important prerequisite for Macedonians if they wish to gain any rights in Europe today.

The framework agreement cited above is very clear and it is now up to the Macedonians to make it work for them.

“Will Macedonia be reunited again?”

This is a question for the future. No one can answer it with any certainty at this time. The Macedonian question has not been satisfactorily answered, at least not for the Macedonian people. As long as Macedonians exist and make their presence known, the Macedonian question will remain un-answered. I must also point out that Macedonia has been a source of conflict since ancient times and if the Powers pay attention to history they will learn that a united Macedonia is much safer and more stable than a partitioned or occupied Macedonia. The bottom line is; when the time comes, it will be up to the Macedonian people to choose their destiny.

“Macedonia will be reunited when the Macedonian people will it so!”

Greek-Australian Reaction to article “Recovering Macedonia”

http://www.neoskosmos.com.au/051017/nkew/community/community_index.shtml

Greeks outraged by Skopjean claims
Giorgios Hatzimanolis

LUDICROUS territorial claims on Greece by members of Australia's Slav Macedonian community have outraged the Greek Community.

The news that an Australian newspaper has published claims that a large part of northern Greece belongs to the Slav Macedonians has even made headlines in Athens.

In a report published last week in the Australian Macedonian Weekly, author Risto Stefov claimed that the expiration of the Bucharest Treaty of 1913 will allow the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) to make territorial claims against Greece, including demands for towns as far south as Larissa.

"It has been almost a century since Macedonia was invaded, occupied and partitioned by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria," Stefov alleges.

"Ever since the break up of the Ottoman Empire, Macedonians have been struggling to assert their identity and to this day Greece and Bulgaria are doing everything they can to stop them," Stefov writes, before asking "Why?"

The author, who lists his personal email address, rstefov@hotmail.com, says Greece has done all it can to denationalise and "extinguish all that is Macedonian."

The Australian Macedonian Weekly, which published the story in its October 11 edition, ran with a map of the Balkans on its front page that indicated that large sections of what is now Greece belong to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

"There is no Macedonian in the world today who does not want to see Macedonia reunited," writes Stefov, who then claims that most so called Macedonians are "realists."

He then says that the so-called Macedonians have a big job ahead of them in trying to educate the Greeks about Macedonia.

"In addition to learning about themselves, their history, their heritage and their right to exist in the world, they must also learn to tell every Greek, every Bulgarian and every other person in this world the truth about themselves and about Macedonia," says Stefov.

Members of the Greek community say they are bitterly disappointed with the article, which they claim does nothing but incite problems between the two communities in this country, something most Australian Greeks have been trying hard to avoid.

Although written with standardised American spelling, it is unclear whether or not the article originates from Australia or overseas. What is clear is Mr. Stefov's demands that FYROM uses the expiration of the 1913 Bucharest Treaty to claim land he says belongs to them.

"The job of getting things to move forward largely rests with the Macedonian Diaspora."

"The vast majority of Macedonian people in the Diaspora are descendants of those Macedonians who were forcibly evicted from Greece."

It is they, says Stefov, who have "cause and legitimacy to challenge the Greek state not only to recover their own properties, culture and identity, but also to help those who are still oppressed and are unable to help themselves."

Meanwhile in the ongoing naming saga between Greece and FYROM, Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Evripides Stylianides last week said Skopje must abandon its intransigent positions concerning the name issue in order to gain Athens' support in its efforts to join the EU and NATO.

"Otherwise, we draw a deep red line that we are determined not to cross. At the end of the negotiating process between Skopje and the EU, there is the option of holding a referendum, a useful institutional tool that Greece does not give up the right to," he added.

At another point, the minister underlined that the Greekness of the historic and cultural name 'Macedonia' was not negotiable and that this had been made clear by Foreign Minister Petros Molyviatis.

"We support FYROM's Euro-Atlantic orientation, but only on the strict condition that it abandons its intransigent position and proceeds along the lines of a mutually-acceptable solution," Stylianides said.

"We hope and are making efforts so that in the coming period, the neighbouring country will display - as Greece has already done - active flexibility and good will so that the issue can be resolved and usher in a new period of stability and cooperation in the region," the minister noted.

"We wish to develop good neighbourly relations and cooperation with the neighbouring country, where we are the top investors. We express our good will by proposing a mutually acceptable solution for the name," the minister said.

The latest development in the long-running dispute between Greece and FYROM over its adopted name of 'Macedonia' which has dragged on unresolved since the tiny republic first broke away from former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s - was the Greek government's rejection of a proposal put forward by UN mediator Matthew Nimetz last week, which was ruled out as "one-sided" and "unacceptable."

Skopyians provoke the omogeneia in Australia

http://www.voiceofgreece.gr/en/Omogeneia_Main_News.asp?id=11867

16 Oct 2005 10:46:00

The last issue of “ Australian Macedonian Weekly” (Slavomacedonian newspaper in Australia) carries a Skopyian autonomists’ map indicating that their Macedonia extends to Larissa under the title “ We will take over Macedonia” and the subtitle “After the expiration of the Bucharest treaty”.

The article, signed by Risto Stefov, invites the “ Macedonians of the diaspora” to begin a struggle for the reunification of Macedonia and the restitution of human rights of “Macedonians” who live in Greece and Bulgaria.

The article characteristically says that a large part of Macedonia is under Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia’s occupation within the frame of “1913 Bucharest Treaty”, which expires in 2012, and calls on all Macedonians to unite for the reunification of their country.

In the first part of the two page article, Greece and Bulgaria are mainly accused of illegally occupying Macedonia and oppressing Macedonians who live in their territory, claiming that there are not Macedonians. The journalist does not stop with the expression of absurd allegations but goes on to demand all those who committed crimes against Macedonians to be taken to justice.

Greece - The Bully of the Balkans

I am writing this article in response to the story "Skopyians provoke the omogeneia in Australia" which appeared on the website "Voice of Greece" at <http://www.voiceofgreece.gr/> on October 16, 2005 [1]. What is strikingly strange about this story is its take on the original article. The authors seem to be reading a lot more into it than there really is and at the same time they are being blind and deaf to what the article is really trying to say.

Take for instance the title "Recovering Macedonia, Expiration of the Bucharest Treaty of 1913". Clearly the title says "Recovering Macedonia" so why are the Greek media authors calling it "We will take over Macedonia"?

(<http://www.greekcity.com.au/content/content.cfm?id=1596>). See also (http://www.voiceofgreece.gr/en/Omogeneia_Main_News.asp?id=11867)

Readers are encouraged to read the original document "Recovering Macedonia" at: <http://www.maknews.com/html/articles/stefov/stefov78.html> and decide for themselves what it says and compare that to what the Greek media says about it [1].

Clearly "Recovering Macedonia" has nothing to do with "taking over Macedonia". Recovering Macedonia is about the Macedonian question, about the Macedonian nation and its struggle to recover its place in this world. Recovering Macedonia is about gaining human rights for the Macedonian minorities in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania. It is about recovering our dignity as a people and as a nation. It is about recovering our properties that were confiscated by the Greek State.

Those who wrote the article are not "Skopyians" as the Greek media makes them out to be, they are simply Macedonians. They are Macedonians from Greece, a people that has been abused and neglected by the Greek State since 1912. They are tired of being an invisible minority without even the most basic human rights and want to bring change. Why has the Greek media taken "Recovering Macedonia", something honourable like "striving for human rights", and twisted it into something violent like we will take your Macedonia?

Do the Greek State and Greek media truly believe that the "Skopyians", a handful of people with a small army and practically no economy, can take on Greece, a NATO member five times its size?

Why is the Greek media attempting to deceive the world, especially its own people, into believing that "Skopyians" are "really" dangerous?

If the Greek Government and the Greek media truly believe that the "Skopyians" are capable of such a feat, why don't they enlighten us? Show us how? I am sure we and many others would be interested to know.

Is the Greek State really afraid of the "Skopyans" or is this another ruse to sidestep the real issue, the cover-up of the existence of the Macedonian minority living inside Greece which the Greek Government refuses to recognize?

Unfortunately the Greek media once again has proven to be unreliable. The Greek media, which kowtows to the Greek Government on matters regarding Macedonia, will do anything, even lie to push the political agenda and continue to deny the existence of Macedonians living inside Greece.

We also have a message for "the other mediums" (you know who you are) who prefer to "copy" Greek articles and present them as "facts" without even bothering to check sources. Where is the integrity in that? Has the media become so complacent with the status-quo that it no longer cares for the truth? If you wish to maintain any shred of integrity please read the two articles;

<http://www.maknews.com/html/articles/stefov/stefov78.html> and (<http://www.greekcity.com.au/content/content.cfm?id=1596> and make an informed decision based on facts not on what the Greek media says. For those of you who continue to support the Greek stand with regard to the Macedonians of Greece, allow us to summarize for you what the Greek State has done for them in the past;

1. The Greek State unleashed its army in Macedonia in 1912 causing untold damage; burning villages, killing civilians, murdering and raping women and children and evicting people from their homes. See:

<http://www.maknews.com/html/articles/stefov/stefov61.html>

<http://www.maknews.com/html/articles/stefov/stefov64.html>

<http://www.maknews.com/html/articles/stefov/stefov67.html>

<http://www.maknews.com/html/articles/stefov/stefov72.html>

<http://www.maknews.com/html/articles/stefov/stefov76.html>

<http://www.maknews.com/html/articles/stefov/stefov80.html>

2. After Macedonia's partition in 1913 (between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria), Greece evicted at least fifty-thousand Macedonians from their homes simply because they refused to pledge loyalty to the Greek State. Greece gave them 24 hours to take whatever they could carry on their backs and get out. They were told, "This is Greece now and there is no room for the likes of you here!" Their properties were confiscated.

3. During the 1920's the Greek State evicted half a million Muslims, most of whom were ethnic Macedonians, and imported more than a million Christians Turks from Asia Minor, depositing most of them on Macedonian lands and awarding them confiscated properties belonging to the evicted Macedonians. With the evictions and the addition of the newcomers to the Macedonian demography, the indigenous Macedonian population became a minority on its native soil.

4. To eradicate and extinguish everything that was Macedonian, the Greek State, after occupying and annexing 51% of Macedonia's territory, named its portion the "New Territories" and later renamed it "Northern Greece". Starting in the 1920's the Greek State initiated a denationalization and forced assimilation program effectively renaming all Macedonian toponyms to Greek sounding ones, all peoples' given and surnames to Greek sounding ones and banning the Macedonian language from use, making it illegal. Adults were forced to go to night school and learn to speak Greek. Pre-kindergarten children were separated from their mothers and sent to school to learn Greek in order to prevent them from learning to speak Macedonian from their mothers.

5. To eradicate all historic evidence of a Macedonian existence in the Greek occupied territory of Macedonia, the Greek State initiated a program that removed all Macedonian inscriptions from municipal buildings churches, gravestones, church icons and whatever else existed.

6. During the Metaxas years the Macedonian language was forbidden to be spoken even in the privacy of one's home. People caught speaking Macedonian were beaten, given a hefty dose of castor oil, fined and imprisoned. Greek prisons and prison camps were crowded with Macedonians, especially old men and women who could not speak a word of Greek.

7. During the Greek Civil War many thousands of Macedonians were evicted from their homes and had their properties confiscated. Tens of thousands of civilians and refugee children were expelled from Greece and are still not allowed to return.

8. Since Macedonia's invasion, occupation and partition in 1912, 1913 successive Greek Governments have tried everything to extinguish all that was Macedonian so that they could claim "Macedonians don't exist".

In 1988 when it became inevitable that a new Macedonian State was about to be declared, from the breakup of the Yugoslav federation, the word "Macedonia" became very popular in Greece.

After attempting to extinguish the name for seventy-six years, the Greek State reversed its policy and made Macedonia a very popular word in the Greek vocabulary. It even renamed its northern province to Macedonia, claiming for historical reasons it was the only legitimate Macedonia and belonged to Greece.

Also after all the years of claiming that only Greeks lived in Macedonia, Greek authorities almost overnight "invented" a new ethnicity called "Greek Macedonians". This new ethnicity it appears is Macedonian but of Greek origin, descendents from the ancient Macedonians and rightful heirs to the Macedonian heritage.

How convenient!

We the Macedonians from Greece, including those living in the Diaspora who have been evicted from Greece, have had enough of Greek

State inventions, denials and cover-ups about Macedonia and about the Macedonian identity. We therefore demand that the Greek Government (a) inform the Greek public of the truth about Macedonia and the Macedonian people and (b) recognize the Macedonian minority living in Greece.

We also appeal to the democratic people of Greece to join us in our struggle for human rights and for a peaceful coexistence between Macedonians and Greeks in a future Europe.

NOTES:

1. The following article was taken from the website "Voice of Greece" at <http://www.voiceofgreece.gr/>

Skopyians provoke the omogeneia in Australia.

16 Oct 2005 10:46:00

The last issue of "Australian Macedonian Weekly" (Slavomacedonian newspaper in Australia) carries a Skopyian autonomists' map indicating that their Macedonia extends to Larissa under the title "We will take over Macedonia" and the subtitle "After the expiration of the Bucharest treaty". The article, signed by Risto Stefov, invites the "Macedonians of the Diaspora" to begin a struggle for the reunification of Macedonia and the restitution of human rights of "Macedonians" who live in Greece and Bulgaria.

The article characteristically says that a large part of Macedonia is under Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia's occupation within the frame of "1913 Bucharest Treaty", which expires in 2012, and calls on all Macedonians to unite for the reunification of their country.

In the first part of the two page article, Greece and Bulgaria are mainly accused of illegally occupying Macedonia and oppressing Macedonians who live in their territory, claiming that there are not Macedonians. The journalist does not stop with the expression of absurd allegations but goes on to demand all those who committed crimes against Macedonians to be taken to justice.

The Treaty of Bucharest, August 10, 1913

1. NEGOTIATION.

The Treaty of Bucharest was concluded on August 10, 1913, by the delegates of Bulgaria, Roumania, Serbia, Montenegro, and Greece. As Bulgaria had been completely isolated in the Second Balkan War, and as she was closely invested on her northern boundary by the of Roumania on her western frontier by the allied armies of Greece and Serbia, and in the East by the Turkish Army, she was obliged, in her helplessness, to submit to such terms as her victorious enemies chose to impose upon her. All important arrangements and concessions involving the rectification of the controverted international boundary lines were perfected in a series of committee meetings, incorporated in separate protocols, and formally ratified by subsequent action of the general assembly of delegates.

2. TERMS.

By the terms of the treaty, Bulgaria ceded to Roumania all that portion of the Dobrudja lying north of a line extending from the Danube just above Turtukaia to the western shore of the Black Sea, south of Ekrene. This important territorial Concession has an approximate area of 2,687 square miles, a population of 286,000, and includes the fortress of Silistria and the cities of Turtukaia on the Danube and Baltchik on the Black Sea. In addition, Bulgaria agreed to dismantle all existing fortresses and bound herself not to construct forts at Rustchuk or at Schumla or in any of the territory between these two cities, or within a radius of 20 kilometers around Baltchick.

3. SERBIA'S GAIN IN TERRITORY.

The eastern frontier of Serbia was drawn from the summit of Patarika, on the old frontier, and followed the watershed between the Vardar and the Struma Rivers to the Greek-Bulgarian boundary, except that the upper valley of the Strumnitza remained in the possession of Bulgaria. The territory thus obtained embraced central Macedonia, including Ochrida, Monastir, Kossovo, Istib, and Kotchana, and the eastern half of the sanjak of Novi-Bazar. By this arrangement Serbia increased her territory from 18,650 to 33,891 square miles and her population by more than 1,500,000.

4. GREECE'S GAIN IN TERRITORY.

The boundary line separating Greece from Bulgaria was drawn from the crest of Mount Belashitcha to the mouth of the Mesta River, on the

Aegean Sea. This important territorial concession, which Bulgaria resolutely contested, in compliance with the instructions embraced in the notes which Russia and Austria-Hungary presented to the conference, increased the area of Greece from 25,014 to 41,933 square miles and her population from 2,660,000 to 4,363,000. The territory thus annexed included Epirus, southern Macedonia, Salonika, Kavala, and the Aegean littoral as far east as the Mesta River, and restricted the Aegean seaboard of Bulgaria to an inconsiderable extent of 70 miles, extending from the Mesta to the Maritza, and giving access to the Aegean at the inferior port of Dedeagatch. Greece also extended her northwestern frontier to include the great fortress of Janina. In addition, Crete was definitely assigned to Greece and was formally taken over on December 14, 1913.

5. BULGARIA'S GAIN IN TERRITORY.

Bulgaria's share of the spoils, although greatly reduced, was not entirely negligible. Her net gains in territory, which embraced a portion of Macedonia, including the town of Strumnitza, western Thrace, and 70 miles of the Aegean littoral, were about 9,663 square miles, and her population was increased by 129,490.

6. APPRAISEMENT OF THE TREATY.

By the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest, Roumania profited most in proportion to her sacrifices. The unredeemed Roumanians live mostly in Transylvania, the Bukovina, and Bessarabia, and therefore the Balkan wars afforded her no adequate opportunity to perfect the rectification of her boundaries on ethnographic lines.

The humiliating terms imposed on Bulgaria were due to her own impatience and intemperate folly. The territory she secured was relatively circumscribed; she had failed to emancipate Macedonia, which was her avowed purpose in entering the war; she lost the districts of Ochrida and Monastir, which she especially coveted; she was assigned only a small line on the Aegean, with the wretched port of Dedeagatch; and she was obliged to forfeit her ambition as the leader of the Balkan hegemony.

Greece, though gaining much, was greatly dissatisfied. The acquisition of Saloniki was a triumph; she was assigned the port of Kavala and the territory eastward at the insistence of the King and the army and contrary to the advice of Venizelos; in the northwest Greece encountered the opposition of Italy by urging her claims to southern Albania; in the assignment of the Aegean Islands she was profoundly dissatisfied; and she still claims 3,000,000 unredeemed conationals.

The fundamental defects of the Treaty of Bucharest were that (1) the boundaries which it drew bore little relation to the nationality of the

inhabitants of the districts affected, and that (2) the punishment meted out to Bulgaria, while perhaps deserved in the light of her great offense in bringing on the, Second Balkan War, was so severe that she could not accept the treaty as a permanent settlement. While Serbia, Greece, and Roumania can not escape a large share of the blame for the character of the treaty, it should not be forgotten that their action at Bucharest was in large measure due to the settlement forced upon the Balkan States by the great powers at the London conferences.

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