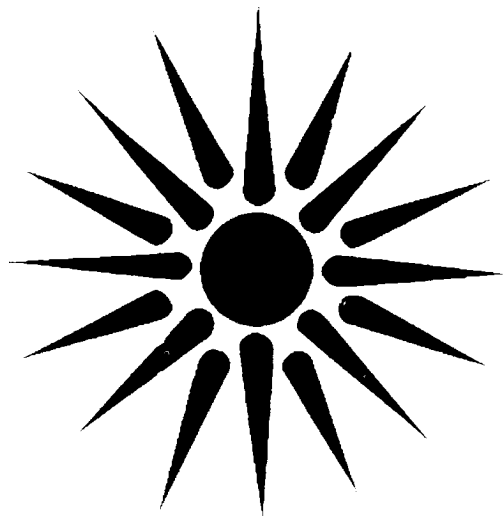


***Greek Atrocities
Committed against
the Macedonian
People***

(A collection of essays)



By Risto Stefov

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Greek Atrocities Committed against the Macedonian People

Ten short years after their failed attempt to liberate themselves from the Ottoman yoke, the Macedonian people were faced with yet another serious dilemma. In 1912 under the guise of liberation, in what was later termed the first Balkan War, Macedonia was invaded and occupied by the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian armies. After these foreign armies expelled the Ottomans out of Macedonia they fought each other for a greater piece of Macedonia in what was later termed as the Second Balkan war of 1913.

After the Greek army consolidated its hold on Macedonian territory it began to expel first the indigenous Muslim population and later everyone else who did not agree with Greece's forceful occupation. After the expulsions, the Greek army was turned loose on the civilian population. Filled with hatred and propaganda, Greek soldiers were told that Macedonia was populated by Greeks and anyone who did not speak Greek was the enemy. When the Greek army invaded Macedonia it found the vast majority of the population, including women and children to be non-Greek speaking. So the entire Macedonian civilian population became the enemy to be disposed of at each individual soldier's discretion.

Entire villages were burned down to the ground. Civilians were murdered on mass. Old men, women and children were beaten, tortured and killed. Women and young girls were indiscriminately and repeatedly raped. The situation became so bad that the international community felt it necessary to send a Commission to investigate.

On August 2nd, 1913, shortly before the end of the second Balkan War, the Carnegie Endowment dispatched a Commission on a fact finding mission. The mission consisted of seven prominent members from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia.

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 a 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.”

It is therefore our wish to highlight some of the Commission’s findings in a series of articles and remind the world of the plight of the Macedonian people and the indignity they suffered at the hands of the Greek army and the Greek State.

Forced Homogenization of the Population in Greek Occupied Macedonia

By Risto Stefov
rstefov@hotmail.com
September 12, 2008

Ordinarily I couldn't care less what people call themselves, it's a personal issue how one wishes to present and even when I know people are lying about their ethnic heritage I let it slide. But, when today's self-proclaimed "Greeks" take it upon themselves to dictate to others how they may call themselves then it's time to speak up.

The Greek government routinely denies the existence of ethnic Macedonians, as it denies the existence of all ethnic and national minorities within its jurisdiction. Greece, you see, is a pure country with no minorities, a miracle in the modern World and unique in Europe - or so we are told.

In truth today's Modern Greek identity, the Greek identity of such luminaries as Kostas Karamanlis and Dora Bakoyannis, is the result of enforced homogenization. It is a political identity and historically artificial.

Prior to 1913 the majority of people living in geographic Macedonia shared common customs, traditions, songs, dances, language, history and religion. These people had lived in Macedonia for some 1500 years and their relationship is probably much older than that. Any decent person, any civilized human being would have no problem referring to such people as 'ethnic Macedonians'.

Now, let's consider the so-called "ethnic Greek" identity of today's Modern Greeks.

According to Webster's dictionary, belonging to an ethnic group means belonging to a division of mankind as distinguished by customs, characteristics, language and sharing a common history, etc.

I recently read an interesting article at in an official Turkish website:

<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/denial-of-ethnic-identity.en.mfa>

What do Turks have to say about today's Greeks? After all both Macedonia and Greece were ruled by Turkey for centuries; Greece for four centuries and Macedonia for five.

The site states:

“The [Modern] Greek Nation is based on the principle of belonging to the Greek race and the Greek Orthodox Church. On this subject, it is enough to glance at the speeches of Greek statesmen about the homogeneity of the Greek nation with the exception of the Muslim minority.

If today's Greek Nation is really homogeneous, one cannot help but wonder about the destiny of the Albanians, the Muslim Albanians, Vlach, Macedonians, Bulgarians, Jews as well as Turks. In this respect it becomes necessary to answer the question of how homogeneity has been achieved in Greek Macedonia while ethnic variety still survives in the Republic of Macedonia.”

What are the Turks talking about? Who are these Albanians, Vlach, Macedonians, Turks, etc. existing in Greece?

As mentioned above, Athens denies the existence of any national or ethnic minorities on its territory. Greece claims to be an ethnically homogeneous nation whose roots extend back to the ancient Greeks of thousands of years ago.

Such a claim is utter nonsense, of course, but this is the official mythology of the Modern Greek state. This is what today's Greeks are taught in school and this is the kind of historical fiction promoted by Greek society.

The Ottoman Turks were masters of Greece for four centuries, long before a Greek state was created and prior to the Romanoi altering their identity and referring to themselves “Greeks”. There was indeed a great variety of ethnic populations in what is today Greece, but apparently they have all vanished.

The Turkish site puts it succinctly:

“In this respect, it becomes necessary to answer the question of how homogeneity has been achieved in Greek Macedonia while ethnic variety still survives in the Republic of Macedonia?”

How indeed!

When the Greek kingdom was created in 1829, the following ethnic groups dominated the territory: Arvanites (Christian Albanians), Vlahi (Vlachs), Tourki (Turks), Voulgari (Bulgarians and Macedonians), Slavi (Macedonians), Slavo-Makedones (Macedonians), Endopii (indigenous Macedonians), Gifti (Roma), Evreii (Jews) and others. Some citations carelessly refer to those who spoke Greek as “Greeks” but such people more often than not belonged to one of the distinct non-Greek ethnic groups.

It is impossible to gauge to what extent ancient Greeks (including the huge slave populations) survived in the lower Balkans and preserved a ‘Greek’ identity for 2500 years. It is extremely unlikely that more than a miniscule fraction of today’s “Greek” population has any connection whatsoever to the ancient Greeks. The vast bulk of today’s “Greeks” have been recently made “Greek” as part of the political homogenization process.

European powers created the Greek kingdom in an effort to block Russian access to warm waters. At that time, in 1829, the Arvanites still spoke the Albanian language and had their own unique customs and traditions. This was the majority population in the region of Attica (Athens) so much so that there was discussion as to whether Greek or Albanian should become the official language of the new kingdom. The Vlach still spoke their mother Vlach language similar to Latin and they had their own unique customs and traditions. Turks spoke the Turkish language and had their own customs and traditions, etc.

Notwithstanding the many names Modern Greeks use to refer to Macedonians, e.g., Slavs, Slavofoni, diglossos, Voulgaros, Slavo-Makedones, Dopii and more recently the ignorant Skopianoii,

Macedonians spoke the Macedonian language, which existed and still exists throughout all of geographic Macedonia. Macedonians too have their own unique customs and traditions, which are different from the other groups.

If the truth be told today's Greece is inhabited by diverse Ottoman Christian populations of various ethnic backgrounds. These people did not have a "Greek" ethnic identity, that identity was imposed on them later. It was only after the creation of the Greek kingdom that authorities fabricated a new "Greek" identity, the purpose being to homogenize the population.

Authorities systematically destroyed people's original ethnic identity. They made the declaration of any non-Greek identity socially repulsive and illegal. People became too ashamed to refer to themselves as Arvanites and Vlach. Even today you see Arvanites like former Greek foreign minister, Pangalos, denying his Albanian heritage and proclaiming himself a pure Hellene. That's quite pathetic but Modern Greeks are taught that any non-Greek identity is vulgar and inferior to the newly fabricated Greek identity. Modern Greeks have buried their true ethnic heritage, and where they still remember it, they have become self-loathing. This is what it means to be a modern-day "Hellene".

Greek authorities also taught the citizenry that it was "patriotic" to monitor one's neighbours and hand over to authorities the names of people who refused to identify as Greek and who continued to speak their non-Greek mother tongues. This process of spying on your neighbours and betraying them to authorities went on for generations and still goes on today, even in the Diaspora.

Politicians in Athens fabricated a state mythology, a fake history if you will, for these newly minted Greeks to share, the purpose being to bind the different ethnic groups together and unify the state.

Greece adopted Koine, which today is paraded as the Modern Greek language. But, just as the Modern Greek flag was stolen from the British East India Company, Koine, which many Greeks boast connects them to the ancients, was stolen from the Byzantine Church. Greece was fabricating its new history, identity and

language in a hodgepodge manner via theft. In fact most of today's "Greek culture" is stolen from the various assimilated populations and misrepresented as "Greek".

People who learnt Koine are no more Greek nor related to the ancient Greeks than people who learnt hieroglyphs are Egyptian and related to the ancient Egyptians. Adopting a new language doesn't give one rights to the heritage of the ancient populations who spoke it.

It made sense to impose the church Koine as religion was the only thing the various ethnic groups of Greece had in common. But, religion is not ethnicity.

Greece changed the place names and people's personal names, renaming everyone and everything to make them appear Greek. This tells us that neither the places nor the people were Greek and they had to be made Greek by force. This is Greece's famous policy of ethnic and cultural genocide.

As a Macedonian from Aegean Macedonia my new (artificial) "Greek" history begins in 1926 after the Greek government changed my grandfather's name and the name of my village from Macedonian to Greek. There was no Stefou or Trigono before 1926 and everyone spoke Macedonian, not Greek.

If I am to believe that after 1926 I am Greek then I must ask: What was I before 1926? What was I before they changed our village name and our family name from Macedonian to Greek? What was the original ethnic heritage of my family?

And just what is it that makes today's citizens of Greece "ethnically Greek"? Just what is it that makes Greekocised Macedonians, Vlach, Arvanites, Roma, Turks, etc., share the same "ethnicity" in Greece?

According to Webster's dictionary a Greek is a native or modern inhabitant of Greece. So, anyone who lives in Greece is Greek by virtue of geography. One must assume that if such people move to a different location they would take on a new identity. That hardly sounds like an ethnic group.

The name Greek is derived from the word Graioi, originally the Latin name of a Boeotian tribe that settled in Southern Italy in the 8th century BC, but clearly the Boeotians did not give rise to today's Modern "Greeks". Use of the term "Greek" cannot, in itself, define an ethnicity. There must be more to it.

So, what makes today's Greeks "ethnic Greeks"?

It can't be culture, tradition or customs as the original cultures, traditions and customs of today's Greek population (Albanians, Vlachs, Macedonians, Turks, Roma, etc.) were distinct and non-Greek.

It can't be language since Koine was formally imposed on diverse groups only after the Greek kingdom was formed in 1829. Koine was not the mother tongue of people living in what became Greece, this was a church language just as Latin was the church language to the West.

So, it isn't language, culture, tradition or custom. It's not history either, as more than half of today's Greek population is not indigenous to the region and was only transplanted into the area from Asia Minor and the Black Sea over the last century. These are unrelated, historically disjoint populations.

You can see why the Greek government was under pressure to manufacture a language and identity for all these different groups. The only thing they shared, the only thing they had in common, was their religion.

Today's Modern Greek state is based on religion, not ethnicity or history. Historically, it is unrelated to ancient Greece. When the Bavarian royal house established the new Greek kingdom it was meant as a haven for the persecuted Christians of the Ottoman regions. The first Greek constitution beckoned to all Christians to immigrate and settle there - it did not beckon to "Greeks" to come and settle there.

Other than a common religion there is little if any of the characteristics of an “ethnic group” existing prior to the formation of the Greek kingdom in 1829.

That’s why forced homogenization was necessary in the first place. That’s why everything and everyone had to be renamed. That’s why a new Greek language had to be imposed and people’s mother tongues and ethnic identities had to be suppressed and destroyed. That’s why ethnic variety still exists in the Republic of Macedonia but has vanished from the new Greek state.

How is it, then, that people who only recently and just barely qualify to call themselves “ethnic Greeks” are allowed to usurp the ancient Greek heritage and the ancient Macedonian heritage? From what authority does this group attempt to tell ethnic Macedonians who they are and how they may call themselves?

Obviously today’s Greeks are ethnic frauds, their identity is nothing more than the product of a government program. We indigenous Macedonians of Greece know this first hand as we have been resisting the ruthless ethnocide of Greece for a century now.

What is the Macedonian government doing negotiating our Macedonian identity and Macedonian ethnic heritage with such racists and frauds?

Greek Atrocities in Macedonia

Part 1 - Introduction

By Risto Stefov

May, 2005

rstefov@hotmail.com

“When will the Greek State apologize to the Macedonian people for its 1912-1913 genocide in Northern Greece?”

“Ethnic cleansing” may be a modern term but its meaning is well understood by the Macedonian people living in northern Greece. Ever since Greece took possession of Macedonia, in the early 20th century, Macedonian people have experienced first hand ethnic cleansing.

This series of articles will present evidence of atrocities perpetrated by the Greek State against the innocent Macedonian civilian populations prior to, during and after the Balkan wars. Most of the information contained in the articles is obtained from the 1913 Carnegie Inquiry and from Greek sources.

The Carnegie Endowment was founded in 1910 by Andrew Carnegie to promote peace and understanding in the world. Its prime objectives are to do research, promote discussions, sponsor publications and education in international affairs and American foreign policy.

When war broke out in the Balkans in 1912 and 1913, the Carnegie Endowment dispatched a commission on a fact finding mission. The mission consisted of seven prominent members from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. Among them was the distinguished journalist Henry N. Brailsford, author of the book “Macedonia its Races and their Future”.

The 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)

It is therefore our wish to highlight some of the Commission’s findings in a series of articles and remind the world of the plight of the Macedonian people and the indignity they suffered at the hands of the Greek State.

The failed 1903 Ilinden Macedonian uprising against the Ottoman regime not only took away the hope for independence and self-rule but at the same time brought devastation and destruction. Many Macedonians lost their lives, properties and all hopes for freedom. While the Macedonian spirit for self-liberation was slowly extinguished by Turkish brutality, there was new hope on the horizon, the hope that Macedonia would be liberated by her Christian brothers Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. Many leading Macedonians, including Krste Misirkov, warned against such false hopes, but most Macedonians, fed up with their intolerable living conditions, could not see the danger. Mesmerized by slick propaganda, they were more than ready to welcome their liberators.

Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, on the other hand, while priming the Macedonian people and the world with their propaganda for liberation, were actually planning for an invasion with intentions of occupying and partitioning Macedonia. The Great Powers were well aware of this sinister plan even before it was put into action.

Here is evidence that the Macedonian people were duped by their Christian brothers, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. According to the Carnegie inquiries, the Macedonian revolutionaries themselves, at first, rejoiced with an outburst of popular gratitude towards their liberators. In a “proclamation to their brothers”, published by the delegates of the twenty-five Macedonian Confederacies, at the very

beginning of the first Balkan war, declared to the Macedonian population:

“Brothers:-your sufferings and your pains have touched the heart of your kindred. Moved by the sacred duty of fraternal compassion, they come to your aid to free you from the Turkish yoke. In return for their sacrifice they desire nothing but to reestablish peace and order in the land of our birth. Come to meet these brave knights of freedom therefore with triumphal crowns. Cover the way before their feet with flowers and glory. And be magnanimous to those who yesterday were your masters. As true Christians, give them not evil for evil. Long live liberty! Long live the brave army of liberation!” (Page 50).

In fact the Serbian army entered Macedonia from the north and the Greek army from the south, welcomed with cries of joy from the Macedonian population. Unfortunately this enthusiasm for the liberators soon gave way to doubts, then to disenchantment and was finally converted to hatred and despair.

According to the Carnegie report, the Macedonians were not the only ones duped. The soldiers of the invading armies were lied to also. “The Servian soldier, like the Greek, was firmly persuaded that in Macedonia he would find compatriots, men who could speak his language and address him with jivio or zito. He found men speaking a language different from his, who cried hourrah! He misunderstood or did not understand at all. The theory he had learned from youth of the existence of a Servian Macedonia and a Greek Macedonia naturally suffered; but his patriotic conviction that Macedonia must become Greek or Servian, if not so already, remained unaffected. Doubtless Macedonia had been what he wanted it to become in those times of Douchan the Strong or the Byzantine Emperors. It was only agitators and propagandist Bulgarians who instilled into the population the idea of being Bulgarian. The agitators must be driven out of the country, and it would again become what it had always been, Servian or Greek.

Accordingly they acted on this basis.

Who were these agitators who had made the people forget the Greek and Servian tongues?

First, they were the priests; then the schoolmasters; lastly the revolutionary elements who, under the ancient regime, had formed an 'organization'; heads of bands and their members, peasants who had supplied them with money or food, -in a word the whole of the male population." (Page 50-51)

In other words, to a Greek, Bulgarian or Serbian soldier, if a person was not of his nationality as he had been taught back home, then this person was the enemy and in Macedonia, the entire Macedonian population was the enemy.

No sooner had the invading armies consolidated their hold on Macedonia, than they arrested and punished all Macedonians regarded as leaders and venerated as heroes by the population, while the dregs, the very men who caused much suffering, were raised to greatness.

Progressive disintegration of social and national life in Macedonia began with the entry of the occupying Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian armies and has not ceased to this day (in Greece and Bulgaria).

All three States, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia committed atrocities against the Macedonian people during the 1912 and 1913 Balkan wars. However, for the purpose of this series of articles, the focus of investigation will be on the Greeks.

Still in the midst of excitement, the first Balkan war was accepted by European opinion as a war of Liberation. In the European mind, its conclusion meant the downfall of the Ottoman regime in Europe and the end of all oppression. Unfortunately, European understanding of the Macedonian situation was far from reality as one tyrant was replaced by three. While the Ottoman regime tolerated the various religions, languages and traditions of all races in their Empire, the new tyrants did not. As soon as they consolidated their hold on Macedonia, they began to act on its population.

First came the evictions.

The first ones to be thrown out were the Muslim Macedonians. Even though they spoke the Macedonian language and insisted that they were Macedonians and not Turks, their captors relentlessly cast them out. For no reason other than being Muslim, they were evicted from their homes and forced out from their ancestral lands.

After the Turkish authorities vacated Macedonia, all that was left were civilians. No Turk dared remain behind knowing what awaited him. So the Turkish villages that the Carnegie report was referring to were in fact Macedonian villages inhabited by Muslim Macedonians.

After the Greek army occupied his town, according to Hadji Suleiman Effendi of Strumnitsa “They subsequently gave the order that the Moslems must abandon the town; and added that they, the Greeks, would burn the houses if the Moslems would not. I myself offered 3 pounds to the Greek patrol which came to burn down my house. The sergeant refused to take it, and said that if he did not burn the house another patrol would. The buildings were all systematically burnt, and the same thing was done in about thirty-two neighbouring villages. ‘We [pointing to the others that were present] were all large farmers, employing, each of us, nearly 300 laborers and tenants; now we have nothing’.” (Page 278)

The Carnegie Commission visited the camp of the Muslim refugees outside of Solun and spoke with refugees from Strumnitsa who, among other things, reported that most Muslims left their town, most under pressure. The few that remained were evicted by force. “They heard that other villages had been burned after they left and some of them actually saw their villages in flames. They had received no rations from the Greeks for four days; they had no plans for the future, did not wish to go Asia, nor yet to settle in Greek territory. They saw ‘no good in front of them at all’.” (Page 278)

Officials of the Comite Islamique, in Solun, informed the Carnegie Commission that by September 1, 1913, there were 135,000 Muslim refugees in and around Solun. Most of them had arrived after the conclusion of the second Balkan war. The Committee reminded the Greek government that it was responsible for these refugees since it

evicted them from their homes. The Committee, which at this point was spending 50 pounds of its own money daily on bread to feed the refugees, had no faith that the Greek government would in any way help to relieve the situation. (Page 278)

In a separate account, according to Ali Riza Effendi of Kukush, the Greeks systematically and deliberately plundered and burnt the town. Many old people were burned alive in their homes. (Page 279)

A Muslim Notable from Yailadjik, a village one and a half hours' distance from Solun stated that on November 11, 1912, Greek soldiers came and killed fifteen Muslims. They then took all the furniture, 9,500 sheep and goats, 1,500 cattle and all the grain which they could find, and then burned the 250 houses of the village. (Page 281)

The following is a report drawn up by the Moslem community of Pravishta, on the atrocities committed in that town and the neighboring villages since the withdrawal of the Turkish authorities on October 24, 1913.

[NOTE.-The names of all of the killed (195 in all) and of some of those robbed, and also those of the aggressors, are fully given in the original Turkish document, but are omitted in the following summarized translation].

Village of Giran

Twenty-one Moslems killed by the Greeks of the village of Nikchan, and a sum of about £T3,000 stolen. Six hundred goats were also stolen for the benefit of the Greek church at Nikchan and 2,400 goats taken by the Greeks of Djerbelan.

Village of Palihor

Six Moslems killed by the band commanded by Demosthenes, headmaster of the Greek school of Palihor, pillage to the extent of about £T3,000. One woman (named) was violated by Demosthenes and another.

Village of Micheli

Demosthenes and other Greeks pillaged the village, carried off many oxen and much corn and stole credit notes for a sum of £T3,000.

Village of Drama

Two Moslems killed by Greeks of Pravishta.

Village of Osmanli

Six Moslems killed by Greeks of Holo; about £T1,500 stolen.

Village of Samalcol

Twenty-one Moslems of this village were taken by Miltiades Machopoulos of the band of Myriacos Mihail to the ravine of Casroub, where they were massacred by the Greek bandit Leonidas and others. Over £T1,500 were stolen from them; a shop looted of stock worth £T1,500, and about £T7,000 stolen in the village generally.

Village of Tchanahli

Two Moslems killed by Greeks of Holo; 200 sheep and a mule stolen.

Village of Mouchtian

Twenty-five Moslems killed by Myriacos Mihail, his band and some local Greeks in the ravine of Casroub. About £T3,000 stolen.

“In the twentieth century of progress, the skeletons which may still be seen in this ravine, present to the eyes of Justice a monument capable of enlightening her regarding Hellenic civilization.” (Page 282).

Village of Dranich.

£T2,000 in money, seven goats and 1,000 sheep stolen by the Greeks of Palihor and Nikchan.

Village of Ahadler

Nine Moslems killed by Greeks of Casroub, and sums amounting to £T258 stolen.

Village of Tchiflik

Ten Moslems killed by the same Greeks of Casroub, and about £T1,000 stolen.

Village of Pethor

Fourteen Moslems killed by the grocer Myriacos Mihail, member of the bishop's council, Panahi, priest of Boblan, and Miltiades Machopoulos. [The band led by these three men is frequently mentioned.] Local Greeks stole about £T1,500.

Village of Rehemli

Three Moslems killed by Greeks of Holo.

Village of Sarili

Five Moslems killed by Greeks of Pethor, and about 1,000 sheep and goats stolen.

Village of Dedeбал

Eight Moslems killed by Myriacos Mihail and his band; about £T1,000 stolen.

Village of Deranli

Three Moslems killed by Myriacos Mihail and his band; about £T3,000 stolen.

Village of Orphano

Three Moslems killed by the Greeks. One of these was seized by the priest Panahi on a telephonic order from the Greek bishop of Pravishta and killed at Essirli. The bishop had had the telephone removed from the Turkish governor's office to his own house, and by this means he gave orders to the whole district.

Village of Boblan

Eight Moslems killed by Myriacos Mihail and his band, specially sent for the purpose by the bishop; about £T800 stolen.

Village of Carpan

Four Moslems killed by the band of Myriacos Mihail sent by the bishop. The Greeks of Carpan stole all the goods and corn belonging to the local Moslems, and did not leave them even the grain which they had in their household jars. The Greek bravoos brutally robbed the women of their earrings. Later Greek soldiers joined the villagers and began to violate the young women, until they were obliged to take refuge in the towns and villages held by Bulgarian troops.

About £T500 was stolen in this village.

Village of Leftera

Four Moslems killed by Greeks. The wife of Arnaut Agouchagha, who voluntarily embraced Islam fifty years ago, was taken to Pravishta to be reconverted to Christianity. She told the Bulgarian chief, Baptchev, that she did not consent to this conversion. Baptchev had her released, but on her return to the village she was "odiously lynched by Greek savages".

Baptchev took £T500 from a Turk at the instigation of the Greek priests of the monastery of Nozlé, who also robbed the villagers of about 2,000 sheep.

Village of Kochkar

Two Moslems killed by Greeks of Drazeni and about £T1,000 stolen.

Village of Kale Tchiflik

Five Moslems killed, and all the cattle seized by the priests of Nozlé.

Village of Devekeran

Four Moslems killed by Greeks of Pravishtá; about £T500 stolen.

Village of Essirli

Nineteen Moslems killed in the ravine of Casroub by Greeks of that village. About £T1, 500 stolen.

Village of Kotchan

One Moslem killed to satisfy the vengeance of the bishop and of the priest Nicholas.

“It is worthy of remark that many Imams figure among the list of victims in the district of Pravishtá further that the victims are almost always men known for their enlightenment.

The reason why the assassins killed Imams and the most enlightened notables for choice is obvious when one reflects that there are .13,000 Moslems in this district out of a total population of 20,000.”
(Page 283)

Town of Pravishtá

Ten Moslems were killed, including one woman, while the town was held by Bulgarian bands, under the command of a chief named Bapchev, who established himself in the governor’s palace and acted as governor and commandant. They were killed by three Greeks (named) and the Bulgarians. On the evening when an assassination was to take place, the students of the Greek school assembled in the courtyard of the government house and sang the Greek national anthem.

The Greek bishop formed a municipal council composed of the priest Nicholas, the grocer Myriacos Mihail, and others (named). The sentence of death was passed by this council, approved by the archbishop, and communicated to Bapchev to be carried out. Similar councils were formed in the villages which took their orders from that of Pravishta. The Bulgarian, chief Bapchev served as the tool of the Greek bishop and notables. In this town the Moslem population has incurred a loss of about £T3,000, stolen by the Bulgarian bands, guided by the Greeks.

The daughter of the commander of the gendarmeries, Suleiman Effendi, who is now in Constantinople, was summoned one night to the bishopric to be converted to Christianity, The bishop threatened her, in order to convert her, but the Bulgarian chief Bapchev, when he heard of this, went to the bishopric, saved the girl, restored her to her family, and thus prevented her conversion. Some days later he gave her a passport to go to Constantinople.

Thanks to the orders issued by Bapchev the mosques of the town and the villages were preserved intact, and no one was molested on account of his religion.

Neither the Bulgarian officers, nor their soldiers nor even the members of the bands committed any violence against women, but Bapchev took money to the value of about £T6,000.

The priest Panahi of the village of Nikchan and the Greek antiquarian Apostol, of the village of Palihor, who disapproved of the unworthy conduct of the bishop, were killed by his orders. The Bulgarian authorities after a careful inquiry were convinced of the bishop's guilt. The bodies of the victims of the town of Pravishta are still in the ravine of Cainardja, at the place called Kavala Bachi.

We certify that this report is in complete agreement with the registers of the Moslem community of Pravishta and true in all its details.

[Seal.]

Moslem Community of the Caza of Pravishta, 1331.

If this were not so tragic, it would be comical;

According to Serbian statistics compiled in 1889 by Gopceвич, 57,600 Bulgarians, 201,140 Greeks, 2,048,320 Serbians and 0 Macedonians lived in Macedonia.

According to Bulgarian statistics compiled in 1900 by Kantched, 1,181,336 Bulgarians, 228,702 Greeks, 700 Serbians and 0 Macedonians lived in Macedonia.

According to Greek statistics compiled in 1904 by Deliani, 336,017 Bulgarians, 652,795 Greeks, no figure was given for Serbians and 0 Macedonians lived in Macedonia.

Where did they get such numbers?

One can only make such claims about Macedonia and get-away with it. Try and tell a Frenchman or an Englishman that 0 French live in France or 0 English live in England and see how far you get!

Leave it to the Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbians to make fools of themselves.

References:

George F. Kennan. "The Other Balkan Wars" A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 1993.

Greek Atrocities in Macedonia

Part 2 - Atrocities Committed in Kukush by the Greek Army

By Risto Stefov

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June, 2005

“When will the Greek State apologize to the Macedonian people for its 1912-1913 genocide in Northern Greece?”

“Ethnic cleansing” may be a modern term but its meaning is well understood by the Macedonian people living in northern Greece. Ever since Greece took possession of Macedonia, in the early 20th century, the Macedonian people have experienced ethnic cleansing first hand.

This series of articles will present evidence of atrocities perpetrated by the Greek State against the innocent Macedonian civilian populations prior to, during and after the Balkan wars. Most of the information contained in the articles is obtained from the 1913 Carnegie Inquiry and from Greek sources.

Before beginning with the atrocities committed by the Greek army against the Macedonian civilian populations in Kukush, I want to provide you with some background information on the overall situation in Macedonia in order to better understand what was happening.

For some thirty years prior to the 1912, 1913 Balkan wars, the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian States had established zones of influence inside Macedonia.

Initially, through their respective churches which operated freely inside Macedonia, they employed propaganda campaigns enforced by armed brigands, denationalizing the Macedonian population and swaying it, sometimes forcefully, into accepting Greek, Bulgarian, or Serbian national sentiments.

After the 1903 failed Ilinden Macedonian uprising, many Macedonians lost hope for self-liberation. Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, aware of this, began to exploit the situation. Again through

their churches, they started new propaganda campaigns, this time promising to liberate the Macedonian people.

While reporting Turkish atrocities in Macedonia to the outside world, mostly instigated by their own agents, the Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbians were raising false hopes inside Macedonia. On one hand, their agents were working hard to vilify the Turks and gain the sympathy of the Great Powers and at the same time they were feverishly promoting the idea of liberation for the “Christian brothers” while all along their aim was “occupation and annexation”.

Many leading Macedonians, including Krste Misirkov the author of “Macedonian Matters”, understood that there would be a price to pay if foreign powers were allowed to invade Macedonia. There were warnings that if Macedonia was invaded, there would be consequences for the Macedonian people. Unfortunately, in view of the overwhelming Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian propaganda cries for liberation, those few voices of protest were drowned out.

By the first Balkan war, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, through their respective church agents had established contacts inside Macedonia and had prepared the civilian population for liberation. Each State, village by village had strategically established who would support them and who would oppose them. Each State identified each village as “Greek friendly”, “Bulgarian friendly”, or “Serbian friendly” based on which sentiment the village majority supported. Villages with strong Macedonian sentiments were classified hostile. Villages with strong Greek sentiments were classified as “Greek Villages”, those with strong Bulgarian sentiments were classified as “Bulgarian Villages” and so on.

I must strongly emphasize at this point that prior to 1912-1913 there were no “Greeks”, no “Bulgarians” and no “Serbians” living in the Macedonian villages. Statistics produced by the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian States were based strictly on religious affiliation and not on national sentiments.

Because Macedonia at the time was not a State, it did not have its own church. As Christians, however, the Macedonians were entitled,

according to Ottoman law, to pray in their church of choice. The majority, being Orthodox, chose the Orthodox Church. Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, as Orthodox States with their own active churches, took advantage of this situation and each established its own churches inside Macedonia. (The Ottoman authorities prohibited any other type of organization within its territories).

As part of their regular service, each church introduced their own brand of denationalization policies. Each offered its service not in Macedonian but in its own language, Greek, Bulgarian, or Serbian. Even though their parishioners were Macedonian, the parish registered them not as Macedonians but as Greeks, Bulgarians, or Serbians depending on which church they attended. The parishes also changed the parishioners' Macedonian names to reflect their new Greek, Bulgarian or Serbian identities. For example if a certain Macedonian was a parishioner of the Greek Church, then he would be given a Greek name, registered as a Greek and statistically counted as Greek. If his brother, on the other side of the village, was a parishioner of the Bulgarian Church then he would be given a Bulgarian name, registered as a Bulgarian and statistically counted as a Bulgarian. If their sister in mid-village was a parishioner of the Serbian church then she would be given a Serbian name, registered as a Serbian and statistically counted as a Serbian.

Many Macedonians who left Macedonia for the west during that period still carry foreign family names given to them by the foreign church clergy.

In addition to prayer, the competing foreign churches also offered Macedonian children free education. That too unfortunately was offered, not in Macedonian, but in foreign languages, Greek, Bulgarian, or Serbian.

This is how the Macedonian population of late 19th and early 20th century was denationalized and declared extinct.

Foreign propaganda in Macedonia was so effective that when the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian armies marched into Macedonia they were welcomed as friends. Even the old guard from the 1903 rebellion joined in and fought side by side with them. But as soon as

the Turks were driven out, the Macedonian old guard and its leaders were arrested and jailed.

The second Balkan war was about the division of Macedonia. Neither Greece, Bulgaria, nor Serbia, after occupying Macedonia, was happy with what they had.

Since no division lines were agreed upon prior to Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia occupying Macedonia and treaties were broken as soon as they were made. The three States that entered Macedonia as allies quickly found themselves at odds with each other. Bulgaria who believed it fought the hardest to drive the Turks out, was not happy with its meager share. Greece who grabbed the most territory with the least effort was unwilling to share. So conflict was inevitable.

The second Balkan war was about grabbing territory and exacting revenge. As the armies clashed, there were winners and losers. The losers took revenge on the civilian population by looting, burning, killing and raping the Macedonian population.

“Deny that your enemies are men, and presently you will treat them as vermin”. (P 95)

“When you have to deal with barbarians, you must behave like a barbarian yourself”. (P 95, a quote from a Greek officer)

According to the Carnegie report, Greece was the first to instigate aggression by attacking Kukush on July 4, 1913. In retaliation Bulgaria attacked Demir-Hissar on July 7, Serres on July 11 and Doxato on July 13.

On July 12, according to the Carnegie report, King Constantine dispatched the following telegram to the representatives of Greece in the European capitals;

KING CONSTANTINE’S TELEGRAM

July 12, 1913.

The general commanding the Sixth Division informs me that Bulgarian soldiers under the command of a captain of gendarmes gathered in the yard of the school house at Demir-Hissar over one hundred notables of the town, the archbishop and two priests, and massacred them all. The headquarters staff ordered the exhumation of the bodies, with the result that the crime has been established. Further, Bulgarian soldiers violated young girls and massacred those who resisted them. Protest in my name to the representatives of the powers and to the whole civilized world against these abominations, and declare that to my great regret I shall find myself obliged to proceed to reprisals, in order to inspire their authors with a salutary fear, and to cause them to reflect before committing similar atrocities. The Bulgarians have surpassed all the horrors perpetrated by their barbarous hordes in the past, thus proving that they have not the right to be classed among civilized peoples.

(Signed) CONSTANTINE, King. (Page 300)

The accounts you are about to read are of those who either witnessed or themselves experienced the Greek atrocities at Kukush.

EVIDENCE OF FATHER JOSEPH RADANOV, of Kukush.

On July 2 he could distinctly see from Kukush that the surrounding villages were on fire, Salamanli among others. Fields of corn and stacks' of reaped corn had been set on fire even behind the Greek positions. The Greeks moreover had fired upon the reapers who had gone to work in the early morning in their fields. The refugees from the neighbouring villages began to arrive upon the heights called Kara-Bunar about a mile away, and were there bombarded by artillery.

Next day (July 3) the battle approached the town, but the Bulgarians retained their position. About midday the Greeks began to bombard Kukush, but when I left no house had taken fire. (Page 300)

FATHER JEAN CHIKITCHEV.

I took refuge after midday on July 3 with Father Michel and meant to stay with him. I saw the shells falling upon the sisters' orphanage.

I saw the hospital struck by a shell. There were at this time no Bulgarian troops in the town, although they were in their positions in front of it. The town was unfortified. The bombardment seemed to be systematic. It could not be explained as a mistake incidental to the finding of the range. Quite forty shells fell not far from the orphanage and three or possibly four houses were set on fire. At this point I left the town and fled with the refugees. Next night it looked as if the whole plain were burning.

NOTE.-Both the above witnesses were priests of the Catholic Uniate Church. (Page 300)

MR. C. [the name may not be published] a Catholic resident in the village of Todoraki near Kukush, states than on July 6 the Greek commandant of Kukush arrived accompanied by thirty infantrymen and eighty armed Turks. He was bound and left exposed to the full sun without food or water from 7 a.m. until 3 p.m. His house was pillaged, and 200 francs taken with all his personal property. On being released he learnt from the villagers that they had lost in all £T300 during the pillage. Two men were beaten and twelve were bound and sent down to prison in Salonica. The women were not maltreated. (Page 301)

PETER SHAPOV, of Zarovo near Langaza, a shepherd.

He was taking his sheep and goats on the road to Demir-Hissar when Greek cavalry overtook the refugees on the edge of the town and began to slash out with their sabres to left and right. They took 600 goats belonging to himself and his two brothers. One of his brothers was wounded by a cavalryman and died afterwards at the Bulgarian frontier. The Bulgarian army was quite half an hour's walk away. There were no Bulgarian troops near them. (Page 301)

MATE, Wife of Petro of Bogoroditsa, near Langaza.

I saw the Greek cavalrymen when they entered our village. I fled and in my haste was obliged to leave a baby of eighteen months behind in the village in order to flee with this one which I have with me, a child of three. I saw our village in flames. I want my child. (Page 301)

ELISAVA, Wife of Georghi of Zarovo, near Langaza.

We all fled when the shells began to fall in our village and got safely to Demir-Hissar. Then I heard people saying the Greek cavalry are coming. There was a panic; children fell on the ground and horsemen rode over them. I lost my children, save one whom I was able to carry. My husband had two others with him. I do not know what has become of him, and have not seen him since that day.
(Page 301)

MITO KOLEV, a boy of fourteen from the village of Gavaliantsi, near Kukush.

On Wednesday, July 2, after the fighting at Kukush, the peasants fled from our village except a few old people. I fled with the rest and reached Kilindir. On Thursday I went back three hours' walk to our village to collect our beasts and find my mother. I found her and was going along the road back to Kilindir with others. As we were leaving our village I saw a Greek cavalryman in uniform on horseback. He fired his rifle at me and missed. I threw myself on the road, pretending to be dead. He then shot my mother in the breast and I heard her say as she fell beside me, "Mito, are you alive?" and that was the last word she spoke. Another boy came up and ran away, when he saw what had happened. The soldier pursued him, shot him, and then killed him with his sword without dismounting. Then I saw a little cripple girl named Kata Gosheva, who was in front of us hiding in a ravine. The soldier went after her, but I do not know whether he killed her. He then came back, passed us and met other cavalrymen. A certain miller of the village named Kaliu, who could speak both Greek and Bulgarian, then came up and lifted me up. The miller had a Mauser rifle. He hid in the ravine when he saw that the two troopers were hurrying back and I hid in some hay. I heard the horses' hoofs going towards the miller. They talked, and I suppose he must have surrendered. He then came back to where I was and the miller said, "Mito, Mito, come out or the cavalry will kill you." So I came out. We both then went to the school house where we found other Greek troopers. I was quite sure they were Greeks because I recognized the uniform.

They used to come to our village sometimes before the war broke out. They questioned the miller in Greek and wrote something and gave it to him. The miller then said, "Let's go to the mill. It is about fifteen minutes from the village." We stayed there for an hour. In the meantime, three other Greek troopers came up from another direction. The miller went to meet them and showed them his piece of paper. The miller told me to gather straw, and he did the same. The troopers set fire to it so as to burn down the mill.

[In reply to a question, Mito explained that the mill was not the miller's personal property. It belonged to the village community, which employed him.]

The miller took away his mattress on his horse, which was at the mill. The troopers then left us and went to the village. We followed and the miller said to me, "We had better ask them for another bit of paper so that they will let us go to Salonica." Then some cartridges which had been left behind began to explode in the mill. This brought up other troopers at a gallop. They fired on us. The miller said something to them in Greek, showed them the paper and they chatted. I saw them looking at me. Then one of them drew his revolver and fired. The ball went through my clothes without wounding me. I fell down, pretending to be dead. He fired again and this time the ball went in at my back and came out at my breast. Then, still on horseback, he struck me on the shoulder with his sabre and the same blow wounded my finger.

[Mito lay down and showed exactly how it happened. He still had the scars of all these wounds. The position was perfectly possible.]

Blood was flowing from my mouth. I hid in the corn all the rest of the day and saw the village take fire in three places. The cavalry then gathered together and then rode off. I was in pain, but managed to walk away. I met two neighbors on my way and one of them took me in his cart to Doiran. There I met my father and had my wounds dressed in the military hospital. We fled through the mountains, and I was taken to the hospital in Sofia. (Pages 301 and 302)

VLADIMIR GEORGHIEV of Dragomirtsi, near Kukush.

I left the village when the war began and afterwards went back to find some of my property. I saw the Greek cavalry, perhaps a whole regiment of them. There were ten in our village with officers. I managed to hide in some reeds near the village. I saw Cavaliantsi burning. About 2 o'clock eight cavalrymen passed and burned the mill. They then went into the village to finish the burning. I also saw our own village Dragomirtsi burning, and heard two or three shots fired. Toward 6 o'clock I fled and on my way met Mito Kolev, who was wounded and could hardly walk. Mito said he could not ride, so it was no use to offer him my beast. I left him and went on. (Page 302)

CHRISTO ANDONOV, of Gavaliantsi.

He was beaten by the Greek soldiers. He saw the mother of Mito Kolev near the Greek cavalrymen and supposes she must have been killed. He did not see what happened very distinctly as he was at considerable distance. He saw the boy named Georghi Tassev killed with a sabre thrust by a trooper who was one of five. Some way off Kata Gosheva, the lame girl, was killed with a sword. This he saw quite distinctly. He was hidden in the ravine at the time.

NOTE.-These two witnesses were in a crowd of refugees at Samakov. In passing through the market place we inquired whether anyone present came from the village of Gavaliantsi. They stepped forward and told the above stories when asked to explain what happened to them after the battle of Kukush. (Page 302)

A Land of Sorrow

December 15th, 1915

Everything is in ashes and ruins, everything is devastated. Only the little white churches have been preserved, together with the small mills on the banks of streams: they can easily be seen from the hilltops.

Greek armies had marched here, devastating everything on their way. I do not know what was done in other parts of Macedonia by other peoples that conquered it one after the other: Turks,

Bulgarians, Serbs. Probably the same, but here, in the region of Kukush, it was done by the Greeks. You can pass from village to village without meeting a living soul, except for the shepherds and their herds. Perhaps it is a village there in the distance? No, it is all in vain! It is nothing but ruins. The miserable huts have been pulled down. Nothing can be seen but the blackened walls overgrown by weeds. Nothing. Nobody. Only occasionally a rabbit dashes across the field, swift as lightning in the wilderness; hardly a bird fluttering its wings as it starts its flight, and then everything is silent and motionless again, under the clear sun in the glimmering blue light of December. The water is so clear that the horses can hardly stop drinking from it. They drink thirstily from every small stream that we pass by. Fields that could be tilled stretch around us, but there are no furrows in sight. Those that used to till it have been either killed or banished. Macedonia could be the granary of the Balkans. This is the conclusion to be made after one-sees those numerous mills and rich little churches.

Lieutenant V. Lebedev, *En Macedoine avec l'armee Francaise. Impressions d'un officier Russe. Traduit du Russe par Paul Trogan* Le Correspondant, 88 anee, 10 Septembre 1916, Paris, 1916, p.p. 842-849.

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George F. Kennan. "The Other Balkan Wars" A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 1993.

Greek Atrocities in Macedonia

Part 3 - Atrocities Committed by the Greek Army in Akangeli

By Risto Stefov
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July, 2005

“When will the Greek State apologize to the Macedonian people for its 1912-1913 genocide in Northern Greece?”

Following the Balkan Wars, during the summer of 1913, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace set up a committee to investigate the situation in the Balkans in general and in Macedonia in particular. The results drawn from this investigation were printed in Washington DC in 1914 under the title Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Cause and the Conduct of the Balkan Wars.

“Ethnic cleansing” maybe a modern term but its meaning is well understood by the Macedonian people living in northern Greece. Ever since Greece occupied part of Macedonia, in the early 20th century, Macedonian people have experienced first hand ethnic cleansing.

This series of articles will present evidence of atrocities perpetrated by the Greek State against the innocent Macedonian civilian populations prior to, during and after the Balkan wars. Most of the information contained in the articles is obtained from the 1913 Carnegie Inquiry and from Greek sources.

MR. G., a Catholic inhabitant of Kukush, interviewed at Salonica, made the following statement:

“After fleeing from Kukush, I arrived at Akangeli with some thousands of refugees from all the surrounding villages. It is close to the station of Doiran. Between two and three p.m. on Sunday afternoon (July 6) the Greek cavalry arrived, possibly 300 of them, with officers. The inhabitants went out to meet them with white flags and the priest at their head. About 120 people of the village were told off to look after the cavalry horses. These people disappeared and no trace could be found of them next day. That

evening the women, both natives and refugees, were all violated, often repeatedly. The soldiers pillaged and killed, but would spare a man's life for five piastres or so. Probably fifty inhabitants of Akangeli were killed. I and another man were bound together by the cavalry. Six piastres and a watch were taken from me and my life was spared, but my companion was killed at my side. Women and girls were stripped and searched to find money. I saw many cases of violation myself. It was done more or less publicly, sometimes in the houses but sometimes in the fields and on the roads. I saw the village burnt and witnessed another case of the murder of a peasant."

In reply to questions he stated that he saw the corpses of the fifty inhabitants after they had been killed. Some were shot and some were bayoneted. Again in reply to a question he was certain there was no conflict in the neighborhood and no shots were fired, but the villagers were told to collect their rifles and surrender them. They did so and one went off accidentally in the hands of an officer who was breaking it. He was wounded, and the soldiers at once killed a boy who was standing near. Turks joined with Greeks in the pillage and so did the infantry, which arrived next day. (Page 303)

GEORGHI CHARISANOV, of Selo-Surlevo.

He took refuge in Akangeli. A squadron of Greek cavalry arrived on Sunday afternoon, gathered the refugees together and demanded arms, telling them not to fear. They then began to beat and rob. The Turks who followed them assisted in the pillage. On Monday, Greek infantry came and joined in sacking the village. Anyone who resisted was killed. There was a general panic and everyone fled who could. There were refugees from quite fifteen villages in the place. The soldiers violated women all the time, even little children. The soldiers went round from house to house on Sunday night and ordered the people to open the doors. They had a native of the village with them in order to give confidence to the people. Women were searched for money. About one hundred men were taken to look after the horses of the cavalry and these disappeared. On Monday the village was burned. We had given ourselves up quite voluntarily to the cavalry and welcomed them, and had surrendered

about one hundred rifles. There was no excuse for what the soldiers did. (Page 303)

MITO ILIEV, a butcher of Akangeli.

I was there when the Greek army arrived on Sunday afternoon towards four o'clock. Reckoning from St. Peter's day it must have been July 6. The village was filled with refugees from Kukush district, perhaps 4,000 altogether. The people went out to meet the cavalry by each of three roads. There were about 400 of them. We made a white flag and showed the Greek colors. Everything went quietly at first. The commandant asked for the mayor, and inquired in Turkish whether he would surrender and give up the arms of the village. We fetched our rifles (generally old Martinis) and piled them on a cart. The soldiers called for bread and cheese which were brought out. They then said, "Who is the butcher here, that he may kill sheep for us." I was chosen and troopers went with me to fetch and kill thirty sheep. Meanwhile the soldiers began to demand money from everybody. I saw a young man, a refugee from another village, whose name I do not know, killed with a sword because he had nothing. I was told that a boy of fifteen was killed about this time, but did not see it. The people were now gathered together in the square of the village and told to sit down. This I witnessed. The Greek command came and asked, "Where do all these people come from?" Then he separated the Akangeli from the rest to the number of about sixty and sent them to a wood called Chulak. Nothing more was ever heard of them. I went on cooking the sheep. Then the soldiers began to violate all the women. I heard cries going on all night, especially about 11 o'clock. The soldiers were not drunk, and they had officers with them. I stayed all night at my oven, and saw the two daughters-in-law of Stovan Popovali violated in front of me a few paces away by three soldiers. Next morning, when we talked together in the village, I heard of many other violations. On Monday the Greek infantry arrived, seized me and told me to lead them to Dourbali. I led them there, and as I went off Akangeli began to blaze. I heard cries and rifle shots on all hands. When I got to Dourbali I fled to Atli, half an hour away, and hid in the house of my partner Saduk, a Turk. I sent Saduk to see what had become of my wife and family. He came back and said that everyone was being killed in the village, that he had seen many corpses, that my house

was not burnt, but there were three dead bodies in front of it. Saduk advised me to flee, and I did so. The Turks in our own village (Akangeli) behaved well, but strangers from other Turkish villages came and joined in the pillage.

In reply to questions the witness stated that an officer was accidentally wounded in the arm while examining one of the revolvers which had been given up. This he saw personally, but denied that it explains the killing of the young man who was the first to be killed with a sword. That happened some distance away. (Page 303, 304)

STOYAN STOYEV, aged 18, of Akangeli.

This witness, at Dubnitsa, in reply to a question addressed to the group of refugees, whether any of those present came from this village or had passed through it in their flight, related in outline almost exactly the same story as the last witness, including the details about the conversation between the commandant and the mayor. The pillage he said, began while the arms were being gathered. A rifle went off accidentally, and an officer was wounded, while the Greek soldier was emptying it. This he saw from a distance of about forty meters. Then the cavalry drew their swords and some people were killed, certainly two youths. At this point he hid and saw little more. He heard from a friend of his, a youth who came running out of the house of Dine Popov, that his wife was being violated. He then fled to a Turkish village. (Page 304)

ANASTASIA PAVLOVA, a widow of Ghevgheli.

Shortly before the outbreak of the second [Balkan] war I was staying with my daughter, a school teacher, in the village of Boinitsa. A Greek lady came from Salonica and distributed money and uniforms to the Turks of the place some six or eight days before the outbreak of the second war. She also called the Bulgarians [Macedonian parishioners of the Exarchate Church] of the village together, and told them that they must not imagine that this village would belong to Bulgaria. She summoned the Bulgarian priest [Exarchate priest], and asked him if he would become a Greek. He replied "we are all Bulgarians [Macedonians belonging to the Exarchate Church] and

Bulgarians [Macedonians belonging to the Exarchate Church] we will remain.” There were some Greek officers with this lady who caught the priest by the beard. Then the men who were standing by, to the number of about fifty, had their hands bound behind their backs, and were beaten by the soldiers. They were told that they must sign a written statement that they would become Greeks. When they refused to do this they were all taken to Salonica. When the men were gone, the soldiers began to violate the women of the place, three soldiers usually to one girl. [She named several cases which she witnessed.] The soldiers came in due course to my house and asked where my daughter was. I said she was ill and had to gone to Ghevgheli. They insisted that I should bring her to them. The Greek teacher of the village, Christo Poparov, who was with the soldiers, was the most offensive of them all.

They threatened to kill me if I would not produce her. The soldiers then came into the room and beat me with the butts of their rifles and I fell. “Now,” they said, “you belong to the Greeks, your house and everything in it,” and they sacked the house. Then sixteen soldiers came and again called for my daughter, and since they could not find her they used me instead. I was imprisoned in my own house and never left alone. Four days before the war I was allowed to go to Ghevgheli by rail with two soldiers to fetch my daughter. She was really in the village of Djavato. At Ghevgheli, the soldiers gave me permission to go alone to the village to fetch her. Outside the village I met five Greek soldiers, who greeted me civilly and asked for the news. Suddenly they fired a rifle and called out, “Stop, old woman.” They then fired six shots to frighten me. I hurried on and got into the village just before the soldiers. They bound my hands, began to beat me, undressed me, and flung me down on the ground. Some Servian soldiers were in the village and interfered with the Greeks and saved my life. My daughter was hidden in the village and she saw what was happening to me and came running out to give herself up, in order to save her mother. She made a speech to the soldiers and said, “Brothers, when we have worked so long together as allies, why do you kill my mother?” The soldiers only answered, that they would kill her too. I then showed them the passport which had been given to me at Boinitsa. I can not read Greek and did not know what was on it. It seems that what was written there was “This is a mother who is to go and find her

daughter and bring her back to us.” The Greek soldiers then saw that it was my daughter, and not I, who was wanted and my daughter cried, “Now I am lost.” The soldiers offered me the choice of staying in the village or going with my daughter to Ghevgheli. I begged that they would leave us alone together where we were until the morning, and to this they agreed. In the night I fled with my daughter, who disguised herself in boy’s clothes, to a place two hours away which was occupied by Bulgarian soldiers. I then went myself to Ghevgheli and immediately afterwards, the second war broke out. The Bulgarians took the town and then retired from it, and the Greeks entered it. The moment they came in they began killing people indiscriminately in the street. One man named Anton Bakharji was killed before my eyes. I also saw a Greek woman named Helena kill a rich Bulgarian [Macedonian belonging to the Exarchate Church] named Hadji Tano, with her revolver. Another, whose name I do not know, was wounded by a soldier. A panic followed in the town and a general flight. Outside the town I met a number of Greek soldiers who had with them sixteen Bulgarian [Macedonian belonging to the Exarchate Church] girls as their prisoners. All of them were crying, several of them were undressed, and some were covered in blood. The soldiers were so much occupied with these girls that they did not interfere with us, and allowed us to flee past them. As we crossed the bridge over the Vardar, we saw little children who had been abandoned and one girl lying as if dead on the ground. The cavalry were coming up behind us. There was no time to help. A long way off a battle was going on and we could hear the cannon, but nobody fired upon us. For eight days we fled to Bulgaria and many died on the way. The Bulgarian soldiers gave us bread. I found my daughter at Samakov. My one consolation is that I saved her honor. (Page 304, 305)

ATHANAS IVANOV, of Kirtchevo, near Demir-Hissar.

Our village is purely Bulgarian [Macedonian belonging to the Exarchate Church] and consists of 190 houses. I am a shepherd and look after the sheep of the village. When the Greek army approached, most of the other villagers fled, but I was late in going and remained behind to see that my family had all got safely away. On July 16, while my wife was gathering her belongings, the Greek soldiers arrived. Some of them told a young woman, a relative of

ours, who was in front of the house, to go and find bread for them. Her husband had already been seized. I went to look for her. I found a sentinel with a fixed bayonet in front of her house. I rushed past him, and found that she had just been violated by a soldier, while another stood over her with his bayonet, and then the second soldier also violated her. She had had a baby [given birth] only three days before. I then met Peniu Penev, who said to me, "You can speak Greek. All our wives are being violated; come and talk to the soldiers." I entered the courtyard of a house and saw three women on the ground who were being violated. One was wounded in the leg and another in the arm. [We took the names, but see no object in publishing them.] This was about three p.m. Many other women were there, crying. I then went out in fear, and when I had gone some distance, saw that the village was burning. I met a woman trying to put out the fire with water. The soldiers came up and violated her. I saw six soldiers trying to violate a young girl. Another soldier protested, but they threatened him with their bayonets. A sergeant then told this man to stop interfering and ordered him to arrest me and take me to the officers, who were at a place some half an hour's distance from the village. [In reply to questions, the witness stated that two cavalry officers were in the village, but were not in the courtyard, where most of the violations were going on. There were, however, non-commissioned officers among the infantry in the village.] When I got to the camp and was brought before the officers, the officers said, "Take him away and fling him into the flames." On my way back to the village, I met nine other villagers and saw them all killed with the bayonet. Their names were Ivan Michailov, Angel Dourov, Pavlo Zivantikov, Ilio Piliouv, Peniu Penev, Peniu Christev, Athanas Belcov, Thodor Kandjilov, Gafio Demetrev. I escaped at the moment by saying I was a Greek, when the soldiers asked, "What kind of creatures are these?" I can speak a little Greek. At dusk I managed to run away. They fired but missed me. I know nothing of what happened to my wife, but my children are saved. (Pages 305, 306)

A WOMAN FROM IJILAR, near Kukush, seen, at Salonica. Name suppressed.

Everything in our village was plundered and burnt including the school and the church. All this was done by Greek soldiers of the

regular army. The inhabitants mostly disappeared. Soldiers kept sending for peasants to supply them with sheep. Four would go and never return, and so on at short intervals until hardly anyone was left. "What am I to do now? I have nothing left but the clothes I wear." (Page 306)

ANTON MICHAILOV AND DEMETRI GHEORGHIEV, of German, near Demir-Hissar.

On July 5 (Saturday), we went to the market at Demir-Hissar. A panic presently took place. Everybody said that the Greek cavalry was coming. We went up to a height from which the plain was visible. We could see no cavalry but a lot of refugees coming from the other direction, from Barakli Djumaia. The Greeks of German, when the town was cleared, began to pillage the Bulgarian [Macedonian belonging to the Exarchate Church] shops. They [Greeks] armed themselves and distributed arms to the Turks. We found the corpses of two Bulgarian soldiers in the garden of Doctor Christoteles. The refugees whom we met from the country all said that the Greeks were everywhere killing and burning; so we returned to our village which was still intact, gathered our things together and fled.

Some of the villagers, however, remained in German. Some days after we had left, Greeks and Turks arrived together and began to pillage, burn and kill. We believe that 180 men, women and children were killed. German had 100 houses, and about half the population remained. We heard of the fate of the others from a young man named Demetri Gheorghiev [not to be confused with our witness of the same name], who told us that the people were gathered together by the Greeks and Turks, the men in the church and the women in the house of Papa Georghi. Some of the men tried to escape from the church, but were all shot at once. This was a signal for the massacre. The men were first searched and robbed, and then killed. Young Demetri jumped from the window of the church and had the good sense to lie down as if he were dead when he was shot at. He told us that some insurgents (andartes) had arrived from Athens and organized everything. There is only one other survivor of the massacre, namely, Papa Georghi.

NOTE. We made a uniform rule of refusing to allow witnesses to give us any information at second hand, but in this instance since the alleged massacre had been so complete the circumstances seemed exceptional. (Page 306)

ANTON SOTIROV, a Priest from the Village of Kalendra near Serres, stated that Greek regulars and Turks came and burnt the Bulgarian [Macedonian belonging to the Exarchate Church] houses at their village and killed an old man, the only one of the inhabitants who remained behind. This he saw from some little distance. (Page 307)

GEORGHI DIMITRIEV, of Drenovo near Serres, stated that his village was burnt by Greek infantry on a Tuesday about noon. He saw an old women named Helena Temelkova, aged about 80, shot and then beheaded by a Greek soldier. He was hidden behind some stones on rising ground and shortly afterward managed to flee. He saw the village burnt by the Greeks. (Page 307)

MR. V. Seen at Salonica. Name suppressed. Was made prisoner by the Greeks at Pancherovo. He speaks Greek well and pretended to be a Greek and was released. He saw three men of the village killed, apparently for motives of robbery. Their names were Angel Michail, Athanas Bateto, and the latter's son. Athanas had £T21. The peasants of this village had gone out to meet the troops with a white flag. This occurred on July 23. Eleven prisoners, who were taken at the same time as himself, were all killed on the hillside in the Kresna pass. These were armed men. (Page 307)

NICOLA TEMELKOV, of Melnik, formerly a teacher, now a merchant.

Between July 11 and July 16, last, all the Bulgarian [Macedonian belonging to the Exarchate Church] inhabitants of the Melnik district fled to Old Bulgaria, and he went with them, but had recently visited Melnik. In the village of Sklava, as he passed through it, all the women were gathered by the Greek soldiers in the house of Mito Constantinov, and the women were distributed among thirty soldiers. One girl of eighteen named Matsa Anton Mancheva resisted stoutly and offered money to the amount of £T60. The

Greeks took her money and still attempted to violate her. She resisted and was killed. Melnik has not been burnt, with the exception of the officers' club, the hotel and the post office. The Greek [Macedonian belonging to the Patriarchate Church] houses are empty and the furniture gone. His father and mother remained in the town and told him their story. The Greeks said to them, "We do not wish to have bears living in our country. We want men." By "bears" they meant the Bulgarians. The officers took everything belonging to the witness on the pretense that he had fled. They demanded produce belonging to his father to the amount of 18 napoleons. They then took him out to his farm at Orman-Tchiflik and threatened him with death. He paid £T180 for his life and was taken back to Melnik. All this was done by officers. They took quantities of wheat, rice and barley from his father's farm and also the buffaloes. The order was given that everything and everybody must be cleared out of Melnik and go to Demir-Hissar, and the government put both automobiles and wagons at the disposal of the Greek inhabitants for this journey. Those who were unwilling to go were beaten. This his father related to him. His father, an old man, has since died from exhaustion and mental worry.

References:

George F. Kennan. "The Other Balkan Wars" A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 1993.

Greek Atrocities in Macedonia

Part 4 - Extracts from Letters of Greek Soldiers

By Risto Stefov

rstefov@hotmail.com

August, 2005

“When will the Greek State apologize to the Macedonian people for its 1912-1913 genocide in Northern Greece?”

“Ethnic cleansing” maybe a modern term but its meaning is well understood by the Macedonian people living in northern Greece. Ever since Greece occupied part of Macedonia, in the early 20th century, Macedonian people have experienced first hand ethnic cleansing.

This series of articles will present evidence of atrocities perpetrated by the Greek State against the innocent Macedonian civilian populations prior to, during and after the Balkan wars. Most of the information contained in the articles is obtained from the 1913 Carnegie Inquiry and from Greek sources.

NOTE: In the letters that follow, many of the soldiers wrote about “Bulgarians” in Macedonia. I just want to remind the reader that there were no civilian Bulgarians (outside of Bulgarian government officials) living in Macedonia in 1913. The Bulgarian civilians the soldiers referred to were Macedonians who were either parishioners of the exarchate Church or who did not speak Greek. Anyone who could not speak Greek or Turkish was assumed to be Bulgarian.

The following are EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF GREEK SOLDIERS found in the mail of the nineteenth regiment of the Greek seventh division, captured by the Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church] in the region of Razlog.

Letter 1

RHODOPE, 11th July, 1913.

This war has been very painful. We have burnt all the villages abandoned by the Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the

Exarchate Church]. They burn the Greek villages [Macedonian villages associated with the Patriarchate Church] and we the Bulgarian [Macedonian villages associated with the Exarchate Church]. They massacre, we massacre 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.

I embrace you tenderly, also
your brother and your wife,
SPILIOTOPOULOS PHILIPPOS.

Letter 2

Mr. Panaghi Leventi,

Doctor

Aliverion Euboea.

I also enclose herewith, the letter of congratulation from my commandant, Mr. Contoghiri in which he praises my squadron, which on the occasion of the short stay of a few days of our division, received the order at five o'clock, to march to the north of Serres. During the march, we engaged in a fight with the Bulgarian comitadjis [Macedonian revolutionaries] whom we dispersed, after having killed the greater part. We burnt the two villages of Doulia and Banitza [Banitsa], the homes of the formidable comitadjis, and passed everything through the fire, sparing only the women, the children, the old people, and the churches. All this was done without pity or mercy, executed with a cruel heart, and with a condemnation still more cruel.

Merocostenitza, 12th July, 1913.

The outposts of the Army.

Love to you and also the others.

(signature unreadable)

Sergeant.

Letter 3

Mr. Sotir Panaionnou,
in the village of Vitziano, parish Ithiou
Tricala de Thessalie.
River Nesto, 12th July, 1913.

Here at Vrondu (Brodi) I took five Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church] and a girl from Serres. We shut them up in a prison and kept them there. The girl was killed and the Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church] also suffered. We picked out their eyes while they were still alive.

Yours affectionately:
COSTI.

Letter 4

Bulgarian Frontier, 11th July, 1913.

DEAR BROTHER JOANI:

Here is where the archicomitadjis [Macedonian revolutionaries] live. We have massacred them all. And the places we have passed will remain in my memory forever.

SER. CLETANIS.

Letter 5

RHODOPE, Bulgarian Frontier,
11th July, 1913.
BROTHER MITZO:

And from Serres to the frontier, we have burnt all the Bulgarian villages [Macedonian villages associated with the Exarchate Church].

My address remains the same: 7th Division, 19th Regt.; 12 Battalion at Rhodope.

JOAN CHRISTO TSIGARIDIS.

Letter 6

NESTOS, 13th July, 1913.
Village Banista [Banitsa],

If you want to know about the parts where we are marching, all are Bulgarian villages [Macedonian villages associated with the Exarchate Church], and everyone has fled. Those who remain are “eaten” by the Mannlicher rifle and we have also burnt a few villages. The Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church] suffered the same fate at the hands of the Servians [Serbians].

S. NAKIS.

Letter 7

In the desert, 12th July, 1913.

...in Bulgarian territory, we are beating the Bulgarians who are continually retreating, and we are on the point of going to Sofia. We enraged them by burning the villages, and now and again when we found one or two, we killed them like sparrows.

Your brother GEORGE (name unreadable)
I am writing you in haste.

Letter 8

Zissis Coutoumas to Nicolas Coutoumas.

With the present I give you some news about the war that we have made against the Bulgarians. We have beaten them and have reached the Turkish-Bulgarian frontier. They fled into Bulgaria and we massacred those who remained. Further, we have burnt the villages. Not a single Bulgarian [Macedonian associated with the Exarchate Church] has been left. God only knows what will come of it. I have nothing more to write you. I remain, your Son Zissis

Coutoumas. Many compliments from Thimios. He is well as also the other young men here.

12th July, 1913.

Letter 9

M. Zaharia Kalivanis,
Erfos-Milipotamos,
ethimo, Crete.
RHODOPE, 13th July, 1913.

Seal of the Commandant of Public Safety, Salonica

We burn all the Bulgarian villages [Macedonian villages associated with the Exarchate Church] that we occupy, and kill all the Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church] that fall into our hands. We have taken Nevrocop and were well received by the Turks, many of whom came to our ranks to fight against the Bulgarians. Our army is in touch with the Servian [Serbian] and Roumanian [Romanian] armies, who are 32 kilometers from Sofia. With regard to ourselves we are near the ancient frontier.

S. Z. KALIYANIS.

Letter 10

July 15th, 1913.
MY BROTHER SOTIR:

Thanks to God, I am well at the moment of writing you. We are at present on the Bulgarian- Thracian frontier. As far as the war is concerned, I can not tell you anything about the situation and what takes place. The things that happen are such that have never occurred since the days of Jesus Christ. The Greek army sets fire to all the villages where there are Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church] and massacres all it meets. It is impossible to describe what happens. God knows where this will end. The time of...has come for us to start eating one another.

Love from your brother
PANAGHIS BEGLIKIS.
I am writing you in haste.

Letter 11

Bulgarian Frontier, 12/VII/1913.

Everywhere we pass, not even the cats escape. We have burnt all the Bulgarian villages [Macedonian villages associated with the Exarchate Church] that we have traversed. I can not describe it to you any better.

Your loving brother
GEORGES (corporal).
My address is as follows:
To Corporal Sterghiou George,
12th Squadron, 3rd Battalion, 19th Regt.
7th Division-if away, send on.

Letter 12

RHODOPE, 13th July, 1913.
My DEAR LEONIDAS:

Keep well, as I am. That is what I wish you. I received your letter, which gave me great pleasure. I also received one from Aristides, who is well, and writes that he has also been enrolled, which pains me, because my sufferings are such that could not be consoled by tears, because everything is lost, because you can not imagine what takes place in a war. Villages are burnt, and also men, and we ourselves set fire and do worse than the Bulgarians.

Your affectionate brother,
THOMAS ZAPANTIOTIS.

Letter 13

Mr. Demetrios Chr. Tsigarida
For the Greek Army, at Mexiata as souvenir of the Hypati-Phtiotis.

Turco-Bulgarian war. COPRIVA (?),
11th July, 1913.
Seal of the Commandant of the 19th Regt.

I was given 16 prisoners to take to the division and I only arrived with 2. The others were killed in the darkness, massacred by me.

NICO THEOPHILATOS.

Letter 14

IN BULGARIA, 13th July, 1913.

What a cruel war is taking place with the Bulgarians. We have burnt everything belonging to them, villages and men. That is to say we massacre the Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church]. How cruel! The country is inundated with Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church]. If you ask how many young Greeks have perished, the number exceeds 10,000 men.

Your Son, TSANTILAS NICOLAOS.

P.S. Write me about the enrolments that are taking place. They are surely on the point of enlisting old men. Curses on Venizelos.

Letter 15

To Georgi D. Karka (Soldier)
First Section of the Sanitary Corps, 9th Division.
Arghirocastro, Epirus.
The River Nestor,
12th July, 1913.

DEAR BROTHER GEORGI:

Thank God I am quite well after coming through these five engagements. Let me tell you that our division has reached the river Nestor, that is to say, the old Bulgarian Frontier, and the Royal

Army has passed this frontier. By the King's orders we are setting fire to all the Bulgarian villages [Macedonian villages associated with the Exarchate Church], because the Bulgarians burned the beautiful town Serres, also Nigrita and a lot of Greek villages [Macedonian villages associated with the Patriarchate Church]. We have turned out much crueller than the Bulgars-we violated every girl we met. Our division took 18 pieces of artillery in good condition and two worn out pieces, altogether 20 cannon and 4 machine guns. It is impossible to describe how the Bulgars went to pieces and ran away. We are all well, except that K. Kalourioti was wounded at Nigrita and Evang the Macedonian got a bayonet wound while on outpost duty, but both are slight cases. Remember me to our countrymen and friends, although after coming through so much, thank God I am not afraid of the Bulgars. I have taken what I had a right to after all they did to us at Panghaion.

My greeting to you,
N. ZERVAS.
(Some illegible words follow.)

Letter 16

M. Aristidi Thanassia, Kamniati.
Commune of Athanamow; Trikala, Thessaly.
14 July, 1913.

DEAR COUSIN:

I have received your letter of the 1st and I am very glad that you are well, as, after all, so are we up to now. Let me tell you, Aristidi, all we are going through during this Bulgarian War. Night and day we press on right into Bulgarian territory and at any moment we 'engage in a fight; but the man who gets through will be a hero for his country. My dear cousin, here we are burning villages and killing Bulgarians, women and children [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church]. Let me tell you, too, that cousin G. Kiritzis has a slight wound in his foot and that all the rest of us, friends and relations are very well including our son-in-law Yani. Give my greeting to your father and mother and your whole household, as well as my cousin Olga.

That is all I have to say,
With a hearty hug.
Your brother,
ANASTASE ATH. PATROS.

Letter 17

M. George P. Soumbli,
Megali Anastassova,
Alagonia, Calamas.
Rhodope, 12th July, 1913.

DEAR PARENTS:

We got to Nevrokop, where again we were expected, for again we fought the entire day, and we chased them (the enemy) to a place where we set on them with our bayonets and took eighteen cannon and six machine guns. They managed to get away and we were not able to take prisoners. We only took a few, whom we killed, for those are our orders. Wherever there was a Bulgarian [Macedonian villages associated with the Exarchate Church] village, we set fire to it and burned it, so that this dirty race of Bulgars couldn't spring up again. Now we 'are at the Bulgarian frontier, and if they don't mend their manners, we shall go to Sofia.

With an embrace,
Your son,
PERICLI SOUMBLIS
7th Division, 19th Regiment, 12th Company, Salonica.

Letter 18

M. Christopher Kranea,
Rue Aristotle et de l'Epire 48.
Athens.
Rhodope, 14th July, 1913.

DEAR BROTHER CHRISTOPHER:

I am writing from Rhodope, a Bulgarian position, two hours away from the old Bulgarian frontier. If God spares me I shall write again. I don't know how much further we shall go into Bulgarian territory or if we are to have any more fights, as I don't know what further resistance we shall have to meet. If this war is to be the end of me, I pray the Almighty to comfort you greatly; and above all my mother and the relatives; but I hope that God will preserve my life. The money you speak of has not come yet. I have sent a few "bear-leaders" into a better world. A few days back my god-father Vassil Christon, tried his hand at shooting eight comitadjis [Macedonian revolutionaries]. We had taken fifty whom we shared among us. For my share I had six of them and I did polish them off. That is all I have to say.

Greeting from your brother,
DIM. KRANEAS.

Letter 19

M. Georges N. Yrikaki,
Vari-Petro, Cydonia,
Canea, Crete.
Macedonia, July 12, 1913.

DEAR GEORGE:

After that we went forward and occupied the bridge over the Strouma. A lot of Bulgars [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church] were hidden in different spots. After we had occupied the bridge we found numbers of them every day, and killed them. The Bulgars have burned the bridge to stop our advance towards Serres.

With greetings,
F. VALANTINAKI.
This is my address-
STILIAN VALANTINO,
19th Regiment, 3rd Battalion, 9th Company, 7th Division. Macedonia.

Letter 20

To A. M. Nicolas Hartaloupa,
Ksilokastro, Tricala, Corinth.
Rhodopian Mountains, 18/7/1913.

DEAR BROTHER NICOLAS:

I am very well and I hope you are as well as I am. We have turned up close to the Bulgarian frontier. We are constantly pressing on and putting the enemy to flight...

When we pass Bulgarian villages [Macedonian villages associated with the Exarchate Church] we set fire to them all and lay them to waste.

With an embrace, Your brother,
A. V. THODOPOULOS. (Same address.)

Letter 21

To Mme. Angheliki K. Lihouidi,
Manastiraki, Acarnania,
Ksiromera-Vonitza.
Rhodope, July 13, 1913.

DEAR MOTHER:

I send you my greetings. I am in good health. We have to-such is the order -burn the villages, massacre the young, only sparing the aged and children. But we are hungry.

With greeting,
Your son, JEAN LIHOUIDIS.

Letter 22

To M. Christo Tchiopra,
Petriilo, Arghitea,
Karditza, Thessaly.
The River Nestor,
July 13, 1913.

DEAR KINSFOLK:

My greeting to you. I am well and hope you are in good health. This is something like real war, not like that with the Turks. We fight day and night and we have burned all the villages.

With greetings,
KAMBAS NICOLAOS.

Letter 23

Independent Cretan Regiment,
12th Company,
To Corporal Em. N. Loghiadi. Leaskoviki, Epirus.
Dobrisnitza, 12th July, 1913.

Today I am answering your letters of the 22nd of May and the 21st of June. We have had a little engagement near the Strouma with the refugees from Koukouch [Kukush] and Lahna [Lagadina]. The guns mowed them down on the road. We did not succeed in occupying the bridge, which they burned in their retreat toward Serres. This letter is being sent from Mehomia.

Greeting from,
E. N. LOGHIADIS.

Letter 24

To M. Dimitri Koskinaki,
Skardelo, Milopotamo,
Retimo, Crete.
Nevrokop, July 12, 1913.

DEAR COUSIN:

I am well and I hope you are, too. We burned all the Bulgarian villages [Macedonian villages associated with the Exarchate Church] on our route and we have almost reached the old frontiers of Bulgaria.

With an embrace,
Your cousin, S. KALIGHEPSIS.

Letter 25

11 July, 1913.

I have not time to write much; you will probably find these things in the papers. It is impossible to describe how the Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church] are being treated. Even the villagers - it is butchery - not a town or village may hope to escape being burned.

I am well and so is cousin S. Kolovelonis.
With a loving embrace,
Your brother, N. BRINIA.

Letter 26

The Bulgarian Frontier,
11th July, 1913.

DEAR BROTHER ANASTASE:

I hope you are well. Don't worry, I am all right. We have had a lot of engagements, but God has spared my life. We had a fight at Nevrokop and took 22 cannon and a lot of booty. They can't stand up to us anywhere, they are running everywhere. We massacre all the Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church] that fall into our clutches and burn the villages. Our hardships are beyond words.

Your brother, NICOLAS ANGHELIS.
I embrace you and kiss my father's hand.

Letter 27

Dobrountzi,
13th July. 1913.

DEAR BROTHER:

All the villages here are Bulgarian [Macedonian villages associated with the Exarchate Church], and the inhabitants have taken to flight as they did not wish to surrender. We set fire to all the villages and smash them up,-an inhuman business; and I must tell you, brother, that we shoot all the Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church] we take, and there are a good number of them.

With an embrace,
Your brother,
Al. D----GEAS. (Illegible.)

Letter 28

Banitza [Banitsa], 11th July, 1913.

My DEAR LEONIDAS:

I can't find paper to write to you, for all the villages here are burnt and all the inhabitants have run away. We burn all their villages, and now we don't meet a living soul. I must tell you that we are close upon the old frontiers of Bulgaria. We have occupied the whole of Macedonia except Thrace.

I want an immediate answer.

This is my address,
CORPORAL GEORGE KORKOTZI,
19th Regiment, 3rd Battalion, 11th Company, 7th Division-wherever
we may be.

References:

George F. Kennan. "The Other Balkan Wars" A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 1993. p.p. 307-314.

Greek Atrocities in Macedonia

Part 5 - The Kukush Situation, a Rare Document

Original by Manol Pandevski [1]

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September, 2005

“When will the Greek State apologize to the Macedonian people for its 1912-1913 genocide in Northern Greece?”

“Ethnic cleansing” maybe a modern term but its meaning is well understood by the Macedonian people living in northern Greece. Ever since Greece occupied part of Macedonia, in the early 20th century, the Macedonian people have experienced first hand ethnic cleansing.

This series of articles will present evidence of atrocities perpetrated by the Greek State against the innocent Macedonian civilian populations prior to, during and after the Balkan wars. Most of the information contained in the articles is obtained from the 1913 Carnegie Inquiry and from Greek sources.

The following account [2] was given by a young Russian officer who visited the wider region of Kukush. Not much is know about Lieutenant V. Lebedev, except that he was a liaison officer in the French army at the Solun front line, or, more precisely, the Macedonian front line. Little is known about him because it is practically impossible to identify this young man solely on the basis of a common Russian surname. As a matter of fact it is irrelevant, just as is the fact that he used several different names to describe “Macedonians”. But it should be noted that the people whom he contacted all called themselves Macedonians.

It is important to note that this description comes to us from a witness with a keen sense of observation and a richness of expression. In addition, as he himself pointed out, he understood the people very well and therefore he gave us their stories as a supplement to what he saw and described himself. His truthfulness is also obvious, intertwined with his human compassion for the suffering of the Macedonians, victims of the two Balkan chauvinist

passions of the basest kind, so typical of the times. He was an unprejudiced observer.

His testimony is a rare and highly appreciated source of information, and at the same time of indisputable historical authenticity. His accounts are a historical document of the consequences of the two Balkan wars in Macedonia in general and the suffering of the Macedonian people in particular. It is of special importance for Greek occupied Macedonia, since the dramatic events that took place in the region of Kukush are of a similar nature to those that took place in the southern regions of Macedonia by June 1913, and which were occupied by the Bulgarian army.

It is a rare testimony, since inhabitants of Kukush, after those two terrible days in June 1913 when the place was burned down, already fleeing across the front line, could neither see nor describe the ruins and desolation which followed the withdrawal of the Bulgarian and the oncoming of the Greek army. Later, they could tell only of the life in the older days. By December 1915, when our traveler walked this region, the Solun front line was already established near Kukush, passing through this region of Macedonia along the then Serbian and Greek international border.

It is also authentic because it depicts a situation almost unchanged since June 1913. It came only two years later after the catastrophe which befell this region, whose ethnic characteristics were never to be the same again. There is something more essential: it is the fact that there only the land ruled, fertile and beautiful but devastated and un-peopled. It was the result of the newly risen, medieval in nature, efforts of conquest.

Greek colonists would populate these parts more systematically some ten years later and this was to gradually bring new life to the barren land. This is why this sight which he saw, and described so vividly had such a terrifying effect on Lebedev's mind. Devastated land, land without people before the very gates of Solun can be seen even in these days; a sight which evokes the same shuddering feeling in every unbiased passer-by, who does not necessarily have to be Macedonian. All this was a direct result of the two Balkan

wars, which, at least for Kukush, were dynastic wars of conquest, and which could be very adequately called wars of extermination.

There is one sentence which draws our attention in particular. In it, Kukush is described as “a nest of komiti” (insurgents). Lebedov obviously took it from another source. Written by whom? The context and the manner in which it was written suggest that it must have been a Greek source. Speaking more precisely it must have been just such a place for the Greek chauvinists. From their point of view, their plans and interests, it was normal procedure to describe it as such. It was necessary to blacken the victim morally prior to his conquest and destruction in order to justify the deed both in the eyes of their own nation and in the eyes of others: the victim was to be labeled in a pejorative manner. This has been done by conquerors and rulers all over the world, both before and since the Balkan wars. The Greek chauvinists used frequently this pejorative expression to describe Macedonian partisan villages in the last war, up to 1944, pretending to have forgotten that modern Greece was the child of the Greek anti-Turkish revolution.

Times change, and so do rulers. And still, Kukush was not “a nest of komiti”, but a Macedonian revolutionary nest, and one of many at that. It had played an important role in the Macedonian Enlightenment movement since the time of Dimitar Miladinov. During the 1903 Ilinden Uprising it gave more than 200 volunteer upraises. It is also the birthplace of Gotce Delchev, and out of four Macedonians delegated to the Ottoman Parliament, two were from this region, Dimitar Vlahov and Hristo Delchev.

Kukush had a well-organized and developed educational system, a reading room with a rich library, dozens of young people with university degrees: professors, doctors, engineers, economists and lawyers. They had all been educated in Europe, Russia, Tsari Grad (Constantinople) and Bulgaria. It held a very important place in the social life and history of the Macedonian people. But all of this held true only up to the ill-fated days of June 20th and 21st, 1913.

The following selection of excerpts have been taken from the publication “En Macedoine avec l’armée française. Impressions d’un officier Russe”, preserved in a Paris library.

“My guide is pleased that he can speak Russian with me and that I understand Macedonian. Here we are already at the site where everything was burned down. ..It is impossible to locate a single village which has not been burned. All the villages were burned down. In this region it was the Greeks who set fire to them, because the population was Slavonic. The Bulgarians (Bulgarian army-M.P.) did the same to the villages which were populated by the Greeks [Macedonians associated with the Greek Patriarch Church]. Sometimes it was the Serbs, in other places, the Turks. ..(the three full-stops by Lebedev -M.P .) Macedonians suffered plundering and destruction everywhere. The fields turned into uncultivated land; ruins are overgrown with weeds; there is no life.

Is this a war of liberation? -sigh the people, while everything is burned down and plundered, the whole population banished, fled or ostracized. We were better off during the Turkish rule.

The hamlet had no more than 30 to 40 houses: Yes, they must have adhered passionately to their religion, since they had built such temples during the Turkish rule. But today the liberators came. They banished the people and burned the villages. The churches are almost ruined, even the stork left the steeple. And still, the church has not been deserted. Small coins are glued to the wax around the altar and there is always oil in the icon lamp.

A shepherd comes to us from nearby pasture.

-We have no priest - he said. The priest fled together with the peasants in 1913, but the church is always a church. Here we come, bring icon lamps and pray to God.

-But who are you?

-We are Macedonians, Greek Macedonians. And the land is Turkish.

-What do you mean?

-It belongs to the Turkish beg who left before the War. He is in Istanbul, but he does his best to collect payment for everything, even for the grass. He charges us dearly.

-And when the village was still here, whose was the land?

-It has always been his.

-But tell me, my dear friend, who was it that burned the village?

-It was the Greeks. They burned it. It is very bad, they burned the village, the villagers were driven out, it's very bad.

I entered the church graveyard. Small marble crosses mark the graves. "Here lies..." "Here lies Mihail Tanchov". On every cross the inscription begins with these words, and I came upon this phrase in every church graveyard I visited from the Vardar to the Galik.

The big town of Kukush is in ruins. The white monastery of St. George, the patron saint of Macedonia rises from the hill which dominates the town. This monastery is a real jewel, a real miracle of Macedonian artistry. During holidays and family feasts for patron saints people came to pray from everywhere: Bulgarians, Greeks, even Turks. In older days, during Turkish rule, it did not bother anyone. But today, things are changed.

Kukuch was a rich town, populated by 8,000 Bulgarians [Macedonians associated with the Exarchate Church] and 20,000 Turks. The Bulgarians won and conquered it (The Bulgarian army after the First Balkan War -M.P) When they came near the town the Turks fled for Turkey. The Bulgarians took their land. They held Kukush for 8 months under occupation and then the fratricidal war, i.e. the Second Balkan War began. After the battle for Kukush all the population fled and went to Bulgaria following the Bulgarian army. The new conquerors, the Greeks, burned down this "nest of komiti". Few houses were spared: the mosque and the empty Turkish barracks, miserable blue and yellow.

The Macedonians believe that justice will be done, that it will triumph over injustice, but I truly doubt that this wish of theirs will

come true. Macedonia will continue to be for a long period of time a land of sorrow and death.

In all the villages and populated places in which there are still traces of preserved life, there is the same sight to be seen. Refugees, always and everywhere. Refugees among whom the most desperate are the Gypsies, who had always led the life of tramps, and who now have come here to settle themselves among the ruins. The desolate villages are being populated with refugees who would do anything, either for the Greek merchant in Solun or Athens, or for the Turkish beg now living in Istanbul.

Notes:

1. Macedonian Almanac (Makedonski Iselenichki Almanah), 1990, p.p. 72-76

2. Lieutenant V. Lebedev, En Macedoine avec l'armée Française. Impressions d'un officier Russe. Traduit du Russe par Paul Trogan Le Correspondant, 88 année, 10 Septembre 1916, Paris, 1916, p.p. 842-849.

Greek Atrocities in Macedonia

Part 6 - Greeks Burning Macedonian Villages in Greek Occupied
Macedonia

By Risto Stefov

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October, 2005

“When will the Greek State apologize to the Macedonian people for its 1912-1913 genocide in Northern Greece?”

“Ethnic cleansing” may be a modern term but its meaning is well understood by the Macedonian people living in northern Greece. Ever since Greece occupied part of Macedonia, in the early 20th century, Macedonian people have experienced ethnic cleansing first hand.

This series of articles will present evidence of atrocities perpetrated by the Greek State against the innocent Macedonian civilian populations prior to, during and after the Balkan wars. Most of the information contained in the articles is obtained from the 1913 Carnegie Inquiry and from Greek sources.

NOTE: I must emphasize again that there were no Greek, Bulgarian or Serbian villages in Macedonia in 1913 as referenced to by the authors of the Carnegie report. The majority of the indigenous people living in Macedonia prior to the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian occupation were Macedonians. Among the Macedonians also lived Turkish, Albanian and Vlach minorities.

The only Greeks living in Greek occupied Macedonia were the colonists settled there by the Greek State after the 1913 occupation and partition.

BURNED VILLAGES

The list of burned villages which follows will be found to be accurate, in the sense that it includes no villages which have not been burned. But it is far from complete, save as regards the Kukush and Strumnitsa regions.

Many other villages were burned, particularly in the Serres and Drama districts. In many cases we have not been able to discover the exact number of houses in a village. It will be noted that the list includes a few Turkish villages in Bulgarian [occupied] territory burned by the Greeks, and a few villages burned by the Servians [Serbians]. The immense majority of the villages are, however, Bulgarian [Macedonian] villages burned by the Greek army in its northward march.

The number of burned villages included in this list is 161, and the number of houses burned is approximately 14,480.

We estimate that the number of houses burned by the Greeks in the second [Balkan] war can not fall short of 16,000.

The figures which follow the names indicate the number of houses in each village.

District of Strumnitsa

Eleven Bulgarian [Macedonian] villages burned by the Greeks, with number of houses in each:

Dabilia (50), Novo-selo (160), Veliussa, Monastira, Svrabite, Popchevo (43), Kostourino (130), Rabortsi (15), Cham-Tchiflik (20), Baldevtsi (2), Zoubovo (30).

Nine Turkish villages burned by the Greeks: Amzali (150), Guetcherli (5), Tchanakli (2), Novo-Mahala (2), Ednokoukovo (80), Sekirnik (30), Souchitsa (10), Svidovitsa (10), Borissovo (15).

Two Patriarchist villages: Mokreni (16), Makrievo (10), with three-fourths of the town Strumnitsa, about 1,000 houses and shops.

In all, over 1,620 houses.

District of Petrits: Fourteen villages burned by the Greeks: Charbanovo, Breznitsa, Mouraski, Mitinovo, Ormanli, Michnevo, Starochevo, Klutch, Koniarene, Kalarevo, Mikrevo, Gabrene, Skrit, Smolare, (the last two partially).

District of Raslog: Dobrinishta (298).

District of Gorna: Djoumaia, Simitli, Dolno-Souchitsa, Srbinovo (200) (the last burned by the Greeks after the Bucharest peace treaty was signed).

District of Melnik: Sixteen Bulgarian [Macedonian] villages burned by the Greeks: Spatovo, Makriko- stenovo, Sklave (30), Sveti-Vratch (200), Livounovo (60), Dolni-Orman (90), Tchiflitsite, Prepetcheno (20), Kapotovo, Kromidovo, Harsovo (100), Dolna-Oumitsa, Hotovo, Spatovo (16), Spanchevo (30), Otovo (60).

District of Nevrokop: Seven Bulgarian [Macedonian] villages burned by the Greeks: Dolna-Brodi (300), Libiachovo (400), Kara-Keui (40), Godlevo, Tarlis (10), Obidin, Tcham-Tchiflik, (and ten houses in the town of Nevrokop) (also the Turkish village of Koprivnik (100).

District of Salonica: Bulgarian [Macedonian] villages burned by the Greeks: Negovan, Ravna, Bogorod.

District of Ziliahovo: Bulgarian [Macedonian] villages burned by the Greeks: Skrijevo, Libechovo. Kalapot (partially), Alistratik (partially), Guredjik.

District of Kukush: Forty Bulgarian [Macedonian] villages burned by the Greeks: Kukush town 1,846 houses, 612 shops, 5 mills. Idjilar (70), Aliodjalar (50), Goliabache (40). Salamanli (15), Ambar-Keul (35), Karaja-Kadar (25), Alchaklish (13), Seslovo (30), Stresovo (20), Chikirlia (15), Irikli (20), Gramadna (100), Alexovo (100), Morartsi (350), Roschlevo (40), Motolevo (250), Planitsa in part (180), Nimantsi (40), Postolar (38), Yensko (45), Koujoumarli (30), Bigliria (18), Kazanovo (20), Dramomirtsi (115) in part, Gavalantsi (45), Kretsovo (45), Michailovo (15), Kalinovo (35), Tsigountsi (35), Harsovo (50), Novoseleni in part (20), Malovtsi (20), Vrightourtsi (15), Garbachel (30), Haidarli (10), Daoutli (18), Tchtelnitsa (40), Rayahovo (150) in part, Gola (15).

In all 4,725 buildings.

District of Doiran: Eleven Bulgarian [Macedonian] villages burned by the Greeks: Akanjeli (150), Dourbali, Nicolits, Pataros, Sourlevo, Popovo, Hassanli, Brest, Vladaia, Dimontsi, Ratartsi.

District of Demir-Hissar: Five Bulgarian [Macedonian] villages burned by the Greeks: Kruchevo (800), Kirchevo (180), Tchervishta (170), German (80), Djouta-Mahala.

District of Serres: Six Bulgarian [Macedonian] villages burned by the Greeks: Doutli (100), Orehovatz (130), Drenovo, Moklen, Frouchtani, Banitsa (120).

District of Gevgheli: Fifteen Bulgarian [Macedonian] and three Vlach villages burned, mainly by the Greeks, but in two cases by the Servians [Serbians]: Sehovo, Schlopentsi, Matchoukovo, Smol, Baialtsi, Marventsi, Orehovitsa, Smokvitsa, Balentsi, Braikovtsi, Kostourino, Mouine, Stoyacovo, Fourca, Ohani, Houma (Vlach), Longountsa (vlach).

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 population in order to make room for Greek colonization.

References:

George F. Kennan. "The Other Balkan Wars" A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 1993. p.p. 314-315

Only in Greece a Lie is the Truth and the Truth is a Lie

By Risto Stefov
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July 7, 2005

Yes Mr. Giorgos Koumoutsakos it's time to fess-up to the truth about Macedonia!

Why is Greece so afraid of the truth?

Greece has been peddling lies for so long that it has forgotten the truth. I am referring to the most recent Greek attacks on the Republic of Macedonia regarding a map on someone's private website and some high school textbooks used in the Republic of Macedonia. See articles in [Kathimerini](#) and [ANA](#).

“Reacting to questions about a story in Tuesday's Kathimerini revealing that the textbooks implied that part of FYROM's territory was under Greek and Bulgarian control, Foreign Ministry spokesman Giorgos Koumoutsakos slammed Skopje. “The time has come for answers to the question of irredentist and dangerous propaganda. Not only does Greece want these answers, it is also a key demand of European political reality,” he said. Koumoutsakos said the books were published in 1998 but remain in circulation.”

Mr. Koumoutsakos, have you and your state contracted amnesia over 19th and 20th century historic developments in the Balkans? Allow me to refresh your memory;

1. Were there not Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian mercenaries paid by the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian Churches in Macedonia to turn Macedonians into Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbians prior to the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars?

2. Were there not Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian teachers and priests in Macedonia, peddling Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian propaganda prior to the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars?

3. Did the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian armies not enter Macedonia in 1912 and occupy Macedonian territory?

4. Did Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia not fight over Macedonian territory in 1913 and partition Macedonia?

Since when does the truth have to be explained?

Would you rather the Republic of Macedonia teach lies in its schools? What exactly is Greece teaching its students?

“The latest instance of an irredentist map and text was apparently detected within the pages of a textbook used by junior high school pupils in FYROM. Specifically, a map showing the Balkans and prominently depicting a region identified as “Macedonia”, with the latter including significant portions of modern-day Greece and Bulgaria. Three hands, meanwhile, extending from the south (Greece), east (Bulgaria) and north (Serbia) are seen on the illustration as encroaching on this “greater Macedonia’s” territory. Moreover, Albania isn’t even demarcated on the notorious map.”

Mr. Koumoutsakos, since when has telling the truth become a sin?

1. It is well known how Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia became states during the 19th century. It is also well known that Greece became a state for the first time in 1829.

2. It is well known that geographical Macedonia and the name Macedonia have roots well into ancient times. Macedonia is the oldest name in European history.

3. It is also well known that Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia occupied and partitioned Macedonia in 1913 during the Second Balkan War.

These are well know facts taught everywhere in the free thinking world.

You should know that today’s Republic of Macedonia is the part of Macedonia that was occupied by Serbia. You should also know that the so-called “Province of Macedonia” or “Northern Greece” or “New Territories” or “Greek Macedonia”, as you like to call it, was part of geographical Macedonia prior to 1912.

The question that begs to be asked is, “Why is Greece so afraid of such a map?” Even if the Republic of Macedonia did have “irredentist” ideas, what could a small state five times smaller than Greece and with a poor economy do?

Not only will the Republic of Macedonia do nothing but it has already amended its constitution, removed certain symbols and now removed the link to the website with the offensive map to satisfy Greece. So what more, Mr. Koumoutsakos, does Greece want from the Republic of Macedonia?

“The time has come for answers to the question of irredentist and dangerous propaganda. Not only does Greece want these answers, it is also a key demand of European political reality,”

What answers are you looking for Mr. Koumoutsakos?

I have an idea for you Mr. Koumoutsakos, why don't you read the following and answer to that!

It is an extract from the Carnegie Inquiry.

Note: Following the Balkan Wars, during the summer of 1913, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace set up a committee to investigate the situation in the Balkans in general and in Macedonia in particular. The results drawn from this investigation were printed in Washington DC in 1914 under the title Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Cause and the Conduct of the Balkan Wars.

“ANASTASIA PAVLOVA, a widow of Ghevgheli.

Shortly before the outbreak of the second [Balkan] war I was staying with my daughter, a school teacher, in the village of Boinitsa. A Greek lady came from Salonica and distributed money and uniforms to the Turks of the place some six or eight days before the outbreak of the second [Balkan] war. She also called the Bulgarians [Macedonian parishioners of the Exarchate Church] of the village together, and told them that they must not imagine that this village

would belong to Bulgaria. She summoned the Bulgarian priest [Exarchate priest], and asked him if he would become a Greek. He replied “we are all Bulgarians [Macedonians belonging to the Exarchate Church] and Bulgarians [Macedonians belonging to the Exarchate Church] we will remain.” There were some Greek officers with this lady who caught the priest by the beard. Then the men who were standing by, to the number of about fifty, had their hands bound behind their backs, and were beaten by the soldiers. They were told that they must sign a written statement that they would become Greeks. When they refused to do this they were all taken to Salonica. When the men were gone, the soldiers began to violate the women of the place, three soldiers usually to one girl. [She named several cases which she witnessed.] The soldiers came in due course to my house and asked where my daughter was. I said she was ill and had to gone to Ghevgheli. They insisted that I should bring her to them. The Greek teacher of the village, Christo Poparov, who was with the soldiers, was the most offensive of them all.

They threatened to kill me if I would not produce her. The soldiers then came into the room and beat me with the butts of their rifles and I fell. “Now,” they said, “you belong to the Greeks, your house and everything in it,” and they sacked the house. Then sixteen soldiers came and again called for my daughter, and since they could not find her they used me instead. I was imprisoned in my own house and never left alone. Four days before the war I was allowed to go to Ghevgheli by rail with two soldiers to fetch my daughter. She was really in the village of Djavato. At Ghevgheli, the soldiers gave me permission to go alone to the village to fetch her. Outside the village I met five Greek soldiers, who greeted me civilly and asked for the news. Suddenly they fired a rifle and called out, “Stop, old woman.” They then fired six shots to frighten me. I hurried on and got into the village just before the soldiers. They bound my hands, began to beat me, undressed me, and flung me down on the ground. Some Servian soldiers were in the village and interfered with the Greeks and saved my life. My daughter was hidden in the village and she saw what was happening to me and came running out to give herself up, in order to save her mother. She made a speech to the soldiers and said, “Brothers, when we have worked so long together as allies, why do you kill my mother?” The soldiers only answered, that they would kill her too. I then showed

them the passport which had been given to me at Boinitsa. I can not read Greek and did not know what was on it. It seems that what was written there was “This is a mother who is to go and find her daughter and bring her back to us.” The Greek soldiers then saw that it was my daughter, and not I, who was wanted and my daughter cried, “Now I am lost.” The soldiers offered me the choice of staying in the village or going with my daughter to Ghevgheli. I begged that they would leave us alone together where we were until the morning, and to this they agreed. In the night I fled with my daughter, who disguised herself in boy’s clothes, to a place two hours away which was occupied by Bulgarian soldiers. I then went myself to Ghevgheli and immediately afterwards, the second war broke out.

The Bulgarians took the town and then retired from it, and the Greeks entered it. The moment they came in they began killing people indiscriminately in the street. One man named Anton Bakharji was killed before my eyes. I also saw a Greek woman named Helena kill a rich Bulgarian [Macedonian belonging to the Exarchate Church] named Hadji Tano, with her revolver. Another, whose name I do not know, was wounded by a soldier. A panic followed in the town and a general flight. Outside the town I met a number of Greek soldiers who had with them sixteen Bulgarian [Macedonian belonging to the Exarchate Church] girls as their prisoners. All of them were crying, several of them were undressed, and some were covered in blood. The soldiers were so much occupied with these girls that they did not interfere with us, and allowed us to flee past them. As we crossed the bridge over the Vardar, we saw little children who had been abandoned and one girl lying as if dead on the ground. The cavalry were coming up behind us. There was no time to help. A long way off a battle was going on and we could hear the cannon, but nobody fired upon us. For eight days we fled to Bulgaria and many died on the way. The Bulgarian soldiers gave us bread. I found my daughter at Samakov. My one consolation is that I saved her honor”. (Page 304, 305) George F. Kennan. “The Other Balkan Wars” A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 1993.

It is time Mr. Koumoutsakos, to come clean and start telling the truth. The Republic of Macedonia is yet another of your victims just like Anastasia Pavlova and all those other women your State has raped.

Future of the Macedonian Nation

A Strategy

By Risto Stefov

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June, 2005

I have said it before and I will say it again, the Greek dispute with the Republic of Macedonia over the name “Macedonia” is nothing more than a ploy, a con, a ruse, to sidestep the real issues; the status of the Macedonian minority in Greece. \

Like a crooked politician, Greece is doing everything it can to take attention away from its dismal human rights record and focus on something intangible like the name dispute.

The name dispute for Greece is another excuse to avoid coming clean with the Macedonian people.

What will Greece gain if Macedonia is not called Macedonia?

NOTHING!

Greece already has everything that is Macedonian, the Macedonian heritage, Macedonia’s history and 51% of Macedonia’s territory.

So, why is Greece complaining?

Greece is cleverly down playing the Greek-Macedonian name dispute and making it look like it is about ancient history.

“Macedonia is Greek from ancient times” is a way of making an issue out of a non-issue. Why should anyone care about such a ridiculous claim?

By doing so Greece is achieving the following objectives;

1. In the eyes of the world, they are down playing the dispute and making it appear trivial,
2. They are drawing our attention away from the real issues,

3. They are putting us on the defensive and forcing a fight for what appears to be a non-issue.

What in fact we should really be doing is asking the following questions;

1. How did Macedonia REALLY become Greek?
2. How did Greece get the Macedonian heritage?
3. How did Greece get Macedonia's history?
4. How did Greece get 51% of Macedonia's territory?"?

Greece is afraid that if the answers to these questions become known, then the truth will come out and there will be hell to pay.

So, what can we do to bring our issues with Greece on track?

It is very important to first recognize Greece's tactics and simply not play their game.

We must also bring attention to the following issues and make them our goals. Before we negotiate the name, we must insist that Greece;

1. Recognize the Macedonian minority inside Greece,
2. Grant human rights with full privileges to all minorities living inside Greece,
3. Allow the exiled Macedonian refugee children to return to Greece,
4. Compensate the families whose properties the Greek State confiscated,
5. Allow all Macedonian who were forcibly evicted by the Greek State to return and reclaim their homes and properties,
6. Take responsibility for the atrocities it committed against the Macedonian people during the Balkan Wars and the Greek Civil War.

It is every Macedonian's responsibility to disassociate himself or herself from debating with the Greeks on non-issues and bring the dispute where it really belongs, to the human rights arena.

Everyone concerned, including the international negotiators and mediators, MUST become familiar with the history of how Macedonia became Greek?

1. It is a well documented fact that Greece, in 1912, 1913 during the two Balkan wars, entered and forcibly occupied Macedonian territory illegally without the consent of the Macedonian people. It then, along with its partners Bulgaria and Serbia, went on a rampage bombing Macedonian villages and indiscriminately killing and murdering entire populations.

2. It is a well documented fact that as soon as Greece consolidated its hold on Greek Occupied Macedonia, it murdered or forcible exiled all Macedonians who refused to accept its conditions.

3. It is a well documented fact that after ethnically cleansing the Macedonian population, Greece brought Greek settlers from Asia Minor, Epirus and other regions and settled them on Macedonian territory, mostly on the lands of the exiled Macedonians, without their consent.

4. It is a well documented fact that during the early 1920's Greece began a campaign of denationalization by banning the Macedonian language and making it illegal to speak Macedonian in Macedonia. It then proceeded to forcibly change all peoples' names and toponyms.

5. It is also a well documented fact that during the Greek Civil War, Greece exiled a large part of the Macedonian population, including the refugee children, illegally expropriated properties and issued them to new settlers.

The territory which Greece today calls "Greek Macedonia" is in fact "Greek Occupied Macedonia" and has been occupied since 1912. The so-called "Greek Macedonians" are not really Macedonians at all, in fact they are the "Greek Settlers" who Greece has been depositing on Macedonian lands since the Balkan wars (1912, 1913).

So, what else can we do to progress to the next step?

1. The Macedonian people cannot and must not be content with the status quo. We need to work towards a common strategy that will involve the entire Macedonian nation regardless of where we live, be it in the Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Canada, Australia, the USA or the world over. We must recognize that we are one and the same people and we must not allow those who benefit from our misfortunes to divide us. We must promote ourselves vigorously as one nation, one people irrespective of religious, political, or ideological interests.

2. We must work within the laws of the states in which we live in order to achieve our goals. We must also use those laws designed to help us by being diligent and not accepting the status quo.

3. Our strategy is to join world institutions, like NATO and the European Union (EU) because they offer security and human rights. The EU constitution contains human rights provisions which will help the minorities in Greece and Bulgaria when implemented. It is up to us, however, to ensure that those provisions are implemented.

4. When it comes to our interests, we must take action ourselves and not allow Greece, Bulgaria, or any other foreign power to lead us or to interfere in our affairs.

5. We must help the Republic of Macedonia choose its foreign policies wisely so that all Macedonians benefit from them.

I envision a borderless Macedonia as part of the European Union where the Macedonian people will once again have the freedom to call themselves Macedonian, speak their Macedonian language, enjoy their Macedonian culture and have the freedom to travel all throughout Macedonia without fear or repercussions.

The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO)

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The industrial revolution in England and the social revolution in France were two of the most significant factors in the inducement of rapid economic growth and social changes in western Europe. By the early 19th century, western capitalists were making their way into the Balkans looking for investment opportunities and market expansion, just as the Ottoman Empire was experiencing decline.

Penetration of western capital into the underdeveloped Balkans commenced around the 1870's in the form of financial loans, mostly for military and infrastructure projects. Infrastructure upgrades such as road, bridge and rail construction were important but were geared more to Western Powers strategic needs and less to domestic economic development. Army maintenance and government bureaucracies were also important sectors to upgrade but they hardly produced any returns.

With virtually no returns on its investments, the Ottoman State quickly became bankrupt.

To overcome the problem, Western Powers imposed spending restrictions and through the International Finance Commission imposed budgetary controls on the Ottoman State's budget. The Commission was made up of very influential western European capitalists whose first priority in managing the budget was to pay interest on the loans.

The brunt of the ensuing crisis was naturally felt by the rural producing class, which was about 80% of the Macedonian population. Being the main producers of goods, Macedonian villages were the most suppressed and exploited social stratum of the Ottoman population.

The encroaching European markets, able to produce goods cheaper, disrupted the way of life and put much of the Macedonian agrarian sector out of business. Social reform and welfare to aid the unemployed was not there since most of the state budget was redirected to pay returns on foreign loans. As a result, the new economic stratification virtually destroyed the traditional village economy, creating considerable economic and psychological distress among the rural population.

The problem was compounded when higher taxes were introduced. The economically strapped peasant, who could hardly afford to survive on his meager income, was now expected to pay even higher taxes.

The majority of the rural population worked the land as tenants and were subjected to a land tax of no less than 10% of the plot's value, payable to the state. An additional 25% income tax (tithe) was payable on productive labour. Of his total produce, the peasant was entitled to only one half. Out of his half, further taxes were paid to the state, the tax collector, the landlord and the local gendarme. By the time all taxes were paid there was hardly anything left for the peasant for survival. So the incentive for him to work the land was no longer there.

As the Ottoman Empire continued to suffer economically, it could no longer decisively respond to external threats and adequately defend its territories, so it began to slowly lose its integrity.

Since none of the Great Powers desired a new large state to replace the existing Ottoman territories, they allowed the Ottoman Empire to slowly degrade. As it crumbled they did everything possible to encourage new and smaller states to take its place.

Caught in a power struggle and mistrusting one another, the Great Powers could not, without consequences, militarily intervene in the Balkans. So next best thing to do was influence each newly created state by any other means possible and sway them in their direction.

Russia, the most powerful of the Great Powers, often attacked the Turkish State but it never made any real gains. The Western Powers

intervened on Turkey's behalf and almost always reversed Russia's actions in Turkey's favour. There were however some exceptions. Russian intervention, for example, was responsible for Serbia gaining its autonomy from the Ottomans and for turning Serbia into a Slavic State.

The Western Powers were afraid of Russia, especially of Pan-Slavism, and often joined forces to keep Russia at bay. Britain took extraordinary measures to keep Russia from gaining access to the Mediterranean waters. Britain strived to keep the modern Balkan States, resulting from the Ottoman breakup, from becoming Russian allies. The creation of modern Greece, with a totally alien national character, is a good example of British intervention.

Frustrated with the Western Powers, Russia in 1878 attacked and overran the Ottoman State creating a Greater Bulgaria (which included all of Macedonia). Again the Western Powers intervened and Russia's actions were reversed. The Western Powers did however agree to allow a smaller autonomous Bulgaria to be created. Macedonia was given back to the Ottomans.

Even though Macedonia was given back, it was now only a matter of time before it was taken away again. Unbeknownst to the Macedonian people, the Great Powers had promised to divide Macedonia between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. Since no agreement was made as to how and when the division was going to take place and which territory was going to which state, Macedonia became the "apple of discord". The only stipulation made by the Great Powers was that Macedonia be divided along national (Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian) lines. In other words, Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian nationalities had to exist in Macedonia before a state could make territorial claims. Since there were no Greek, Bulgarian, or Serbian nationalities living in Macedonia, the competing states sought ways to invent them, which in time escalated the competition between them and propagated the Church Wars.

To get inside Macedonia, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia made use of an old Ottoman legal provision which allowed Ottoman citizens to pray in a church of their choice. Being Orthodox Christians, the same as the Macedonians, each competing state established its own

churches and subsequently its own schools inside Macedonia. Each state then used them to promote its propaganda and carry out denationalization and assimilation campaigns.

For obvious reasons, the Great Powers wanted Macedonia to remain under Ottoman control for as long as possible (so that they could continue to collect interest on their loans). Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia on the other hand, fearful and mistrustful of one other, wanted Macedonia partitioned as soon as possible.

By the 1880's Macedonians were fighting on multiple fronts. Besides fighting the Ottomans and the Great Powers for their economic survival, they now had to fight Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian intervention, which not only threatened the loss of their country but also the erasure of their identity.

These were the conditions under which the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) emerged.

Macedonians were well aware of the situation in their country and in the surrounding Balkans and followed events as they unfolded. So the thought of liberating their country was not something new or too far from their minds. Macedonians had fought in the first wave of insurrections between 1804 and 1830 during which Serbia, Greece and Romania were liberated. They then fought in the second wave of insurrections between 1876 and 1889 in which Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania were liberated. Unfortunately, the Western Powers handed Macedonia right back to the Ottomans. Macedonians had also fought during the Razlog Uprising in May 1876 and during the Kreshna Uprising in October 1878.

Unfortunately most Macedonians were poor and totally dependent on their landlords for their livelihood. They possessed no tactical power, nor the potential to overthrow the system. The bourgeoisie operating in Macedonia was weakened by the competitiveness of European capital and the petit-bourgeoisie was underdeveloped and had its own problems with the hostile Patriarchy. The only choice the Macedonians had was to wait for someone else or for some external power to challenge and remove their oppressors.

Unfortunately given the mindset of the Great Powers, no such power existed.

Given the economic conditions in Macedonia, a number of leading Macedonian intellectuals came to the conclusion that Macedonia could no longer afford to wait for external intervention and must act on its own. Macedonians must liberate themselves without dependence on outside help. The most effective way to do that was through a united national front. All of Macedonia must be organized, armed and mobilized so that when the time came it could act as one. To organize such an effort, a central organization would be needed which would have the freedom to operate throughout Macedonia. Naturally it would have to be a secret organization and do its work clandestinely.

The beginnings of such an organization came from a number of Macedonian student groups studying abroad who had fought against the foreign propaganda.

One such student group, stationed in Switzerland, agitated the European bureaucracy by releasing its own virulent propaganda, refuting chauvinist allegations. Another student group, stationed in Sofia, did the same in Bulgaria. This group was organized by Petar Pop Arsov, Kosta Sahov and Hristo Matov in late 1891 and allied itself with the Macedonian pechalbari (migrant workers). An offshoot of this group helped Vasil Glavinov establish the “Macedonian Social-Democratic Party” in Sofia in 1893, which attracted many Macedonians.

Other such Macedonian revolutionary organizations existed in Russia, Greece (the Macedonian Brotherhood in Athens, 1893) and Britain (the Committee for Autonomy of Macedonia and Albania, in London).

The foundation of the first Revolutionary organization inside Macedonia was laid on October 22nd, 1893, when a group of concerned Macedonian intellectuals got together at Ivan Nikolov’s house in Solun, sharing opinions on Macedonian issues and what to do about them. Among the intellectuals present were bookstore owner Ivan Nikolov, high school teacher Damian Gruev, former

editor of the journal Loza Petar Pop Arsov, high school teacher Anton Dimitrov and Doctor Hristo Tatarchev.

Over the following months other Macedonians joined the debate and a second meeting was convened on February 9th, 1894 in Solun, during which a Constitution for the organization was drafted with the following resolutions;

- (a) The “Society”, once properly constituted, would be of a secret and revolutionary nature.
- (b) Its revolutionary activities would be confined to within Macedonia’s geographic and ethnographic borders.
- (c) Any Macedonian citizen might be allowed membership, irrespective of nationality (Albanian, Turk, Vlah, etc.) or religion (Christian, Muslim, Jew, etc.).

The name chosen for the organization was the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO). [It was then changed to TMRO (T for Taina-Secret) and later to VMRO “Vnatrezhno-Makedonska Revolutsionerna Organizatsija”. For the purpose of this article we will call it “Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization” or IMRO.]

The group also set the following goals for the organization;

- (i) to destroy the Ottoman system
- (ii) to remain an “independent” organization
- (iii) to seek Macedonian autonomy

These goals were ratified during the organization’s first Revolutionary Congress held in Resen in August 1894.

At its onset IMRO had problems recruiting members. But after the Solun congress in 1896 its situation improved dramatically. Initially, due to IMRO’s secret nature, it was difficult getting the word out but as interest expanded beyond Solun to regional towns like Ohrid, Bitola and Resen, support became widespread. An early tactic employed successfully by IMRO was the use of teachers in the Exarchate schools, charged with educating the people with revolutionary propaganda. Unfortunately this was not enough.

Without mass participation there would be no revolution, so IMRO sought to find a charismatic leader who would attract the attention and capture the imagination of the masses, yet be someone capable of comfortably communicating with them on their own level. Luckily such a charismatic leader was found in Gotse Delchev who had the soul of an anarchist, the convictions of a social democrat and acted like a revolutionary. His induction into the organization enabled IMRO to reshape its image from an organization run by intellectuals to one that would assert itself as a potent revolutionary force and guide Macedonia's destiny.

With Delchev at the helm, IMRO expanded its influence to Shtip, Veles, Kukush and Solun Regions.

Although IMRO had begun life in late 1893 as a secret organization, by 1896 it had developed almost to a point where it acted as a state within a state. In taking part and in leading demonstrations and boycotts against Ottoman State institutions, IMRO became the natural protector of the Macedonian people especially in the many isolated villages. Likewise, it acted as a diplomatic unit informing both Macedonians and outsiders of the injustices of Ottoman rule and the greedy ambitions harboured by the new Balkan States and their benefactors, the Great Powers.

Delchev believed that true revolutions succeed by seizing power by means of institutions established by the revolutionary masses themselves, often spontaneously or at the suggestion of the organization directing the revolutionary fight. Delchev was firmly committed to a long term violent revolution. He believed a frontal battle with the Ottomans would seriously damage the organization. In hindsight, he was correct.

IMRO's success inside Macedonia was becoming a threat to Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian Imperial territorial ambitions towards Macedonia. While each reacted in their own way, the Bulgarian response was unique to say the least. Since Bulgaria became a state it refused to recognize the existence of a separate and distinct Macedonia. It refused to recognize the Macedonian people as ethnically distinct from Bulgarians. Bulgarian policy was and remains to this day, that "Macedonians are Bulgarians". Anything

that was Macedonian was Bulgarian, including IMRO. Bulgarians believed that IMRO should be getting its directives directly from Sofia and as such in March 1895 created the “External” Organization, better known as the “Supreme Macedonian Committee in Sofia”. Even though this organization’s majority membership came from nationalist Macedonian immigrants, its leadership was drawn from the Bulgarian army ranks.

This insidious Organization, better known as the “Vrhovists” (vrhovist means supremacist in Macedonian), through its allegedly “sympathetic” stance sought desperately to undermine and control IMRO by attempting to subordinate its central committee to its Supremacist directives. When that failed it attempted, by covertness and assassinations, to eliminate the subjective forces within the Organization.

Bulgaria, through armed Vrhovist intervention, was hoping to provoke Ottoman reprisals against the innocent Macedonian population. Pretending to be IMRO, Vrhovist agents would openly challenge Ottoman authorities who, out of revenge, would attack Macedonian villages. This of course would be mistakenly blamed on IMRO by the European press and would tarnish IMRO’s reputation. Great Power pressure would then be leveled against the Ottomans, which the Bulgarians hoped might seriously weaken Ottoman control over Macedonia. This would then create ideal conditions for Bulgarian intervention on Macedonia’s behalf and Bulgaria would then carry out Macedonia’s liberation, or should I say annexation.

The political climate that produced the “Supreme Committee” (the Vrhovists) was created by the Bulgarian State and by Prince Ferdinand himself.

Bulgarian intervention in Macedonian internal affairs was not limited to Vrhovist activities alone. Vrhovist work was supplemented by the policy of the Exarchate Church, which continued in its attempts to rally young Macedonians to the Bulgarian cause. Further, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie dispatched undercover agents to Solun, to spy on IMRO movements and report them to Sofia.

Having achieved limited success with its spies, the Bulgarians changed tactics and began to infiltrate IMRO itself. To this end the “Revolutionary Brotherhood” was created in Solun, under the leadership of Ivan Garvanov. While pretending to believe in Delchev’s principles, Garvanov succeeded in penetrating the IMRO Central Committee and paved the way for the Ilinden disaster. By influencing IMRO policy, Garvanov was responsible for the Organization’s weakening and eventual split into hostile factions.

During the summer of 1895, the Vrhovists dispatched armed insurgents into Macedonia and Thrace in hopes of recruiting Macedonian fighters in order to start an early uprising and provoke Ottoman reprisals. Their tactics however backfired and received criticism not only from the Ottoman Grand Pasha himself but also from Britain and Russia. Boris Sarafov, captain of the insurgents, managed to penetrate eastern Macedonia and captured and held Melnik for forty-eight hours. IMRO, at this point, sent the Vrhovists a stern warning to “keep their hands off Macedonia!” realizing that Ottoman reprisals would cost many innocent Macedonians their lives.

In light of these Vrhovist intrusions, IMRO, determined to purify itself of Vrhovist elements, held a congress in Solun during the summer of 1896. Unfortunately, this was only an ideological purification where the basic goals of the organization, mentioned earlier, were reaffirmed. Delchev, among other things, emphasized the need for IMRO’s total independence from outside deceivers who pretended sympathy for the revolution while pledging loyalty to the “Supreme Committee” in Sofia.

The IMRO constitution was also redrafted, with help from Giorche Petrov, to include new provisions for uniting all dissatisfied elements in Macedonia and Endrene (Adrianople). It also added provisions for dividing Macedonia into six revolutionary districts (Solun, Shtip, Bitola, Skopje, Serres and Strumitsa). Subsequently Endrene District was also added.

The Congress also expanded the size of IMRO’s Central Committee, electing Delchev, Gruev, Petrov, Pop Arsov, Toshev, Matov and Tatarchev to its seats of authority. Matov and Toshev designed the

Central Committee seal, which consisted of a banner, swords, rifles and a bomb. Inscribed on it was “Macedonian Central Revolutionary Committee”.

The Bulgarian intrusion into Macedonia rang alarm bells in Serbia, prompting King Alexander to conclude an agreement with the Greeks in which Greece and Serbia staked out their future claims over Macedonia. Alexander then did the same with Bulgaria’s Ferdinand and Greece later made similar agreements with Bulgaria. The agreements later were shown to be not worth the paper they were written on. There was, however, one matter on which all three states agreed and that was the need to paralyze IMRO.

By early 1897 Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia had their own agents inside Macedonia, some as consular officials in Solun and others traveling across the country incognito, all seeking to obstruct IMRO’s recruitment progress. The Vrhovists, under the command of army General Nikolaev, fiercely agitated against IMRO by continuously dispatching their anti-IMRO propaganda to diplomatic missions abroad.

IMRO’s plans were further frustrated when Bulgaria informed Delchev that they would not sell IMRO arms and that he would have to deal directly with the Vrhovists. To this Delchev did not agree and under no circumstances would he agree to surrender IMRO’s sovereignty or obligate his organization to the Vrhovists. Further, Delchev would not even consider enlisting support from Russia, the recent liberator of Bulgaria, especially after he discovered a report tabling the “Goluchowski-Muraviev Agreement. An agreement drawn up in April 1897, by Emperor Franz-Joseph of Austria and Tsar Nikolai II of Russia which called for Macedonia and Thrace to be equally divided by Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, in some future time.

Direct or indirect attacks on IMRO did not deter the Central Committee’s recruitment efforts or its ability to promote itself to the masses. Purchasing arms and ammunition were a problem for the time being, but new means were sought to raise finances and find markets where arms could be purchased and smuggled into Macedonia. A further testament to IMRO’s strength was Delchev’s

resolve to infiltrate and assume control of the “Supreme Committee” in Sofia. Between 1897 and 1901, Delchev and Petrov took several trips to Sofia, attempting to rally Macedonian dissident emigrant forces away from the Vrhovists. They were unsuccessful only because the Supremacists had strong support from the Bulgarian State.

Unfortunately strength alone was not enough to maintain a successful IMRO, finances and arms were also needed. Being unable to align itself with the bourgeoisie in Macedonia, refusing to accept money from Bulgaria and being isolated by the Patriarchate and to some extent, by the Exarchate Churches in Macedonia was a real impediment for IMRO. As such, for its funding, IMRO relied strictly on token donations, membership dues, small earnings of its teaching staff and extorted donations from the Chiflik estate owners.

Shortage of funds became an impediment in purchasing arms, printing and distributing propaganda, legal fees and bail for interned members and in procuring food and medical supplies. The Central Committee’s failure to raise sufficient funds forced some revolutionary districts to fundraise on their own, sometimes by creative methods. Through 1897 and 1898 numerous attempts were made to kidnap wealthy Greeks, Turks and Bulgarians and extract ransoms.

Even if IMRO had the necessary funds it still could not purchase all the arms it needed. Most arms dealers refused to sell arms to IMRO and of those who did, smuggling and transporting became a serious problem.

Desperation forced IMRO to purchase obsolete rifles from the Bulgarian military at a grossly inflated price. But there too they ran into problems when the Bulgarians refused to sell them cartridges. When Petrov complained the War minister said, “We are not idiots to give you cartridges as well; thus we shall keep power in our hands, otherwise you will turn away from us!”

To overcome the arms shortage, Delchev, as the Commander-in-chief of the IMRO forces, recommended a policy of “self arming”.

In future, new recruits would be required to purchase their own weapons and ammunition.

In late 1897 Delchev took a trip to Odessa, Russia where he learned from Armenian revolutionaries how to manufacture homemade bombs and crude flame-throwers.

Upon his return Delchev enlisted the aid of Kirkov, an explosives expert, and set up a munitions factory in the mountains of eastern Macedonia where six men were employed making bombs full time. The factory operated for eighteen months before it was discovered and destroyed by Ottoman authorities at the instigation of Stoilov, the Bulgarian Prime Minister.

Whatever weapons the Macedonian insurgents lacked they more than made up for in courage. The Cheti (guerilla bands) were very mobile and used their limited guns and explosives with great efficiency, being prepared to commit suicide rather than face capture and torture. This unique disposition terrified the Ottoman forces.

Weapons manufacturing and smuggling was a risky business, the type that would alarm authorities if discovered. Even with all the caution in the world, someone was bound to get caught. Sure enough this happened to IMRO courier Done Stoyanov. Stoyanov was carrying explosives when the Ottoman militia captured him. After severe torture he told them everything.

With that information Ottoman authorities immediately ordered “search and destroy” missions in rural Macedonia, unleashing a reign of terror on the Macedonian villages. To counter this offensive, IMRO responded by mobilizing its Cheti. Each revolutionary district took charge of defending the villages within its sphere of influence.

By 1899, within a year of their mobilization, the Cheti drew heavily from the ranks of the young villagers who were most eager to fight for their freedom. For rapid reaction, in the more active districts, IMRO assigned one Cheta per village.

In 1899 Delchev, as chief inspector, drew up the famous “Rules of the Cheti” which among other things defined the roles and conduct of the Cheta. Besides being responsible for defending, the Cheti were also responsible for educating the people about the cause.

Predictably, arming of the Cheti proceeded slowly but when Gruev arrived in Bitola the process was streamlined and explosives and guns began to arrive. Gruev appointed the legendary Cheta chief Marko, the “Tsar of Lerin”, in charge of weapons distribution.

As for the actual fighters that made up the Cheti, their experience varied as much as their backgrounds. Some were outlaws and hardened fighters who lived in the open, slept on the mountains and spent years fighting the Turks, while others were schoolboys barely out of school. Coming as they did from various backgrounds they were a handful for the Central Committee to manage but more than a handful for the Ottoman garrisons. As an American journalist once said, “The Turks fear them with fear that is often comic. They never attack a Cheta except with a vastly overpowering force. As for the Cheti they think nothing of attacking twice their number...”

By 1900 IMRO had formed over thirty Cheti in Bitola, Kostur, Lerin, Ohrid, Krushevo and Prilep Districts, as well as in Thrace. Besides fighting the Turks, the Cheti also proved to be a formidable force against the Vrhovists, especially those who ventured south into Pirin and came face to face with Sandanski.

Unfortunately as the organization’s mobilization program quickened, so did Ottoman awareness of its activities. The Ottomans began to build up forces in Macedonia in expectation of an uprising. More search and destroy missions were carried out and, between 1899 and 1903, thirty IMRO munitions depots were discovered and destroyed. Additionally some of the IMRO leaders, including Gruev and Petrov, were being arrested more frequently, which meant that either the Turks were getting better or someone was supplying them information.

Although never proven, Garvanov, the Vrhovist leader of the “Revolutionary Brotherhood”, was suspected of supplying the Turks

with information. Garvanov was also responsible for Vrhovist deeds blamed on IMRO.

After his failed attempt to start a rebellion in Macedonia in 1895, in 1900 Sarafov sent six assassins to kill Delchev and Sandanski. Unable to successfully carry out their mission, with Garvanov's help, the Vrhovists began a spree of destruction, razing villages and stealing money, while claiming to be an IMRO Cheta. During one such attack, Marko, the Cheta leader from Lerin was killed.

This unsuspecting turn of events with the Vrhovists caught IMRO by surprise, but the next time they tried something similar IMRO was prepared.

When General Tsonched, Sarafov's successor, organized a similar attack in Pirin District in 1902, Yane Sandanski was ready for him and sent him packing. The Turks did the rest and finished him off. Unfortunately the Macedonian villages paid for the Vrhovist meddling. The Turks exacted retribution by razing 15 villages, killing 37 people and torturing 304 men and women. The Vrhovist intrusion was a bitter victory and in future it would prove even bitterer.

To make matters worse the Exarchate Church began dismissing Macedonian teachers suspected of being affiliated with IMRO.

It was no accident that the Ottoman authorities declared IMRO illegal on January 31st, 1903 and had almost all its leaders arrested and given life sentences in the harshest prisons in Asia Minor.

The following month witnessed the staging of the Solun Congress during which the IMRO Central Committee truly rested in Garvanov's hands. Delchev, Petrov and Toshev, about the only true IMRO leaders that had not been jailed, refused to attend the Congress knowing full well that Vrhovists dominated it.

Even though Macedonia was not ready for a general uprising, the Solun Congress set a date for one anyway. In the Vrhovist mind, any determined uprising, preferably a failed one, would weaken the Turks, and ultimately create conditions for intervention by the

Bulgarian State. August 2nd, 1903 was the date chosen for the uprising, which coincided with Ilinden an important Macedonian holiday.

After Gruev's release from prison in April 1903 (due to a general amnesty), Delchev desperately tried to postpone the rebellion but was killed before he had a chance to address the assembly scheduled to meet in Smilevo in May. Being outnumbered, Gruev went along with the majority and Macedonia indeed witnessed the beginnings of a tragic end.

A failed rebellion was not something that the Macedonian people, especially the IMRO leadership could easily reconcile. But as events unfolded, the Ottomans were not the only ones who wished Macedonia to fail. There were more sinister forces at work, like the Vrhovists and the Patriarchate and Exarchate Churches, who equally did not want Macedonia to win. The Great Powers too had their own resolve and all they could do was watch Macedonia burn while offering the Macedonian people no more than their sympathies. They did not even offer aid to the sick, homeless and starving.

For the Macedonians it was a great revolution, a glorious revolution. To paraphrase Giorgio Norigiani, "The Ilinden rising is an achievement of great importance for the Macedonian people. There are things in it which stagger the imagination and cause this general insurrection to be ranked as a 'great historical event'. The whole people rose with a frenzied, irresistible urge for immediate freedom. The Macedonian people's faith made them believe in their creative possibilities, for only a people strong in spirit is able to pluck up courage and with full confidence venture on an historic undertaking. Through this courageous uprising, unique in its kind for noble daring, the Macedonian people expressed not only their love of freedom and justice, but also of moral power. This rising remains even today an unrepeatabe human act of supreme self-sacrifice for a people's freedom. Ilinden will remain in history a sacred name for every Macedonian. It is written on the tables of the laws of the Macedonian people and will shine for evermore, because it is a magnificent expression of the Macedonian peoples' limitless love for their native land, their unquenchable thirst for freedom, their inflexible will for a new life, and a real inner essence of their being.

It is not possible to speak of the epic of Ilinden without speaking of the man who incarnated it and who set in motion the Macedonian people on the road to revolution, on the road to freedom. That man was Gotse Delchev. He was not only a great revolutionary, he was one of the most upright, noble and idealistic natures born under the Macedonian sky; obedient to every moral principle and self-denying service. These are the characteristic qualities of Gotse Delchev, of a great son of Macedonia.” (pp. 46-47).

As expected, the rebellion was strongest in western Macedonia where the population was most prepared. It started in Bitola Region on August 2nd, 1903 and in a few days spread like wildfire south to Lerin and Kostur and north to Resen, Ohrid and Prilep.

Karev and his Cheti stormed and liberated the town Krushevo and then created the Krushevo Republic, the first of its kind in the Balkans. Karev, after being elected president, constituted a provisional government with its own police force, judiciary and financial and welfare bodies. Through the creation of this Republic, Macedonians expressed their desire to national self determination. The fact that the Republic was constituted upon a multiracial basis also demonstrated the readiness of the Macedonian people to lay a multicultural foundation for their state. Sadly the Republic only lasted couple of weeks before the Turkish army destroyed it.

As for Vrhovist involvements in the general uprising, they did not materialize. Sarafov’s boasting that at the first sign of struggle the Bulgarian army would storm in and liberate Macedonia, did not happen. All Vrhovist promises turned out to be lies.

Initial IMRO successes during the Ilinden uprising came as a surprise to the Ottomans. Even though they had a numerically superior force in Macedonia it was still no match for the fierce fighting Cheti. Reinforcements were called in and led by the ruthless and skilled war veteran General Baktiar Pasha. Baktiar’s solution to the problem was total annihilation, not only of the fighting Cheti but also of the villages that support them.

By the time he was done there were 4,694 civilians murdered, 3,122 women raped, 12,440 houses burned, 201 villages razed, 75,835

people left homeless and 30,000 people exiled. IMRO was reduced to shambles with most of its leaders dead and almost all of the Cheti demolished. To again paraphrase Giorgio Norigiani, “The tortured slaves, fighting on mass, often without weapons, but on spirit alone, for life and liberty; and the sadistic Pasha and his cohorts, murdering and plundering with rabidity.” (p. 47)

Having failed its ambitious rebellion, IMRO was determined to continue the fight for the cause at a diplomatic level.

In September 1903 Pere Toshev was sent to Tsari Grad (Istanbul) to extract certain guarantees from representatives of the Great Powers. Dissatisfied with present conditions, IMRO sought to gain some degree of self-government in Macedonia through the appointment of a Christian Governor. The Great Powers, however, were not interested and hoped to maintain the status quo. A month later they changed their minds and agreed to send a “peace keeping force” to keep the peace in Macedonia. Unfortunately the only thing the peacekeeping force did was put IMRO out of action. Instead of keeping the Ottomans at bay, the peacekeepers kept IMRO’s from defending the Macedonian people from Turkish and foreign aggression.

By now the Ottomans were out of favour with the Great Powers and decided to minimize their own aggressive behaviour and invite others like Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia to do it for them, by declaring Macedonia a “multi-interest zone”.

What this meant was that Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian terrorist bands, sponsored by their respective churches, were now encouraged to roam Macedonia to murder, rape, pillage and do whatever they felt like without fear of retribution from the Turkish authorities. Greeks and Turks stood side by side as allies while murdering the Macedonian population. The Christian holy man Patriarchate Bishop Karavangelis of Kostur blessed the Muslim owned cannons with Christian words as the Turkish army opened fire on the Christian civilian populated Macedonian villages, killing innocent women and children. The Great Powers, with their military ships docked in the harbours, stood and watched as the mountains were dotted with fires. They watched villages burn and heard cries

of suffering and yet did nothing. Such was the fate of the Macedonian people in the aftermath of the Ilinden rebellion.

Expecting no assistance or aid from the Great Powers, remnants of IMRO established temporary centers and distributed urgently needed foodstuffs and medical supplies to the population. While this was taking place, a political struggle for control of IMRO was also beginning to take shape. Bulgaria's wish for a confrontation between IMRO and the Turkish army was granted. Bulgaria no longer needed IMRO and sought ways to liquidate the rest of its leadership. Bulgarian hopes of fully subordinating IMRO to Vrhovist directives were slim at best, so with that in mind Bulgaria sent a number of assassins to eliminate the rest of the IMRO leaders. For a while Sandanski's forces succeeded in repealing them, but their persistence unfortunately paid off as they, in time, succeeded in assassinating all of the important IMRO leaders.

After the rebellion was put down, IMRO still had hopes of better times and perhaps another uprising in the future.

In May 1904 IMRO held a Congress in Prilep and issued "Directives for Future Activity". Among other things, it was decided to decentralize the Central Committee and give more decision making power to the districts. No future uprising would be allowed without consent from the Revolutionary Districts and from the Cheta chiefs themselves.

Not everyone in the IMRO leadership agreed with this resolution which unfortunately caused the Organization to split into a left and right faction. The right faction insisted on pursuing a policy of renewed confrontation, one no doubt suited to the appetites of its Vrhovist patrons, while the left faction pursued the original policies as outlined by Gotse Delchev.

Ironically, both factions operated under the same banner and a showdown was imminent. Fortunately cooler heads prevailed and a negotiated settlement was reached during the Rila Congress in November 1905. The Rila Congress, which took place at the Rila Monastery on the Macedonian-Bulgarian border, was attended by 22 elected delegates and had a single item on its agenda: "What was the

appropriate direction for the Organization and how was it to perform its role?" After several recommendations were put to a vote, a resolution was reached and a rule book was issued. Some of the more important recommendations adopted included the following goals;

- (a) to create an autonomous and independent Macedonia,
- (b) to achieve this by a united national front, over a long period of revolutionary activity,
- (c) to resist all foreign interference.

Items put forward during the Prilep Congress were reaffirmed and certain safeguards were enacted to prevent irresponsible repetition of the Ilinden episode.

While IMRO was sorting out its own problems, armed terrorist bands from Greece and Serbia were making their way into Macedonia. Wreaking their own special brand of terror, the story was the same everywhere; pillaging, murdering and razing entire villages.

The most violent campaign was undoubtedly waged by the Greek terrorists who, aided by the Patriarchate Church and agents provocateur within Macedonia, penetrated far into Macedonia's south-central regions.

In 1905, sanctioned by the Greek government, one-thousand bandits from the Greek Island of Crete, reinforced by Turkish army deserters, roamed unhindered in Macedonia, razing and slaughtering entire villages, wiping them out completely from the view of the unsuspecting world. The violence wreaked upon innocent Macedonians was staggering.

Relief for IMRO and the Macedonian people came in the form of the Young Turk Uprising, which saw IMRO as an ally in the fight against Ottoman injustices and corruption.

After wresting power from the Sultan in mid-summer 1908 in Macedonia, the Young Turk regime outlawed armed propaganda and ordered the various terrorist bands to disband. In exchange for

their help and for various other reasons, Sandanski and his Cheta helped the Young Turks take Tsari Grad, the Ottoman capital.

With the passing of Gruev and Karev, Sandanski was the natural successor to Delchev and a leading figure in the IMRO leadership. His cooperation with the Young Turk regime earned him the privilege of making recommendations and proposals for reforms.

In July 1908 he proposed the “Nevrokop Programme”, a land redistribution program in favour of the poor landless peasants. To manage the Programme, an offshoot of IMRO called the National (or Peoples’) Federative Party (NFP) was formed. Unfortunately the Young Turk regime turned out to be another Great Power ploy in their manipulation of the Balkans and soon began its decline until its final collapse on July 13, 1912.

With the return of the Sultan, Macedonia witnessed the resurgence of the armed bands, this time with renewed vigour.

Frustrated by the repressive stand of the Young Turk regime, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia made a last ditch stand to impose their sovereignty over Macedonian territory and, in the guise of “liberation”, occupied Macedonia.

The 1st Balkan war was precipitated by Montenegro’s declaration of war against Turkey on October 18th, 1912. It was almost entirely fought on Macedonian soil, where again innocent Macedonians were forced to suffer in someone else’s war.

The 2nd Balkan war, a vicious war between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia over the spoils of Macedonia, was also fought on Macedonian soil, delivering even more pain, suffering and death to an even larger Macedonian population.

Worst of all was Macedonia’s partition. August 10th, 1913, the day Macedonia’s partition was signed in Bucharest, became the darkest day in history for the Macedonian people.

With the sanctioning of Macedonia’s partition by the Great Powers in the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, so died IMRO hopes of

liberating Macedonia. IMRO, however, did not disappear and subsequently the Serres branch of the Organization, comprising a great number of late Sandanski followers, merged with remnants of the IMRO Provisional Mission of western Macedonia to constitute IMRO (United) under the leadership of Gjortse Petrov and Dimo Hadzi Dimov.

Since IMRO was declared illegal by the occupying states and it was no longer allowed to function on its native soil, from time to time it operated in various countries abroad.

In 1923, under the leadership of Dimitar Vlahov, IMRO (United) was centered in Vienna, Austria.

The legendary IMRO did not liberate Macedonia and the Macedonian people from the clutches of its enemies but it did teach Macedonians not to lose hope for there would be another, a better day.

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