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Original scientific article

THE EXODUS OF THE MACEDONIANS FROM AEGEAN MACEDONIA - A PROCESS OF INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE TRAUMA¹

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Abstract The issue of the reasons that led to the exodus of the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia after the Greek Civil War and the consequences caused by it is treated in this work. With our analysis, based on multiple sources of data, we would like to confirm the assumption that during a long period of time, and especially after the Greek Civil War, Macedonians were - and are still - exposed to various forms of institutional and non-institutional repression, which presents trauma with consequences on the individual and collective level. The consequences of this repression are felt by the Republic of Macedonia in which a large number of expelled Macedonians - citizens of Greece - have settled. The general attitude of the Macedonian citizens in relation to the name dispute is largely interwoven by feelings of trauma arising from the stated exodus and the contemporary course of policies that shape up the relations between the two countries, but also the international political situation of the Republic of Macedonia, the membership of the UN and in particular the processes of integration in the European Union and NATO.

Keywords: exodus, assimilation, trauma, extermination - genocide, Macedonians, Aegean Macedonia.

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Is there genocide?

The starting point in this text is the assumption that in the region of Macedonia, which by the provisions of the Treaty of Bucharest of 1913, after the Balkan wars, was appointed to Greece, from the moment of its occupation until today, ethnic cleansing is being carried out which, can be categorized under genocide.

We will try to confirm this assumption through: a) an analysis of the demographic changes in this area, to which we will refer by the traditional name of Aegean Macedonia, and b) through the analysis of the measures that the government of Greece has applied more in direction of changing the cultural identity of the population, which attained the dimensions of forced assimilation. The asserted situations, further, will be reviewed from the aspect of the definition of genocide, adopted by the Convention on Genocide of 1948⁴.

Demographic data

There is a huge discord in relation to demographic data about ethnic Macedonia under the Ottoman Empire, as well as the Aegean Macedonia after the Second Balkan War, when it became part of Greece. In relation to the composition of the population of Macedonia in the framework of the Empire, according to the Ottoman statistics of 1881, the total number of population was 1,863,382, of which 1,251,385 were Slavs; 463,839 Muslims, of which a part were Pomaks (Islamized Slavs); and only 59,480 Greeks (Iliej, 2002: 103). The following statistics - according to the survey of Vasil K'nčov - at the beginning of the 20th century (based on the language spoken in the households) reveals that in Aegean Macedonia there were 370,371 (35.20%) Macedonians (named by him as Bulgarians); 274,052 (25.05%) Turks; 236,755 (22.50%) Greeks; 68,206 (6.49%) Jews; 44,414 (4.22%) Vlachos and others (K'нчов, 1970).

Regarding the situation after the Balkan wars, we will present data from the Carnegie Commission, according to which after the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest, in the part of Macedonia that belonged to Greece lived: 329,771 Macedonians, 314,856 Turks, 236,755 Greeks, 47,414 Vlachos, 25,302 Roma, 68,206 Jews and 8,100 diverse, or the total of 1,042,092 inhabitants

⁴ According to this Convention, that was ratified by Yugoslavia on August 29th 1950: "Genocide is one of the following acts perpetrated with the aim to destroy, totally or partially, national, ethnic, racial or religious group, through: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group". The next article (3) of the same Convention explicitly defines acts that are punishable (a) Genocide; (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide; (d) Attempt to commit genocide; (e) Complicity in genocide.

(Тодоровски, 2001: 62). The domination of the Macedonian (termed as "Bulgarian") population was stated also by some Greek historians, as Stavranios, for whom "the population of Macedonia were exclusively Slavs, except in the border regions, where members of the other Balkan nations can be met" (Cit. by Шеј, 2002: 105)ⁱ.

The massive migrations of the Macedonians, in which we search for elements of genocide, began during the Balkan wars, when 30,000 individuals left Aegean Macedonia and additional 20,000 during World War I. The wave of migrations was particularly intensified after the signing of the Convention between Greece and Bulgaria (November 27, 1919) for the voluntary exchange of population, when - under the motto on a voluntary exchange of the eastern part of Aegean Macedonia - a number of Macedonians named as Bulgarians were expelled.ⁱⁱ The next wave, also initiated by an agreement for exchange of the population, happened in 1923 with the Treaty of Lausanne between Greece and Turkey, when all the Muslim population of Aegean Macedonia was moved to Turkey, of whom about 40 thousand were Macedonian Muslims (Стојановски и други, 1988: 298, Danforth, Van Boeschoten, 2012: 35,).ⁱⁱⁱ This was followed by the Treaty between Greece and Bulgaria in 1927 to regulate the issues of legal property that were incurred by the joint resettlement, which incited additional migrations from Greece to Bulgaria of 32,000 Macedonians.^{iv} The migrations of the Macedonian population were followed by the considerably greater migrations of the Greek population from the two countries with which the agreement was concluded for transfer of the population, especially from Asia Minor, which led Shea to the conclusion, reported in his study devoted to the relations between Macedonia and Greece, that towards "the end of the 1920s Greeks carried out a vast program of social engineering, with which they sent to exile tens of thousands of Macedonians who spoke a Slav language and brought maybe ten times more Greeks from Turkey and Armenia" (Шеј, 2002: 26). Shea quoted John Geipel, according to whom in the 1920s about one million Greeks from Asia Minor moved into Greece, but he also stated another statistical item, according to which, after the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 for exchange of population, around 350,000 Muslims and "Bulgarians" left Greece and more than 550,000 refugees from Asia Minor came to Macedonia, with which the density of the population in the period between 1920 and 1928 grew by 33%, and accordingly the ethnic structure was changed in favor of the Greek ethnic group (Шеј, 2002 : 109-110). A new wave of emigrants happened after the civil war of 1946-1949, in which Macedonians took massive participation, when the surviving participants of the war were forced to leave the state. Their treatment after that clearly speaks about the new measures of ethnic engineering whose purpose was a complete emptying of the area of the Aegean Macedonia from the Macedonian ethnic group. This refugee wave also comprised 28,000 children up

to 14 years, which represents an act clearly defined by the Convention on genocide as a form of genocide.

During and after the civil war several legal acts were adopted which sanctioned the return of the emigrants to the country, whose sanctions made a clear distinction between those labeled as pure Greeks and those named as Slavophon Greeks. Thus, with a legal act adopted during the war (1947), all those that had left the state without permission of the Greek government were denied citizenship; by an act of 1953, the property of those who had left the country and did not return within a period of three years could be confiscated; by an act of 1959, confiscation of the land of everybody who was not Greek by origin and had left the country without returning within a period of five years was allowed, which was only amended in 1985, but still remains valid for Macedonians; by an act of 1962 entrance into the country was forbidden to persons who have lost the citizenship, and this prohibition applied also to the members of their families; with an act of 1969, settling of ethnic Greeks on abandoned Macedonian farms was allowed; by an act of 1982, returning in the country and reimbursement of citizenship to non-ethnic Greeks who had left the country during the civil war was allowed, but ethnic Macedonians were not covered by it.^v

An additional measure of ethnic engineering is the program for creation of a buffer zone of 60 km inhabited by members belonging to the Greek ethnic group in order to divide the Macedonian population on both sides of the border. In accordance with this measure, the border areas of Aegean Macedonia were inhabited by a great portion of the hundreds of thousands of Greek immigrants (of those who came back from the Soviet Union), and as a counterweight to these measures a large number of Macedonians were "voluntary" displaced to cities (28,000) in the south of the state and the islands (about 50,000, among whom a large number of Macedonians), or were forced to emigrate (about 90,000, among whom 50,000 Macedonians) (Ташевска-Ременски, 2007: 114).

The revision of demographic data related to the mentioned migrations of Macedonians from the region of Aegean Macedonia does not reveal precise data for these migrations, but information coming from Macedonian associations world wide indicate a figure that ranges from one-quarter to a million (Шеј, 2002: 129).

Forced assimilation

Greece had signed international arrangements with which the existence of minorities was acknowledged combined with guarantees for their rights, but these agreements did not obstruct the practice of ignoring the existence of

minorities (with the exception of the Turkish minority) and disregard of their rights. In this respect, as an extreme case of non-recognition and disregard, the attitude towards the Macedonian minority can also be specified. In parallel with the activities aimed at physical extinction (through physical violence and pressures for emigration), violent actions for the assimilation of the Macedonian minority took place. The vivid illustration of these activities is the order given by the commander of the National Guard in Poipotamos of 1946:

"From today on it is strictly forbidden for all inhabitants from two to fifty years to use any other language but the Greek. We warn youngsters to pay special attention to that. The offenders of this command will be submitted to the Security Committees.

The use of the Macedonian language is prohibited in all municipal centers, institutions, in trade, at meetings, rallies, festivities, lunches, wedding parties, etc. In all listed cases we order that Greek language is to be spoken. To all the political and military authorities, to all public and private officials, we recommend not to give and not to accept gifts in another language other than Greek. Parents, teachers, priests, guardians of underage children. We invite you to fulfill your patriotic duty, otherwise you will be considered responsible for the offences of the subordinates. Those who do not respect these commands will be considered traitors to the fatherland, and they will feel the terrible punishment by our organization" (Cit. by: Ташевска-Ременски, 2007: 121).^{vi}

This command, given by a person who belonged to the organization "Eliniki Makedoniki pigma" (Greco-Macedonian fist) is the model of behavior towards the Macedonian population on the whole territory of Aegean Macedonia for a long period of time, which - in a kind of soft version – has been practiced so far. On the other hand, the population which will be required to accept the Greek identity is not provided with equal approach to social resources. The restrictive approach is particularly characteristic in relation to the entry into higher levels of education and in the state administration.

The question that we are here posing in search for a response to our assumption regarding perpetrated genocide is whether the number of measures for expulsion of the Macedonian population from the areas of Aegean Macedonia - combined with the treatment of those Macedonians who did not leave Aegean Macedonia - can be placed under the items of the definition of genocide by the Convention on Genocide. Our response is that genocide is in question, because of:

(A) *Killing members of the group*: history gives numerous examples of killings of Macedonians. Only during the civil war 21,000 Macedonians were murdered (Iliej, 2002: 113).

(B) *Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group*: here we would emphasize the mental harm which can be noticed in a large number of violent acts whose objective was suppression of the Macedonian identity and its transformation into Greek identity, through: violent introduction of the Greek language and simultaneous prohibition of the use of Macedonian language, the prohibition of all forms of symbolic expression of the Macedonian identity, demolition of Macedonian churches and construction of Greek ones; preserving the status of low stratification level through restriction of the access to the educational institution; hampering access to the civil service and thus disabling upward social mobility; obstructing any kind of forms of civil congregation (e.g. all repression measures which are being carried out in relation to the civil association "Rainbow"); resettlement to other parts of the state for the purpose of diminishing the consequences of the collective actions undertaken by concentrated population groups, etc.

(C) *Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part*: previously mentioned activities were deliberately inflicted in order to cause migrations of part of the population and abolition of the ethnic identity of those who will remain in the country. In addition, we would like to emphasize the fact of encouraging the overpopulation through excessive immigration of members of the Greek ethnic group, which led to worsening of the living conditions for the native Macedonian population.

(D) *Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group*; - we have no evidence for such measures;

E) *Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group*; the transferring of children from two to fourteen years of age during the civil war, which was termed a temporary measure to save the children from the horrors of the war, became a permanent measure. The evacuation of these children, named "refugee children", which is the name that is still being used, represents a particularly painful episode of the tragic fate of the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia.

To conclude, the activities that Greece undertook from the very beginning of the occupation of Aegean Macedonia in relation to the Macedonian population are with two primary objectives: extermination and assimilation, i.e. violent persecution of a major part of the population and forced assimilation of

those who still decided to remain (unfinished because of the basic fact that assimilation can be completed only when the status of the assimilated is equalized with that of the other population), regarded from the aspect of the Convention on Genocide, present genocide.

Why a request to the United Nations to proclaim genocide has not been submitted?

Here we set off with the question: Was there a climate of international support for the request by the Macedonian government addressed to the UN, in order to proclaim genocide of the Macedonian ethnic group in Aegean Macedonia? The conducted analysis in the search for an answer to this question convinces us that what had occurred with the Macedonian population in Aegean Macedonia after its fall under the rule of Greece was known to the international community. Actually, the international public was informed about the situation in Macedonia ever since the period before the Balkan wars, when it was part of the Empire, and that interest continued afterwards. Here we can cite Langue, who wrote that after the failure of the Ilinden uprising:

"The cruelty of the repressions causes a wave of emotions of the public opinion in Europe, or of that which is expressed as such, the press and the intellectual milieu. Thus Tolstoy, Gorky, Anatole France, Jaurès, Clemenceau ... were engaged. Great Britain and France sent subsidiary missions for refugees. Catholic and Protestant denominations distributed food and medicines" (Langue, 1998, cit. by: Госийо, 2004: 159).

After the Balkan wars, the League of Nations in the 1920s voiced deep concern in relation to the upholding of the human rights of that population by the Greek government. Here we would also mention the Treaty for protection of the non-Greek nationalities in Greece concluded by the forces of the Entente in Sèvres on 10 August 1920 and the Protocol to the Foreign Ministers Kalfov (Bulgaria) and Politis (Greece) of 29 September 1924, by which Greece was obliged to respects the interests "of the inhabitants that are different from the majority of the population by nation, language or religion," to provide them with equal civil and political rights and freedom, opportunities to use their mother tongue in the press, before courts, in religious services and in primary school teaching (Стојановски и други, 1988: 299), followed by the opening of the office of the high commissioner for national minorities in Thessaloniki in 1925 "for monitoring of the international agreements related to the minorities" (Шеј, 2002: 113).

The international community mediated for improvement of the status of the Macedonian and other non-Greek population in Greece. Still, it did not carry out controls for the accomplishment of the adopted laws, and they practically did not influence the policy of extermination and forced assimilation. Thus, part of the agreed improvement of the status of the Macedonian minority was the creation of the primer (named ABECEDAR) for the use of Slav language in schools, but it never entered into use, and in addition Macedonian schools were closed, and the children had to attend kindergartens in which the Greek language was taught and they were educated in Greek spirit. The situation was particularly detrimental at the time of the dictatorship of Metaksas (1936-1940), when - with a legal act "Actions against State Security" - sanctions were provisioned against requests for protection of minority rights, Macedonian language was forbidden even for domestic use, evening schools were open for adult Macedonians to learn the Greek language, expression of any kind of Macedonian national feelings (language, songs, dances) were forbidden with which "thousands of Macedonians were arrested, detained or expelled from Greece" (Iliej, 2002: 115).

Namely, the real situation with the Macedonian and other minorities in Greece for the entire period from taking over of the Aegean Macedonia until today is not quite as unknown to the wider world community not to receive the support for one well-articulated request by the Macedonian side for changes in the policy of the Greek Government towards the minorities. Here we can state several public condemnations of the situation in Greece that can support our position:

- The international organization of writers PEN, at their 49th Congress, held in June 1986, publicly condemned the denying of recognition of the Macedonian language by Greece and sent a letter to the Greek Minister of Culture and the Greek PEN, which - as anticipated - did not accept the arguments stated in the letter;
- The annual report by the State Department of the United States of 1991, in which sharp criticism for harassment of the Macedonian and Turkish minority in Greece was expressed;
- Comments in relation to the behavior of Greece towards its minorities, reported by the Badinter Commission, which was established in 1991 in order to advise the European Union for recognition of the former Yugoslav republics;^{vii}
- The report of Amnesty International of November 1992, titled as "Greece: Violations of the right to freedom of expression: further cases of concern";
- The report of the Helsinki Committee of July 1993, incited by a concrete case of violation of the right to freedom of expressing own opinion (the Sideropoulos case);

- The US branch of Human Rights Watch in its report of 21 April 1994 issued a report entitled "Ethnic identity: The Macedonians of Greece", in which the existence and activities of the Macedonian minority in Greece was presented;
- The US State Department, on 18 October 1994 issued a document in which the existence of the Macedonian and the Albanian minority in Greece was confirmed;
- The reports by Amnesty International of 1994 on the occasion of the case with Father Nikodimos Carknas;
- In November 1994, the UN High Commissioner for Minorities of the CSCE, Max van der Stoep - in the context of his visit to Thessaloniki - indicated the need for more attention to be paid to the position of the minorities in the Balkans;
- the report of the British section of the international Alliance of Human Rights of 1994, in which data concerning disregard for the human rights in Greece were given;
- the report by the British Helsinki Group of 1994, named as "Macedonian minorities", in which data concerning disregard for the human rights of the Macedonian minority by the Greek government were given;

Mass media in several countries give several reasons for the ignoring of the existence of the Macedonian minority by Greece:

- Xenophobic nationalism, typical for the Balkans, motivated by the fear of spreading the information on how the Greek state was created (Steve Saragil in *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto);
- The problem of confiscated properties of the emigrated Macedonians - their rights to possession of land (Chuck Sudetic in *New York Times*);
- Symbolic ethnic cleansing conditioned by the ethnic nationalism that is characteristic not only for Greece, but for the entire Balkans (Loring Danforth);
- We should add our attitude to this list that Greece cannot afford the loss of Aegean Macedonia since it would mean its economic disaster – because it is the territory that provides the whole State with food, raw materials for the industry (cotton as the basis of the textile industry) and with energy (thermal power plants supplied with coal from the mines in the western part of Aegean Macedonia).

Has the situation of the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia encouraged collective trauma in Macedonia?

"Collective traumas are reflections of neither individual suffering nor actual events, but symbolic renderings that reconstruct and imagine them. Rather than descriptions of what is, they are arguments about what must have been and what should be. ... The truth of a cultural script depends not on its empirical accuracy, but on its symbolic power and enactment. Yet, while the trauma process is not rational, it is intentional. It is people who make traumatic meanings, in circumstances they have not themselves created and which they do not fully comprehend... Trauma scripts are performed in the theatres of everyday collective life" (Alexander, 2012: 4).

If we accept the above definition of collective trauma by Jeffrey Alexander, and challenge the possibilities of its creation, in which the basis of that creation would be the situation of genocide to at least half of the members of the community, which defines itself through the symbolic of the Macedonian identity, we can conclude that there were real (not imaginary) conditions for creation of collective trauma in context of all political units through which the population that inhabits today's Republic of Macedonia has survived.

The historical occasions, however, do not give arguments for the position that it might have happened in the period of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians and its follower – pre-war Yugoslavia. The authors of the history of the Macedonian nation accuse the Government of the Kingdom of SCS because in the period of its existence the question about the position of the Macedonian minority in Greece was not posed. According to them, they were worried that "the recognition of the Macedonians in Greece as Bulgarian population would inevitably lead to posing of a similar demand by Sofia for recognition of the Macedonian population in Yugoslavia as Bulgarians, i.e. Bulgarian national minority" (Стојановски и други, 1988: 299). That government, unlike Greece - which immediately after taking on the territory of Aegean Macedonia started to implement aggressive assimilation policies - opted for gradual assimilation, but the ultimate goal of that policy was the same as the one Greece had, and the realistic perceiving of the situation led to slowing down the pace.

"Government authorities and the Serbs show a lot of patience and tact in their efforts in relation to the "serbianization" of the population. They openly acknowledged that no astounding results should be expected among the old generation, but the growing generations are theirs. ... We are surprised by the patience, tact and diversity of the measures undertaken by the Serbs for the assimilation of the population" (An

excerpt from the Bulletin of the Central Committee of VMRO on the occasion of the position and the spirit of the population in Western Macedonia (Vardar) and Eastern (called Aegean), taken from: Госийо, 2004: 161).^{viii}

Namely, the stance of the Kingdom of SCS, according to Macedonian historians, gave the right to Greece in 1925 to reject the ratification of the Protocol Kalfov-Politis (Стојановски и други, 1988: 300). On the other hand, the SCS Kingdom signed several agreements with Greece, and according to them, the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia were recognized as Serb minority" (Тодоровски, 2001: 143).

Tracing the events after the Second World War and the establishment of Vardar Macedonia (appointed as South Serbia by SCS) with the status of a socialist republic with equal status as the other five republics that entered in the composition of Yugoslavia discloses that even then the policy of lack of care in relation to the position of the Macedonian minority in Greece continued. Even after the end of the civil war in Greece and the acceptance of the Macedonian refugees, not only that their trauma caused by the unbearable living conditions in their hometowns and their leaving with no chances to return wasn't shared, but this wave of refugees also evoked negative emotions, got "different forms of invisible refusal of the refugees by their own compatriots, those who in the vocabulary of the refugees were "natives", those – according to the refugees – who were lucky to "be at home"" (Kolbe, 1999: 9). The word "Aegeans", which is the word that the local population used when referring to the refugees, and which they later "out of trouble or too strong a wish for adjusting accepted themselves", according to Kolbe includes in itself "all the clichés of rejection and mistrust, stigmatization and tabooing ... which "could not and cannot still conceal the repulsive, defamatory and humiliating content, which to this day remains a suitable cliché for everyone who wants to express his privileged highness, based only on the knowledge that he/she is "from here" (Ibid).

This non-acceptance, which Kolbe indicates in her very emotional work entitled "The Aegeans", non-acceptance which we - as part of the "old settlers" - are also witnessing, because - sixty years after their coming and settling in this country - we still call them Aegeans, which we explain as a result of: the dominance of the Yugoslav political power over the local political power in the Republic of Macedonia formally recognized as free and equal; the difficult economic situation after the Second World War and its extended duration caused by the socialist experiment of collectivization, which made the refugees from Greece to be felt as unfair competition aiming at conquering the underdeveloped labor market; but also the established cultural matrix in these regions for distrust towards "foreigners". Under such conditions, the cultural construction of stigma

against victims of extermination is formed – the members of the expelled families became "reasons" of the current suffering among the local population which was facing various kinds of scarcity, and targeted their discontent towards those who in reality were victims of the regional political circumstances, or - as Alexander specified - "suggesting new meaningful and causal relationships between previously unrelated events, structures, perceptions, and actions (Alexander, 2012: 6). The domestic society fails to recognize the individual trauma of the newcomers, experienced as "others"; it restricts the solidarity in relation to them, leaving them to their own suffering. In case a collective trauma in relation to the extermination was created, it would have triggered compassion with the sufferings of the expelled ones, identification with them (melting of the ones with the others in the "we"), as well as social responsibility and political action. National trauma has not been created, but the individual trauma of the victims of prosecution - whose life suffered radical changes - is articulated in partial trauma, i.e. collective trauma of the expelled and their successors, of those who have accepted the name "Aegeans", and that these days at least once a year share the pain of their own destiny at the traditional manifestation "Congregation of the Refugee Children".

The attitude towards the "Aegean Question" after the Republic of Macedonia acquired independence in 1991 convinces us that since then, despite all the problems that arise from the Greek repudiation of the name, it has not become a challenge for construction of social trauma, which - with the power that a social trauma possesses - would have mobilized the forces of the Macedonian society with greater energy and stronger self-respect to fight the newly arisen battle over the name. Moreover, as Kica Kolbe notes, it is not even recognized that the very "Aegean issue", i.e. the refusal of the domestic Macedonian society to accept and integrate the refugees from Aegean Macedonia, became one of the factors that Greece could not be able to finalize the process of assimilation of the Aegean population within its borders (Kolbe, 1999: 40). For if there are "Aegeans" outside Greece and, if they were expelled from Greece, then there is material evidence that they also exist in Greece.

The Convention on genocide (Article 8) gives the right to "each of the parties who signed to address the competent organs of the United Nations ...in order to prevent or deter acts of genocide ... regardless of whether genocidal activities have been accomplished in their own or in another country." Taking into consideration that Yugoslavia has ratified this Convention, it might have addressed a request to the United Nations to take measures and to state sanctions against the activities in relation to the Macedonian population from Aegean Macedonia which - in accordance with the stated Convention - belong to the category genocide. It did not do so. However, the question we are posing here is why the Republic of Macedonia has failed to do so after its independence?

Considering the fact that acts of genocide do not expire, such a request to the United Nations for genocide perpetrated upon the population in Greece which belongs to the Macedonian nation might have been submitted by the Republic of Macedonia after its recognition as a member of the UN. Such requests, which refer to mass killings during the war from 1992-95 in the regions of former Yugoslavia were submitted by all newly established states in this area that were involved in military activities.^{ix}

Following the definition of collective trauma given by Jeffrey Alexander we will also try to challenge the course of events that might have served as a basis for stimulation of the collective trauma.

1991: Report by the Badinter Commission (Opinion no. 6) relating to the admission of the Republic of Macedonia to the UN and recognition of the name. That Commission concluded that it was necessary that the Republic of Macedonia examines those provisions of its constitution pertaining to the changing of borders and its care for parts of the Macedonian people who live in the neighboring country as minorities, because the existing provisions cause anxiety with the neighboring countries and could cause regional misunderstandings and conflicts. The response to this request was not submittal of a request to the UN for determination of the genocide in relation to the Macedonian minority in Greece, but amendments to the Constitution with which the state gives up any kind of territorial pretensions towards its neighbors, as well as from interference in their internal affairs (two amendments adopted by the Parliament on 6 January 1992)^x, which did not satisfy the Badinter Commission, and additionally a solemn declaration of the Republic of Macedonia was submitted, that it "will refrain of any kind of enemy propaganda against one neighboring state – member-state of the European Community."^{xi} Namely, from the very conception of the name dispute, the Republic of Macedonia took the position of withdrawal within the frames of formal procedures in view of resolving the problem.

1993: Resolutions 817 and 845 of the Security Council of the UN: With the Resolution 817 the Security Council of the UN recommends to the General Assembly to receive the country as a member of the UN under the provisional name "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", which on one hand was accepted by the government of our country, and on the other the population was encouraged to protest against the use of this name at each international event. The Resolution 845 called for continuation of the dialogue about the name under the auspices of the UN Secretary General in order to achieve a speedy resolution of the dispute between the two countries.^{xii} In contexts of the procedure for acceptance of the membership and the following activities by the international community, there were suggestions of names for the state (Slavomakedonija by

Greece, New Macedonia by the authors of the draft agreement for confirmation of the existing border-line (S/25855)). The events after the recognition on both sides of the border reveal adopting of clearly different strategies in relation to achievement of the national objectives: stirring up nationalism from the Greek side (the fall of the government of New Democracy due to its "soft" stance regarding the name and the coming to power of PASOK with emphasized "tough" attitude) and letters with polite content from the Macedonian side, expecting understanding by the international community that "the constitutional name Republic of Macedonia does not imply any kind of territorial or other aspirations", and therefore other proposals for the name "are not even necessary".^{xiii}

The name problem was raised high by the Greek propaganda to the level of social endangerment and thus they managed to cause social trauma that is pervading not just the Greeks from the country but also those of the Diaspora. An indicator for this trauma is not only the attitude of each Greek with their furious reactions at any place, at any time, at any occasion of the mentioning of the name Republic of Macedonia, the collective actions motivated by the recognition of the country under the temporary name, such as meetings (the meeting in Thessaloniki in 1992 attracted one million protesters, and the one in Melbourne one hundred thousand), but, before all, the attained political unity – even back in 1992 the political parties in Greece agreed that the word "Macedonia" is not acceptable in any way for the new state (Roudometof, 2002: 32). On the other hand, the extreme nationalism of Greece was not a sufficient challenge at least for a revision of the interpretation of the already undertaken commitments with the two mentioned amendments to the Constitution, as well as to take over a firm position in relation to the need in the draft Interim Agreement to incorporate article 8 of the Declaration of the United Nations on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Language Minorities, as well as the Recommendation for minority rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Here we will mention the conclusion made by Jeffrey Alexander that "the events by themselves and for themselves create social trauma," they "are not inherently traumatic. Trauma is socially mediated attribution". The forced assimilation of the Macedonian population in Greece, with emphasized extermination consequences, occurred over a long period before the outbreak of the new nationalist wave caused by membership of the Republic of Macedonia to the UN, but - as Alexander stated - "the attribution does not have to be executed in the real time when the event is happening: it can also be done before the event happens, as an indicator of unconsciousness, or after the occurrence of the event, as post hoc reconstruction" (Alexander 2012: 13). The particular collective trauma of the "Aegean" population in Macedonia could have served as a basis for

creating social collective trauma as a means for facing the Greek nationalism, but that did not occur. Contrary to this, in Greece a collective trauma was created out of events that have not even occurred, which again is in line with the thesis of Alexander that the nationalistic ideology can produce such situations when "...events that are deeply traumatizing may not actually have occurred at all; such imagined events, however, can be as traumatizing as events that have actually occurred." (Alexander 2012: 13). The construct of the Greek collective trauma was effectuated soon after its appearance through a two-year economic blockade on Macedonia, with grave consequences on its fragile economy and with its additional incorporation in the Interim agreement signed between the governments of the Republic of Macedonia and Greece on 13th of September 1995.

1995 Interim accord signed between the governments of the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece on 13th of September 1995: With this agreement Greece recognized the Republic of Macedonia (under the name FYROM) as "an independent and sovereign state", an agreement for the establishment of diplomatic relations was achieved, mutual promise was given to "respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and the political independence of the other side", that both sides will refrain from the use of force and expression of territorial pretensions, they will continue with negotiations over the name under the auspices of the UN Secretary General, according to the Resolution 845 (1993) of the Security Council, etc. What we would like to underline here is that our party obliged itself to something that excludes the possibility of the realization of the "Aegean" question as collective trauma. Namely, it "solemnly declared that anything from its constitution, and in particular the Preamble and article no 3 of the Constitution is not, cannot and should not be interpreted in such a way that it presents or ever will give a basis for interference of the second side (i.e. the Republic of Macedonia) in the internal affairs of the other party (i.e. Greece), in order to protect the status and rights of other persons in the country who are not citizens of the Second Party" (Interim Accord 1995: 6). The Republic of Macedonia has given up its right, guaranteed by the conventions of the United Nations, to take care and protects the people with Macedonian national consciousness in any country in the world. In addition to this, it signed a document with ambivalent content, with which Greece undertakes that it will not obstruct the membership of Macedonia in international organizations, but will have the right to obstructing in case Macedonia addresses those organizations under its constitutional name.

2008 The Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia on November 3rd 2008 issued a "Resolution for search of a strategy for the imposed dispute by the Republic of Greece in connection with our constitutional name," in which "the united position of the State summit would undoubtedly be incorporated in the

negotiating process", based on the "frames of the Report of the so called Badinter Commission (particularly on the part of the report indicated as 'Opinion no. 6'), the Resolutions 817 and 845 of the Security Council of the UN of 1993 and the Interim Accord signed between the governments of the Republic of Macedonia and Greece on September 13th 1995". This resolution was supported both by the Government and the President of the Republic of Macedonia. In relation to it Stojan Andov submitted one proposal strategy to the Parliament, in which he indicated the failures that our country has done in the efforts for resolution of the dispute over the name, with the following request:

"One of the basic directions that have to be determined by the Parliament in this Strategy is that the question for this dispute is not a question of one party, of a Government or a person, but that mutual complete understanding of all political factors in the country is needed. There are conditions for such unity and their achievement needs abandoning of the contrived differences and attempts for daily political benefits by parties with which the essence of this dispute is blurred and the country is hampered to successfully resolve this issue"^{xiv}

After 2008 the announced strategy has not been adopted, but something happened that we can recognize as partial social trauma. It is the engineering of the cultural identity transformation of the Macedonian nation by setting the nation's foundations in the distant past of twenty-three centuries ago in the famous time of the Macedonian state and the conquering of Alexander of Macedon. The emphasis on the Macedonian heritage ("we are the descendants of Alexander of Macedon") encourages the awareness that the progeny makes us the undisputed heirs of the name Macedonia and Macedonians, and hence acts on the development of the awareness regarding the need to defend these names at any price. Jeffrey Alexander - to use his arguments here - said that "identity includes cultural reference", by which the stereotypical meanings of the collectivity can suddenly shift in order to provide traumatic status of the event, the significance becomes the asset which provides a feeling of shock and fear, not the events themselves, and the shock becomes a result of the socio-cultural process that is "deeply influenced by the structures of power and of unpredictable skills of the reflexive social agents." The mechanisms used for redesigning of the cultural identity (architectonic projects in the capital city, actualization of the symbols that really or imaginatively refer to the stated historical period, the production of cultural artifacts with which the projected cultural identity is brought closer to the people, etc.) spur the collective feelings for the need of uncompromising defense "of what has been ours for millenniums" - the name Macedonia and Macedonians. In relation to this Alexander would say, "The events are one thing; the presentation of these events is completely different. The trauma is not the result of group experience of pain. It is a result of acute embarrassment that

enters into the heart of the collective feeling of its identity" (Alexander, 2012: 15). Under conditions when the name becomes a collective trauma of at least a segment of the population, any kind of efforts undertaken in order to overcome the problem with Greece - by a decision which goes out of the framework which has acquired the status of a taboo - to accomplish the defined aims for joining NATO and the EU with a compromise for the name are becoming heretic. The game about the name - as one Greek professor, a participant of a workshop which was held in Skopje in 2012 on the dispute over the name issue remarked - "has become a game of political chess", in which having non-decisions or red lines outlined by any party in the game are not a solution.^{xv}

What next?

Under the complex circumstances in our contemporary life, we never have just one and only goal, but multitude of objectives that can be mutually aligned, though very often they contradict each other. Thus, for a long period of time we have agreed on the objectives of joining NATO and EU accession (EU integration), but simultaneously we guard strong feelings in order to preserve the name we have given to our country and which we cherish as our inviolable possession. Given the long confirmed certainty about the mismatch of these objectives, in response to the question what to do, we can state the dilemma expressed by one reader of *Nova Makedonija* on the occasion of the controversy caused by the open letter to Ivan Čapovski in response to statements made by Mirjana and Denko Maleski that in relation to the name issue we are hostages of the Aegean Question: "Which road to take - wonders the commentator - should we finally accept the strategy of Pitu Guli, who deliberately lost his life at Mečkin Kamen, although he knew that he will lose, or the strategy of Nikola Karev who withdrew, because he saw that it was useless to die without any possibility to win the battle? (*Nova Makedonija*, No. 21853 of 3.12.2009, novamakedonija.com.mk.) "^{xvi}. Our choice in relation to this dilemma, based on the awareness for the long-term bad strategy in the fight for the name, as well as of our own assessment of the priorities – giving precedence to the objective of EU integration - would be to take the road of Nikola Karev, who withdrew, because he saw that it was useless to die without any chance to win the battle.

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ⁱ Based upon the religious affiliation of the population Stavranios concluded that immediately before the Balkan wars in Aegean Macedonia there were 326.426 Bulgarians, 40.921 Macedonian Muslims, 289,973 Turks, 4240 Turk Christians, 240,019 Greeks, 13.753 Greek Muslims, 5.574 Albanian Muslims, 3.291 Albanian Christians, 45.547 Vlach Christians, 3.500 Vlach Muslims, 59.560 Jews, 29.803 Gypsies, 8.100 others, or totally 1.073.549 (Cit. after: Shea, 2002: 105)

ⁱⁱ This attitude is present in the History of the Macedonian nation (Стојановски А., Катарџиев И., Зографски Д., Апостолски М., 1988, *Историја на македонскиот народ*, Скопје: Македонска книга/Култура/Мисла/Наша книга.

ⁱⁱⁱ Then 329.000 Turks were evicted from Greece and around 50.000 Islamized Macedonians, at their places 1.220.000 Greeks were settled, of whom 630.000 in Aegean Macedonia (Тодоровски, 2001:141). In his work about the ethnic composition and the government on the Balkans Gossiaux mentions the figure of one million Greeks transported/settled to the Aegean Macedonia (Госиџо, 2004:160).

^{iv} Gligor Todorovski states that according to Bulgarian statistic data in the period between 1913 and 1928 86.572 Macedonians from Greece emigrated to Bulgaria (named as Bulgarians according to this statistical data (Тодоровски, 2001:140)

^v Acts were continually adopted that disabled the return of Macedonians who had left Greece (Act 2536 of 1953; Act 3958 of 1959; Act 4234 of 1962). These acts were withdrawn in 1985, but only for the emigrants of Greek nationality.

^{vii} Our comment: It probably won't be exaggerated to say that in case Greece was submitted to the same process today the Badinter Commission would have – after noting the disrespect of minority rights in Greece – to propose that Greece is not recognized as a sovereign country“ (cit. after: IIIej, 2002: 151).

^{viii} The plan for gradual assimilation was based upon the awareness that the repressive measures of Serbization would provoke resistance that may lead to approaching Bulgaria. This attitude can be seen with many non-Balkans historians, and here we will mention only Jean-François Gossiaux (Госиџо, 2004).

^{ix} Application of the convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (26 February 2007 Judgment); www.icj-cij.org/document/files/91/13685.pdf

^x The first amendment relates to the restrain of any territorial pretensions in relation to the neighboring countries, while with the second the Republic of Macedonia denies the right to interfere in internal affairs of other countries (Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, 2011: 7).

^{xi} No. 32193, Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:

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^{xii} Resolution 845 (1993) <http://www.nato.int/for/un/u930618d.htm>

^{xiii} Excerpts from the letter of the President of the Republic of Macedonia Kiro Gligorov to the Secretary General of the UN of May 29, 1993.

^{xiv} Резолуција за изнаоѓање на стратегија за наметнатиот спор од страна на Република Грција за нашето уставно име, <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/CADEF1D31F29244BBDC4746559CC4E8B.pdf>

^{xv} The workshop was held between 27th and 29th of September 2012 in Skopje, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria and the Austrian National Academy for Defense. (Dr Marios Panagiotis Efthymiopoulos, “A Resolution to a Dispute with no Strings Attached: the Name Dispute of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, https://www.academia.edu/7797666/A_Resolution)

^{xvi} Nova Makedonija, no. 21853 of 3.12.2009, <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk> .